About the Harrison Comprehensive Plan

INTRODUCTION

The Harrison Comprehensive Plan Committee, with assistance from the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG), developed the 2027 Harrison Comprehensive Plan between December 2025 and March 2027.

The final plan draws from Harrison's 2009 Comprehensive Plan update process, the 2023 Downtown Revitalization effort, municipal records and ordinances, relevant regional and state data, and extensive public input. Together, these sources provide the foundation for a framework intended to guide the Town of Harrison into the future while remaining grounded in the values and priorities of its residents.

PURPOSE

A comprehensive plan helps a Maine community define a shared vision for its future and turn that vision into a practical framework for local decision-making. For Harrison, the plan identifies priorities for growth, housing, natural resources, public services, community character, and future municipal investments.

An up-to-date comprehensive plan also gives the Town a stronger foundation for pursuing grants and other outside funding. Many state and federal programs look for evidence that a proposed project is supported by an adopted local plan and responds to an identified community need. By documenting Harrison's priorities and future investments, the Comprehensive Plan can help strengthen grant applications, guide development and housing decisions, support capital planning, and demonstrate that local projects are part of a coordinated long-term strategy rather than stand-alone requests.

PLAN PROCESS

Harrison's last comprehensive plan was drafted in 2009 but was not approved by the State of Maine. The current effort represents the Town's second attempt to create a comprehensive plan. Harrison hired the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) as its planning consultant to assist the Comprehensive Plan Committee throughout the process.

Early in the process, the Harrison Comprehensive Plan Committee adopted the motto **“Guiding Growth ~ Preserving Character.”** The phrase reflects the Committee’s intention to plan thoughtfully for Harrison’s future while recognizing the qualities that make the town a special place to live. The planning process is intended to help Harrison adapt to future changes while preserving its character and remaining a friendly, welcoming community for current residents and new families.

Public engagement was central to the planning process. A project website was launched early in the winter of 2026 and was continuously updated with draft materials, project information, and upcoming opportunities to participate. The first community survey was launched on April 11, 2026, and remained open through early July. A total of 228 people completed the survey, although the results indicated a need for continued outreach to groups that were underrepresented among respondents.

Workshops and surveys gave residents several opportunities to shape the plan as it developed. The April 11, 2026 workshop drew approximately 68 participants for visual preference, mapping, investment, and vision exercises that helped establish early priorities. Those ideas were carried forward into a June 24 workshop focused on draft goals and strategies related to land use, housing, natural resources, and public services. A second survey, launched on September 18, gave residents another opportunity to respond to those proposed goals and strategies. Later in the process, a third public workshop on October 24, 2026 allowed participants to review draft comprehensive plan chapters and discuss refined goals and strategies through a round-robin format.

Together, these outreach efforts gave residents multiple ways to participate and helped ensure that the final Comprehensive Plan reflects both the priorities of the Harrison community and the requirements of the State of Maine.

VISION STATEMENT

The following vision statement was developed from feedback gathered at the first public workshop, along with themes that emerged through surveys and other public input during the comprehensive planning process.

Harrison will guide thoughtful and intentional growth to appropriate areas, strengthening the Village, expanding housing choices for people at all stages of life, and supporting small businesses and year-round economic activity. The town will work to preserve its clean waters, open lands, historic Village character, and the friendly rural qualities residents value as Harrison changes and adapts over time. Harrison will invest in reliable public services and community amenities in a transparent and fiscally responsible way, helping the community remain healthy, welcoming, and vibrant for current and future generations.

GOALS

Each chapter begins with a mission statement that summarizes the goals and overall direction of the chapter.

Each chapter concludes with the goals and actions needed to carry that direction forward. Timeframes and responsible parties will be refined in the final implementation matrix after public review and consideration of budget and staffing needs.

THE HARRISON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMMITTEE

Role	Name
Chair	Scott Ramsdell
Vice Chair	Ron Ward
Secretary	Andrea AskenDunn
Members	Cameron Fernald Wendy Gallant Kristin Humphrey Leo Saidnawey Bill Winslow Connie Allen Al Fitzmorris

CONTENTS

1. POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS
2. HISTORIC & ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES
3. CURRENT LAND USE
4. RECREATION & TOWN OWNED LAND
5. WATER RESOURCES
6. NATURAL RESOURCES
7. AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY RESOURCES
8. ECONOMY
9. FISCAL CAPACITY
10. PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES
11. TRANSPORTATION
12. HOUSING
13. FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

INTRODUCTION

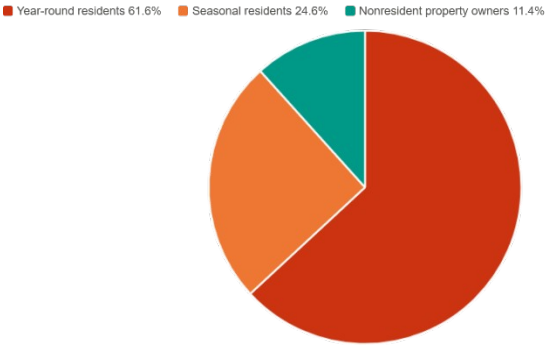
Harrison is a small, seasonal community whose year-round population is older and less economically secure than Cumberland County as a whole. Harrison is growing at a slower rate than the rest of the county, which has resulted in failing school enrollment, a smaller tax base and a shrinking labor force.

The forces at play in Harrison's population trends impact the town's ability to build housing, offer services and expand the village center which are all goals reflected elsewhere in this plan.

2,588 2024 population estimate	**56** 2024 median age	**–27%** Reduction in public school students from 2016–2025

INVENTORY

Population Overview

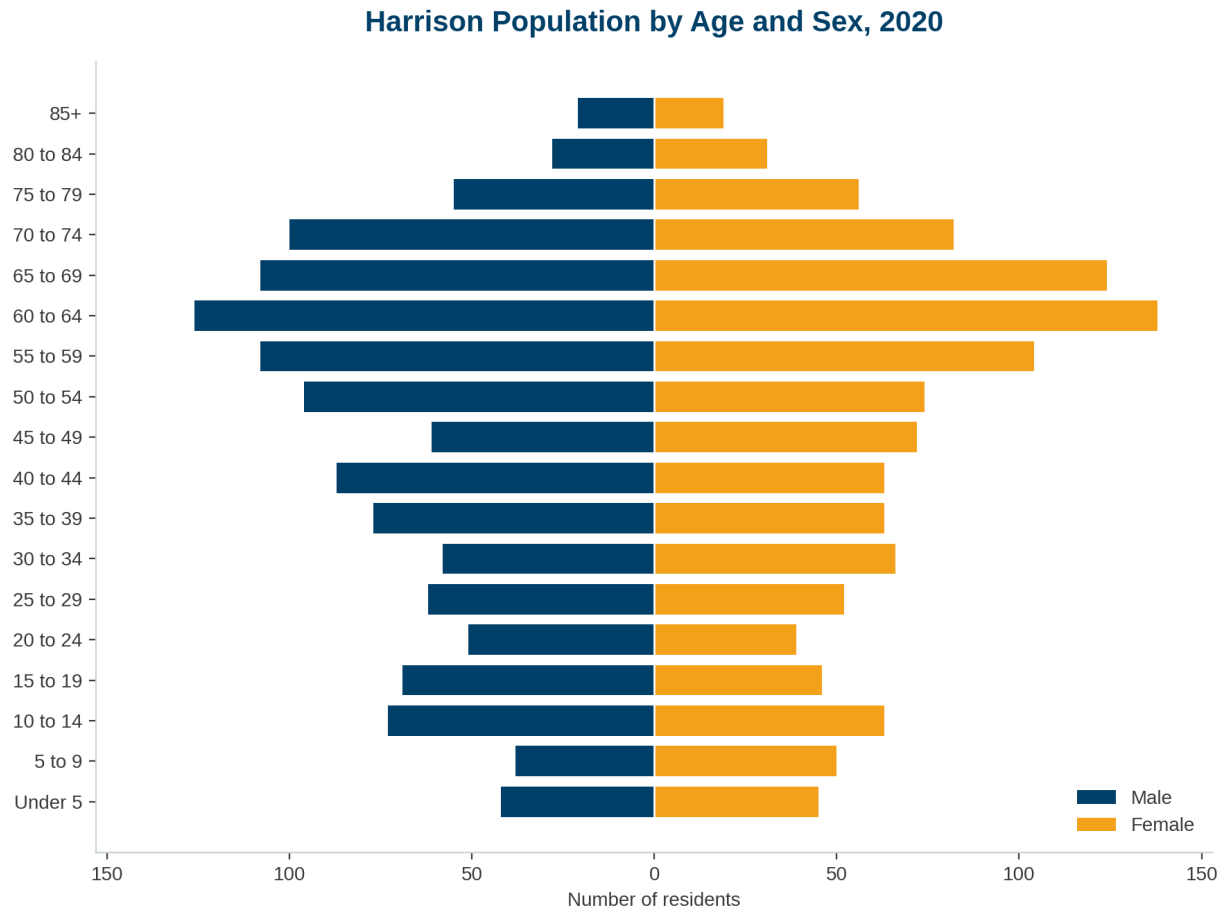


Harrison had 2,721 residents in 2010 and 2,455 in 2020. The U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates Program placed the 2024 population at 2,588. According to the U.S. Census Harrison's population is 92% White.

Seasonal residents and visitors are not fully represented in year-round population counts. The 2026 survey reflects this dual character: 61.6% of respondents identified as year-round residents, 24.6% as seasonal residents, and 11.4% as nonresident property owners.

Age and Households

The estimated median age rose from 52.6 in 2014 to 56 in 2024. Residents aged 65 and older increased while the number of children and adults in the family-forming age range declined. The 2024 old-age dependency ratio was estimated at 48.8 older adults per 100 working-age residents, compared with a child dependency ratio of 14.8.

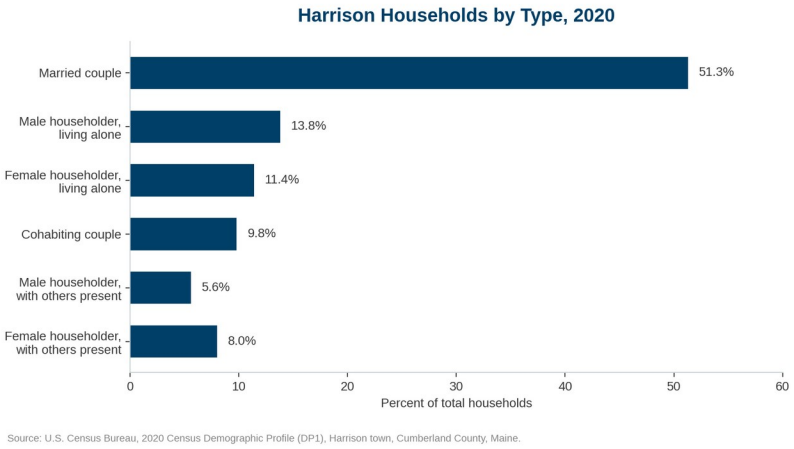


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census Demographic Profile (DP1), Harrison town, Cumberland County, Maine.

Public School enrollment associated with Harrison declined from 303 students in 2016 to 222 in 2025. This represents a 27% decrease, whereas the rest of Maine

School Administrative District 17 declined by approximately 8% over the same period. In 2026, there were 276 homeschooled students in MSAD17.

Most Harrison households are married couples, followed by men living alone.



Mobility and residency

There is little mobility in and out of Harrison, according to the 2024 American Community Survey. Of Harrison's population 1 year and older (2,488), only about 4.6% moved in the past year, and many of those who did move stayed within Cumberland County.

People who moved to Harrison from a different state in the past year have a median age of 26.5, compared to Harrison's overall median age of 56.2. This plan will consider ways to attract and retain more young people, including modest housing construction, increased recreational amenities, and expanded economic development.

Income, Education, and Vulnerability

The 2024 American Community Survey estimated Harrison’s median household income at $56,938. This was about 60% of the Cumberland County estimate and 76% of the statewide estimate. The estimated poverty rate increased from 10.3% in 2014 to 19.1% in 2024, with a higher estimate among residents under age 65. In 2024, an estimated 17% of Harrison residents were living with a disability. About 30.9% of adults aged 25 and older held a bachelor’s degree or higher, with most bachelor's degrees in science/ engineering or arts/ humanities. These estimates have margins of error and should be read as indicators rather than exact counts.

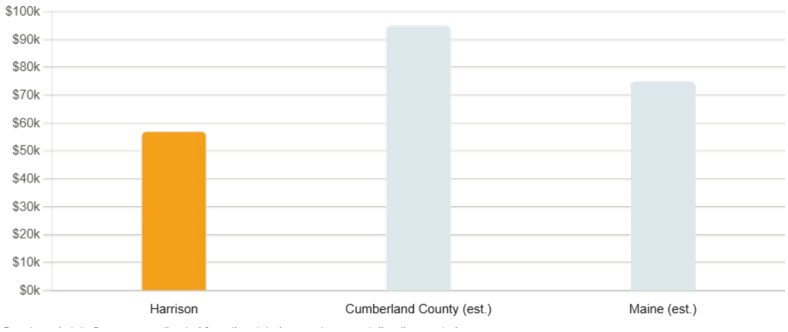
These indicators point to a higher level of household vulnerability in Harrison than in Cumberland County overall. With lower poverty and disability rates, Harrison may need to plan for additional support services and housing options that meet a wider range of needs in the years ahead.

Indicator	Earlier point	Recent point	Direction
Population	2,721 (2010)	2,588 (2024 est.)	Below 2010
Median age	52.6 (2014)	56.0 (2024 est.)	Older
Public School students	303 (2016)	222 (2025)	Down 27%
Median household income	$55,750 (2014)	$56,938 (2024 est.)	Little nominal growth

Median Household Income

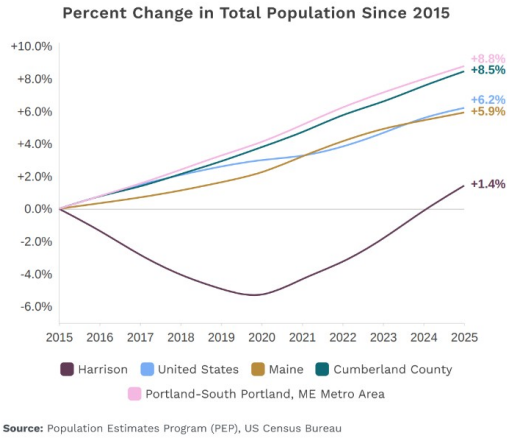
TRENDS

1. **Harrison is growing, but at a much slower pace than Cumberland County**



From 2015 to 2025, Harrison's population grew 1%, a net increase of 37 people. Over the same timeframe, Cumberland County grew 8%. State projections prepared before the most recent population rebound estimate a decline to about 2,270 residents by 2042. Projections are not forecasts, but they identify the likely direction if current age, birth, death, and migration patterns continue. The population increase since 2020 should be monitored before the town assumes that the longer decline has ended.

2. **The population is getting older, and this will impact public services**



A smaller share of children and working-age adults can reduce both school enrollment and the local labor pool, while increasing demand for emergency medical, transportation, accessibility, and aging-in-place services. Housing and economic policies that make room for younger households can support a more balanced population without requiring rapid growth.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Survey	• Respondents were older, more educated and more affluent than the town as a whole • Of the 228 responses, nearly 90% expected to remain connected to Harrison for at least 10 more years • 77.1% were age 48 or older; 58.7% were age 58 or older • 39.7% were retired • 71.2% held a bachelor's degree or graduate degree • 30.3% had a household income above $150,000
Workshop findings	N/A
Other Input	• In a 2026 survey of kids in the summer recreation program, 39% said they would live in Harrison as an adult while 29% said no and 32% said not sure. Among those who said "no" some reported "There is nothing to do."
Significance	These results must be considered alongside additional outreach to younger residents, renters, working families, and lower-income households.

STATE REQUIREMENTS

What will be the likely demand for housing and municipal and school services to accommodate the change in population and demographics, both as a result of overall change and as a result of change among different age groups?

Harrison's age pyramid suggests that a need for senior housing such as ADUs will increase in the coming years while school enrollment is likely to decline.

Is the rate of population change expected to continue as in the past, or to slow down or speed up? What are the implications of this change?

Harrison's population fell by about 9.8% between 2010 and 2020, from 2,721 to 2,455 residents, then rose an estimated 5.4% by 2024 to 2,588, reversing the decline of the 2010s. State projections prepared before that rebound expect the population to fall to about 2,270 by 2042, a slower rate of decline than in the 2010s. Because the recent increase is a short-term estimate, it should be monitored before assuming the earlier decline has ended. If the decline resumes, the main implications are fewer school-age children, a smaller labor force, and more demand for services for older residents.

Does your community have a significant seasonal population, is the nature of that population changing? What is the community's dependence on seasonal visitors?

Yes, Harrison has a significant seasonal population. In addition to nearly 25% of residents being seasonal, 33.9% of the housing stock is for seasonal, recreational or occasional use according to the Census. In the Harrison 2009 Comprehensive plan it states that the seasonal population is significant and "doubles" Harrison's population to close to 5,000.

Reliance on tourism as an industry will be discussed in the economy chapter.

If your community is a service center or has a major employer, are additional efforts required to serve a daytime population that is larger than its resident population?

Not applicable.

GOALS & ACTIONS

1. ***Track demographic change.***
    - Town Staff will update a one-page demographic dashboard that includes school enrollment data. (Annually)
    - The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee will identify measures of seasonal population and visitor demand. (By 2028)
2. ***Plan services for an aging and seasonal population.***
    - Town Staff will complete an age-friendly and seasonal service needs assessment. (By 2029)
    - The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee will coordinate aging-in-place, transportation, digital access, and social-connection efforts. (Ongoing)
    - The Selectboard will use current demographic data when reviewing services, facilities, and recreation. (Annually)
3. ***Support a stable, multigenerational population.***
    - The Selectboard will apply population and age-balance goals to housing, economic, and capital decisions. (Beginning with FY2029)
    - The Planning Board will test land-use proposals for housing opportunities for low-income households, young households, workers, and older residents. (During ordinance review)
    - The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee will review demographic trends and recommend plan changes. (Every five years)

HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

Harrison was originally home to the Pequawket group of the Abenaki people. Due to conflict with colonists, most of them had already left the area by the time the first settlers, Nathan and John Carsley, arrived in 1792 from Gorham. The town of Harrison was incorporated in 1805 after being carved out of Otisfield and Bridgton. It was named after Harrison Gray Otis of Boston, who was a principal landowner. The first townhouse was built in 1808 at the cost of $100.

Logging, mills, and farming were major occupations in Harrison's first century. A canal opened in 1830, and steamboats started carrying passengers up Sebago and Long Lake in 1847. In 1898 the narrow-gauge railroad reached Harrison, driving the early days of the tourism industry. Shorefront development started in the early 1900s in the form of both private houses and summer camps. Many hotels also sprang up, and Deertrees Theater was opened in 1936. Tourism has thus been an important part of Harrison's economy for over a century, thanks to the beautiful lakes and welcoming community.

Early Settlement

The first settlers in Harrison were brothers, John and Nathan Carsley, who came from Gorham in 1792. They built a log cabin on Maple Ridge Road in which John Carsley spent the winter alone, and he is therefore considered the first settler of Harrison. His brother Nathan returned with his pregnant wife, Susie, in the spring of 1793; descendants of Nathan still live in Harrison. Other early pioneers settled shortly thereafter in the Maple Ridge area and nearby. Maple Ridge Road was the site of the first church building, built in 1829, the first cemetery, and the first town meeting, which was held at the home of Naphtali Harmon. Several of Harrison's oldest homes are located on Maple Ridge Road.

Harrison was incorporated in 1805, and the probable locations of the early pioneers have been documented. The first sawmill was erected in the village of Mill Stream by James Sampson in 1800, providing access to crude lumber for frame timber homes. Transporting lumber was difficult in the early days due to a lack of good roads, so most of the earliest homes and barns have hand-hewn timbers in them.

Harrison's historic village, rural roads, farms, civic buildings, and cultural institutions are central to its identity. Known resources include Deertrees Theatre, the former Caswell Public Library, historic homes, cemeteries, and archaeological sensitivity near waterways. A complete townwide inventory has not been completed.

5	15	1
known National Register properties	cemeteries maintained by Parks	townwide inventory still needed

Mission: Harrison will work to protect and preserve its historical buildings and structures through a more centralized historical inventory, adaptive reuse and ordinances that will protect resources for years to come.

INVENTORY

Historic Buildings and Village Character

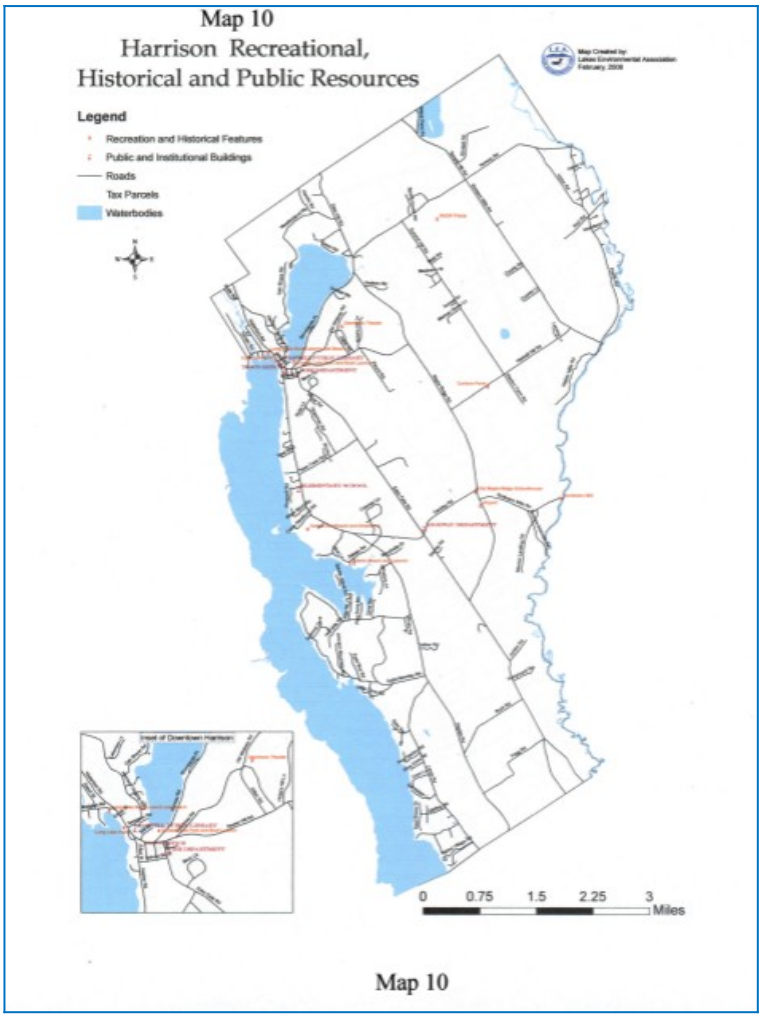
The 2023 Downtown Revitalization Plan describes a compact village with older residential, commercial, civic, and recreational resources between Crystal Lake, Long Lake, and the Bear River. Historic homes and the village street pattern contribute to a recognizable sense of place even where individual buildings are not formally designated as historic on the National Register.

Harrison has five structures known to be on the National Register of Historic Places: Lakeside Grange (2005), Deertrees Theater (1989), Ryefield Bridge (1999), the former Caswell Public Library (2005), and the Scribner Homestead (2001). Historic Scribner's Mill was originally on the National Register but was removed

following a partial collapse of the building in 1977; the mill has since been rebuilt and is now part of the Scribner's Mill museum complex, which includes several other historic buildings and is open to the public.

Other buildings and structures that have been identified as having cultural and historical significance are:

- Calvary Community Church
- 7th Day Adventist Church
- Emerson House
- Tollman House Inn
- Pierce House (Maple Ridge)
- Sampson House
- The Block
- Maple Ridge Inn
- Pierce House (Village)
- Randall House
- Dr. Rubies' house
- Spring House Summit Springs
- Maple Ridge School
- Bolsters Mills Library



Harrison does not have a standalone historic-preservation ordinance, historic district, or comprehensive design standards. The 2023 Downtown Revitalization Plan recommends further survey work, consideration of a historic overlay, sign standards, and façade support.

Cultural Institutions and Collections

The Harrison Historical Society (HHS) operates a volunteer museum on Haskell Hill Road that is open to the public and provides historical programming of local interest. HHS holds many historic artifacts and research materials, including farming and logging equipment, Harrison artifacts and signs, and genealogical records. HHS collected photographs of older houses in 1984 and included their stories in the 2005 Bicentennial History. HHS has also compiled a list of all burials

in Harrison's cemeteries, including a list of all veterans buried, both kept at the museum.

Harrison Village Library and Bolsters Mills Library provide local records, programming, and community gathering places. Deertrees Theatre remains both a cultural landmark and an active regional attraction.

The Scribner's Mill museum complex has a large collection of tools and equipment related to the logging and lumbering business. The 1847 Scribner Homestead is part of the museum complex and holds many artifacts related to a farming family in the early 20th century.

GPCOG Staff need committee members and town staff to expand on cultural institutions and collections in Harrison. Is anything missing?

Archaeological Resources

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission documented four historic archeological sites for the town.

- Twin Bridges: Early 19th Century- 20th Century farmstead
- Bolsters Mills Cannery: 19th Century industrial factory
- Long Lake Dugout: 19th Century wreck canoe
- Stephen Waterhouse Homestead: Homestead built in 1835 from town history and county map.

The Maine Historic Preservation also documented two prehistoric archeological sites, numbers 22.5 and 22.21. One is located on the north end of Long Lake, and one is located on the margins of the Crooked River valley.

Areas near bodies of water and historic travel routes may contain pre-contact or historic archaeological resources. The 2009 Comprehensive Plan identified the need for continued coordination with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, but no recent comprehensive archaeological survey has been conducted.

Existing shoreland, subdivision, and site-plan reviews can provide an early opportunity to identify projects that warrant consultation. The town should avoid publishing sensitive archaeological locations in general public maps.

TRENDS

1. **Since 2009, Downtown planning has shifted attention from individual landmarks to the character of the village as a whole.**

In the last several years, many buildings have been redeveloped or upgraded as needs have changed. These changes create a need for practical guidance that allows older buildings to remain useful and adaptable to future uses. This guidance will provide a blueprint for energy, accessibility, and aesthetic upgrades while maintaining the historical character of the building and the town as a whole.

Historic preservation can support economic development when paired with grants, code assistance, and flexible reuse. District or design standards should be developed with property owners and should focus on the features that residents most value rather than freezing the village in time.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Survey	• Respondents preferred small retail and services, home businesses, recreation uses, and other small-scale activities
Workshop findings	• Historic and downtown character received strong support, and participants reacted favorably to traditional New England building forms, active public spaces, and small-scale development • Large, repetitive, treeless subdivisions were generally viewed as inconsistent with Harrison's character
Other Input	
Significance	• This feedback should be noted when planning for future housing development to ensure any new construction aligns with historical character and architecture • Preferences support adaptive reuse and context-sensitive infill in the village

STATE REQUIREMENTS

Are historic patterns of settlement still evident in the community?

Historic patterns of settlement are evident in the community in the form of the village center as well as development along the river. Early in the 1900s, development on the shore of the lakes began and today this area is still populated by summer homes.

The decline of manufacturing and logging has changed the landscape of the town. Several backyard portable sawmills do remain, however there is no large manufacturing mill in town.

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

There are currently five buildings and structures that are on the National Registry of Historic Places and this designation provides certain protections, however Harrison has no standalone historic preservation ordinance or design standards.

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?

No, but the goals set forth in this chapter are meant to address this gap.

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

Since 2023, four older buildings in Harrison have been torn down or replaced. The 1921 Block got new paint and siding on its street-facing floor, and Lakeside Grange was recently repainted.

In a more historical sense, on May 14, 1907, a fire tore through the commercial square and destroyed the chair factory and sawmill, several stores, the Odd Fellows Block, and the Baptist Church in a single night. Losses were estimated at $75,000, with less than $20,000 covered by insurance. Some in town assumed it

was the end of the village center. However, business owners bounced back quickly and within a week the square was rebuilt.

Harrison does not have any incentives in place yet, however the town's plan is to pursue preservation, facade, accessibility, and energy-efficiency funding down the road.

GOALS & ACTIONS

1. ***Document and share historic resources in collaboration with the Harrison Historical Society***
    - Town Staff will create a shared inventory of historic buildings, landscapes, cemeteries, and collections. (By 2028)
    - Town Staff will publish non-sensitive historic information through maps, exhibits, walking materials, and the Town website. (Ongoing)
2. ***Keep historic buildings useful.***
    - The Planning Board will prepare voluntary village design and adaptive-reuse guidance. (By 2029)
    - Town Staff will pursue preservation, façade, accessibility, and energy-efficiency funding. (Ongoing)
    - The Planning Board will draft simple sign standards for Selectboard consideration. (By 2029)
3. ***Protect Harrison's highest-priority historic places.***
    - The Selectboard will commission a professional historic and archaeological survey. (2030–2031)
    - The Planning Board will draft a village-character or historic overlay with affected property owners. (After the survey)
    - The Selectboard will advance an ordinance, district, or National Register nomination after cost and public review.

CURRENT LAND USE

INTRODUCTION

Land use planning has a long history in Maine. Municipalities began preparing comprehensive plans in the early 1900s, and since 1943 state law has recognized comprehensive planning as the foundation for local zoning.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, Maine began taking a more active statewide role in land use in response to concerns that certain types of development could damage natural resources and affect surrounding communities. In 1971, Maine adopted the Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act, requiring municipalities to regulate development adjacent to critical water resources. The law was intended to protect water, wildlife, and open space by regulating land uses and the placement of structures within shoreland areas.

While the State establishes minimum protections and directly reviews certain larger developments and environmentally sensitive areas, Municipalities continue to retain substantial responsibility for local land use decisions. In this Plan, land use refers to the ways a community guides where and how development occurs. Zoning ordinances are the most familiar form of land use regulation, but communities may also use subdivision standards, site plan review, building requirements, environmental protections, road standards, and other development controls.

Harrison has relatively limited townwide land use regulations. State-required shoreland zoning applies within designated shoreland areas, while local ordinances regulate subdivisions, site plans, floodplains, aquifer protection, roads, buildings, towers, and related development issues. Outside these specific regulatory systems, Harrison does not have townwide zoning districts that determine where ordinary residential, commercial, or industrial uses may be located. As a result, development has occurred in a more dispersed and less predictable pattern than in communities with broader zoning controls.

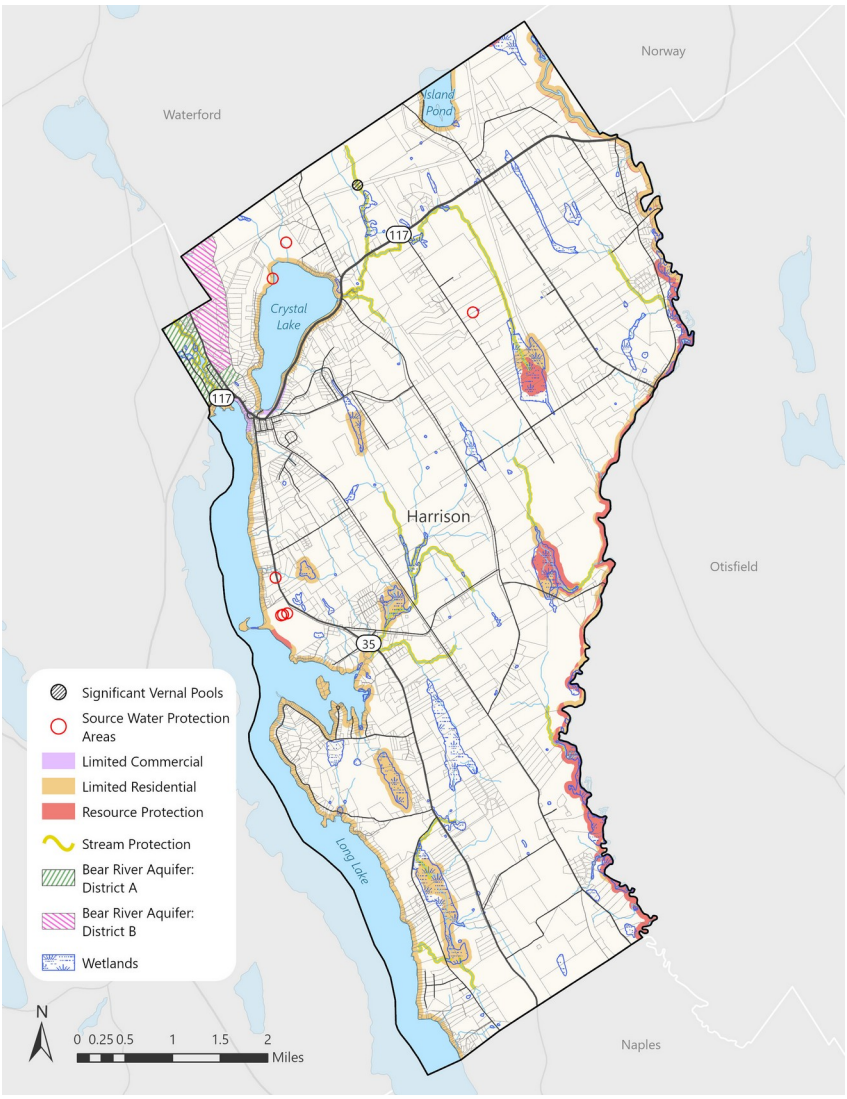
9 Land Use Ordinances	**0** Zoning Districts	**July 14th, 2020** Harrison adopted site plan and subdivision ordinances

INVENTORY & STATE REQUIREMENTS

Existing Land Use Ordinances

<u>State Requirement</u>: Provide a brief description of existing land use regulations and other tools utilized to manage land use, including shoreland zoning, floodplain management, subdivision, site plan review, and zoning ordinances.

