

Chapter B

Economy

1. Purpose

An understanding of past, current and future potential trends in the local and regional economy is essential for assessing the town's future needs. Employment patterns will change due to factors such as: increasing numbers of at-home workers and telecommuters; changes to regional changes to major sources of employment; and changes in locations and composition of retail service centers. As a result of these changes, transportation, telecommunication and energy infrastructure will all be impacted and require adequate planning. This chapter:

- a) describes employment trends in Brooksville;
- b) describes the local and regional economy; and
- c) discusses likely future economic activity and market changes that may impact Brooksville.

2. Key Findings & Issues

Brooksville has lower unemployment rates than both the County and State, and even when seasonal fluctuations are factored in, maintains, on the average, a more stable employment outlook than both County and State. Many Brooksville residents work outside of town and are employed in either education or Health Care related fields. However, Agriculture & Fisheries make up a larger share of the Brooksville's workforce than that of Hancock County's. In the future Brooksville may wish to consider investing, on a regional basis, in fiber optic Internet capabilities to compete for new residents who can work from home and might choose to reside in Brooksville because of its abundant natural beauty, lifestyle and ecosystem benefits.

3. Key Findings & Issues from the 2006 Plan

Brooksville did offer limited local jobs in 2006 in construction and resource-based industries. Unemployment rates were also lower than the region with less seasonal fluctuation compared to Hancock County.

4. 2018 Public Opinion Survey Results

The topic of local jobs is a priority for many residents, with 56% of survey respondents thinking it requires attention by the town and another 14% supporting further study. Economic activities favored by respondents include: agriculture (93%), commercial/retail (76%), Inns, Bed and Breakfasts (76%), Restaurants (79%) with Health, and Office related activities both at (approximately 60%). Heavy industry was largely not supported with 94% of respondents against. Gas Stations were also not supported with 57% of respondents against.

5. Recent Employment Trends

Employment & Unemployment:

The Labor Force of a town is described as all persons aged 18 to 64 and able to work. According to the Maine Department of Labor (Me DOL) there were 433 persons of Brooksville’s year-round population able to work in 2019, see table B –1. The figures represent persons employed and/or looking for work and do not include self-employed persons or persons not seeking work. Compared to Hancock County and the State, Brooksville’s unemployment rate is lower than the County average.

**Table B – 1
Brooksville Employment Trends**

Brooksville	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Labor Force	452	446	444	433	435	438	437	433
Employment	419	424	422	417	421	424	425	421
Unemployment	33	22	24	16	14	14	12	12
Unemployment Rate	7.3 %	4.9%	5.0%	3.7%	3.2%	3.2%	2.7%	2.8%

Source: Maine Department of Labor, Center for Workforce Research and Information

**Table B – 2
Hancock County Employment Trends**

Hancock County	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Labor Force	29,972	30,101	29,772	29,055	29,129	29,297	29,374	29,089
Employment	27,377	27,728	27,760	27,438	27,817	28,147	28,300	28,064
Unemployment	2,593	2,373	2,012	1,617	1,312	1,150	1,074	1,025
Unemployment Rate	8.7%	7.9%	6.8%	5.6%	4.5%	3.9%	3.7%	3.5%

Source: Maine Department of Labor, Center for Workforce Research and Information

Employment by Sector:

Table B – 3 shows employment by sector for Brooksville and Hancock County as reported in the 2018 American Community Survey 5 – Year Estimates. The table shows all Brooksville residents employed by types of industry. This table represents both Brooksville residents who work in town and also those that commute to other towns and locations for work. The largest sector of employment for Brooksville residents is Education, Healthcare and associated services, which in 2018 employed 23.7 % of all working civilians. The next largest sectors are Construction (13.3 %) and Manufacturing (12.3 %). The local school and Blue Hill – Northern Light Hospital (formerly Blue Hill Memorial) are major employers, and while local construction and home building is still a major employer, it has fallen since the 2006 Comprehensive Plan, which reported approximately 15.6 % of residents employed in this sector. Agriculture, Forestry

and Fisheries increased from 8.4 %, in 2006, to 9.4 % in 2018, and is a larger percentage of the total labor force compared to the County. The percent of the regional labor force employed in Retail, Information Technology and Scientific & Professional Services is lower in Brooksville than the County. Brooksville’s natural resource-based economies are discussed further in the following chapters: G (Marine Resources), J (Agriculture and Forestry), I (Natural Resources), F (Recreation), and H (Water Resources).

