

City of Biddeford
City Council - Workshop
October 11, 2022 6:00 PM Council Chambers

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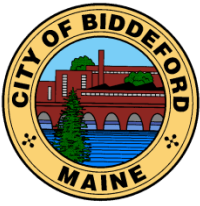
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Status: In-Person and Via Zoom; Council Chamber, 6:00 pm

1. Workshop Discussion Items

- 1.1. Transportation Projects Review
- 1.2. Joint Meeting of City Council & Planning Board - Comprehensive Plan Update - Future Land Use
 - [20221011 Joint Meeting - Comp Plan Update - Future Land Use - MEMO](#)
 - [20221011 Joint Meeting - Comp Plan Update - Future Land Use - PRESENTATION](#)



CITY OF BIDDEFORD

Planning and Development Department

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CITY COUNCIL/PLANNING BOARD MEMORANDUM

TO: Biddeford City Council

FROM: Matthew Grooms, AICP, City Planner and Eric Freeman, Assistant City Planner

DATE: October 4th, 2022

RE: Comprehensive Plan Update – Future Land Use Plan

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, October 11th, 2022 at 6:00 pm

I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Biddeford is working towards completion of a final draft of the City's Comprehensive Plan. A culminating step in that process is the development of the Future Land Use Plan, which formally designates areas of the City as either 'priority growth target areas' or 'rural areas', in accordance with the State of Maine's Growth Management Act Title 30-A M.R.S.A. Sections 4312 to 4350. The designation of priority growth areas is a significant piece of a community's comprehensive plan, as this designation is the basis for municipal decisions around land use policy, specifically, zoning. This map, in conjunction with policy recommendations proposed as part of the Comprehensive Plan, is the basis by which a municipality determines what types of land uses are appropriate where, and at what level of intensity such uses may occur.

The intent of this workshop is to collect feedback on the proposed priority growth and rural area designations, as well as an approach being proposed by staff to provide some additional nuance to this plan, by designating specific 'opportunity areas', emphasized by key existing or anticipated development characteristics.

II. CURRENT FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

As a point of reference, the current future land use plan, included as part of the 1999 Comprehensive Plan, was developed based upon the zoning districts in effect at that time. The map was simple, and stated that all zones excluding the Rural Farm (RF) zone, was considered a priority growth area. This of course includes Biddeford's downtown, in-town residential development, major industrial and commercial areas immediately south of downtown towards Arundel and along Route 111, Biddeford's coastline, and areas along key corridors and within key nodes to both the east and west of downtown. Approximately half of Biddeford is designated for growth, while the other half is designated as Rural Farm, as can be seen in the attached presentation (Attachment 1). It should be noted that the Rural

Farm zone does not prohibit housing or commercial development, but only allows for very low-density growth.

III. **HOW THE CURRENT LAND USE MAP INFORMS FUTURE DISCUSSION?**

These designations are generally consistent with on-the-ground conditions, with the exception being some land area in East Biddeford that is designated as priority growth area, but that is currently undeveloped. As the Board and council are likely well aware, a few key themes have emerged in the course of public engagement as defining considerations for future land development. These include:

- **Conserve Biddeford's significant natural resources and rural landscapes;**
- **Support higher density 'missing middle' infill housing proximate to downtown as naturally occurring affordable housing.**
- **Concentrate housing, employment, services and amenities in close proximity to reduce automobile dependence and establish vibrant complete neighborhoods.**
- **Invest in developing a complete streets network, which allow for safer and more enjoyable experiences as pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.**
- **Account for the public infrastructure costs necessary to support new growth.**

The general consensus, gathered as part of the City's public outreach efforts for the Comprehensive Plan, was that the City welcomed the opportunity to grow and experience new investment, particularly where such investment supported the prosperity and vibrancy of downtown Biddeford, but that this designation process should be carefully assessed through a climate-oriented, and ecological lens. Given that the current future land use plan generally reflects today's build-out, and in light of the above listed observations, the City is generally looking to minimize major deviations from today's plan.

IV. **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

In developing recommendations for the City's future land use map, staff have been evaluating the following items as either limiting factors, or as rationale for adjustments to today's map. These include:

- **Housing Demand** – The Mayor's Affordable Housing Task Force acknowledges that Biddeford, like communities across the US, is in the midst of a housing crisis, with rental and purchase rates quickly outpacing household incomes across the community. Similarly, Biddeford is beginning to experience an influx of new residents, in part due the positive media attention Biddeford has experienced in recent years, and in part due to the relatively higher cost of living in surrounding communities. These factors have increased local demand, which has reduced the supply of available units on the market. The City is soon to release a number of policy recommendations, which could include the establishment of an inclusionary zoning ordinance to leverage affordable housing units out of private market-rate developers, development of a housing trust fund to subsidize affordable housing, and targets for new housing starts. While this information is not yet available, it will likely call for significant and diversified new housing development to accommodate this growing demand.
- **Utility Infrastructure** – Major development requires adequate utility infrastructure, notably water and sewer access and capacity. Without this infrastructure in place, development is severely limited when serviced by the limited capacity of wells and septic systems. As the City evaluates future land use policy, it is critical that we understand where this infrastructure is located, and where it would be necessary to extend such infrastructure, which is very costly. Not only is the extension of

infrastructure costly, it is costlier to provide service and maintain infrastructure for low density development. Generally, utility infrastructure is more efficient when servicing compact, high density development as more users are charged per linear foot of water or sewer line.