Harrison's natural resource protections are built around three principal land use ordinances: the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, the Bear River Aquifer Protection Ordinance, and the Floodplain Management Ordinance. Together, they reflect the Town's longstanding effort to protect water resources and environmentally sensitive areas while allowing development to occur under defined standards.



Shoreline Zoning

The Shoreland Zoning Ordinance has been part of Harrison's land use framework since 1974 and was most recently updated in 2020. It regulates development in areas near lakes, rivers, streams, and other protected waters, where poorly planned development can have a direct effect on water quality, wildlife habitat, and the character of the shoreline. The ordinance establishes standards for uses, lot dimensions, vegetation clearing, structures, and other activities within these areas.

Groundwater protection is addressed through the Bear River Aquifer Protection Ordinance which regulates uses that could threaten groundwater quality. This is particularly important in Harrison, where public water infrastructure is limited and many homes and businesses rely on private wells.

The Town's Floodplain Management Ordinance, most recently adopted in 2024, adds another layer of protection by regulating development in mapped flood-hazard areas. These standards are intended to reduce risks to people and property while helping Harrison remain eligible for federal floodplain management and insurance programs.

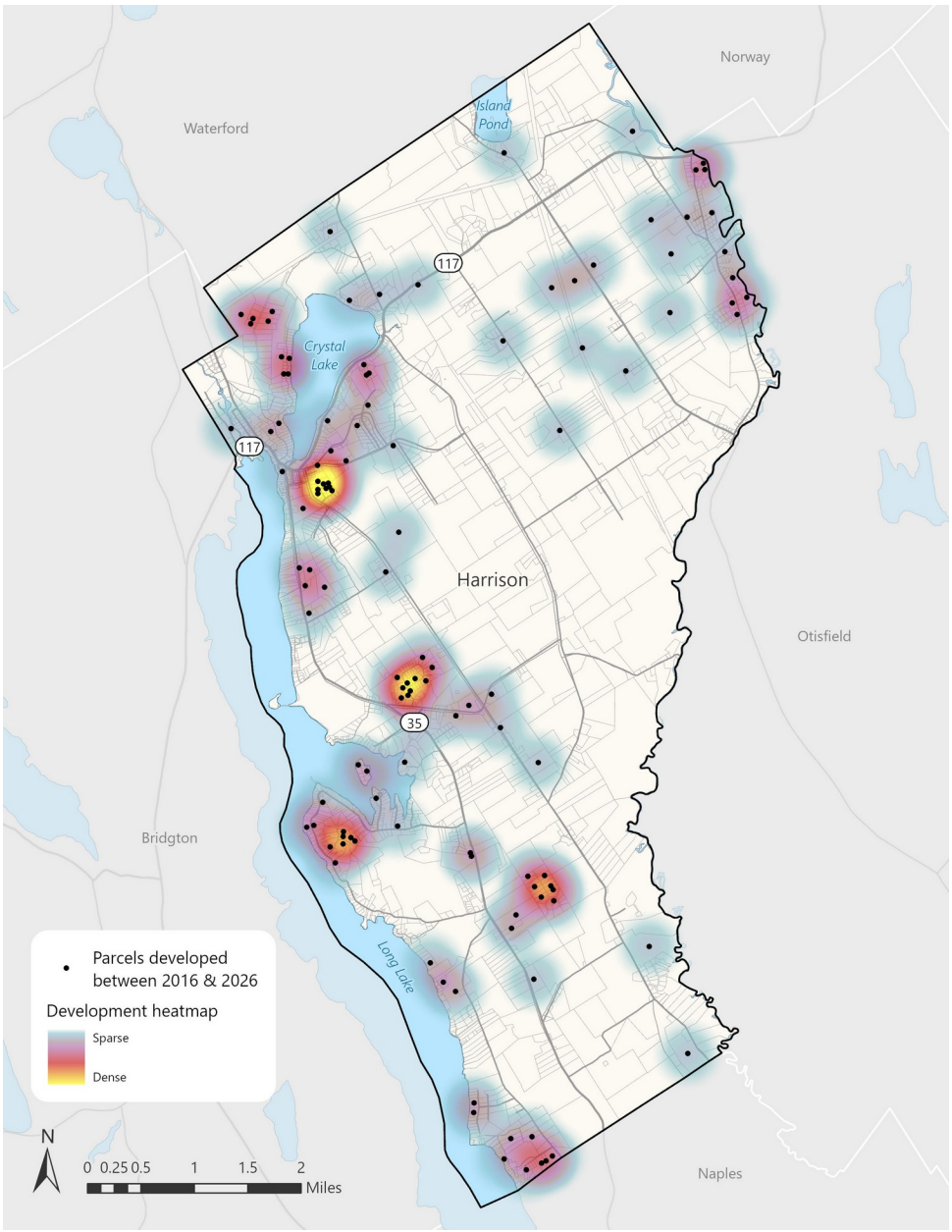
Taken together, these ordinances form an important part of Harrison's approach to land use. They do not regulate development townwide but instead focus on specific areas where natural resource protection and public safety concerns are greatest.

The remaining land use ordinances in Harrison focus primarily on how development is reviewed and constructed in town. The Site Plan Review Ordinance applies to new buildings or facilities, major remodeling, and related site changes. Single-family homes, duplexes, and their accessory uses are exempt from this process. The ordinance provides a process for evaluating the potential effects of proposed development on surrounding properties, infrastructure, traffic, natural resources, and community character. It also establishes performance standards intended to ensure that development is designed and carried out in a way that is compatible with its surroundings.

The Subdivision Ordinance governs the division of land for development. It establishes procedures and standards for reviewing subdivisions, including lot layout, roads, utilities, natural resources, open space, and other improvements associated with creating new lots.

Harrison's Building Permit Requirements Ordinance and Building Code Ordinance work together to regulate construction. This ordinance establishes when a permit is required and outlines the basic procedures and requirements for construction and development, while the Building Code Ordinance sets building and energy standards that apply to construction in town.

Development Heat Map



The Tower Ordinance and New Road Construction Ordinance are narrower in scope. The Tower Ordinance regulates the location, construction, and modification of telecommunications towers and related facilities. The New Road Construction Ordinance establishes design and construction standards for new roads, including requirements intended to provide safe and adequate access.

Taken together, these ordinances provide the Town with a framework for reviewing development proposals and ensuring that new construction meets basic standards for safety, infrastructure, site design, and compatibility with surrounding areas.

Existing Land Use Ordinances			
Ordinance Name	**Original Adoption**	**Current Posted Version**	**Purpose**
Shoreland Zoning Ordinance	June 26, 1974	July 14, 2020	Regulates development within designated shoreland areas.
Building Permit Requirements Ordinance	March 5, 1980	June 10, 2026	Establishes when building permits are required and basic permitting procedures.
Bear River Aquifer Protection Ordinance	June 25, 1988	June 10, 2009	Protects groundwater within the Bear River Aquifer area.
New Road Construction Ordinance	June 20, 1992	June 20, 1992	Establishes standards for the design and construction of new roads.
Subdivision Ordinance	June 12, 1996	July 14, 2020	Regulates the division of land and review of subdivisions.
Tower Ordinance	June 9, 1999	June 9, 1999	Regulates telecommunications towers and related facilities.
Building Code Ordinance	June 11, 2019	June 11, 2019	Establishes applicable building and energy-code standards.

Existing Land Use Ordinances			
Ordinance Name	**Original Adoption**	**Current Posted Version**	**Purpose**
Site Plan Review Ordinance	Not stated in current posted ordinance	July 14, 2020	Establishes review requirements and performance standards for certain development projects.
Floodplain Management Ordinance	June 12, 2024*	June 20, 2024	Regulates development within mapped flood-hazard areas.

***State Requirement*: Are floodplains adequately identified and protected? Does the community participate in the National Flood Insurance Program? If not, should it? If so, is the floodplain management ordinance up to date and consistently enforced? Is the floodplain management ordinance consistent with state and federal standards?**

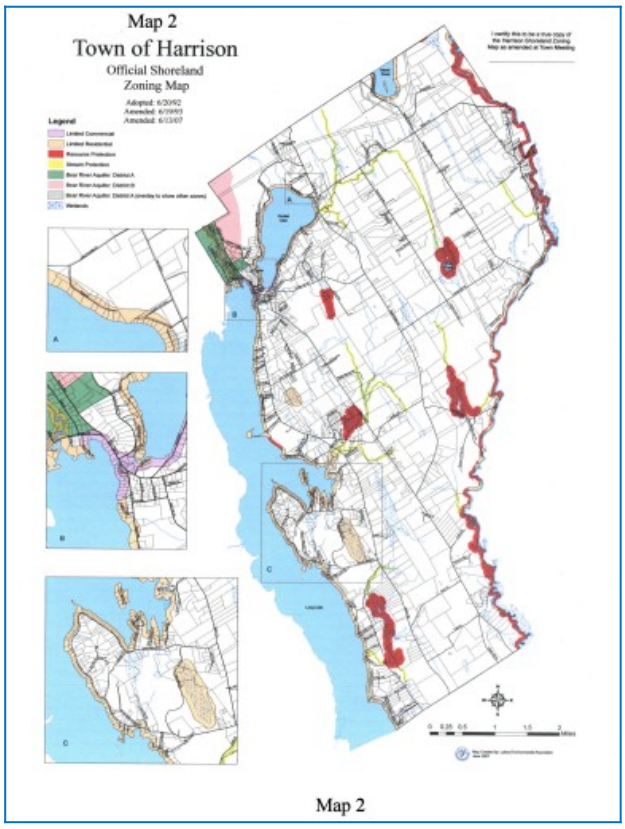
Harrison participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) under FEMA Community Identification Number 230049. The Town's regulated flood-hazard areas are identified by the FEMA Flood Insurance Study for Cumberland County and accompanying Flood Insurance Rate Maps effective June 20, 2024. These maps identify Special Flood Hazard Areas in Harrison, including Zones A and AE. Harrison's Floodplain Management Ordinance adopts the current FEMA study and maps by reference and establishes permitting and development standards for construction and other activities within mapped flood-hazard areas.

***State Requirement*: What regulatory and non-regulatory measures would help promote development of a character, and in locations that are consistent with the community's vision?**

Harrison could consider a simple zoning framework based on the Future Land Use Plan to provide clearer expectations about where different types and intensities of development are appropriate. Existing subdivision and site plan standards could also be updated to better address issues such as buffering, access,

open space, stormwater, landscaping, and compatibility with surrounding uses. These regulatory tools could be complemented by non-regulatory approaches, including conservation easements, landowner incentives, current-use taxation, and targeted public investments in roads, utilities, sidewalks, and other infrastructure. Together, these measures could help guide growth to suitable locations, protect rural and natural areas, and support the development patterns identified through Harrison's public workshops and surveys.

<u>State Requirement</u>: An existing land use map, by land use classification (such as mixed-use, residential, commercial, institutional, industrial, agricultural, commercial forests, marine, park/recreational, conserved, and undeveloped land).



The Town of Harrison does not have a townwide zoning ordinance and instead regulates land use through a collection of nine separate ordinances. Harrison's Official Shoreland Zoning Map shows the locations of the state-mandated shoreland zoning districts as well as the Bear River Aquifer Protection Area. The Bear River Aquifer Protection Ordinance identifies Aquifer Protection Districts A and B, both of which are shown on the Shoreland Zoning Map.

If Harrison chooses to establish townwide zoning in the future, the zoning ordinance would be accompanied by a zoning map identifying the location and boundaries of each district and the types and intensity of development allowed within them

<u>State Requirement</u>: A summary of current lot dimensional standards.

Harrison's basic townwide dimensional requirements are established primarily through the Building Permit Requirements Ordinance. For most newer lots, the ordinance requires a minimum lot area of 40,000 square feet, 150 feet of road

frontage, a 50-foot setback from public ways, 10-foot side and rear setbacks, and a maximum residential building height of 35 feet, although exemptions apply to certain older lots. Subdivisions are subject to additional standards, including 20-foot side and rear setbacks and limits on lot configuration, as well as design guidelines addressing roadside buffers, open space, scenic ridgelines, and natural resources. The Site Plan Review Ordinance does not establish a separate townwide schedule of lot size or building setbacks. Instead, it regulates the physical design of development through standards for parking, driveways and entrances, lighting, buffering, and circulation. As a result, Harrison has a common baseline for lot size, frontage, setbacks, and residential building height, while additional dimensional requirements vary according to the type and location of development and the particular ordinances that apply.

Existing Development Pattern

The Village contains Harrison's most compact mix of homes, businesses, civic uses, parks, and public water service. The 2023 Downtown Revitalization Action Plan focuses on a 263-acre Village study area containing 211 parcels within a walkable span of approximately 0.8 mile. The plan was developed to strengthen Harrison's traditional Village center, coordinate future public and private investment, and position the Town to compete for state and federal downtown revitalization funding.

Outside the Village, much of Harrison remains rural and forested, with development generally following Route 117, Route 35, and lake shorelines.

Administration and Development Activity

Recent permit activity indicates increased development activity in Harrison. In 2024, the Town issued 152 building permits and 111 plumbing permits, completed 428 inspections, and recorded 34 new homes. The following reporting year included 172 building permits, 131 plumbing permits, 581 inspections, and 37 new homes. Maintaining a consistent permit database would allow the Town to better track where development is occurring and what types of development are being built.

Harrison does not currently have townwide zoning, so the Comprehensive Plan provides the policy foundation for any future district-based land use ordinance. The plan itself does not rezone property. Instead, it identifies a community-supported future land use pattern and establishes a framework for later

ordinance development, public review, and voter consideration. Future land use ordinances should be coordinated with the Comprehensive Plan and reviewed periodically to ensure they remain aligned with the Town's long-term goals.

***State Requirement*: Is the community's administrative capacity adequate to manage its land use regulation program, including planning board and code enforcement officer?**

Harrison currently administers its land use regulations through the Code Enforcement Office and Planning Board. Recent activity indicates a substantial ongoing workload. During the April 2024–March 2025 reporting period, the Code Enforcement Office issued 172 building permits and 131 plumbing permits, conducted 581 inspections, and assisted 866 walk-in customers; 37 new homes were permitted during the same period. These responsibilities are supplemented by ordinance enforcement, property research, public inquiries, and assistance to applicants. The Planning Board also meets regularly, with additional workshops, public hearings, special meetings, and site walks as needed to review subdivisions, site plans, and other development matters.

The Town has historically used both a Code Enforcement Officer and an Assistant Code Enforcement Officer, although staffing has changed in recent years. Harrison provides permit forms, ordinances, Planning Board records, and other land-use information online, but permit and development information is not currently maintained in a publicly accessible parcel-based system that allows development patterns to be readily tracked over time. As Harrison considers changes to its land-use regulations, including possible townwide zoning, the Town should evaluate whether existing staffing and recordkeeping systems are sufficient to administer additional requirements efficiently and consistently.

***State Requirement*: Is most of the recent development occurring: lot by lot; in subdivisions; or in planned developments? Is recent development consistent with the community's vision?**

Available Code Enforcement, Town, and Planning Board records indicate that recent residential development in Harrison has been dominated by individual homes rather than multifamily projects. From April 2018 through March 2025, the Town reported 184 permits categorized as "new homes," along with at least 14 mobile homes and 8 modular homes during years when those categories were reported separately. Subdivision activity also continues to create new residential

lots, but available records do not show how many new homes are built on subdivision lots versus existing lots.

Overall, Harrison's recent development pattern remains primarily low-density and residential. Duplexes, accessory dwelling units, and multifamily housing appear to represent a smaller share of new development, although they are not consistently tracked as separate categories. As a result, the available data does not provide a clear picture of whether recent housing development is meeting residents' stated preference for smaller, more affordable year-round housing. More consistent permit tracking would allow the Town to better monitor development trends and evaluate whether future growth is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

***State Requirement*: A description or map identifying the location of lots and primary structures created within the last ten years. Include residential, institutional, commercial, and industrial development.**

***State Requirement*: Estimate the minimum amount of land needed to accommodate projected residential, institutional, commercial, or industrial development at least ten (10) years into the future.**

Based on projected population change and declining household size, Harrison is estimated to need about 63 additional owner-occupied homes and 15 to 20 rental units. If all were developed as single-family homes under the current Building Permit Requirements Ordinance, they would require roughly 77 acres. Other housing types could accommodate the same number of units on less land. Harrison has ample undeveloped land to accommodate this level of growth.

TRENDS

1. **Since 2009, several changes to Maine law have affected how municipalities plan for and regulate development.**

State housing laws, including LD 2003 and subsequent amendments, have expanded opportunities for accessory dwelling units, multiple dwelling units, and affordable housing. More recent updates to Maine's Growth Management Act also reinforce the need for comprehensive plans and land use.

2. **Harrison has updated its subdivision, site plan, shoreland, floodplain, building, and permitting requirements.**

These changes have strengthened review of specific types of development, but they do not address the broader townwide question of where different uses and levels of development are most appropriate.

That broader question is especially important in a community without townwide zoning districts. Harrison currently relies primarily on site-level standards once a particular use is proposed. Looking ahead, the Town should consider whether a simple zoning framework could provide greater predictability for property owners and neighbors, protect rural and natural areas, and guide more intensive development toward locations that are better suited to accommodate it. Any such system should avoid unnecessary complexity or bureaucracy. Zoning that is too restrictive or poorly calibrated could limit housing opportunities or create barriers to appropriate development, making careful mapping, testing, and broad public participation essential during the ordinance-development process.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Survey	• 72.4% of respondents supported directing development to designated areas
Workshop findings	• More participants identified growth areas than non-growth areas, accounting for 57% of the 87 points identified in the commercial mapping activity • These points were concentrated in the village center and along the Rt 117 corridor and to a lesser extent the Rt 35 corridor
Other Input	N/A
Significance	• Suggests support for a measured approach to growth that provides opportunities for new development while maintaining the scale, character, and natural features residents value.

GOALS & ACTIONS

1. **Clarify and monitor existing land-use requirements.**
    - Town Staff will prepare and publish a plain-language guide to Harrison's land-use and development requirements. (By 2027)
    - Town Staff will maintain a digital permit log that tracks development by location, use, and housing type. (Ongoing)
    - The Planning Board will review development activity each year to identify recurring issues, regulatory gaps, or areas where standards may need to be updated. (Annually)
2. **Strengthen and modernize townwide development standards.**
    - The Planning Board will review and update subdivision standards addressing open space, stormwater, road design, infrastructure, and long-term maintenance responsibilities. (2027–2028)
    - The Planning Board will review and update site plan standards addressing buffering, lighting, signage, access, landscaping, water-resource protection, and compatibility with surrounding development. (2027–2029)
    - Town Staff will establish a coordinated preapplication process for development proposals that require review under multiple Town ordinances or by multiple boards or officials. (By 2027)

4. RECREATION AND TOWN-OWNED LAND

INTRODUCTION

As a municipality located in Maine's "lakes region", recreation and town-owned land is an important part of Harrison. People come from all over to experience the recreational amenities offered in Harrison, and residents rely on access to other spaces such as libraries and trails year-round.

Lakes, parks, trails, fields, beaches, libraries, and civic spaces provide year-round benefits and help define Harrison as both a hometown and a destination. The town manages several high-use properties with a small staff and substantial volunteer support. Harrison's recreational resources could become strained in the future if the population were to grow without matching the growth with increased investments in staff and infrastructure.

Mission: Utilize long-term planning to maintain or improve access to recreational amenities and open space resources while protecting water quality and neighborhood character.

5 downtown public spaces identified	**135 acres** size of RADR property	**93** summer recreation participants in 2025

INVENTORY

GPCOG Staff need committee members and town staff to expand on park/trail/water access in Harrison. Is anything missing?

Parks and Water Access

Town recreation assets include Crystal Lake Park and beach, Long Lake Park, public boat launches, the RADR Sports Complex and Field of Dreams, playgrounds, fields, and downtown green spaces. Additionally, Western Foot Hills Land Trust and Loon Echo Land trust have properties in town that are open to the public. The 2023 Downtown Revitalization Plan identified five public spaces in or near the village and opportunities for better connections, docks, restrooms, signs, landscaping, and year-round use.

The Parks Department also maintains 15 cemeteries and a wide range of seasonal facilities. Recent work included dam gates, docks, railings, picnic tables, trees, swim buoys, and beach facilities. Water testing at the public beach has remained an operating priority.

Programs and Community Partners

The Recreation Department has provided swimming lessons, lifeguarding, youth and adult sports, community events, senior lunches, and winter programs. The 2024 Annual Report shows that summer program participation increased by 20 people from the previous year. Libraries, Deertrees Theatre, local organizations, volunteers, and regional partners expand the range of cultural and recreational opportunities. Other local offerings include Burgandar Live-Action Role Play, Maine Adaptive Sports and Recreation, and Harrison Friendly Riders.

Camp Newfound and Camp Owatonna, Camp Pinecliffe, and Vacationland Campground all operate on or near Long Lake, each large enough to hold its own public water supply permit through the Maine Drinking Water Program. These camps represent a distinct category of recreational land use in Harrison, serving a seasonal, transient population rather than year-round residents, and contributing to the same recreation-driven economy that shapes the rest of this chapter. Their presence also means a meaningful share of Harrison's summer

population moves through private recreational institutions that the town does not manage directly, a pattern worth factoring into any future assessment of recreational capacity or seasonal demand.

Harrison Village Library reported 9,782 circulated items, 6,809 visits, and 2,355 program participants for its 2023–2024 reporting year. Bolsters Mills Library is volunteer-run in a former two-room school and provides Wi-Fi, computers, and local collections despite limited building infrastructure.

Town-Owned Land and Stewardship

The RADR property is approximately 135 acres and lies north of the village. The town is actively working with partners to create trails on RADR. Other town-owned parcels serve municipal, public works, water-access, conservation, and recreation functions. A single geospatial inventory of ownership, deed restrictions, maintenance responsibility, accessibility, and future possibilities has yet to be conducted.

GPCOG staff need more info on RADR and what it is and what it offers

TRENDS

Participation, seasonal demand, and the age of facilities are increasing maintenance and staffing needs. Public access can also create shoreline erosion, parking, noise, and wake and water-quality concerns if sites are not designed and managed well.

Recreational amenities are directly tied to Harrison's tax base and economic stability. Lakefront parcels account for nearly half of the town's total valuation, which means the condition of Crystal Lake, Long Lake, and the trails and parks that surround them has a direct bearing on property values townwide, not just on the experience of residents and visitors who use them. Investment in recreation, water quality, and public access should therefore be understood as an investment in the town's fiscal foundation.

The Downtown Plan and Capital Improvement Plan create opportunities to coordinate recreation investment with walking routes, village revitalization,

public restrooms, shoreline improvements, and grants. Climate conditions may shorten some winter activities and increase demand for shade, cooling, and shoulder-season programming.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Survey	• Survey responses placed water quality and open space above all other overall priorities
Workshop findings	• Participants allocated about 19% of their investment exercise dollars to recreation, second only to open space and habitat • Public bathrooms, trails, parks, clean water, and family activities received strong support
Other Input	In a 2026 survey of kids in Harrison, participants were asked for their ideas on new or additional recreational opportunities in Harrison. The top three picks were an adventure park, ice fishing derby and a "Bring Back the Old Home Days" event. When asked "what they want to see more of in town" the top three choices were farms with animals, stores and restaurants.
Significance	Recreation improvements should be designed as stewardship projects as well as amenities.

STATE REQUIREMENTS

Will existing recreational facilities and programs in the community and region accommodate projected growth or changes in age groups in your community?

Harrison's recreation programming already serves both ends of the age spectrum, from youth and adult sports to senior lunches, but the town's population is aging while school-age enrollment has fallen 27 percent since 2016. If population growth resumes without matching investment in staff and infrastructure, existing facilities and programs could become strained, particularly those serving the growing share of older residents who are likely to rely more heavily on accessible, low-impact recreation than on youth sports infrastructure.

Is there a need for certain types of services or facilities or to upgrade or enlarge present facilities to either add capacity or make them more usable?

The 2023 Downtown Revitalization Plan identified five public spaces in or near the village needing better connections, docks, restrooms, signage, landscaping, and year-round usability.

The beach area at the Long Lake Boat launch is small and lacks sand. The town will consider expanding this area to make the area more usable and enjoyable for visitors and residents looking to swim in the summer.

Are important tracts of open space commonly used for recreation publicly-owned or otherwise permanently conserved?

The RADR property, roughly 135 acres north of the village, is town-owned. Twin Bridges Preserve and Crooked River Forest, both significant trail networks along the Crooked River, are permanently conserved through Western Foothills Land Trust and Loon Echo Land Trust, in partnership with the Maine Bureau of Parks and Land, the Nature Conservancy, and others.

The Long Lake Boat Launch is publicly owned as well as the Crystal Lake Boat Launch which are popular summer spots for swimming and boating.

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, either outright or through conservation easements?

Harrison has active, ongoing partnerships with Western Foothills Land Trust and Loon Echo Land Trust, but no dedicated open space fund.

Does the public have access to each of the community's significant water bodies?

There are boat launches and swimming areas at both Long Lake and Crystal Lake, but the beach area at Long Lake, while popular, is very small and lacks sand. The town manager highlighted this as an area that could be improved.

Are recreational trails in the community adequately maintained? Are there use conflicts on these trails?

Twin Bridges Preserve and Crooked River Forest are actively managed by Western Foothills Land Trust and Loon Echo Land Trust, in partnership with the Maine Bureau of Parks and Land and the Nature Conservancy. There are no known conflicts.

Is traditional access to private lands being restricted?

Harrison follows Maine law when it comes to private land.

Harrison Town Staff to provide an answer.

GOALS & ACTIONS

1. ***Maintain safe, welcoming and accessible recreation assets.***
    - Town Staff will maintain an inventory, condition rating, and maintenance schedule for recreation sites and equipment. (Annually)
    - Town Staff will publish park and launch hours, rules, access, parking, safety, and accessibility information. (Before each season)
    - Town Staff will track participation, unmet demand, seasonal use, and program costs. (Annually)
    - *State required action: Town Staff will provide landowners with educational materials on Maine's recreational-use liability law to encourage continued public access to private land.*
2. ***Improve access and year-round recreation.***
    - The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee will prepare a trail and active recreation plan. (2028–2030)
    - Town Staff will improve accessibility, restroom, wayfinding, and waterfront improvements at priority sites. (2028–2032)
    - Town Staff will expand recreation partnerships with schools, libraries, lake groups, land trusts, existing trail connections, and nearby towns. (Ongoing)
3. ***Guide major recreation and land investments.***
    - The Selectboard will commission master plans and cost estimates for RADR, downtown public spaces, and major waterfront facilities. (Before major expansion)
    - Town Staff will pursue grants, donations, and other outside funding for priority recreation projects, including infrastructure improvements to the Bolsters Mills Library. (Ongoing)
    - The Selectboard will evaluate land acquisition, easements, and disposition using adopted public-benefit criteria. (As proposed)

WATER RESOURCES & FRESHWATER ACCESS

INTRODUCTION

Clean water is Harrison's defining natural and economic asset. The town's lakes, rivers and groundwater sustain its environment and economy while shaping its character and quality of life. Growth and changing environmental conditions place increasing pressure on these resources, making their long-term protection essential.

Harrison is an inland municipality with no tidal waters, marine fisheries, commercial harbors, or other coastal marine resources, so the state's marine resources planning topic does not apply to Harrison in its coastal sense (see *Applicability*, below). Still, Harrison manages comparable freshwater access and navigation issues through mooring rules, boat launches, water-quality programs, and state partnerships as part of its broader water resources stewardship.



Water Resources in Harrison

Mission: Preserve Harrison's clean water quality amid environmental and climate change, and promote responsible freshwater access, through seasonal education, designated leadership, and responsible investment.

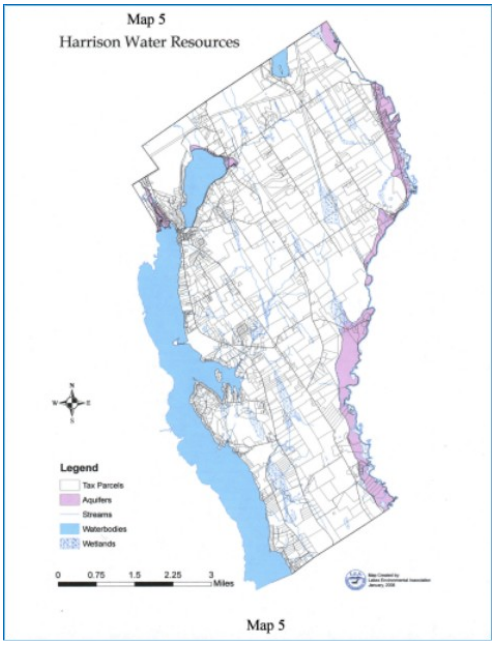
86.3% survey respondents who ranked water quality in their top three priorities	**50%** of the town's tax base derived from lakefront parcels	**2+** public boat launches on Long Lake and Crystal Lake

INVENTORY

Applicability

The state comprehensive-planning topic of marine resources addresses coastal access, water-dependent uses, commercial fishing, and harbor management. Harrison has none of these marine conditions and has no tidal waters. This topic is therefore not applicable to Harrison. Freshwater navigation and access — the practical equivalent for an inland lakes community — is addressed below; freshwater fisheries and habitat are addressed in the Natural Resources chapter.

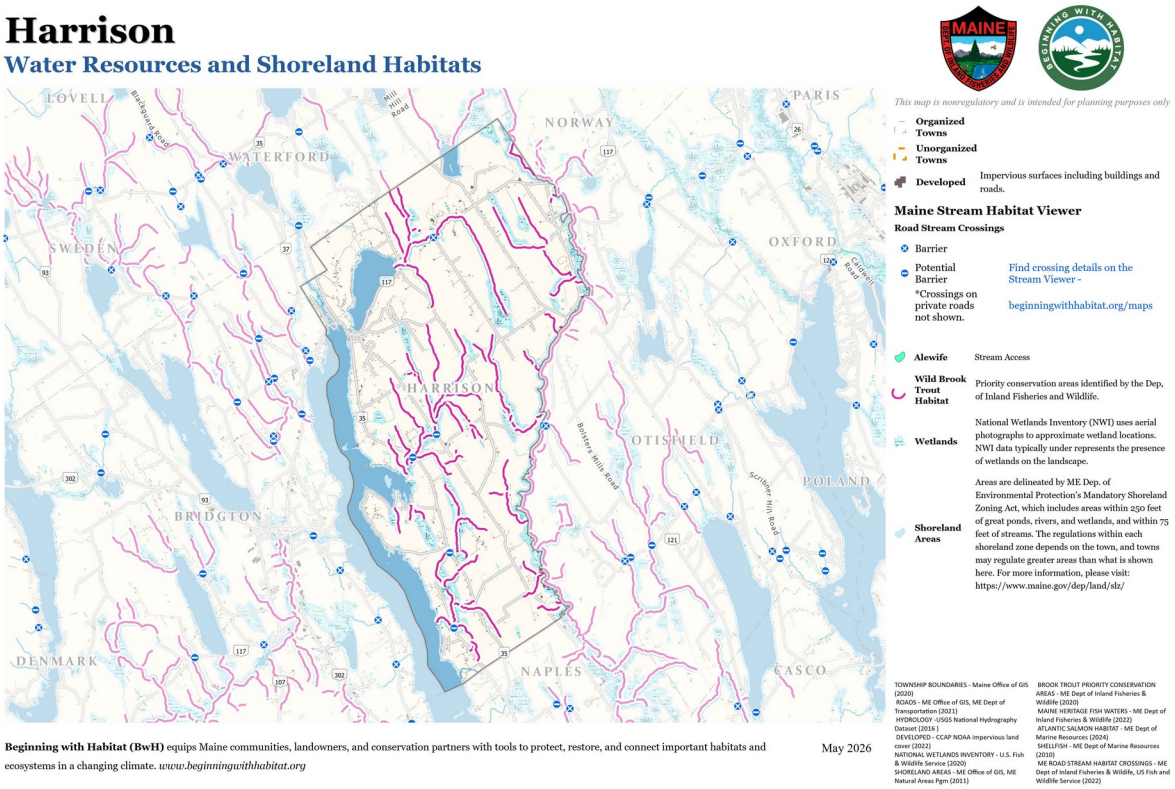
Lakes, Ponds, Rivers, and Wetlands



Long Lake and Crystal Lake frame the village and connect Harrison to the broader Sebago and Presumpscot watersheds. Island Pond, Pierce Pond, Crooked River, Mill Stream, wetlands, and smaller tributaries provide additional habitat and watershed functions. Planning materials estimate that lakefront parcels account for nearly half of the town's tax base, which makes water quality a fiscal concern as well as an environmental one.

