

## 6. PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

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There are a number of public facilities and services available to the residents of Wiscasset. Some of these are provided by the Town, but many others are made available by volunteers and private groups and organizations. The following paragraphs contain a summary of the Town's government and its facilities and services. **Note:** The Municipal Government's Capital Investment Plan is incorporated within the Appendices Section (Appendix F) of the Comprehensive Plan. The Wiscasset School Department Capital Investment Plan is incorporated within the Comprehensive Plan by this reference and is available at the Wiscasset School Superintendent's Office.

### **Municipal Government and Administration**

The Town of Wiscasset is governed by the Selectmen/Town Manager/Town Meeting form of government that includes both elected and appointed officials. The Board of Selectmen is composed of five residents who are elected to the Board with staggered terms of office. Under this system, the municipal officers remain the executive body, establish policy and instruct the Town Manager to implement said policy. Administrative duties are performed by the Town Manager according to the Maine Town Manager Plan outlined in State law because the Town does not have a local charter. In 2006, the town moved to secret ballot voting.

**Town Office Staff.** The Town Office staff includes:

- Town Manager
- Town Clerk
- Treasurer
- Assessors' Agent
- Code Enforcement Officer
- Accounts Payable/General Assistance Clerk
- Planning and Development Director
- Administrative Assistant/Office Manager

**Boards and Committees.** The following is a list of the standing and ad hoc boards and committees:

- Planning Board
- Budget Committee
- Waterfront Committee
- Transportation Committee
- Comprehensive Plan Committee
- Ordinance Review Committee
- Airport Advisory Committee
- Shellfish Committee
- Cemetery Committee
- Capital Improvement Advisory Board

## Major Town Properties

Table 1 contains a listing of major properties owned by the Town of Wiscasset. The list includes properties with structures on them, as well as wharfs, rental or lease properties, parks and major open space parcels.

<b>Table 1 Major Town-Owned Properties</b>				
Description	Address	Map/Lot	Acreage	Comments
<b>Buildings</b>				
Municipal Building	51 Bath Road	U05-001	1.96	Municipal Complex
Municipal Parking	Middle Street	U01-035	0.15	
Community Center	242 Gardiner Road	R06-011	89	
Airport	108 Chewonki Neck Rd	U20-001	196	
Transfer Station	78 Fowle Road	R05-017	57	
Town Garage	42 Hodge Street	U02-013	2.38	
Treatment Plant	69 Water Street	U02-060	4	
Town Landing	Federal Street	U02-042	0.42	Town Landing
Municipal Pier	22 Main Street	U01-063	0.45	Wharf
Wharf	9 Water Street	U01-070A	0.46	Wharf, restrooms
Powder House	68 Churchill Street	U05-011	0.01	
Boy Scout Hall	7 Lincoln Street	U02-050	0.07	
Art Gallery	15 Warren Street	U02-077	0.23	
Weight Watchers	96 Chewonki Neck Rd	U21-010	1.38	
Radio Beacon	Edgecomb	R02-012	2.2	
Home	166 Chewonki Neck Rd	U20-004	2.38	Rented out
Garage	53 Huntoon Hill Road	R05-020	29	At old transfer sta.
<b>Land, Open Space</b>				
Greenlawn Cemetery	Rumerill Road	R01-003	5	
Town Park	151 Main	U01-029	0.29	Sunken Garden
Open Space	Bath Box Lot	R04-027	30	
Open Space	51 Rumerill Road	R06-050	28.9	
Open Space	Ferry Road	U21-006	20	
Open Space	Chewonki Neck Road	U21-009	5.5	
Open Space	Bog Road	R04-006	4	
Open Space	Off Bog Road	R04-008	2	

## Fire Department

The Wiscasset Fire Department provides fire protection services to Wiscasset and to surrounding communities on a “mutual aid” basis. The quasi-volunteer department has a 40-member roster that

includes a mix of dedicated veteran and younger members. The Fire Station is located within the Municipal Building at 51 Bath Road in Wiscasset. The Town also maintains a fire training site adjacent to the Transfer Station equipped to provide controlled burn and incident training sessions.