- Roadway Infrastructure – Roadways have capacity limits beyond which, additional traffic will reduce a roadway’s level of service rating and require roadway/intersection improvements to accommodate the additional traffic. Aside from this, from a freight perspective, certain roadways feature vehicle weight limits, and restrict access to certain types of vehicles, or vehicles of a certain dimension. Alternatively, it is in the best interest of the community to reduce or restrict large truck movements through congested or in-town locations. Therefore, it is important to identify locations proximate to the Maine Turnpike, railroad and other major arterials, which may be suitable for certain commercial and/or industrial uses often employing large freight vehicles.
- Planned Investments – As of the writing of this memorandum, several significant investments are being planned, particularly around roadway infrastructure in Biddeford. This includes a new ramp extension at Exit 32 on the Maine Turnpike, with access to Route 111. In consideration of this work, to be funded by the MTA, the City has initiated a feasibility study to evaluate a separate Route 111 to South Street connector, through currently undeveloped land adjacent to the Maine Water Company, to provide a secondary means of access between Exit 32 and downtown Biddeford. This connector road could potentially provide direct access to property in West Biddeford that is currently inaccessible. Also, the City has is expecting federal grant funds to complete a plan for improvements to Route 1 and Elm Street from Main Street to the Saco line. Such transportation improvements will support additional growth, green space and pedestrian movements in the downtown.
- Climate Impacts – Land use planning, when done well, is a powerful tool for communities in addressing local contributions to climate change. Smart growth, which involves the reuse of the existing building stock wherever possible, compact urban development forms where one can easily access everything needed in daily life without the use of an automobile, and transit-oriented development, which concentrates growth around transit hubs and corridors significantly reduces the greenhouse gas emissions per capita when compared with new sprawling, car-dependent suburban growth. Aside from general development patterns, the Comprehensive Plan must account for emerging land uses, such as alternative forms of energy development (wind, solar, battery storage), and develop a framework for their future use to support renewable clean energy production. It is noted that the City established a Climate Action Task Force and a regional plan including Kittery, Kennebunk and Kennebunk Port with Biddeford is underway with an expected completion by September of 2023.
- Habitat and Natural Resources – Biddeford is fortunate to contain significant undeveloped tracts of land, which in many instances feature high quality wildlife habitat areas, water and other critical natural resources, soils of statewide significance. It is important to effectively steward these resources to support our local wildlife, and any planning for future land use, must identify and account for these resources across the City.

- Open Space and Recreational Needs –Through surveys and public engagement, the City understands that there is a strong desire to expand and enhance publicly accessible open spaces across the City for a variety of both passive and active recreational needs. This may involve acquiring conservation/access easements on private property for expansion of our trail system, improvements to existing parks in our downtown, or establishing new active use fields and parks across the City to support this demand.

V. FUTURE LAND USE PLAN - OPPORTUNITY AREAS

The current iteration of the future land use plan is black and white, both literally and figuratively, as property is either designated for growth or not. This framework does not adequately reflect the varying degrees of development intensity on the ground today, or the unique characteristics of that development.

As a means of providing more structure to this framework, the City proposes to identify key areas of opportunity for targeted change in Biddeford, and create five (5) distinct land use categories. Each of these areas has unique land use characteristics that the Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Plan aims to preserve and enhance. Additionally, the future land use plan aims to identify areas where development should be increasingly limited.

The five land use categories of the revised Future Land Use Plan are:

Downtown Core

The urban core of Biddeford including Main St and the Mill District.

Zoning: MSRD1, MSRD2, MSRD3, B1

Urban Residential

In-town residential primarily characterized by a dense mixture of single-family and multifamily homes.

Zoning: R1B, R2

Suburban Residential

Lower-density, predominantly single-family residential

Zoning: R1A, R3, SR1

Business & Industrial

Commercial and industrial areas concentrated along outer Route 1, Route 111 and the Biddeford Connector. This also includes medical and institutional zoning

Zoning: B2, OR, I1, I2, IN, M, W1, W2, W3

Limited Growth / Rural Farm

Rural Farm zone. Primarily very low density single-family housing, light commercial, working landscapes (farming, forestry) and undeveloped woodland.

Zoning: RF, LRF

In addition to the land use categories identified above, the Future Land Use Plan identifies other key areas of opportunity for future growth and development; including:

- Downtown – The Future Land Use Plan places emphasis on promoting dense, mixed-use development within the existing downtown core and mill district. The goal is to incentivize development that allows residents to live, work, shop and access services, amenities and entertainment without the need to drive or even own a car. Regulatory changes here can support and enhance Biddeford’s increasing desirability as a destination, in and of itself, powered in large part by the City’s historic resources, its riverfront location, its creative economy and its rising culinary scene. To support this vision, such areas need to be well supported by complete streets, featuring pedestrian, bicycle and transit accommodation. Further, such areas should employ transportation demand management (TDM) strategies, to thoughtfully reduce parking demand in the downtown. Aside from transportation strategies, this is an area where we will need to look closely at use and dimensional restrictions, to accommodate intensive new development.
- Urban Residential Infill – Smaller-scale duplex, fourplex or other “missing middle” infill housing types within existing core residential zones. Particularly MSRD2 and R2, and R1A/B zones. These areas of the City are well supported by public utility infrastructure and can support a substantial number of new housing units. Further, these neighborhoods are within a short walking distance of downtown amenities, and an increase in density here, would support new economic activity downtown while also contributing towards the City’s climate and ecological goals.
- Andrews Rd. / Exit 32/ South Street Connector – Potential to explore expanding the Priority Growth Area boundary westward in the vicinity of Andrews Rd. and Exit 32 to enable limited new commercial and residential development in conjunction with a possible South Street Connector project. This project, as presented, would provide a new means of access for vehicular traffic to downtown Biddeford, as well as currently undeveloped property to the west of the Maine Turnpike. The connector would be in close proximity to the shopping center at Biddeford Crossing, and major new residential development proposed at the intersection of Andrews Road and Route 111. In exchange for allowing for new development opportunity here, the City would be looking to closely coordinate with nearby property owners to conserve portions of the available undeveloped land for conservation and public recreational use.
- Industrially Zoned Property – The nature of industrial uses has changed significantly over the past several decades, with many new low-impact uses emerging, and many former heavy industrial uses declining. This warrants a close look at uses and dimensional restrictions, as well as performance measures to ensure that Biddeford is maximizing its industrially zoned property, and welcoming to new and emerging industries. We also aim to ensure industrial users have robust access to road and rail transportation.
- Rural Farm / Limited Growth Zones – Explore zoning changes that would limit low-density sprawl in Rural Farm zones and create new requirements for conservation and green space within these areas. One recommendation being considered by the City could be to implement a form of impact fee specific to development of a certain scale in rural areas, which could then be utilized to support either open space or park maintenance, or property acquisition to expand established conservation

areas across the City. Another idea would be to establish a hierarchy of uses within the Rural Farm Zone to prioritize working landscapes and conservation over housing or other commercial uses.

