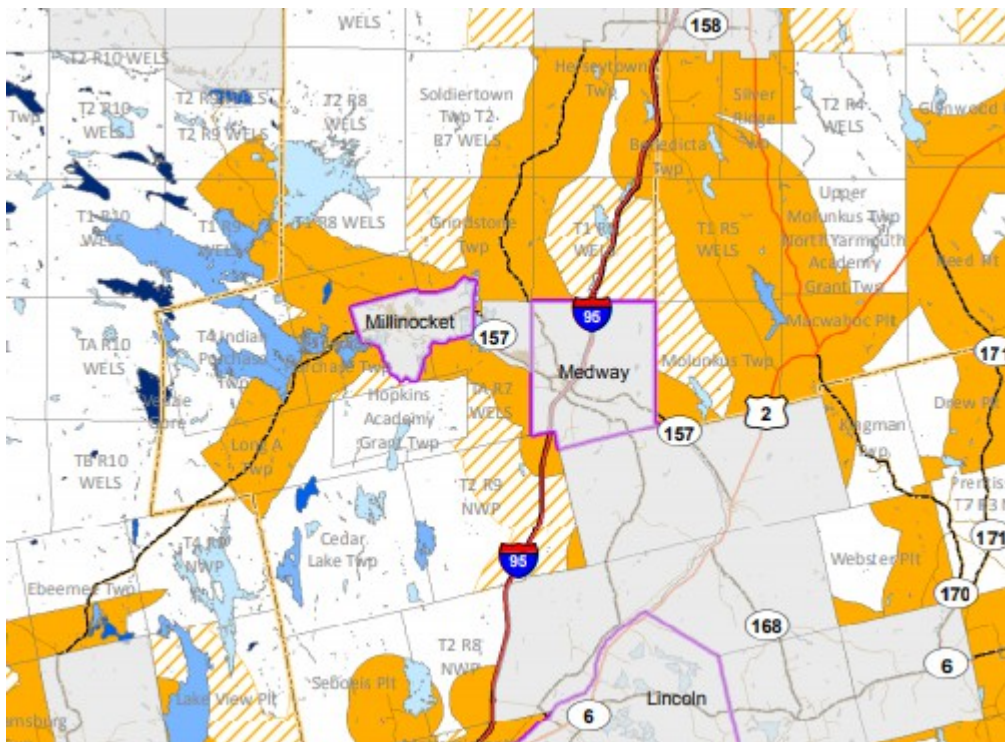


LUPC PROPOSED ADJACENCY CHANGES

4/10/2018

Mr. Manager,

Below is a summary of my thoughts on the proposed changes to the LUPC adjacency rules in unorganized territories. Although I appreciate their efforts to modernize and effect positive economic change in rural areas, I feel this could have some serious and negative consequences for the Town of Millinocket. The changes would allow for subdivisions (including commercial) to be developed in the following yellow areas surrounding the Town (see map below).



1. THE COST OF RURAL SPRAWL

- **Cost to the Taxpayer**

- Considering any new development outside of Town lines is a move away from services, the county will have to bear higher costs of services, which could in turn raise taxes for the Town. In addition, it could put a strain on our own limited resources, even if the Town does get compensated.
- Although common knowledge to many, research has shown the economic costs associated with developments that extend further from city centers. One study showed that the per capita cost of public service provision decreased with higher density and increased with the spatial extent of the urbanized land area. (Carruthers & Ulfarsson, 2003)
- A later study by the same researchers showed that if all counties in the US developed

land that was just 50% more compact public services would cost \$7.25 billion less annually. (Carruthers & Ulfarsson, 2008)

- The Real Estate Research Corporation performed a comprehensive study for the US government on the Costs of Sprawl, and the findings were as followed: “the most expensive form of residential development in terms of economic costs, environmental costs, natural resource consumption and many types of personal costs ... This cost difference is particularly significant for that proportion of total costs which is likely to be borne by local governments.” (RERC 1974,7)
- **Cost to the local economy**
 - Of course there would be an economic benefit to having more development in the Katahdin Region, but the changes would allow developers to focus on new projects OUTSIDE of the town lines of Millinocket, which would result in a loss of a potentially larger tax base. The Town needs to be focusing new developments within its own boundaries to grow the tax base.
 - New commercial enterprises outside of the Town boundaries could take focus away from shopping locally, which ultimately effects existing local businesses and could slow or halt any new commercial development in the Town. Millinocket needs to create excitement and movement for new businesses to form within the town and not allow any progress to be directed away from the Town. Developers and businesses look at trends, and if the trends point towards new and successful activity in the unorganized territories that's where they'll go.
 - More development in currently forested areas means less product for the forest industry. This town's economy is built upon forest products and it will continue to play a large role for years to come. By allowing new development to spring up in areas outside of the town we'd in turn be reducing access and availability for the forest industry.

2. OTHER COSTS

- **Affordability to local residents**
 - Although I'm not against new development and growth, there's nothing that could stop developers from buying up the majority of land surrounding the lakes and recreational areas and making it inaccessible to local residents. Developers could not only close off land to the general public, but their sole interest could be in developing high-end properties that many local residents may not be able to afford. In order to secure future generations' right to access land surrounding Millinocket I believe we need to limit the ability for developers to gain control over more land.
- **Scenery and Natural resources**
 - Many people come to Millinocket and the Katahdin Region because of the beautiful landscapes and the sense of being closer to/in the woods. I don't feel that having developments spring up alongside Route 11 or any of the other highways that feed in/out of Millinocket would maintain that sense of proximity to the woods. It could damage the tourism industry and be a drastic shift in the local resident's ability to access land surrounding Millinocket.
- **Cultural capital**
 - The way of life that people have experienced could be forced to change dramatically by opening up surrounding land to development. It could not only effect local resident's from being able to access the public lands, but new development could also take away from the community capital and cultural capital that remains incredibly strong to this day. Being that I was a land developer for almost a decade

and having done a lot of research on urban sociology and land use planning while in college, I understand that many developers are interested in profit and much less interested in preserving culture (unless it is profitable, of course). I'm concerned that new developers would not take into consideration the effect they would have on the local economy or culture as their primary clientele are presumably wealthy out-of-staters. As land use researchers explained, "New approaches to sustainable community design focus on changing priorities in physical planning to promote ... land-use patterns [that] minimize the need for travel; and reconnecting to community values rather than private or isolated values." (Roseland, 2012; Newman & Kenworthy, 2006)

Although there is much more to expand on, like rural sprawl and its effect on public health and many other issues, I feel the most important impacts new development in the surrounding unorganized territories would have on Millinocket revolve around a potential change in local access to land, damage to the local economy, slowing or halting local development, less aesthetically appealing surroundings, and higher costs to taxpayers.

I would like to get some input from the other councilors on this issue so we can draft a letter to the LUPC that addresses our concerns and to perhaps create some alternative solutions that would tailor any adjustments made in the adjacency rules to our locality.

Sincerely,

Steve Golieb

References:

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