

# Existing Land Use - 12



Understanding York’s existing land use and zoning provides a basis for seeing where the town currently is and if future changes need to be made. Land use regulations have implications for all of the other elements of York’s Comprehensive Plan. As one of the Town’s primary tools to maintain and focus uses, zoning and land use regulations are critical to the Town’s effort to be proactive about directing change and protecting the features that residents wish to preserve.

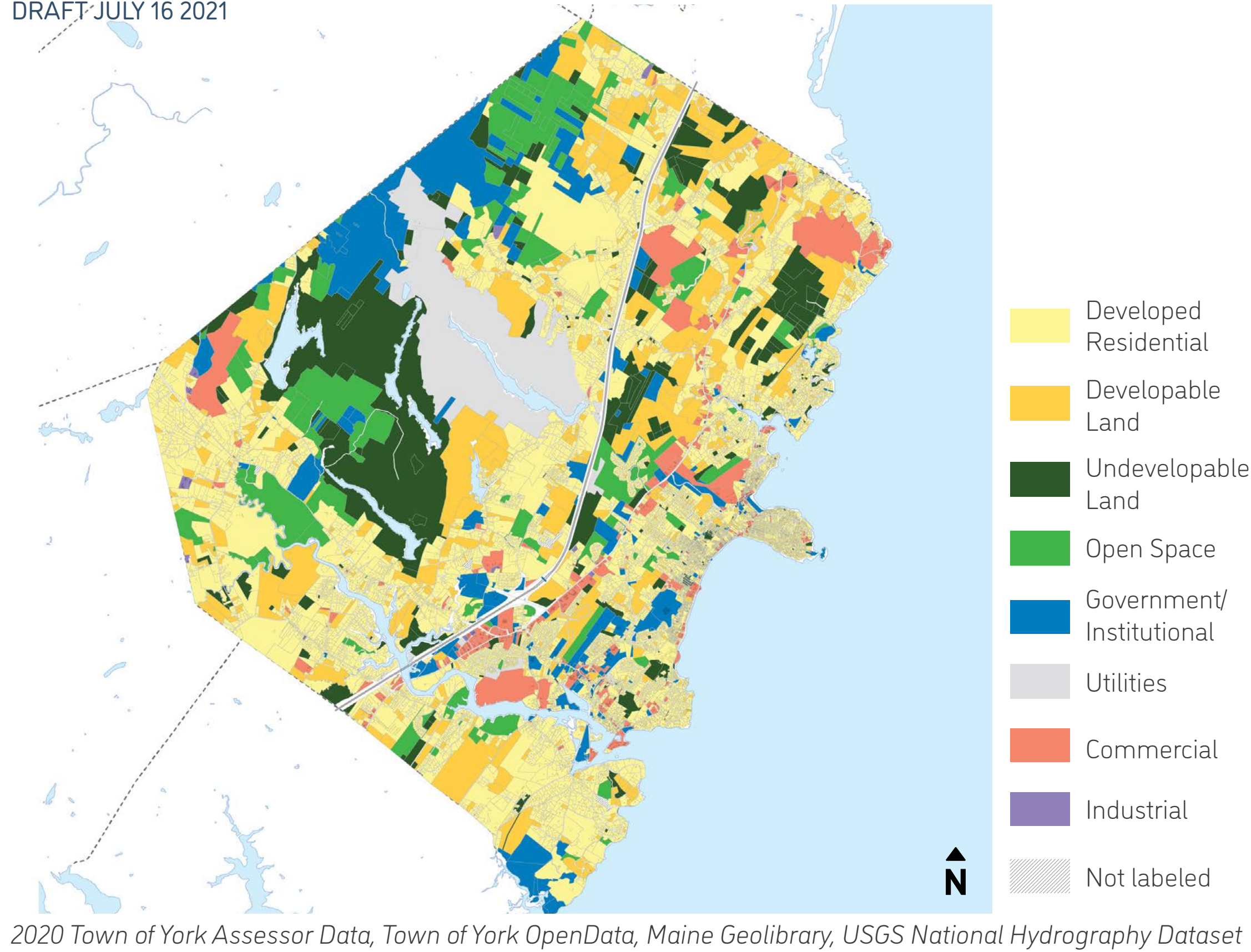
## YORK’S LAND USE TODAY - HIGHLIGHTS

### Current Land Use

- The following land use figures and percentages were calculated using Town of York GIS and 2020 Tax Assessment data. Therefore, each parcel is counted towards only one specific land use based on its “primary use” category, with the sum of all parcels equating roughly to the town’s overall land area.
- The Town of York consists of approximately 55 square miles of land area, made up of 9,237 land parcels. *(Source: 2020 Town of York’s Assessor’s Office)*
  - According to 2020 Town Assessor’s data, sorted by tax assessment land use categories, land area considered Residential is the largest land use category at approximately 39% of the town, and about 80% of the parcels.
  - Just under 10% is assessed as Open Space/ Agriculture/ Forestry/ Cemeteries, and less than six percent is assessed as Commercial uses.
