

Town of Chebeague Island Code of Ordinances  
Chapter 17 – Land Use & Planning  
Article VI – Long Range Plan

# **LONG RANGE PLAN**

**of the Town of Chebeague Island  
MAINE**

Adopted by the Town Meeting: July 1, 2007  
Effective: July 1, 2007

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Town Clerk

Seal:

# CHEBEAGUE ISLAND LONG RANGE PLAN

Version of 5/5/02

## Revision after Town staff and Planning Board comments

This version incorporates the edits and corrections from the Town staff. We have incorporated the summary recommendations generated by the recent water survey update by Sevee and Maher. The LRPC (Long Range Planning Committee) thought it was not useful at this point to try to work out more detailed funding needs associated with our recommendations as identified in the Town staff comments.

As this is a long-range plan, details will be worked out with the Town staff as individual suggestions are pursued. The LRPC considers this version ready to be distributed to the Council and to Island residents. After a public hearing on Chebeague, further revisions may need to be made before the final version goes to the Planning Board and the Council.

In the summer of 1999, The Cumberland Town Council authorized and established a budget for the preparation of a long term comprehensive plan for Chebeague Island for presentation to the Island and the Council in the spring of 2000. Jim Phipps and Sam Ballard were appointed co-chairs of the committee. Additional island residents volunteered to prepare the plan. Mark Eyeran of Planning Decisions, Inc. participated in this effort.

To: The Cumberland Town Council

From: The Chebeague Island Long Range Planning Committee

The Chebeague Long Range Planning Committee is pleased to submit its comprehensive plan for the island to the Cumberland Town Council. It takes into account comments from Council members and Town staff on the June 2000 draft. We have accepted some but not all of the recommended changes so far. It is our hope that after further careful review by the Council and input from the public, the revised plan will be incorporated into the Town of Cumberland's Comprehensive Plan. Numerous public meetings have been held, and we look forward to a final public hearing, which we assume, will be held on Chebeague prior to the Council's adoption of the plan. We understand that the Council will consider input from the public, and we welcome that. However we believe this plan fairly represents the two years of work put in by more than two-dozen individuals who care deeply about the future of Chebeague.

While we did not always agree on all aspects of the plan we were able to reach consensus, which was no small job. We feel that we have developed a document that will make the Town of Cumberland aware of issues that will affect the future of this geographically isolated neighborhood of the town. We understand that not everything can be accomplished at once. We have made recommendations as to which areas of the plan need immediate action, although that does not mean that we feel other recommendations are less important. We further understand that many of these recommendations require financial and human resources. We hope that the Council will use the plan when setting priorities and developing the town budget.

The implementation of the plan will take time and effort, but we feel a committee of dedicated islanders representing diverse segments of the community, with regular public input, can work with the Town staff, to accomplish this daunting task.

The central theme of this document is balancing the relationship between man and his environment so that an endangered community can survive. It's as simple as that. We understand that there are tensions within which may create conflict. This balance needs to be considered as the recommendations in the plan are implemented. To quote from the Affordable Housing section of the plan, If more land is taken out of the housing market to be preserved as open space, as the plan recommends, the remaining developable land will increase in value. This increase in the selling price of land will increase assessments and property taxes for all land on Chebeague. (p 26) Despite this potential conflict the committee feels we still need to preserve land, and we still need to preserve a diverse population by keeping island living affordable for all segments of the population.

Chebeague is one of only thirteen island communities in Maine. Our way of life is endangered. While we realize that we are facing pressures from outside similar to those in other communities, informed public policy decisions can lessen the impact. People from away sometimes think of our community as a twenty-first century anomaly, for a sense of place no longer has much meaning in our mobile society. But it is a sense of place that shapes our plan. Dorothy Simpson says it well in her book, *The Maine Islands, Yet, there is a difference.* There are some who can not forget what their ancestors knew in this place, the remoteness, the silence, the imperviousness of the surrounding sea, the sense of being an islander and therefore, in some ways, different from all men. We are committed to preserving our community, and with your help, we will succeed.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

I: Evolution of Plan - 7	
A: Population and Development Trends - 8	
B: Community Survey - 8	
C: Central Dilemma - 9	
D: The Vision for Chebeague - 10	
E: Threats to Achieving the Vision - 11	
II Summary of Recommendations with Priorities - 13	

### SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION OF ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

III Land and Resources - 19	
A: Groundwater - 19	
Recommended actions - 21	
B: Wetlands - 23	
Recommended actions - 24	
C: Land Use - 25	
Recommended actions - 28	
D: Affordable Housing - 30	
Recommended actions - 31	
E: Open Space and Recreation - 34	
Recommended actions - 37	
IV Preserving Community - 40	
A: Economic and Social Life - 40	
Recommended actions - 41	
B: Island Economy - 42	
Recommended actions - 43	
C: Island Economy - Fishing - 45	
Recommended actions - 47	
D: Health, Welfare, and Safety - 49	
Recommended actions - 51	
V Transportation - 52	
A: Transportation to the Mainland - 52	
Recommended actions - 57	
B: Transportation on Chebeague - 58	
Recommended actions - 60	
VI Chebeague's Relationship with Cumberland - 62	
Recommended actions - 64	
Appendix 1	
Chebeague Schools - 65	
Recommended actions - 67	

## Plight of an Island

If I should lose my habitats  
For wildlife on the shore  
Of creatures of my woodlands  
For one to see no more;  
If I should lose my lanes and trails  
Where people stroll and love  
To hark and hear a chickadee,  
A blue jay or a dove;  
If I should lose my rills and streams,  
My marshes and my ponds,  
My pussy willows or my ferns  
Extending out green fronds;  
If I should lose uniqueness  
For peace and solitude,  
For quaintness and for measure  
Of land and what is good;  
If I should lose variety  
Amidst my island throng--  
Become Nantucket or Cape Cod--  
Forget where I belong,  
If I should lose my way of life,  
My scenic views -- and such,  
I wouldn't hesitate to blame  
My people -- very much.

