BUILD MAINE SYSTEMS CHANGE

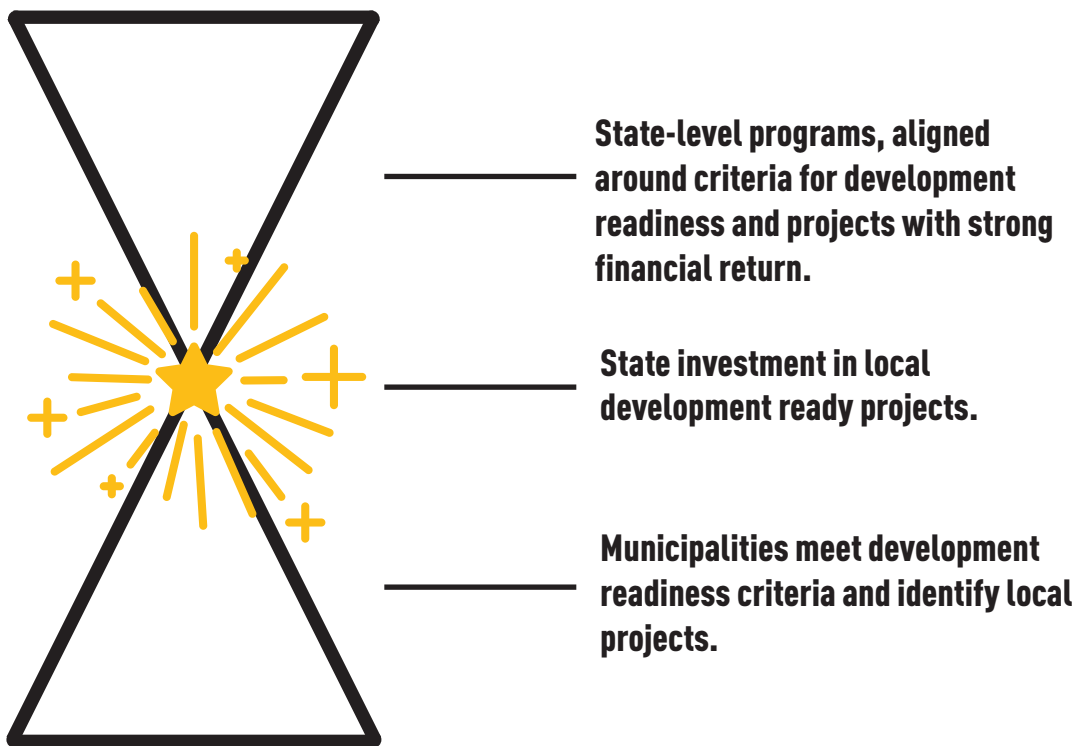## Development Ready Communities

HOW THE MODEL WORKS

Development Ready Communities is an idea for a new coordinated state delivery model that supports and prioritizes funding for local projects with a strong financial return and that meet shared state and local economic, housing, environmental, and quality of life goals. Priorities and recommendations are currently being generated through a number of state-level processes, and these need to be looked at in a wholistic way and from an investment perspective so we can direct funding and resources into the hands of communities.

STATE-LEVEL INITIATIVES

- Governor's Climate Council
- Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) State Economic Development Plan
- Ryan Fecteau's housing task force
- Blue Ribbon Commission for Roadway Funding
- Age Friendly State Advisory Committee
- Maine Housing Qualified Allocation Plan

State-level programs, aligned around criteria for development readiness and projects with strong financial return.

State investment in local development ready projects.

Municipalities meet development readiness criteria and identify local projects.

➡ **A different way of organizing state and municipal relationships.**

➡ **Focusing on investment instead of on planning.**

➡ **An outcome-driven approach.**

WHERE DO WE SPEND REDEVELOPMENT FUNDING?

- **TOWNS identify priority investment areas with resiliency considerations informing the priorities (locations of downtowns, villages corridors, working farms, working, waterfront).**
- **TOWNS identify key projects within priority investment areas.**
- **STATE identifies Major Projects (sewerage treatment plants, bridges, etc).**

STATE sets guidelines for areas that can qualify as priority investment areas. STATE/RPOs provide base-line data related to climate change risk, including data and mapping on coastal flooding, nuisance flooding, storm surge, sea level rise, coastal erosion, and shoreline change.

HOW DO WE PRIORITIZE REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS?

- **TOWNS submit projects for funding.**
- **STATE inter-agency team selects projects for funding from pool of communities that meet baseline redevelopment criteria.**
- **STATE creates capital plan for Major Projects.**