  - In York, there is a significant amount of land categorized as Utilities (almost seven percent), as well as Government/ Institutional / Charitable / Non-Taxed (just under nine percent).

### YORK LAND USE MAP BY TAX ASSESSOR CATEGORY

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York Land Use in Acres and Parcel Count by Tax Assessment Land Category**				
Tax Assessment Land Category	Acreage (Estimate*)	Percentage of Total (Estimate*)	Number of Parcels	Percentage of Total Parcels (Estimate*)
Residential	12,736	38.8%	7,429	80.4%
Commercial	1,859	5.7%	319	3.5%
Industrial	56	0.2%	15	0.2%
Developable	5,576	17.0%	735	8.0%
Undevelopable	4,428	13.5%	349	3.8%
Utilities	2,132	6.5%	39	<0.1%
Open Space / Agriculture / Forestry / Cemeteries	3,122	9.5%	123	1.3%
Government / Institutional / Charitable / Non-Taxed	2,896	8.8%	184	2.0%
Unlabeled	45	0.1%	44	0.5%
Total (Estimate*)	32,843	100%	9,237	100%

Totals may equal more or less than sum of each category due to rounding of numbers.  
\*\*The difference between the Total Estimated Acreage in this Table and Table 1: York Land Use in Acres by Tax Assessment Category are due to the GIS data provided. This discrepancy in not unusual, and the focus should be on the Percentage of the Total.

### This topic includes...

- Current land use
- Zoning and other land use regulations
- Resource protection
- Recent development patterns