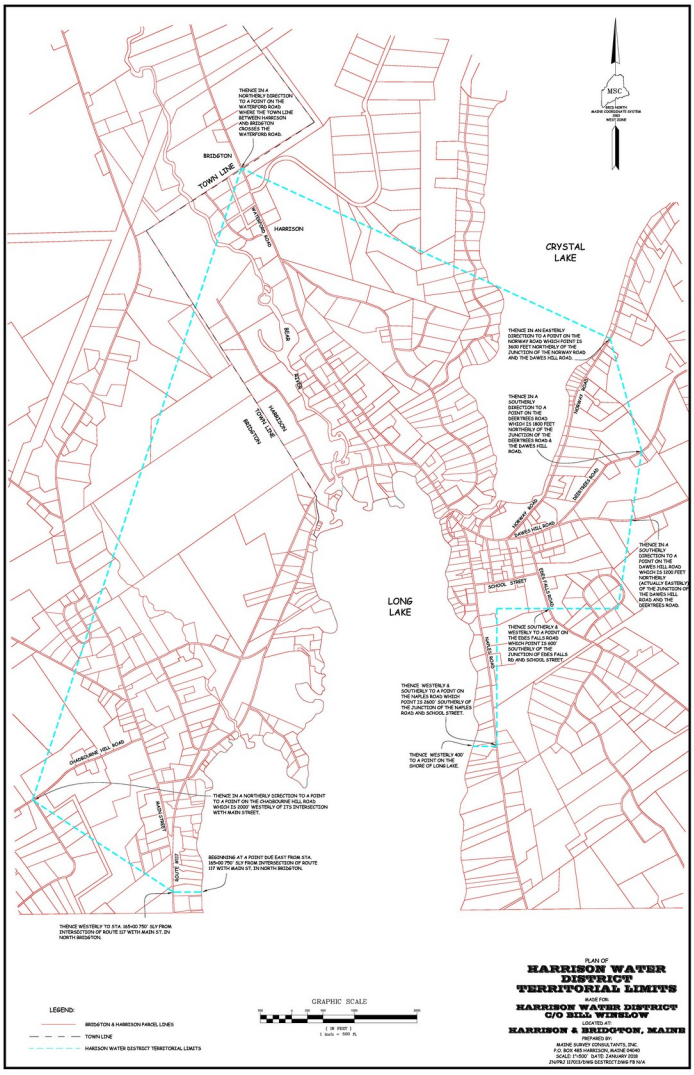
Lakes Environmental Association monitors local waters. Island Pond has shown increasing phosphorus and declining clarity, and 2026 workshop materials identify wake-

related shoreline undercutting. Long-term trends and lake-specific thresholds should be confirmed directly with monitoring partners.

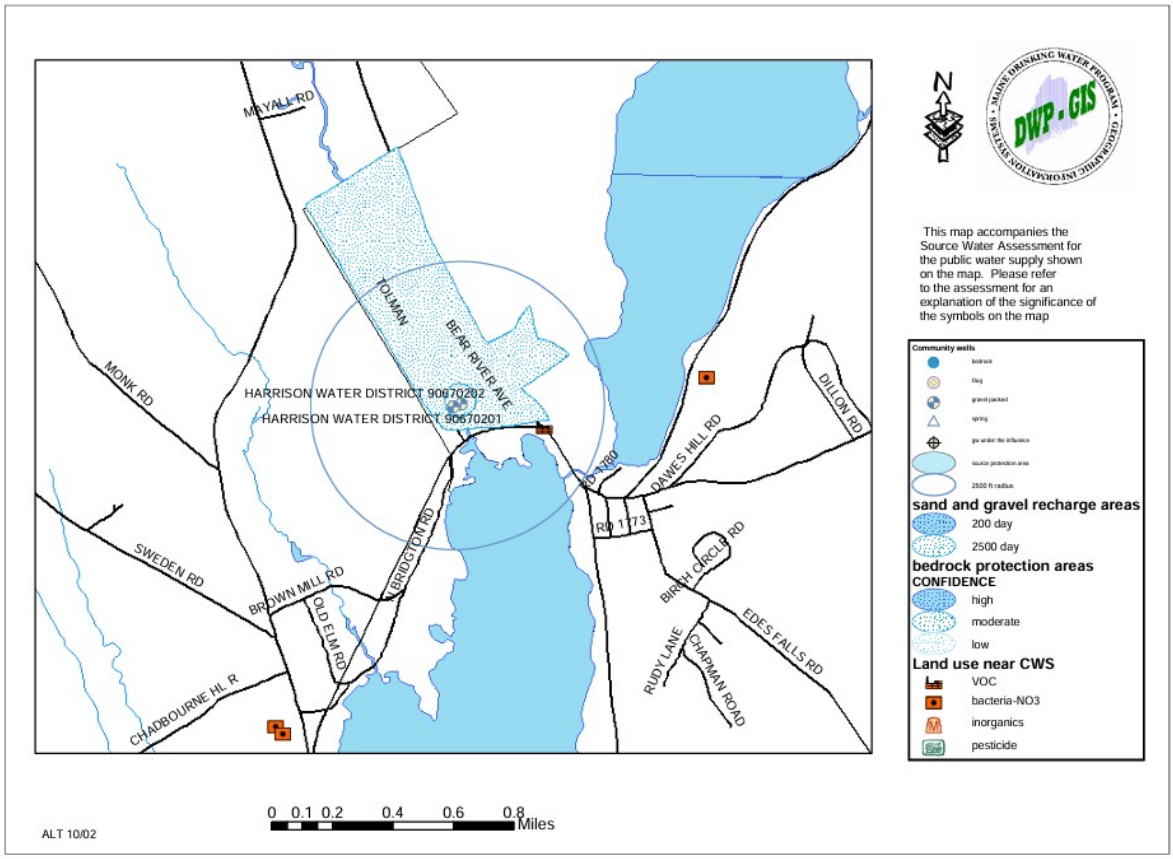


Groundwater and Drinking Water

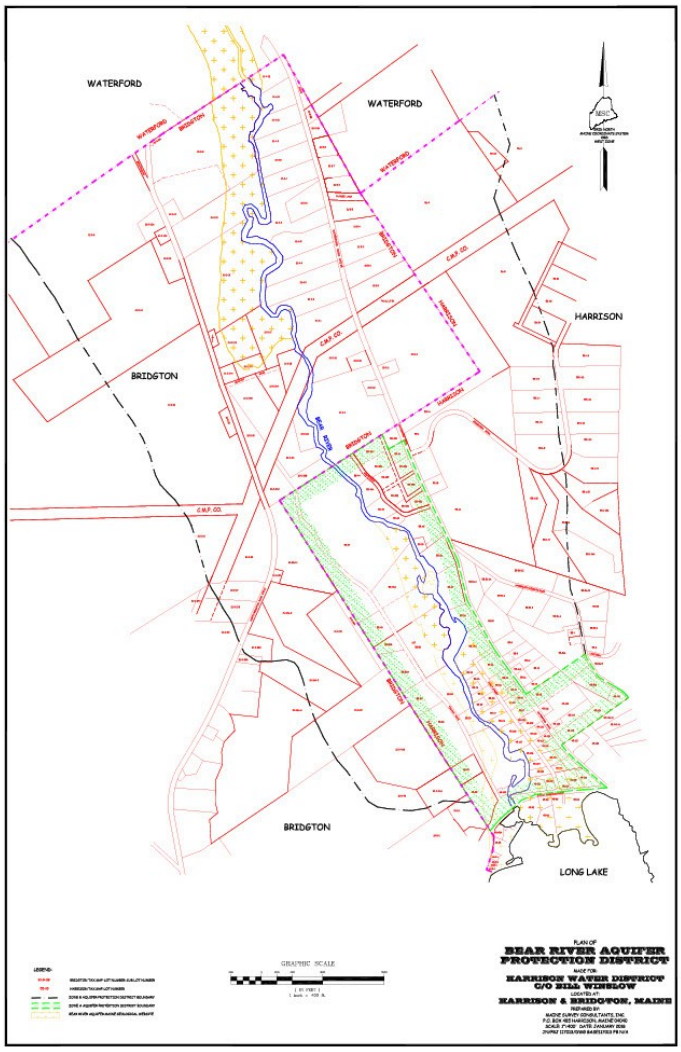
Private wells and septic systems serve most properties. The Harrison Water District provides public water to portions of Harrison and North Bridgton and reports on routine testing and system improvements. The Bear River Aquifer Protection Ordinance limits specified risks in a mapped groundwater resource area.



Harrison Water District Territorial Limits



Community Source Water Protection Map



Bear River Aquifer Protection District



Summit Spring in Harrison is a very unusual and historically important water source. The water comes from a rare, high-altitude, naturally free-flowing spring bottled without disinfection. The spring produces a flow of approximately 3.5 million gallons per year, according to the Portland Press Herald.

Public water does not eliminate wastewater constraints. The village has no municipal sewer, and most growth depends on site soils, private systems, or limited shared disposal arrangements.

Table: Harrison Public Water Systems

System Name	PWS ID	Type	Source Wells / Notes
Harrison Water District	ME0090670	Community	Two gravel wells (90670201, 90670202); serves portions of Harrison and North Bridgton
MSAD 17 Harrison Elementary School	ME0000293	Non-Transient, Non-Community	One bedrock well (293101)

System Name	PWS ID	Type	Source Wells / Notes
Camp Newfound/Owatonna	ME0000798	Non-Community	Multiple bedrock wells (798102, 798103 active; 798101, 798104, 798105 inactive; 798106, 798107 no assessment on file)
Camp Pinecliffe	ME0000800	Non-Community	One bedrock well (800101)
Vacationland Campground	ME0007307	Non-Community	One bedrock well (7307101)
Camp Laughing Grass	ME0092797	Non-Community	No source water assessment on file
Summit Spring Water Inc	ME0093430	Bottled Water/Vendor	No source water assessment on file; source ID 93430601

Source: Maine Drinking Water Program, Spring 2026 PWS Data by Town — Harrison, Comprehensive Plan Data Portal.

PWS Type key: C = Community (serves the general public year-round); NTNC = Non-Transient, Non-Community (same people regularly, e.g. a school); NC = Non-Community (transient users, e.g. a campground); NP = Bottled Water/Vendor.

Freshwater Navigation and Access

Long Lake and Crystal Lake support boating, paddling, fishing, swimming, and winter activities such as ice fishing, ice hockey, and snowmobiling. The town maintains public access facilities and updated its mooring regulations in 2026. State boating law, inland fisheries rules, shoreland zoning, and local park rules also apply.

GPCOG Staff need committee members and town staff to expand on freshwater access in Harrison. Is anything missing?

Launch capacity, parking, wakes, shoreline erosion, safety, and invasive aquatic species require coordination between the town, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Maine Department of Environmental Protection, lake associations, and users.

Existing Protection

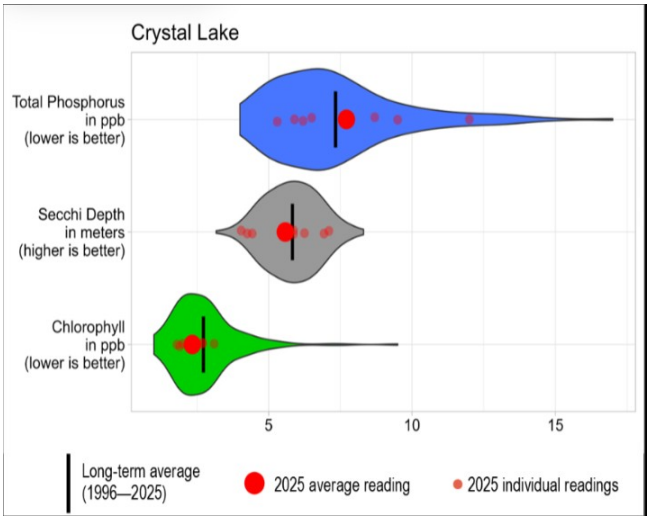
Shoreland zoning, floodplain management, site-plan review, subdivision review, plumbing and septic standards form the local protection framework. State wetland, stormwater, erosion, and natural resources laws also apply. Enforcement capacity, consistent mapping, and coordination across ordinances are as important as the written standards and should be strengthened.

TRENDS

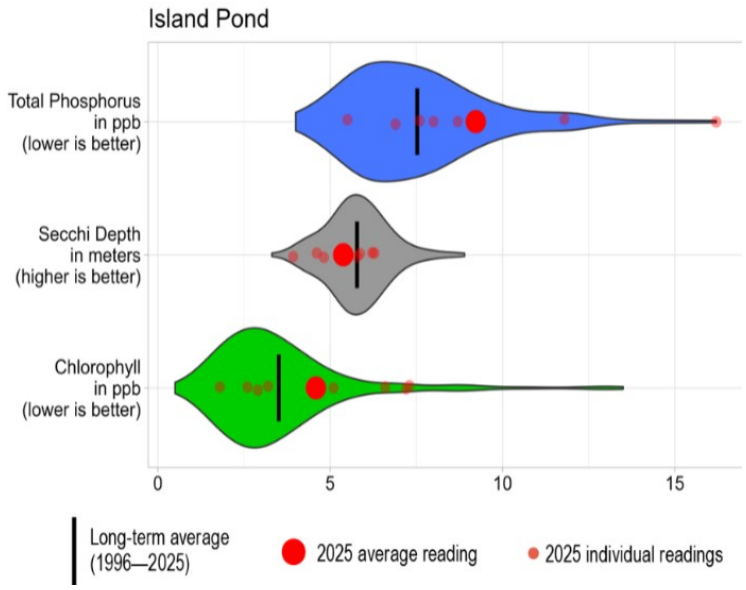
1. **Climate change is impacting water temperature, water quality and shoreline erosion:**

Warmer water, stronger storms, shoreline development, larger and more powerful boats, high seasonal use, and aging septic systems can increase phosphorus, erosion, harmful algal bloom risk, and habitat stress. There has been a regional lake-warming trend of about 1.4°F per decade since 1980. Local monitoring should guide Harrison-specific conclusions.

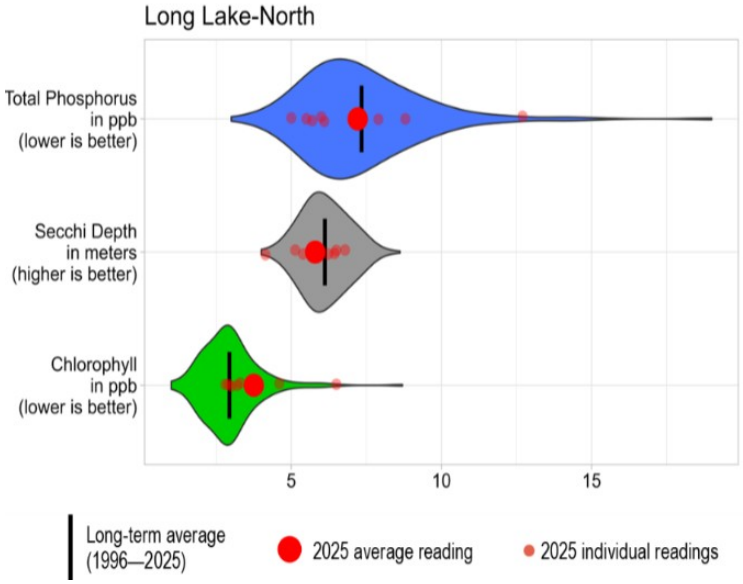
Data from the Lakes Environmental Association shows that Crystal Lake water quality is improving in some measures such as Chlorophyll but worsening in others such as clarity.



In Island Pond, phosphorous is increasing and clarity is decreasing, both signs of concern.



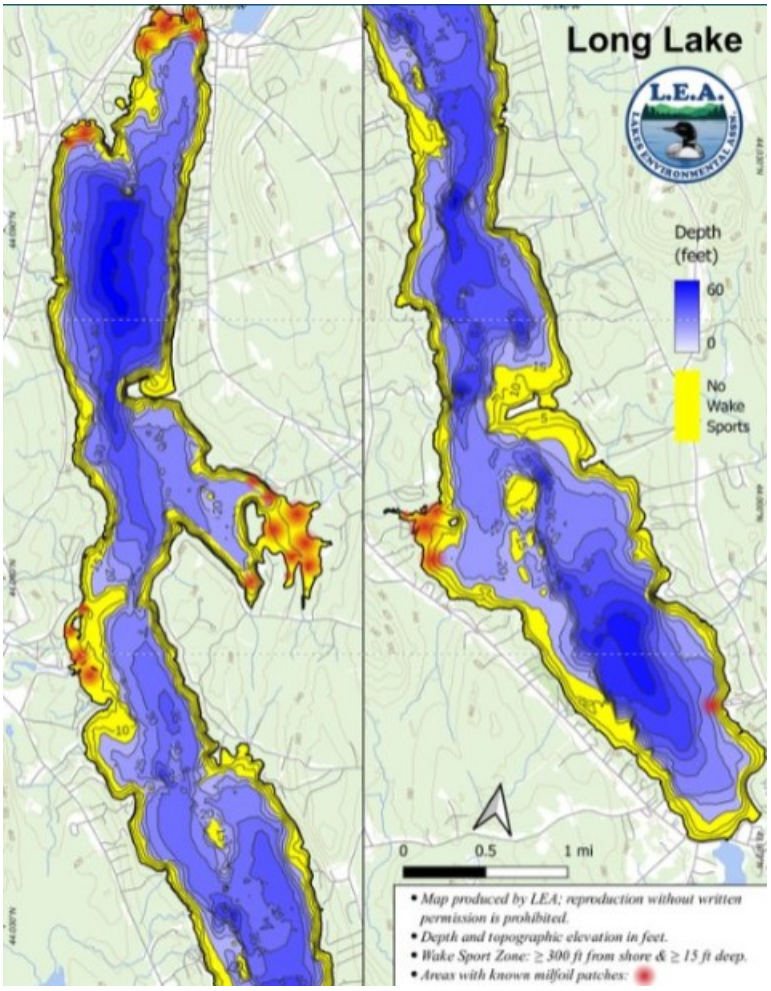
Finally, Long Lake is decreasing in clarity while other measures remain stable.



2. **Growing concern about boat wakes and invasive species is increasing management demands on inland lakes generally, not just in Harrison**.

Local regulation must remain within state authority and should be based on documented conditions; education, launch design, enforcement partnerships, and consistent mooring administration can address many concerns without requiring the establishment of a formal marina.

One such invasive species present in Harrison's Long Lake is the Variable Leaf Milfoil, which LEA is working to control with hand removal, suction harvesting and benthic barriers.



Milfoil areas in Long Lake

Maine communities increasingly use watershed plans, culvert replacement, low-impact development, septic outreach, vegetated buffers, and land conservation together. Directing higher-intensity growth to suitable areas can reduce dispersed shoreline and rural impacts if infrastructure and design standards are adequate.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Survey	• Respondents' highest overall priority • Selected as top three among 86.3% of respondents

Workshop findings	• The most popular vision statement was “clean and healthy waterways” with 34 respondents at the first workshop • Participants emphasized public water access, clean lakes and responsible recreation
Other Input	N/A
Significance	• Strong support should inform ordinance, capital and land-use decisions • Supports careful management of boating impacts, but not necessarily restriction • The public’s prioritization of water indicates the town should hire a water resources management to ease the burden of water and freshwater-access management currently placed on town staff

STATE REQUIREMENTS

Are there point sources (direct discharges) of pollution in the community? If so, is the community taking steps to eliminate them?

Harrison has one identified point-source discharge: Dyer Excavation & Septic, a licensed septage disposal facility on Norway Road, which holds a Maine Waste Discharge License for sub-surface wastewater disposal. As a permitted and regulated facility, this discharge is not considered a contamination threat requiring elimination.

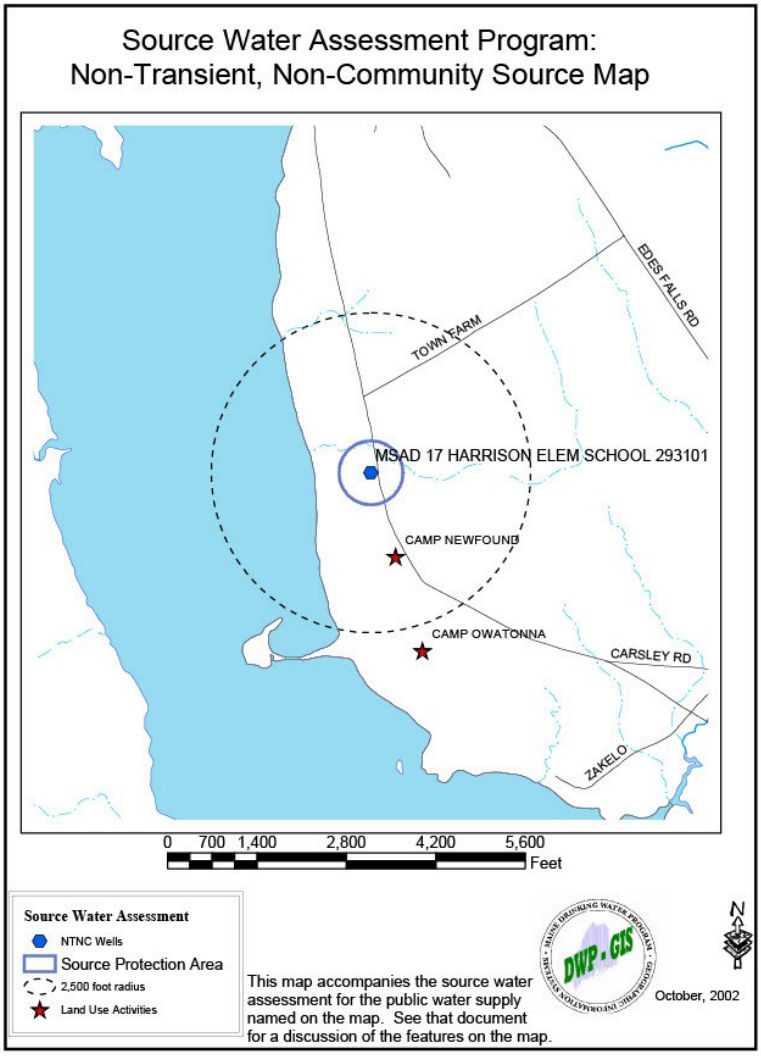
Are there non-point sources of pollution? If so, is the community taking steps to eliminate them?

Two of Harrison's lakes have documented nonpoint-source pollution concerns. Long Lake, shared with Bridgton and Naples, is on Maine DEP's Nonpoint Source Priority Watersheds list due to a declining dissolved-oxygen trend, and has been the subject of a dedicated Phosphorus Control Action Plan since 2005. Crystal Lake was placed on the same priority list following a 2003 watershed survey identifying stormwater-carried phosphorus and sediment as the primary pollution source. However, Crystal Lake does not appear on DEP's current priority list, suggesting conditions have improved or stabilized since that survey.

The town manager reports that there are issues with runoff from Rt. 117 into Long Lake boat launch area. He reported the town is looking to make improvements to that area.

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

Harrison's groundwater supplies are protected through the Bear River Aquifer Protection Ordinance and, for the Harrison Water District's two gravel wells, an active Wellhead Protection Ordinance confirmed in Maine DEP Source Water Assessments. As of a 2003 assessment, the district's wells carried moderate risk based on well type and site geology, low existing risk of acute contamination, and moderate future risk of chronic contamination due to incomplete legal control of the wellhead protection area at that time. A 2011 reassessment shows the town has since achieved full legal control of the entire wellhead protection area and the 2,500-foot Phase II/V waiver radius through town ordinance, improving future chronic-contamination risk to low — though the same reassessment detected a chronic contaminant, bromodichloromethane, likely a treatment byproduct rather than an external pollution source; current water quality data from Harrison Water District should be checked to confirm present conditions. By contrast, the MSAD 17 Harrison Elementary School's well, which is Harrison's only Non-Transient, Non-Community public water source with no reported land control within 300 feet, carries a high future risk ranking for both acute and chronic contamination, representing a concrete gap the town could address through acquisition or a protective ordinance.



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?

Yes. According to the town manager, town public works crews and contractors use best management practices to protect surface water, groundwater, wetlands, and roadside drainage systems during daily operations. Salt and sand are stored and handled to minimize runoff, and winter materials are applied at rates appropriate for road and weather conditions. Street sweeping is performed to remove

accumulated sand, sediment, and debris before those materials enter catch basins, ditches, streams, or lakes.

During culvert replacement and drainage work, crews protect water quality by reducing soil disturbance and keeping sediment out of waterways. They maintain stream flow and stabilize disturbed areas while limiting work within waterways whenever practical. At the public works garage, crews manage hazardous materials through proper storage and disposal practices supported by procedures to prevent and respond to spills. Contractors are expected to follow the same environmental standards and applicable permit requirements, with Town oversight throughout the work.

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

Lakes Environmental Association actively monitors Long Lake and Crystal Lake and led the 2003 Crystal Lake Watershed Survey, and the Cumberland County Soil & Water Conservation District and Casco Bay Estuary Project have both contributed land-use data and survey work to past watershed studies, including the 2005 Long Lake Phosphorus Control Action Plan developed jointly with Bridgton and Naples. Resilient Harrison Maine provides a local advocacy channel already named in this chapter's stewardship goal. At the state level, the Maine Drinking Water Program offers wellhead protection grants, land acquisition loans, best management practice guidance, and model wellhead protection ordinance language — directly relevant given the legal-control gap identified at the MSAD 17 Elementary School well — and the Maine Departments of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and Environmental Protection remain active partners on freshwater navigation, invasive species, and water quality coordination. Given Long Lake's shared watershed with Bridgton and Naples, continued or renewed multi-town collaboration on that watershed in particular represents a clear, already-precedented opportunity rather than a new relationship to build from scratch.

Marine Resources — Applicability (§2.6)

Harrison is inland, has no tidal waters, marine fisheries, commercial harbors, or other coastal marine resources, so this topic does not apply in its coastal sense. Freshwater navigation and access are addressed as the practical local equivalent.

GOALS & ACTIONS

1. Track water conditions and promote stewardship.

- The Town will hire a water resources manager to compile water indicators with local and state partners and to maintain mooring records and enforcement needs. (Annually)
- Town Staff will provide consistent septic, buffer, erosion, fertilizer, and construction guidance with permits, and will publish a guide on boat launches, mooring, parking, safety, invasive species, speeds, and water-quality rules before each boating season. (Ongoing / Before each boating season)
- Town Staff will support landowner education and volunteer monitoring alongside local advocacy groups such as Resilient Harrison, Maine, and will coordinate seasonal boating education with lake associations and state agencies. (Annually)

2. Strengthen watershed, groundwater, and lake-health protection.

- The Planning Board will review local standards for gaps in phosphorus, stormwater, buffer, and maintenance requirements. (2028–2029)
- The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee will coordinate watershed plans for priority waters, and Town Staff will include invasive-species prevention, runoff control, and erosion-resistant design in launch projects. (2028–2031 / During each project)
- Town Staff will maintain a culvert, ditch, and erosion inventory and rank corrective projects. (Annually)

3. Fund and invest in freshwater resources and access.

- The Selectboard will commission a wastewater-options study for the village and other documented problem areas. (2030–2032)
- The Selectboard will adopt a multi-year funding strategy for stormwater, culvert, septic, shoreline, and conservation projects, and will require site plans and lifecycle costs before adding major waterfront projects to the Capital Improvement Plan. (By 2031 / Before CIP approval)
- The Selectboard will pursue acquisition, easements, or partnerships for high-value watershed land; the water resources manager will pursue boating facilities, water quality, and resilience grants; and the Selectboard will adopt site-specific rules only after legal, environmental, operational, and public review. (Ongoing / As available / As needed)

NATURAL RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

Harrison's natural resources are central to the town's rural character and quality of life. Maine's Beginning with Habitat program emphasizes the role of comprehensive planning in identifying these resources and considering them alongside future growth and development.

Harrison contains large areas of natural resources and wildlife habitats, including a portion of the regionally significant Jugtown Plains. Together, these resources support wildlife, water quality, outdoor recreation, flood storage, and the broader ecological systems that contribute to Harrison's character.

Much of this natural landscape remains intact, but development, roads, and other infrastructure can gradually fragment habitat and reduce connections between natural areas. Maintaining these connections is important for wildlife movement and for the long-term health of Harrison's natural systems. State guidance therefore encourages communities to consider both individual resources and the larger landscape patterns that connect them.

This chapter provides an overview of Harrison's natural resources, where they are located, and how they relate to future land use. It also identifies strategies the Town can use to conserve important resources while accommodating appropriate growth.

Mission: Protect and conserve Harrison's critical natural resources, including wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, shorelands, scenic vistas, and unique natural areas, through future zoning and development decisions.

8,200+ acres largest mapped habitat block extending into Harrison	2 mapped deer wintering areas	3 notable rare species identified

INVENTORY

Habitat Connectivity

Although development is relatively dispersed throughout Harrison, the town still contains a significant number of large habitat blocks. There are several blocks larger than 500 acres that extend at least partly into Harrison, including one that exceeds 5,300 acres. The size of these areas is important, and so is maintaining safe connections between them so wildlife can safely move throughout the landscape.

Roadways are one of the most significant barriers to habitat connectivity in Harrison. Since 2016, 153 wildlife-vehicle collisions resulting in insurance claims have been recorded, with a notable concentration along Route 17 between Stargazer Road and Deer Hill Road. These collisions raise both ecological and public safety concerns. The available data also likely understate the overall impact, since collisions involving smaller species are less likely to be reported.

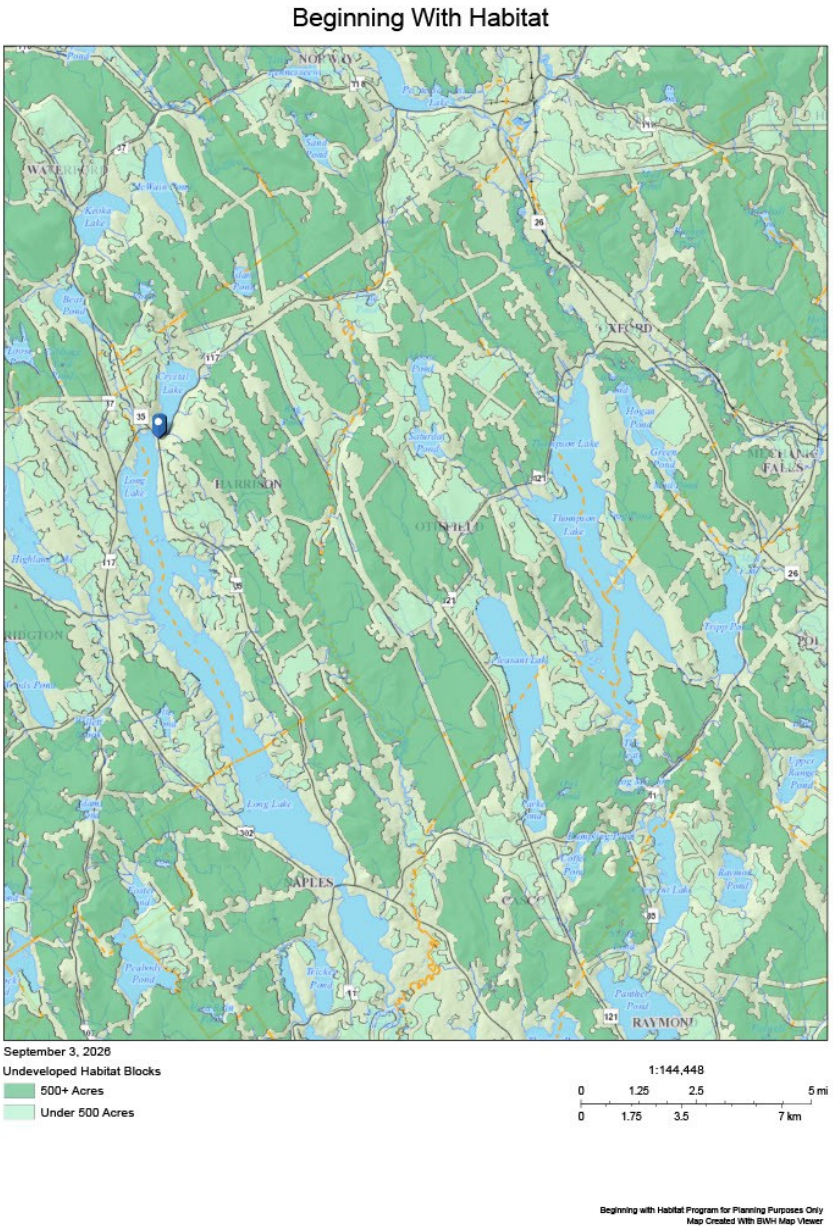
Aquatic connectivity is also important for both wildlife and community resilience. Species such as Brook Trout depend on connected waterways to reach spawning areas and respond to changing conditions such as warmer water temperatures and drought. Culverts can disrupt these connections when they are undersized, perched too high above the streambed, damaged, or designed in ways that create excessive water velocity. In Harrison, six public culverts have been evaluated for aquatic organism passage. One was identified as a barrier, four as potential barriers, and one as posing no barrier. The town also has one impassable dam.