- Biddeford's Shore Front – Biddeford's shorefront is an unparalleled natural resource, and should be accessible to all Biddeford residents. Based upon the input received during public engagement for the Comp Plan, there is a strong desire to see Biddeford's shoreline become more accessible to members of the public. The City should evaluate opportunities for improved access through improvements to existing facilities, coordination with transit providers to improve access, and regulatory changes to encourage better public access. Aside from this, the City should explore opportunities for a public marina and additional boat launches. From a protection standpoint, the City should carefully consider the impacts additional use may have on our waterfront, and ensure that the City's regulatory controls provide adequate protection.

VI. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this workshop is not to present a finalized draft, but to share the framework through which the City is approaching this long-range planning exercise and provide the Planning Board and members of the public with some initial recommendations based upon that framework. We expect this to be an iterative process, and are asking for feedback on whether we should factor in other considerations in refining this framework. The Future Land Use Plan is a key element of the comprehensive plan, and is the basis by which the City's zoning is developed. We look forward to working very closely with City Council and Planning Board, as well as members of the community to develop consensus around this plan.

VII. ATTACHMENTS

- A. Future Land Use Plan Presentation

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Comprehensive Plan Update

October 11, 2022



FUTURE LAND USE



The goal of the future land use plan is to identify needs and opportunities for managing growth within the community. To align with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan, as well as ongoing local planning and development projects. This plan serves to...

- Identify areas where growth and development are encouraged (Priority Growth Areas)
- Identify areas where growth should be limited or entirely prohibited (Limited Growth Areas)
- Create a vision for land use, housing, and transportation
- Determine what types of uses are appropriate where, and to what intensity.

KEY GOALS



- Conserve Biddeford's significant natural resources and rural landscapes
- Support higher density 'missing middle' infill housing proximate to downtown as naturally occurring affordable housing.
- Concentrate housing, employment, services and amenities in close proximity to reduce automobile dependence and establish vibrant complete neighborhoods.
- Invest in developing a complete streets network, which allow for safer and more enjoyable experiences as pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.
- Account for the public infrastructure costs necessary to support new growth.

KEY IDEAS: INFILL



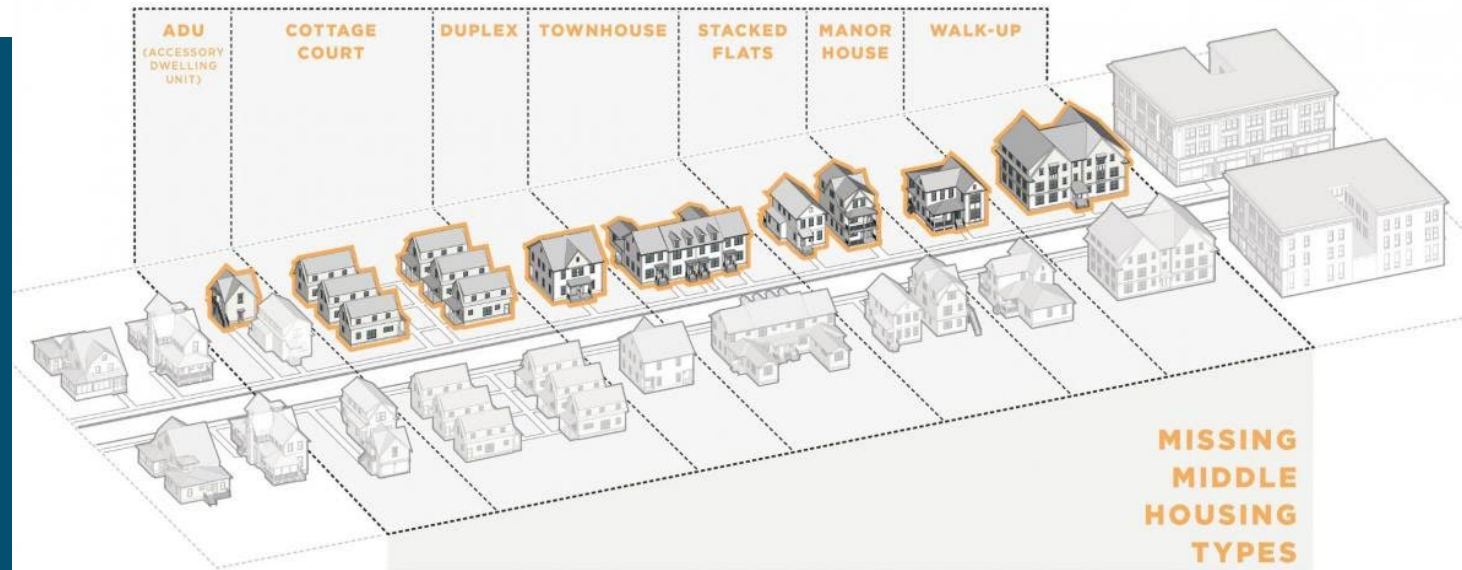
What is it?

Creating new housing within existing urban residential neighborhoods through added density.

- Duplex / Fourplex Homes
- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
- Other “Missing Middle” Housing types

Infill housing allows communities to grow in a way that minimizes sprawl and helps preserve open space elsewhere.

Infill also helps to create vibrant, walkable neighborhoods and allows more people to access businesses and services without a car.





KEY IDEAS: LD 2003

What is it?

LD 2003 is state legislation sponsored by Rep. Ryan Fecteau (D-Biddeford) that aims to address Maine's housing crisis by creating new allowances for duplex and fourplex homes in most areas.

- Allows for up to four (4) units per lot by-right in most existing growth areas
- Allows for two (2) units per lot by-right in other areas
- Density bonuses for certain affordable housing projects
- Signed into law in April of 2022
- Phased Implementation

LD 2003 is likely to have an impact on how our community develops and where growth occurs.