*Sylvia Hamilton Ross*  
*August 1999*

## INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### I: Evolution of the Plan

This plan for Chebeague Island has been developed at this point in time in response to a variety of circumstances and actions. In 1998, the Town of Cumberland adopted a revised Comprehensive Plan. At the same time a Committee on Growth Management and the Costs of Growth was developing more recommendations for carrying out elements of the plan concerned with rapid growth on the mainland. One of the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan was to develop a more detailed Open Space plan, and this was also done for the mainland in 1999-2000.

In 1997 a comprehensive Town property tax reassessment made Chebeaguers want to take a closer look at what their tax revenues were being spent on, and whether they were getting their "fair share". This led to a study of Town expenditures on Chebeague, done by Jim Phipps and Sam Ballard, a long-time summer resident, with continuing guidance from Bob Benson and Melody Main, and with the cooperation of all the Town department heads.

All these threads came together into the idea that Chebeague should develop its own long-range planning document, within the framework of the Town's Comprehensive Plan, but with more detailed analysis and recommendations. In Spring of 1999, the Town Council authorized such an effort, requesting that the Chebeague Long Range Planning Committee report its recommendations by March 2000.

A committee of volunteers was formed on the Island. It was headed by Town Councilor Jim Phipps and Sam Ballard who had been working on the issue of taxes and services. The other members who were regular participants are shown on page 2. Mark Eyerman of Planning Decisions Inc. was hired as a consultant to the Committee.

The Committee met every two weeks from June 1999 through April 2000. They undertook a survey of Island public opinion in the fall, and held a general introductory meeting on September 2 to gather ideas about significant issues and to introduce the planning process in general. Three other meetings were held on various issues during the winter -- a public meeting on groundwater, another on affordable housing, and a meeting with fishermen. In June the plan was presented at two meetings to which all Island residents were invited.

The Committee also divided itself into 12 subcommittees to do research on the topics that were identified as important early in the process. Each group did its own research with data and help from Town officials, staff at Planning Decisions, Inc. and a wide range of other people. The research findings and recommendations of each subcommittee are available in a series of background reports, available in a separate volume.

The sections above described how this planning effort came to be done at this particular time. But in a larger sense, real plans -- ones that are not done to meet some legal or funding requirement -- generally are a response to changing conditions in a community. How has Chebeague changed over the past 50 year period, and how do its residents feel about change now?

### **A: Population and Development Trends**

The image that most people have of Chebeague has, of course, been shaped by their having mostly been adults since World War II. This period is not entirely typical of Chebeague's population or construction trends in earlier years. Census data for the Island is particularly difficult to find for this period, but the trend is sufficiently clear. From its high of 650 people in 1900, by 1920 Chebeague had already shrunk to 379. World War II was followed by an out-migration of much of the Island's youth. Girls married ex-soldiers, and many moved away. The men sought economic opportunities and the convenience of living on the mainland. Between 1945 and 1956, 75 percent of the children who graduated from the Chebeague High School left. This pattern was not greatly different from what was happening in small communities all over the country, but for Chebeague, it was a break with the past.

While the rest of the country was having the post-war baby boom and the related boom in suburban growth, Chebeague was in decline. People on the Island could not get mortgages to build houses. In the 1950s and 60s only about one house a year was built. In the late 1950s and early 60s, after the Cousins Island bridge had been built and the inner bay ferry service ended, Islanders pursued a state-wide campaign to have a bridge built to Littlejohn Island, thereby connecting Chebeague to the mainland by road. This effort finally failed in a state-wide referendum.

In the 1970s signs of recovery began to be seen. The census count of population -- which, of course, covers only year-round residents, continued to decline, reaching 340 in 1980 and hitting 295 in 1990. On the other hand, construction began to increase. In the 1970s 20 houses were built, in the 80s, 30, and in the 1990s, 35 new houses were constructed. In the 1990s 121 people moved to the Island as year-round residents, resulting in a population increase, to 335, even after deaths are counted. Some in-migrants were summer people retiring to or coming to work on the Island, others had grown up on Chebeague. Some married in; a few came with no prior connections at all.

Of the houses built on Chebeague during the 90s, most were built as year-round houses. About half were occupied year-round, divided fairly evenly between working families and retirees. The other half of the houses were built by people who typically stay for a longer period on the Island than just the traditional summer months. Using a different lens to look at the houses, somewhat less than half were built by "new" people "from away", the rest, by people with long-time roots on Chebeague, either summer or year round. So by comparison to the very quiet 1950s and 60s, Chebeague has been having a building boom. It is not surprising, then, that development and control over it has been an issue in this plan. Indeed, an initial effort to limit growth was tried in 2000-2001, but resulted in unanticipated problems.

### **B: The Community Survey: Priorities for Chebeague**

The Committee decided early in its process that a survey would be useful not only to provide information about what residents of Chebeague thought were important issues, but also to get people to think about what the issues were. The survey was sent out in early September 1999 to 1145 property owners, year-round residents and others connected to Chebeague. Almost half (47 percent, or 537 people) responded -- an excellent return for such a survey. The coding and initial analysis were completed by early December.

Almost a third (32 percent) of respondents were year-round residents, 22 percent were long-seasonal residents, typically coming from May to October,

and an additional 37 percent were summer people who come for three months or less. The balance of 9 percent were non-resident property owners and a variety of other people with Chebeague connections. A higher proportion of elderly people responded than did younger ones. Year-round residents had higher rate of response than summer people. On average respondents had been living on or coming to Chebeague for 41.1 years -- a long time.

