

*HANCOCK COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION*

2015 - 2016

SERVICES POLICY



Serving the people and governments
of Hancock County since 1970

May 2015

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OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The Hancock County Planning Commission advocates for and provides assistance to county and local governments by:

- Protecting our heritage and resources
- Planning for the future growth of Hancock County
- Promoting a viable and sound economy for Hancock County

WHAT IS THE HANCOCK COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION?

The Hancock County Planning Commission (HCPC) is a non-profit organization that works with the 37 Hancock County municipalities, county government and Isle Au Haut in Knox County. Its mission is to provide member municipalities with advisory professional planning services. The HCPC executive board sets the overall direction of the agency. Board members are appointed by representatives (commissioners) from each town and the Hancock County Commissioners.

The HCPC:

- offers research, direction and advice to member municipalities;
- provides new and creative direction to meet our members' needs; and
- dedicates the time and effort necessary to deliver quality service customized to the specific needs of each community.

WHAT SERVICES DOES THE HCPC PROVIDE?

There are two general types of service that we provide to our communities, basic and reimbursable. Basic services are those provided without charge to towns who are dues-paying members or those that are tied to a specific state, federal, or foundation grant. Reimbursable services are those services provided for a fee. Such services are normally done on a contractual basis with a town. The key to all our services is that we tailor them to the needs of the individual towns. This means that we offer advice as trained professionals and *suggest* courses of action. Towns use our services to help shape the future that *they* desire.

WHAT SERVICES ARE PROVIDED WITHOUT CHARGE?

We expect to provide the following services for the 2015-2016 fiscal year:

- Brownfields Assessment
We have used grant funds to hire an environmental consulting firm to prepare assessments of key brownfields sites. The term brownfields refers to abandoned or underutilized commercial or industrial sites whose potential reuse may be jeopardized by actual or perceived contamination. Sites in Hancock County include abandoned commercial facilities, service stations and marine operations. The HCPC consultant identifies the extent of contamination and what, if any, clean-up measures are needed.
- CDBG Technical Assistance
The HCPC normally receives a grant each year from the Maine Office of Community Development to help municipalities apply for Community Development Block

Grant (CDBG) monies. This program has been used by many HCPC towns in creating or retaining jobs, job training, improving substandard housing, upgrading community infrastructure and facilities, and downtown revitalization.

- CEO/LPI Assistance

We provide code enforcement officers (CEO's) and local plumbing inspectors (LPI's) with information on the latest state training requirements and help with related matters such as setting up fair permit fee structures and developing job descriptions. We can also help towns recruit CEO's/LPI's.

- Community Health Assessment and Planning

We help towns identify their current health assets and needs based upon information compiled by various state agencies, the U.S. Bureau of Census and studies conducted in the communities. We assist towns in identifying projects to encourage physical activity, enhance nutrition, safer roads and other environmental improvements. We assist in identifying long-range strategies for healthier communities. In recent years, funding has been provided through a variety of state, federal and private foundation sources permitting us to provide health-related services at no charge to the towns.

- Economic Development Planning

We have been involved in a variety of economic development planning activities, including sustainable agriculture, a commercial kitchen incubator, and entrepreneurial training activities. We have received a national award for our endeavors. We coordinate our efforts with the Eastern Maine Development Corporation and other business assistance groups.

- Floodplain Management

We will keep towns informed as the new floodplain maps are released. HCPC helps towns with all aspects of floodplain management including interpreting maps and regulations. We can also help towns join the National Flood Insurance Program and adopt appropriate ordinances. Links to the floodplain maps are on our web site.

- Hazard Mitigation and Emergency Management Planning

We advise towns on the development of hazard mitigation plans. We collaborate with first responders, the hazard mitigation personnel at the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Hancock County Emergency Management Agency staff, and other state and federal agencies.

- Information on State and Local Land Use Laws

The staff keeps abreast of changes in Maine land use law. The HCPC is the place to call with questions on the latest state requirements for subdivision review, comprehensive plans, shoreland zoning, mobile home park laws, building codes, or any similar state law.