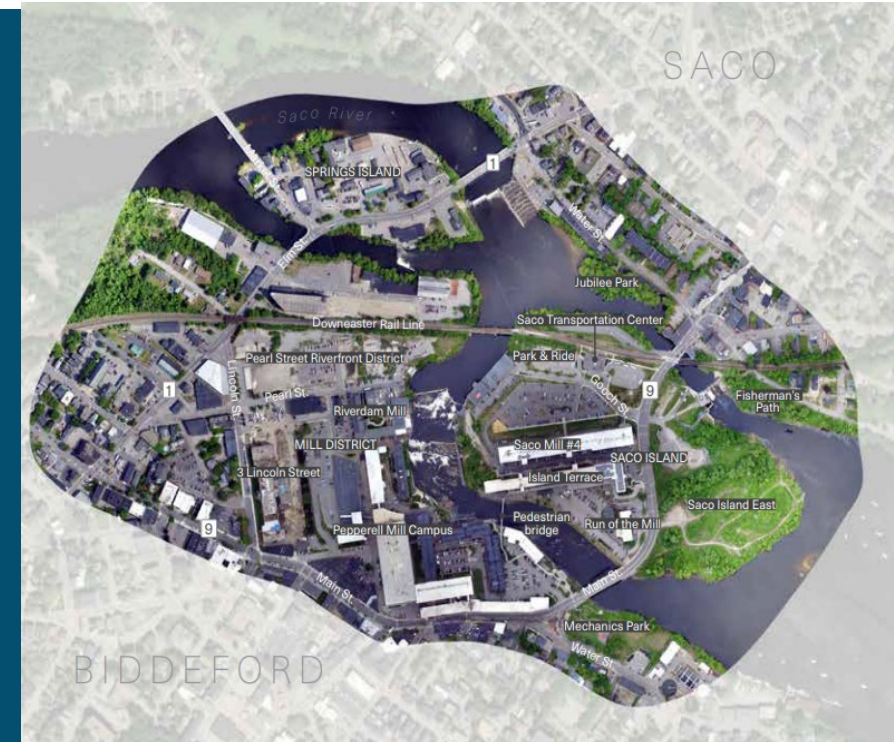
KEY IDEAS: DOWNTOWN SMART GROWTH



What does it mean?

- Mixed-use development that prioritizes creating a walkable and vibrant urban core.
- Continued redevelopment of the Mill District
- Transit-Oriented Development
- Reduce or eliminate parking requirements for some downtown projects.

Focusing on development in Biddeford's downtown core will help preserve open space elsewhere



The Biddeford-Saco ToD Study area (2021)

KEY IDEAS: RURAL AREAS & OPEN SPACE



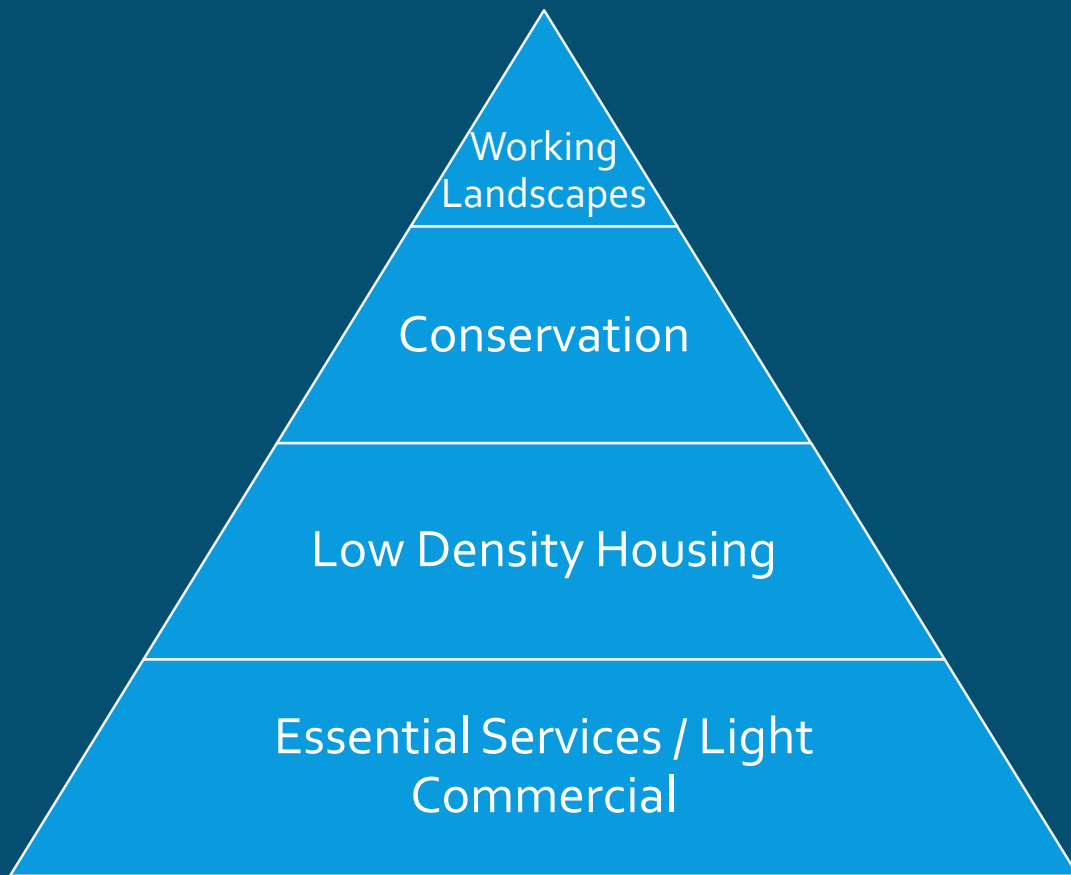
- **What kind of future do we want for our rural areas?**
- Balancing the needs of working landscapes, conservation, recreation and development.
- Where possible, prioritize protection of prime agricultural soils and vulnerable ecosystems.
- Identify areas within the RF zone where any new development should be strongly discouraged
- Create a hierarchy of uses for guiding future development within the RF zone.

