

Natural Resources – 3



York’s natural resource base is an important part of the community’s vitality. Major natural resources in York include Mount Agamenticus, the York River, the Cape Neddick River, the Atlantic Ocean, and a number of beaches, parks, and forests. Many of these resources serve natural, recreational, and economic functions. It is important to preserve these important connections to nature while finding new ways to connect people with York’s rich natural environment.

NATURAL RESOURCES TODAY - HIGHLIGHTS

Wildlife Habitats

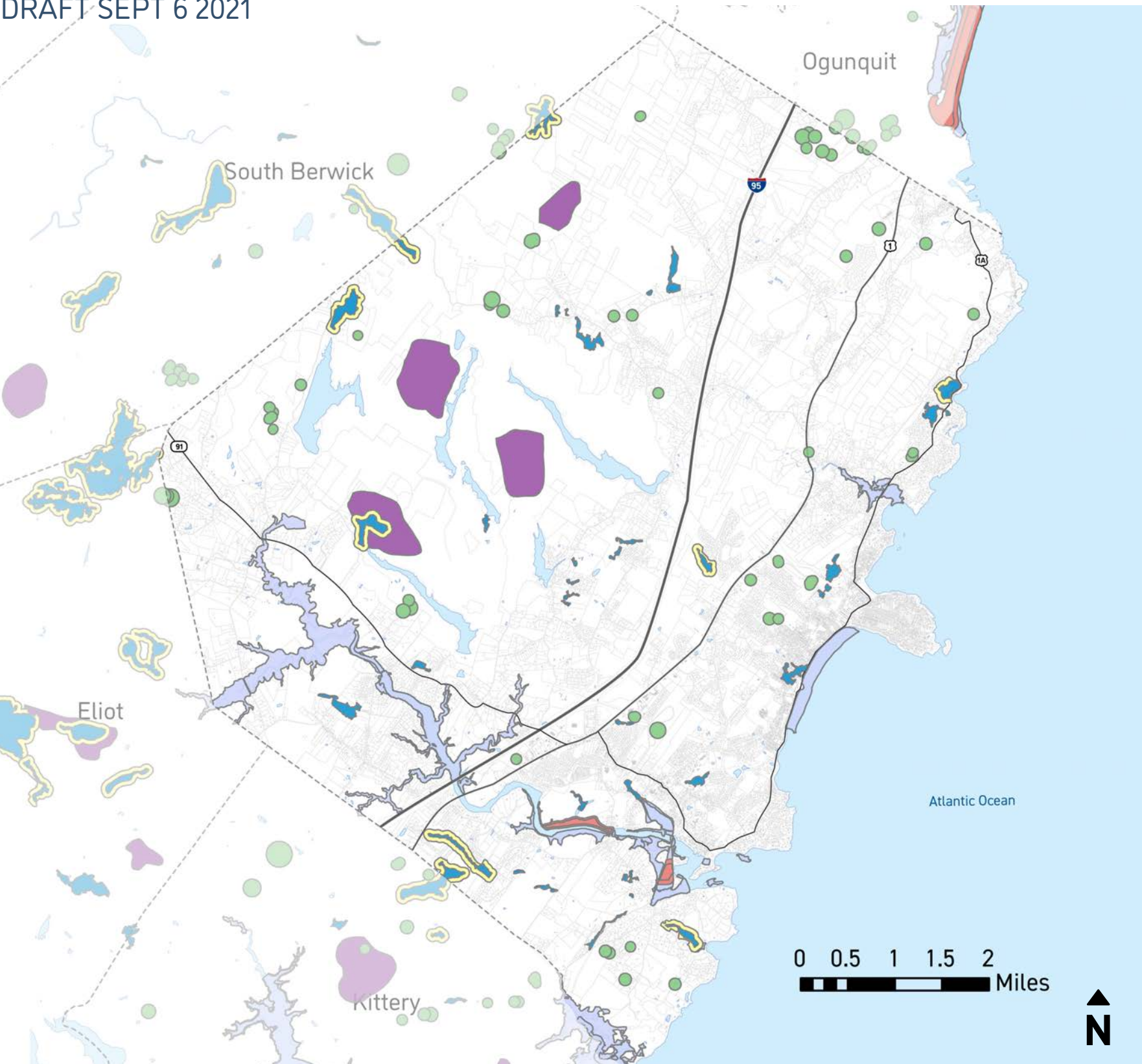
- Due to York’s location on the coast, at a point where the northern and southern forest ecosystems meet, and the continued presence of large tracts of undeveloped, unfragmented land, the town is home to some of the highest biodiversity in Maine.
- Beginning with Habitat (BwH) is a program within Maine’s Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife that helps to collect and consolidate habitat information produced by separate federal, state, and local agencies and other organizations. There are three BwH Focus Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance located in York. BwH focus areas contain unusually high concentrations of at-risk species and habitat.

BwH Focus Area	Why is this Area Significant?
Brave Boat Harbor – Gerrish Island	Includes a rich association of natural community types, including upland forests, dune grasslands, spartina saltmarshes, oak forests, freshwater swamps, pocket swamps, vernal pools, and coastal features that provide the habitat needed to support most of the native plants and animals we would expect to find along the south coast of Maine.
Mt. Agamenticus Focus Area	Comprises and is one of the largest remaining expanses of undeveloped forests in coastal New England. The uplands and wetlands around Mt. Agamenticus are inhabited by 12 animal species and 21 plant species that are considered rare in Maine. Many of these rare species are at the northern limit of their distribution range and are more abundant south of the Maine border. Similarly, some natural communities that occur in the Focus Area are restricted primarily to southern New England. The forest that extends northward from Mt. Agamenticus features Maine’s only chestnut-oak woodland.
York River Headwaters Focus Area	Encompasses the 1,000 acres of uplands and wetlands that comprise the headwaters of the York River. It is notable for the Tidal Marsh Estuary Ecosystem that includes the intertidal bays and one of the largest unprotected spartina saltmarshes, a rare community type, in the state. The extensive York River Estuary is one of the Gulf of Maine’s least disturbed marsh-estuarine ecosystems and may be the most ecologically diverse coastal drainage for its size in the Gulf of Maine. Rare plants and animals and extensive areas of high value habitat are found throughout the focus area as well. This diverse system of large, undeveloped, high quality natural habitats is a high priority for additional conservation action because of the rapid pace of development in its immediate vicinity

Source: Beginning with Habitat Focus Areas documentation provided as part of the 2021 Comprehensive Planning Dataset from the state.

“SIGNIFICANT WILDLIFE HABITATS” IN YORK

DRAFT SEPT 6 2021



Source: Beginning with Habitat Data Received from Town of York August 30, 2021; Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife; Town of York OpenData; Maine Geolibrary, USGS National Hydrography Dataset

- Shorebird Areas
- Significant Vernal Pools
- Wildlife Wetlands
- Deering Wintering Areas
- Inland Waterfowl / Wading Bird Habitat
- Tidal Waterfowl / Wading Bird Habitat

This topic includes...

- Critical natural resources such as wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, sand dunes, shorelands, scenic vistas, and unique natural areas
- Threats to natural resources
- Protections for natural resources

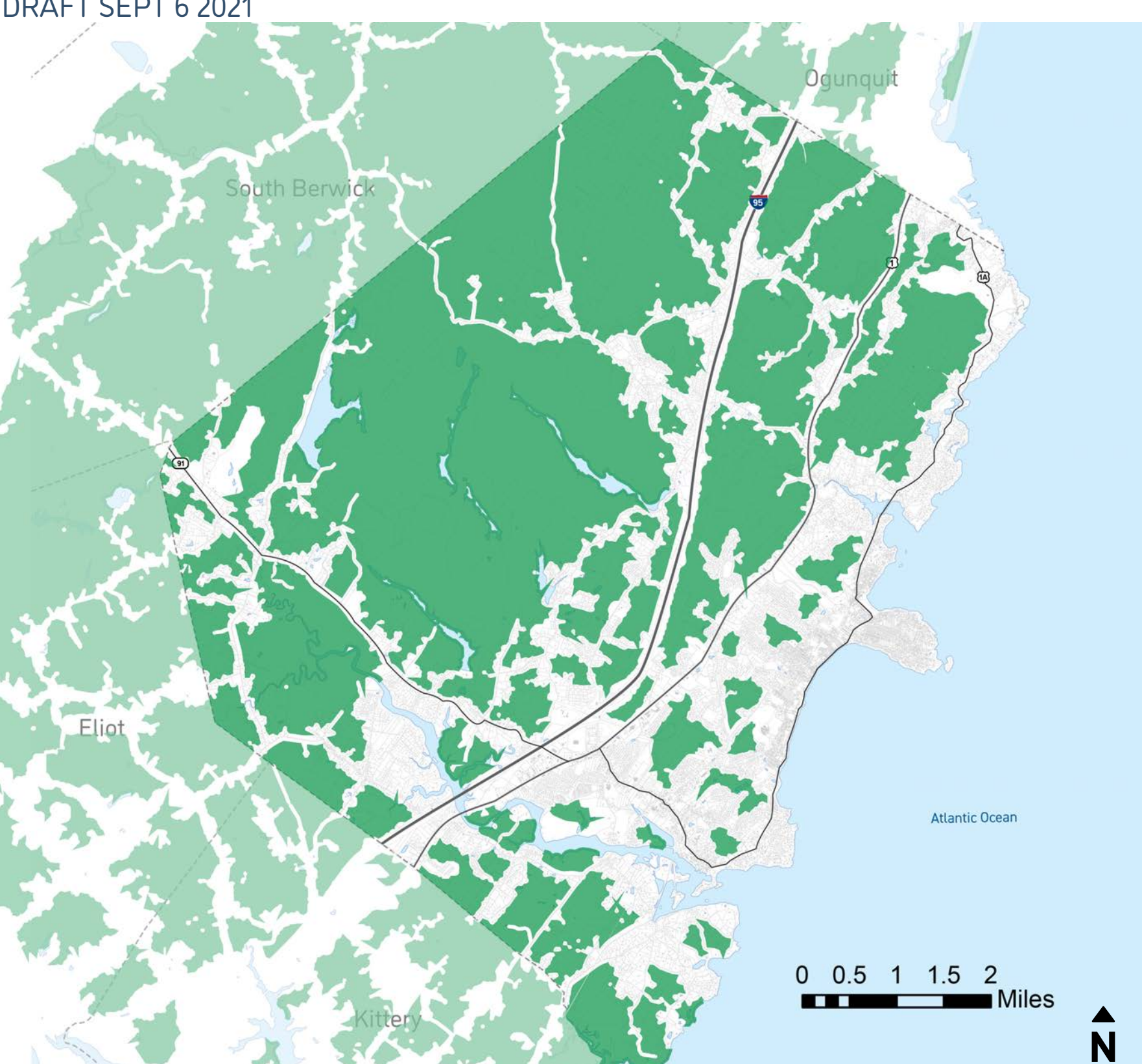
- Significant wildlife habitats in York include:
 - » Candidate Deer Wintering Area;
 - » Inland Waterfowl and Wading Bird Habitat (IWWH);
 - » Wildlife wetlands;
 - » Shorebird Areas;
 - » Tidal Wading Bird and Waterfowl Habitats (TWWH); and
 - » Significant Vernal Pools.
- In York’s rivers, there are many Wild Brook Trout Priority Areas in addition to riparian habitats.
- Particularly around the Mt. Agamenticus area, there are many areas classified by the State as buffers for endangered, threatened, and special concern species habitats as well as rare plant communities.