- Joint Purchasing of Supplies

The HCPC saves towns money by coordinating the joint purchase of road salt and other items.

- Land Use Ordinance File

Our land use ordinances and regulations are available for towns to use as a guide in the development of their own ordinances. We have electronic copies of many ordinances. We have the latest state models for subdivision ordinances, outdoor wood boilers, wind

power, ground water extraction, telecommunication facilities, site plan review, and shoreland zoning.

- Low Impact Development and Stormwater Runoff

The HCPC is a source of information on Low Impact Development (LID), an approach to site planning, design and development that reduces stormwater impacts. LID aims to mimic pre-development hydrology, treat stormwater as close to its source as possible, preserve natural drainage systems and open space, and incorporate small-scale controls that replicate natural processes in detaining and filtering stormwater. We also have samples of other stormwater management standards.

- Adapting to Climate Change

HCPC is compiling an inventory of land use ordinances that reflect more severe storm events, increased flooding, and storm surges. We also are gathering information on how municipal infrastructure and facilities can be adapted to accommodate more severe weather.

- Newsletter

Our informative quarterly newsletter covers topics such as HCPC-sponsored events, recent court cases on land use law, demographic trends, available grant monies, the planning experiences of other towns, and other items of municipal interest. Our newsletter is on our website, www.hcpcme.org

- Transportation Planning

We work with the Maine Department of Transportation to assist towns with transportation assessment and planning. We have extensive information on traffic and road conditions, and the potential for alternative modes such as buses, vanpools, and bicycles. We help towns prepare transportation proposals and grant applications. We are a regional Safe Routes organization and assist in the preparation of bicycle and pedestrian plans. We promote and support scenic byways and other regional tourism initiatives. Our support includes planning, grant writing, administration and project implementation. Our past projects have included creating scenic turnouts, interpretive signage, access to outdoor recreation, marketing materials, tourism websites, and public relations.

- Smart Growth Technical Assistance

The HCPC is an information resource for towns wishing to develop “smart growth” policies such as preserving and creating mixed-use pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods and revitalizing service centers. We help towns grow and prosper in a way that respects local cultural and natural features. Our role is to help towns choose the options they want rather than to dictate what they should do.

- Solid Waste Management and Recycling

The HCPC helps towns develop and implement cost-effective recycling and waste diversion strategies. We sponsor household hazardous waste and universal waste collection days and have been active in organizing and promoting home, farm-based and municipal composting.

- Subdivision Review Assistance

We help towns with all aspects of subdivision review, including interpreting the state law and helping to review an actual application.

- Planning Advisory Service and Other Informational Resources

We are members of the Planning Advisory Service (PAS), a national organization providing support to professional planners. We use its informational services to supplement our own library and the resources of the Maine Municipal Association. We can also make inquiries through the Maine Association of Planners. Municipal officials are welcome to use our library and our ever-growing on-line resources.

- Web Site

The HCPC web site has information on various agency projects, maps, and upcoming events. Municipal web sites can be accessed through our site as well as comprehensive plans, land use ordinances, and other planning documents. It also has information on funding sources, an archive of our past newsletters, and socio-economic data. It has links to other useful web sites on community planning, the latest U.S. Census data, healthy communities, transportation, solid waste management, water resources, and economic development.

- Workshops

The HCPC sponsors or co-sponsors numerous workshops on topics of current interest to planning boards, selectmen and other local officials. Most of our workshops qualify for CEO/LPI education credits.

- Other Services

Other services include providing the latest available U.S. Census data, related statistics and population projections. We are also available to attend hearings and meetings with local officials.

HOW ARE BASIC SERVICES PROVIDED?

Usually, a simple phone call, e-mail or walk-in request initiates these services. In fairness to all our towns, requests are provided on a first-come first-served basis. While there is no charge for professional staff time, we do charge for large volumes of photocopies and other supplies. Our services are primarily for town officials, including select boards, planning boards, conservation commissions, zoning boards of appeal, comprehensive planning committees, and other town boards and staff. Basic services may vary according to our funding in a given year.