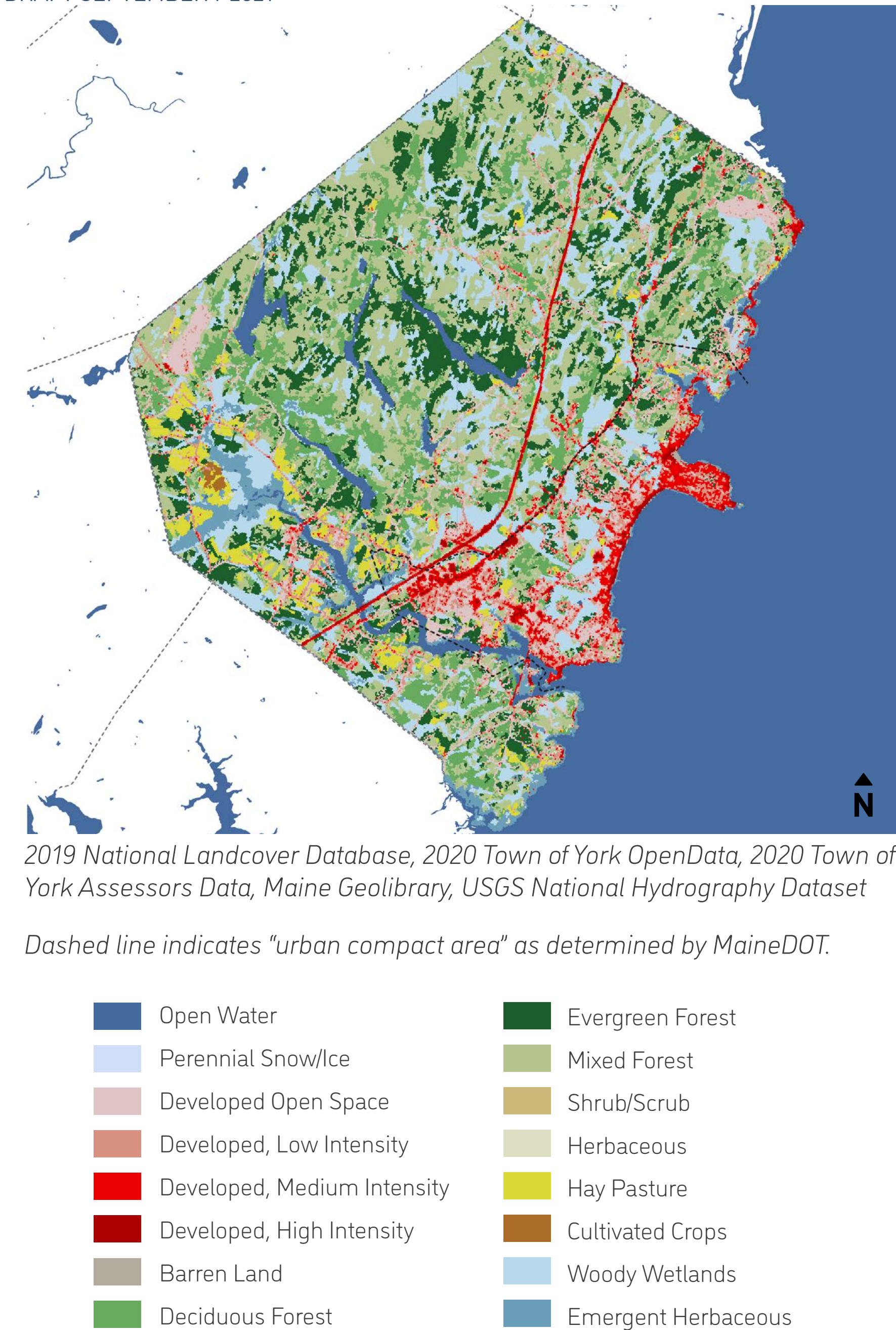
### Undeveloped Land

Town Assessor’s data provides a view of York’s built environment at the building/structure and parcel level – meaning that for a single-family home on a three-acre parcel, the entire parcel is considered a residential use even if the structure only covers a small portion of the lot. Another method of analyzing the amount of development in a community is to survey land cover. Land cover is a description of physical cover of the ground.

- Land Cover analysis from 2019 National Land Cover Database data shows an estimated 82% of York’s land area is undeveloped (a majority of that undeveloped land is classified as various forests and woodlands) and approximately 18% is developed (a majority of that being classified as open, low or medium intensity).