STATE sets baseline criteria. STATE/RPOs provide technical assistance to communities to help them meet baseline criteria.
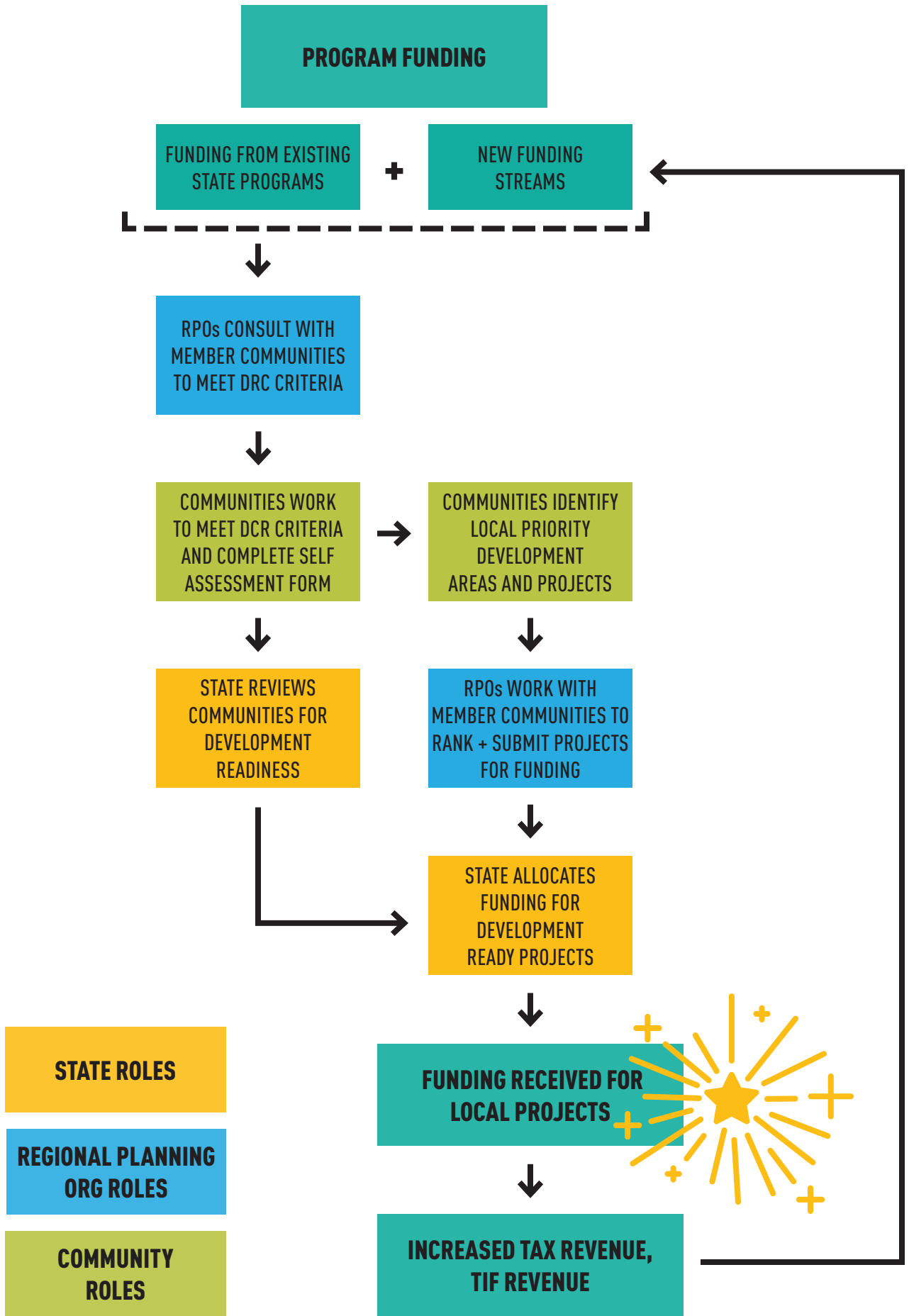
HOW DO WE FUND RESILIENCY + REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS?

- **STATE inter-agency team funds local projects, and with land bank authority acting as development agent, assists with clearing title, addressing contamination, engage in real estate transactions, and enable financing of redevelopment and relocation efforts.**
- **STATE identifies federal emergency management and other funding sources for Major Projects through Maine Infrastructure Bank.**

HOW DO WE GET PROJECTS TO HAPPEN?

- **By meeting baseline redevelopment criteria, towns are better positioned to achieve the investment they want and need (better plans for where investment happens, better land development rules to reduce barriers to investment, greater public support for projects).**
- **By setting up an inter-agency team and land bank enabling legislation, a variety of barriers to redevelopment, adaptation, and relocation are removed, and funding can be established to support projects with a financing gap.**

PROGRAM FUNDING

FUNDING FROM EXISTING STATE PROGRAMS + **NEW FUNDING STREAMS**

RPOs CONSULT WITH MEMBER COMMUNITIES TO MEET DRC CRITERIA

COMMUNITIES WORK TO MEET DCR CRITERIA AND COMPLETE SELF ASSESSMENT FORM → COMMUNITIES IDENTIFY LOCAL PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS AND PROJECTS

STATE REVIEWS COMMUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT READINESS

RPOs WORK WITH MEMBER COMMUNITIES TO RANK + SUBMIT PROJECTS FOR FUNDING

STATE ALLOCATES FUNDING FOR DEVELOPMENT READY PROJECTS

FUNDING RECEIVED FOR LOCAL PROJECTS

INCREASED TAX REVENUE, TIF REVENUE

STATE ROLES

REGIONAL PLANNING ORG ROLES

COMMUNITY ROLES

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

SURCHARGE ON CONSTRUCTION DEBRIS USER FEES

Funding for additional planning and development resources, including including technical assistance provided by the COG/EDDs for land banking and direct investment into development ready projects could come from a 5% surcharge paid by users on fees for disposal of construction and demolition debris. C&D does not include metal, household appliances, propane tanks, waste oil and certain other types of waste. It is very specific to building demolition waste. Some towns charge flat fees depending on the size of the vehicles, others charge by weight. By charging a percentage based surcharge it avoids any issues with flat fee structures.