Undeveloped Blocks

- The continued presence of large tracts of undeveloped, unfragmented land is essential to York’s rich biodiversity. An extensive, undeveloped block of forested open space surrounds Mount Agamenticus and the watersheds of the York and Kittery water supplies.
- Unfragmented blocks are important because the size of block generally limits the diversity of animal species. At 2,500 acres and above, the block size does not generally restrict species.
- Within York there are two blocks in excess of 2,500 acres—one just to the north of Mountain Road and the other just to the south of Mountain Road.

UNDEVELOPED BLOCKS

DRAFT SEPT 6 2021



Source: 2021 Beginning with Habitat Program Received from Town of York August 30, 2021, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Town of York OpenData, Maine Geolibrary, USGS National Hydrography Dataset

- Undeveloped Blocks

CivicMoxie





NATURAL RESOURCES TODAY - HIGHLIGHTS (CONT.)

Sand Dunes

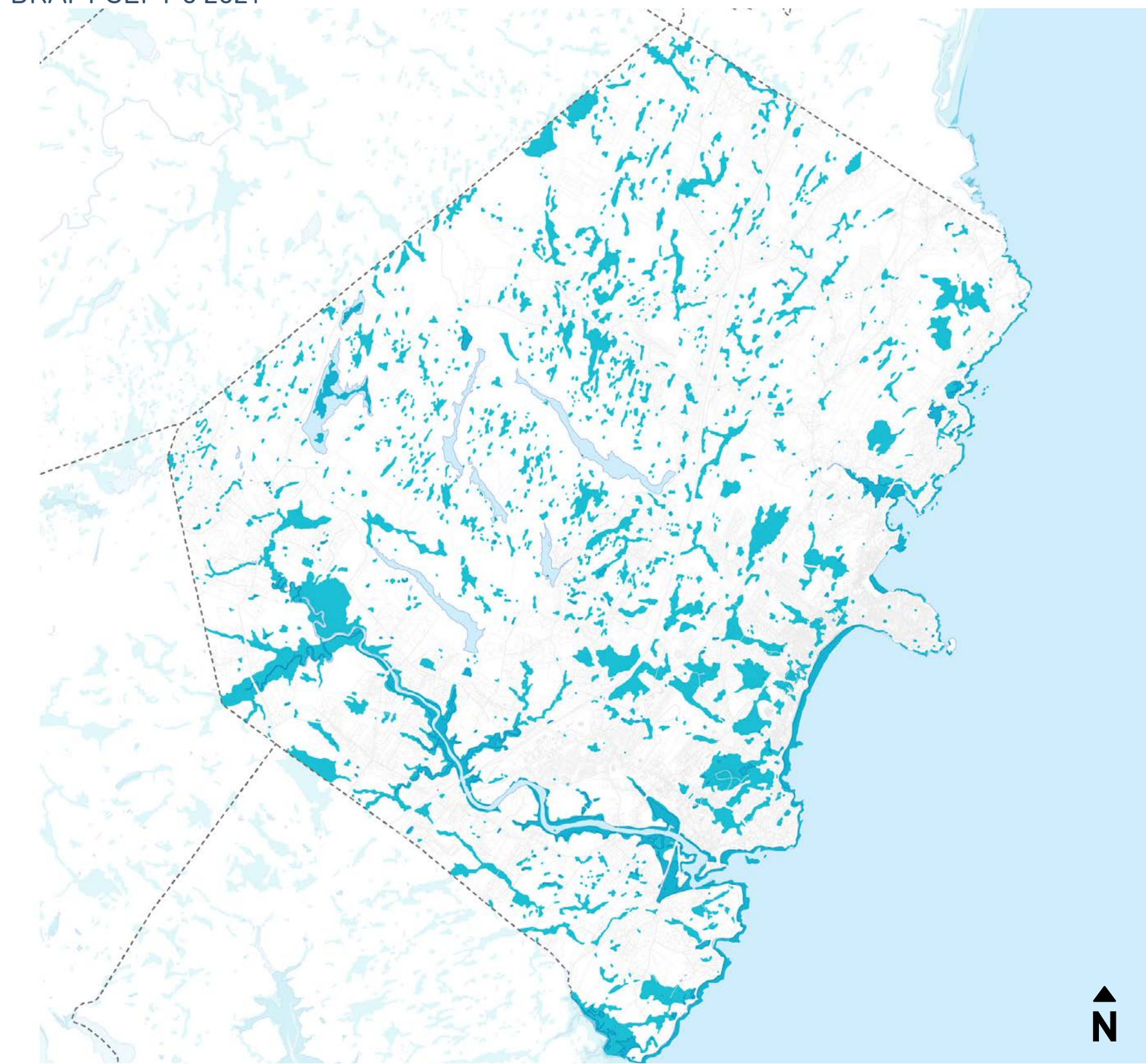
- In York the State has identified two coastal sand dune systems: along Long Sands Beach and along Short Sands Beach. Dunes are an important component of the natural environment along the coast, and they fulfill a multitude of functions. Most notably, they buffer inland areas from storms, provide important wildlife habitat, and enhance the scenic beauty of the coastline.
- The dunes in York have been heavily developed, and have been so for over a century in many places. In the face of future sea level rise, buffering functions will become more vital, and it is likely that much of the development on the frontal dunes will be subject to increasingly frequent and more severe damage during storm events.

Wetlands

- Wetlands in York serve as valuable ecosystem habitats and can help to absorb water and mitigate flooding impacts. Fifty-seven percent of York’s wetlands have been found by the state to have “Values at a Significant Level” for flood flow function.

YORK WETLANDS

DRAFT SEPT 6 2021



Source: 2021 Wetland Characterization Maine Geolibrary, Town of York OpenData, National Hydrography Database

Classified Wetlands

Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Benefits

- York’s wetlands and sand dunes are important tools for mitigating the impacts of sea level rise and more frequent flooding events.
- In addition, natural resources in York provide opportunities for carbon sequestration (absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere). The management, preservation, and expansion of these lands are key components of York’s climate action planning and strategies to reduce York’s greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the coming years.

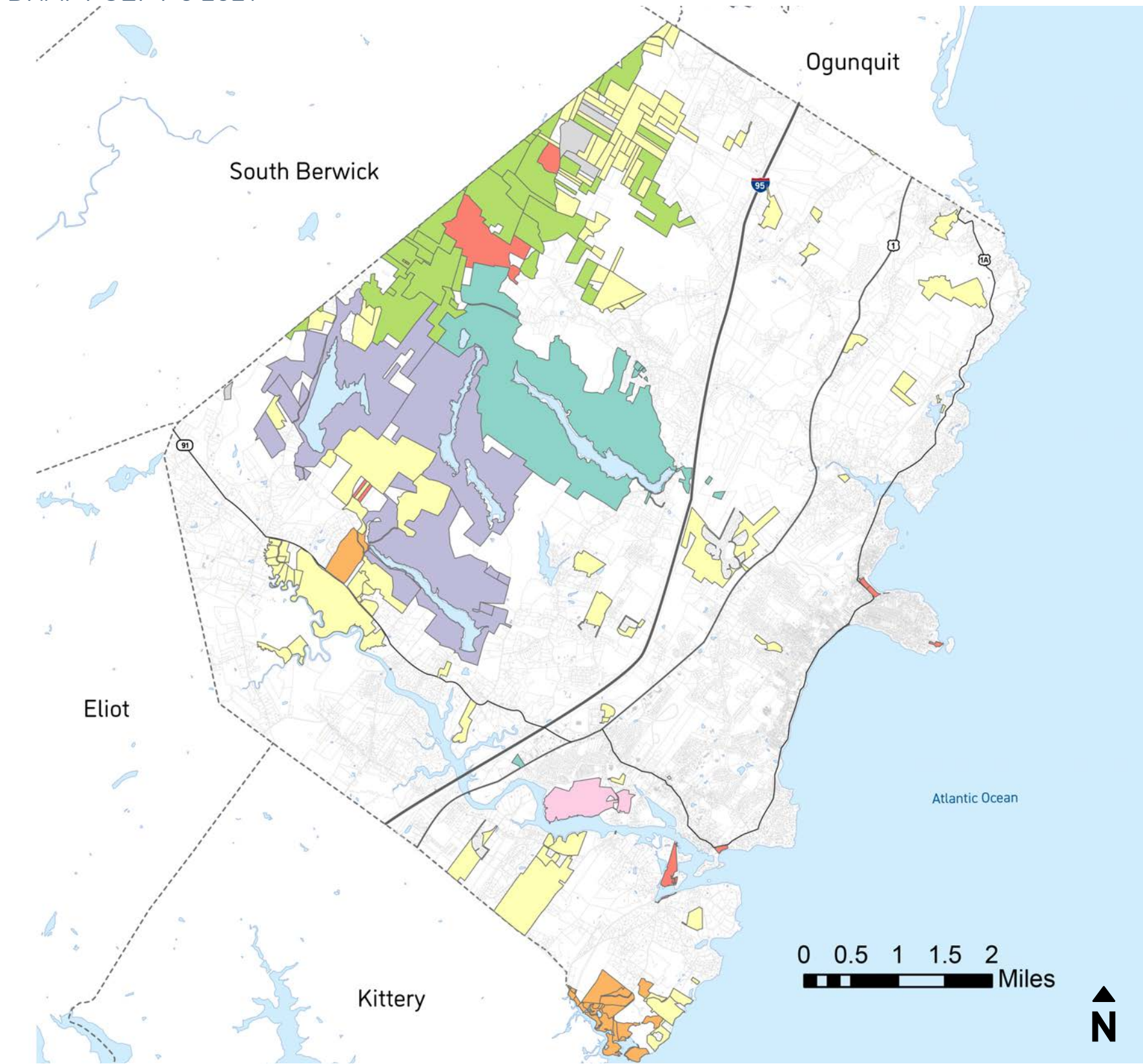
Conserved Lands

- Conservation data compiled by Beginning with Habitat (BwH) reflects approximately 9,000 acres of conservation land and easements in York.