KEY IDEAS: RURAL AREAS & OPEN SPACE

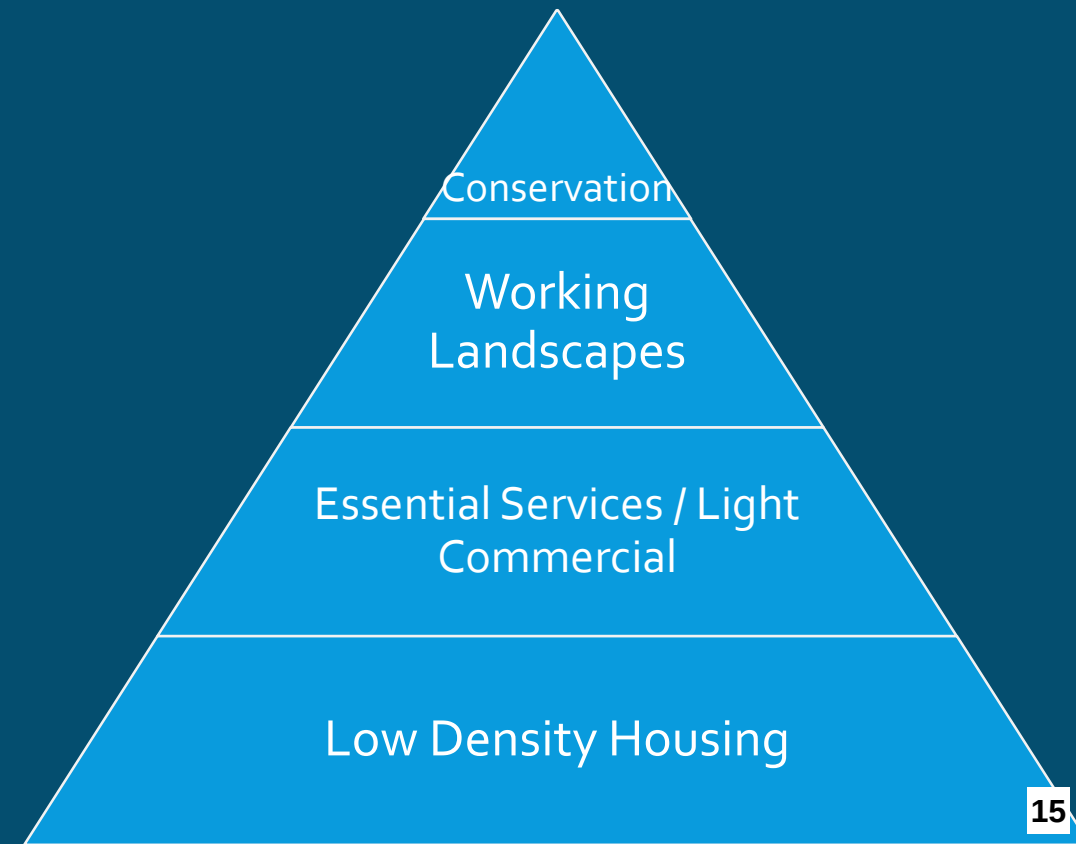
CREATING A HIERARCHY OF USES



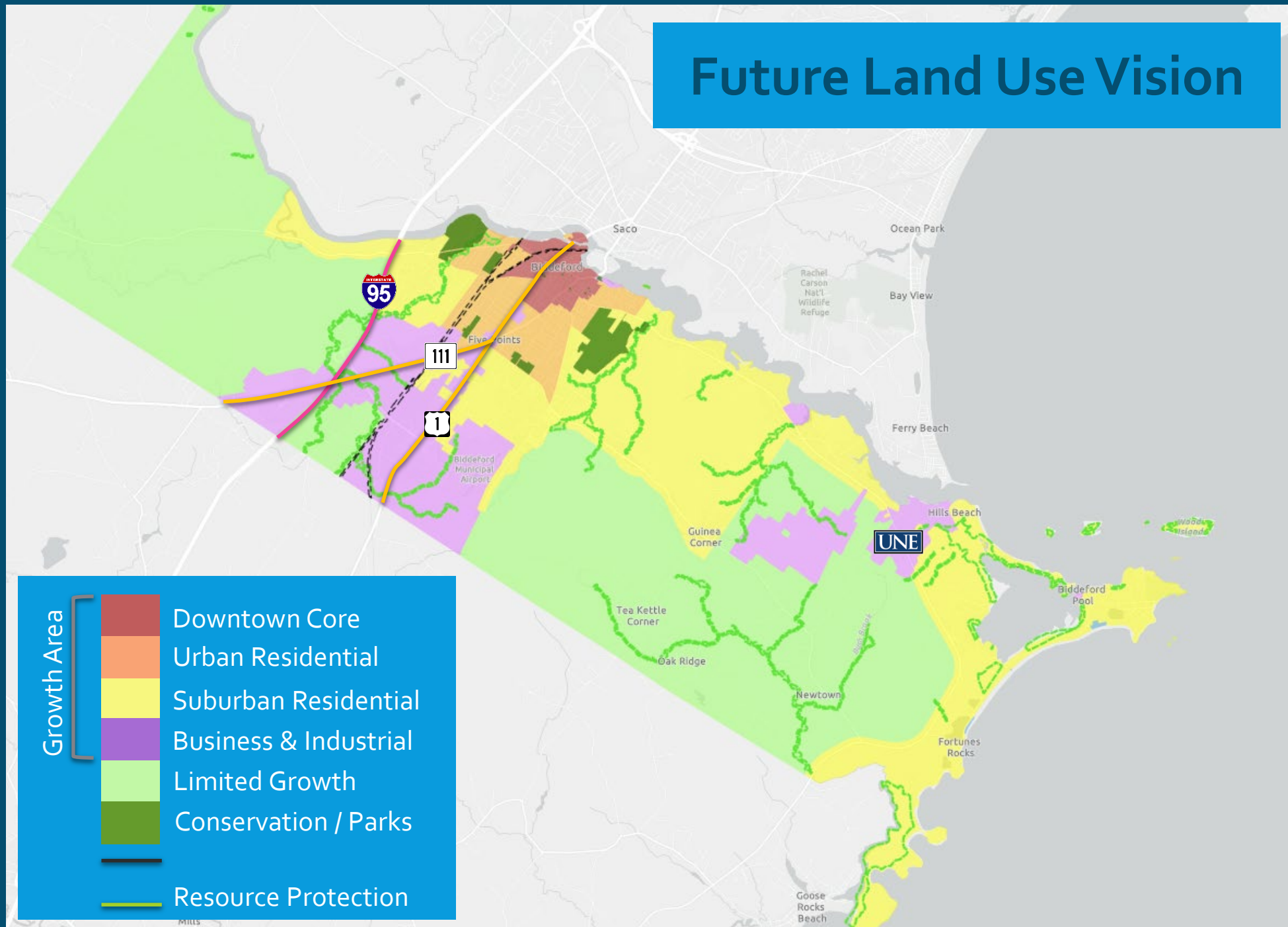
What kind of future do we want for our rural areas?



...Or...