The survey provided both a wealth of interesting, useful information and a clear idea of what Chebeague residents thought were the most important issues facing the Island. The full analysis can be found in the accompanying report Chebeague Island Survey Report. Each of the background papers for the plan also summarizes and discusses results that were related to the topics in that section.

There were four unifying threads among all island residents about what they most wanted to preserve about Chebeague. The first was the desire to maintain the rural character of Chebeague. They saw this as involving protection of the ecosystem, maintaining open space and keeping the population relatively small, and development, low density. The second was the importance maintaining the strong sense of community. The third was maintaining access to the shore for recreation and fishing. And the fourth was maintaining the balance between year-round and summer residents, not allowing the Island to gradually become a community that could only be afforded by summer people.

It was also striking how marginal disagreement was between year-round residents and summer people. There were some interesting, but not surprising, differences in priorities between these two groups. Summer people emphasized the natural beauty and strong sense of community on the Island. Year-rounders had concerns about day-to-day life. But, overall both groups shared a common view of what should be preserved and what problems the Island is facing.

### **C: The Central Dilemma**

It is clear from the survey results and from the recommendations that the Long-Range Planning Committee considers it equally important to preserve both the natural, rural character of the Island and its social and economic community. The dilemma we face is the same that is faced by any small, uniquely beautiful place: the more attractive we keep the Island by preserving open space, rural character and access to the shore, the more likely it is that the value of the remaining land will be bid up by more people who want to and can afford to come to enjoy its uniqueness. If nothing is done to stop them, rising property values and tax assessments will inevitably reduce the diversity of Chebeague's population. Young year-round families (and older ones with modest incomes) would not be able to afford to buy houses. And the taxes by themselves would force out lower income residents -- retired fishermen and local small business people, for example. Some might be glad of the windfall profits they are able to reap from their land, but others would sell against their will, only because they could not afford not to hold onto their property.

What would be lost if Chebeague were to become just another affluent summer or retirement island would be a small piece of a way of life -- a closely knit community of fishermen and other year-rounders, many of whom have lived on the Island for generations through prosperity and depression. The image of the Maine lobsterman, his boat and catch is the stuff of tourist posters designed to attract people to Maine. But for Chebeague it is not an exhibit in a living history museum or a picture in a children's book, it is a real,

major part of our everyday life. Only 13 of Maine's 1150 islands still have island schools. Chebeague is one of them. It welcomes summer people from other places, but does not want to be overwhelmed by them.

As the Long-Range Planning Committee has become clear about its goals, we have tried to identify actions that could be taken to help maintain Chebeague's rural character and to keep the year-round economy strong. Such a balance may not be easy to maintain, but it is the central hallmark of this plan.

Since this is a long-range plan, we expect that implementation will take place over a period of, say 10 years. Spelling out, for each of the goals and recommendations, who would be responsible for carrying them out, what period of time this might take and how they might be funded has yet to be done in detail. Many recommendations are directed to the Town. Many will involve changes in Town ordinances or administrative practice. Some require further technical studies that we cannot do for ourselves. Some ask for expenditure of Town funds. Each of the actions and projects described here must involve the development of a detailed proposal which will spell out these practical details. Usually these will be developed with Town staff members, and will result in grant proposals or items in the Town budget.

Finally, there are some problems that cannot adequately be addressed by Islanders or by the Town but have to be acted on by the State Legislature. The most central issue of this kind is the structure of the State legislation on local property taxation. Every piece of property, however it is used, is valued at its "highest and best use" which is considered, under Chebeague's current zoning, to be housing development. But we want to be able to use land for wood lots or storing traps and boats and for other uses besides houses. This is an issue where the Town should take the lead in petitioning the legislature.

#### **D: The Vision for Chebeague**

Sylvia Ross' poem, written at the beginning of this planning process, was the Long Range Planning Committee's first guide to what we hoped to achieve -- identifying what was special about Chebeague that needed to be preserved, and how this was being threatened. Over the more than three years that the planning committee has been at work, this image of the character of the Island has become more formalized-- these are the qualities that bind people to the Island. It is an island that:

Maintains a year round working community that includes those who make their living on the island and people who commute to the mainland.

Works to maintain and support a viable fishing/lobstering industry.

Has a diversity of year round residents including both younger, working households and retired people, and works to maintain this mix.

Provides an environment and services that are attractive for families with children.

Has a balance of year-round and seasonal residents and works to assure that a diverse population continues to reside on Chebeague.

Has many members of long-time families who live on Chebeague year-round or seasonally.

Is steeped in a rich and colorful history that adds an important dimension to Island life.

Has year-round and summer households with a range of incomes.

Has a strong and supportive sense of community.

Provides year round services that preserve a viable year-round community.

Encourages and supports commercial activities on the island especially those that enable people to be year-round residents.  
Is not overrun with enterprises that cater to or encourage day-trippers.  
Is endowed with great natural beauty, surrounded by the ocean, with rocky shores, sandy beaches, deep woods and open fields.  
Relies on the groundwater as its water supply and will continue to do so in the future.  
Maintains a balance between developed and natural areas, protects important natural and scenic resources.  
Has traditional paths through the woods, along the shore and through people's door yards.  
Provides a pleasant, quiet, rural character for both residents and visitors.

#### **E Threats to Achieving the Vision**

Increased value of land.

A change in the transportation system to the island that makes it significantly easier for day-trippers to visit Chebeague.

Contamination or a significant decrease in the quality of the groundwater upon which the island population relies.

A loss or significant reduction in water access for fishermen.

Deterioration, loss, or substantial increase in the cost of key services on a year-round basis including auto service, boat service and repair, the store, fuel oil/propane supply, etc.