- Government conservation land and easements are held by the Town of York, the York Water District (YWD), the Kittery Water District (KWD), the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&W).
- The vast majority of conservation land in York is located in the greater Mount Agamenticus area, although there are significant holdings throughout town.
- The York Land Trust has been working in the Mount Agamenticus region for 25 years to help conserve more than 14,000 acres of land. The Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative (MtA2C) has targeted 15,086 acres of Open Space in the focus area of this initiative across York and neighboring towns.

CONSERVED LAND IN YORK BY LAND HOLDER

DRAFT SEPT 6 2021



Source: State of Maine Conserved Lands Data updated April 26, 2021 (credit to Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Parks and Lands, Land Use Planning Commission, Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, State Planning Office, The Nature Conservancy, New England Forestry Foundation, Maine private land trusts, US Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife, Maine municipal towns, Appalachian Mountain Club), Town of York OpenData, Maine Geolibrary, USGS National Hydrography Dataset

York Water District	Town of York	Maine Coast Heritage Trust
York Land Trust	US Fish and Wildlife Service	Great Works Regional Land Trust
Kittery Water District	Maine Dept of Inland Fisheries + Wildlife	

Regional Cooperation

- Beginning with Habitat is a statewide initiative that assists landowners, land trusts, non-profits, and governmental bodies with conservation planning by providing information, creating maps, collecting data, assisting with conservation planning, and helping to create tools and strategies for conservation programs.
- MtA2C is a coalition of ten organizations working together to conserve fields, wetlands, and marshes in a regional focus area that includes parts of Kittery, Eliot, York, Ogunquit, Wells, and South Berwick.
- *York River Wild & Scenic Stewardship Plan* - A bill was introduced in the U.S. Senate December 1, 2020 to designate York River as 'Wild and Scenic'. The Bill must be passed by Congress and signed by the President to achieve designation.
- Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC) provides its 39 member towns with services including land use planning, brownfields redevelopment, transportation planning, sustainability and resilience programs, and cooperative purchasing.





NATURAL RESOURCES TODAY - HIGHLIGHTS (CONT.)

Threats to Natural Resources

- Previous planning efforts in York have consistently identified residential development as the largest threat to natural resources.
- Historical development patterns in York included development in environmentally unstable areas, such as on coastal dunes and in the former marshlands behind the dunes. Many of the current land use problems faced in York are a result of uninformed decisions over 100 years ago. Sea level rise will worsen these problems, and will create others.
- Looking forward, threats to natural resources from growth pressures and development include:
 - » Groundwater pollution from development on poor soils without public sewer collection and treatment;
 - » Non-point water pollution from road maintenance and new development with inadequate erosion/sedimentation control;
 - » Reduction in surface water quality from increasing impervious surfaces in each watershed;
 - » Loss of biodiversity by habitat loss and fragmentation from new roads and development;
 - » Worsening of flooding problems from more than a century of unplanned development, continued development, and sea level rise;
 - » Loss of the working landscape (such as sustainable agriculture and forestry) by escalating land values and neighborhood concerns and impacts;
 - » Increased demand for use of trails and natural spaces; and
 - » Overcrowding of harbor and other waters as people compete to use finite shore resources.
- Natural resources in York operate as a system full of complex inter-relationships, and impacts in any one of these areas could have cascading effects.

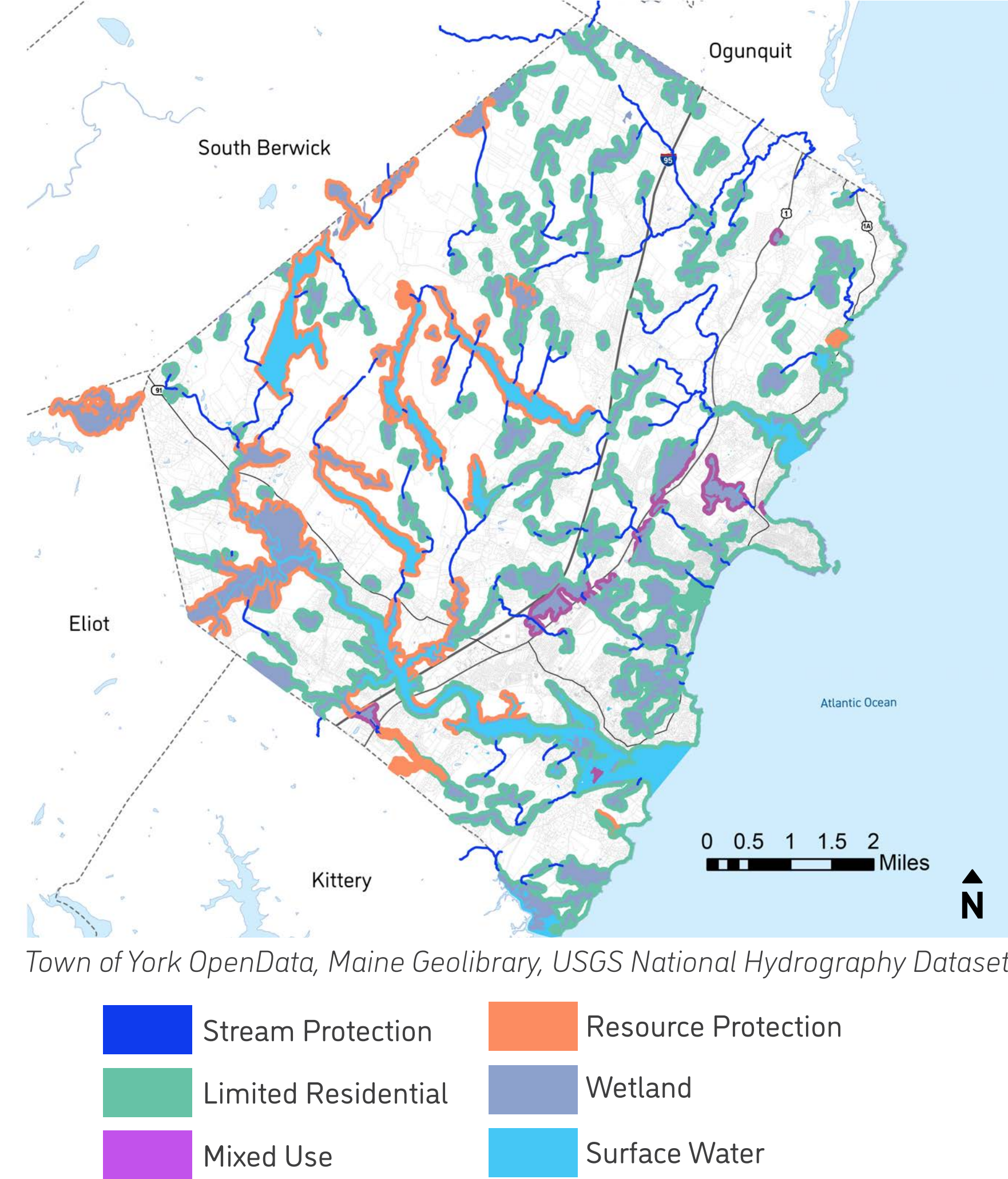
Policies and Regulations

Policies, regulations, and other tools protecting natural resources in York include:

- Shoreland Overlay Zoning District;
- Watershed Protection Overlay Zoning District;
- Wetlands Protection Overlay Zoning District;
- The Farm Enterprise Overlay Zoning District;
- Open Space Conservation Subdivisions;
- York Conservation Commission;
- York Shellfish Conservation Ordinance;
- State's Current Use Tax Laws; and
- Other Development and Performance Standards.

SHORELAND OVERLAY ZONING DISTRICT

DRAFT SEPTEMBER 7 2021



WHAT WE'VE HEARD SO FAR...

- Feedback from the CompFest! event reflected that York's natural resources and natural beauty are loved and essential to the town's identity.
- Preparing for climate change was a major concern reflected in feedback from the CompFest! event.
- Recreational use of York's natural resources has increased in recent years. More pervasive use of social media has raised demand on lesser-known resources. Balancing recreational users, commercial users, and environmental quality/protection of these resources remains a challenge.

KEY ISSUES/ITEMS OF NOTE

- How can York work to balance different uses of critical natural resources (i.e. commercial, recreational, ecological)?
- What tools can be used to protect critical natural resource areas from the impacts of future development and recreational use?
- How can York's natural resource areas help in planning for climate change mitigation and adaptation?



Natural Resources - 3



THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

THESE ARE DRAFT AND ARE JUST MEANT
TO START THE CONVERSATION

- 1. Preservation of key natural areas.
- 2. Identification of additional opportunities for conservation of land with a focus on growing contiguous tracts of land and on ecologically fragile and climate-vulnerable areas of the town.
- 3. Enhancement of natural areas that will help to lessen climate change impacts.
- 4. Reduction of impacts of development on natural resources.

WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS OR COMMENTS ON THIS TOPIC?

PLACE YOUR
POST-IT NOTES
HERE!



Agricultural + Forest Resources - 4



While agriculture and timber harvesting are not the cornerstones of the local economy that they once were in York, there is still a small presence of each in town. More broadly, the abundance of forest resources in York holds significant value for the town and serves a number of ecological, recreational, and climate mitigation purposes, as well as representing the vast majority of undeveloped land in York.