### 2019 TOWN OF YORK LAND COVER MAP

DRAFT SEPTEMBER 7 2021





# Existing Land Use - 12



## YORK’S LAND USE TODAY - HIGHLIGHTS (CONT.)

### Zoning

- York’s Zoning Ordinance sets land uses and lot dimension standards based on the zoning classifications, and these have been continually amended over time as new conditions have arisen.
- The Town has 22 base zoning areas grouped in four categories: Residential, Business (includes specialized districts for commercial areas), Route 1 zones, and General Development.
- Approximately 60% of the town’s land area falls under General Development zoning; about 31% as zoned as Residential 1A through 7; seven percent is within the six Route 1 zoning categories; and two percent is Business and Village Districts.
- Minimum lot sizes for all uses range from 20,000 square feet to three acres. The smallest minimum required lot sizes are east of Route 1 in the more urbanized areas near the Village Centers, with the largest three-acre minimums for the General-1 and 2 zones west of Route 1 in the more rural areas.
- The Route 1-1 through 1-6 Zoning Districts are geographically connected but have different purposes. Route 1-1 Zoning is meant to ensure protection of the York River. Route 1-2 through Route 1-4 Zones are different intensities of mixed and commercial uses. Route 1-5 and 1-6 Zones allow for a mix of uses at a smaller and rural scale.