WHAT BILLABLE SERVICES ARE PROVIDED?

We take a flexible approach to providing billable services. Major services provided include, but are not limited, to:

- Capital Improvement Programs
We have been involved in the preparation of Capital Improvement Plans. We can assist in estimating future revenues and expenditures as well as the impact of a given expenditure on the tax rate.
- Comprehensive Plan Assistance
We have extensive experience in preparing comprehensive plans both within Hancock County and elsewhere in Maine and northern New England. Rather than consultants, we view ourselves as partners with the town in the preparation of a plan.

- Computer-Aided Mapping and Analysis
We provide GIS (Geographic Information Systems) services for environmental, land use, transportation and public service mapping. We design and print large-scale color maps for a wide range of municipal uses.
- Community Revitalization Strategies
We help towns identify community needs and set priorities in community improvement efforts including rehabilitation of substandard housing, revitalization of a downtown area or public facilities improvements. We've also been active in waterfront improvement projects.
- Information Systems and Public Opinion Surveys
We work with towns to design and implement information systems, such as public opinion surveys and municipal record systems. We tabulate opinion surveys and develop other databases.
- Fiscal, Environmental, and Traffic Impact Studies
We are equipped to prepare or review fiscal, environmental, and traffic impact studies. While the HCPC charges for such services, the town may require through its ordinances that the subdivision applicant reimburse the town.
- Grant Preparation and Administration
Our staff has experience in grant writing and can help towns in preparing grant applications. We are familiar with many state and federal programs and have a strong working relationship with most state agencies. We have staff with the required state certification to administer Community Development Block Grants.
- Market Research & Economic Development Strategies

The HCPC helps towns prepare and implement economic development strategies. Specific steps could include, but are not limited to, market research activities, creating a local economic development committee, recommending appropriate zoning standards for an industrial park, and marketing an industrial site. We can assist in preparing Tax Increment Financing (T.I.F.) packages.

- Land Use Ordinance Drafting Assistance
Using our extensive library (both electronic and hard copy) of zoning and subdivision ordinances from towns in Hancock County and elsewhere in Maine, we draft ordinances for towns and prepare revisions as requested. We also have access to the resources of Maine Municipal Association and the American Planning Association's Planning Advisory Service to keep in touch with the most current court cases and innovative zoning techniques.
- Contractual Planner Services
We can provide a professional planner on a part-time basis to a town that may need some planning services but does not need someone full-time.

HOW ARE BILLABLE SERVICES PROVIDED?

When a town requests billable services, the HCPC prepares a detailed scope of work, which describes the proposed product and the budget. Unless otherwise indicated, all work is done within an agreed-upon budget rather than at an hourly rate. When the HCPC and the town agree upon the final scope of work, a contract is developed. The HCPC staff will be pleased to help prepare cost estimates.

COUNTY WIDE PROJECTS UNDERWAY

Much of our transportation planning occurs on a regional or sub-regional basis. We are also working on county-wide healthy communities ventures. The HCPC is exploring new ways to work on county-wide economic development planning by providing data and analysis to those involved in job creation and retention. It is also involved in promoting healthy communities.

COST OF MEMBERSHIP

For the 2015-2016 year, membership dues are determined on a sliding scale according to a town’s 2010 year-round population. Dues are used to cover the costs of the basic services described above and also serve as the required matching monies for state and federal grants. **To qualify for member services, towns must pay their full dues assessment** (see table).

2015-2016 DUES ASSESSMENT	
Year-round population (2010 Census)	Dues
Under 500	\$630
501-1,000	\$800
1,001-1,500	\$1,220
Over 1,500	\$1,370

NON-MEMBER COST AND SERVICES

Non-member communities and other organizations may obtain the services offered, but at a higher cost (normally 50%) than members. Payment for all services must be made in advance.

Apart from those services that are funded by grants, whose terms require we serve all towns, there is a charge for all staff time devoted to non-members in excess of ten minutes. Priority service shall be given to member communities and to contracts with member towns.