- This topic includes...**
- York's existing farms and forestry activities
 - Regulations or strategies to support farmland and forestry activities
 - Recent trends or impacts from development
 - Community farming and forestry activities (community gardens, farmers' markets, etc)

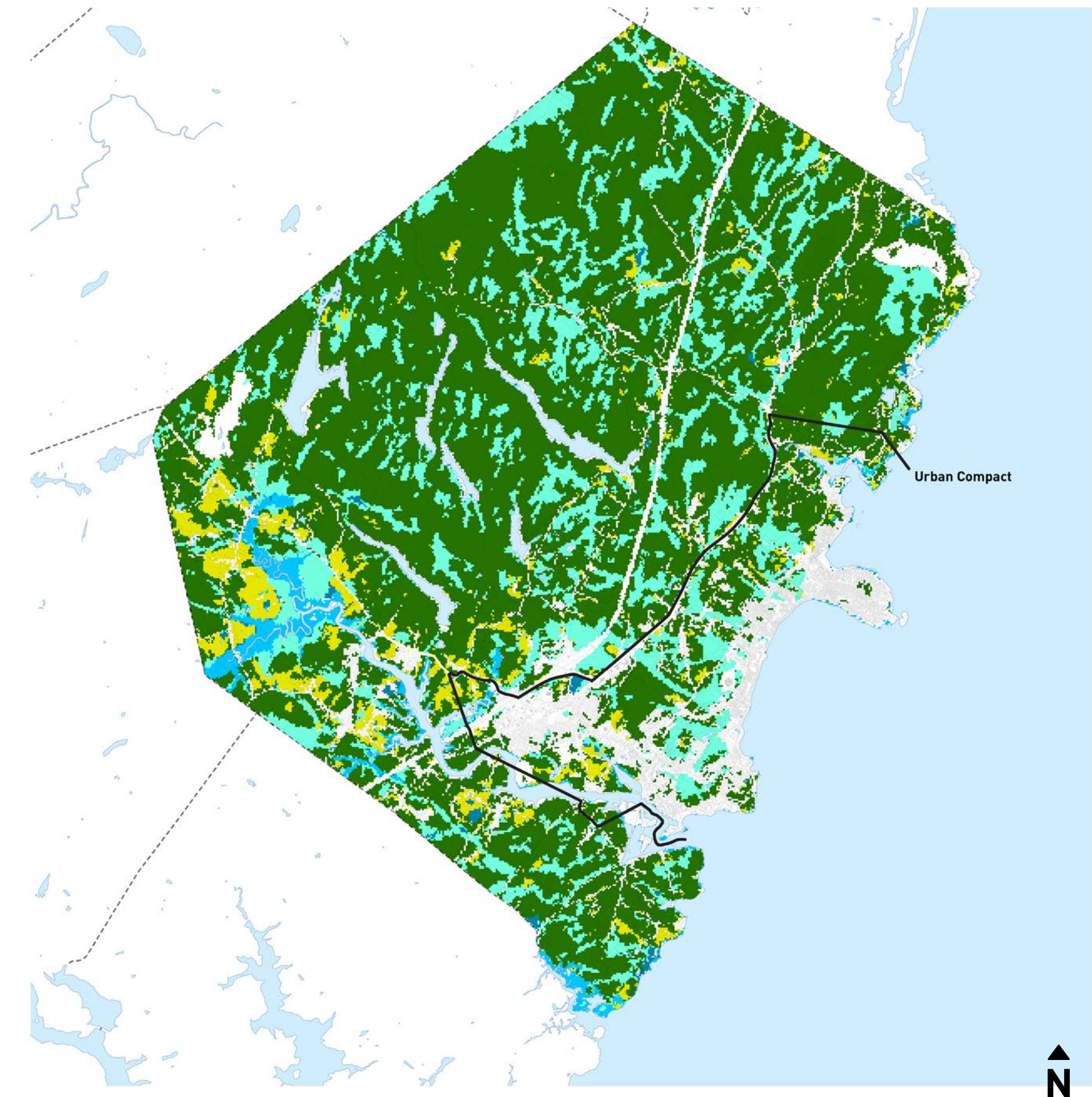
AGRICULTURAL + FOREST RESOURCES TODAY - HIGHLIGHTS

Forests and Tree Cover

- Land Cover analysis from the 2019 Land Cover Database identified 57% of land in York as forests and woodlands, making up the majority of undeveloped land.
- An extensive, undeveloped block of forested open space surrounds Mount Agamenticus and the watersheds of the York and Kittery water supplies. Here, the Northern forest blends into the Southern forest, presenting a rich diversity of plant communities.
- Agricultural and Forest Land in York provide opportunities for carbon sequestration (absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere). The management, preservation, and expansion of these lands are a key component of York's climate planning efforts and strategies to reduce York's Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions in the coming years.

FORESTED, GRASSLAND, WETLAND LAND COVER

DRAFT JULY 16 2021



2020 Town of York OpenData, Maine Geolibrary, USGS National Hydrography Dataset, NOAA Regional Land Cover

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| ■ Forested | ■ Palustrine Open Wetland |
| ■ Agriculture + Open Grassland | ■ Estuarine Open Wetland |
| ■ Palustrine Forest Wetland | |

Timber Harvesting/Forestry

- Year End Landowner Reports to the Maine Forest Service reflect approximately 310 acres of timber harvested in York in 2018. Forest land that has been harvested for timber in York totals more than 8,000 acres within a 27-year period (1991-2018). This includes 11 acres associated with a change of land use and a total of 141 acres that were clear cut. *(Maine Forest Service)*
- According to land use information from York's Tax Assessor's Office, there are currently four parcels totaling 156 acres classified as forestry land uses.

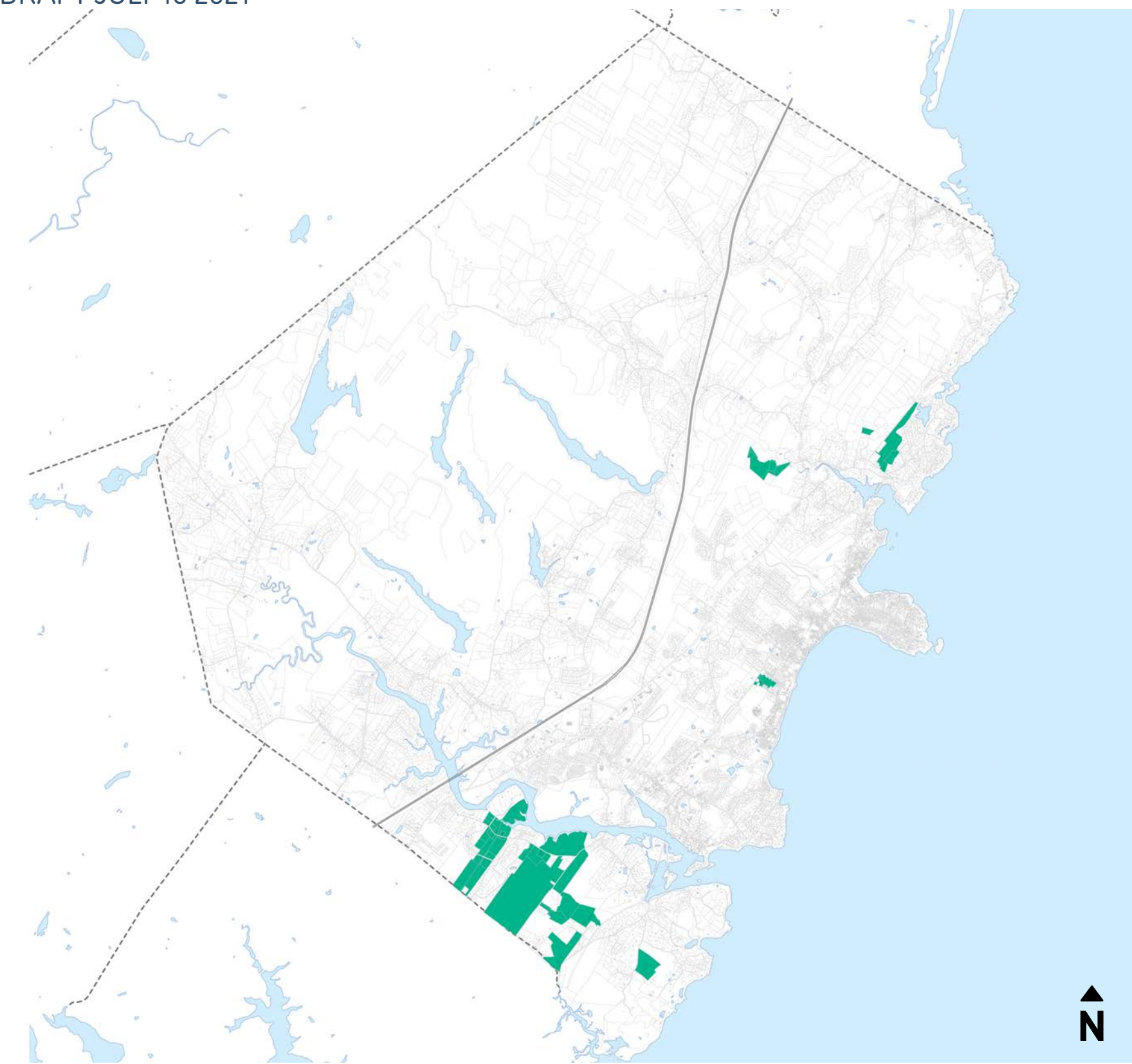
- As of 2019, there were there were 18 parcels containing 876 acres registered as Tree Growth in the state's current use tree growth tax credit program. *(2019 Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary, Maine Revenue Services Property Tax Division)*

Farming

- Only a small percentage of land in York is deemed "prime farm land" and is primarily located along the York River. Some prime farm land in close proximity to ME-91 or Route 1 may be particularly vulnerable to future development. *(Natural Resource Conservation Service and Town of York)*
- According to land use information from York's Tax Assessor's Office, there are currently 12 parcels totaling an estimated 134 acres classified as agricultural land uses in York, including farms, pastures, and farm buildings. *(Town of York)*
- As of 2019, there were 887 acres of land registered in the state's current use farmland tax credit program. This includes 308 acres of farmland and 579 acres of woodland. *(2019 Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary, Maine Revenue Services Property Tax Division)*
- Currently, there are approximately 740 acres of land in York in the Farm Enterprise Overlay District. *(Town of York)*

FARM ENTERPRISE OVERLAY ZONING DISTRICT

DRAFT JULY 16 2021



2019 Town of York OpenData, Maine Geolibrary

- Farm Enterprise Overlay District

- The 2017 Census of Agriculture reported that York County had seen a 6% reduction in total number of farms between 2012 and 2017. This trend is consistent with the state of Maine as a whole, which saw a 7% reduction in the number of farms during the same time period. York County only accounts for 4% of the State of Maine's agriculture sales. *(U.S. Census of Agriculture)*



AGRICULTURAL + FOREST RESOURCES TODAY - HIGHLIGHTS (CONT.)