Loss of the elementary school through a decline in enrollments or a significant change in the attractiveness of the island for younger families with children as a result of a decline in the quality of the education on the island or changes in the mainland school system that adversely impact the involvement of island children in both educational and extra curricular activities.

Increasing housing cost/lack of affordable housing that makes it difficult for younger year-round families to live on/move to the island.

Lack of year-round rental housing

A significant change in the current mix of summer, seasonal, and year-round population.

A change in values that threatens traditional freedom of access and movement around the Island.

A significant change in the current ratio of developed to undeveloped land.  
Significant change in type or amount of public improvements that change the rural character of the island.

## **II Summary of Recommendations with Priorities:**

As an indication of the priorities we have agreed on, two indicators are included in the text here: Should begin now are new initiatives we hope will begin soon. Maintain as ongoing means that this recommendation is already being carried out and this work should continue.

### **III A Groundwater**

Chebeague has a sole source aquifer. All houses are served by wells which tap into this single source of water. Protection of groundwater is vital and ranked first on the survey.

Recommended Actions (See p. 19 for expanded version).

Implement the recommendations of the updated ground water study.

Ongoing public education about groundwater.

**Septic Systems** - Perform septic system survey. Recommend Town consider establishing an island-wide maintenance program.

**Junk Cars** - Recommend CTC and Town explore affordable system for removing junk cars.

**Hazardous chemicals:** Continue waste disposal program carried out by Regional Waste Systems.

**Wells:** Record new wells with the Plumbing Inspector.

### **III B Wetlands**

Wetlands play a vital part in groundwater recharge. Since Chebeague's wetland areas are not large enough to be protected by state regulations, local protection is required as currently there is none. The classification of 'Resource Protection' should be reviewed and extended.

Recommended Actions (See p. 23 for expanded version)

Develop Education Program about the Island's wetlands.

Wetland inventory: Appropriate funding for a detailed wetlands inventory on the Island.

Expanded program for Wetlands acquisition.

Review Wetland Regulation in light of Inventory.

Wetlands' importance to aquifer recharge should be explicitly stated in Zoning Ordinance.

### **III C Land Use**

Over development is a major concern. If current building trends continue, within 50 years Chebeague will have 550 to 600 houses. Options to control growth are described. Containing growth will require careful selection among these options.

Recommended Actions (See p. 25 for expanded version)

Maintain the rural character of the Island by preserving significant parcels of land in their undeveloped state.

Insure that land use regulations protect the Island's natural environment.

Maintain the visual, historical and architectural character of the Island as future development occurs.

### **III D Affordable Housing**

To maintain the diverse population, it is necessary to have affordable housing. A set of strategies are identified for maintaining existing and developing new affordable housing.

Recommended Actions (See p. 30 for expanded version)

An Island Committee on Affordable Housing should be appointed by the Town.

Maintain the existing supply of affordable housing.

Continue to work with Cumberland to pursue CDBG funds to upgrade existing homes.

Educate taxpayers about currently existing programs that might reduce their property taxes.  
Increase the number of year-round rental units.  
Lower the cost of construction of new houses in an affordable housing program.  
Encourage owner-built homes on family land.

### **III E Open Space and Recreation**

In order to control development and maintain the rural atmosphere of Chebeague, scenic views, ways to waterfront, traditional paths, woodlands fields, and wild life habitats should be protected.  
Recommended Actions (See p. 34 for expanded version)  
Preserve access to the shore  
Preserve Chebeague's fields and forests  
Preserve wildlife habitat  
Preserve access to established paths on the Island  
Preserve scenic areas  
Increase support for Library, Recreation Center.  
Develop a plan for physical maintenance and control over use for Town land such as Chandler Cove Beach.

### **IV Preserving Community**

#### **A: Economic and Social Life**

To maintain a diverse society on Chebeague while keeping development at an appropriate level, it is necessary to use all means to prevent taxes from overwhelming low-income island residents and forcing them off the island.  
Recommended Actions (See p. 40 for expanded version)  
Moderate increases in Tax assessments: State actions  
Moderate tax assessments: Town actions  
Reduce tax payments

### **B The Island Economy**

The island economy has four components: Fishing (treated below), Commuters (about 15% of residents), and island businesses which involve over 80 residents. Zoning revisions are the primary need to support this economy.  
Recommended Actions (See p. 42 for expanded version)  
Zoning revisions  
Remove those uses that are not appropriate on the Island.  
Allow a broader range of business activities within a residence.  
Develop an approach for allowing portable 'food carts or wagons' at limited locations.  
Amend the zoning ordinance to allow permanent small-scale saw mills.  
Explore ways of insuring that reliable childcare is available.  
Other non-marine economic issues  
Reevaluate present construction waste bin at Transfer Station to facilitate disposing of construction waste.  
Explore using Island Institute's Fund for Education to provide vocational training to residents.  
Continue financial and legal support for ferry service.

### **C The Island Economy - Fishing**

Since fishing, principally lobstering, is the oldest continuing Chebeague industry, providing the largest portion of the Island's economy (38 boats hauling approximately 35,000 traps), the needs of the fisherman for shore access, zoning provisions, mooring privileges and protection from encroachment of newer industries should be addressed.  
Recommended Actions (See p. 45 for expanded version)  
Insure access to the shore for fishermen

Document access points.  
Study parking at access points used by fishermen.  
Protect and, whenever feasible, increase access to clam flats.  
If a future new wharf for fishing is built, it should be located on the outside of the Island.  
Implement recommendations of the Stone Wharf Committee when submitted.  
Improve regulation of moorings.  
Increase Town role in aquaculture leasing.  
Other Marine Recommendations  
Maintain gear storage in Zoning Ordinance for uses related to commercial fishing.  
Continue clam flat management.  
Provide any feasible assistance to the Boatyard to assure its continued operation.  
Eliminate costs to lobstermen for disposing of old metal traps at the transfer station.