Important Wildlife & Fisheries Habitat

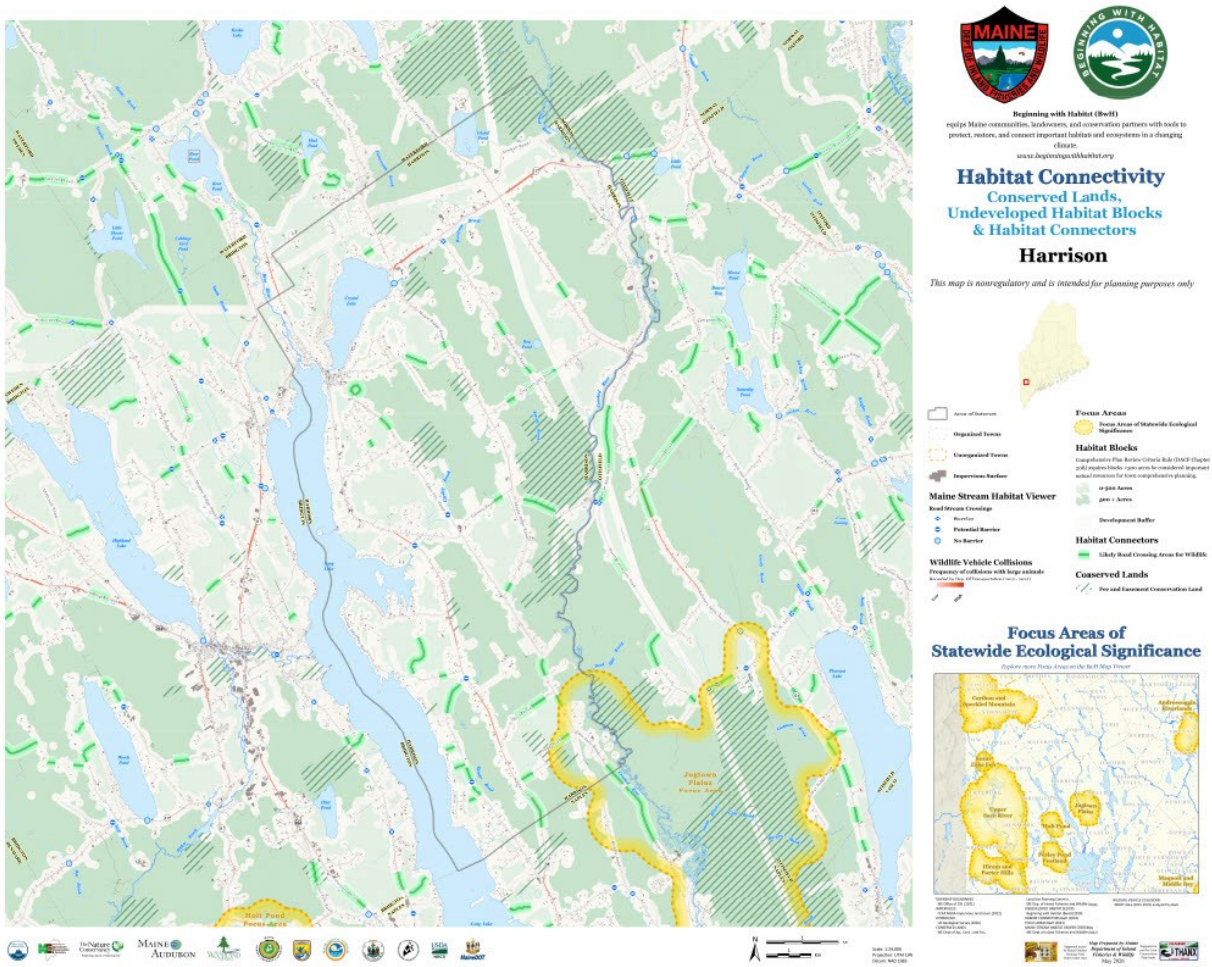
Harrison contains several important wildlife and fisheries habitats. Two proposed Deer Wintering Areas are located in town. Although Deer Wintering Areas are not currently designated as Significant Wildlife Habitat, towns may take voluntary steps to help protect them.

Harrison's lakes and streams also support important cold-water fisheries. Crystal and Long lakes support self-sustaining Lake Trout populations, reflecting the quality of their deep, cold waters. Brook Trout are also found in several streams throughout town. They depend on cool, well-oxygenated water, adequate cover, and connected stream habitat, making them particularly sensitive to changes in surrounding land use. Many streams in Harrison are identified as Wild Brook Trout Priority Conservation Areas because of their relatively intact uplands and ability to support trout populations.

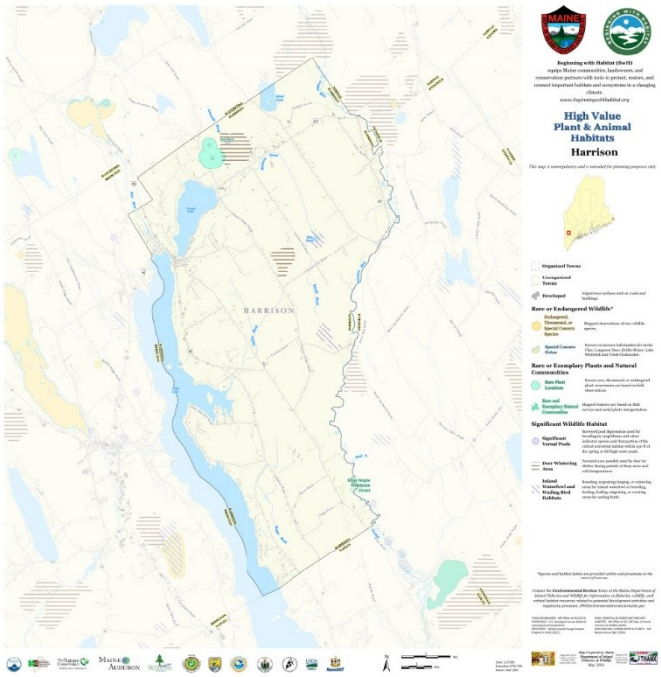
The Crooked River is especially significant because it supports one of only four naturally occurring Landlocked Salmon breeding populations in Maine. The river flows into Sebago Lake, which supports one of the state's largest Landlocked Salmon populations. These fish migrate upstream into the Crooked River to spawn, and past restoration projects have improved aquatic connectivity and reopened additional habitat for breeding salmon.



Undeveloped Habitat Blocks



Focus Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance

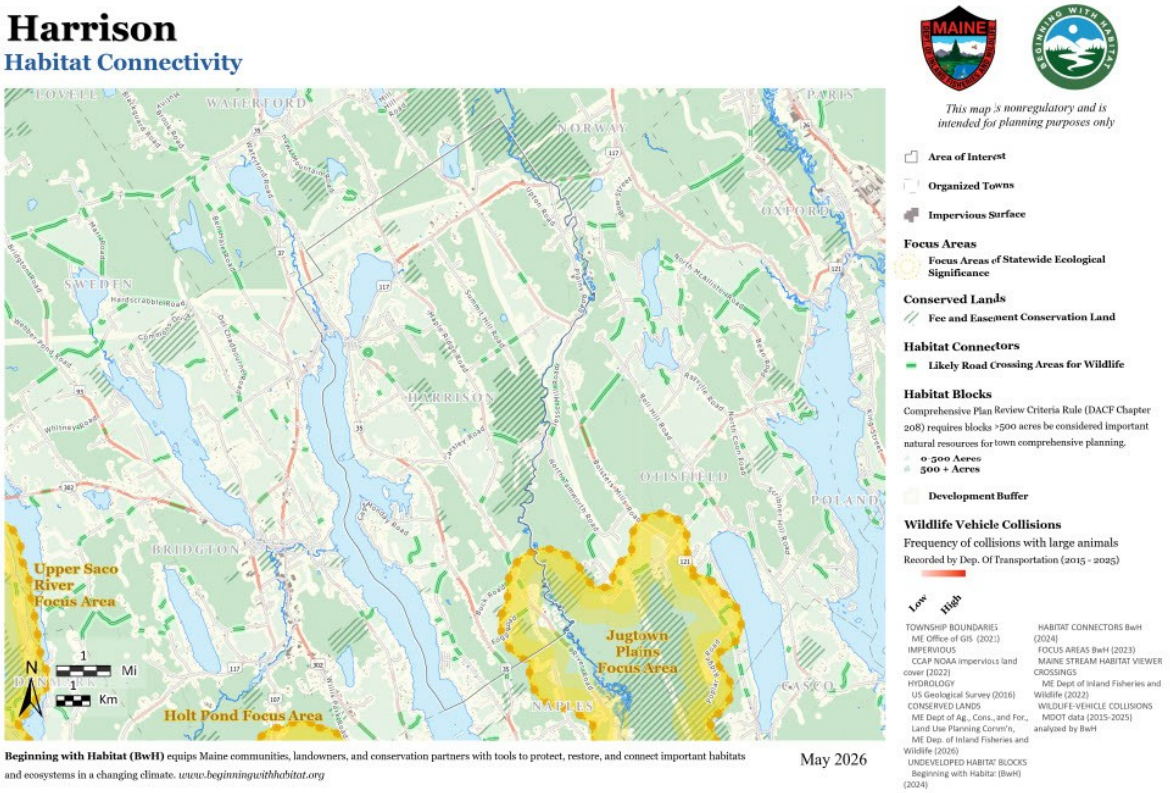


Significant Wildlife Habitat

Harrison contains two types of Significant Wildlife Habitat regulated under Maine's Natural Resources Protection Act: Inland Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat and Significant Vernal Pools.

Inland Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitats are wetlands that provide especially important feeding, nesting, breeding, and resting areas for wetland-

dependent wildlife. The value of these habitats depends not only on the wetland itself, but also on the condition of the surrounding uplands. Development, vegetation removal, and other disturbance near the wetland can affect water quality and the ability of wildlife to use the area. For that reason, activities within 250 feet of designated Inland Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat are regulated under Maine's Natural Resources Protection Act. Two of these habitats have been identified in Harrison.



Significant Vernal Pools are small, temporary wetlands that usually fill with water in the spring and dry later in the year. Their seasonal nature makes them poor habitat for fish, but ideal breeding areas for certain amphibians and invertebrates that depend on fish-free pools. Species such as Wood Frogs, Spotted Salamanders, Blue-spotted Salamanders, and Fairy Shrimp rely on vernal pools for part of their life cycle. A vernal pool may be designated as significant when it meets specific biological and hydrologic criteria, although only a portion of surveyed pools qualify. Activities within 250 feet of a Significant Vernal Pool are regulated to help protect both the pool and the surrounding upland habitat used by these species. One Significant Vernal Pool is currently known in Harrison, but others may exist. Specialized field surveys are needed to identify additional pools.

Harrison staff need to contribute knowledge about the one vernal pool.

Focus Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance

Focus Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance identify places with high concentrations of important wildlife habitat, rare plants and animals, and other significant natural resources. These areas are defined using biological data rather than municipal or property boundaries and can help towns, landowners, and land trusts focus conservation efforts where they may have the greatest ecological benefit.

The Jugtown Plains Focus Area extends into southern Harrison and also portions of Casco, Naples, and Otisfield. It is recognized for its large, relatively unfragmented forest, rare pitch pine-heath barren community, and habitat for rare species, including the Acadian swordgrass moth. The pitch pine-heath barren at Jugtown Plains is the northernmost known example of this natural community type.

The focus area's location across several towns creates opportunities for regional conservation efforts. Some of its important natural resources are already protected on conserved land in Harrison, while others remain unprotected, particularly along the Crooked River. Voluntary conservation agreements and other land protection strategies could help protect sensitive areas and guide development toward less vulnerable locations.

Rare and At-Risk Species

Harrison is home to several rare and at-risk species, including the Blanding's Turtle, Wood Turtle, and Small-whorled Pogonia.

- ***Blanding's Turtles*** are state endangered and depend on large, connected forested wetland complexes. Their movement between wetlands during the year makes them especially vulnerable to road crossings and habitat fragmentation.
- ***Wood Turtles***, a state species of special concern, rely on slow-moving streams with nearby forest cover and meadow habitat. During the summer, they may travel far into surrounding uplands to forage, making protection of both stream corridors and adjacent lands important.

- **Small-whorled Pogonias**, a federally listed species of orchid, grow in small populations in Harrison. This species relies on shaded forest environments and is sensitive to changes in canopy cover and moisture conditions. Protecting known habitat and identifying additional populations before development can help reduce impacts to this rare plant.

Threats and Protections

<u>State Requirement</u>: Are any of the community's critical natural resources threatened by development, overuse, or other activities?

Harrison's critical natural resources face several ongoing pressures, with the clearest being the gradual conversion and fragmentation of undeveloped land. A review of Planning Board activity from 2016 through 2026 shows repeated subdivision and development of previously undeveloped or lightly developed parcels. In 2025 alone, two residential subdivisions converted about 64.6 acres into 24 residential lots. Maine Forest Service data also show 400 acres of "land use change" between 1991 and 2023, indicating forest converted to another use rather than routine timber harvesting.

Shorelands, streams, and groundwater also face development-related risks. Planning Board records show recurring construction, septic improvements, and other development near lakes and waterways. These projects do not demonstrate measurable water-quality degradation, but they show that Harrison's shorelands continue to experience development and redevelopment. In 2025, Planning Board review of an auto-storage operation also identified vehicles stored near a brook, raising concerns about hazardous fluids and work occurring close to the stream.

Aquatic connectivity is another concern. Harrison has one surveyed public culvert identified as a barrier to aquatic organism passage, four potential barriers, and one impassable dam. These structures can restrict fish movement, and future roads or stream crossings could add to this problem if they are not designed to maintain natural stream flow and aquatic passage. The Crooked River is especially sensitive because it supports important Landlocked Salmon and Brook Trout habitat. Development within the watershed can increase impervious surfaces, remove streamside vegetation, and increase runoff, sediment, and nutrient inputs, while highly permeable soils in some areas make groundwater more vulnerable to contamination.

Overall, the most significant concern is the cumulative effect of these activities over time. Incremental land conversion, habitat fragmentation, and shoreline development can gradually reduce the quality and connectivity of Harrison's natural resources even when individual projects have limited impacts on their own.

***State Requirement*: 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's strongest regulatory protections are found in the Shoreland Zoning, Subdivision, and Bear River Aquifer Protection ordinances. Shoreland Zoning offers protection through setbacks, limits on roads and driveways, and standards for vegetation removal and timber harvesting. The Subdivision Ordinance provides additional protection for mapped wildlife habitat, including threatened and endangered species, waterfowl and wading bird habitat, Deer Wintering Areas, and wildlife travel corridors. It can require review by a qualified wildlife biologist and allows important habitat to be protected through open space and conservation easements. The Bear River Aquifer Protection Ordinance limits development intensity and potentially contaminating uses within aquifer protection areas and establishes standards for setbacks, impervious surfaces, erosion control, runoff, vegetation removal, and septic systems.

Harrison also benefits from several non-regulatory conservation efforts. Loon Echo Land Trust owns and manages the 409-acre Crooked River Forest, protecting more than a mile of river frontage and important Landlocked Salmon and forest habitat. Western Foothills Land Trust has protected additional land along the Crooked River, including portions of a 2,375-acre connected forest block and a 690-acre conservation easement in Harrison. Regional conservation efforts extend across Harrison, Otisfield, Norway, and Waterford, helping protect the Crooked River corridor at a watershed scale. Harrison has also coordinated with Otisfield and other stakeholders on shared river infrastructure, including the Scribner's Mill bridge and dam.

The Town is also investing in aquatic connectivity. Beginning in 2024, Harrison advanced replacement of two large culverts carrying Carsley Brook beneath Edes Falls Road and Carsley Road, supported by state grant funding and outside partners. The two projects have a combined construction cost of about $882,000,

with $500,000 in grant funding reported by the Town. Construction began in 2026. The goal is to replace inadequate crossings with larger structures that maintain natural stream flow, improve passage for fish and other aquatic organisms, and make local roads more resilient to flooding and larger storms. Together, these regulatory and non-regulatory measures help protect Harrison's natural resources.

TRENDS

1. **Incremental habitat fragmentation is one of Harrison's most significant long-term natural resource concerns.**

Though the town still contains several large blocks of forest and wetlands, over time, new development can break larger habitat areas into smaller pieces and reduce connections between them. This gradual pattern can weaken habitat quality even when individual projects comply with existing development standards.

Harrison currently relies on a combination of state natural-resource laws, local shoreland and floodplain regulations, subdivision and site plan review, conserved lands, and private stewardship to protect these resources. Conservation subdivision design could provide another tool for limiting fragmentation by clustering development in one portion of a property while permanently protecting the remaining land as open space. This approach can help maintain larger habitat areas and preserve connections between them.

The town has not completed a comprehensive townwide natural resources field survey or open space plan, so some resources may not yet be fully documented. Beginning with Habitat maps provide an important starting point by identifying known habitat areas, wildlife resources, and other natural features that can inform planning and site-specific review.

2. **Climate-related changes such as heavier storms, shifting water levels, higher temperatures, pests and changing specials ranges are becoming more important.**

The town's forests, wetlands, shorelands, floodplains, and intact soils can help reduce some of these impacts by slowing runoff, storing carbon, moderating heat, supporting pollinators and wildlife, and reducing pressure on public infrastructure.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Survey	• Protecting lake, pond, and water quality ranked first overall • Preserving open space and wildlife habitat ranked second • Nearly nine in ten respondents agreed that Harrison should protect open space for the future, including 57% who strongly agreed • 92% supported working with neighboring communities to protect shared water resources
Workshop findings	• Participants gave the largest share of their investment dollars, 26% to acquiring land for open space and habitat protection, more than any other category • Most popular vision statements included "clean and healthy waterways" and "keep rural, friendly town feel," and common themes included nature, conservation, and slow, intentional growth • Participants also favored development patterns that preserve open space, retain tree cover, and provide access to nature • Farmland and undeveloped land received positive reactions, while more dispersed suburban development drew criticism for consuming wildlands and contributing to sprawl
Other Input	
Significance	• Conserving open space is important to residents and they favor development patterns that preserve this space • Concerns about taxes and the pace of development suggest that residents generally favor targeted, fiscally responsible conservation measures rather than broad or costly interventions

GOALS & ACTIONS

1. **Use current natural-resource information.**
    - Town Staff will maintain current maps of conserved land, wetlands, floodplains, rare species habitat, and other critical natural resources. (Annually)

- The Planning Board will incorporate natural-resource screening into subdivision and site plan review, requiring subdivision and non-residential developers to submit relevant Beginning with Habitat maps and information on critical natural resources. The Planning Board will consider this information during its review and require appropriate measures to protect these resources through site design, construction timing, limits on excavation, or other measures. (By 2028)
- Town Staff will provide guidance on habitat protection, buffers, pollinators, invasive species, and forestry. (Ongoing)
- Town Staff will make information available to landowners living in or near critical and important natural resources about current-use tax programs and applicable local, state, and federal regulations. (Ongoing)

2. **Protect connected habitat and priority open space.**
    - The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee will prepare an open space and habitat connectivity plan to identify priority areas for conservation and connections between important natural resources. (2028–2030)
    - The Planning Board will require conservation design for qualifying subdivisions in mapped transition and rural areas to help protect open space, habitat, and other important natural resources. (By 2029)
    - Town Staff will coordinate with neighboring communities and regional and state resource agencies to protect shared critical and important natural resources, including Jugtown Plains, the Crooked River corridor, large habitat blocks, important wildlife road crossings, and recreational resources. (Ongoing)
3. **Conserve Harrison's critical natural resources.**
    - The Select Board will establish conservation criteria and explore grants and other funding opportunities for conservation easements, land acquisition, and long-term stewardship of important natural resources. (By 2030)
    - The Planning Board will ensure that Harrison's land use ordinances are consistent with applicable state law regarding critical natural resources and will designate those resources as Critical Resource Areas in the Future Land Use Plan. (2029–2031)

- The Select Board will pursue regional and public-private partnerships to protect and restore Harrison's critical and important natural resources, including opportunities to acquire land or conservation easements from willing landowners when partners and funding are available. (Ongoing)

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

INTRODUCTION

In Harrison, there is a commitment to maintaining the rural character of the town. The large presence of both farmland and forest is a major contributor to rural character because the protection of both resources prevents overdevelopment. As a result, 16.4% of survey respondents from Harrison ranked agriculture and forestry as one of their top priorities.

However, given a need for increased housing and a proportional increase in business activity, the potential for construction in Harrison is possible in years to come. As a result, it is important that the town set forth specific goals to protect forest and farmland while also considering ways that these resources could contribute to the economy through agritourism or recreational amenities.

Working farms, woodlands, fields, and related rural businesses contribute to Harrison's landscape and economy. Forest management and agriculture can keep land productive and undeveloped when operations remain viable.

Mission: Protect and preserve Harrison's agriculture and forest resources as crucial to the economy, food supply and wildlife habitat while exploring options for agritourism.

16.4% Of survey respondents identified agriculture and forestry as one of their top three priorities	**36.7%** see agriculture and forestry tourism as a good fit	**15,081** acres of timber harvest in Harrison

INVENTORY

Agricultural Land and Enterprises

Harrison retains farms, fields, equestrian uses, gardens, farm stands, and agricultural businesses. The 2024 Annual Report and workshop materials reflect continuing public recognition of farming and open fields as part of the town's identity. Harrison has the highest total valuation for farmland in all of Cumberland County, demonstrating the importance of agriculture as a town resource.

Table 5-1 2024 Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary - Farmland

Number of parcels	Acres first classified	Acres farmland acres	Total acreage woodland	Total valuation farmland	Total valuation woodland
16	0	369	634	$808,320	$274,600

Harrison town staff should provide context on why this might be.

Small-scale and diversified agricultural operations may combine typical farm production with direct sales and/or tourism. For example, High View Farm in Harrison is a small dairy farm that has taken advantage of agritourism by offering winter horse-drawn sleigh rides. Maple Springs Farm in Harrison is a vegetable farm known for growing 60 tomato varieties and operating a vendor booth at the Portland Farmer's Market.

Prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance, as classified by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, are the soils most suited to productive agriculture.

Forestry and Large Ownerships

Forested land makes up much of the town's rural landscape and overlaps with large habitat blocks and working properties. These lands can be utilized for timber harvesting. Sustainable timber management can provide income, retain open land, and maintain natural habitat. Timber Harvest Data shows that there has been a fair amount of timber harvesting over the years, but most of it was

"selection harvesting" rather than clearcutting. Harvesting activity has declined significantly since the early 2000s.

Table 5-2 Summary of Timber Harvest Information for the town of: Harrison

Harvest Area By Town (Acres)

Year	Selection	Shelterwood	Land Use Change	Clearcut	Totals	# of Reports
1991-2003	6234	482	107	101	6924	213
2004-2013	2842	261	87	0	3190	117
2014-2018	1722	1172	64	6	2964	100
2019-2023	1701	160	142	1	2003	81
Total	12499	2074	400	108	15081	511

Data compiled from Confidential Year End Landowner Reports to Maine Forest Service.

Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry - Maine Forest Service

A large amount of Harrison's forestland is classified as working forest land under the state Tree Growth Program, which helps forest landowners keep land in forestry by reducing property tax pressure. Mixed wood forest makes up the largest share of the enrolled acreage.

In recent years, two parcels were withdrawn from the Tree Growth Program, according to town staff. The first was 12.5 acres that was part of a trust that has not yet been developed, and the second was 6 acres taken out that had a dwelling on it and the rest was split off into a new map/lot (89 acres) and kept in Tree Growth.

Table 5-3 2024 Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary – Tree Growth

Number of parcels	Softwood Acres	Mixed wood acres	Hardwood acres	Total acres	Total value
100	1,124	2,469	854	4,438	$1,914

Land-Use Relationship

Scattered residential development can increase land values, increase taxes, fragment ownership, create conflicts with farm and forestry operations, and make management access more difficult. Clear rural districts and conservation subdivision standards can retain forest and farmland resources while preserving reasonable development value.

TRENDS

1. **Maine as a whole is losing farmland and farmers are getting older.**

Since 2012, over 1,100 farms and almost 230,000 acres of farmland in Maine have fallen out of production, according to the 2022 USDA Census of Agriculture. Nearly 40% of Maine farmers are age 65+, which represents an 18% increase from 2017.

2. **Production costs have increased while the average cost of an acre of farmland has also increased.**

Agriculture and forestry face high land, equipment, labor, and insurance costs.

3. **Climate change is lengthening some growing seasons while increasing heat, intense rain, pests, and crop uncertainty.**

All of these factors threaten the viability of farming in communities like Harrison. Additionally, it is important to consider a potential future need for more local food sources because of climate change or supply chain issues.

4. **Statewide, the forest land base in Maine has remained relatively stable over several decades.**

In the second half of the 20th century, forest loss to conversion has been balanced by reversion to forest on abandoned agricultural lands.

5. **Regionally, consumer interest in local food, outdoor experiences, and direct sales are creating new opportunities.**

Local standards should distinguish ordinary agricultural activity from higher-impact commercial events and should be consistent with state-to-farm protections.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Survey	• Agriculture and forestry was a top three overall priority for 16.4% of survey respondents • 36.7% identified agriculture- or forestry-based tourism as a good fit for Harrison
Workshop findings	• Images of open farmland and rural scenes received positive workshop responses
Other Input	• Maine Farmland Trust presented to the Comprehensive Plan Committee, and local farmers shared their perspectives at the meeting. • It is challenging to start farming in Harrison due to town's current assessing structure and real estate market
Significance	• The lower overall ranking compared with water and habitat suggests that working-land actions should clearly explain their water-quality, wildlife, economic, and tax-base benefits.

STATE REQUIREMENTS

How important is agriculture and/or forestry and are these activities growing, stable, or declining?

Agriculture, in particular, is very important in Harrison because the farmland there has the highest total farmland valuation in all of Cumberland County and preserving and protecting this agriculture as well as supporting small local farms is a priority of this plan and the town as a whole.
The activities appear stable but strained, with some signs of decline in traditional activity. Timber harvest activity has declined from earlier periods, and agriculture faces financial barriers.

At the same time, there are growth opportunities in local food, direct sales, agritourism, outdoor experiences, and diversified farm/forest businesses.

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 in the community?

Regulatory steps include current-use tax programs and above ordinances.
There are two active Land Trusts in Harrison:

- Loon Echo Land Trust (LELT): Founded in 1987, this accredited nonprofit protects land through conservation easements and fee ownership in Harrison, Bridgton, Casco, Denmark, Naples, Sebago and Raymond. It manages properties like the Crooked River Forest in Harrison (comprising the 334-acre Intervale parcel and the 75-acre Woodsum Brook parcel) and Sylvan Woods. Headquarters are located in Bridgton, Maine.
- Western Foothills Land Trust: This organization also holds significant conservation easements in the Harrison area, including a 690-acre parcel along the Crooked River

Are farm and forest land owners taking advantage of the state's current use tax laws?

Yes, see above charts.

Has proximity of new homes or other incompatible uses affected the normal farming and logging operations?

No.

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 on the community?

No, Harrison is largely not equipped for large development due to infrastructure limitations such as sewer, and no large development is expected.

Does the community support community forestry or agriculture (i.e. small woodlots, community forests, tree farms, community gardens, farmers' markets, or community-supported agriculture)? If so, how?

In a public survey, 36.7% identified agriculture- or forestry-based tourism as a good fit for Harrison, showing there is some support in town for amenities such as farmers' markets or community gardens. While there is currently no formal community garden or farmers' market, some farmers are vendors at other area farmers' markets.

Does the community have town or public woodlands under management, or that would benefit from forest management?

In need of Harrison town staff input to complete this question.

GOALS & ACTIONS

1. ***Support working farms and forests.***
    - Town Staff will publish current-use enrollment data and maintain a voluntary directory of working-land businesses. (Annually)
    - The Planning Board will clarify permits for routine agricultural and forestry uses. (By 2028)
    - **State required action:** Town Staff will map prime farmland soils and farmland of statewide importance, along with any locally important soils identified by the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District, and overlay them with tax parcels. (By 2027)
2. ***Support Viable Farm Businesses***
    - The Planning Board will set scale and impact-based standards for agriculture-based uses in consultation with the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Maine Forest Service district forester. (2028–2029)
    - Town Staff will coordinate technical assistance and local market opportunities with regional partners. (Ongoing)
    - Town Staff will include working-land access, drainage, and stream crossings in public work and open space planning. (Ongoing)
3. ***Protect forests and farmland from development-related fragmentation***
    - The Planning Board will draft rural zoning standards that limit fragmentation of agricultural and forestry resources while allowing reasonable uses. (2029–2031)
    - The Planning Board will add conservation design, shared access, and resource-based siting to subdivision standards. (By 2029)
    - The Selectboard will establish a voluntary municipal farm support program which would allow for temporary easement to the town in exchange for additional property tax reduction on eligible farmland and farm buildings. (2031–2033)

ECONOMY

INTRODUCTION

History considers Captain Benjamin Foster's store in South Harrison the town's first business in the 1700s. Early texts describe the store as "the place where many curious scenes were enacted." Every year in Harrison at this time there was a "river driving" event and Captain Foster's store served as a headquarters for any men who were attending. The Centennial History of Harrison, Maine, published in 1909, described the river drivers as "addicted to drink" and likely obtained their alcohol at Captain Foster's business.

A few years later, Oliver Peirce opened a store above his residence, and in 1824 relocated to "the brick store" building. The brick store was considered a landmark in the village for many years, and the business came to be known as Peirce Store.

Subsequent years document a series of different "corner stores" with various owners as well as a small grocery store, a furniture store, a tailoring shop and a grain and milling business. A drug store opened on "Old Fellows Block," in the late 1800s and later, a jewelry store opened under the same roof. A boot and shoe store opened in 1902.

Aside from small stores, manufacturing was a key part of Harrison's early economy. The wire-making industry was one of the town's largest employers for over five decades. There were several ownership changes at the local factory, which eventually closed due to technological changes in the industry which made local production unprofitable. Other manufacturing-related businesses included a chair factory, along with blacksmithing, cabinet-making, harness-making, and milling operations.

In present times, Harrison's economy reflects much of what existed in the past: small, home-based businesses and village stores. Manufacturing has been replaced by tourism, driven by access to Crystal Lake and nearby recreational amenities.

Today, residents want economic activity that fits the town's scale and character, but face the challenges that come with limited infrastructure, limited workforce housing and a seasonal customer base.

The workforce issue is twofold. While limited housing in Harrison means limited workforce, limited job opportunities in Harrison means limited incentives to build more housing. This plan will advocate for an increase in both housing and job opportunities at a scale appropriate for Harrison's size and character. And, not unlike Oliver Peirce, the opportunity for more home-based businesses should be considered in Harrison because it will allow for more business activity while taking advantage of existing infrastructure.

Mission: Promote economic activity that fits the town's scale and character and remove barriers that constrain economic growth such as limited housing and commercial space.

87.1%	**8%**	**43.4%**
small retail/services seen as a good fit	currently estimated to live and work in town	favor limited business growth

INVENTORY

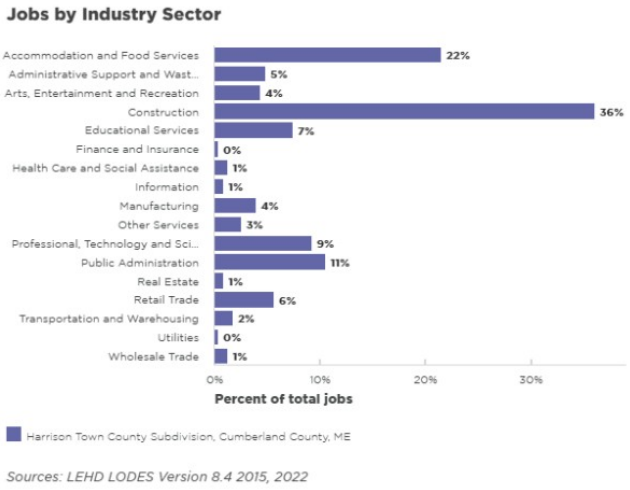
Economic Base and Work Patterns

Harrison functions within the larger Bridgton, Oxford Hills, and Lakes Region economy. Many residents commute or work remotely, while local employment includes construction and trades, public education, retail and services, municipal and nonprofit work, lodging and food, recreation, property services, and home-based businesses.

The Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary, published annually by Maine Revenue Services, offers a way to compare Harrison's tax base directly against its closest neighbors. According to the 2024 edition, Harrison's taxable personal property (the machinery, equipment, and business fixtures assessed separately from land and buildings) totaled just $3,638,900 against a total municipal valuation of $1,137,036,300, or about 0.32 percent of the town's entire

tax base. This is the lowest share of any nearby town. Bridgton, with its established commercial corridor along Route 302, reported a personal property share more than three times higher at 1.15 percent, while Naples reported 1.40 percent. Harrison's businesses, by this measure, carry unusually little taxable equipment for the region, a pattern consistent with a local economy built on small retail, services, and home-based work rather than manufacturing or heavy-equipment-dependent industry.

The highest percentage of jobs are in construction, followed by accommodation and food services. Given the tourism potential in Harrison, building on the accommodation and food services industry as well as the arts, entertainment and recreation sector is one way to increase job opportunities in Harrison.



Most employed people in Harrison have quite a long drive to work. U.S. Census Data and the American Community Survey estimate that only about 8% of employed residents both live and work in Harrison and according to U.S. Census Data, the mean travel time to work is 30.5 minutes.

Village and Commercial Locations

The village contains a mix of businesses, civic uses, homes, parks, and public water service. The Downtown Revitalization Plan recommends a small-business-friendly strategy built around streetscape, signs, parking, walking, façade improvements, public spaces, broadband, housing reuse, and potential tax increment financing.

Survey respondents preferred future growth through small and mid-sized businesses or a primarily residential community with limited business. The village was the most commonly preferred business location, such as the Rt. 117 corridor, followed by a designated commercial or industrial area and worthy opportunities townwide.

Addressing buffering, scale, lighting, and traffic will be necessary once such areas are designated, to ensure compatibility with Harrison's rural and lakeside character. This designation and standard-setting is planned through the Future Land Use Plan and subsequent zoning process.

Long Lake, Crystal Lake, and Deertrees Theatre draw a substantial seasonal population, and the survey's 24.6% seasonal-resident and 11.4% nonresident-owner shares reflect that. The town supports this industry primarily through recreation infrastructure such as public boat launches, beach maintenance, and the RADR trail network, rather than through dedicated tourism marketing or a visitor's bureau.

Infrastructure and Business Requirements

When it comes to growth, the lack of municipal sewer in Harrison is one of the largest issues. Currently, no municipal sewer serves the village so planned new developments would have to utilize existing buildings with sewer or consider well construction. This problem requires some creativity when it comes to business types. Businesses that are based out of homes or businesses that share working spaces are possible solutions to the problem.

Like in many rural communities, broadband, cell service, electrical capacity, roads, drinking water, parking, and access were also identified as possible constraints to business expansion. While nearly 100% of Cumberland County has access to 4G, less than 50% have access to 5G 35/3 mbps, which could be a barrier for some businesses. Rural areas of Cumberland County in particular are only 42% covered by 5G 35/3 mbps according to the FCC.