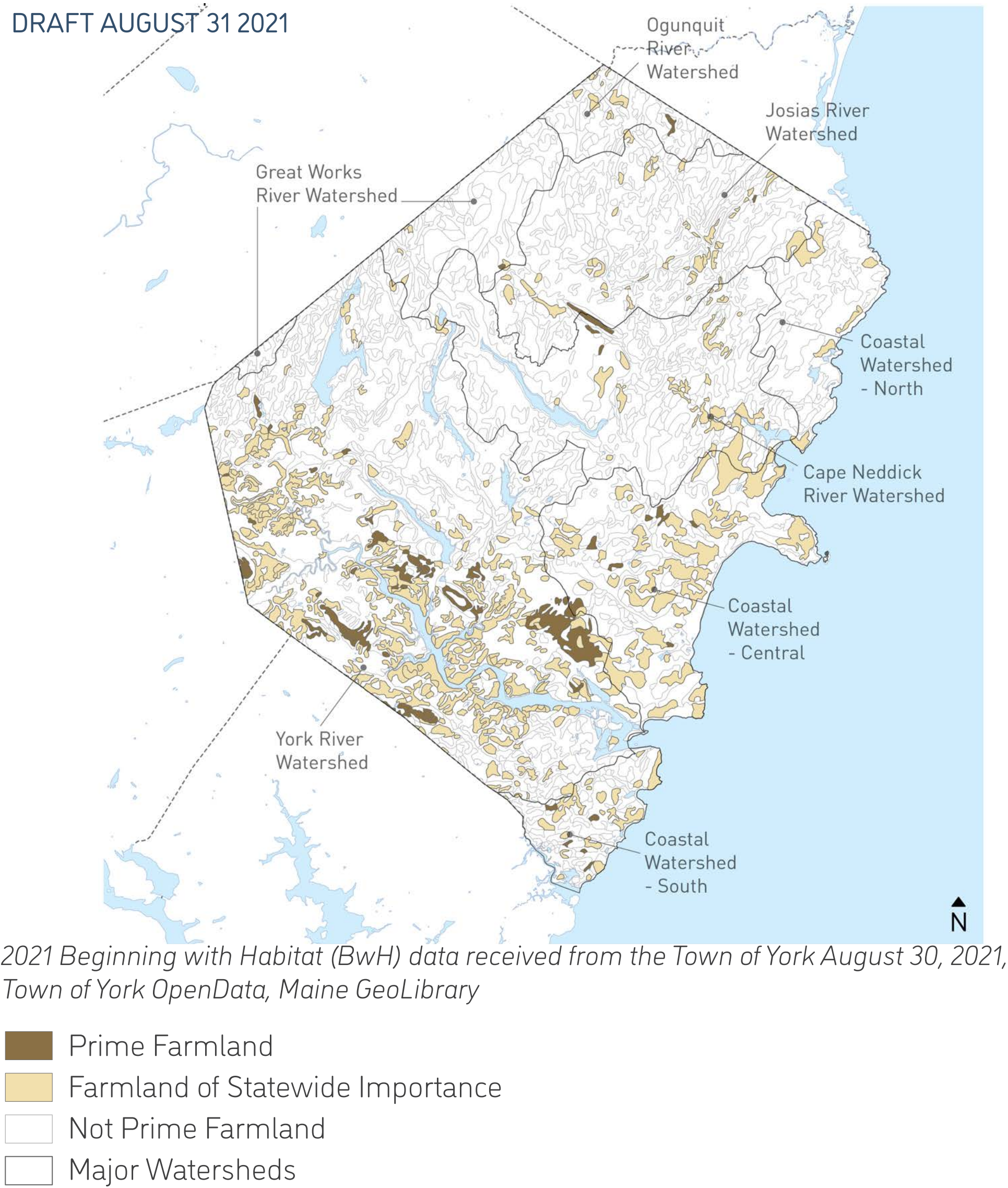
Community Farming Activities

- The York Region Chamber of Commerce operates a weekly farmers market during the summer months (May to October) and less frequently in the winter months. This gives farms the opportunity to sell directly to residents and visitors.
- Both Blaisdell and Zach’s farms operate popular farm stands, and Nubble Hydro Microgreens Farm offers a monthly microgreen crop delivery subscription.
- York Town Farm is York’s community garden located at Long Sands Road. It includes an estimated seven garden plots and is run informally by a resident.



FARMLAND SOILS

DRAFT AUGUST 31 2021



WHAT WE’VE HEARD SO FAR...

- There is interest from some members of the community in growing York’s agriculture and aquaculture industries.
- There is interest in seeing additional community garden space.
- The Mount Agamenticus area and York’s existing forests and tree canopy are among York’s most valuable natural resources and warrant more proactive preservation efforts to ensure these beloved qualities are not threatened by other competing priorities.

Preservation Efforts

- Town policies such as the Farm Enterprise Overlay District and Open Space Conservation Subdivisions seek to preserve land dedicated to agriculture/forestry (as well as protection of public access, wildlife corridors, scenic beauty, and land trust education opportunities) through increased flexibility and land protections.
- The York Land Trust has been working in the Mount Agamenticus region for 25 years to help conserve more than 14,000 acres of land. *(York Land Trust)*
- The Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative (MtA2C) has targeted 15,086 acres of Open Space in the focus area of this initiative across York and neighboring towns. *(MtA2C)*
- Maine Farmland Trust is a statewide organization that protects farmland, supports farmers, and advances the future of farming. The organization is currently partnering with the Blaisdell family to pursue an agricultural conservation easement that would permanently protect the historic farm. *(Maine Farmland Trust)*

KEY ISSUES/ITEMS OF NOTE

- There has been some loss of forest cover in York between 2010 and 2020.
- While there is a small community gardening presence in York, it is not coordinated through the Town and is not particularly visible.
- While farming is not particularly prevalent in York, members of the community have expressed a desire to see more active farming. Where might these uses be located and how can they be supported or encouraged?



Agricultural + Forest Resources - 4



THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

THESE ARE DRAFT AND ARE JUST MEANT
TO START THE CONVERSATION

- 1. The safeguard and support of existing farms and forestry operations and encourage their economic viability.
- 2. Maintenance of areas identified as prime farmland soils to the greatest extent possible.
- 3. Increase of small-scale farming on community and household land where appropriate.
- 4. Promotion of agriculture and forestry in a manner that also recognizes the need to ensure the protection of environmental resources.

WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS OR COMMENTS ON THIS TOPIC?

PLACE YOUR
POST-IT NOTES
HERE!



Marine Resources - 5



Marine resources play an important role in York’s way of life. Marine-oriented businesses contribute to the local economy, and York’s coastal resources provide numerous recreational, public access, and scenic opportunities. These resources, which include three harbors, several beaches, parks, and many rocky coastline areas, have been prominent in York’s history and continue to be an essential part of the town’s character and economy.

MARINE RESOURCES TODAY - HIGHLIGHTS

Marine Resources in York include...

- **Harbors:** York Harbor, Cape Neddick Harbor, Brave Boat Harbor;
- **Beaches:** Cape Neddick Beach, Short Sands Beach, Long Sands Beach, York Harbor Beach;
- **Public parks with access to the coast:** Goodrich Park, Steedman Woods, Hartley Mason Estate, Ellis Park, Sohler Park, Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge;
- **Islands:** seven state-owned, two federally-owned, one Town-owned, two privately-owned;
- The York River and Cape Neddick River, as well as many smaller brooks and streams;
- Wheeler wildlife refuge, clam flats, and other natural areas;
- Docks, moorings, wharves, boat launches, and other waterfront facilities; and
- Many scenic views and routes.

Impacts of Sea Level Rise

- Sea level rise has the potential to increase floodplains, storm damages, and reduce public access to recreation areas on the waterfront. High Astronomical Tide (HAT) plus 1.6 feet of sea level rise (SLR), which could happen by 2050 or earlier, will lead to a loss of inundation of 29% of York County’s undeveloped sand dunes, 84% of its developed dunes, and reduce dry beach area by 42%. *(State of Maine, Assessing the Impacts Climate Change May Have on the State’s Economy, Revenues, and Investment Decisions: Volume 2: Cost of Doing Nothing Analysis Final)*

Commercial Uses

- In York, commercial waterfront users include lobstermen, charter fishing operations, tuna boats, marina or boat docking facilities, whale watching tour boats, wholesale and retail seafood dealers, bait vendors, storage and repair, marine railway, boat and motor sales, kayak and paddlecraft rental companies, and a boat fuel station.
- Commercial fishing, primarily lobstering, has long been important to the local economy. Between 2008 and 2015, the total harvest weight (in pounds) of landings in York has fluctuated between approximately 500,000 pounds and 900,000 pounds. The total value of these landings has fluctuated between approximately \$2 million and \$4 million. *(Maine Department of Marine Resources, Landings Program, 2021)*

2015-2020 York/York Harbor Commercial Landings

Year	Species	Weight (lbs)	Value
2015	Lobster	681,854	\$3,078,361
2016	Lobster	886,370	\$4,063,706
2016	Tuna	20,483	\$142,990
2017	Lobster	721,892	\$3,556,430
2018	Lobster	824,767	\$4,051,342
2019	Lobster	654,705	\$3,551,950
2020	Lobster	676,558	\$3,144,600
2020	Tuna	12,645	\$50,055

Source: Maine Department of Marine Resources, Landings Program, accessed August 2021

This topic includes...