- In addition to the Base Zoning Categories, York’s Zoning Ordinance also currently includes eight Overlay Districts: the Shoreland Overlay District; the Watershed Protection Overlay District; the York Village Hospital Overlay District; the York Village Affordable Elderly Housing Overlay District; the Workforce Affordable Housing Overlay District; the Farm Enterprise Overlay District; the Wetlands Protection Overlay District; and the Historic Districts: York Center, Lindsay Road, and York Harbor Local Historic Districts.

### Resource Protection

- Several of the Town’s Zoning Ordinance Overlay Districts are intended to protect resources in town, such as Watershed Protection Overlay District, Wetlands Protection Overlay District, and Shoreland Overlay District. Within the Shoreland Overlay District are areas considered Resource Protection Subdistricts that have specific restrictions for uses and development. (See 3 – Natural Resources for Shoreland Overlay District map and 2 - Water Resources for Watershed Protection Overlay map.)
- The Town of York manages the floodplains through its Floodplain Management Ordinance, which was most recently amended on May 19, 2012, and is consistent with state and federal standards. The Town also identifies and protects the floodplains through its Shoreland Overlay District, Wetlands Protection Overlay, and the Watershed Protection Overlay, in addition to using FEMA flood map data.

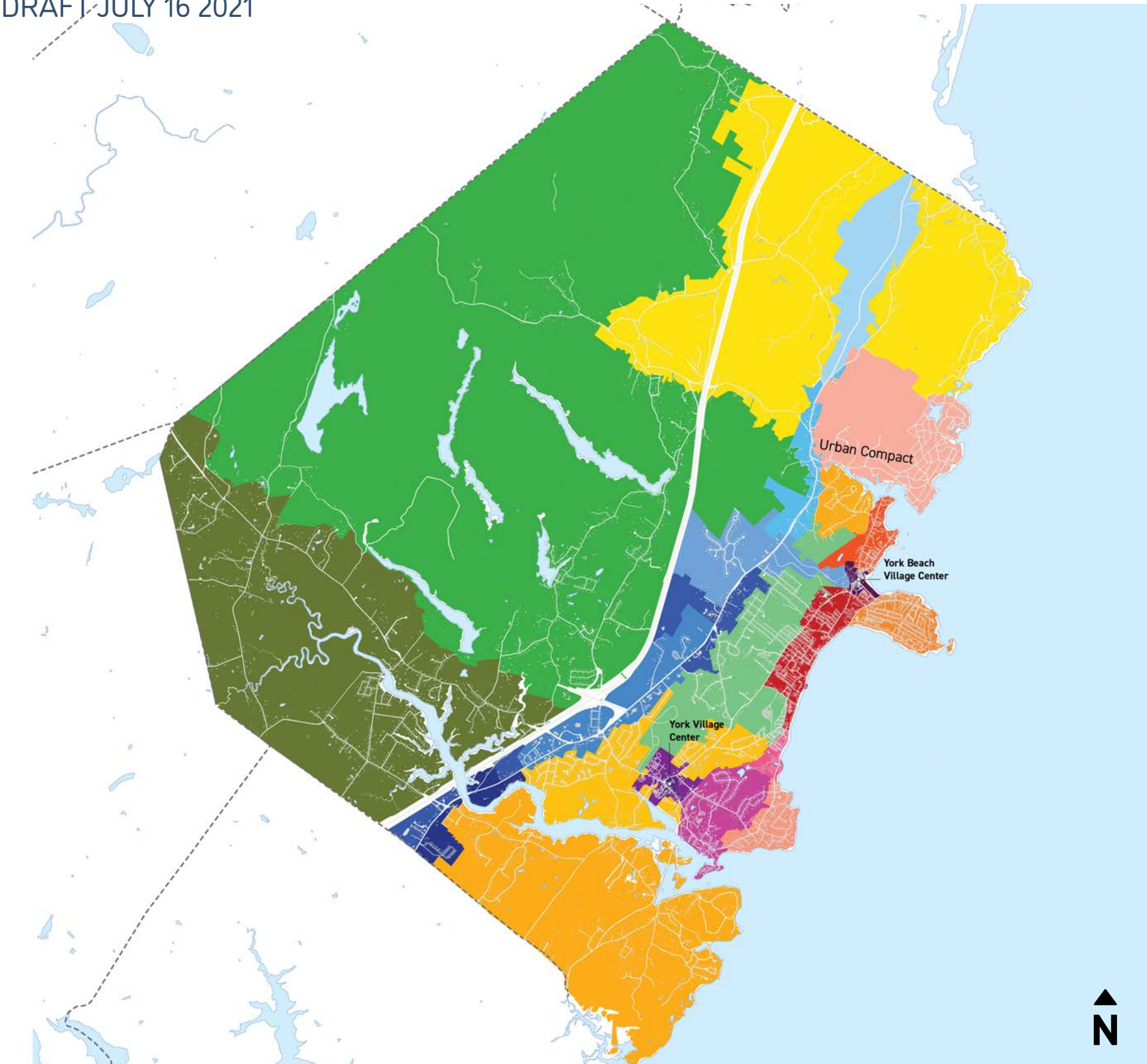
York Land Area by Base Zoning Category\*\*