The Harrison Water District is the only community water system in Harrison. It services 813 customers. This means the rest of the residences and businesses in Harrison use a private well system, which could be a barrier for business growth and expansion.

Predictable permitting, a clear future land-use map, and focused public investment can reduce uncertainty. Economic development should also protect the water, scenery, and rural character on which much of the visitor economy depends.

TRENDS

1. **The number of jobs is increasing, but unemployment remains high:**

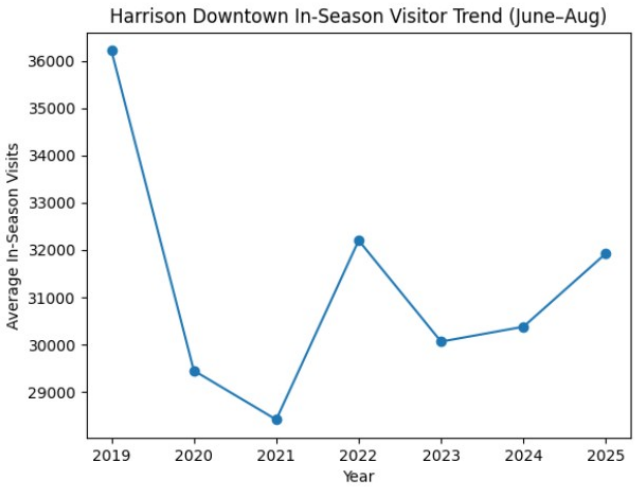
The number of jobs in Harrison has increased 17.8% from 2013 to 2023, which outpaces Cumberland County (15.2%) and Maine as a whole (8.7%). However, the unemployment rate per capita is 8%, which is higher than the other towns in the region.

2. **Nearly a quarter of Harrison works from home:**

Remote and hybrid work create opportunities for year-round residency and home enterprises if reliable internet and suitable workspace become available. The U.S. Census reports 22.5% of people in Harrison working from home. At the same time, online retail and high operating costs challenge traditional small storefronts. According to the Chamber of Commerce, there are 247 businesses in Harrison. Harrison needs to focus on how to best attract desired businesses.

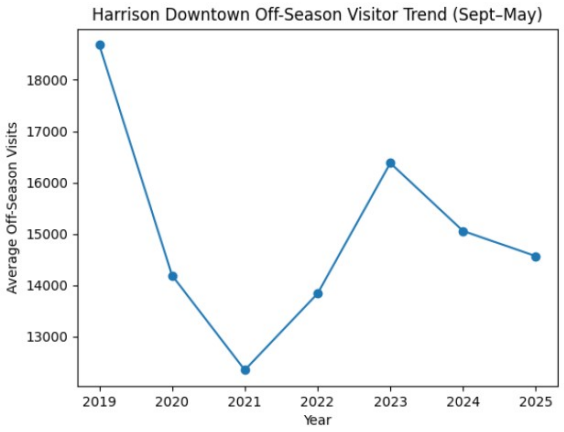
3. **Tourism is rebounding after COVID-19 and remains ann important part of the economy.**

Harrison's economy is fundamentally tied to its lakes, forests, and village character. Long Lake and Crystal Lake anchor a recreation- and tourism-based visitor economy; Deertrees Theatre and the historic village core support cultural tourism and small-scale hospitality; and the town's forested land base supports both forestry-related enterprise and the scenic character that draws visitors and second-home owners. These assets are the same ones residents most want protected, meaning economic strategies should lean toward enterprises compatible with those resources (recreation, hospitality, agritourism, forestry, clean-energy siting) rather than uses that would degrade them.



Tourism trends in Harrison show that after the COVID-19 pandemic, summer visitation trends in

Harrison have rebounded. From 2023 to 2025 there was a steady rise in visitation. These trends reinforce the importance of the summer tourist season for the local economy.



Off-season visitation has not rebounded to the same extent and remains unstable. Off season trends point to a need for more information about how residents and visitors use the town and its resources year-round.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Survey	• Identified small retail and services, trades and construction, home businesses, outdoor recreation and tourism, and lodging or restaurants as the strongest economic fits • Big-box retail and large businesses received little support
Workshop findings	• Commercial-growth points concentrated in the village and along Route 117 • Small standalone businesses and home businesses were preferred over strip development • Participants also supported historic downtown character and public spaces
Other Input	• Survey respondents also prioritize open space and resource preservation so the Town should explore attracting clean energy businesses to create local jobs, diversify the economy, and advance climate action

Significance	• Not unlike Harrison's early history, a strong village center is a crucial part of Harrison's future. A stronger village can support local services, public gatherings, and tax-based diversity without requiring large-scale commercial development and even drive tourists and visitors outside of peak summer months. More intensive business uses may be appropriate in a carefully selected area with safe road access, adequate utilities, fencing or tree buffers, and limited natural-resource conflict. Future business development should target existing properties or buildings that are vacant but could be converted into business space.

STATE REQUIREMENTS

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

Harrison's economy is experiencing significant change. Job growth in Harrison is outpacing the state and the county, although Cumberland County and Maine are also experiencing growth. Harrison's growth, therefore, is part of a larger regional trend. Harrison's job count grew 17.8% from 2013 to 2023, while Cumberland County's grew 15.2% and Maine's grew 8.7%. However, one less positive trend for Harrison is its unemployment rate which sits at 8%, higher than other towns in the region. These trends impact the local population because a climbing number of jobs suggests a potential future demand for more housing and resources.

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

The community does not currently have defined priorities for economic development outside of the ones that will be established in this document. Harrison is not named in current region economic development plan (the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy or Regional Prosperity Plan (2023-2028)). However, the broader Sebago Lakes region is stated as an economic strength in the document.

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

The Village Center in Harrison has a mix of homes, businesses, civic uses and parks and is considered to be the most viable for new businesses. The 2023 Downtown Revitalization Plan defines a 263-acre study area with 211 parcels. The area is considered generally viable but could use some improvements to streetscape, façade and public spaces. The area is neither deteriorating nor thriving but has potential with some targeted development for growth.

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

Due to Harrison's presence in the lake's region, tourism, particularly in the summer months, is a big part of the local economy. Harrison supports the industry primarily by continuing to offer and maintain recreational amenities that draw visitors rather than through dedicated tourism or marketing. This includes public lake access (Crystal Lake Park and beach, Long Lake Park, and multiple boat launches), a 2026 update to mooring regulations to manage growing boating demand, trail networks at Twin Bridges Preserve and Crooked River Forest maintained in partnership with regional land trusts, and cultural assets including Deertrees Theatre.

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

Given that 22.5% of Harrison residents work from home, and many others travel quite far for work, prioritizing home occupations is important for a community because they increase jobs without any additional sewer or water infrastructure.

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?

Survey respondents highlighted the village center and the Route 117 corridor as a preferred location for commercial development, but also remained open to the idea that a future land use plan could designate certain areas for this sort of development.

Once specific sites are identified, the planning board will assess whether performance standards are needed, however, compatibility for development would be considered in the selection of such a designated area.

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?
No municipal sewer serves the village so this is a constraint that must be considered ahead of any future development.

If there are local of regional economic development incentives such as TIF districting, do they encourage development in growth areas?
There are currently no TIF districts in Harrison, but this will be considered as part of this plan. Harrison currently captures no TIF revenue, a position it shares with neighboring Casco and Sebago. Three of Harrison's six closest neighbors take a different approach: Naples reported $52,150,538 in captured assessed value and $485,000 in TIF revenue in 2024, Bridgton reported $42,524,762 captured and $725,047 in revenue, and Raymond reported $17,178,945 captured and $295,478 in revenue. As Harrison considers whether TIF financing could support the improvements recommended in the Downtown Revitalization Plan, these three towns offer a closer model to examine than more distant Maine municipalities.

How can/does the community use its unique assets such as recreational opportunities, historic architecture, civic events, etc. for economic growth?
Harrison’s unique assets are at the center of its economy and its character. Recreational opportunities such as lake access, boat launches and parks drive tourism which drives economic growth. Historic sites such as Deertrees Theater bring people to the Village Center alongside various events such as children’s sports and local festivals.
In the future, pairing civic events with opportunities for local businesses to host pop-ups or creating development opportunities near the theater or other recreational spaces could help increase foot traffic and customer base.

GOALS AND ACTIONS

1. **Support small and home-based businesses.**
    - Town Staff will maintain a plain-language permitting guide, referral list, and business directory. (Annually)
    - Town Staff will hold a business roundtable to identify shared needs and practical Town responses for recruiting and retaining local businesses.
    - Town Staff will coordinate events, wayfinding, promotion, and grant information with regional partners. (Ongoing)
2. **Strengthen the village and year-round economy.**
    - The Selectboard will prioritize phased Downtown Revitalization Plan projects through the Capital Improvement Plan. (Annually)
    - Town Staff will analyze tax increment financing or similar tools for priority improvements. (2028–2029) (2027-2028)
    - The Planning Board, working with the business community, will create ordinances that allow compatible mixed uses with current business activity.
3. **Provide suitable locations and infrastructure for job and tax base growth.**
    - The Planning Board will identify clusters of commercial or employment areas through the zoning process. (2027-2029)
    - Town will establish a program to provide incentives for clean energy industry or businesses to locate within the community.
    - The Selectboard will identify opportunities for major infrastructure improvements pursuant to a sound financing plan and consistent with this Plan. (Annually).

FISCAL CAPACITY

INTRODUCTION

Financial planning is a key component to planning for Harrison's future to ensure that funds are used strategically and with an eye to meet future community needs, as well as needs for staffing, facilities, infrastructure, and maintenance. Harrison is in good financial standing, and the community has historically played an active role in making informed decisions about how to allocate funding.

The Comprehensive Plan does not commit to funding specific individual items but estimated costs per strategy, where known, are listed in the Implementation Chart in Appendix xxx.

The Plan is structured to allow for flexibility as unexpected needs arise or priorities shift. Thinking about the cost of future improvements will require consideration of the full range of lifecycle costs, the optional funding strategies available to the Town, and the associated staffing to support capital improvements.

Mission: Balance service needs, capital assets, affordability and a tax base strongly influenced by waterfront and seasonal property to develop a long-term fiscal policy that connects land use decisions with operating and infrastructure consequences.

$1.137B	**7.70**	**$14.8M**
FY2025 taxable value	FY2025 tax rate	2026 draft CIP project total

INVENTORY

Tax Base and Commitment

For fiscal year 2025, Harrison reported taxable valuation of approximately $1.137 billion and a tax rate of 7.70 mills. The total assessment included municipal, school, county, and allowance for tax abatements. Property values and valuation changes affect how costs are distributed even when the tax rate remains comparatively low.

Planning materials estimate that lakefront parcels represent nearly half of the tax base. This concentration links fiscal stability to water quality and shoreline value and can also shift tax burdens as waterfront assessments change.

Capital Planning

The May 2026 draft Capital Improvement Plan identified approximately $14.8 million in projects across roads, infrastructure, facilities, equipment, and vehicles. The planned five-year spending schedule was highest in fiscal year 2028. The draft identified grant, tax, reserve, and other funding sources and projected a substantial reduction in available reserves if all programmed work proceeds.

The draft plan divided costs by department, as well as assets by type. The approximate cost per department is available below in Table 10-A.

Table 10-A CIP Cost by Department

Draft CIP category	Approximate amount	Anticipated Capital Needs	Growth-related needs	Funding priorities	Funding sources
Roads	$7.27 million				
Infrastructure	$5.12 million				

Draft CIP category	Approximate amount	Anticipated Capital Needs	Growth-related needs	Funding priorities	Funding sources
Vehicles	$3.08 million				
Facilities	$2.37 million				
Equipment	$0.80 million				

Capital planning is most useful when inputs are updated annually. Projects in this plan should enter the capital program only after those updates.

Fiscal Effects of Growth

The location and pattern of development affect municipal costs. Development farther from existing services can cost more per property to serve and maintain. Commercial development can strengthen the tax base while increasing demand for infrastructure and municipal services.

A fiscal-impact model can inform choices, but it should not be used as a substitute for housing, environmental, legal, or community goals.

POTENTIAL METHODS OF FUNDING CAPITAL INVESTMENT

"Pay-as-you-go" - 100% Current Year Financing

The "pay-as-you-go" method of funding capital improvements is the equivalent of paying cash, with local property tax, the usual revenue source. Therefore, only projects a community can afford in a given year are funded. Harrison uses this approach to fund many of the vehicle and equipment capital improvements identified in its annual CP. The "pay-as-you-go" approach ensures the maximum

cost of projects undertaken does not exceed the Town's willingness and ability to pay. However, it can foster postponement of "minor" capital item purchases that can result in greater future costs. It also does not work well for expensive projects because of the significant one-year impact on the tax rate.

"Pay-as-you-use" - Debt Financing

This debt financing approach typically involves issuing bonds to pay for capital improvements or economic development activities. The cost of the improvement and debt interest are calculated in the debt repayment schedule, which is typically spread out in even increments over a specified time period, usually from five to 20 years. The Town's ability to achieve the lowest possible financing costs is tied directly to its fiscal management, including the existence and adherence to formal fiscal policies. The Town of Harrison Debt Management Policy provides the Town with guidelines and information to manage debt levels by evaluating the need for capital investment against the capacity to pay for financing the costs of meeting that need.

This approach helps avoid a large municipal expenditure in a single year. It also offers predictability to the municipal budgeting process, since the annual amount needed to pay for the capital item(s) is known. Disadvantages to this approach include payment of interest on the bond amount, costs associated with issuing a bond, and the fact that the annual debt payment amount must be repaid, regardless of a community's financial ability to make the payment in any given year. Harrison has used this approach for some past road reconstruction and for the Public Works garage.

Low Interest Loans

Low interest loans are often available for infrastructure financing, development of affordable housing, and similar types of projects.

Impact Fees

The capital costs to provide new infrastructure to meet service demands caused by new development can be partly financed through the assessment of an impact fee. An impact fee can only be used to pay for capital items and not for replacement or maintenance costs. Impact fees are not a panacea to pay the cost of all new

infrastructure needs. The amount of the fee must be carefully calculated to reflect only the amount of demand caused by the new development, and the Town must strictly administer the fees collected.

Exactions

The Town of Harrison Planning Board routinely requires applicants for new projects to construct the needed infrastructure to serve their project and to upgrade off-site facilities to meet new demands associated with their development. The common word for this requirement is an exaction.-

Fund Balances and Reserve Funds

The fund balance is the municipal equivalent of a savings plan. When the Town exceeds the recommended fund balance, the Selectboard can choose to apply excess unassigned fund balance to purchase capital. Harrison has long used fund balances to aid in the purchase of equipment and other capital improvements that have a known service life. This practice can greatly benefit from an overall facilities maintenance and improvements plan and schedule to help the Town manage its tax rate.

Dedicated Reserve Fund

A dedicated reserve fund involves setting aside user fees collected for a specific service to pay for capital facility improvements. Harrison currently uses this approach in a limited manner for Recreation but should consider this for other areas (e.g. percentage of mooring fees for Harbormaster wages and boat launch fees collected for Harrison's two public boat launches.) This is sound fiscal policy and warrants further exploration to determine if this approach can be applied for other programs, including tourism and hospitality related costs and user fees.

Capital Improvement Districts & Special Assessments

Capital improvement districts allow the Town to obtain monies from the direct beneficiaries of the improvement to pay the cost to construct needed improvements. The Town government has not established specific capital improvement districts.

Grants

There are grant programs and cost-sharing funds available through state and federal agencies that can reduce the municipal fiscal burden of undertaking certain capital improvements. The Town currently contracts with a Grant Writer on a part-time basis.

Donations

Donations of funds, equipment, or property by an individual, corporation, or foundation are rarely major or consistent methods of financing capital improvements, but they are important sources that have greatly benefited the community. The role of the Town should be to continue encouraging private donations that benefit the public and to acknowledge the efforts of those who contribute.

Enterprise Funds

The Town operates a number of enterprise funds that are designed to be mostly self-sustaining through user fees and grants. All funds are designed to maintain some activity or capital assets and are not intended to amass a large net revenue position.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District

TIFs enable municipalities to reinvest property tax revenue from increased assessed value within a designated area. Although Harrison does not currently use TIF districts, other Maine municipalities such as Richmond, Wilton and Oxford do.

TRENDS

1. **Costs are rising**

Construction, paving, vehicles, insurance, and emergency-service costs have risen faster than general inflation. Grants can reduce local cost but often require matches, project readiness, and future maintenance. State education and revenue-sharing decisions can also change local exposure.

2. **Infrastructure is getting old and outdated.**

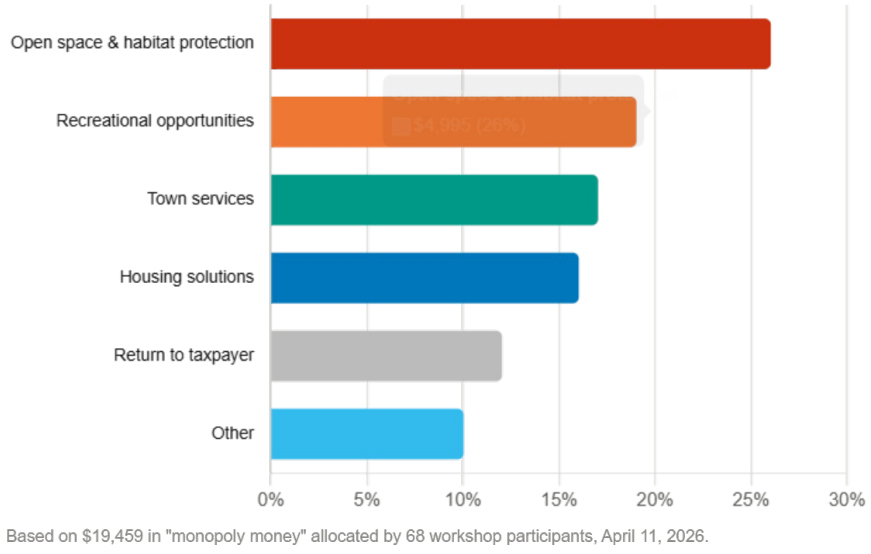
Aging infrastructure and deferred maintenance create fiscal risk even in years when taxes are held down. Transparent reserves, recurring condition assessments, and a stable project pipeline can reduce emergency borrowing and improve grant competitiveness.

GPCOG staff want to know if there are any specific examples of this

PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Tax stabilization ranked seventh by average survey score but was placed in the top three by 27.0% of respondents. In the workshop investment exercise, about 12% of allocated funds were returned to the taxpayer, while most funds were directed to open space, recreation, services, and housing.

Town Investment Prioritization in Public Feedback

Survey	N/A
Workshop findings	 Based on $19,459 in "monopoly money" allocated by 68 workshop participants, April 11, 2026. • Workshop participants allocated their money to the above priorities
Other Input	N/A

Significance	Public feedback reflects both cost sensitivity and willingness to invest in visible priorities. Project descriptions should state total cost, local share, operating effect, funding source, and expected public benefit.

STATE REQUIREMENTS

How will future capital investments identified in the plan be funded?

The Comprehensive Plan does not commit to funding specific individual items but estimated costs per strategy, where known, are listed in the Implementation Chart in Appendix xxx.

If the community plans to borrow to pay for capital investments, does the community have sufficient borrowing capacity to obtain the necessary funds?
Harrison has substantial borrowing capacity under both the statutory debt limit (30-A M.R.S. §5702) and the Maine Bond Bank's fiscal stress benchmarks. At $3,123,396 outstanding, the town is using less than 5% of its most restrictive applicable statutory debt ceiling and has approximately $61.7 million in remaining general-purpose borrowing capacity. Annual debt service of $295,560 represents just 3.6% of General Fund expenditures, well under the Bond Bank's 10% stress threshold. If planned capital investments require new borrowing, statutory and fiscal capacity are not limiting factors.

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?

- **Ecomaine:** Harrison is a member of Ecomaine, the regional solid waste and recycling corporation. Harrison has a 1.65% ownership share. Members are bound by interlocal waste-handling agreements. Harrison's share of projected landfill closure costs is about $304,519.
- **Overlapping debt:** Harrison carries a share of Cumberland County debt (about $602K) and MSAD #17 debt (about $1.74M). These are required by Harrison's membership in the county and school district.
- **Waterford recreation:** Harrison and Waterford participate in a Recreational Services Agreement

Identify community revenues and expenditures by category for the last five (5) years and explain trends.

Revenues

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Operating grants and contributions	46,583	58,880	67,525	-	-
Charges for services	203,937	222,421	220,487	233,335	162,280
Taxes	8,622,787	7,799,335	7,491,661	7,479,650	6,982,774
Grants	709,427	581,266	455,006	390,181	295,791
Investment income	241,730	169,621	(136,597)	292,543	83,518
Interest and lien fees	40,015	22,749	20,072	36,961	40,526
Other revenue	153,134	114,226	86,934	181,204	40,241

Expenses

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
General government	1,213,384	1,459,793	890,005	1,080,779	797,634
Protection	704,994	688,259	510,499	470,353	615,463
Health and sanitation	383,406	333,428	306,197	293,853	261,846
Public works	1,556,174	1,514,786	1,323,000	1,220,266	918,495
Special assessments	3,831,986	4,089,130	3,968,149	4,027,706	3,876,842
Community Programs	438,414	382,358	367,820	335,501	327,350
Unclassified	125,409	174,969	158,430	116,788	49,446
Interest on long-term debt	18,956	-	10,557	17,199	27,139

Capital Outlay	-	-	115,222	74,861	-

From 2020 to 2024, Harrison's reported revenues increased by roughly 32% from approximately $7.6 million to $10.0 million. Taxes remained the largest revenue source. Unrestricted state grants more than doubled over this period, while investment income fluctuated from year to year.

Reported expenses increased by roughly 20% from approximately $6.9 million to $8.3 million. County and school assessments remained the largest expense category. Public works expenses increased by approximately 69%, while health and sanitation expenses increased by 46% and community program expenses increased by 34%.

The preceding tables use government-wide accounting, which includes long-term assets and obligations. Capital purchases generally become assets, with their costs recognized over time through depreciation. Debt principal payments reduce outstanding debt rather than appearing as expenses. As a result, the difference between revenues and expenses does not represent cash remaining after all annual spending. A blank capital outlay entry also does not mean the town made no capital purchases that year.

To provide a clearer picture of annual spending and the use of accumulated funds, the following table summarizes Harrison's 2024 governmental fund revenues and expenditures.

2024 Revenues, Spending and Fund Balance

Item	2024
Total governmental fund revenues	$9,930,272
Total governmental fund expenditures, including capital outlay	$11,710,626
Capital outlay included in expenditures above	$3,595,088
Change in total governmental fund balances	–$1,780,354

Source: Town of Harrison audited financial statements for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024.

In 2024, Harrison's overall net position increased by approximately $1.74 million. However, governmental fund expenditures exceeded revenues by approximately $1.78 million as the town used accumulated funds for capital investment. These results are consistent: the town can spend reserves to acquire or improve long-term assets while increasing its overall net position.

The effects differed by fund. After transfers, the General Fund balance increased by approximately $767,000, while the Combined Capital Fund balance declined by approximately $2.70 million, ending the year at approximately $1.45 million.

The 2024 results therefore should not be described simply as an annual surplus. They show both an increase in the town's overall net position and a reduction in funds available for future spending. Future fiscal planning should evaluate remaining reserves, upcoming capital commitments and the town's ability to replenish funds used for capital projects.

Describe means of funding capital items (reserve funds, bonding, etc.) and identify any outside funding sources.

According to the May 2026 Capital Improvement Plan, capital items are funded through capital expenditures, taxes, grants, bond proceeds and reserve funding.

Identify local and state valuations and local mil rates for the last five (5) years.

Year	Valuation	Mill Rate
2026	$1,100,600,000	
2025	$1,064,250,000	$8.205
2024	$864,350,000	$7.70
2023	$702,900,000	$12.950
2022	$628,650,000	$11.900

How does total municipal debt (including shares of county, school and utility) compare with the statutory and Maine Bond Bank recommended limits on such debt?

As of June 30, 2024, Harrison's outstanding bond payable was $3,123,396, down from $3,400,000 the prior year. Measured against the town's full state valuation of

$864,350,000 in 2024, this represents approximately 0.36% of full value — well below both the Maine Bond Bank's suggested stress threshold of 8% and the statutory ceiling of 15% of full state valuation under 30-A M.R.S. §5702. Total remaining debt service, including interest, is $4,145,243 over the life of the outstanding bonds. Annual debt service for fiscal year 2024 was $295,560 ($170,595 principal, $124,965 interest), representing approximately 3.6% of the town's total General Fund expenditures of $8,272,723 also well below the Bond Bank's suggested stress threshold of 10%. By both measures, Harrison's debt position is well within statutory limits and shows no signs of the fiscal stress the Bond Bank's benchmarks are designed to flag.

GOALS & ACTIONS

1. ***Make municipal costs and tradeoffs clear.***
    - Town Staff will publish a fiscal snapshot showing valuation, taxes, debt, reserves, operating drivers, and capital obligations and work to reduce Maine's tax burden by staying within LD 1 spending limitations. (Annually)
    - Town Staff will show each capital project's cost, funding, useful life, operating effect, status, and responsible department. (Annually)
    - The Selectboard, in partnership with the Harrison Budget Committee, will adopt written reserve, debt, and capital-prioritization policies. (By 2028)
2. ***Diversify revenue and reduce lifecycle costs.***
    - Town Staff will maintain a grant-readiness list for priority projects. (Annually)
    - Use Tax Increment Financing TIF Districts as a method to attract new business in designated growth areas (2030)
    - Town Staff will use lifecycle costs and preventive maintenance when comparing capital options. (Ongoing)
3. ***Align land use, infrastructure, and fiscal capacity.***
    - Town Staff will prepare a service-cost and fiscal-impact analysis for major land-use alternatives. (Before zoning adoption)
    - The Selectboard will adopt a financing plan for priority roads, facilities, public safety, water, and wastewater projects. (2030–2032)
    - The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee will review the Capital Improvement Plan for consistency with growth and rural policies. (Annually)

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

Harrison provides local government, public works, fire and emergency response, code enforcement, parks, recreation, libraries, solid-waste services, and emergency management with a small staff and many volunteers. Aging facilities, recruitment timelines, seasonal demand, and new regulatory responsibilities are increasing pressure.

Due to the small size of Harrison, some resources, such as public safety staff and school districts, are shared between municipalities. However, this approach is more successful for some services than others, and gaps remain in Harrison that would be exacerbated by future growth or population increase.

Mission: Upgrade public facilities and services to match demand and coordinate future investments in services and facility upgrades through the Capital Improvement Plan.

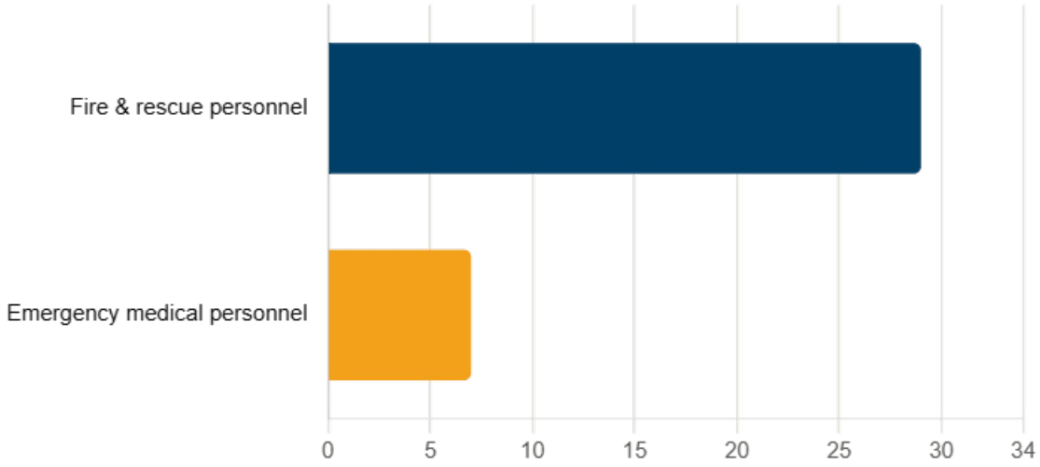
[Map: recommend adding a Public Facilities location map showing the Town Office, Fire Station, Transfer Station, Harrison Village Library, Bolsters Mills Library, and the Harrison Water District's two wells, following the numbering convention of the other chapters' maps.]

409 Fire & Rescue incidents in 2024	**4** Public Works crew positions	**581** code inspections in latest reporting year

INVENTORY

Public Safety and Emergency Management

The Fire and Rescue Department reported 409 incidents in 2024, including 216 emergency medical calls. A March 2024 organizational review and strategic plan, commissioned from Municipal Resources Inc., found 375 average annual calls from 2021 through 2023 and identified daytime response capacity, staffing, training, procedures, leadership, communications, and long-term capital planning as priorities. The same review found that 9 percent of EMS calls in 2023 received no response at all. Workshop materials reported 29 volunteer Fire and Rescue personnel and seven emergency medical personnel as of 2023.



Harrison also has two county deputies that cover the town for 80 hours per week. Total calls from January 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026, were 2,649, with 5 percent considered critical emergency calls, 20 percent high-priority calls, and 65 percent administrative or preventative calls. Two hospitals, Bridgton Hospital and MaineHealth Stephens Hospital, are within 20 minutes of Harrison, along with two ambulances covering the town.

The Municipal Resources Inc. review recommended a full-time chief, weekday per-diem coverage, at least two trained personnel for apparatus response, updated procedures, and a 20-year capital plan. The review also cautioned that mutual aid from neighboring communities, without a formal contract in place,

cannot substitute for Harrison building its own adequate capacity, and framed itself as a steppingstone toward evaluating regionalized fire service delivery in the future rather than a present-day solution. Emergency Management also coordinates storm response, exercises, shelters, and reimbursement; the April 2024 snowstorm generated more than $49,000 in reported federal reimbursement. The Select Board is also in the process of establishing a Public Safety Committee to address concerns related to aging facilities and new regulatory responsibilities.

Public Works, Stormwater, Solid Waste, and Utilities

A four-person Public Works crew maintains roads, drainage, culverts, signs, shoulders, dirt roads, snow operations, and municipal infrastructure. A new Public Works facility at Edes Falls and Carsley roads represents a major recent investment. A major culvert replacement project is already underway at the same location, supported by a $500,000 grant against an $881,740 total project cost. The town has not yet completed a comprehensive culvert, ditch, and erosion inventory, which its own goals identify as a needed step toward ranking future corrective projects rather than responding project by project; how future development would affect the stormwater system's overall capacity has not yet been analyzed. Harrison is not a regulated Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System, or MS4, community, and because the town has no municipal sewer system, it has no combined sewer overflows to manage.

The Transfer Station provides solid-waste and recycling services.

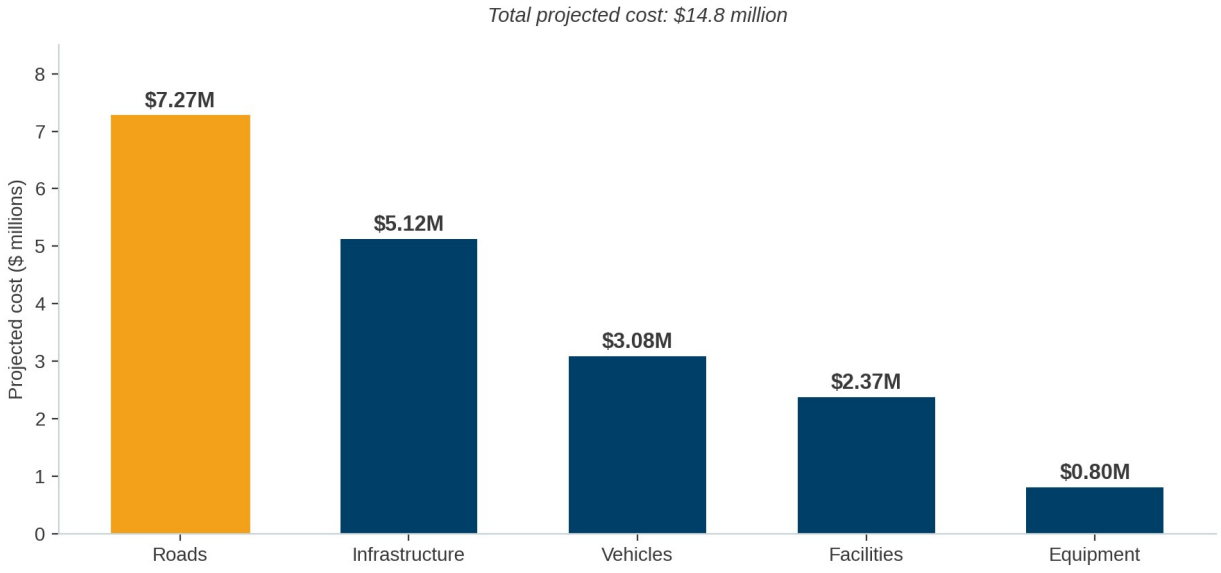
Harrison staff need to provide more information about the Transfer Station and solid waste.

The Harrison Water District serves approximately 813 people across portions of Harrison and North Bridgton, drawing from two gravel wells. Both wells are covered by an active Wellhead Protection Ordinance extending across the full wellhead protection area and the 2,500-foot Phase II/V waiver radius. Per the Harrison Water District, there are no current proposed expansion projects. Most properties outside the district rely on private wells and septic systems, and Dyer Excavation and Septic, located on Norway Road, is a licensed septage disposal

and compost facility holding a Maine Waste Discharge License for sub-surface wastewater disposal, representing at least part of how the town's septage is processed and managed. Cell service and sewer service is not available townwide, and broadband, cell service, and electrical capacity have all been identified elsewhere in this plan as possible constraints on business expansion.