The department is led by a professional Fire Chief, elected annually by its members, and paid as a part-time employee of the Town. The Fire Chief also works full time as a fire fighter for the City of Bath. Regular and advanced training is offered (and in many cases mandatory) for all members. Due to the volunteer nature of the service, one of the challenges of the department is providing adequate manpower during the 8am-5pm workday. However, the primary strength of the department rests solely with the dedication of volunteers including many Town employees such that each and every call to duty has been answered regardless of the time of day. The Town allows full-time employees to respond to fire calls during work hours placing public protection as the highest priority. According to the 2005 Annual Report, the Department responded to 132 calls for the nine-month period. Of these 22 were mutual aid calls.

Vehicles and major pieces of equipment housed at the fire station portion of the municipal complex include:

- Maxium Fire Truck E-6 (1971)
- Chevy Fire Truck R1 (1978)
- GMC Pickup, ½ ton PK (1988)
- Pemfab Fire Truck Royale S-944A (1989)
- Pierce Fire Truck E7 (1993)
- GMC Pickup (1993)
- GMC Fire Truck (1994)
- GMC Fire Truck (1996)

## **Wiscasset Ambulance Service**

The Wiscasset Ambulance Service (WAS) provides emergency medical services to Wiscasset, Alna, Edgecomb and Westport. The Service responded to approximately 495 calls in 2004 and 522 calls in 2005. The WAS is located within the Municipal Building at 51 Bath Road in Wiscasset.

The WAS is led by a 30-hour/week, paid part-time director who is annually elected by its members. The director reports directly to the Town Manager and is advised by a slate of WAS officers. The WAS has provided service to Alna, Edgecomb and Westport for nearly three decades without charge with the exception of contributions in recent years for paramedic training and the replacement of one ambulance.

Significant challenges facing the service are:

- The ongoing evolution of providing medical care in the field;
- The growing demand for services;
- Daytime coverage;
- Demographic trends in Wiscasset and the region that show a growing population of elderly residents requiring services;
- Increased traffic pressures and resulting accidents; and,
- Other factors that place increased demand on the quasi-volunteer department.

The increased paramedicine-degree licensure of some members in recent years allows the service to deliver pharmacology and advanced patient-care in the field. The advanced services now delivered by the service meet an important need in the community, but also require ongoing advanced training, reporting and materials purchases.

Vehicles and major pieces of equipment include:

- Ambulance, Ford (1994)
- Ambulance, Ford (1991)
- Ambulance, Ford E456 (2005)
- Boat and Trailer, OMC Express 380

## **Police Department**

The Wiscasset Police Department is located in the southwest end of the municipal building. The Department is staffed by four full-time officers (including the Chief), one full-time secretary and 11 reserve officers. The Department owns three vehicles. Replacement vehicles are rotated into the fleet on a staggered basis, usually replacing the oldest vehicles.

The number of calls continues to rise each year. In 2002, the Police Department responded to 2,873 calls. By 2005, this had increased to 4,095 calls for service. The Department provides a wide variety of services to the citizens of Wiscasset including, but not limited to, emergency services, traffic control, animal control, property checks, citizen disputes, drug abuse resistance education, support for the shellfish warden and security for organizations at large gatherings.

## **Water Supply**

In 2004, Earth Tech, Inc., of South Portland prepared a Comprehensive Water System Facilities Plan for the Wiscasset Water District. The discussion that follows is based on information contained in the plan.

The Wiscasset Water District (WWD) is a quasi-municipal district governed by a five-member Board of Trustees. Trustees are elected by the residents of Wiscasset and serve staggered terms of three years. The WWD was formed in January of 1985 for the purpose of assuming responsibility for the operation of the system from the Wiscasset Water Company. In 1988, the WWD determined that the water source, the Ward Brook watershed, was insufficient due to the town's increasing population. The District discontinued pumping and treatment operations from Ward Brook and constructed a water main and pump station connection to the Bath Water District (BWD). The WWD also constructed a 600,000-gallon storage tank behind the high school to meet the growing demands of the community.