Base Zoning Category	Acres (Estimate*)	Percentage of Total (Estimate*)
Residential 1A - 7	10,198	31%
Route 1-1 — 1-6	2,478	7%
Business/York Beach Village/ York Village Center	595	2%
General Development 1 - 3	19,873	60%
Total (Estimate)	33,144	100%

Source: Town of York GIS data used for acreage estimates.  
Totals may equal more or less than sum of each category due to rounding of numbers.  
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### YORK BASE ZONING MAP

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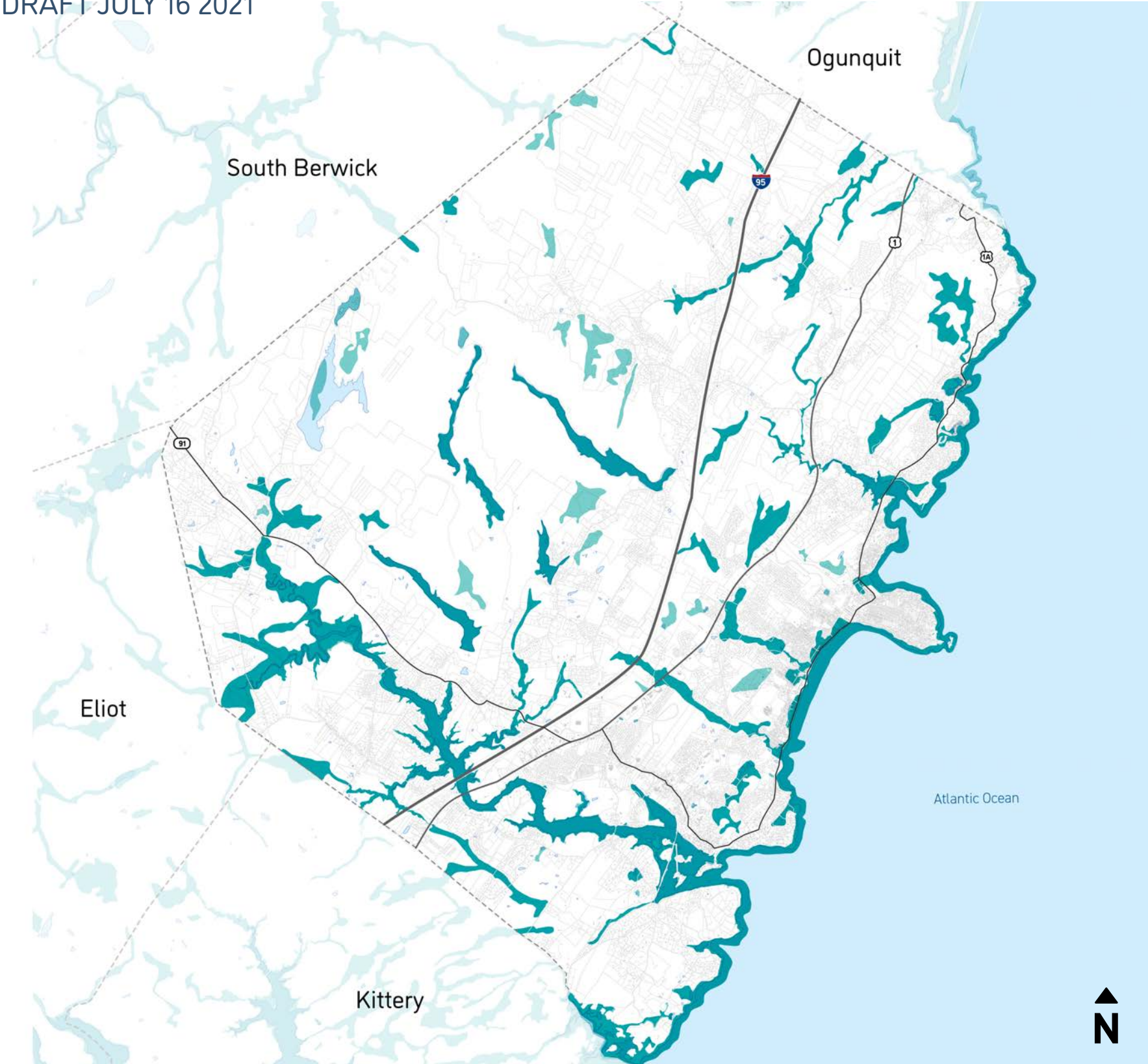


Town of York OpenData, Maine Geolibrary, USGS National Hydrography Dataset

GEN-1	YVC-1	RT 1-3	RES-1B	RES-6
GEN-2	YVC-2	RT 1-4	RES-2	RES-7
GEN-3	YBVC	RT 1-5	RES-3	
BUS-1	RT 1-1	RT 1-6	RES-4	
BUS-2	RT 1-2	RES-1A	RES-5	

### FEMA FLOODPLAINS

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Town of York OpenData / FEMA (2002), Maine Geolibrary, USGS National Hydrography Dataset

Special Flood Hazard Area (1% annual chance)
Moderate Flood Hazard Area (0.2% annual chance)
Minimal Flood Hazard Area







## YORK’S LAND USE TODAY - HIGHLIGHTS (CONT.)

### Recent Development Patterns

For the purposes of determining the structures built, instead of utilizing permit data, Town Assessor’s data was used, sorting by “Year Built.” The 2021 data is only for a partial year since it was pulled mid-year (July 2021). This data set did not specify if a structure was removed and replaced on the same parcel or if it was a structure built on a previously vacant parcel. The data was also sorted to require a minimum of 200 square feet of living area in order to be counted.