NON-COMMERCIAL HISTORIC TAX CREDIT

Financing for direct investment into Hamlets and Farmsteads could come from a non-commercial historic tax credit that provides cash equity for projects where the extraordinary costs of investment are not supported by financial returns.

STATE ROLES

The State serves as a public sector Real Estate Investment Trust, with common platform for where and how state will invest. Departments organize funding programs, and consolidate and align programs with funding priorities.

STRATEGIC FOCUS

1. Community developments that are catalytic.

2. Critical infrastructure creating job growth and sustainability.

3. Expanding assistance to rural and small communities.

4. Technical economic development assistance for communities.

REQUIRED BASELINE CRITERIA

1. Projects must be located in a targeted place type area that have the financial value per acre, density, building type, and scale appropriate for priority place types;

2. Projects must maintain or improve the existing neighborhood context, present a retrofit or redevelopment plan supported and by the community's readiness standards; or support local rural economic development; and

3. Projects must be located in a community demonstrating readiness through Development Ready Community entry, progress, certification, or maintenance. Communities that do not contain a downtown or traditional commercial center must be Development Ready Community certified before transformational projects will be considered for assistance.

PLACE-BASED CRITERIA FOR INVESTMENT

Technical assistance and financial investment are founded on a place-based investment model, prioritizing Development Ready Projects that have the following characteristics:

1. Compact activity provides financial return on investment.

2. Interconnected streets encourage walking, reduce the number and length of automobile trips, reduce carbon emissions, and allow independence for those who do not drive, especially the elderly and the young.

3. A broad range of housing choices provide price levels for people of diverse ages, races, and incomes.

4. Activity that supports rural life and land-based business activities.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. Communities must demonstrate readiness through Development Ready Community "entry", "progress", "certification", or "maintenance". [DEFINE]

STATE TO-DO

1. State departments identify all funding programs.

2. Consolidate funding programs, where possible.

3. Revise funding criteria for each program to align with Development Ready Community framework.

4. Set up structure for Development Ready Technical Assistance: Why, what, who, where, and when. Align policies, initiatives, plans, and procedures so they reflect beliefs, culture, goals, objectives. Set up system for accountability.

STATE INVESTMENT IN DEVELOPMENT READY PROJECTS

CUSTOMER FOCUS: Deliver exceptional service and satisfaction as State engages with businesses, entrepreneurs, developers, communities, and local partners.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE - with support of Regional Planning Organizations

Development Ready staff provide consultation and technical assistance in the areas of best practices, capacity building, and development to help communities remove redevelopment barriers and strategically plan for the future.

MANAGEMENT

- Communicate in a clear and concise manner regarding program offerings.
- Track project success against metrics.

PLANNING

- Assist municipalities in actively engaging stakeholders to strategically plan for the future.
- Assist municipalities in removing barriers to development.
- Provide training opportunities and resources to residents, local units of government, developers, nonprofit organizations, and other partners to promote community revitalization.
- Provide updated data to communities to support their work, including data on value per acre and climate.

DEVELOPMENT

- Work with regions and municipalities to identify housing and development opportunities.
- Help pair financing to identify housing and development opportunities.
- Work with municipalities to assist with quality project development.

FINANCIAL INVESTMENT

State unifies primary community development resources located within Maine Housing, Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD), Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT), and other Departments to prioritize funding for local projects according to criteria that meet State and local financial, economic, environmental, and quality of life goals.

DECD

- Community developments that are catalytic.
- Advance historic preservation.
- Expand assistance to rural and small communities.
- Technical economic development assistance for communities.

MDOT

- Critical infrastructure supports business, local economies, and adaptation.
- Ensure a system of roads that can be maintained in good quality.
- Increase safety of streets for people walking and biking.
- Increase access to transit and ride share in all parts of Maine.

MAINE HOUSING

- Expand housing choice by supporting a broader range of housing types.
- Increase home ownership and help end homelessness (including veterans).
- Help develop and preserve affordable, stable housing, especially for workforce.

DEP

- Rebalance protection of resources within areas targeted for walkable development.

REGIONAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION ROLE

The Regional Planning Organizations would serve as an extension of the State and function as development consultants to their local municipalities.

Key roles of the RPOs would include:

- Providing critical technical assistance services to member communities who request assistance, related to community planning, resiliency planning, development planning, and project finance.

- Working with member municipalities to rank qualifying projects within certified Development Ready Communities for submission for State funding. In this way, the RPOs would help promote a regional approach to establishing funding priorities.

- Providing regional project review boards and code enforcement assistance to municipalities.

Opportunity exists to enable Regional Planning Organizations to handle regional project review and code enforcement, as appropriate.

Qualifying RPOs
- Economic Development Districts (EDDs)
- Councils of Government (COGs)

COMMUNITY ROLES

DEVELOPMENT READY COMMUNITY FUNDING CRITERIA

The following pages contain possible criteria for the development ready community framework. In order to be eligible for State funding, communities would be required to meet a select list of baseline criteria. Additional criteria could be included and contribute to a scoring system, so that projects submitted by communities who meet more of the criteria would rank higher for state funds.