The water supply for the Bath Water District (and thus the Wiscasset Water District) is Nequasset Lake, located in the Town of Woolwich. Nequasset Lake has been a water source for over 100 years, and currently serves Bath, West Bath, Woolwich and Wiscasset. The watershed of Nequasset Lake is approximately 21 square miles, located primarily in Woolwich, but also extending into portions of Dresden and Wiscasset.

Water is pumped to Bath where it is treated with a number of processes that include filtration and disinfection. The WWD performs water quality testing at the Woolwich connection to the system. The WWD's only booster station is located at the intersection of West Road and Route 1 in Woolwich.

Two 375 GPM (gallons per minute) pumps are used intermittently to fill the storage tank behind Wiscasset High School.

The water distribution system in Wiscasset comprises water mains ranging in size from 1.5 inches up to 12 inches in diameter. The system contains approximately 20.25 miles of water mains. The larger diameter water mains are primarily cement-lined ductile iron, cast iron and HDPE. The majority of the 6-inch diameter distribution lines, which are part of the original distribution system of 1916, are cast iron. The water distribution system delivers water from the storage tank to the WWD's customers. In 2002, there were 513 customers including 415 residential customers, 81 commercial customers and 17 governmental customers.

The WWD's office is located on Birch Point Road. All administrative functions of the district, including accounting functions, bill payment and processing, vehicle storage, maintenance, records storage and control equipment for remote operation of pumping, are housed in this facility. Opportunities for expansion of the system include Route 27 north of the high school, and the Town of Edgecomb.

The Earth Tech report identifies a number of needed improvements to the system including:

- The major distribution lines, which are 70-80 years old;
- 1,920 feet of 6-inch, cast iron pipe between hydrants 93 and 96 along Churchill and Gardiner Roads (12-inch cement-lined ductile iron pipe needed);
- 1,520 feet of 6-inch, cast iron pipe between hydrant 62 and 82 Federal Street, as well as a service line to the Middle School (8-inch cement-lined ductile iron pipe needed);
- 3,710 feet of 6-inch, cast iron pipe between hydrants 34 and 37 along Birch Point Road (12-inch cement-lined ductile iron pipe needed);
- 1,040 feet of 6-inch, cast iron pipe between hydrants 84 and 87 along Hodge Street (8-inch cement-lined ductile iron pipe needed); and
- 2,340 feet of 12-inch cement-lined ductile iron pipe needed to replace a 6-inch, cast iron pipe along Lee Street as well as the creation of a new extension down Bradbury Street to Fort Hill and down Fort Hill Street to Main Street.

## **Sanitary Sewer System**

The Town of Wiscasset is served by a public sewer system that includes 14 miles of sewer line, 17 pump stations and an activated sludge wastewater treatment plant located on Cow Island.

All of the gravity sewer lines in the system are eight-inch lines, with the exception of those in the downtown which are 14-inch lines. Some of the force mains are as small as four inches.

The sludge from the treatment plant is run through a belt filter press and is then loaded and trucked to a compost facility in Unity. Treated wastewater is discharged to the Sheepscot River. In 1992, the Town upgraded the treatment plant for a total cost of \$4,100,000. The plant is currently licensed for a monthly average flow of 620,000 gallons per day. Monthly discharges are averaging about 180,000 gallons per day, or about 29% of capacity. The treatment plant employs four full-time people, including the superintendent and has an operating budget of about \$373,000 that has been supported by user fees since 2001. Prior to 2001, plant operations were supported by taxes. New connections are

charged an impact fee according to a formula based on estimated usage as well as a one-time connection fee of \$100.

The overall condition of the waste water system is strong and far exceeds current demand, allowing adequate capacity for growth. The age of the system, however, does require current and ongoing investment in infrastructure upgrades. The Town recently expanded the system for the first time outside Wiscasset borders to the Town of Edgecomb. The expansion has increased the revenue stream and cost-sharing structure for future system upgrades, thus reducing the financial burden on Wiscasset users.