**Table B – 3
Employment by Sector, Brooksville & County**

Category/Industry	Brooksville		Hancock County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture/Fishing	39	9.4 %	1,788	6.7 %
Construction	55	13.3 %	2,137	8.0 %
Manufacturing	51	12.3 %	1,437	5.4 %
Wholesale Trade	24	5.8 %	469	1.8 %
Retail Trade	18	4.3 %	3,483	13.0 %
Transportation	0	0 %	1,000	3.7 %
Information	0	0 %	410	1.5 %
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	17	4.1 %	1,188	4.4 %
Professional, Scientific & Management Services	24	5.8 %	3,029	11.3 %
Educational, Health & Social Services	98	23.7 %	6,944	26.0 %
Arts, Entertainment, Rec & Food Service	46	11.1 %	2,749	10.3 %
Public Administration	8	1.9 %	771	2.9 %
Other Services	34	8.2 %	1,326	5.0 %
Total	414	100 %	26,731	100 %
<i>Source: 2018 American Community Survey 5 – Year Estimates</i>				

Table B – 4 compares seasonal unemployment rates for Maine, Hancock County and Brooksville for the years 2017 to 2019. For most months during these years, Brooksville maintained a lower unemployment rate than the State or the County. However, with such a small number of unemployed people in Brooksville, it is difficult to determine a meaningful and predictable seasonal trend.

Table B – 4
Seasonal Unemployment Rates for Brooksville, County & State

Rate = Percent unemployed of the total labor force									
Month	2017			2018			2019		
	ME	HC	BVille	ME	HC	BVille	ME	HC	BVille
DEC	3.0	4.3	2.2	3.1	4.3	2.4	2.9	4.0	3.2
NOV	3.0	2.7	1.9	3.1	3.4	2.2	2.8	3.2	3.1
OCT	2.7	2.4	3.1	2.7	2.4	1.8	2.4	2.1	2.7
SEP	2.7	2.4	1.5	2.7	2.2	1.5	2.3	2.1	2.8
AUG	2.7	2.4	2.2	2.7	2.3	1.7	2.3	1.9	1.8
JUL	3.2	2.8	3.3	3.1	2.6	1.9	2.7	2.3	2.1
JUN	3.3	2.9	3.0	3.2	2.8	3.6	2.8	2.4	2.6
MAY	3.5	3.6	3.4	3.2	3.4	3.4	3.0	3.1	3.9
APR	3.7	4.5	3.8	3.5	4.3	3.8	3.4	4.4	2.7
MAR	4.2	6.1	5.5	3.9	5.4	3.2	3.9	5.5	3.0
FEB	4.3	6.4	4.3	3.9	5.8	3.7	4.0	6.1	2.5
JAN	4.3	6.7	4.8	3.9	5.8	4.0	4.1	6.0	3.0

Source: Maine Department of Labor, Center for Workforce Research and Information

Commuting Patterns:

Brooksville is a rural community and this requires that most residents commute to get to work. Average commute times have decreased for the majority of residents from 28.2 minutes in 2000 to 23.3 minutes in 2018, according to the American Community Survey 5 – Year Estimates. This is slightly less than the County average of 23.6 minutes. Census data can provide more accurate insights into the commuter destinations and travel times; however the 2020 census has not yet provided the data to make these calculations. It should be reviewed when available to gain a better understanding of this topic.

Major Employers:

Brooksville’s beautiful rural landscapes and pristine coastal areas are major economic assets of the town, resulting in its ability to support an important agricultural and fisheries-related economy as well as tourism. There is one major boat-yard, Seal Cove, which primarily supports recreational boating in Brooksville and employs 20 people. Buck’s Harbor Marina, while not as large an employer as Seal Cove, brings significant seasonal business through mooring rentals and its provision of marine services. After the maritime sector the local school is the next major employer in town. Building, Plumbing, Heating and Electrical contractors are also important employers in Brooksville. The 2018 public opinion survey showed strong support for limiting heavy industry and certain types of retail (“big box stores”) in Brooksville.

Two local enterprises that have been established, or significantly changed, since the 2006 Comprehensive Plan deserve special mention because of their importance to the community. Buck’s Harbor Market was acquired from its previous owners in 2006 by a long time seasonal resident who wanted to ensure the market’s continued viability. In the years since, the owner has

made major capital improvements to the property and has subsidized the store's recurring operating losses. Viewed by many residents as the "beating heart" of Brooksville, the market is not only a convenient place to buy groceries and a wide assortment of prepared foods, but it also serves as a gathering spot where townspeople can connect with their friends and neighbors. Associated with the market is Buck's, a full-service seasonal restaurant that offers fine dining in a casual setting and which also makes a valuable contribution to community life. Now retired, the owner of these businesses has informed the Committee that he may no longer be able to subsidize the year-round operation of the market, a potential development that warrants serious consideration by both town officials and the community at large.