The town's draft Capital Improvement Plan identifies approximately $14.8 million in projects to address facility, infrastructure, and equipment needs across the planning period, including $7.27 million for roads, $5.12 million for infrastructure, $3.08 million for vehicles, $2.37 million for facilities, and $0.80 million for equipment. These figures represent the estimated cost of the capital improvements described throughout this section.

Draft Capital Improvement Plan by Category



Source: Town of Harrison draft Capital Improvement Plan, May 2026.

Administration, Code, Libraries, and Community Services

Town administration supports elections, finance, assessing, records, planning, code enforcement, public information, and governing boards. Code activity increased to 172 building permits, 131 plumbing permits, 581 inspections, 37 new homes, and 866 walk-in contacts in the latest annual reporting period.

Harrison Village Library reported 9,782 circulated items, 6,809 visits, and 2,355 program participants in its 2023 to 2024 reporting year. Bolsters Mills Library, volunteer-run in a former two-room schoolhouse, provides Wi-Fi, computers, and local collections despite limited building infrastructure, a constraint that should be weighed directly against any future growth in demand for its services. The Parks and Recreation Department, General Assistance Department, and regional or nonprofit partners complete the local service network. Harrison does not currently have a street tree program.

GPCOG is looking to see if there are any other town services that should be highlighted in this inventory.

TRENDS

1. **Like the rest of the state, Harrison faces difficulties recruiting certified EMS professionals and Harrison's aging population may exacerbate this.**

Volunteer emergency-service models face recruitment, training, availability, and call-volume pressure across Maine. Harrison's older population and seasonal peaks may increase medical and response needs.

The town received a grant to put on an Emergency Responder training course but has struggled to find a company to host it.

2. **Code enforcement and planning workload will also rise if the town adopts more detailed land-use standards or if the housing stock increases.**
3. **Harrison may consider more regionalism and sharing of services if population were to increase.**

Regional delivery can improve specialized capacity, but shared services require clear governance, cost allocation, response standards, and local accountability. Investments in records, asset management, backup power, communications, and cybersecurity are now core public-service needs.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Survey	• Survey respondents identified infrastructure, roads, utilities, and internet as constraints but ranked individual infrastructure topics below water and open space overall
Workshop findings	• Town services received about 17 percent of the workshop investment allocation
Other Input	N/A
Significance	• This pattern supports targeted service investment tied to documented risk and visible public benefit • Staffing and facility proposals should include service standards, alternatives, and long-term cost

STATE REQUIREMENTS

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

While the answer to this question may vary based on what municipal service is being discussed, the overarching answer is no. If Harrison wants to expand development and housing in the future, they will struggle because of insufficient sewer infrastructure. Additionally, there is a shortage of EMS professionals that left some 9% of EMS calls unanswered. When it comes to schools, however, due to falling enrollment, there is adequate school infrastructure if the population were to increase.

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

Some sharing already exists: two Cumberland County Sheriff's deputies cover Harrison 80 hours per week, and RTP's Lake Region Explorer and microtransit pilot are regional transit partnerships. Two hospitals in neighboring communities, Bridgton Hospital and MaineHealth Stephens Hospital, serve as Harrison's de facto regional healthcare partners.

Harrison has a strong mutual aid program for the fire departments, but call volume is overall pretty low.

If the community has a public sewer system, what issues or concerns are there currently and/or anticipated in the future? Is the sanitary district extension policy consistent with the Future Land Use Plan as required by (38 M.R.S.A. §1163), or will it be?

Not applicable; Harrison has no public sewer system at all

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

Harrison has a public water system that serves 813 people across Harrison and North Brigdton, drawing from two gravel wells with an active Wellhead Protection Ordinance covering the full wellhead protection area and the 2,500-foot Phase II/V waiver radius. Per the Harrison Water District website, there are no current proposed projects.

If the town does not have a public sewer or water system, is this preventing the community from accommodating current and projected growth?

Water and sewer infrastructure limitations are explicitly cited as a constraint on multifamily and higher-density housing development in Harrison.

Are existing stormwater management facilities adequately maintained? What improvements are needed? How might future development affect the existing system?

A four-person Public Works crew maintains roads, drainage, culverts, signs, shoulders, dirt roads, and winter operations. Culvert and drainage maintenance is ongoing, and a major culvert replacement project is already underway at Edes Falls and Carsley Roads, supported by a $500,000 grant against an $881,740 total project cost. The town has not yet completed a comprehensive culvert, ditch, and erosion inventory, which its own goals identify as a needed step toward ranking future corrective projects rather than responding project by project. How future development would affect the system's overall capacity has not yet been analyzed.

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

Most Harrison properties rely on private septic systems, since the town has no municipal sewer. Dyer Excavation and Septic, located on Norway Road, is a licensed septage disposal and compost facility holding a Maine Waste Discharge License for sub-surface wastewater disposal, and represents at least part of how the town's septage is processed and managed.

Is school construction or expansion anticipated during the planning period? Are there opportunities to promote new residential development around existing and proposed schools?

There is one elementary school in town. The current one was built in the early 90s and it was for Harrison students only. Since then, enrollment has plummeted in Harrison and Waterford so Waterford students began attending in Harrison.
The school district is considering a further consolidation by building a new school, but it is unclear what town it would be located in.
There are concerns from the community that there would not be a school in town and that students would be subject to longer bus trips.

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

Harrison's emergency response system shows real gaps that the town has already identified and begun to plan for. A March 2024 organizational review and strategic plan, commissioned from Municipal Resources Inc., found that 9% of EMS calls in 2023 received no response at all, and identified daytime response capacity, staffing, training, procedures, leadership, communications, and long-term capital planning as priority concerns. The study recommended a specific set of improvements: a full-time chief, a group of per-diem staff to fill weekday shifts, at least two trained personnel responding on each incident, expanded standard operating procedures, and a 20-year capital plan. The report explicitly cautions that mutual aid from neighboring communities, without a formal contract in place, cannot substitute for Harrison building its own adequate capacity. Harrison's own Goals & Actions already commit to phasing these recommendations between 2027 and 2031.

Is the solid waste management system meeting current needs? Is the community reducing the reliance on waste disposal and increasing recycling opportunities? Are improvements needed to meet future demand?

The waste management system is meeting capacity, but on some summer days it is close to exceeding. If population were to increase, the town would need a plan for growth for the transfer station. Harrison has a single-sort recycling program through EcoMaine.

Are improvements needed in the telecommunications and energy infrastructure?

Cell service and electrical capacity are identified as possible constraints to business expansion in the economy chapter.

Are local and regional health care facilities and public health and social service programs adequate to meet the needs of the community?

Harrison has two bordering towns that have hospitals. Trauma services for higher acuity patients is farther, requiring a commute to MMC Portland. There is not much in the area for public health, but Harrison there is a local health officer and general assistance. The Cumberland County Sherriff's Office has mental health liaisons on staff that can be deployed for calls. There are some gaps in social services. For example, Harrison has people that are repeatedly sent to the hospital only to be sent home and dealt with again that probably would benefit from more available social services programs. There are no assisted living or elderly housing options here in Harrison.

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

The town office would be able to accommodate growth by about three positions. There is a long-term plan under consideration that would involve building a parks and recreation building at Crystal Lake Park, which would allow for expansion of either the meeting room or additional offices if needed.

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

This question can't be meaningfully answered until Harrison's Future Land Use Plan formally designates Growth and Rural Areas.

Does the community have a street tree program?
Harrison does not currently have a street tree program.

GOALS & ACTIONS

1. ***Track facilities, services, and maintenance needs.***

- Town Staff will maintain an inventory of facilities, fleet, equipment, staffing, service demand, and mutual aid. (Annually)
- Town Staff will track service and preventive maintenance gaps during budget development. (Annually)
- Town Staff will maintain continuity, cybersecurity, communications, shelter, and backup-power procedures. (Annually)

2. ***Strengthen staffing, partnerships, and service delivery.***

- The Selectboard will phase priority fire-services recommendations and report on staffing, response, training, and cost. (2027–2031)
- Town Staff will evaluate shared public safety, code, planning, library, transportation, solid-waste, and social services. (2028–2030)
- Town Staff will hire a consultant to prepare an accessibility program to ensure Americans with Disabilities Act compliance for municipal buildings, parks, communications, and emergency services. (By 2029)

3. ***Provide resilient facilities and service capacity.***

- Town Staff will complete facility master plans and 20-year capital schedules. (2029–2032)
- The Selectboard will fund priority staffing and capital improvements through the annual budget and Capital Improvement Plan with a focus on EMS personnel to ensure 100% of 911 calls are answered. (Ongoing)
- The Selectboard will locate and size major facilities and service extensions to support growth areas and rural response. (As projects are proposed)

TRANSPORTATION

INTRODUCTION

Harrison's transportation system is composed of state and local roads, bridges, culverts, sidewalks, trails, and other transportation infrastructure that provide connections throughout the community. Year-round and seasonal residents, visitors, workers, and people traveling through the Lakes Region rely on this network to reach homes, businesses, and essential services. Emergency responders and freight carriers also depend on a safe and reliable transportation system to serve Harrison and the surrounding region.

The Town's principal transportation corridors, Routes 117 and 35, intersect in Harrison Village, making the Village an important center of both local and regional travel. The Village also contains Harrison's sidewalk network. A person walking from one side of the Village to the other can reach local shops and restaurants, the Town Hall and Library, the public boat launch, and two parks with beach access on Long Lake and Crystal Lake. This concentration of transportation infrastructure and community destinations makes the Village an important focus for transportation planning.

Harrison's transportation needs have changed since the 2009 Comprehensive Plan. While maintaining roads and bridges remains a major responsibility, transportation planning has broadened to consider infrastructure resilience, public transit, walking and bicycling, accessibility, and connections between transportation and land use. The following sections describe Harrison's existing transportation network, remaining needs, and priorities for the future.

Mission: Develop and maintain a safe, efficient transportation system that supports anticipated economic and residential growth in Harrison.

2 State-route Corridors	**20%** Of Survey Respondents identified Road Repair and Safety as a needed improvement.	**46.7%** Of Survey Respondents identified Parking and Access as Business Constraints.

INVENTORY

Road Network

Harrison's road network includes local roads, private roads, two state routes, and one state-aid road. Routes 117 and 35 connect Harrison with Bridgton, Naples, Otisfield, Waterford, and the broader Lakes Region.

Maine State Routes

Route 35, which connects Kennebunk to Bethel, passes north-south through Harrison and intersects Route 117 in the Village Center. The State is responsible for maintaining Route 35, including approximately 7.2 miles, or 38,016 linear feet, within Harrison.

Route 117 travels east-west through Harrison, connecting the town with Bridgton and communities to the west. Within the Village Center, Route 117 serves as Harrison's Main Street. The State manages approximately 5.1 miles, or 26,928 linear feet, of Route 117 within Harrison.

The two routes have different levels of importance within MaineDOT's highway classification system. MaineDOT uses these classifications to help establish priorities for highway maintenance and investment and is responsible for projects and access decisions along both state routes. Route 117 through Harrison is classified as a Highway Corridor Priority 2 roadway, reflecting its importance as a regional arterial. Route 35 through Harrison is classified as Highway Corridor Priority 4. The shared Route 117 & 35 segment through Harrison Village is classified as Highway Corridor Priority 2.

STATE HIGHWAY	HIGHWAY CORRIDOR PRIORITY	ROLE IN HARRISON
ROUTE 117	2	Primary east-west corridor serving Harrison Village and regional travel
ROUTE 35	4	North-south corridor connecting Harrison with Naples and Waterford
SHARED ROUTE 117 & 35 SEGMENT	2	Principal state-highway segment through Harrison Village

State-aid Roads

A state-aid road is locally owned and maintained but is eligible for state funding through the MaineDOT State-Aid Highway Program. Bolsters Mill Road is the only state-aid road in Harrison, providing an important connection between Otisfield and Route 117. The Town is responsible for winter maintenance, while state funding may support eligible improvements such as resurfacing, reconstruction, drainage improvements, culvert replacement, shoulder work, guardrails, and minor bridge repairs.

Local Roads

Harrison has approximately 66.12 centerline miles, or 132.24 lane miles, of public roads. Town roads range from streets within the Village Center to rural roads throughout the community, including some gravel roads. The Harrison Public Works Department maintains local roads and provides winter plowing and sanding. Its responsibilities also include maintaining drainage systems, ditches, shoulders, culverts, signs, sidewalks, curbs, and guardrails, as well as pothole repairs and other routine roadway maintenance. Gravel roads are maintained using material from Harrison's municipally owned gravel pit.

Private Roads

Harrison also has an estimated 39.81 miles of private roads, making them an important part of overall access within the community even though they are not publicly maintained. Private property owners or road associations are generally responsible for road repairs, snow removal and sanding, vegetation management, drainage, signage, and other necessary upkeep. Maintenance responsibilities should be clearly established when new development relies on private roads.

ADDITIONAL STATE REQUIREMENTS

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

Maintaining and improving local roads is a major part of Harrison's capital planning. The Fiscal Year 2027 Town Budget allocated $886,183 for paving projects and roadway improvements, including $610,000 for the Capital Roads appropriation. Harrison has historically appropriated approximately $610,000 annually for capital road work, with funding directed toward roads identified as having the greatest need. The Town expects road funding to remain a significant annual capital expense and will refine future funding needs through its five-year road improvement plan.

Are conflicts caused by multiple road uses, such as a major state or U.S. route that passes through the community or its downtown and serves as a local service road as well?

Yes, Route 117 serves multiple transportation functions as it passes through Harrison Village. It is both a state highway carrying traffic that is passing through Harrison, and the Village's Main Street, providing access to businesses, public facilities, parks, waterfront areas, parking, and local streets. Route 35 also intersects Route 117 in the Village. As a result, thru-traffic, local vehicle trips, parking, property access, and pedestrian activity are concentrated within the same area.

MaineDOT traffic counts illustrate the importance of this corridor. Portions of Route 117 and the shared Route 117 & 35 segment through and near the Village carry approximately 5,000 to 5,600 vehicles per day.

Pedestrian safety has been an ongoing concern within the Village. The 2023 Harrison Downtown Plan identified pedestrian safety as one of the highest priorities raised through public input. Since that planning process, pedestrian safety improvements have included work on sidewalks and crossings and the installation of pedestrian-activated rapid-rectangular flashing beacons (RRFBs) at selected crosswalks along Main Street. The beacons increase the visibility of pedestrians crossing Route 117 and help address conflicts between pedestrian activity and vehicle traffic traveling through the Village. The Plan recommends continued coordination with MaineDOT on future safety improvements.

MaineDOT crash data provides broader context for transportation safety in Harrison. During the five-year period analyzed, 544 crashes were reported townwide. Run-off-road crashes were the most common crash type, accounting for 259 crashes, or nearly half of the total. Deer collisions accounted for another 157 crashes, or approximately 29 percent. The data also included 44 rear-end or sideswipe crashes, 41 intersection-related crashes, 13 head-on or sideswipe crashes, five rollover crashes, two pedestrian crashes, and one bicycle crash. Crash-related injuries included three fatalities and 18 suspected serious injuries.

These townwide crash statistics do not necessarily indicate conditions within Harrison Village. MaineDOT crash data should therefore continue to be monitored by location to identify crash patterns and areas of concern within the Village and to help determine whether additional pedestrian, intersection, access-management, or traffic-calming improvements are warranted.

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

Harrison regulates access and traffic impacts through its Site Plan Review Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and driveway permitting. The Site Plan Review Ordinance requires entrances and exits to provide safe access, adequate sight distance, and minimal conflict with traffic flow. The Subdivision Ordinance addresses safe vehicular access and circulation, traffic capacity, pedestrian safety, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and street connections in designated growth areas. Where necessary, improvements such as turning lanes, traffic islands, and traffic controls may be required. The Town also uses a Driveway Opening or Excavation Permit for access involving local roads, while entrances along state highways are subject to MaineDOT permitting. Harrison does not have a separate comprehensive access-management or local traffic-permitting ordinance; instead, these issues are addressed through existing development review standards and coordination with MaineDOT.

Do planned or recently built subdivision roads (residential or commercial) simply dead-end or do they allow for expansion to adjacent land and encourage the creation of a network of local streets? Where dead-ends are unavoidable, are mechanisms in place to encourage shorter dead-ends resulting in compact and efficient subdivision designs?

Harrison's subdivision standards provide some mechanisms for creating an interconnected road network. The Subdivision Ordinance requires provisions for street connections to adjoining properties in designated growth areas where site conditions allow and where the connection would improve emergency access or provide connections between existing or potential uses. The New Road Construction Ordinance also requires plans for new roads to identify planned or anticipated future street extensions.

Harrison also allows permanent dead-end roads. The New Road Construction Ordinance requires dead-end roads to provide either a cul-de-sac or a T-shaped turnaround but does not establish a maximum length for dead-end roads or specifically require shorter dead-ends to encourage compact subdivision design.

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

Do the local road design standards support bicycle and pedestrian transportation?

Harrison's New Road Construction Ordinance provides limited support to bicycle and pedestrian transportation. This ordinance establishes standards for roadways, shoulders, curbs, sidewalks, and other road infrastructure. The ordinance requires two-foot shoulders

on minor roads and four-foot shoulders on major roads, which can provide some additional space along the roadway for pedestrians and bicyclists, but often will not be sufficient for safe access by pedetrians and bicyclists.

The ordinance does not establish specific standards for bicycle facilities or require sidewalks or other pedestrian facilities as part of new road construction. It also does not establish standards for pedestrian and bicycle connections between new development and existing neighborhoods, sidewalks, trails, or community destinations. As a result, Harrison's current road design standards provide some opportunity to accommodate walking and bicycling, but do not specifically require new roads to be designed for bicycle and pedestrian transportation.

Active Transportation

Though driving remains the primary mode of transportation for most Harrison residents, many use human-powered travel such as walking, bicycling, and rolling. In Harrison, these activities serve both transportation and recreational purposes. Some residents use active transportation to reach work, school, and other destinations. Others walk, bike, or use trails to exercise and enjoy nature.

Pedestrian Infrastructure

Harrison's sidewalk network is concentrated within the Village Center. Sidewalks and crosswalks provide access to businesses, municipal facilities, parks, waterfront areas, parking, and other Village destinations.

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

Harrison's sidewalk network provides relatively good connections among destinations within the Village, but connections to residential areas outside the Village are limited. The network does not extend continuously to Harrison Elementary School or most outlying residential areas.

The Downtown Revitalization Plan identified opportunities to close gaps and improve connections among Main Street, Waterford Road, Depot Street, the Harrison Food Bank, and Crystal Lake. Recommendations included creating a sidewalk loop, improving crossings, pedestrian lighting and wayfinding, and addressing traffic speeds and other barriers to pedestrian travel.

Pedestrian infrastructure has continued to improve since completion of the Downtown Plan. Recent work has included ADA-compliant sidewalk and ramp improvements near Main and Front Streets, upgraded crossings along Main Street, and pedestrian-activated flashing beacons at selected crosswalks. The Town has also coordinated with MaineDOT on Route 117 improvements and opportunities for additional sidewalk and crossing improvements.

Bicycle Infrastructure

Harrison currently has no dedicated bicycle lanes.

How are walking and bicycling integrated into the community's transportation network (including access to schools, parks, and other community destinations)?

Walking is integrated most strongly into the transportation network within Harrison Village, where sidewalks and crossings connect many community destinations. Outside the Village, walking and bicycling generally occur along road shoulders, resulting in more limited connections between residential areas and daily destinations. Recreational trails provide additional opportunities for walking and bicycling but generally function as recreational facilities rather than transportation connections. Future improvements should focus on addressing prioritized pedestrian gaps, improving the safety of pedestrian crossings, and considering walking and bicycling needs when road improvements and new development occur.

The 2023 Downtown Revitalization Action Plan identifies several specific opportunities to expand Harrison's walking network. Potential improvements include new sidewalks along Lincoln Street, Depot Street, and Waterford Road; a trail connection from Mill Park to Main Street; safer pedestrian access between the Long Lake boat ramp and nearby shoreline businesses; and continued sidewalk and crossing improvements throughout the Village. The plan also recommends improving wayfinding for pedestrians and bicyclists to Village amenities, nearby neighborhoods, regional trails, and cultural resources. These connections could help link parks, waterfront areas, businesses, the Harrison Food Bank, and residential areas more directly to the Village sidewalk network.

Trail Infrastructure

Harrison has recreational trails that provide opportunities for walking, hiking, and mountain biking. Twin Bridges Preserve, located off Route 117, contains approximately three miles of trails along the Crooked River and is maintained by the Western Foothills Land Trust. The trails provide recreational access to the river but are not considered

suitable for mountain biking because of the environmental sensitivity of the area.Crooked River Forest, located off Maple Ridge Road, contains approximately two miles of trails along another section of the Crooked River. Mountain biking is allowed on designated trails within the forest. The trail network is managed through partnerships involving the Western Foothills Land Trust, Loon Echo Land Trust, Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, The Nature Conservancy, and the Town of Harrison.

Public Transit

Harrison does not have a local fixed-route transit system. Harrison residents can access regional transportation through the Lake Region Explorer and the Regional Transportation Program (RTP) microtransit pilot program.

The Lake Region Explorer is a fixed-route regional bus system that connects the towns of Bridgton, Naples, Casco, Raymond and Windham to the cities of Westbrook and Portland. The closest bus stop to Harrison is located about 5 miles from the Village at the Bridgton Community Center. The Lake Region Explorer serves the public and is supported by a combination of Federal Transit, Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT), and local funding. No reservations are required to ride the bus.

The RTP provides transportation services in the Lakes Region using buses, vans, and volunteer drivers. Services are open to the public, with programs serving older adults, people with disabilities, low-income residents, and others with transportation needs. These services are particularly important for residents who do not have reliable access to a vehicle and may depend on public transit, family members, volunteer drivers, or other transportation arrangements to reach health care, employment, food, and other essential services.

In 2025, RTP received a $99,576 MaineDOT grant to launch a microtransit pilot program in Harrison. The program provides reserved, door-to-door trips to local destinations and nearby communities using an ADA-accessible van. Residents book rides in advance by phone or app, and fares are kept low through shared rides and subsidies. Continuation of the pilot depends on available funding and program performance.

Do available transit services meet the current and foreseeable needs of community residents? If transit services are not adequate, how will the community address the needs?

Transit options have expanded, but they do not provide a comprehensive alternative to driving. Harrison has no local fixed-route service, and residents must travel to Bridgton to directly access the Lake Region Explorer. RTP’s microtransit pilot provides a more flexible

option within Harrison and nearby communities, particularly for residents who cannot reliably drive. The Town should continue coordinating with RTP and regional partners to evaluate the microtransit pilot, identify unmet transportation needs, and pursue funding to maintain or expand services that prove effective.

If the community hosts a transportation terminal, such as an airport, passenger rail station, or ferry terminal, how does it connect to other transportation modes (e.g. automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, transit)?

Harrison does not host a transportation terminal, such as an airport, passenger rail station, or ferry terminal, so this question is not applicable.

If the community hosts or abuts a public airport, what coordination has been undertaken to ensure that required airspace is protected?

Harrison does not host or abut a public airport, so this question is not applicable.

If you are a coastal community are land-side or water-side transportation facilities needed? How will the community address these needs?

Harrison is not a coastal community; therefore, the coastal transportation facility requirement is not applicable.

Public Parking

Public parking is concentrated primarily within Harrison Village and around municipal and recreational facilities. Published Town planning documents do not provide a complete count of spaces in each municipal parking area, but they identify the following capacity and usage conditions:

PUBLIC PARKING AREA	DOCUMENTED CAPACITY / USE INFORMATION
Town Office	Off-street public parking is available; used for Town Office business, meetings, elections, and nearby Village destinations.
Crystal Lake Park	Gravel parking area serves park, beach, recreation, events, and the boat launch. The Downtown Plan found the lot

	inefficient because spaces and access aisles are not clearly defined.
Crystal Lake boat launch	Only a few boat-trailer spaces are available; the Downtown Plan found this capacity likely sufficient.
Long Lake boat launch / waterfront	Parking serves waterfront and boat-launch activity. Boat and snowmobile trailer parking is limited, particularly during periods of high recreational use.
Olde Mill Tavern area	Off-street parking is available adjacent to the building and contributes to Village parking supply.
Farmers market / Bear River area	Only limited parking is available.
Mill Park	The Downtown Plan identifies the area as a potential location for additional, better-defined off-street parking.

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Harrison currently has no public electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, so most local EV charging likely occurs at private residences. Public Level 2 chargers are available in nearby communities, including Bridgton, Casco, Norway, and Windham. As EV use increases, Harrison may want to evaluate opportunities for public charging at municipal or commercial locations.

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

The Downtown Revitalization Plan identified several parking issues within the Village, including diagonal parking near the Post Office, limited visibility near the Harrison Heights intersection, inefficient use of the gravel parking area at Crystal Lake Park, and limited trailer parking at Long Lake. The plan recommended improving wayfinding to existing off-street parking, improving pedestrian connections between parking areas and Village destinations, evaluating additional parking within Mill Park, and conducting a parking study to better understand long-term needs.

Parking also emerged as an issue in the 2026 Comprehensive Plan Survey. 49% of respondents identified parking as an infrastructure limitation for supporting businesses,

making it the most frequently identified business infrastructure constraint. In comparison, 13% identified parking as a limitation for supporting housing.

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

Harrison's parking standards do not appear to currently discourage development in the Village, although some requirements could present challenges for smaller Village properties. The Site Plan Review Ordinance requires off-street parking for new and expanded uses based on the type and size of development. Required parking may be located within 300 feet of the principal building, which provides some flexibility for Village properties where on-site space is limited. However, required parking spaces generally cannot be counted for more than one use, limiting opportunities for shared parking among nearby businesses.

The 2023 Downtown Revitalization Plan found that the Town's parking requirements appeared adequate for current needs. Rather than identifying parking standards as a major barrier to development, the plan recommended making better use of existing parking through improved wayfinding, pedestrian connections, more efficient parking layouts, and consideration of additional public parking within Mill Park, located between Crystal Lake Park and Long Lake. As the Village develops, the Town could consider whether greater flexibility for shared parking or other alternative parking arrangements would better support compact Village development.

Major Traffic and Pedestrian Generators

Harrison's principal trip generators include civic, educational, commercial, recreational, and cultural destinations. Activity varies considerably by season and by time of day, with summer recreation and special events adding traffic beyond normal year-round travel.

DESTINATION OR AREA	LOCATION	TYPICAL ACTIVITY PERIOD	TRANSPORTATION SIGNIFICANCE
HARRISON VILLAGE BUSINESSES AND WATERFRONT	Main Street / Routes 117 and 35	Year-round; highest activity during business hours and summer	Concentrates local traffic, through traffic, parking, and pedestrian activity

TOWN OFFICE	20 Front Street	Weekdays; municipal office hours	Civic services, meetings, elections, and public parking
HARRISON VILLAGE LIBRARY	4 Front Street	Mon., Wed., Thu. 11 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sat. 10 a.m.-2 p.m.	Regular pedestrian and vehicle destination within the Village
HARRISON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	309 Naples Road (Route 35)	School days; arrival and dismissal periods	Generates school-related vehicle, bus, and pedestrian activity
CRYSTAL LAKE PARK AND BOAT LAUNCH	Village / Crystal Lake	Year-round recreation; highest use in summer and during events	Beach, recreation, events, boat access, and parking demand
LONG LAKE PARK AND BOAT LAUNCH	Village / Long Lake	Highest use in summer and during events	Beach and waterfront access; boat and trailer parking demand
DEERTREES THEATRE	Deertrees Road	Seasonal performances and events	Cultural destination generating event-related vehicle trips
RADR SPORTS COMPLEX	Off Route 117, about 3 miles north of Crystal Lake Park	Sports, concerts, snowmobile and other events	Major event destination; primarily accessed by vehicle
TRANSFER STATION	980 Norway Road (Route 117)	Mon., Wed., Fri.-Sun., 8 a.m.-4 p.m.	Regular municipal-service traffic on Route 117

TRENDS

Harrison's approach to transportation has broadened since the 2009 Comprehensive Plan. Road maintenance remains a major responsibility, but transportation planning increasingly considers infrastructure condition, resilience, public transportation, walking and bicycling, accessibility, and connections between transportation and land use.

The Town is also taking a more systematic approach to managing its roads and other infrastructure. Harrison recently began using Vitalytics pavement-condition software to evaluate road conditions and help prioritize investments. The Town is also developing a five-year road improvement plan to guide the scheduling and funding of road projects. These efforts reflect an increased emphasis on using condition data and long-term capital to address issues within the transportation network.

Transportation options in Harrison and the Lakes Region have expanded since the 2009 Comprehensive Plan. Regional transit services have grown, walking and bicycling have received greater attention, and electric vehicles have emerged as a new transportation consideration. While driving remains the primary means of travel in Harrison, these changes provide additional options for residents and create new considerations for future transportation planning.

State funding programs are also placing greater emphasis on improving the resilience of roads, bridges, culverts, and other transportation infrastructure. More frequent heavy rainfall and changing freeze-thaw conditions have increased the importance of properly sized culverts, effective drainage, and infrastructure that can withstand future weather conditions.

Land use will continue to influence transportation needs and costs. Concentrating modest growth near existing roads, services, and the Village can make more efficient use of infrastructure and create opportunities for shorter trips and walking. Coordinating transportation investments with future land use will therefore remain an important consideration as Harrison grows.

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

State transportation planning directly affects Harrison because Routes 117 and 35 are state highways and important local and regional corridors. MaineDOT's Family of Plans, Work Plan, Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), Complete Streets policies, and other programs impact road, bridge, safety, active transportation, and resilience investments within Harrison.

MaineDOT's 2026–2028 Work Plan identifies the following projects affecting Harrison:

YEAR	LOCATION	PLANNED IMPROVEMENT
2026	Route 35	Light capital paving
2026	Route117	Woodsum Bridge improvements, preliminary engineering

2026	Edes Falls Road	Carsley Brook large-culvert project
2026	Carsley Road	Carsley Brook large-culvert project
2027	Route 117	Highway resurfacing & paving

Although Harrison is outside the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS) metropolitan planning area (MPO), it participates in regional planning as it is within the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) region. Regional transit planning affects services available to Harrison residents, including the Lake Region Explorer and microtransit, while planning in neighboring communities and along regional corridors affects travel between Harrison, Bridgton, the Route 302 corridor, and Greater Portland. Harrison should continue coordinating with MaineDOT, the Regional Transportation Program (RTP), GPCOG, and neighboring communities so local priorities can be considered as state and regional transportation projects and services are developed.

What are the transportation system concerns in the community and region? What, if any, plans exist to address these concerns?

Harrison's primary transportation concerns include maintaining aging roads, bridges, culverts, and drainage systems; improving pedestrian safety and accessibility; managing the different transportation functions of Routes 117 and 35 within the Village; improving walking and bicycling connections; addressing parking and access; increasing resilience to changing weather conditions; and providing transportation options for residents who cannot drive. Rising construction and maintenance costs add to these challenges.

Several existing efforts address these concerns. The Town is improving its capital planning and use of road-condition information, while the Downtown Revitalization Plan identifies pedestrian, parking, accessibility, and Village transportation improvements. RTP and regional transit planning address transportation options for residents who cannot drive.

State investments also address several of Harrison's transportation needs. MaineDOT's current Work Plan includes paving on Routes 35 and 117, preliminary engineering for improvements to the Woodsum Bridge on Route 117, and funding for large-culvert projects on Edes Falls Road and Carsley Road. These projects address roadway condition, bridge needs, drainage, and transportation-system resilience.

Continued coordination among the Town, MaineDOT, RTP, GPCOG, and neighboring communities will be important for implementing these efforts, identifying additional transportation needs, and pursuing funding opportunities.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Transportation-related comments from the first public workshop and the 2026 Community Survey emphasized road conditions and safety, walkability, parking, recreational trails, and the relationship between transportation and future development. In the survey, 35% of respondents identified roads as an infrastructure constraint for housing, while 39% identified roads and 49% identified parking as constraints for supporting businesses. In open-ended responses, residents also called for road repairs, greater traffic safety and walkability, and slower traffic in the Village.

Residents expressed substantial interest in additional walking and bicycling opportunities. Nearly two-thirds of respondents (65.6%) selected multi-use paths for biking, hiking, and snowshoeing as a recreational opportunity they would like to see more of, making it the most frequently selected recreational improvement. The survey also found that 72% supported improved standards for roads, driveways, and ditches to reduce polluted runoff into lakes and streams, connecting transportation improvements with water-quality protection.

Overall, public feedback highlights the importance of maintaining Harrison's transportation infrastructure while improving safety, walkability, and access within the Village. These priorities helped shape the transportation goals and actions that follow.