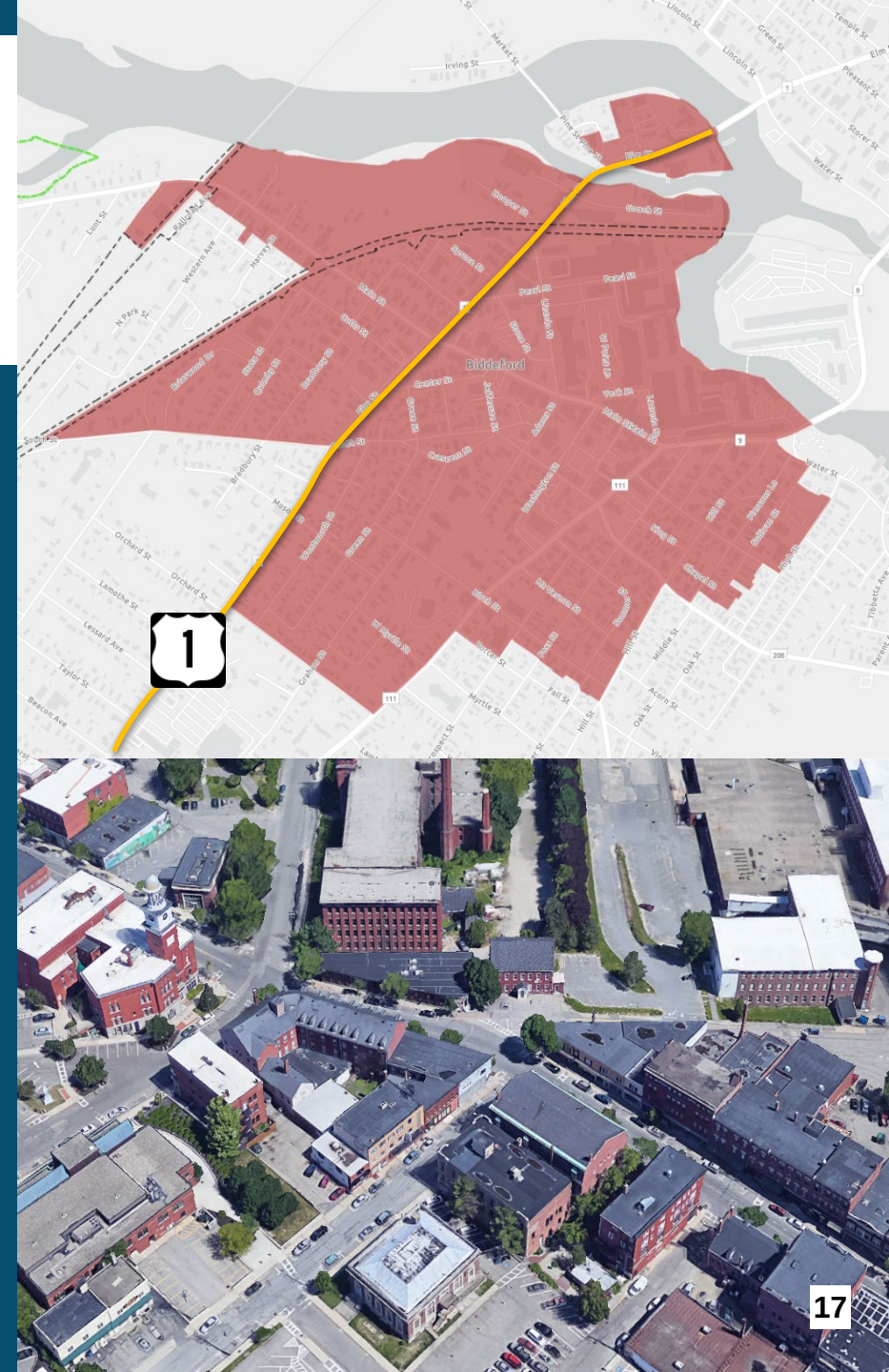
Future Land Use Vision





DOWNTOWN CORE

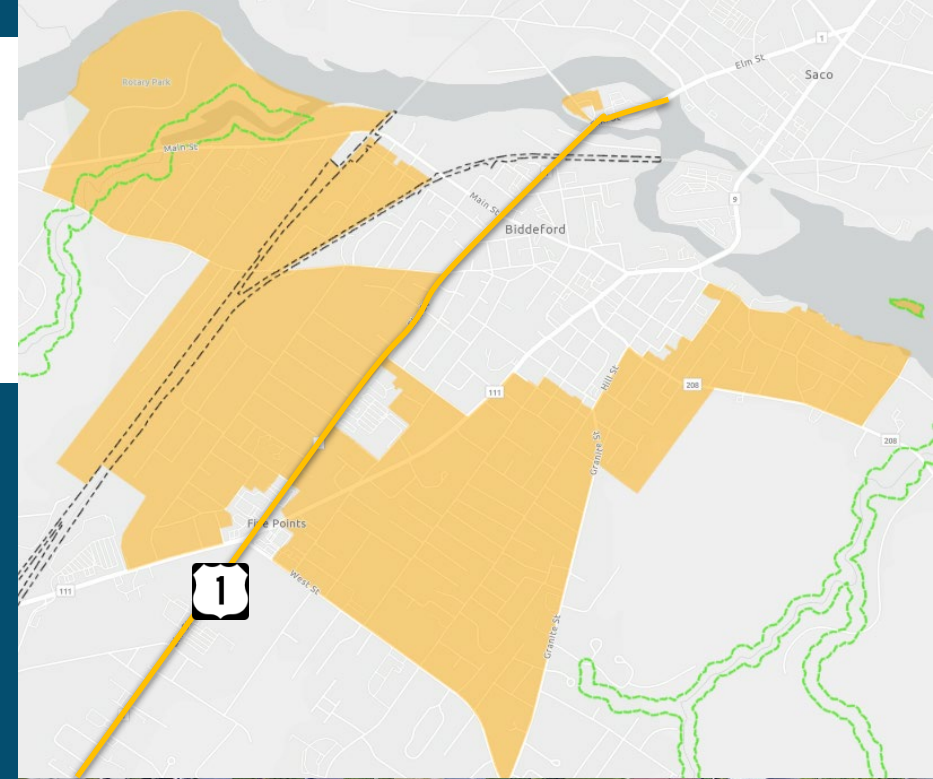
- High intensity, mixed-use development
- Continued redevelopment of the Mill District
- Transit-Oriented Development
- Multifamily Infill Development in residential areas
- Reduce or eliminate parking requirements for some downtown projects.
- Complete streets / Shared Streets