- Marine resources and associated water-dependent uses located in York
- Facilities operated by the Town to provide access for residents and visitors to the water and waterfront areas
- Marine water quality testing
- Regulations impacting shoreland areas

Recreational Uses

- Recreational waterfront uses include restaurants, lobster pounds, lodging facilities, seasonal/year-round housing, boating, paddlecraft and other non-motorized vessels, beach-going, swimming, surfing, diving, and tourist-oriented businesses.
- Recreational use of many marine resource areas in York has increased in recent years. One specific factor contributing to this change is increased use of social media to spread the word about recreational opportunities and previously lesser-known sites.

Public Access

- In addition to York’s beaches and public parks with access to the shore, public access points include two Town docks in the York Harbor area, Strawberry Island, Scotland Bridge boat launch, and informal canoe/kayak launch options at Goodrich Park and Route 103.
- The 2018 York River Watershed Stewardship Plan identified 45 docks on record from the mouth of the York River to the Scotland Bridge area and 311 moorings and 198 slips managed by the Town.
- Most launching facilities direct users to York Harbor, where overcrowding has created safety concerns.
- Limited parking and years-long waiting lists for moorings have been described as limitations to public access.

PUBLIC ACCESS POINTS TO THE SHORE

DRAFT JULY 16 2021



Town of York OpenData, Maine Geolibrary, USGS National Hydrography Dataset

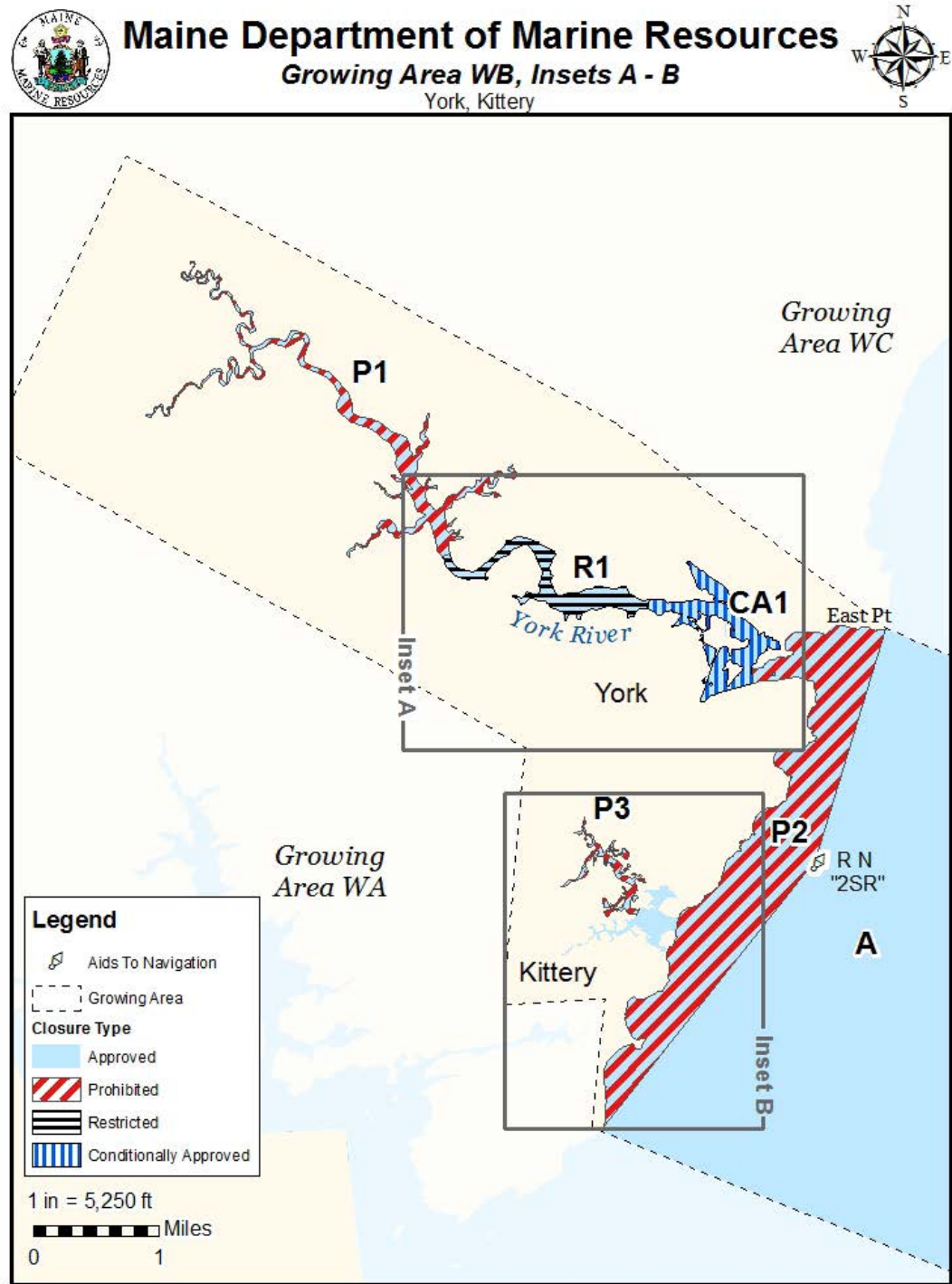




MARINE RESOURCES TODAY - HIGHLIGHTS (CONT.)

Clam Flats

- At this time, York allows only recreational clam digging. The Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) monitors bacteria levels and classifies areas as Prohibited, Restricted, Conditionally Approved, or Approved. Currently, productive flats in York consist of the following (all other areas are closed):
 - » York River open flats: all flats east of Sewall’s Bridge to the mouth of the York River.
 - » Brave Boat Harbor open flats: all flats on the York side of the Harbor from the eastern trolley bridge to the mouth of the Harbor.
 - » In addition, a large section of Brave Boat Harbor that has historically been classified as “Prohibited” by the DMR is in the process of being reclassified as “Approved”.



Source: Maine Department of Marine Resources

Dredging

- A federal dredge project in 2018 improved navigable areas and anchorages, creating the potential for added moorings and berths. Prior to 2018, the last dredging of York Harbor was in 1996. The Harbor Board hopes to have the next dredge of York Harbor happen around 2030 to 2033.

Current local regulations in place include...

- Shoreland Overlay Zoning District;
- Floodplain Management Ordinance;
- Harbor Ordinance;
 - » Harbormaster and Harbor Board enforce rules + regulations and manage harbor planning; and
- Shellfish Conservation Ordinance.

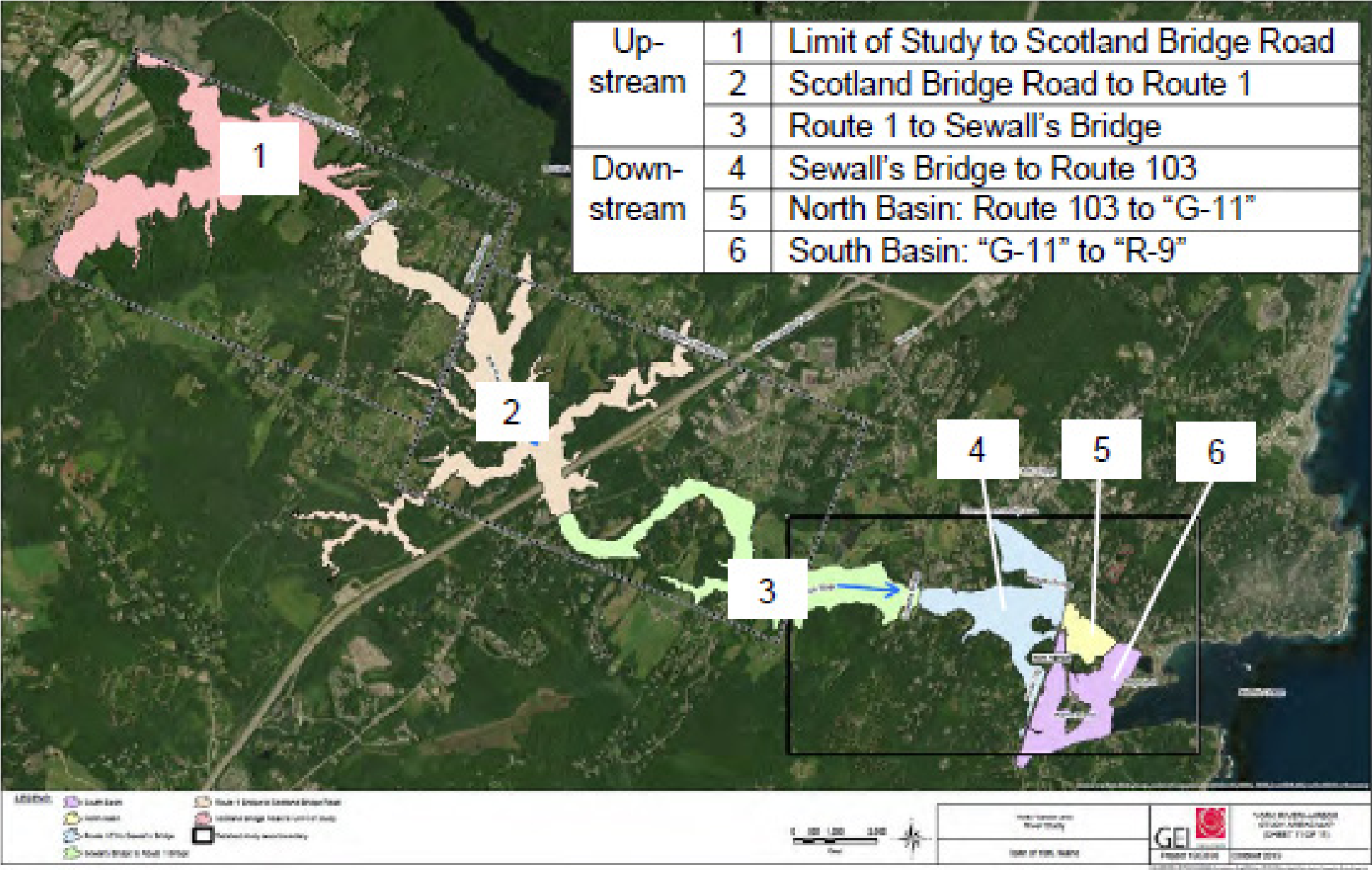
WHAT WE’VE HEARD SO FAR...