Some of the challenges facing the Waste Water system are:

- The system was designed and built while Maine Yankee constituted more than 90% of Wiscasset's Tax base. As such, its design was not based on anticipated economic rates of return to cover initial investment, ongoing operational costs or future infrastructure upgrade costs. Maine Yankee's early and unexpected closure did not allow the Town enough time to adequately plan financially for the long-term economic viability of the system. As such, user rates were not established until 2001 and impact fees until 2003, leaving the Town without significant dedicated reserves for infrastructure upgrades. The existence of the system has improved the environment, protected public health and afforded the community significant economic development opportunities. Town leaders wisely dedicated investment in its construction. However, the Town is still in transition from the former economic landscape to the present state of affairs to meet the long-term funding needs of the system.
- The Town has upgraded several pump stations since original construction. Eight of the stations have been upgraded over the past six years and two of the upgrades were due to unexpected catastrophic infrastructure failures; three additional pump stations need to be upgraded in the near future at costs approximating \$200,000 each.
- The force main on Birch Point Road from pump station #9 needs to be replaced with a larger pipe to accommodate the expected increase in flows due to residential growth, and projects on the former Maine Yankee land and Birch Point (Mason Station). Rough cost estimates exceed \$750,000.

## **Public Works/Highway Department**

One of the primary responsibilities of the Public Works/Highway Department is construction, maintenance, repair and plowing the town's road system. The department maintains and repairs all Town vehicles with the exception of school buses.

Responsibilities of the Public Works/Highway Department are much broader than many residents may be aware. The department maintains all Town cemeteries and many Town-owned properties including the Maine Art Gallery, Scout Hall, the clock/spire on Fort Hill Street, the Powder House on Churchill Street, waterfront docks, wharfs, and the Sunken Garden. The department also has responsibilities at the airport and other Town properties. In addition, it supports staff needs at the transfer Station including Class A drivers for the transport of waste to disposal sites.

The department mows and maintains grounds on many Town-owned properties including the Town common, Town Hall, roadside areas and many other public lands in Wiscasset. Employees perform tree removal, culvert replacement/repair, clearing and maintenance of Town boundaries lines. The department also fills the need to perform tasks that do not fall neatly into the purview of responsibility of other departments. Random projects may include anything from moving furniture and building repairs to assisting other departments on special projects.

Some of the significant challenges facing the department are:

- Aging equipment
- Expanding infrastructure requiring oversight and maintenance
- A reduction in staff from 16 employees at the height of Maine Yankee funding to the present level of five truck driver/laborers, one mechanic and a Road Commissioner.

Vehicles and major pieces of equipment used by the Highway Department include:

- Truck #2, Chevy (1991)
- Truck w/plow #6, GMC (1994)
- Truck w/plow #5, GMC (1995)
- Truck – 1 ton #3, Chevy (1996)
- Truck w/plow #8, GMC (1996)
- Truck w/plow #7, GMC (1997)
- Truck w/plow #4, GMC (1999)
- Truck, GMC TK36003 (2005)

## Sidewalks

Wiscasset has approximately 4.2 miles of sidewalks, located primarily in the village. Sidewalk materials vary throughout the village, but generally consist of pavement, brick or concrete.

<b>Table 2 Wiscasset Sidewalks</b>			
<b>Sidewalk Location</b>	<b>Length in Feet</b>	<b>Sidewalk Location</b>	<b>Length in Feet</b>
Federal Street	3,280	Middle Street,East Side	728
Fore Street	160	MiddleStreet,West Side	655
Fort Hill Street	515	Pleasant Street	590
Gardiner Road	5,455	Route One	255
High Street	560	Summer Street	610
Hodge Street	1,440	Town Common	140
Hooper Street	1,360	Union Street	370
Lee Street	920	Warren Street	255
Lincoln Street	360	Washington Street	1,126
Main Street, North Side	765	Water Street,East Side	354
Main Street, South Side	985	Water Street,West Side	1,203

## Local Road System

Wiscasset has about 33 miles of local roads that require maintenance and capital investment on a regular basis. The following is a summary list of these roads:

**Table 3**  
**Wiscasset Local Roads**

<b>Road Name</b>	<b>Length in Feet</b>	<b>Road Name</b>	<b>Length in Feet</b>
Acorn Road	1,000	Lee Street	1,300
Alna Road	6,000	Lincoln Street	300
Bath Road	20,800	Lowelltown Road	13,300
Beechnut Hill Road	3,000	Main Street	1,450
Big Foot Alley	150	Middle Street	1,450
Birch Point Road	11,616	Morton Street	300
Blagdon Ridge Road	1,300	Mountain Road	900
Bog Road	750	Oak Ridge Drive	1,700
Boudin Road	200	Oak Ridge West	2,500
Bradbury Street	400	Old Bath Road	13,560
Bradford Road	8,500	Old County Road	400
Brown Road	2,500	Old Dresden Road	5,800
Caton Road	800	Old Ferry Road	4,500
Chewonki Neck Road	12,900	Old Sheepscot Road	5,500
Chewonki Neck Road	500	Old Stage Road	4,200
Churchill Street	2,900	Oxhorn Road	2,000
Clark's Point Road	3,400	Page Avenue	1,200
Cushman Point Road	3,500	Pine Road	500
Danforth Street	290	Pinewood Drive	800
Deer Ridge Road	800	Pleasant Street	1,260
Dickinson Road	5,000	Pottle Cove Road	1,300
Dorr Road	2,000	Ready Point Road	3,200
Evergreen Street	400	Rumerill Road	3,800
Federal Street	3,600	Shady Lane	3,200
Flood Avenue	1,700	Shea Road	1,500
Fore Street	650	Sheepscot Shores Road	5,500
Fort Hill Street	850	Shinbone Alley	150
Fowle Hill Road	6,000	Summer Street	1,330
Foye Road	10,800	Thorndike Road	400
Freedom Song Lane	800	Twin Oak Road	600
Gardiner Road	22,100	Two Bridge Road	2,450
Gibbs Road	4,400	Union Street	420
Gorham Road	1,500	Ward Book Road	1,000
Hammond Street	300	Warren Street	450
Hemlock Road	1,900	Washington Street	620
High Street	1,000	Washington Street Extension	300
Hilltop Drive	5,808	Water Street	1,850
Hodge Street	1,770	West Alna Road	10,500
Hooper Street	1,620	Westport Bridge Road	5,100
Howard Lane	400	Westview Road	800
Huntoon Hill Road	2,400	Whites Lane	1,500
Indian Road	5,800	Willow Lane	13,500
Johnson Street	700	Young's Point Road	4,800
Langdon Road	1,000		

## Solid Waste/Transfer Station

The Town of Wiscasset has operated a transfer station on Fowles Hill Road since 1991 following the closure of its landfill. The transfer station is housed in one main building and two sheds (one for operation of the scale and one for storage) in addition to several other out-structures used for temporary storage of waste and recycling materials slated for transport to permanent disposal sites. Since the landfill closure in 1991, Wiscasset's station is truly a transfer-based operation with no permanent storage of waste.

The present staff consists of a supervisor, one full-time laborer and the equivalent of a ½-time employee through shared staffing with the Public Works/Highway department.

The most significant challenge of the Transfer Station, similar to other departments, is replacing funds lost following the closure of Maine Yankee. Major changes in operations, the fee structure, and staffing have taken place since 1997 and continue at the present time in an effort to reach equilibrium between funding and the delivery of services.

In 2004, the Wiscasset region recycled 50.8% of its waste stream. Wiscasset's waste stream included the following:

<b>Table 4 2004 Waste Stream</b>				
Solid waste incinerated For energy	2,471 tons		Construction wood incinerated for energy	450 tons
Material for reuse	130 tons		Lead acid batteries	3.3 tons
Metal	377.7 tons		Brush for chips	150 tons
Plastic (#2 only)	9.8 tons		Mixed paper	42.4 tons
Cans	22.7 tons		Clear glass	28.0 tons
Cardboard	90.6 tons		Leaves for compost	230 cu yd
Newspaper	99.4 tons			

Major vehicles and equipment used at the transfer station include:

Ford truck cat 50 (1994)	Glass and can compactor
Oil truck, International 1972 (1997)	Chipper
Compactor	Tractor for trailers
Baler	Compactor trailers
Fork lift	Front end loaders
Open top trailer	

## Outdoor Recreation

(See also Natural Resources section of the Plan)

Wiscasset is fortunate in having a number of high-quality outdoor recreation facilities available to its residents, as well as a very active program sponsored by the Wiscasset Parks and Recreation Department.