URBAN RESIDENTIAL

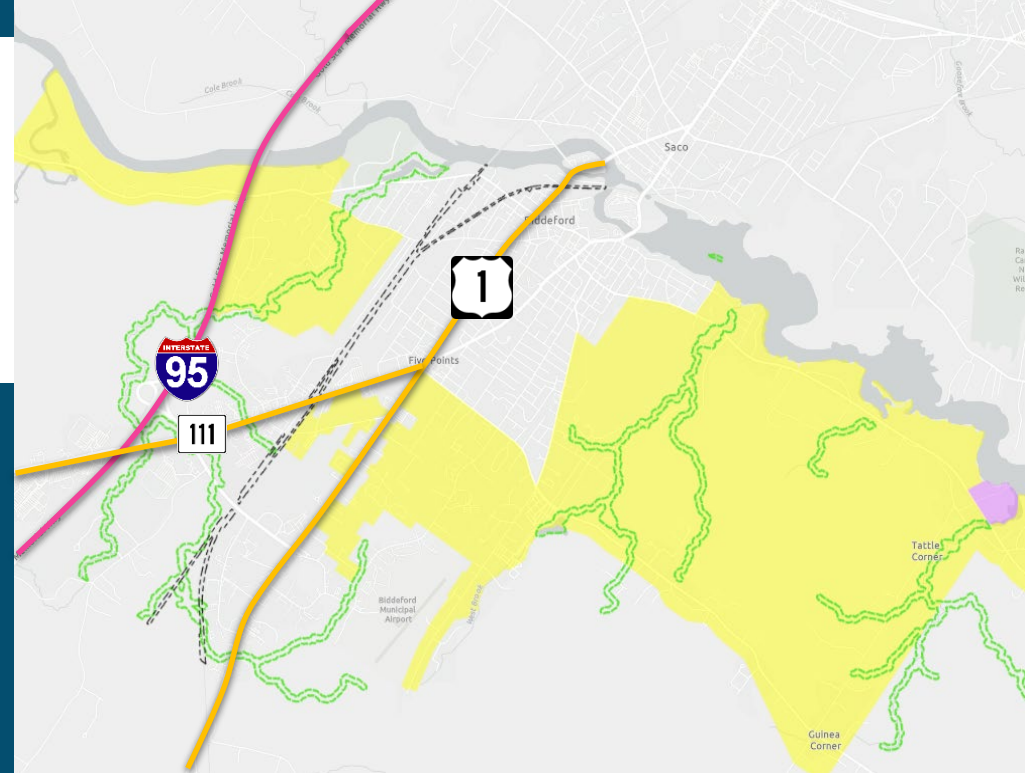
- Multifamily Infill
- Focus on “Complete Neighborhoods”
- Small-Scale neighborhood retail / commercial
- Improve Bike/Ped and Transit Access





SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL

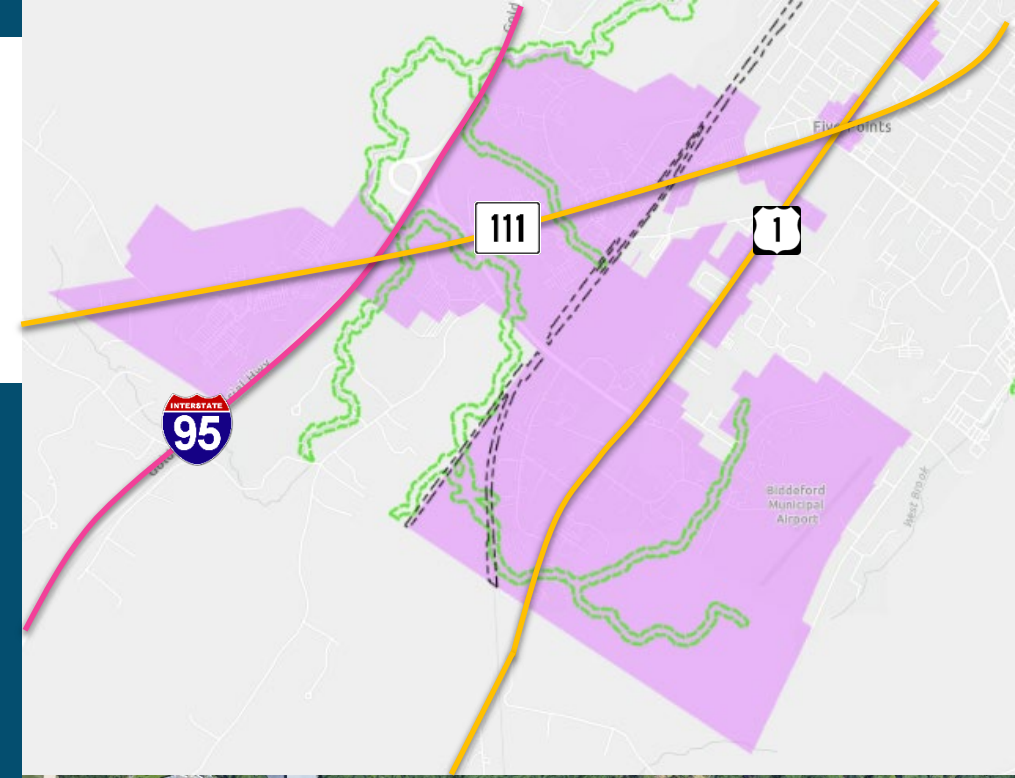
- Multifamily Infill
- Focus on “Complete Neighborhoods”
- Improve Bike/Ped access