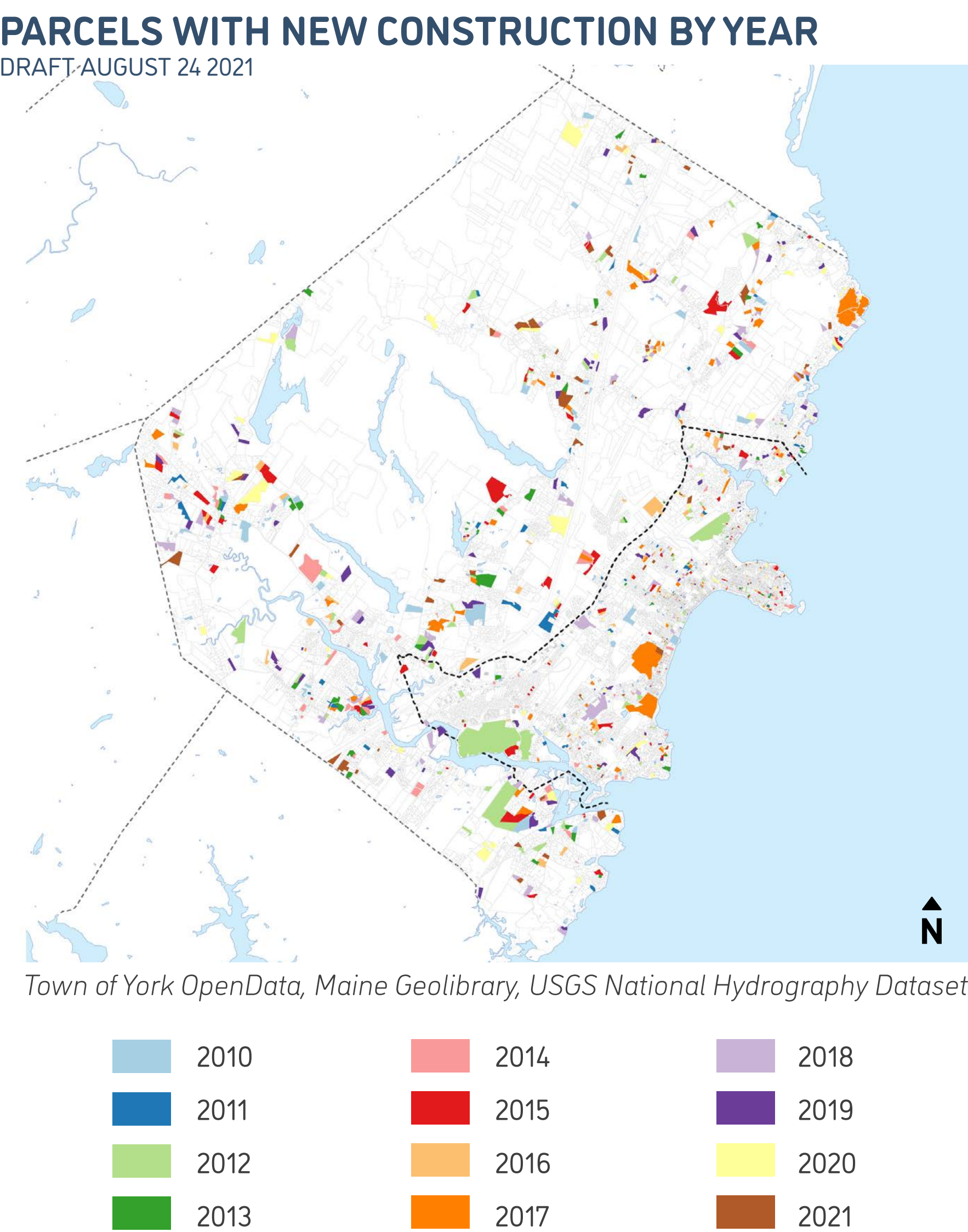
- Generally, new development in York has mostly been single-family residential units on separate lots. While the previous *Comprehensive Plan* indicated a desire for growth in the urban compact area, the amount of development that has occurred over the past ten years appears to have been more dispersed throughout the town.
- Approximately 95% of structures built between 2010 and July 2021, according to the Town Assessors, were for residential use, followed by three percent for commercial uses. In that time period, the number of structures built in a single year peaked in 2016, with 260. The average annual number of structures built, not including 2021, is approximately 122 structures.