The development ready community framework is meant to be a dynamic program that helps the state and communities work together effectively. As such, communities could be asked to recertify every 3 years, which means that baseline criteria could be amended and / or added over time.

INSTRUCTIONS:

As you review the following pages, please do the following:

- **Mark any criteria that you think should be baseline criteria, even for communities that have very few resources.**
- **Let us know which of these criteria you don't think are appropriate or necessary.**
- **Let us know if you can think of any missing categories and criteria, potentially related to climate, municipal finance, transportation, etc.**
- **Indicate whether any of the criteria should apply in certain contexts and not others, such as entirely rural communities, versus those who have a downtown center, or communities that have limited resources, versus those who have planning and economic development, planning, and other staff.**
- **Suggest any edits or improvements to language.**

[B] Baseline - Mandatory criteria for communities with Downtowns, Villages, High Impact Corridors, and Adjacent Neighborhoods.

[R] Rural - Criteria apply to communities that have self-identified as having only Rural Crossroads or Rural Farmsteads.

[Optional] The criteria are not required and only contribute to scoring.

**   If there are no symbols referenced, the criteria are still under review and need to be classified as Baseline, Rural, or Optional.

PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS

The following priority development areas are targeted for state funding based on a set of place-based characteristics and a demonstrated positive return on investment. A community may identify locations for newly established priority development areas as part of a comprehensive planning process, where the community can demonstrate that there is no existing priority development area of the same placetype, and where the newly established area meets the criteria, excepting historic criteria.

1. DOWNTOWN

A Downtown is an area with a dense grouping of contiguous mixed-use parcels that include multi-story buildings. The area must have been planned, built, and used for mixed-use activities for more than 80 years, and include buildings of historical or architectural significance. The area must primarily consist of buildings that contain a mix of businesses, services, and residential uses. Buildings are located close together, are often times attached, and located adjacent to the sidewalk with a zero-foot front setback. The area includes a network of streets that form blocks. Sidewalks are present along main commercial streets.

- [ ] Area was planned and built prior to 1940 and include buildings of historic or architectural significance.
- [ ] Mix of multi-story buildings.
- [ ] Mix of uses, including residential uses, permitted within buildings.
- [ ] Buildings located close together and often times attached.

- [ ] Majority of buildings have 0 ft front setback.
- [ ] Area includes a network of connected streets.
- [ ] Sidewalks present along main commercial street(s).
- [ ] Area has positive value per acre.

2. VILLAGE CENTER

A Village Center is an area with a loose grouping of predominantly contiguous mixed-use parcels that contains a mix of multi-story buildings. The area must have been planned, built, and used for mixed-use activities for more than 80 years. The area must primarily consist of buildings that contain a mix of commercial, residential, and civic activities. Buildings are located close together, are often times attached, and located adjacent to the sidewalk with a zero-foot or shallow front setback. Buildings are located along a loose network of streets. Sidewalks may be present.

- [ ] Area was planned and built prior to 1940 and include buildings of historic or architectural significance.
- [ ] Mix of multi-story buildings.
- [ ] Mix of uses, including residential uses, permitted within the area.

- [ ] Buildings located close together and may be attached.
- [ ] Majority of buildings have 0 ft or shallow front setbacks.
- [ ] Area includes a loose network of connected streets.
- [ ] Area has positive value per acre.

3. RURAL CROSSROADS

A Rural Crossroads is an area with a contiguous grouping of 2 or more buildings of historical or architectural significance that have formed a center of community within a small town or village. A Rural Crossroads can contain a mix of commercial, residential, and civic activities. Buildings are located close together and near to the street, providing a place where people can easy walk between buildings because of their proximity.

- [ ] Area was planned and built prior to 1940 and include buildings of historic or architectural significance.
- [ ] Mix of uses, including residential uses, permitted within the area.

- [ ] Buildings are clustered.
- [ ] Majority of buildings have shallow front setbacks.
- [ ] Area has positive value per acre.

4. HIGH IMPACT CORRIDOR

A High Impact Corridor is a primarily linear collection of contiguous parcels of land along a regional road that connects a downtown to other outlying areas. This area is often only 1 parcel deep and often times forms a boundary between commercial activity and residential neighborhoods. The area must have been planned and built, and used for predominantly commercial activities for more than 40 years. High impact corridors offer new economic opportunities, the potential for safe and sustainable transportation, and improvement to local quality of life.

☐ Area was planned and built prior to 1980.

☐ Area includes a collection of primarily linear parcels along a regional road.

☐ Area is located within a 2 mile radius of a Downtown, Village Center, or Crossroads.

☐ Contains primarily commercial uses, with plans for an expanded mix of uses.

☐ Area includes plans for an expanded network of interconnected streets.

☐ Area has a positive planned value per acre.

5. ADJACENT NEIGHBORHOOD

An adjacent neighborhood is primarily residential and located within walkable distance to a downtown. The area must have been planned, built, and used for mixed-use activities for more than 80 years. Housing mostly consists of single homes, duplexes, townhouses, small apartment buildings, and accessory units. Some businesses may be located in this area, including corner stores and cafés, as well as churches, schools, and other civic buildings. Buildings are typically located close together and are sometimes attached. The area includes a network of streets that form blocks. Sidewalks are often times present.