BUSINESS / INDUSTRIAL

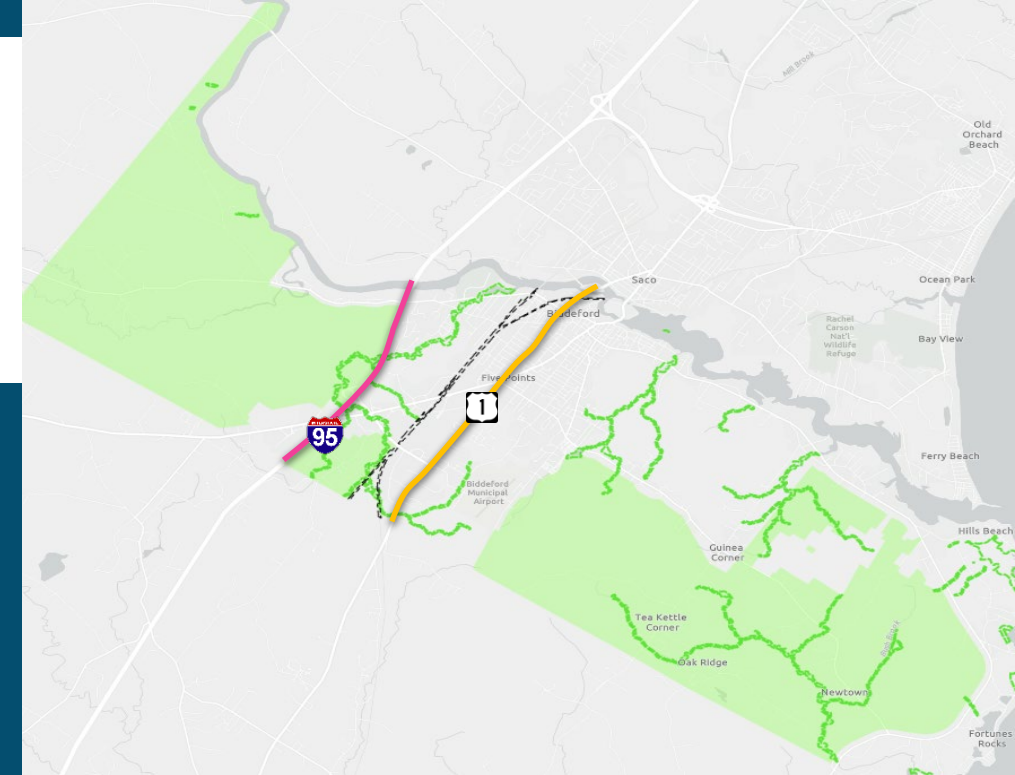
- Higher-Density housing and mixed-use development along key transit corridors (Route 1, Route 111)
- Plan for emerging commercial and industrial land uses
- Improved Bike/Ped and Transit Access



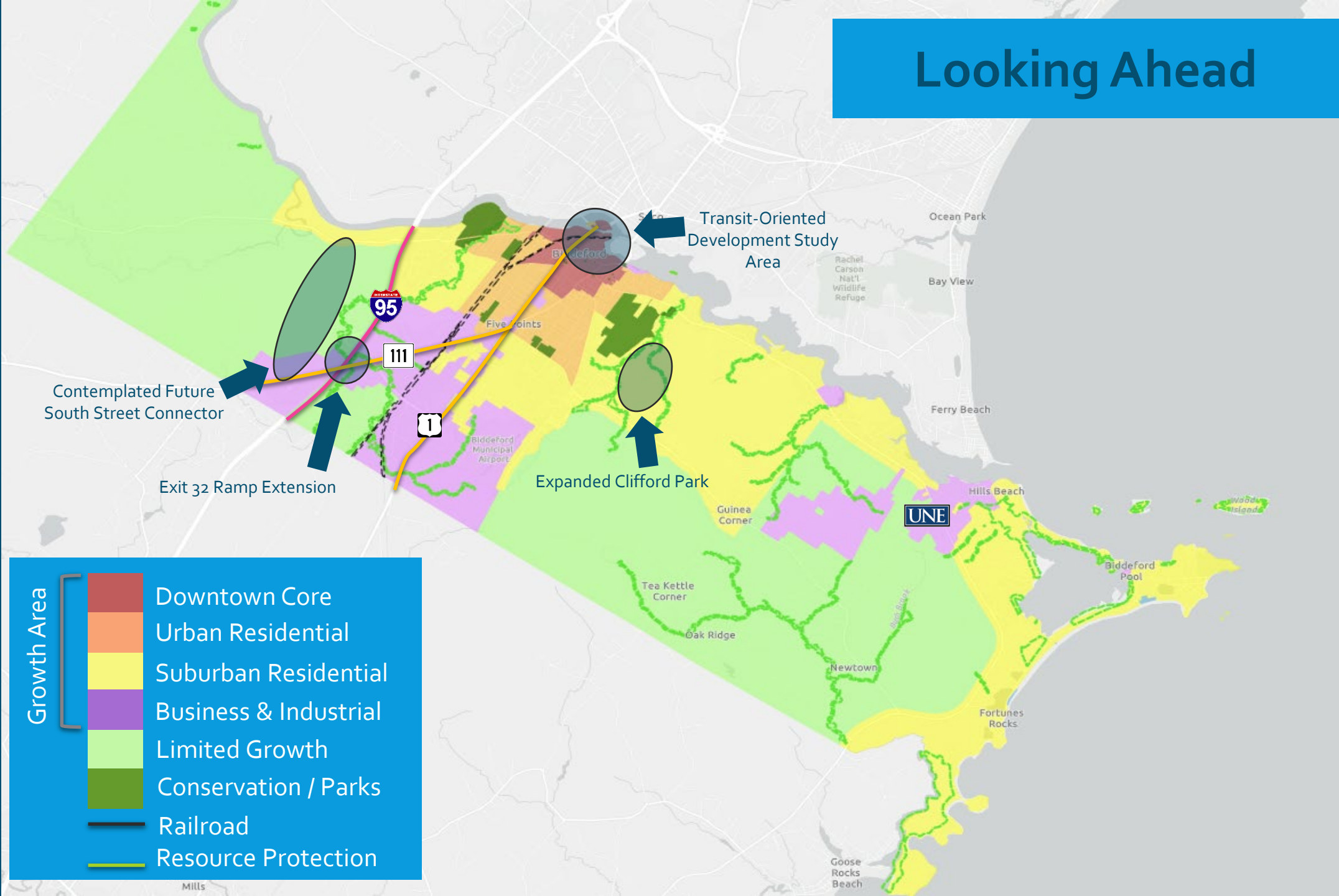


RURAL FARM

- Identify areas where conservation should be prioritized
- Support working landscapes
- Create a hierarchy of uses to guide future development
- Limit ultra low density sprawl



Looking Ahead



Where we need Feedback:

Growth area boundary

Land use Categories

Limited Growth Area (RF) Strategies