- York allows only recreational clam digging at this time. There has been some interest in opening up York to commercial clam digging.
- Capacity at York’s marine resources is a major challenge, particularly in regard to parking and moorings. However, expansions to capacity could have negative impacts on safety and critical environmental resources.
- With high levels of use of York Harbor and York River and impacts from runoff pollution, the Town has observed increased rates of sedimentation in the Harbor, which could indicate a need for additional dredging sooner than anticipated.
- Surveying at the CompFest! event reflected that York’s rivers and beaches are some of the most-loved resources in town. Many residents expressed that these same resources are particularly vulnerable.

2019 York Harbor + River Capacity Study

- The Study identified that waterway capacity in York is a balance of spatial, facility, ecological, and social factors, and that effective management of varying uses is necessary.
- Recommended that York consider management of distinct river areas rather than regulating the York River as a whole.
- Two areas specifically called out for safety and capacity concerns:
 - » Area near the Route 103 bridge (commercial use of Town Dock #1, paddlecraft use of Strawberry Island and kayak landing, recreational use of boats in adjacent mooring fields, bridge jumping off Route 103 bridge and swimming near causeway to Wiggly Bridge).
 - » The area at the mouth of the harbor, which includes heavy use by boats from York Harbor Marine as well as the adjacent mooring fields and Agamenticus Yacht Club (AYC). The narrow channel at low tide and high currents at ebb tide add to navigation challenges at this location.

York Harbor + River Capacity Study River Areas



Source: York Harbor + River Capacity Study, November 4, 2019

KEY ISSUES/ITEMS OF NOTE

- Maintain environmental quality of ocean and coastline.
- There are multiple competing uses of coastal areas, including capacity issues such as parking and moorings. Impacted areas include environmentally sensitive resources, such as clam flats, that may not be able to accommodate increased levels of recreational use.
- Impacts of sea level rise on Town infrastructure are already being seen, with water levels reaching the Wiggly Bridge causeway much more frequently in recent years.
- Additional number and intensity of storms is taking a toll on the shoreline and impacting both public and private waterfront facilities.



Marine Resources - 5



YORK
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

THESE ARE DRAFT AND ARE JUST MEANT
TO START THE CONVERSATION

- 1. Protection, management, and growth of critical habitat and natural areas.
- 2. Protection of commercial fishing, ports, and harbors from incompatible development.
- 3. Balance among multiple competing uses of coastal areas.
- 4. Promotion of access to the shore for commercial fishermen and the public.
- 5. Preparation for the impacts of climate change on York’s marine resources.

WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS OR COMMENTS ON THIS TOPIC?

PLACE YOUR
POST-IT NOTES
HERE!

OVERFLOW COMMENTS CAN GO ON BLANK PAGE TO ONE SIDE OF THIS BOARD

CivicMoxie

Check out the project website at: CompPlan.net



Recreation - 9



Breathtaking views and varied recreational amenities are important parts of life in York. Offerings include the Atlantic Ocean with its beaches and coastline, fishing and boating in the York River, and the trail systems and nature preserves of the forest lands surrounding Mt. Agamenticus. In addition, the Town offers recreational programming for various age groups, and golf, tennis, horseback riding and similar pursuits are available at both public and private venues.

This topic includes...

- Existing recreational facilities and programs
- Land and water recreation areas
- Local and regional trail systems
- Public access
- Unmet community needs

RECREATION TODAY - HIGHLIGHTS

Recreation in York includes...

- **Beaches**, including Cape Neddick Beach, Short Sands Beach, Long Sands Beach, York Harbor Beach.
- **Surface water recreation areas**, such as the York River, the Cape Neddick River, Scituate Pond, Lake Carolyn, Seabury Gut, and the Atlantic Ocean provide opportunities for motorized and non-motorized boating, fishing, swimming, and clamming.
- **Trails and Preserves**, including 40 miles of maintained trails at Mount Agamenticus (Mt. A) as well as trails in York Land Trust’s preserves and the lands of the Kittery and York Water Districts.
- **Waterfront Pedestrian Paths**, including the Cliff Walk and Fisherman’s Walk, the Wiggly Bridge and Causeway and walking paths in Steedman Woods, and some walking paths in the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Preserve.
- **Local parks and open spaces**, including Goodrich Park, Ellis Park, Hartley Mason Reserve, Moulton Park, Sohier Park, Bog Road Fields & Benjamin Park Playground, York Beach Ballfield, York Town Farm, and Smith Field.
- **Other Facilities**, including the Center for Active Living, the York Public Schools, and partnerships with regional entities such as the Portsmouth Indoor Pool and the Kittery Community Center.
- **Programming**: Many recreational programs are run through the York Parks & Recreation Department. Other popular organizations with community programming include York Little league, York Youth Hockey, York Youth Football, York Soccer Club, Mackey Skate Park, and Seacoast United Sports Center. York’s schools field multiple competitive teams for fall, winter, and spring sports.

York Parks & Recreation Department

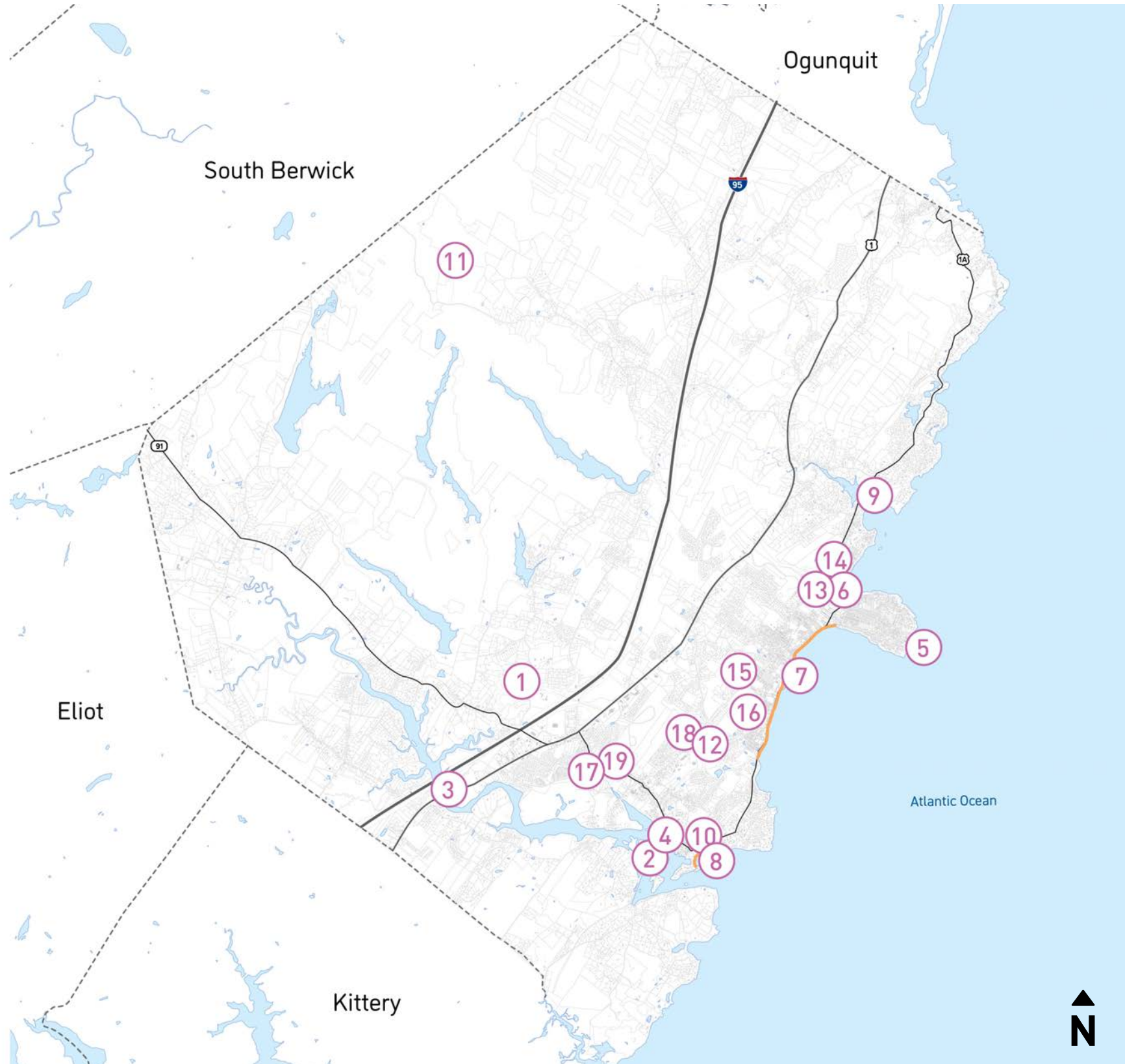
- The responsibilities of York’s Parks & Recreation Department include operations and maintenance of public buildings, grounds, parks, beaches and recreation facilities, as well as school and community athletic fields and green spaces.
- The Department offers a wide array of recreational programs for both adults and children. The most popular offerings include youth sports, summer camps, adult fitness programs, and older adult services.
- A long-term partnership with the York school system allows the Parks and Recreation Department to run many programs at school facilities.