☐ Area was planned and built prior to 1940.

☐ Mix of predominantly residential buildings, with some businesses and civic buildings.

☐ Buildings located close together and may be attached.

☐ Majority of buildings have shallow front setbacks.

☐ Area includes a network of connected streets that form blocks.

☐ Sidewalks often times present.

☐ Area has positive value per acre.

6. RURAL FARMSTEAD

A rural farmstead is a parcel of land that serves, or has the potential to serve, as a resource-based economic center of activity in a rural area. This placetype is designed to protect from development pressures and to safeguard agricultural and forest sectors. The farmstead must include at least one existing residential or agricultural building built before 1940 that has historical or architectural significance. The farmstead can contain a mix of commercial and residential activities. The farmstead offers an opportunity for new buildings located close together to support the commercial and residential needs of a rural business that supports agriculture and forestry.

☐ At least 1 building on the parcel was built prior to 1940.

☐ Contains a mix of residential, agricultural, and land-based commercial uses.

☐ Farmstead must include plans for capital improvements to support existing buildings and land-based agricultural and commercial activities.

7. WORKING WATERFRONTS

A working waterfront is an area of land that serves, or has the potential to serve, as a resource-based economic center of activity, whether adjacent to a downtown or located within a rural area.

☐ At least 1 building on the parcel was built prior to 1940.

☐ Is used predominantly for water-based activities.

1 — PLANS

Best Practice 1 evaluates community planning and how a community's development vision is embedded in the comprehensive plan, priority development plans, and capital improvement plan.

Comprehensive plans should be a community's guiding framework for growth and investment. Information and strategies outlined in the comprehensive plan should provide clear policy direction for physical, social, economic, environmental, and fiscal decisions that impact the community. The comprehensive plan should focus its content on providing a sense of direction for the community and enabling the community to achieve its stated goals. The plan should communicate clear expectations to all stakeholders engaged in development, where development should and should not occur, the types of development the community desires, and the areas where local resources will be concentrated. Coordination between the capital improvement plan and the comprehensive plan is essential.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 1
COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

The governing body has adopted a comprehensive plan in the past 5 years.

EXPECTATIONS

The comprehensive plan:

- [ ] **[B, R]** Reflects the community's desired direction for the future.
- [ ] **[B, R]** Identifies priority development areas and their boundaries by parcel, and maps these on a priority development area map.
- [ ] **[B, R]** Includes prioritized recommendations for implementation, including goals, actions, timelines, and responsible parties.
- [ ] **[B, R]** Is accessible online.
- [ ] ~~**[B, R]** Identifies projects and includes estimated project costs and timeline for completion.~~
- [ ] ~~**[B, R]** Is revisited every year to track progress and reported annually to the governing body.~~

EVALUATION CRITERIA 2
RESILIENCY PLANNING

The governing body has integrated climate resiliency planning into its comphensive and capital improvement plans.

EXPECTATIONS

- [ ] The community has completed the Maine Flood Resilience Checklist.
- [ ] The comprehensive plan includes an inventory of buildings, public infrastructure, and residential septic systems that are vulnerable to coastal flooding, nuisance flooding, storm surge, sea level rise, coastal erosion, and shoreline change.
- [ ] The community has determined where to pursue adaptation versus relocation, based on financial considerations that include economic value and replacement cost projections (with life cycle accounting); environmental considerations that include investigation of living shoreline or other natural resources-based means of augmenting/developing resilience; and community considerations, including deep local connection to a place and ability to find viable design solutions for adaptation.
- [ ] The comprehensive plan includes a list of priority resiliency projects that address environmental needs and are weighted toward priority development areas.
- [ ] Resiliency projects are coordinated with the capital improvement plan.

1 — PLANS (cont'd)

EVALUATION CRITERIA 3
FIANANCIAL STANDARDS

The comprehensive plan includes standards to manage and protect pubilc tax dollars.

EXPECTATIONS

☐ Local policy for municipal acceptance of private roads is aligned with priority development areas and is based on whole life cycle cost and connectivity standards.

☐ Priority development areas are established based on whole life cycle cost analysis and value per acre criteria for priority development areas to support local fiscal health.

☐ Any local TIF policy is aligned with priority development areas.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 4
INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

The comprehensive plan must include a prioritized list of infrastructure, street, and public space projects.

EXPECTATIONS

☐ The comprehensive plan identifies priority infrastructure, street, and public space projects that support priority development areas.

☐ The community has demonstrated that the long-term costs of infrastructure projects (including maintenance and replacement costs) are covered by revenues produced by properties serviced by the infrastructure.

☐ **[Optional]** Priority street projects have been evaluated against the following criteria:

☐ Reduces vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and carbon emissions through a reduction in car trips.

☐ Improves street safety and mobility for all modes, including people walking, biking, and driving.

☐ Contributes to a sustainable street network that is interconnected, flexible, and multi-modal.

☐ Improves land values by reducing number of vehicle lanes and vehicle speeds.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 5
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The governing body has adopted a capital improvement plan updated annually.