GOALS & ACTIONS

1. **Monitor infrastructure conditions and safety to guide transportation system preservation and improvements.**
    - Town Staff will maintain condition and risk ratings for roads, bridges, culverts, drainage, signs, sidewalks, and parking. (Annually)
    - Town Staff will publish parking, winter maintenance, road-posting, construction, and emergency-route information. (Seasonally)
2. **Improve mobility and transportation options within the Village by providing a safe and efficient network for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, children, older adults, people with disabilities, and other transportation users.**
    - Town Staff will phase priority sidewalks, crossings, lighting, wayfinding, parking, and traffic-calming projects. (2028–2032)
    - Town Staff will complete a parking and access-management plan. (2028–2029)

- Town Staff will coordinate demand-response, volunteer-driver, trail, bicycle, and pedestrian options. (Ongoing)

3. **Build a resilient transportation network that supports future land use, promotes public health and livability, protects natural and cultural resources, and adheres to the Sensible Transportation Policy Act.**
    - The Selectboard will fund a prioritized, multi-year transportation improvement, maintenance, and repair program based on condition, risk, cost, water quality, and access. (Through the annual CIP)
    - The Planning Board will update land use standards as needed to address safe access, state access-management and traffic-permitting requirements, future street connections, and public and private roads. (By 2029)

STATE-REQUIRED GOALS & ACTIONS

4. **Prioritize community and regional needs associated with safe, efficient, and optimal use of transportation systems.**
    - Town Staff will coordinate with neighboring communities, GPCOG, MaineDOT, and regional transportation providers on shared transportation priorities. (Ongoing)
    - Town Staff will coordinate with the Regional Transportation Program (RTP) and local partners to improve transportation options and connections to regional destinations. (Ongoing)
5. **Promote fiscal prudence by maximizing the efficiency of the state or state-aid highway network.**
    - Town Staff will review Maine Department of Transportation data and submit priority concerns. (Annually**)**
    - Town Staff will work with the Maine Department of Transportation on a corridor and village transportation plan for Routes 117 and 35. (2030–2032)

HOUSING

INTRODUCTION

Housing costs in Harrison have risen dramatically over the past decade. According to the Zillow Home Value Index, home values increased by 65% between 2015 and 2025, bringing the average home price to roughly $457,000. At the same time, local incomes have not kept pace.

According to the 2023 American Community Survey, Harrison's median household income is about $56,938. Even a household earning 120% of the median income, or about $68,326, could only afford a home of about $255,000 without becoming cost-burdened. This large gap between local incomes and home values puts homeownership out of reach for many residents.

Housing costs are also putting more pressure on existing homeowners. The share of homeowners who are cost-burdened increased from 28.6% in 2014 to 38.6% in 2024. About 17% of homeowners spent between 30% and 49% of their income on housing, while another 21% spent half or more of their income on housing. These housing costs can be especially difficult for seniors and single-parent households.

Renting in Harrison has become increasingly difficult as well. Approximately 10% of residents rent their homes. While the median rent of $885 was below the estimated $1,115 that a median-income renter could afford, lower-income renters still face challenges. In 2024, 28% of renters were cost-burdened, including 13% who spent half or more of their income on housing.

The larger challenge is the limited supply of rentals. The share of homes that were vacant and available for sale or rent fell by 3.1 percentage points between 2014 and 2024. Of the 503 vacant homes in Harrison in 2024, none were reported as available for sale or rent. Most vacant homes are instead used seasonally. This shows how limited housing choices have become for people looking to rent or buy in Harrison.

Housing options in Harrison are also limited. Of the town's 1,798 homes, about 89% are single-family homes. Between 2014 and 2024, Harrison lost about 36 multifamily housing units and 123 mobile homes. As these housing types decline, residents have fewer choices beyond traditional single-family homes. This can

make it harder for young adults, smaller households, older residents, and people with modest incomes to find housing that meets their needs.

Housing costs and limited choices can affect Harrison's long-term future. A lack of attainable housing can make it harder to retain residents, welcome new families, maintain a local workforce, and support essential services. Future housing planning should consider what types of housing Harrison needs and where new development is most appropriate. Careful planning can help meet housing needs while protecting open space and the community character.

Mission: Expand attainable, year-round housing options while protecting water resources, open space, and Harrison's rural character.

Approximate Medium Home Price	Estimated Percentage of Cost-burdened Households	Seasonal or Vacant Housing Units
$457,000	**38%**	**28%**

INVENTORY & STATE REQUIREMENTS

Housing Supply and Occupancy

Harrison's 2009 Comprehensive Plan reported 1,733 housing units in town. Since then, the town's housing stock has increased to approximately 1,798 units.

About 72% of Harrison's homes are occupied year-round, while the remaining 28% are classified as vacant. Of those vacant homes, about 98.8% are used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional purposes. This leaves only about 1.2%, or six homes, that are truly vacant. This pattern reflects Harrison's recreation economy but limits the year-round rental and ownership choices.

According to the American Community Survey, Harrison's housing stock is 88% single-family homes, 3.7% multifamily housing, and 8.3% mobile homes or other housing types. In 2009, the town had slightly more housing variety. Single-family homes still made up the majority of the housing stock at 87%, while 2.7% of homes were multifamily and 10.3% were mobile homes.

More recent trends suggest that housing choices are becoming even more limited.

Table 1: Housing Units by Type of Structure			
Type of Structure	**Occupied Units**	**Margin of Error**	**% of Total**
1-unit, detached	1,139	±149	88.0%
1-unit, attached	31	±31	2.4%
2 units	17	±23	1.3%
3–4 units	0	±11	0.0%
5–9 units	0	±11	0.0%
10+ units	0	±11	0.0%
Mobile home / other	108	±62	8.3%
Total occupied units	**1,295**	**±129**	**100.0%**

Between 2014 and 2024, Harrison lost about 36 multifamily units and 123 mobile homes. At the same time, new construction has been almost entirely single-family. The GPCOG Housing Permit Dashboard shows that all 34 housing units permitted in 2024 and all 30 permitted in 2025 were single-family homes.

Together, these trends suggest that Harrison's housing stock is becoming less diverse, which could make it harder for local workers, low- and moderate-income households, seniors, young adults, and families to find housing that meets their needs.

This pattern reflects Harrison's recreation economy but limits the year-round rental and ownership choices available to smaller households, workers, or families or individuals with modest or lower incomes.

Table 2: Age of Housing Stock (Year Structure Built)			
Year Built	**Occupied Units**	**Margin of Error**	**% of Total**
2020 or later	27	±21	2.1%

Table 2: Age of Housing Stock (Year Structure Built)			
Year Built	**Occupied Units**	**Margin of Error**	**% of Total**
2010–2019	70	±45	5.4%
2000–2009	265	±94	20.5%
1980–1999	296	±119	22.9%
1960–1979	203	±73	15.7%
1940–1959	85	±57	6.6%
1939 or earlier	349	±161	26.9%
Total occupied units	**1,295**	**±129**	**100.0%**

Harrison's housing stock is also aging. Approximately 27% of homes were built before 1940, and 72% were built before 2000. Only about 2% of Harrison's homes have been built since 2020. As homes age, owners may face more repairs, higher maintenance costs, and a greater need for energy-efficiency improvements such as insulation and weatherization. These added costs can create further challenges for households that are already cost-burdened.

Harrison may want to consider creating a permit-based housing dashboard to better track changes in the town's housing stock. The dashboard should distinguish between single-family homes, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, multifamily units, seasonal-to-year-round conversions, demolitions, and short-term rentals where data are legally available.

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

Harrison's population peaked in 2010 at 2,721 residents. Between 2010 and 2020, the town lost about 266 people. The population began increasing again around 2020 as more people moved to Maine during the COVID-19 pandemic, but this growth is not expected to continue. Like many small, rural communities in Maine, Harrison is projected to lose population over the next few decades. State

projections estimate that the town's population will decline to 2,270 residents by 2042.

At the same time, Harrison's population is aging and household sizes are shrinking. The median age is 56, up from 52.6 in 2014. In 2024, one-person households made up 44% of all households, while two-person households made up another 36%. Although Harrison's population grew by only 1% between 2015 and 2025, the number of households increased by 8%. This is important because smaller households can increase housing demand even when the total population stays the same or declines.

If Harrison's average household size remains at about 1.94 people per household, a projected population of 2,270 would require about 1,170 occupied housing units in 2042. Since Harrison currently has 1,295 occupied homes, the existing year-round housing supply would be sufficient.

However, continued growth in one-person households could increase housing demand. If one-person households increased from 44% to 60% of all households, Harrison's average household size would fall to about 1.67 people. Under this scenario, approximately 1,358 occupied homes would be needed by 2042, which is rough 63 more homes than today.

Rental housing should also be considered when calculating future housing needs. About 10% of Harrison households currently rent, but no rental units were reported as available in 2024. Maintaining the current share of renters would require only a modest increase in rental units, but additional housing is needed to improve rental availability. Adding approximately 15 to 20 rental units could help address this shortage.

***STATE REQUIREMENT:* Are seasonal homes being converted to year-round use or viceversa? What impact does this have on the community?**

The number of seasonal homes in Harrison has fluctuated over the past decade. In 2014, seasonal homes made up 31.9% of the town's housing stock, increasing to 35.5% in 2019. Since then, the share of seasonal housing has declined, reaching 27.6% in 2024. This decline occurred during the same period that Harrison's population began to increase. One possible explanation is that some seasonal property owners began living in Harrison year-round during or after the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the available data does not confirm how many seasonal homes, if any, were converted to year-round residences.

<u>STATE REQUIREMENT:</u> Are there other major housing issues in the community, such as substandard housing?

Property maintenance issues and substandard building conditions exist in Harrison, but they do not appear to be a major housing issue. In 2024, the Harrison Code Enforcement Department reported 14 open complaints or violations in town, three of which were authorized to move to the Town's legal department. Complaints included illegal junkyards, excessive garbage, and buildings constructed without permits. In 2025, the Town and the owner of 14 Main Street entered into a consent agreement that provided for the demolition of a dangerous building on the property. Harrison voters later approved up to $37,000 to demolish and remove the structure. These cases indicate that some properties in Harrison experience conditions associated with disrepair and blight, although available information does not suggest that these conditions are widespread.

Short-term rentals (STRs) may be a growing concern for Harrison. Many of the town's dwelling units are used seasonally, recreationally, or occasionally, reflecting the town's longstanding role as a seasonal community. An estimated 90 to 110 short-term rentals (STRs) operate in Harrison, representing approximately 5% to 6% of the town's total housing stock and roughly 18% to 22% of its seasonal housing stock, assuming the categories substantially overlap. While Harrison has fewer STRs than Bridgton, STRs make up a larger share of the housing stock than in several Cumberland County communities that regulate them.

Harrison does not currently have an adopted STR ordinance, although the Town considered a draft ordinance in 2026. Before adopting a regulatory approach, Harrison should confirm its preliminary STR inventory at the parcel level and identify the specific concerns it is seeking to address, such as life safety, parking, wastewater capacity, neighborhood impacts, or housing availability. That assessment could then inform whether registration, inspections, operating standards, geographic distinctions, or an overall cap would be appropriate.

Affordability and Need

Housing affordability is a significant issue in Harrison. Housing is considered affordable when it costs no more than 30% of a household's income. A household earning 120% of the median income could afford a home priced at approximately $255,000 without exceeding this threshold. Unfortunately, the median home price

in town is approximately $457,000, creating an affordability gap of more than $200,000. As a result, even households earning above the median income may struggle to purchase a home in Harrison, placing homeownership out of reach for many locals.

American Community Survey data show that housing costs are also placing pressure on existing homeowners. In 2024, approximately 38% of Harrison homeowners were cost-burdened, including 17% who spent between 30% and 49% of their income on housing and another 21% who spent half or more of their income on housing. Among homeowner households earning between $50,000 and $75,000, approximately 32% were cost-burdened, even though their incomes ranged from about 88% to 132% of Harrison's median household income. Together, these trends show a significant mismatch between household incomes and housing costs in Harrison.

In 2024, renters in Harrison were somewhat less cost-burdened than homeowners, with 28% of renters spending more than 30% of their income on housing. Of these renters, 15% spent between 30% and 49% of their income on housing, while another 13% spent half or more. Harrison had 128 renter-occupied homes in 2024, and the rental vacancy rate was 0%, meaning no rental units were reported as available for rent. This suggests that while some rental housing remains relatively affordable, finding an available unit is extremely difficult because of the limited supply.

Harrison has also lost much of its lowest-cost rental housing. In 2019, 26 homes rented for less than $600 per month and another 13 rented for between $600 and $799. By 2024, the report estimated that no rental units remained in either price range. Despite this loss, 50 rental homes, or 46% of the rental housing analyzed, were still affordable to households earning less than 60% of Area Median Income (AMI) in 2024. The largest group consisted of 33 homes affordable to households earning 61%–80% AMI, while 24 homes were affordable at 31%–50% AMI and 15 were affordable at 81%–100% AMI.

However, the report identifies no federally or state-assisted deed-restricted affordable homes in Harrison. Instead, the affordable rentals identified in the report are considered Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH), meaning they are affordable because of current market rents rather than because of long-

term affordability restrictions. This makes Harrison's existing affordable rental supply more vulnerable to future rent increases.

***STATE REQUIREMENT*: Information on existing local and regional affordable/workforce housing coalitions or similar efforts.**

Harrison does not currently have a local affordable or workforce housing coalition. However, several housing organizations and initiatives are active in nearby communities. Developers Collaborative developed Harrison Ridge, a 48-unit affordable senior housing development in Bridgton. In neighboring Norway, Norway Community Housing and the Center for an Ecology-Based Economy are developing a proposed 17-unit affordable housing project.

The Quality Housing Coalition also participated in the Cumberland County Lakes Region Homeless Services Study, which examined housing and homelessness needs in communities including Bridgton and Naples. The study identified Quality Housing Coalition and its Project HOME program as housing resources available to the Lakes Region.

These nearby efforts demonstrate that Harrison could pursue partnerships with existing regional and statewide housing organizations rather than creating housing initiatives entirely on its own.

***STATE REQUIREMENT*: How do existing local regulations encourage or discourage the development of affordable/workforce housing? A summary of local regulations that affect the development of affordable/workforce housing.**

Harrison regulates housing development through its Building Code Ordinance, Building Permit Requirements Ordinance, Site Plan Review Ordinance, and Subdivision Ordinance. Together, these ordinances establish construction standards, dimensional requirements, and review procedures for a range of housing types, including single-family homes, duplexes, apartments, multifamily housing, condominiums, and subdivisions. While these regulations allow different forms of housing, they include relatively few provisions specifically intended to support affordable or workforce housing.

The strongest existing provisions are found in the Site Plan Review and Subdivision ordinances. The Site Plan Review Ordinance allows the Planning Board to consider the provision of affordable housing when granting waivers

from certain requirements. The Subdivision Ordinance goes further by defining both affordable housing and reserved affordable housing and by allowing overhead utilities for reserved affordable housing when underground utilities would make the project unaffordable. It also allows certain standards to be waived when doing so results in a more practical and economic development, provided public health, safety, and other municipal goals are protected.

Overall, Harrison's ordinances provide some flexibility that could help affordable or workforce housing projects, but they do not offer strong or automatic incentives.

EXISTING POLICY CONTEXT

Over the past several years, Maine has adopted a series of housing laws intended to increase housing production by reducing local regulatory barriers. The most significant for Harrison are LD 2003, LD 1829, and LD 2173. Together, these laws establish minimum standards that local ordinances must meet while still allowing municipalities to regulate development through shoreland zoning, subdivision standards, water and wastewater requirements, environmental protections, and other local rules. They also make Harrison's future growth-area designations especially important because several housing density and affordability provisions apply differently inside and outside designated growth areas.

LD 2003, enacted in 2022, required municipalities to allow additional dwelling units on residential lots, at least one accessory dwelling unit, and greater density for qualifying affordable housing developments. LD 1829 expanded these requirements in 2025, and LD 2173 further clarified them in 2026. Under the current law, at least four dwelling units must be allowed on a residential lot in a designated growth area, while at least three units must be allowed in other areas where residential uses are permitted. In growth areas without public sewer, municipalities generally may not require lot sizes larger than 20,000 square feet or impose density standards that are more restrictive than state subsurface wastewater requirements.

The laws also make ADUs and qualifying affordable housing easier to develop. ADUs must be allowed on lots with single-family, two-unit, and three-unit residential structures, and one ADU is generally exempt from local density, lot-area, and additional parking requirements. Qualifying deed-restricted affordable

housing may receive a density bonus of at least 2.5 times the otherwise allowable density, reduced parking requirements, and additional building height. Other recent laws also reduce parking requirements in growth areas and allow residential uses in many commercial areas, creating additional opportunities for housing in locations that may previously have been limited to nonresidential development.

These changes will require Harrison to review and update its Building Permit Requirements, Site Plan Review, Subdivision, and related land-use ordinances. State law now also limits when Planning Board approval may be required for projects with four or fewer dwelling units and changes when multifamily development is considered a subdivision. Harrison generally has until July 1, 2027, to bring its ordinances into compliance where voter approval is required. The Comprehensive Plan will play an important role in this process because the location of future growth areas will influence allowable density, lot sizes, parking standards, and affordable housing opportunities throughout the town.

TRENDS

1. **Harrison's housing market is becoming more difficult for both buyers and renters.**

Home prices have risen faster than local incomes, more existing households are experiencing housing cost burdens, and available rentals are extremely limited. These trends point to a growing mismatch between what local households can afford and the housing that is available to them.

At the same time, Harrison's housing choices are narrowing. Recent development has been overwhelmingly single-family, while multifamily and mobile home options have declined. A large share of the town's housing stock is also seasonal, further limiting the number of homes available for year-round residents. The age of the existing housing stock may also increase repair, maintenance, and energy costs over time.

2. **Demographic changes could create demand for different types of housing.**

An aging population, smaller households, and continued growth in one-person households suggest a need for more modest-sized homes, rentals, and other year-round housing options that better match changing household needs.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Public feedback from Harrison's Comprehensive Plan Survey and First Community Workshop shows that housing affordability is a concern for residents. Across both engagement efforts, participants generally supported housing that serves year-round residents and fits Harrison's small-town character. Residents expressed that new housing should be carefully planned to protect lakes, open space, and rural areas.

The survey showed substantial concern about affordability. 67% of respondents said they were concerned about residents, workers, and families finding housing they can afford, including 19% who were very concerned. Affordable housing for people who live or work locally ranked as the third-highest overall community priority, behind protecting water quality and preserving open space and wildlife habitat. 58% percent agreed that Harrison should encourage affordable housing, and 60% supported allowing a mix of housing types. However, respondents were more cautious when asked about actual development. 41% said they would support affordable housing development in Harrison, while 31% were unsure and 27% were opposed. These results suggest that many residents support affordable housing in principle but have concerns about how much is built, where it is located, and how it fits into the community.

Residents expressed the strongest support for smaller-scale housing. In the survey, 72% were willing to see more smaller single-family homes, 33% supported cluster housing, 30% supported accessory dwelling units, and 27% supported duplexes. Only 15% supported more apartments. The first workshop showed a similar preference. Participants responded positively to smaller single-family homes, ADUs, duplexes, and modest multifamily housing, often describing these options as affordable, efficient, or appropriate for younger households. Participants also favored housing that retained yards, trees, and access to nature.

Both engagement efforts also indicate that residents are generally more interested in guiding growth than stopping it altogether. In the survey, 72% said Harrison should guide development, and 77% preferred directing growth to specific areas. During the workshop mapping exercise, about 40% of mapped points identified places where participants wanted residential growth, with some concentration along Routes 35 and 117 and Bolsters Mills Road. Denser multifamily housing was most often associated with the Village Center, while

mid- and lower-density housing was spread more broadly. About 60% of mapped points identified areas where participants did not want growth, particularly around Crystal Lake and northern Long Lake.

Residents also recognize that Harrison's housing challenges are influenced by more than zoning alone. Survey respondents most often pointed to high construction costs as a barrier to housing, identified by 59%, followed by property taxes at 34% and limited water or sewer infrastructure at 28%. Short-term rentals, zoning and lot-size requirements, and neighborhood opposition were also identified as concerns, though less frequently. Together, these responses suggest that improving housing affordability will require a broader approach that considers development costs, infrastructure, and local regulations.

Overall, public feedback points toward a measured housing strategy for Harrison. Residents appear to support improving affordability and expanding housing choices, particularly for year-round residents, workers, younger households, and families, but they generally prefer modest-scale housing that fits Harrison's existing character. Future housing policies will need to balance these needs with strong public priorities for protecting water quality, open space, and the town's rural setting.

CALL TO ACTION

Harrison should work to expand its housing supply to help meet local and statewide housing needs. A wider range of housing options could better serve households at different income levels and support a stronger community, local workforce, and economy.

Although Harrison faces challenges due to limited public water and sewer infrastructure, these constraints do not prevent the town from creating new housing opportunities.

The Town should take an active role in supporting housing development by improving review processes, identifying suitable sites for affordable and workforce housing, and partnering with qualified housing developers.

The overall goal is to create modest, well-planned housing opportunities that meet community needs and support the goals of this Comprehensive Plan.

GOALS & ACTIONS

1. **Expand access to housing information and support low-impact housing choices.**
    - Town Staff will publish guidance for accessory units, smaller homes, year-round conversions, and related local standards. (By 2027)
    - Town staff will maintain a public-facing housing dashboard that tracks permits, housing type, sale prices, rents, vacancies, seasonal housing, and housing cost burden. The dashboard will also include a register of vacant or abandoned homes that may be suitable for reuse. *(Annually)*
    - Town staff will connect residents with weatherization, accessibility, home repair, first-time homebuyer, septic assistance, and housing counseling programs through a dedicated webpage, flyer, or other public information materials. *(Ongoing)*
2. **Allow more year-round housing in suitable locations.**
    - The Planning Board will update subdivision and site plan standards to better support accessory dwelling units, cottages, duplexes, townhouses, and adaptive reuse projects. *(2028–2029)*
    - The Planning Board will identify village and transition areas where a broader range of housing types may be appropriate. *(Through the Future Land Use Plan; see Section __)*
    - Town staff will evaluate and track incentives, funding tools, and partnerships that could support housing for workers, older adults, and income-restricted households. *(2028–2030)*
3. **Create attainable housing while protecting Harrison's natural resources**.
    - Town staff will complete site, infrastructure, market, and fiscal feasibility analyses for priority housing locations identified through the Comprehensive Plan process. *(2029–2031)*
    - The Select Board will select a qualified housing partner following a public review of potential sites, costs, funding options, and community benefits. (2030–2032)
    - The Planning Board will update zoning to allow realistic housing capacity in designated growth areas while strengthening conservation standards in rural and resource-sensitive areas. (Through future zoning updates)

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Harrison is one of the few communities in Cumberland County with no townwide zoning. Instead, the Town regulates development through a series of targeted ordinances. Shoreland zoning protects areas near protected waters, while separate aquifer and floodplain regulations address groundwater protection and flood hazards. Subdivision and site plan ordinances govern how larger development proposals are designed and reviewed, including issues such as roads, utilities, open space, natural resources, traffic, and compatibility with surrounding areas. Harrison also regulates building permits, construction standards, new roads, and telecommunications towers.

Together, these ordinances provide standards for particular areas and types of development, but they do not establish townwide districts that determine where residential, commercial, or industrial uses should be located. As a result, development outside these regulated areas and activities is not currently guided by a townwide land-use map.

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan laid the groundwork for directing future growth. It called for orderly growth in appropriate areas, protection of Harrison's rural character, and efficient use of public services. The Plan recommended identifying locations suitable for different types of growth, encouraging commercial and service development along Routes 117 and 35, retaining agricultural land and open space, and designating rural areas through future land-use regulations. However, it did not establish a detailed townwide land-use framework, and its supporting data and implementation approach now require updating.

More recent planning efforts provide additional direction. The 2023 Downtown Revitalization Plan offers a current foundation for the Village, while the 2026 Comprehensive Plan workshops and community survey provide updated guidance on where residents would like to see growth and where they would like to protect rural character, open space, and natural resources. Together, these efforts provide the basis for refining Harrison's growth, transition, rural, and resource areas while recognizing that some locations remain subject to differing community views.

The Future Land Use Plan brings these efforts together into a clear geographic framework for future growth, conservation, and investment. It provides the policy

basis for later decisions about zoning, subdivision, capital improvements, conservation, and infrastructure.

Mission: To encourage orderly growth, make efficient use of public services, protect Harrison's rural character, preserve open space, and limit sprawl by directing new development to appropriate areas through local ordinances.

72.4%	**4**	**Town vote**
support guiding growth to designated areas	conceptual place types	required for future zoning

Note. The Plan itself does not change what a property owner may do with their land. Any future zoning ordinance or map would require separate drafting, public notice, hearings, legal review, and voter action to take effect.

INVENTORY & STATE REQUIREMENTS

Existing Land Use Regulations.

Harrison regulates land use through a series of targeted ordinances that apply to specific areas, activities, and types of development. A more detailed description of these regulations is provided in the Current Land Use Chapter on page ??.

Conceptual Place Types

VILLAGE GROWTH AREA. The Village Growth Area was developed from public input gathered through workshops and surveys. Residents generally supported directing growth to appropriate areas rather than allowing it to spread throughout town. Support for focusing growth specifically in the Village was more mixed, but 39% of survey respondents agreed that new housing and businesses should be located mostly near the Village Center. The 2023 Downtown Revitalization Action Plan also identifies the Village as the focus of long-term investment. This approach supports Harrison's vision of allowing modest, intentional growth in suitable locations while protecting rural character, natural resources, and small-town identity.

The Village has both natural opportunities and constraints. Existing public water service, established roads, parks, public spaces, and the waterfront support continued investment and infill development. At the same time, development must take into account nearby shorelands, wetlands, and water resources.

The Village Growth Area is intended to accommodate a greater mix and intensity of development than other areas. Suitable uses may include small shops and services, mixed-use buildings, smaller homes, accessory dwelling units, duplexes, and appropriately scaled multifamily housing.

Long-term planning is already guiding municipal investment in the Village. The Downtown Plan calls for improvements to sidewalks, streetscapes, parks, building façades, utilities, broadband, and parking. It also recommends studying a central wastewater system, which could support additional housing and businesses while helping protect water quality.

The Village Growth Area should include all parcels within the proposed Downtown TIF District. The TIF could help fund eligible infrastructure, planning, streetscape, façade, and economic development projects. Including the full TIF area would better connect the Future Land Use Plan with the Town's ongoing downtown investment and infrastructure efforts. Final boundaries should be based on parcel and infrastructure analysis, natural-resource information, and public review.

TRANSITION & EMPLOYMENT AREAS. Transition & Employment Areas provide locations outside the Village Growth Area for small businesses, mixed uses, and housing. Public input identified Routes 117 and 35 as suitable locations for this type of growth.

At the first public workshop, residents placed residential and commercial growth points on maps of Harrison to show where they thought future growth would be appropriate. Residential growth points were somewhat more common along Routes 117 and 35. Commercial growth was focused mainly in the Village and along Route 117, with some interest along Route 35. These results helped form the basis for this conceptual place type.

Additional public input showed a preference for limited or small- to mid-sized business growth rather than large commercial or industrial development. Residents favored stand-alone small businesses and home-based businesses, with little support for strip-mall development. Residential development in these areas should generally remain lower in intensity than in the Village Growth Area and result in low- to moderate-density neighborhoods.

Routes 117 and 35 provide good access for businesses and employment uses, but development must account for road safety, access management, parcel size,

utilities, and nearby natural resources. Growth should be concentrated in defined nodes rather than continuous roadside development.

Major public investments may include road and intersection improvements, access management, broadband, stormwater systems, and other utilities needed to support business and residential growth. Survey respondents identified parking, broadband, sewer, and roads as major limits on future business growth, so infrastructure capacity should help determine the final location and size of these areas.

RURAL AREAS. Most land outside the Village Growth Area and Transition & Employment Areas should remain rural. These areas are intended for low-density housing, farming, forestry, recreation, and small rural businesses. Rural Areas should include, where practical, working farms, woodlots, land enrolled in current-use tax programs, prime agricultural soils, and other lands that support Harrison's rural economy. This approach supports Harrison's vision of preserving the town's rural character, open space, and natural resources.

Development would continue to be allowed in Rural Areas, but at a lower density and intensity than in the Village Growth Area or Transition & Employment Areas. New homes and small businesses should fit the rural landscape.

Rural Areas contain important assets, including Harrison's forests, undeveloped lands, and farmlands. At the same time, wetlands, streams, wildlife habitat, steep or poorly drained land, and other natural features may limit where development is appropriate. The State also requires rural development patterns to be compatible with rural character and to avoid strip development along roads.

Public input supports this approach. Residents favored preserving rural character, open space, farmland, trees, and access to nature. Workshop participants preferred smaller-scale development and expressed concern about large, spread-out subdivisions and developments without tree buffers.

Municipal infrastructure is not intended to encourage growth in Rural Areas. Town investment would generally focus on maintaining existing roads, public safety, and other services rather than extending infrastructure to support higher-density development.

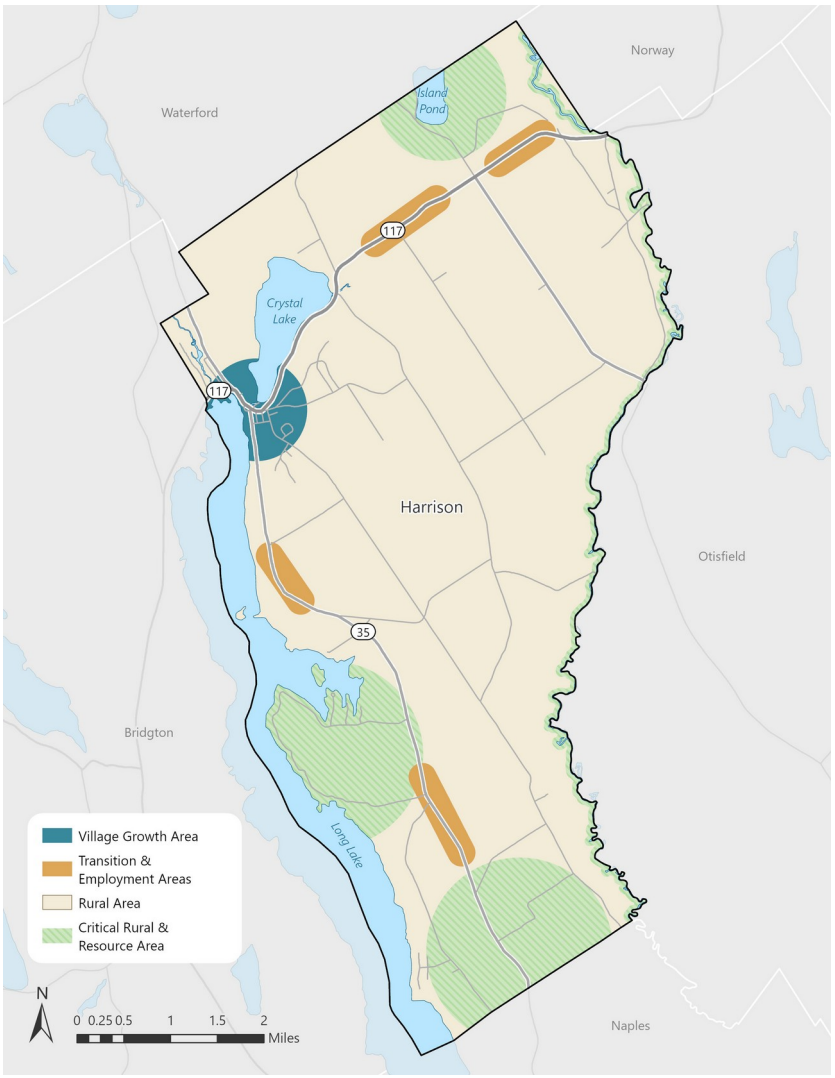
CRITICAL RURAL AND RESOURCE AREAS. State rules allow communities to designate Critical Rural Areas where high-value habitat, forest land, vulnerable

natural resources, or other important rural lands warrant greater protection. Harrison has shaped its Critical Rural and Resource Areas around the Crooked River corridor, the Jugtown Plains Focus Area, mapped Significant Wildlife Habitat, large habitat blocks and connections, and areas where several important natural resources overlap. Designating them as a specific conceptual place type within the comprehensive plan helps advance Harrison's vision of preserving its rural character, open space, water quality, and natural resources.

- **The Crooked River corridor** is a major priority because it provides significant spawning habitat for Landlocked Salmon and supports Wild Brook Trout. It is also part of a larger network of wetlands, wildlife connections, and conserved open space.
- **Jugtown Plains**, in southern Harrison, contains a concentration of important natural resources and is part of a larger Focus Area shared with Casco, Naples, and Otisfield. Its sandy soils can make parts of the area especially sensitive to certain types of development and land disturbance.
- **Other important resources** include several habitat blocks larger than 500 acres, two mapped Inland Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitats, one known Significant Vernal Pool, two proposed Deer Wintering Areas, and habitat for Blanding's Turtle, Wood Turtle, and Small-whorled Pogonia.

Development would not be prohibited in these areas, but it should remain low density and low intensity. Appropriate uses may include low-density housing, forestry, agriculture, recreation, and other rural uses that can be located without significantly affecting sensitive resources.

Major municipal infrastructure should not be extended into these areas to encourage growth. Public investment would instead focus on protecting existing infrastructure and natural systems, such as improving stream crossings, maintaining road resilience, supporting habitat connectivity, and pursuing conservation projects when funding and willing landowners are available. Final boundaries should be based on current Beginning with Habitat data, parcel analysis, conserved lands, adjoining municipal designations, and public review.



<u>State Requirement</u>: Is the configuration of the growth area(s) shaped by natural opportunities and/or constraints (i.e. the physical suitability or unsuitability of land for development)? The location of public facilities? The transportation network?

The Village Growth Area is shaped by both natural opportunities and constraints. It already functions as Harrison's town center and is supported by established roads, parks, public spaces, public water, and other community infrastructure. The proposed Downtown TIF District and possible future wastewater service identified in the 2023 Downtown Revitalization Plan could further support housing and business growth. At the same time, nearby shorelands, wetlands, water resources, Crystal Lake, and Long Lake limit where and how development can occur.

***State Requirement*: How can critical natural resources and important natural resources be effectively protected from future development impacts?**

Critical and Important Natural Resources can be protected by directing higher-intensity growth away from sensitive areas and using development standards that reduce impacts where development does occur.