Source: yorkparksandrec.org

YORK PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES

DRAFT SEPTEMBER 7 2021



Town of York OpenData, Maine Geolibrary, USGS National Hydrography Dataset

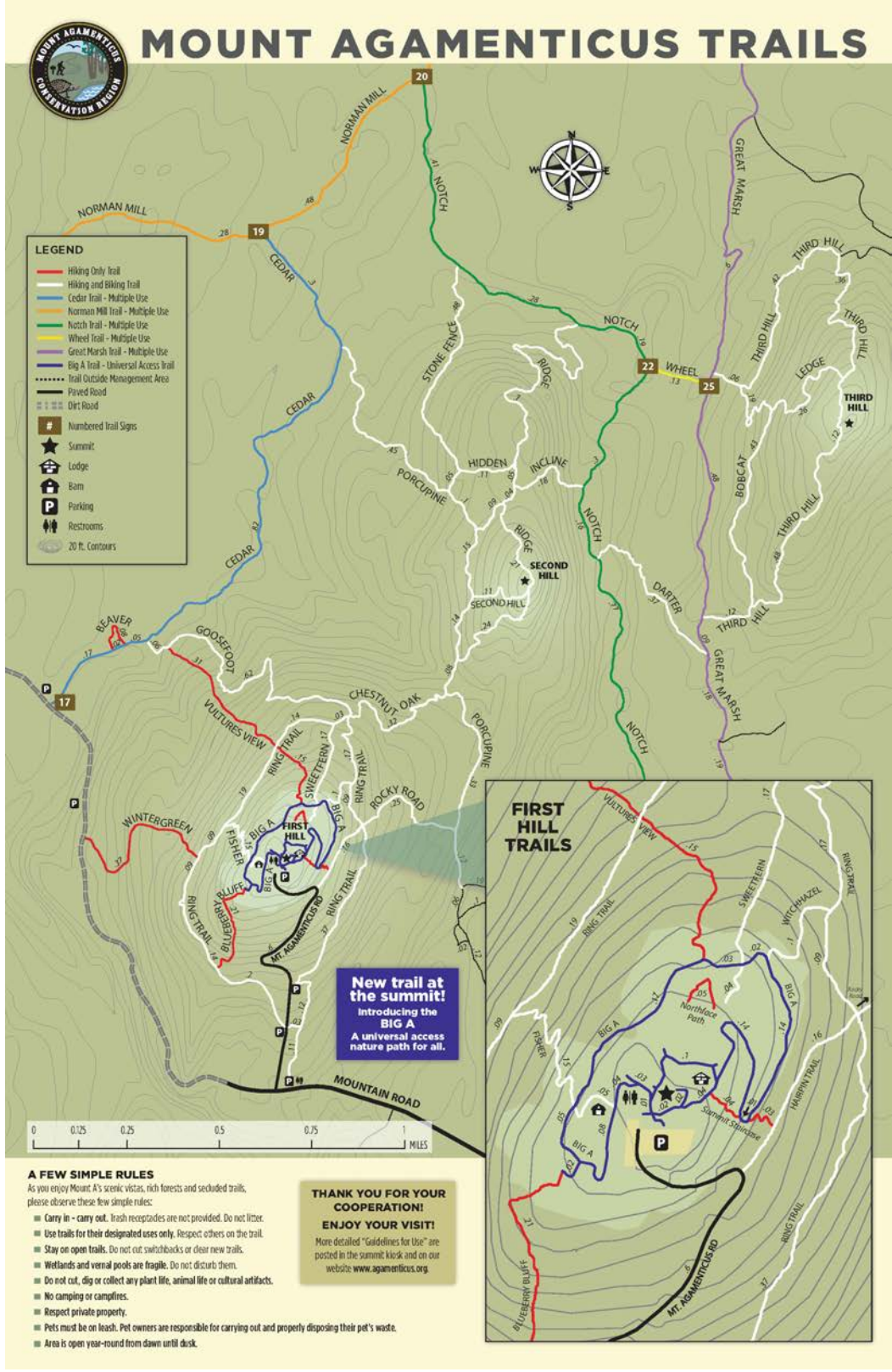
- ① Bog Road Fields
- ② Strawberry Island
- ③ Goodrich Park
- ④ Moulton Park
- ⑤ Sohier Park + Gift Shop
- ⑥ Ellis Park / Short Sands Beach
- ⑦ Long Sands Beach and Bath House
- ⑧ Harbor Beach and Bath House
- ⑨ Cape Neddick Beach
- ⑩ Hartley Mason Reserve (maintained by York Parks + Recreation)
- ⑪ Mount Agamenticus and Mt. A Lodge
- ⑫ Town Farm + Community Gardens
- ⑬ York Beach Ball Field
- ⑭ Center for Active Living
- ⑮ Smith Field (co-maintained by York Parks + Recreation)
- ⑯ York High School (grounds maintained by York Parks + Recreation)
- ⑰ York Middle School (grounds maintained by York Parks + Recreation)
- ⑱ Coastal Ridge Elementary School (grounds maintained by York Parks + Recreation)
- ⑲ Village Elementary School (grounds maintained by York Parks + Recreation)





RECREATION TODAY - HIGHLIGHTS (CONT.)

Mt. A serves as a recreational destination for over 40,000 area residents and regional visitors annually. Capital improvement projects to expand off-street parking and enhance restroom facilities are in the planning process and will be coming soon.



Map Source: <http://agamenticus.org/>

Planning for a Growing and Changing Population

- York’s population swells in the summer months and is additionally supplemented by thousands of day trippers, dramatically increasing demand on recreational services in the community. Over the next fifteen years, it is likely that York will continue to see slow but continual population growth of both year-round and seasonal residents. (*American Community Survey, Southern Maine Planning & Development Commission, and Levine Planning Strategies*)
- York has a higher percentage of residents ages 65 to 84 than the rest of the county or the state of Maine and the median age in York rose from 46.5 to 52.2 between 2010 and 2019. As the population in York continues to age, the requests and demand for a range of facilities and programs will need to evolve. (*2019 Five-Year American Community Survey*)

WHAT WE’VE HEARD SO FAR...

- Capacity is a challenge and a hindrance to recreation in York, particularly in relation to Town-owned facilities for programs and staffing. Simultaneously, recreational users are developing higher expectations.
- Use of outdoor recreational resources has expanded in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Social media has increased demand on lesser-known recreational sites in recent years.
- There is a trend toward privatization of recreational programming and activities.
- Recreational facility desires that have been expressed include an indoor pool, fitness center, affordable gym for seniors, ice skating rink, and more community gathering spaces with flexible spaces for programming for different age groups. There is concern about older adults losing dedicated spaces.
- The demand for indoor pickleball space has increased tremendously in recent years.
- Town Staff report recent increases in non-resident visitation to Cape Neddick Beach due to pay-to-park by private land owners.

2017 Recreational Needs Assessment

- A 2017 *Recreational Needs Assessment*, completed by the University of New Hampshire, identified the need for a multigenerational community recreation/activity space in York with a diverse array of recreation activity spaces to meet the needs of York residents.
- This study also identified that many facilities in York are up against capacity limits and are in need of upgrades or expansion to meet the community demand. Nearly half of *Recreational Needs Assessment* survey participants agreed or strongly agreed that the “facilities needed are not available” in York and that there were “better recreation opportunities elsewhere.”
- Survey respondents expressed preferences for dedicated space for older adult activities and dedicated space for youth/teen activities.

Recreational Needs Assessment Survey Results - Activity Space Preference

Activity Space	Very Important	Important	Neither	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
Dedicated space for senior activities	66% (40)	15% (9)	7% (4)	5% (3)	8% (5)
Dedicated space for youth/teen activities	48% (30)	19% (12)	11% (7)	8% (5)	13% (8)
Multipurpose activity space	41% (25)	20% (12)	8% (5)	13% (8)	18% (11)
Indoor walking/jogging	35% (22)	26% (16)	6% (4)	11% (7)	21% (13)
Outdoor walking paths/trails	34% (11)	28% (9)	6% (2)	6 (2%)	25% (8%)
Dedicated space for early child	32% (20)	29% (18)	5% (3)	13% (8)	21% (13)
Cardio workout space	31% (19)	20% (12)	8% (5)	7% (4)	34% (21)
Indoor pool	36% (20)	12% (7)	9% (5)	7% (4)	36% (20)
Gymnastics/athletic courts	30% (17)	16% (9)	18% (10)	19% (11)	18% (10)
Commercial kitchen	29% (18)	18% (18%)	18% (11)	5% (3)	31% (19)
Arts and crafts	23% (14)	22% (13)	15% (9)	10% (6)	30% (18)
Community meeting/conference room	20% (12)	25% (15)	11% (7)	13% (8)	31% (19)
Strength/weight training	20% (12)	20% (12)	13% (8)	8% (5)	39% (24)
Outdoor playgrounds	13% (8)	20% (12)	18% (11)	13% (8)	36% (22)
Indoor climbing wall	13% (8)	16% (10)	13% (8)	11% (7)	46% (28)
Outdoor community gardens	13% (5)	11% (4)	21% (8)	13% (5)	42% (16)
Outdoor hardscape patio with seating	11% (7)	25% (16)	10% (6)	13% (8)	41% (26)
Outdoor open green space	11% (7)	21% (13)	18% (11)	7% (4)	43% (26)
Outdoor swimming pool	11% (7)	8% (5)	13% (8)	14% (9)	54% (34)
Performing arts space	10% (6)	15% (9)	8% (5)	14% (8)	53% (31)
Indoor artificial turf	5% (3)	5% (3)	20% (12)	18% (11)	52% (31)
Outdoor fitness trail/stations	3% (2)	17% (11)	21% (13)	8% (5)	51% (32)

Source: 2017 Recreational Needs Assessment

KEY ISSUES/ITEMS OF NOTE

- Not all spaces used for recreational activities in York are publicly-owned or otherwise permanently protected, including the majority of York’s beaches and traditional walking paths such as the Cliff Walk.
- Many recreational assets also serve valuable ecological or commercial functions, and balancing needs of different users at these sites can be challenging.
- While used by many, trails in York do not currently connect to each other and are not widely publicized. Are there opportunities to establish connections between trails? Are there opportunities to develop more trails that are usable by older York residents?
- How have community needs changed since the 2017 *Recreational Needs Assessment*?
- Zoning districts such as the Green Enterprise Recreation Overlay District and the Route One-4 Tourism/Recreation district encourage future recreational amenities in York. What would York like to see in these locations?





THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

*THESE ARE DRAFT AND ARE JUST MEANT
TO START THE CONVERSATION*

1. Increasing the capacity and number of recreational facilities and resources in York to meet current and future needs.
2. Supporting increased use of and access to recreational resources; meeting the needs of diverse user groups while maintaining necessary protections for functions and values such as critical habitat and drinking water.

WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS OR COMMENTS ON THIS TOPIC?

PLACE YOUR
POST-IT NOTES
HERE!