#### **D Health, Welfare, and Safety**

Chebeague/Cumberland emergency care system is excellent, as is our Physician Assistant. More Information on entitlements, Town assistance, and regional programs would be useful to enable those in need of such services to access them privately. Substance abuse by the very young and lack of childcare services are a concern.

Recommended Actions *(See p. 49 for expanded version)*

##### **Health**

Reduce barriers to provision of childcare.  
Explore ways to get supplemental funding for all levels of home care.

##### **Welfare**

Have the Town take action on substance abuse,  
Have the Town be involved in education on entitlements and Town assistance programs.  
Work to connect Regional Transportation Program services to ferry.  
Police, Fire, and Rescue: Review staffing and facility needs of the police, fire and rescue services.

#### **V A: Transportation to the Mainland**

Access to education, medical services, and shopping as well as access to the state's transportation system is dependent on boat services including the necessary wharves and parking facilities. With deep appreciation to the Town and the state for its concern and hard work both at Cousins, and Chandler's Cove, Chebeague needs to have this commitment continued.

Recommended Actions *(See p. 52 for expanded version)*

Secure permanent arrangements for continued use and maintenance of the Cousins Island wharf.  
Design and construct improvements to Wharf Road and the turn-around area.  
Explore relaxation of barging restrictions for transportation of cars and trucks.  
Continue involvement by Cumberland and MDOT in order to maintain affordability of ferry and parking rates.  
Continue to support Casco Bay Lines (CBL) service to Chebeague.

#### **B: Transportation on Chebeague**

With ferry docks on either end of the island and 15 miles of paved and dirt roads, island vehicles are a necessity for maintenance of Chebeague's diverse economy and social life. Roads, road maintenance and road safety are therefore a major concern.

Recommended Actions *(See p. 58 for expanded version)*

Traffic regulations

Post speed limit signs.

Include traffic regulations for bikes.

Enforce the speed limit and bike regulations; provide a radar gun for enforcement.

Review signs for traffic control on Chebeague.

Road standards

Do traffic volume studies to provide data for road standards.

Develop a set of standards for the public roads on Chebeague to guide Town maintenance and improvement programs.

Explore creating standards for private roads.

Road maintenance

Adopt a Town-wide six-year capital improvement plan. Publicize information about how to report needed road work to DPW. Develop a plan for road maintenance on Chebeague.

Town should open a new gravel pit to reduce costs of road maintenance.

Act on the process for holding hearings and making decisions on Chebeague's paper streets.

Public parking arrangements at wharves.

Stone Wharf: Implement parking recommendations of the new Stone Wharf Committee.

Chandler Cove Wharf: Develop regulations for use of the parking lot at the Chandler Cove Wharf.

## **VI The Island's Relationship with Cumberland**

With fewer and fewer people who remember Town Meeting days, the Town can become a faceless entity with all that implies. Travel complications notwithstanding, some island visits by department heads to discuss their roles and visits by staff members to handle registration and other issues would be useful and productive.

Recommended Actions *(See p. 62 for expanded version)*

Budget meeting on Island with Council & Town Manager, continuing the budget review process initiated in 1999.

Adoption of a Town-wide Capital Improvement Plan

Coordination on Island policy-making and administration

Town departments discuss what they see as their role on the Island.

Consider having a member of the Town staff come out to the Island at regular intervals.

Boat fare to public meetings

Televising Town meetings.

Police, Fire, and Rescue: Review the staffing and facility needs of the police, fire and rescue services.

## **Appendix 1: Chebeague Schools**

It is recognized that schools are not a responsibility of the Town of Cumberland, that all decisions for our schools remain with SAD 51. However, as the support for schools on Chebeague is so dependent on transportation and related infrastructure, for the sake of completeness we are including the recommendations for the schools as an appendix to the island's overall planning description.

Recommended Actions *(See p. 62 for expanded version)*

Recommendations to the Town of Cumberland.

Support Recreation Center and Library.

Develop a wider range of opportunities for mainland children to experience the Island and vice versa.

**Recommendations To S.A.D. 51:**

Appoint Teachers experienced in multi-age classrooms with interest in the island way of life.

Expand coordination between the Chebeague School and mainland elementary schools.

Request that SAD 51 increase financial support to Library and Recreation Center.

Bring staffing, educational resources, services and facilities up to the same level as the mainland.

Continue and support the role of the Chebeague Island School Community Advisory Committee.

Have two School Board meetings on Chebeague each year.

Develop a teacher in-service training course on Chebeague.

Create a new Community Advisory Committee for Chebeague Students on the Mainland.

**Recommendations to the Chebeague community:**

Develop a program to educate all Island residents on needs and importance of the Island school.

Recruit people without children in the schools to serve on the advisory committees

Improve mutual understanding, reduce impediments to integrating Chebeague children into mainland schools and after school life.

Work to elect a resident of Chebeague to the District Board of Directors.

## **SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION OF ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **III. LAND AND RESOURCES**

An island is a small place that is inevitably at least somewhat self-sufficient and independent of the mainland. This is true for an island's social community where isolation means that neighbors have to be more interdependent. Smallness and separation from the mainland also mean that natural resources are limited and can be fouled or used up. Growth and development on an island needs to be evaluated for its impact on these limited natural resources. In the science of ecology this limit is called the "carrying capacity" of the land. As the Island Institute explains in its *Exploring Limits: Making Decisions about the Use and Development of Maine Islands* (1994):

According to this principle, populations of species in any given environment are limited in size by the amount of habitat, food, water, and other survival requirements available within the confines of that environment. Ultimately, population size is determined by the factor which is the most crucially limited -- i.e., if there is not drinking water, the environment becomes uninhabitable even if there is adequate soil and vegetation. The combined impact of these factors defines the carrying capacity: a specific, quantifiable upper limit to the size of the population that environment can support (p. 4).