EXPECTATIONS

The capital improvement plan:

☐ Details a minimum of six years of public structures and improvements and is reviewed annually.

☐ Is consistent with and coordinates with the comprehensive plan and the budget.

☐ Is accessible online.

☐ ~~Coordinates projects to minimize construction costs.~~

2 — PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Best Practice 2 evaluates how well a community identifies its stakeholders and engages them, not only during the comprehensive plan process, but on a continual basis. A public participation strategy is essential to formalize those efforts and outline how the public will be asked to participate in the planning and development process, and in other major decisions that affect the community.

A good public participation strategy recognizes that the best decisions are made with the involvement of a broad and diverse group of people working together to problem solve. Public participation aims to prevent or minimize disputes by create a process for resolving issues before they become an obstacle. Staff should consider additional kinds of engagement outside of formal town or city chambers, to meet people where they are and create a more comfortable and productive environment for the exchange of ideas.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 1
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

Community has a public participation strategy for engaging a diverse set of stakeholders.

EXPECTATIONS

The public engagement strategy:

- [ ] **[B, R]** Identifies key stakeholders, including those not normally at the table.
- [ ] **[B]** Identifies the appropriate method and venue to most effectively engage each stakeholder group.
- [ ] ~~**[B]** Ensures that if third party consultants are hired, they adhere to the public engagement strategy.~~

EVALUATION CRITERIA 2
ENGAGEMENT METHODS

The community demonstrates that public participation efforts go beyond basic methods.

EXPECTATIONS

The public engagement strategy includes some of the following best practices and proactive practices:

- [ ] **[B, R]** Baseline Practices: website postings, newspaper notices.
- [ ] **[B]** Best Practices: post card mailings, local cable notifications, newspaper stories, fliers posted around town, social media postings, live stream and posting recorded meetings.
- [ ] **[B]** Proactive Practices: community workshops, charrettes, canvassing, meeting people in places where they go, Zoom broadcasts for remote public commenting.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 3
EVALUATING RESULTS

Community leaders evaluate and share outcomes from the public participation process.

EXPECTATIONS

Community leaders:

- [ ] **[B]** Communicate the results of community engagement efforts in a consistent and transparent way.
- [ ] **[B]** Adjust public participation strategy based on success and shortcomings.

3 — DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Best Practice 3 evaluates a community's development standards and helps the community achieve its local goals as detailed in the comprehensive plan. Zoning and other development standards are key tools for plan implementation. Development standards that are at odds with the community's goals can discourage development and investment, create distrust between the community and its leaders, and impede healthy market forces.

Communities should work to speed up and maximize the efficiency of the permitting process and simplify zoning to regulate only what's necessary to achieve the community's shared local goals.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 1
ZONING ALIGNS WITH PLANS

The community has development standards that align with the goals of the community as detailed in the comprehensive plan.

EXPECTATIONS

☐ **[B, R]** Development standards are updated to align with the priority development areas established in the comprehensive plan.

☐ **[B]** The community has reviewed and revised the zoning district intent statements and updated the zoning map to align with the comprehensive plan.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 2
PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT LOCATIONS

Development standards identify priority development areas and encourage developement desired by the community.

EXPECTATIONS

☐ **[B, R]** Development standards allow by right or by administrative review the type and form of development desired by the community.

☐ **[B, R]** Where development is allowed by right, development is regulated by form-based standards that align with the community's goals.

☐ **[B, R]** Form-based standards should at a minimum include build-to lines / setbacks, building dimensions and attachments, roof types, percent glazing, shopfronts, mixed uses, and parking location.

☐ **[B, R]** Where appropriate, development standards should allow for the preservation of historic buildings and natural landscape features, such as stone walls, hedgerows, fields, mill ponds, and other parts of a community deemed to be locally important.

☐ **[B, R]** Development standards are clear about community's expectations with regard to local building tradition, design, and building materials.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 3
FLEXIBLE STANDARDS

The zoning includes flexible tools to encourage development and redevelopment.

EXPECTATIONS

The zoning should:

☐ **[B, R]** Provide an easy path for the rehabilitation or reuse of existing structures.

☐ **[Optional]** Clearly define special land use and conditional zoning approval standards, procedures, and requirements.

☐ **[Optional]** Define waivers and criteria for when waivers can be granted.

3 — DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS (cont'd)

EVALUATION CRITERIA 4
HOUSING OPTIONS

Development standards allow for a variety of housing options.

EXPECTATIONS

☐ **[B]** Development standards permit accessory dwelling units to occur within existing homes.

☐ **[B]** Every zoning district that permits residential uses allows for three or more of the following types: accessory dwelling units, duplexes, 3-plexes, 4-plexes, small apartment buildings, live/works, residential units above non-residential uses, co-housing, single-room occupancy, tiny homes, manufactured housing.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 5
TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Development standards improve people's access to non-vehicular transportation.

EXPECTATIONS

☐ **[Optional]** Development standards contain a range of street sections that are appropriate for a variety of places.

☐ **[Optional]** Street standard sections are based on desired roadway design speeds and provide safe street space for people walking, biking, pushing strollers, or using mobility assistance devices.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 6
PARKING STANDARDS

Development standards include flexible parking standards.