Within the Village Growth Area and Transition & Employment Areas, development near sensitive resources can use setbacks, buffers, stormwater controls, and careful site design to protect shorelands, wetlands, water resources, and other mapped resources.

Within Rural Areas, conservation subdivisions, open-space protection, buffers, shared driveways, and careful placement of buildings, roads, and driveways can reduce clearing, fragmentation, and impacts on forests, farmland, streams, wetlands, and wildlife habitat.

The strongest protections would apply within Critical Rural and Resource Areas. Development should avoid the most sensitive resources, maintain large habitat blocks and wildlife connections, protect stream and wetland buffers, and limit unnecessary clearing and fragmentation. Possible tools include conservation design, larger buffers, shared access, habitat-connectivity standards, conservation easements, and voluntary land protection. State-defined Critical Natural Resources should be clearly mapped and protected from incompatible development to the greatest extent practicable. Public investment can also support resource protection through improved stream crossings, road resilience, habitat connectivity, and conservation projects.

Implementation Relationship

A comprehensive plan that is consistent with state law provides the policy basis for future land-use ordinances. Any townwide zoning should remain simple, with a limited number of districts, clear standards for allowed uses, lot size and building height, and an administrative system the Town can reasonably manage.

Before adoption, the final zoning map should be tested against existing lots and uses, housing capacity, infrastructure costs, natural resources, property rights, and regional responsibilities. Existing lawful uses should be treated fairly, and the ordinance should include clear procedures for nonconforming uses, appeals, amendments, and enforcement.

TRENDS

Harrison has strengthened its development review through updated shoreland, subdivision, site-plan, floodplain, building, and permitting rules. The Future Land Use Plan adds a townwide framework for guiding where different types and levels of development should occur and can begin guiding capital investment, conservation efforts, and grant applications before any future zoning ordinance is adopted

***State Requirement*: How does the Future Land Use Plan relate to recent development trends?**

Recent development in Harrison has been mostly residential, low-density, and dispersed throughout town. From April 2018 through March 2025, the Town reported 184 permits for new homes, along with additional mobile and modular homes. Subdivision activity has also continued to create new residential lots, roads, and other infrastructure.

Harrison property data from 2016 to 2026 shows a similar pattern. New development has occurred in many parts of Harrison, including along Routes 35 and 117, near lake shorelines, and on rural roads, rather than being concentrated in one area. Planning Board activity over the same period also shows a mix of subdivisions, new roads and driveways, shoreline construction and reconstruction, commercial and home-based uses, campsites, solar development, and other projects on developed and previously undeveloped land.

The Future Land Use Plan responds to recent development trends by providing clearer direction for where future growth should occur. It builds on the existing concentration of development in the Village and along Routes 117 and 35, while seeking to reduce scattered development in rural and environmentally sensitive areas.

***State Requirement*: Given current regulations, development trends, and population projections, estimate how many new residential units and how much commercial, institutional, and/or industrial development will likely occur in the planning period? Where is this development likely to go?**

Based on projected population change and declining household size, Harrison is estimated to need about 63 additional owner-occupied homes and 15 to 20 rental units during the planning period, for a total of roughly 78 to 83 new housing units.

Actual housing production may differ from this population-based estimate, particularly if demand for seasonal homes continues. The Town should therefore track new housing by type and location throughout the planning period.

Future housing is expected to be distributed across several areas rather than concentrated in one place. The Village Growth Area is intended to accommodate the largest share of new housing through multifamily, mixed-use, and other higher-density development. Transition & Employment Areas are expected to accommodate the next largest share through low- to moderate-density neighborhoods that may include duplexes and modestly sized single-family homes. Some low-density residential development is also expected to continue in Rural Areas, while future growth in Critical Rural and Resource Areas should remain the most limited.

Available data do not support a reliable numerical estimate of future commercial, institutional, or industrial development. Recent trends and public input instead suggest continued small-scale commercial and employment growth, concentrated mainly in the Village and designated nodes along Routes 117 and 35.

No major institutional or industrial development is currently projected. Institutional uses may expand as community needs change, while industrial development is expected to remain limited in scale.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Public input showed strong support for managing and directing growth, although there was less agreement about exactly where that growth should occur. At the 2026 community workshop, about 40% of the 117 residential mapping points identified places where participants wanted growth, while about 60% identified places where they did not. Residential growth points were somewhat more concentrated along Route 35, Route 117, and Bolsters Mills Road. Denser multifamily development was most often associated with the Village, while participants generally favored a mix of mid-density and lower-density development elsewhere. Areas identified for little or no growth included locations around Crystal Lake and the northern portion of Long Lake, including Cape Monday. Considerable overlap between growth and no-growth points in some locations indicates that additional neighborhood-level discussion will be needed when boundaries are refined.

Commercial mapping showed a somewhat clearer preference for directing growth to established corridors and centers. 57% percent of the 87 commercial mapping points identified locations for growth, concentrated primarily in the Village and along Route 117, and to a lesser extent Route 35. Participants generally favored stand-alone small businesses, home-based businesses, and mixed-use Village development, while few supported strip-mall-style development. Growth and no-growth points again overlapped in some areas, particularly the Village and Route 117 corridor, although growth points outnumbered no-growth points in both locations.

The community survey reinforced the broader preference for guiding growth rather than allowing it to occur without direction. 77% of respondents favored directing growth to specific areas rather than limiting regulations, and 72% said Harrison should guide future development. At the same time, support for concentrating housing and businesses specifically in the Village was more mixed: 39% supported that approach, 35% opposed it, and about one-quarter were neutral. Focusing growth near the Village also ranked relatively low when respondents were asked to rank eleven community priorities. For business development, however, 30% preferred the Village Center and another 23% preferred designated commercial or industrial areas, while only 19% favored limiting new business development townwide.

Taken together, the results support a measured approach that directs growth to appropriate locations while preserving rural character, open space, and natural resources. The Future Land Use Plan therefore identifies areas where somewhat greater development may be appropriate while maintaining most of Harrison as rural or resource-focused land. This approach is consistent with the workshop's broader themes of conservation, rural character, and slow, intentional growth, rather than establishing a rapid growth target.

Vision Statement

Harrison will guide modest, intentional growth to places that can support it while preserving clean waters, open lands, historic village character, and the friendly rural qualities residents value. The town will expand year-round housing and small business opportunities, maintain reliable public services, and make transparent investments that future generations can afford.

***State Requirement*: Does the Future Land Use Plan align and/or conflict with the community's vision statement?**

The Future Land Use Plan closely aligns with Harrison's vision. It directs greater development toward the Village and selected areas along Routes 35 and 117, while keeping most of the town rural and providing stronger protection for important natural-resource areas.

It also emphasizes protecting Harrison's waters, open lands, historic village character, and rural qualities. The Future Land Use Plan reflects those priorities by designating most of the town as rural and identifying Critical Rural and Resource Areas for stronger protection. Future ordinance work can build on this framework by determining how development should be limited or managed within and near these important resources.

GOALS & ACTIONS

1. **Adopt a Future Land Use Plan to guide growth and conservation efforts.**
    - Town Staff will refine the proposed growth, transition, rural, and resource areas using parcel, infrastructure, service, and natural-resource data; conduct neighborhood map reviews; and document public and agency input. (By 2027)
    - The Planning Board will develop conservation, siting, buffering, and connectivity standards to protect designated Critical Rural and Resource Areas from incompatible development.
    - The Selectboard will advance the Future Land Use Plan after state, legal, mapping, and public review. (By 2027)
2. **Align Town ordinances and investments with the Future Land Use Plan.**
    - The Planning Board will propose amendments to existing land-use ordinances and standards to reflect the desired uses, scale, density, and intensity identified for each Future Land Use area. (Within two years of adoption)
    - The Selectboard will use the Future Land Use Plan to guide financial commitments by prioritizing infrastructure needed to support designated growth areas, along with conservation, housing, economic development, and grant projects. (Ongoing)
    - The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee will report on the Town's progress in carrying out the Future Land Use Plan. (Annually)

3. **Implement the Future Land Use Plan through simple townwide zoning.**
    - The Planning Board will draft a limited zoning ordinance and map based on the Future Land Use Plan that establishes clear, predictable, and efficient permitting procedures, particularly within designated growth areas. (2029–2031)
    - Town Staff will evaluate the proposed zoning's effects and coordinate public notice, neighborhood meetings, hearings, and revisions. (Before a zoning vote)
    - The Selectboard will submit the zoning ordinance and map to voters and fund administration if adopted. (After public review)

STATE-REQUIRED GOALS & ACTIONS

4. **Coordinate the community's land use strategies with other local and regional land use planning efforts.**
    - The Planning Board will review neighboring comprehensive plans and zoning when developing or amending Harrison's land-use ordinances to reduce conflicts along municipal boundaries.
    - The Town will participate in regional planning and conservation efforts involving shared resources, including the Crooked River, Jugtown Plains, transportation corridors, and other cross-boundary resources.
    - The Town will coordinate with neighboring communities on shared infrastructure and natural-resource issues, including roads, culverts, water resources, and habitat connections that cross municipal boundaries.

APPENDIX A - CORE REFERENCES

Town plans and records

- Town of Harrison. Comprehensive Plan. 2009.
- Town of Harrison. Downtown Revitalization Plan. 2023.
- Town of Harrison. Annual Report. 2024.
- Greater Portland Council of Governments. Harrison Fire Services Strategic Planning Report. 2024.
- Town of Harrison. Draft Capital Improvement Plan. May 2026.
- Town of Harrison. Current ordinances, permits, budgets, assessing records, facility information, and department reports.

Harrison 2027 public process and resources

- Harrison 2027. Population and Demographics presentation. April 8, 2026.
- Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Harrison Natural Resources presentation. 2026.
- Harrison First Public Workshop feedback, heatmaps, and analysis. April 11, 2026.
- Harrison Second Public Workshop resource flyers. June 2026.
- Harrison Survey Results. Prepared for July 22, 2026 committee discussion.

State, federal, and regional sources

- U.S. Census Bureau. Decennial Census, American Community Survey five-year estimates, and Population Estimates Program.
- Maine Department of Education. Publicly funded student enrollment.
- Maine State Economist. Municipal population projections.
- Maine Office of Community Affairs, Municipal Planning Assistance Program. Comprehensive-planning guidance.
- 30-A M.R.S. § 4326 and related state land-use and housing law.
- Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and *Beginning with Habitat*.
- Maine Department of Environmental Protection; MaineDOT; Maine Historic Preservation Commission.

- Lakes Environmental Association and Harrison Water District.

Model and structure

- Town of Cumberland and Greater Portland Council of Governments. Cumberland Comprehensive Plan Draft. 2026.
- Proposed Outline for Harrison Comprehensive Plan Chapters. User-provided working document. 2026.

APPENDIX B - SURVEY SNAPSHOT

The survey summary used in this draft includes 228 respondents. Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding, skipped questions, or multiple-response formats. The sample was older, more educated, and more affluent than Harrison's population.

Overall priority	Average rank	Selected in top three
Water quality	2.12	86.3%
Open space and wildlife	3.46	62.4%
Affordable housing	5.19	34.5%
Infrastructure	5.42	20.4%
Agriculture and forestry	5.99	16.4%
Economic growth and jobs	6.17	16.4%
Tax stabilization	6.21	27.0%
Invasive species	6.38	16.8%
High-speed internet	7.65	10.2%
Village growth	8.38	7.5%
Climate resilience	9.03	2.2%

Selected housing and land-use results

Question or statement	Result
Concerned about housing affordability	66.1%
Support guiding development to designated areas	72.4%
Prioritize open space over more housing	85.3%
Encourage affordable housing	56.3%
Support a mix of housing types	58.2%
Accept smaller single-family homes	71.5%
Accept cluster or cottage housing	34.8%
Accept accessory dwelling units	31.2%
Accept duplexes or townhouses	28.1%
Accept apartments	15.4%

Selected economic results

Use or direction	Result
Small retail and services fit Harrison	87.1%
Trades and construction fit Harrison	67.6%
Home-based businesses fit Harrison	65.2%
Outdoor recreation and tourism fit Harrison	62.9%
Lodging and restaurants fit Harrison	56.7%

Use or direction	Result
Prefer small or mid-sized business growth	45.8%
Prefer primarily residential with limited business	43.4%
Prefer business growth in the village	33.5%

APPENDIX C - COMPLETION CHECKLIST

The following items should be completed before the plan is advanced as a state-review or public-hearing draft.

- Validate and publish the official survey dataset and methodology.
- Complete parcel-based existing land use, future land use, public facilities, transportation, water, natural resources, historic resources, and agricultural/forestry maps.
- Update assessor data for current-use programs, conserved land, tax base, and parcel trends.
- Update Census, employment, housing, school, MaineDOT, lake, public-water, flood, and facility data to the latest available year.
- Confirm Maine Historic Preservation Commission records and archaeological consultation procedures.
- Complete housing-needs analysis required by current state law and rules.
- Complete regional coordination findings and document consistency with neighboring plans.
- Test future land-use boundaries against parcel conditions, housing capacity, infrastructure, fiscal effects, and natural resources.
- Conduct targeted outreach to renters, younger adults, families, lower-income residents, employers, volunteer services, seasonal residents, and underrepresented neighborhoods.
- Assign timeframes, lead parties, partners, indicators, and rough costs in a consolidated implementation matrix.
- Obtain legal review and confirm the state consistency-review rule in effect at submission.
- Complete public notice, hearings, committee recommendation, Select Board action, and voter adoption steps.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE AND MATRIX

Harrison Comprehensive Plan 2027

TIMELINE KEY

Timeframe	Meaning
Annual / Ongoing	Recurring administration, monitoring, maintenance, or coordination.
2027–2028	Early implementation and foundational information.
2028–2030	Plans, ordinance updates, partnerships, and phased projects.
2029–2032	Complex studies, capital planning, and zoning development.
2032–2037	Long-term investments and programs that depend on earlier work.
Trigger-based	Work tied to a budget, project, ordinance, public review, or funding opportunity.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

Town Staff includes the Town Manager and appropriate municipal departments.

The Selectboard leads policy, budget, and voter-facing decisions.

The Planning Board leads land-use and ordinance work.

The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee tracks progress, coordinates partners, and recommends plan updates.

1. POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

ID	Goal	Action and Responsible Party	Timeframe
1.1	**Track demographic change.**	Town Staff will update a one-page demographic dashboard that includes school enrollment data.	Annually
1.2		The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee will identify measures of seasonal population and visitor demand.	By 2028
1.3	**Plan services for an aging and seasonal population.**	Town Staff will complete an age-friendly and seasonal service needs assessment.	By 2029
1.4		The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee will coordinate aging-in-place, transportation, digital access, and social-connection efforts.	Ongoing
1.5		The Selectboard will use current demographic data when reviewing services, facilities, and recreation.	Annually
1.6	**Support a stable, multigenerational population.**	The Selectboard will apply population and age-balance goals to housing, economic, and capital decisions.	Beginning with FY2029
1.7		The Planning Board will test land-use proposals for housing opportunities for low-income households, young households, workers, and older residents.	During ordinance review
1.8		The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee will review demographic trends and recommend plan changes.	Every five years

2. HISTORIC & ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

ID	Goal	Action and Responsible Party	Timeframe
2.1	**Document and share historic resources in collaboration with the Harrison Historical Society**	Town Staff will create a shared inventory of historic buildings, landscapes, cemeteries, and collections.	By 2028
2.2		Town Staff will publish non-sensitive historic information through maps, exhibits, walking materials, and the Town website.	Ongoing
2.3	**Keep historic buildings useful.**	The Planning Board will prepare voluntary village design and adaptive-reuse guidance.	By 2029
2.4		Town Staff will pursue preservation, façade, accessibility, and energy-efficiency funding.	Ongoing
2.5		The Planning Board will draft simple sign standards for Selectboard consideration.	By 2029
2.6	**Protect Harrison's highest-priority historic places.**	The Selectboard will commission a professional historic and archaeological survey.	2030–2031
2.7		The Planning Board will draft a village-character or historic overlay with affected property owners.	After the survey
2.8		The Selectboard will advance an ordinance, district, or National Register nomination after cost and public review.	After cost and public review

3. CURRENT LAND USE

ID	Goal	Action and Responsible Party	Timeframe
3.1	**Clarify and monitor existing land-use requirements.**	Town Staff will prepare and publish a plain-language guide to Harrison's land-use and development requirements.	By 2027
3.2		Town Staff will maintain a digital permit log that tracks development by location, use, and housing type.	Ongoing
3.3		The Planning Board will review development activity each year to identify recurring issues, regulatory gaps, or areas where standards may need to be updated.	Annually
3.4	**Strengthen and modernize townwide development standards.**	The Planning Board will review and update subdivision standards addressing open space, stormwater, road design, infrastructure, and long-term maintenance responsibilities.	2027–2028
3.5		The Planning Board will review and update site plan standards addressing buffering, lighting, signage, access, landscaping, water-resource protection, and compatibility with surrounding development.	2027–2029
3.6		Town Staff will establish a coordinated preapplication process for development proposals that require review under multiple Town ordinances or by multiple boards or officials.	By 2027

4. RECREATION & TOWN-OWNED LAND

ID	Goal	Action and Responsible Party	Timeframe
4.1	**Maintain safe, welcoming and accessible recreation assets.**	Town Staff will maintain an inventory, condition rating, and maintenance schedule for recreation sites and equipment.	Annually
4.2		Town Staff will publish park and launch hours, rules, access, parking, safety, and accessibility information.	Before each season
4.3		Town Staff will track participation, unmet demand, seasonal use, and program costs.	Annually
4.4		Town Staff will provide landowners with educational materials on Maine's recreational-use liability law to encourage continued public access to private land.	Not specified
4.5	**Improve access and year-round recreation.**	The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee will prepare a trail and active recreation plan.	2028–2030
4.6		Town Staff will improve accessibility, restroom, wayfinding, and waterfront improvements at priority sites.	2028–2032
4.7		Town Staff will expand recreation partnerships with schools, libraries, lake groups, land trusts, existing trail connections, and nearby towns.	Ongoing
4.8	**Guide major recreation and land investments.**	The Selectboard will commission master plans and cost estimates for RADR, downtown public spaces, and major waterfront facilities.	Before major expansion

ID	Goal	Action and Responsible Party	Timeframe
4.9		Town Staff will pursue grants, donations, and other outside funding for priority recreation projects, including infrastructure improvements to the Bolsters Mills Library.	Ongoing
4.10		The Selectboard will evaluate land acquisition, easements, and disposition using adopted public-benefit criteria.	As proposed

5. WATER RESOURCES & FRESHWATER ACCESS

ID	Goal	Action and Responsible Party	Timeframe
5.1	**Track water conditions and promote stewardship.**	The Selectboard will hire a water resources manager to compile water indicators with local and state partners and to maintain mooring records and enforcement needs.	Annually
5.2		Town Staff will provide consistent septic, buffer, erosion, fertilizer, and construction guidance with permits, and will publish a guide on boat launches, mooring, parking, safety, invasive species, speeds, and water-quality rules before each boating season.	Ongoing / Before each boating season
5.3		Town Staff will support landowner education and volunteer monitoring alongside local advocacy groups such as Resilient Harrison, Maine, and will coordinate seasonal boating education with lake associations and state agencies.	Annually

ID	Goal	Action and Responsible Party	Timeframe
5.4	**Strengthen watershed, groundwater, and lake-health protection.**	The Planning Board will review local standards for gaps in phosphorus, stormwater, buffer, and maintenance requirements.	2028–2029
5.5		The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee will coordinate watershed plans for priority waters, and Town Staff will include invasive-species prevention, runoff control, and erosion-resistant design in launch projects.	2028–2031 / During each project
5.6		Town Staff will maintain a culvert, ditch, and erosion inventory and rank corrective projects.	Annually
5.7	**Fund and invest in freshwater resources and access.**	The Selectboard will commission a wastewater-options study for the village and other documented problem areas.	2030–2032
5.8		The Selectboard will adopt a multi-year funding strategy for stormwater, culvert, septic, shoreline, and conservation projects, and will require site plans and lifecycle costs before adding major waterfront projects to the Capital Improvement Plan.	By 2031 / Before CIP approval
5.9		The Selectboard will pursue acquisition, easements, or partnerships for high-value watershed land; the water resources manager will pursue boating facilities, water quality, and resilience grants; and the Selectboard will adopt site-specific rules only after legal, environmental, operational, and public review.	Ongoing / As available / As needed

7. NATURAL RESOURCES

ID	Goal	Action and Responsible Party	Timeframe
7.1	**Use current natural-resource information.**	Town Staff will maintain current maps of conserved land, wetlands, floodplains, rare species habitat, and other critical natural resources.	Annually
7.2		The Planning Board will incorporate natural-resource screening into subdivision and site plan review, requiring subdivision and non-residential developers to submit relevant Beginning with Habitat maps and information on critical natural resources. The Planning Board will consider this information during its review and require appropriate measures to protect these resources through site design, construction timing, limits on excavation, or other measures.	By 2028
7.3		Town Staff will provide guidance on habitat protection, buffers, pollinators, invasive species, and forestry.	Ongoing
7.4		Town Staff will make information available to landowners living in or near critical and important natural resources about current-use tax programs and applicable local, state, and federal regulations.	Ongoing
7.5	**Protect connected habitat and**	The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee will prepare an open space and habitat connectivity plan to identify priority areas for conservation and connections between important natural resources.	2028–2030

ID	Goal	Action and Responsible Party	Timeframe
7.6	**priority open space.**	The Planning Board will require conservation design for qualifying subdivisions in mapped transition and rural areas to help protect open space, habitat, and other important natural resources.	By 2029
7.7		Town Staff will coordinate with neighboring communities and regional and state resource agencies to protect shared critical and important natural resources, including Jugtown Plains, the Crooked River corridor, large habitat blocks, important wildlife road crossings, and recreational resources.	Ongoing
7.8	**Conserve Harrison's critical natural resources.**	The Selectboard will establish conservation criteria and explore grants and other funding opportunities for conservation easements, land acquisition, and long-term stewardship of important natural resources.	By 2030
7.9		The Planning Board will ensure that Harrison's land use ordinances are consistent with applicable state law regarding critical natural resources and will designate those resources as Critical Resource Areas in the Future Land Use Plan.	2029–2031
7.10		The Selectboard will pursue regional and public-private partnerships to protect and restore Harrison's critical and important natural resources, including opportunities to acquire land or conservation easements from willing landowners when partners and funding are available.	Ongoing

8. AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY

ID	Goal	Action and Responsible Party	Timeframe
8.1	**Support working farms and forests.**	Town Staff will publish current-use enrollment data and maintain a voluntary directory of working-land businesses.	Annually
8.2		The Planning Board will clarify permits for routine agricultural and forestry uses.	By 2028
8.3		Town Staff will map prime farmland soils and farmland of statewide importance, along with any locally important soils identified by the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District, and overlay them with tax parcels.	By 2027
8.4	**Support Viable Farm Businesses**	The Planning Board will set scale and impact-based standards for agriculture-based uses in consultation with the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Maine Forest Service district forester.	2028–2029
8.5		Town Staff will coordinate technical assistance and local market opportunities with regional partners.	Ongoing
8.6		Town Staff will include working-land access, drainage, and stream crossings in public work and open space planning.	Ongoing
8.7	**Protect forests and farmland from**	The Planning Board will draft rural zoning standards that limit fragmentation of agricultural and forestry resources while allowing reasonable uses.	2029–2031

ID	Goal	Action and Responsible Party	Timeframe
8.8	**development-related fragmentation**	The Planning Board will add conservation design, shared access, and resource-based siting to subdivision standards.	By 2029
8.9		The Selectboard will establish a voluntary municipal farm support program which would allow for temporary easement to the town in exchange for additional property tax reduction on eligible farmland and farm buildings.	2031–2033

9. ECONOMY

ID	Goal	Action and Responsible Party	Timeframe
9.1	**Support small and home-based businesses.**	Town Staff will maintain a plain-language permitting guide, referral list, and business directory.	Annually
9.2		Town Staff will hold a business roundtable to identify shared needs and practical Town responses for recruiting and retaining local businesses.	2027-2028
9.3		Town Staff will coordinate events, wayfinding, promotion, and grant information with regional partners.	Ongoing
9.4	**Strengthen the village and year-round economy.**	The Selectboard will prioritize phased Downtown Revitalization Plan projects through the Capital Improvement Plan.	Annually
9.5		Town Staff will analyze tax increment financing or similar tools for priority improvements.	2027–2028

ID	Goal	Action and Responsible Party	Timeframe
9.6		The Planning Board, working with the business community, will create ordinances that allow compatible mixed uses including adaptive reuses, home enterprises and small visitor businesses, in accordance with clear standards	2027-2029
9.7	**Provide suitable locations and infrastructure for job and tax base growth.**	The Planning Board will identify clusters of commercial or employment areas through the zoning process.	2027–2029
9.8		The Selectboard will establish a program to provide incentives for clean energy industry or businesses to locate within the community.	2027-2029
9.9		The Selectboard will identify opportunities for major infrastructure improvements pursuant to a sound financing plan and consistent with this Plan.	Annually

10. FISCAL CAPACITY

ID	Goal	Action and Responsible Party	Timeframe
10.1	**Make municipal costs and tradeoffs clear.**	Town Staff will publish a fiscal snapshot showing valuation, taxes, debt, reserves, operating drivers, and capital obligations and work to reduce Maine's tax burden by staying within LD 1 spending limitations.	Annually
10.2		Town Staff will show each capital project's cost, funding, useful life, operating effect, status, and responsible department.	Annually

ID	Goal	Action and Responsible Party	Timeframe
10.3		The Selectboard, in partnership with the Harrison Budget Committee, will adopt written reserve, debt, and capital-prioritization policies.	By 2028
10.4	**Diversify revenue and reduce lifecycle costs.**	Town Staff will maintain a grant-readiness list for priority projects.	Annually
10.5		The Selectboard will use Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts as a method to attract new business in designated growth areas.	2030
10.6		Town Staff will use lifecycle costs and preventive maintenance when comparing capital options.	Ongoing
10.7	**Align land use, infrastructure, and fiscal capacity.**	Town Staff will prepare a service-cost and fiscal-impact analysis for major land-use alternatives.	Before zoning adoption
10.8		The Selectboard will adopt a financing plan for priority roads, facilities, public safety, water, and wastewater projects.	2030–2032
10.9		The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee will review the Capital Improvement Plan for consistency with growth and rural policies.	Annually

11. PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

ID	Goal	Action and Responsible Party	Timeframe
11.1	**Track facilities, services, and**	Town Staff will maintain an inventory of facilities, fleet, equipment, staffing, service demand, and mutual aid.	Annually

ID	Goal	Action and Responsible Party	Timeframe
11.2	**maintenance needs.**	Town Staff will track service and preventive maintenance gaps during budget development.	Annually
11.3		Town Staff will maintain continuity, cybersecurity, communications, shelter, and backup-power procedures.	Annually
11.4	**Strengthen staffing, partnerships, and service delivery.**	The Selectboard will phase priority fire-services recommendations and report on staffing, response, training, and cost.	2027–2031
11.5		Town Staff will evaluate shared public safety, code, planning, library, transportation, solid-waste, and social services.	2028–2030
11.6		Town Staff will hire a consultant to prepare an accessibility program to ensure Americans with Disabilities Act compliance for municipal buildings, parks, communications, and emergency services.	By 2029
11.7	**Provide resilient facilities and service capacity.**	Town Staff will complete facility master plans and 20-year capital schedules.	2029–2032
11.8		The Selectboard will fund priority staffing and capital improvements through the annual budget and Capital Improvement Plan with a focus on EMS personnel to ensure 100% of 911 calls are answered.	Ongoing
11.9		The Selectboard will locate and size major facilities and service extensions to support growth areas and rural response.	As projects are proposed

12. TRANSPORTATION

ID	Goal	Action and Responsible Party	Timeframe
12.1	**Monitor infrastructure conditions and safety to guide transportation system preservation and improvements.**	Town Staff will maintain condition and risk ratings for roads, bridges, culverts, drainage, signs, sidewalks, and parking.	Annually
12.2		Town Staff will publish parking, winter maintenance, road-posting, construction, and emergency-route information.	Seasonally
12.3	**Improve mobility and transportation options within the Village by**	Town Staff will phase priority sidewalks, crossings, lighting, wayfinding, parking, and traffic-calming projects.	2028–2032
12.4		Town Staff will complete a parking and access-management plan.	2028–2029

ID	Goal	Action and Responsible Party	Timeframe
12.5	**providing a safe and efficient network for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists,**	Town Staff will coordinate demand-response, volunteer-driver, trail, bicycle, and pedestrian options.	Ongoing
12.6	**Build a resilient transportation network that supports future**	The Selectboard will fund a prioritized, multi-year transportation improvement, maintenance, and repair program based on condition, risk, cost, water quality, and access.	Through the annual CIP

ID	Goal	Action and Responsible Party	Timeframe
12.7	**land use, promotes public health and livability, protects natural and cultural resources, and adheres to the Sensible Transportation Policy Act.**	The Planning Board will update land use standards as needed to address safe access, state access-management and traffic-permitting requirements, future street connections, and public and private roads.	By 2029
12.8	**Prioritize community and regional needs associated with safe, efficient, and optimal use of transportation systems.**	Town Staff will coordinate with neighboring communities, GPCOG, MaineDOT, and regional transportation providers on shared transportation priorities.	Ongoing
12.9		Town Staff will coordinate with the Regional Transportation Program and local partners to improve transportation options and connections to regional destinations.	Ongoing
12.10	**Promote fiscal prudence by maximizing the efficiency of the state or state-aid highway network.**	Town Staff will review Maine Department of Transportation data and submit priority concerns.	Annually
12.11		Town Staff will work with the Maine Department of Transportation on a corridor and village transportation plan for Routes 117 and 35.	2030–2032

13. HOUSING

ID	Goal	Action and Responsible Party	Timeframe
13.1	**Expand access to housing information and support low-impact housing choices.**	Town Staff will publish guidance for accessory units, smaller homes, year-round conversions, and related local standards.	By 2027
13.2		Town Staff will maintain a public-facing housing dashboard that tracks permits, housing type, sale prices, rents, vacancies, seasonal housing, and housing cost burden. The dashboard will also include a register of vacant or abandoned homes that may be suitable for reuse.	Annually
13.3		Town Staff will connect residents with weatherization, accessibility, home repair, first-time homebuyer, septic assistance, and housing counseling programs through a dedicated webpage, flyer, or other public information materials.	Ongoing
13.4	**Allow more year-round housing in suitable locations.**	The Planning Board will update subdivision and site plan standards to better support accessory dwelling units, cottages, duplexes, townhouses, and adaptive reuse projects.	2028–2029
13.5		The Planning Board will identify village and transition areas where a broader range of housing types may be appropriate.	Through the Future Land Use Plan

ID	Goal	Action and Responsible Party	Timeframe
13.6		Town Staff will evaluate and track incentives, funding tools, and partnerships that could support housing for workers, older adults, and income-restricted households.	2028–2030
13.7	**Create attainable housing while protecting Harrison's natural resources.**	Town Staff will complete site, infrastructure, market, and fiscal feasibility analyses for priority housing locations identified through the Comprehensive Plan process.	2029–2031
13.8		The Selectboard will select a qualified housing partner following a public review of potential sites, costs, funding options, and community benefits.	2030–2032
13.9		The Planning Board will update zoning to allow realistic housing capacity in designated growth areas while strengthening conservation standards in rural and resource-sensitive areas.	Through future zoning updates

14. FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

ID	Goal	Action and Responsible Party	Timeframe
14.1	**Adopt a Future Land Use Plan to guide growth and conservation efforts.**	Town Staff will refine the proposed growth, transition, rural, and resource areas using parcel, infrastructure, service, and natural-resource data; conduct neighborhood map reviews; and document public and agency input.	By 2027

ID	Goal	Action and Responsible Party	Timeframe
14.2		The Planning Board will develop conservation, siting, buffering, and connectivity standards to protect designated Critical Rural and Resource Areas from incompatible development.	Not specified
14.3		The Selectboard will advance the Future Land Use Plan after state, legal, mapping, and public review.	By 2027
14.4	**Align Town ordinances and investments with the Future Land Use Plan.**	The Planning Board will propose amendments to existing land-use ordinances and standards to reflect the desired uses, scale, density, and intensity identified for each Future Land Use area.	Within two years of adoption
14.5		The Selectboard will use the Future Land Use Plan to guide financial commitments by prioritizing infrastructure needed to support designated growth areas, along with conservation, housing, economic development, and grant projects.	Ongoing
14.6		The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee will report on the Town's progress in carrying out the Future Land Use Plan.	Annually
14.7	**Implement the Future Land Use Plan through simple townwide zoning.**	The Planning Board will draft a limited zoning ordinance and map based on the Future Land Use Plan that establishes clear, predictable, and efficient permitting procedures, particularly within designated growth areas.	2029–2031
14.8		Town Staff will evaluate the proposed zoning's effects and coordinate public notice, neighborhood meetings, hearings, and revisions.	Before a zoning vote

ID	Goal	Action and Responsible Party	Timeframe
14.9		The Selectboard will submit the zoning ordinance and map to voters and fund administration if adopted.	After public review
14.10	**Coordinate the community's land use strategies with other local and regional land use planning efforts.**	The Planning Board will review neighboring comprehensive plans and zoning when developing or amending Harrison's land-use ordinances to reduce conflicts along municipal boundaries.	Not specified
14.11		Town Staff will participate in regional planning and conservation efforts involving shared resources, including the Crooked River, Jugtown Plains, transportation corridors, and other cross-boundary resources.	Not specified
14.12		Town Staff will coordinate with neighboring communities on shared infrastructure and natural-resource issues, including roads, culverts, water resources, and habitat connections that cross municipal boundaries.	Not specified