Tinder Hearth, which was started by a team of local musician-baker-entrepreneurs in 2006, offers baked products, bread and pastries, which are sold both on site and in local stores, and a Pizza dinner which it serves in an outdoor dining area in the warm enough months. It also hosts a well- attended open stage.

Tourism is another important segment of Brooksville's economy, with seasonal residents and visitors alike contributing to the economy through lodgings, food services and other hospitality industries. One of the town's larger hospitality and tourism business is the Hiram Blake Camp, located on Cape Rosier and with accommodations for 55 guests from June through mid-October. Significant economic activity is generated directly through laundry service, labor, and purchase of supplies. The camp's on-site lobster fishery generates additional economic activity from wholesale and retail sales. Campers patronize business within Brooksville, including Four Season Farm, Tinder Hearth Bakery and Buck's Harbor Market as well as nearby businesses such as the Bagaduce Lunch.

Other important seasonal businesses that support tourism and recreation in the summer months are Robin Hood Camp and Oakland House Inn. Both are historic operations that are directly tied to Brooksville's environment. Robin Hood Camp provides nature-based and outdoors recreation for youths from twenty-five different countries each year and is the only camp in the United States on both salt and fresh water. The Oakland House entertains guests with ten rooms, eight private cottages and a guesthouse situated on Eggemoggin Reach. Both operations provide significant economic benefit to Brooksville, which is derived from the natural resources of the town – water access, pastoral landscapes and quiet rural charm.

A growing segment of employment is the "work-from-anywhere" professional who requires only a stable and fast Internet connection. Brooksville will need to invest and cooperate on a regional basis to attract Fiber Internet providers to attract new residents in this segment. This growing segment can be a vital component to compliment one of Brooksville's long established mainstays, creative enterprises.

Brooksville supports a small but vibrant arts, crafts and creative economy that attracts both visitors and residents to the area. While especially active in the summer season, there are also year-round residents creating local crafts that are sold at The Maker's Mart, at the Farmer's Market, or shown at the local library. Creative products that can be found for sale include painting and sculpture, ceramics and pottery, weaving, woodcarving and fine woodwork, iron forging and metalwork, and other handicrafts fashioned from local materials such as rocks and

shells. There is also a lively community of writers, with sales of children's books and local history books, and book readings and lectures at locations such as the famous Good Life Center on Cape Rosier or the Reversing Falls Sanctuary. The Bagaduce Theater in North Brooksville offers summer productions, there are photographers and videographers producing work in the area, and seasonal music events and dances are held at David's Folly Farm and Tinder Hearth Bakery.

6. Projected Future Employers & Regional Issues

Brooksville's future economy will depend on a range of factors, including both regional and local demographics, as well as changes in climate and technology. While a certain number of local businesses will continue, mostly related to the industries connected to the land and water, retail and other industries that rely on brick-and-mortar storefronts will continue to compete with larger regional centers such as Blue Hill and Ellsworth, and will likely not be major employers in the future. Climate change's impact on fisheries and marine based industries also remains to be seen. This diverse sector, whether shellfish or sea-weed harvesting, etc., will be impacted by rising sea-temperatures and increasing cycles of extreme weather events. This could pose a major threat to the future of Brooksville's local economy. The town will also be in competition with other towns and regions that have fiber optic Internet as telecommuting increases in the Internet age.

7. Goals & Objectives

GOAL: Brooksville will have a local economy that retains as much capital in town as possible through a variety of services and economic and job opportunities.			
Objective	Strategy	Responsible Party(ies)	Timeframe
Actively pursue equitable access to fiber and broadband internet for all Brooksville residents.	Continue the efforts of the local broadband committee.	Local broadband committee, HCPC	Immediate and ongoing.
Prepare Brooksville for climate change impacts to current industries such as fisheries and other natural resource-based operations.	Have the climate change task force address this, and other climate change related issues with recommendations and a plan.	Select Board, the Committee, HCPC	Immediate – Completed within one year of plan adoptions.
Support current businesses and attract new business opportunities through actively researching and pursuing grants, loans and other financial support, and identifying appropriate capital investment projects in town.	Select Board and town office will actively pursue CDBG, USDA, state and private sources of funding for applicable capital investments and opportunities.	Select Board Town office	Immediate – On-going.
Encourage small home-based businesses that do not negatively impact the quiet rural character of the town and align with State environmental policies.	Designate a committee to review current land-use ordinances both local and state, to find a balance between projected development demand and Brooksville’s natural resources, and then formulate a policy if required.	Select Board designees, HCPC.	Immediate – To be completed within one year of plan adoption.