On islands both the land and the water have real, measurable limits. In the sections of this part of the report the major limiting factor that is discussed is the supply of water. Supply itself is not the major issue -- there is plenty of water. But "too much" development could lead to the water becoming polluted. How much is "too much". That is difficult to tell. But the sections that follow suggest how we can tell and what implications that has for use of other resources such as land.

#### **A: Groundwater**

Groundwater is the water that occupies and saturates the pore spaces between grains in soil and fills the narrow passageway in fractures that cut through the underlying bedrock. There are no underground rivers that supply water from distant sources such as Cousin's Island, Bradbury Mountain or other mainland locations. The movement of precipitation from the land surface into the surficial and bedrock aquifers is called recharge. The amount of recharge that occurs in a certain location is dependent on the character of the overlying soil. The overlying soil type, such as clay or gravel, will influence the amount of water available for pumping and the ability of the soils to reabsorb and cleanse domestic wastewater.

Chebeague's groundwater resources differ from mainland Cumberland in one very important way: Chebeague is a sole source aquifer: This means that all groundwater on the island originates as precipitation that falls on the island as either rain, snow or fog. On Chebeague, all water users are dependent on individual wells for water supply. Residents of the Island recognize that there are no reasonable alternative water supplies. On the survey they ranked preserving the groundwater first among 31 issues that they were asked about.

### **Current Conditions**

In 1992, at the request of the Town of Cumberland, a groundwater study was completed on the island. The results of the study are presented in the report Chebeague Groundwater Study, prepared by Sevee & Maher Engineers. This study was updated by Sevee & Maher in 2001. The main findings of these studies were:

The bedrock is the primary aquifer on the island. In 1992, approximately 86% of the island households sampled relied on bedrock wells and the remainder relied on dug wells or shallow well points for their water supplies. The 2001 sample had 80% bedrock wells, with the balance relying on shallow wells or springs.

The quantity of water provided by the aquifer is sufficient to accommodate more future development than is likely to occur.

The water quality is the most critical issue. The natural water quality is generally good, with iron and sulfide being the only naturally occurring contaminants. In some cases high iron levels require treatment. However, water quality sampling indicated that even in 1992, 25% of the wells sampled tested positive for coliform bacteria. By 2001 this had risen to 56% of wells. These results may be indicative of septic related contamination suggesting that existing housing density may be too close in some areas, or that septic systems may be malfunctioning. Five wells tested positive for ecoli bacteria in 2001, probably due to septic contamination.

Saltwater intrusion appears to be a problem in certain areas of the Island, especially near Division Shores and at Rose's Point. Continued development along the shoreline may result in saltwater intrusion in both new and existing wells.

### **Threats To Groundwater Quality**

Junk cars are much more numerous on the Island than on mainland Cumberland.

Junk cars are a potential source of petroleum contamination to the groundwater. Junk cars are regulated by the Town Code Enforcement Officer.

Household waste and spills are a potential source of groundwater contamination. Improper use and disposal of household cleaners and paint related compounds could result in significant groundwater contamination.

Petroleum use and storage is regulated by the Maine DEP, although the Town can adopt more stringent regulations. Currently, commercial quantities of gasoline and diesel are stored at the boatyard, fuel oil is stored in trucks at Martin's Hill garage and diesel is stored in an above ground tank at the Town Garage. In addition, junk cars, home heating oil or kerosene tanks and homeowner supplies are a significant potential source of contamination. In 1999, the Maine DEP visited the Island and determined that home heating tanks were a significant threat to groundwater on the island. In 2002, they are providing funds to the Town to replace tanks that pose a problem.

Fertilizers and herbicides, even when properly applied can contaminate the groundwater. Current status of use of the chemicals is unknown.

Septic systems, if properly designed, sited, installed and maintained, treat human and house wastes and infiltrate the treated waste water back into the ground. That's a lot of ifs. Septic systems are regulated by the State Plumbing Code and monitored by the Town Code Enforcement Officer. Types of systems currently in use on Chebeague include: Standard tanks and leach fields, Non-standard septic systems, and leach fields, Cesspools, Over board discharge, and Composting. Malfunctioning or poorly operating systems can be source of contamination to the groundwater and the marine environment, i.e. lobster nurseries and clam flats. Septic Systems require regular maintenance - pumping - in order to effectively treat the waste. In public information sessions conducted in 1999 as part of this project, it was apparent that many homeowners were not properly maintaining their septic systems. This was due

to the difficulty and expense of getting a pump truck to the island and also a lack of awareness of the importance of pumping the system regularly. The groundwater study is providing public education and the availability of pumping services seems to have improved. Innovative systems are also being developed for use in coastal areas that can be installed in areas shallow bedrock. This may change site requirements for septic disposal and may impact allowable housing density in the future

Salt Water Intrusion is an important concern for Chebeague. The island is entirely surrounded by seawater, and the less dense fresh water floats on top of the seawater as a lens. Bedrock wells drilled close to the shore, or several bedrock wells clustered together can intercept this interface and pull in salt water. In 1992, saltwater intrusion problems already existed along Division Shores, the 2001 study indicated additional problems at Rose's Point. With increased development along the shoreline, the potential for saltwater intrusion problems increases.

**Goal:**

*PRESERVE AND PROTECT CHEBEAGUE'S GROUNDWATER*

**Recommended Actions**

Implement the results of the updated ground water study. Ongoing Public education about groundwater. An informed population is essential in protecting Chebeague's sole source aquifer. Update of 1992 study will provide a practical base for such education. It is much more effective to prevent problems than to clean them up after they have happened, and the first line in prevention is ordinary residents. Educate Chebeaguers through the use of public forums, written brochures, the calendar and the Island's web site.