EXPECTATIONS

☐ **[B]** Development standards do not mandate parking minimums.

OR

☐ **[B]** Development standards include all of the following:

☐ Shared parking agreements.

☐ On-street and off-site parking to count toward requirements.

☐ Car share or ride share can count for multiple vehicle spaces.

☐ Requirements for bicycle parking.

3 — DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS (cont'd)

EVALUATION CRITERIA 7
SUSTAINABILITY

Development standards include standards for green infrastructure.

EXPECTATIONS

☐ **[B]** Development standards provide clear guidance on renewable energy sources.

☐ **[Optional]** Development standards encourage the use of non-invasive species.

☐ **[Optional]** Development standards require reduction in paving and use of green infrastructure approaches for stormwater management, including rain gardens, bioswales, shade trees, and other landscape treatments to reduce impervious surfaces and the heat island effect.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 8
FINANCIAL STANDARDS

Development standards include criteria to protect municipal finances.

EXPECTATIONS

☐ **[B]** Development standards contain project approval standards established by the municipality based on positive life cycle accounting and a value per acre minimum of XX.

☐ **[B]** Development standards require projects to submit value per acre analysis.

☐ **[B]** Development standards do not require developers to build expensive infrastructure in places where the life cycle costs / return on investment do not support it.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 9
USER FRIENDLY DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Development standards are clear and easy for people to access and understand.

EXPECTATIONS

☐ Development standards are organized and written with consideration of the end user experience, with language that is approachable and diagrams to help illustrate ideas in 3-dimensions.

☐ Development standards include clear definitions and standards.

☐ Development standards are available in electronic format on-line.

☐ ~~Hard copies of development standards are available for review in convenient locations.~~

4 — DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

Best Practice 4 evaluates the community's development review policies and procedures, project tracking, and internal/external communication. In order to create an inviting development climate and help realize the community's goals, leaders and staff should work to simplify and clarify policies, operate in a transparent manner, and increase efficiency.

The purpose of the development review process is to assure that plans for development comply with local ordinances and are consistent with the comprehensive plan. Streamlined, clear, well communicated development policies and procedures ensure a smooth and predictable experience for people trying to invest and build in a community.

It is essential for a community's economic development staff, plan review staff, and permitting and inspections staff to coordinate efforts and provide a designated representative for the applicant. Efficient steps and detailed instructions will increase permitting efficiency and save expenses for all parties.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 1
SITE PLAN REVIEW PROCESS
The community has a zoning ordinance that clearly articulates a site plan review process.

EXPECTATIONS
- [ ] **[B]** The responsibilities and procedures of each review body and staff are clearly documented for the public and applicants, including notification procedures, meeting schedules, and timeline for review.
- [ ] **[B]** Staff will create user friendly application forms and instructions that are posted online.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 2
QUALIFIED DEVELOPMENT REVIEW STAFF
The community has a qualified staff to help applicants navigate the development review process.

EXPECTATIONS
- [ ] **[B]** The community has an identified staff point person to work with applicants through the entire approval process who trained to perform intake responsibilities including:
  - [ ] Receiving and processing applications and site plans.
  - [ ] Maintaining contact with the applicant.
  - [ ] Facilitating meetings.
  - [ ] Processing applications for approval.
  - [ ] Coordinating with permitting and inspections staff.
  - [ ] Facilitating meetings.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 3
CONCEPTUAL PLANS
The community encourages public stakeholder meetings and conceptual site plan and subdivision review.

EXPECTATIONS
- [ ] **[B, R]** A public stakeholder meeting is required for projects that deviate from the community's stated vision.
- [ ] **[B]** The community encourages developers to meet with staff or planning board for conceptual site plan review.
- [ ] **[B]** The community has defined expectations for public stakeholder and conceptual site plan review meetings posted online.

4 — DEVELOPMENT REVIEW (cont'd)

EVALUATION CRITERIA 4
NEIGHBORHOOD ENGAGEMENT

The community encourages a developer to seek input from neighboring residents and businesses prior to the application process.

EXPECTATIONS

☐ **[B]** Staff assists the developer in soliciting input on a proposal before the formal site plan approval process begins.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 5
JOINT SITE PLAN REVIEW

The appropriate departments engage in joint site plan review.

EXPECTATIONS

☐ **[B]** The community has a joint site plan review team that consists of any of the following positions that exist within the community:

☐ Planning Department

☐ Department of Public Works

☐ Code Enforcement staff

☐ Fire, Police

☐ Economic Development staff

☐ Historic District staff

EVALUATION CRITERIA 6
CLEAR INTERNAL REVIEW POLICY

The community has a clearly documented internal staff review policy.

EXPECTATIONS

☐ The internal review process articulates staff roles, responsibilities, and timelines.

☐ Development review standards are clearly defined and followed by staff.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 7
PROMPT ACTION ON DEVELOPMENT REQUESTS

The community promptly acts on development requests.

EXPECTATIONS

☐ **[B]** The community has tiered site plan review, where simpler, less impactful projects with no discretion or relief requests located within priority development areas can be approved administratively by staff or by planning board / commission.

☐ **[B]** The staff / permitting authorities follow documented procedures and timelines in a consistent manner.