**Parks and Recreation Department Facilities.** Major facilities operated by the Department include:

- Wiscasset Community Center. The Community Center, which opened in 1998, is a 35,000-square foot recreation complex serving Midcoast Maine, located on 90 acres behind the high school. The Center has a six-lane pool with family alcove, a hot tub, gymnasium, fitness room and a senior center with full kitchen. The center is owned by the Town of Wiscasset and operated by the Recreation Department.
- Wiscasset Community Park. Facilities include a multi-age playground, picnic tables, pavilions, a baseball/softball field, and a band shell.
- Sherman Park. This 1-acre park is located on the Sheepscot River. Facilities include a baseball/softball field, basketball courts, benches, tennis court and fitness center.

**Other Recreation Facilities.** The following is a summary of major publicly- and privately-owned recreation facilities in Wiscasset:

<b>Recreation Area</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Town Acres</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Back River		2		On Back River
Chewonki CG		50		On Montsweag River
Chewonki Foundation		526	526	On Montsweag River, Bay
Downeast Family Camping		300	300	On Gardiner Pond
Old Stone Farm		180	180	On Ward Brook
Sortwell Memorial Forest		200	200	
Westside CG		7	7	
Wiscasset Fields, Playground		8	8	
Wiscasset High School		20		
Wiscasset Middle School		5		
Wiscasset Open Space		72		
Wiscasset Primary School		2		
Wisc. Rod & Gun Club		5		
Wiscasset Town Common		0.1		
Wiscasset Waterfront Park		1		On Sheepscot River
Wiscasset Yacht Club		2		

## Airport

(See transportation section of this Plan)

## Wiscasset Public Library

The Wiscasset Public Library is an independent entity that is governed by a Board of Trustees. It serves the towns of Wiscasset, Westport, Edgecomb and Alna, all of which support the library through annual appropriations. In 2005, the library circulated 67,572 books, audio tapes, videos and DVDs.

The library is located in a brick building that was constructed in 1803 to house the Lincoln and Kennebec Bank, and later the Wiscasset Bank and Mariner's Bank. The County offices were located in the building until the Lincoln County Courthouse was built in 1824. In 1862, the building was converted to a private residence and it served in that capacity until 1929 when it was purchased by a committee of donors for use as a library. The major challenge currently facing the library is that portions of the building have fallen into disrepair.

## Wiscasset School Department

The Wiscasset School Department has a total enrollment of about 860 students. The Department includes three schools: the Wiscasset Primary School (K-4) with about 260 students, Wiscasset Middle School (5-8) with about 250 students, and Wiscasset High School (9-12) with about 350 students. For the current year, approximately 25% of the total student body consists of tuition students including some from nearby communities (Alna, Westport) and some from more distant communities (for example, Bristol). Currently, the primary school and the high school are located on Route 27. The middle school is located on Federal Street.

Declining enrollment continues to be a major issue. As shown in Table 6, total enrollment (including tuition students) has declined from 1,095 in 1999 to 870 in 2004.

<b>Wiscasset School System Total October 1 School Enrollment 1999-2004</b>						
	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
Elementary <sup>1</sup>	665	629	569	558	559	512
Secondary	430	413	401	409	362	358
Total	1,095	1,042	970	967	921	870

Source: Maine Department of Education

<sup>1</sup> Includes grades K-8

The State Planning Office projects that the number of school age children in Wiscasset will continue to decline, from a total of about 588 Wiscasset students in 2005, to about 426 by the year 2015 (a decline of about 162 students, or 28%). The number of tuition students would have to increase dramatically to offset these losses.