This education should cover:

- How septic systems work and the need for maintaining them by pumping.
- Need to maintain home heating oil tanks.
- Problems created by junk cars.

**Septic Systems:** On Chebeague, malfunctioning or improperly installed septic systems pose a significant threat to groundwater quality which can impact both our water supply and the marine environment. Properly maintaining septic systems on Chebeague is difficult and expensive due to transportation and logistics, while the situation seems to have improved in the past year. A Phase 2 septic system survey of the island should be completed by a qualified individual to identify areas where existing septic systems are malfunctioning. Once the study is completed, we recommend the Town consider assistance in establishing an island-wide maintenance program.

**Junk Cars:** Due to the potential for significant groundwater contamination that junk cars present, minimizing the number of junk cars on Chebeague is an important goal of this committee. Some removal is occurring now, but many cars remain. We recommend that the Town consider an annual inspection program, similar to the one on Long Island, where all properties are inspected by the CEO for the presence of junk vehicles and compliance with Town ordinances. Current regulations should be reviewed to determine, if they are adequate and appropriate for the island. We recommend that CTC and the Town explore an affordable system for regularly taking junk cars off the Island. Public education about the need for such a program and the way it would work is essential.

**Use and disposal of hazardous chemicals:** The existing household hazardous waste disposal program carried out by Regional Waste Systems should be

continued at regular intervals. Information on the proper use and disposal of hazardous chemical, used motor oil and paint-related compounds should be made available to the public. The Town should consider an assessment of the current use of pesticides and herbicides on the island should be done. Funding may be available from the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District.

**Wells:** The Town should require that when wells are dug, their locations and yield are recorded with the Plumbing Inspector and in the Town's GIS system.

## **B: Wetlands**

Wetlands are particularly critical on Chebeague because they are an important element in the system of groundwater recharge. Since we have a sole source aquifer, this groundwater recharge is essential to the wells we all depend on. Because wetlands are now regulated by all levels of government to protect them from development, it has been necessary to develop standard definitions that allow them to be reliably identified and mapped. Wetlands are defined by having three characteristics. First they have water. They can either have saturated soil or they can actually be "inundated" with water, meaning that the water is visible on the surface. Often the water level in wetlands goes up and down over the course of the year. Second, they have particular kinds of soils, called "hydric" soils. Third, they have particular kinds of plants that are adapted to life in wet conditions. These three characteristics are intertwined because the presence of the water in or above the soil makes the ground anaerobic, meaning that it does not get air, so only plants that can grow in such conditions over an extended period of time can survive. A hydric soil is one "that is saturated, flooded, or ponded long enough during the growth season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part" (USDA, Soil Conservation Service, 1991).

Wetlands can be "marine" that is they are fed by salt water from the ocean, or they can be "freshwater" wetlands fed by groundwater or surface sources such as streams. They can occur in the area where the ocean meets the shore and the shore rises to upland, or they can be found in depressions in the landscape. Each kind of habitat -- salt, brackish and fresh, saturated below ground or inundated, above -- has its own kinds of animals and plants.

If you didn't know whether there were wetlands on Chebeague or not, you could look on maps or at the land itself for the defining characteristics of wetlands. Where are there bodies of water -- ocean, streams or ponds? Where are there wetland or hydric soils? And where are there plants that are typical of wetlands? The wetland map that we have is the map produced for the National Wetlands Inventory by the Fish and Wildlife Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior. The mapping is done from aerial photographs, and are not always checked "on the ground" which means that some forested wetlands, in particular may be missed. A look at a map of the hydric soils on Chebeague shows much larger areas of hydric soils than of mapped wetlands. So the question posed by comparing these maps is whether the wetlands are more extensive than the map shows.

### **How Do Governments Protect Wetlands?**

Most of the regulation is done by the State through the Department of Environmental Protection and the Federal Government through the Army Corps of Engineers. The Town has no particular zoning regulations for wetlands. Instituting such a zone on Chebeague, may be useful.

The Town Subdivision Ordinance prohibits development on filled tidal wetlands and in areas where the soils present severe limitations for development. The only non-buildable soil on Chebeague is Sebago mucky peat which occurs in several small areas. The Shoreland Area Overlay District requires that certain wetlands be classified as Resource Protection, which restricts permitted uses to such low-intensity uses as recreation and forest and wildlife management. Some coastal wetlands in the Shoreland Zone are classified as Resource Protection: Indian Point, Durgin's Pond, Chandler Cove Beach, Sandy Point, all the area around Johnson Cove and the beach and wetland at Rose's Point. Some, such as Springettes and Bennett Cove are not in the Resource Protection Zone. The most notable Shoreland Zone restriction, although one not directly tied to wetland management, is the requirement for a shoreland zoning permit for any land use or building in that area.

**Goals:**

PROTECT WETLANDS FOR AQUIFER RECHARGE TO THE EXTENT THAT IS POSSIBLE UNDER CURRENT GOVERNMENTAL REGULATIONS.  
FOR PARTICULARLY ESSENTIAL WETLANDS STRONGER METHODS OF PROTECTION SUCH AS PURCHASE OF LAND OR EASEMENTS MAY BE NECESSARY.

**Recommended Actions:**

**Education Program:** An implementation committee should work with the Cumberland Conservation Commission to develop an informational program and materials about the Island's wetlands, including their role in recharging the groundwater.

**Wetland inventory:** Because of the limited information about the Island's wetlands, a detailed wetlands inventory on the Island should be done. This study should identify the wetlands on the Island, map their approximate locations, evaluate their wetland functions, and propose improvements in the Town's regulations necessary to protect these resources.