Structures built from 2010 to 2021\* by Land Use Category as Specified by Town of York Assessors

Land Use	Number of Parcels with Structure Built	Percentage
Residential	1,353	95%
Commercial	45	3%
Industrial	8	1%
Government / Institutional / Charitable / Non-Taxed	16	1%
Total	1,422	100%

Source: Town of York Assessors. Based on parcels with “Year Built” listed as 2010 or newer. Data was sorted to require a minimum living area of at least 200 square feet.  
\*2021 data is for partial year, through July 2021.

Representation of New Construction by Year from 2010 to July 2021\*



Dashed line indicates “urban compact area” as determined by MaineDOT.  
\*Note: This is an approximate representation of locations of new construction from 2010 to July 2021 due to issues with parcel location data matching.

## WHAT WE’VE HEARD SO FAR...

- CompFest! participants mentioned wanting specific types of businesses and industries in York that would complement or add to the community.
- Allow or support more housing diversity in type and costs.
- There is concern about rural or environmentally sensitive areas being developed.
- Concerns about preserving natural resources and supporting agricultural uses.
- The Town’s current Zoning Ordinance is complex.
- Additional administrative capacity is needed in the Town’s Planning and Code Enforcement Departments.

## KEY ISSUES/ITEMS OF NOTE

- What should future development look like in York?
- Does the Town’s zoning reflect desired future development patterns?
- Should the Town set target percentages of land for development and protection? For specific uses?
- How should the Town balance development, protect current and future investments from sea level rise and other climate change impacts, and protect natural resources?
- Should the Town consider allowing and/or encouraging more commercial development? Would this help reduce the tax burden on residents?

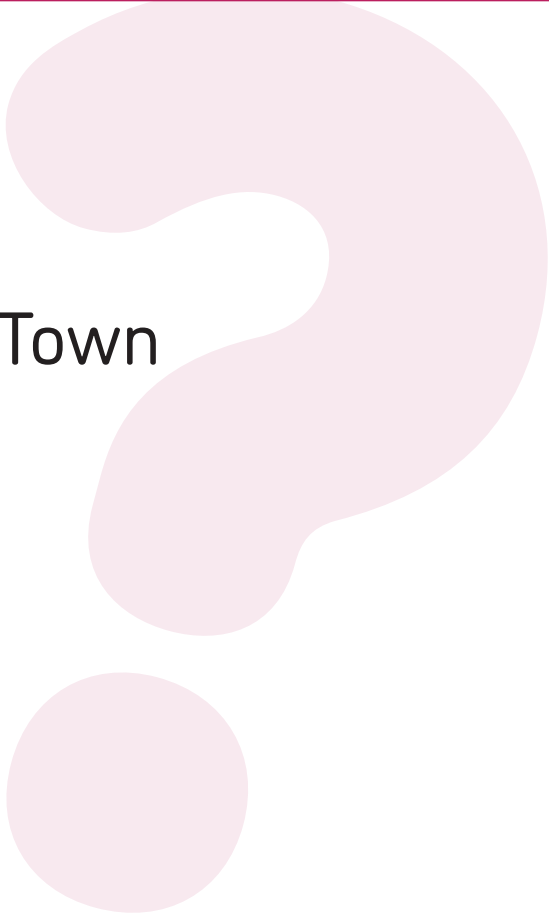




## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

THESE ARE DRAFT AND ARE JUST MEANT  
TO START THE CONVERSATION

- 1. Prioritization of housing assessment needs to achieve affordability, diversity, and aging-in-place.
- 2. Re-evaluation of zoning priorities for development and resource protection.
- 3. Modification and alignment of land use policies to support designated areas for development that support multiple Town goals across plan topics.
- 4. Consideration of land use policies that address and minimize risks associated with climate change.



## WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS OR COMMENTS ON THIS TOPIC?

PLACE YOUR  
POST-IT NOTES  
HERE!