4 — DEVELOPMENT REVIEW (cont'd)

EVALUATION CRITERIA 8
PROJECT TRACKING

The community has a method to track development projects.

EXPECTATIONS

☐ The community uses a tracking mechanism for projects during the development planning, permitting, and inspections process, to help with communications between local and state planning, permitting, and inspections staff.

~~**EVALUATION CRITERIA 9**~~
~~**INTERNAL** REVIEW OF PROCESS~~

~~**The community annually reviews successes and challenges with the development review process.**~~

EXPECTATIONS

☐ ~~The community obtains customer feedback on site plan approval and permitting and inspections process and integrates changes when applicable.~~

☐ ~~All the staff involved in site plan review, including permitting and inspections staff, meets to capture lessons learned and amends the process accordingly.~~

5 — RECRUITMENT + TRAINING

Best Practice 5 evaluates how a community conducts recruitment of new staff, elected and appointed officials. It also tracks training and orientation needs for new staff, elected, and appointed officials.

Diversity of staff, boards, and commissions can ensure a wide range of perspectives are considered when making decisions on financial incentives and development.

Communities should seek applicants with relevant skill sets and establish expectations prior to new officials and board members becoming active. Planning boards, the governing body, and staff make more informed decisions when they receive adequate training on land use and development issues. Turnover in officials can create gaps in knowledge, which makes ongoing training essential.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 1
BOARD EXPECTATIONS

The community sets expectations for board and commission positions.

EXPECTATIONS

- [ ] **[B]** The community defines expectations and desired skill sets for open seats.
- [ ] **[B]** Board and commission applications are available online.
- [ ] **[Optional]** Appointment committees involve the primary staff who will be working with the new committee member in the interview process.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 2
ORIENTATION PACKETS

The community provides orientation packets to all appointed and elected members of development related boards and commissions.

EXPECTATIONS

- [ ] The orientation packet includes all relevant planning, zoning, and development information.
- [ ] Links to webinars, training videos, and other instructional material related to development, municipal finance, housing, transportation, and other relevant information should be made available.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 3
TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The zoning includes flexible tools to encourage development and redevelopment.

EXPECTATIONS

- [ ] **[B]** The community has a training budget allocated for staff, elected, and appointed officials.
- [ ] **[Optional]** The community holds collaborative work sessions, including joint trainings on development topics.

6 — DEVELOPMENT READY SITES

Best Practice 6 assesses how a community identifies and markets priority development ready sites in order to attract investment and meet a community's vision. A development ready site is a site that aligns with state-level priority development areas, is targeted for development by the community to meet local goals, and is ready for investment. Identifying and marketing development ready sites can assist a community in stimulating desired investment in obsolete, vacant, or underutilized properties.

Communities that have engaged the public and determined desired outcomes for development ready sites create predictable outcomes for both potential developers and the community. If a development proposal on a development ready site is still controversial, additional public participation should happen to ensure broad community support.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 1
IDENTIFY DEVELOPMENT READY SITES

The community should identify development ready sites.

EXPECTATIONS

- [ ] **[B]** The community maintains an updated list of development ready sites for potential developers with the following basic information for each development ready site available online:
    - [ ] Photo of the site.
    - [ ] Plans and renderings showing desired development outcomes.
    - [ ] Owner contact information.
    - [ ] Basic zoning parameters.
    - [ ] Lot size, building size.
    - [ ] Property tax assessment information.
    - [ ] Available utilities.
    - [ ] Known environmental conditions.
    - [ ] Planned infrastructure and street improvements.

EVALUATION CRITERIA 2
COMMUNITY VISION

The community has developed a vision for the development ready sites.

EXPECTATIONS

- [ ] **[B, R]** The vision includes desired development outcomes and specific development criteria.
- [ ] **[B, R]** The vision is clearly articulated through visual plans and renderings.
- [ ] **[B, R]** Community champions for the development of the site are identified.
- [ ] **[B, R]** Controversial development sites are called out as needing more public engagement.

6 — DEVELOPMENT READY SITES (cont'd)

EVALUATION CRITERIA 3
DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

The community identifies potential resources, financing, and incentives for development ready sites.

EXPECTATIONS

☐ **[B, R]** The community identifies negotiable development tools, financial incentives, in-kind support, creative financing options, and other opportunities available to help support local projects that align with the community's vision.

7 — ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Best Practice 7 assesses what goals and actions a community has identified to assist in strenghthening its overall economic health, specifically as related to major infrastructure projects that support economic development.

This best practice relates to the specific funding opportunities identified through the Development Ready Community process and aligning those projects with the annual Comprehensive Economic

Development Strategy (CEDS) that prioritizes infrastructure projects for the region in terms of their economic impact.

The CEDS is an ongoing Federal initiative of the Economic Development Administration to provide funding for local infrastructure projects that support economic development. The SEDS are prepared by Regional Planning Organizations that are also federally designated Economic Development Districts (EDDs).

EVALUATION CRITERIA 1
IDENTIFY PRIORITY CEDS PROJECTS

Communities, working with RPOs, should identify key CEDS projects to advance for Federal funding.

EXPECTATIONS

☐ **[B]** The community works with their Regional Planning Organization / Economic Development District to maintain an updated list of priority infrastrucutre projects that support local economic developemnt goals.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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