EFFECTIVE DATE: JULY 1, 2015

Our Staff

e-mail Addresses

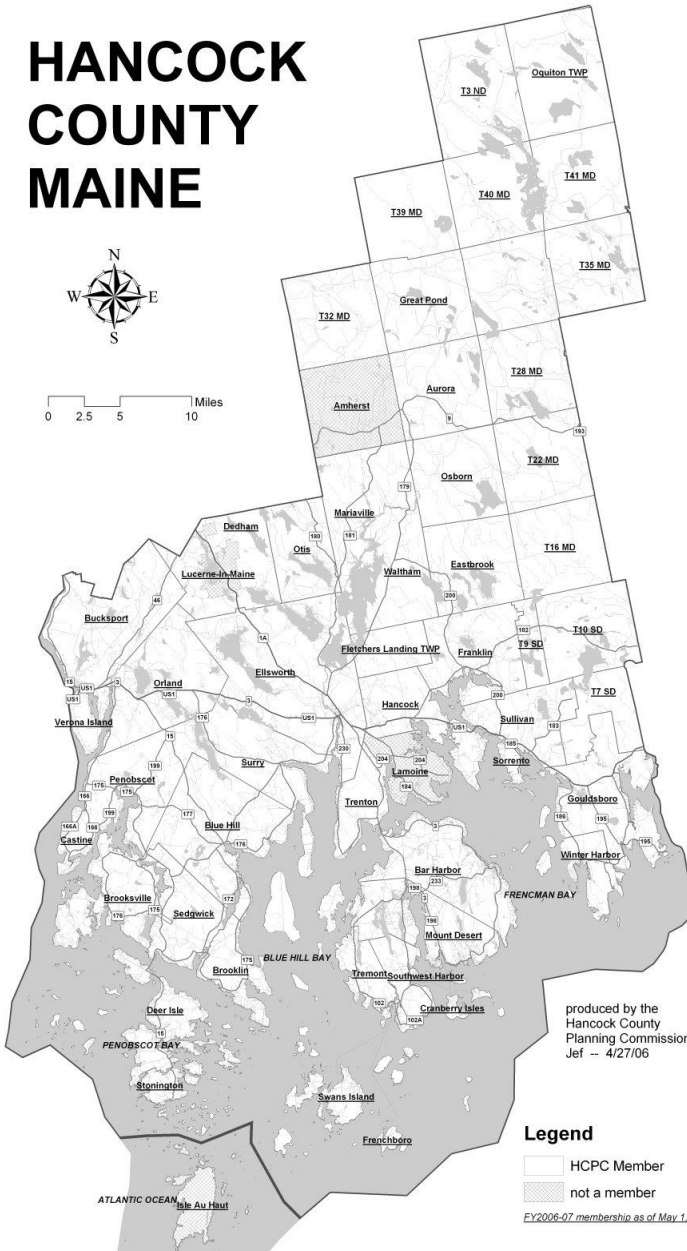
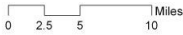
Thomas E. Martin	Executive Director	tmartin@hcpcme.org
James H. Fisher	Senior Planner	jfisher@hcpcme.org
Sheri Walsh	Admin. Assistant/ Planning Technician	swalsh@hcpcme.org

Executive Board

Roderic Franzius, Chairman
Dave Milan, Vice-Chair
Raymond Jones, Treasurer
Beverly Sanborn, Secretary

Denis Blodgett	Lee McWilliams	Jane Disney
Janet Michaud	Ian Staub	Valerie Chiasson

HANCOCK COUNTY MAINE



produced by the
Hancock County
Planning Commission
Jef -- 4/27/06

Legend

- HCPC Member
- not a member

FY2006-07 membership as of May 1, 2006

Hancock County Planning Commission
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Ellsworth, Maine 04605

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E-mail: hcpc@hcpcme.org

Web site: www.hcpcme.org

Monday - Friday, 8:00 AM- 4:30 PM

After hours?

Leave a message on our answering machine or e-mail us.

Directions:

HCPC is located on Route 1A, 395 State Street in Ellsworth, opposite the Friends and Family Market. Look for our sign.