**Wetland protection:** An implementation committee should work with land owners, the Land Trust and other Island institutions to protect significant wetlands from development or inappropriate encroachment, through use of the State Open Space Program, purchase of the land or the purchase or donation of conservation easements.

**Wetland regulation:** The Cumberland Planning Board and Town Planner, with an implementation committee should review the current protection of the Island's wetlands based upon the wetlands inventory and determine:

If there are additional wetland areas that should be included in the Resource Protection District.

If additional local regulations are needed to protect the wetlands with significant wetland function and value.

**Wetlands Importance** The importance of wetlands to aquifer recharge should be explicitly stated in the Aquifer Protection provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.

**C: Land Use**

A feeling that Chebeague is changing more rapidly than residents want pervaded the responses to the planning survey. What seems to draw people to, or to keep them on Chebeague, summer and winter alike, is that it is a small rural place surrounded by water. The fact that it is only moderately rural is irrelevant. What survey respondents wanted most to preserve about the Island was its open space, its access to beaches and to the shore, and its

rural character. The issue they identified as the most pressing for Island residents to deal with was growth and development, mentioned spontaneously in an open-ended question by half the respondents. Clearly shaping development and preserving open space are two sides of the same coin.

If the immediate past is any guide to the future, the pattern of building since 1991 should tell us something about what may happen in the next ten years. But this effort is made more complicated since the past year gave us an unusual example of how not to control growth. Between 1991 and July 1, 2000, 31 building permits were issued for new houses, an average of 3.1 per year, a rate similar to that for the prior decade. The number varied from year to year, depending in part on the state of the economy. On July 1, 2000, in a strong housing market, the Town Council adopted a town-wide growth management ordinance, also supported by this Long-range Planning Committee. The ordinance set a yearly limit of 44 houses on the mainland and 3 on Chebeague, reflecting the past yearly average.

However, the result on Chebeague was a panic in which people rushed to get in line to build 23 houses. Ultimately in Spring 2001, the Council adopted a one-time transfer of unused mainland growth permits to Chebeague, with the provision that anyone getting a permit had to build right away. This resulted in the issuance of 12 building permits for houses over a five-month period, in addition to the three permits that had been allowed in 2000-2001 under the cap.

So who has been building, and was the surge that resulted from the cap any different from the previous pattern of development? In the nine years before the cap, somewhat more of the houses (35% versus 20%) were built for immediate year-round occupancy by either working residents or retirees. The cap panic pushed some future retirees to build sooner, but when they do actually retire, the new year-round houses will be back up to about a third. There have also been a few more new summer residents in the post-cap boom, but in the end, it is notable that almost two thirds of the people who built over the whole ten-year period had long-time year-round or summer connections to Chebeague. So, as far as new construction goes, we have met the enemy and it is us.

A series of build-out scenarios were done in 1997. They projected several variations of the pre-building cap development pattern into the future. The results suggested that total build out of all developable lots on the Island could result in more than a doubling of the number of houses, from 400 now to 950 in 50 years. Projecting the 3% per year growth rate would result in about 150 to 200 new houses over the next 50 years, for a total of from 550 to 600 houses.

### **Mechanisms for Controlling Development**

What combination of land use regulations and other programs would enable Chebeaguers to control the development that will occur? Zoning and subdivision regulations are the basic tools we have to use. But they are not the only ones. A brief description of each can help to understand the strengths and weaknesses of these tools.

A subdivision ordinance regulates the division of undeveloped "raw" land like a farm field or a tract of woods into lots that can be developed for residential or commercial use. The purpose of subdivision regulations is to be sure that the lots created are clearly defined legally, and will have suitable services so that both their buyers and the general public are not

harmd by things like pollution, erosion, and traffic congestion. Subdivision ordinances require that lots can be served by adequate water, sewage service, solid waste disposal, roads, fire protection, utilities, storm drainage, and sometimes land for recreation or parks.

The zoning ordinance, in turn, regulates the uses that can be built on subdivided lots, and how dense development can be. The general logic of zoning is to reduce the negative side-effects that can come with development. No one wants to buy a house and then have a slaughter house built next door.

In the Cumberland Zoning Ordinance Chebeague is divided into two zones. What distinguishes the Island Business district from the Island Residential one? Not a great deal. Both zones require a minimum lot size of 1.5 acres if there is at least 150 feet of road frontage, and 3 acres for 'back lots' with less road frontage. Both allow single family houses and duplexes. In the zoning ordinance, the Island is seen as largely residential, with a rural resource-based economy and a smattering of businesses and services necessary for the year-round and summer residents. There are no zones for large-scale commercial uses, for manufacturing/industry, nor for multi-family housing.

In addition to the residential and business zones on Chebeague there are several "overlay" districts that apply only to the shoreland area in order to protect the water from pollution and the shore from erosion. Chebeague has also been designated in the Zoning Ordinance as Aquifer Protection area because it has a sole source aquifer. These provisions largely control storage or disposal of materials such as hazardous waste, road salt, manure, and petroleum that might pollute the groundwater.

Taken together, the zoning and subdivision regulations determine required services for development and set minimum sizes of lots as well as setbacks of buildings from lot lines. In other words, they establish the amount of development that can take place and what kind of development it is allowed to be. They say nothing about where it should go -- any place is acceptable as long as the various standards set out in the regulations can be met. They say little about what development should look like. And, finally, they set no limit, except the 1.5/3 acre lot requirement, on how much development can occur.

There are ways to control location, appearance and amount of development. One mechanism, which the Town is now trying, is placing a cap on development by limiting the number of building permits issued for new houses each year. As was indicated above, the first year on Chebeague produced a boom instead of a cap, but it is unclear how the cap will work in the future.

The Town also has other ordinances and policies that we can use, such as the mechanisms for protecting open space proposed by the recent mainland Growth Management Committee. One way to reduce the amount of development would be to simply increase the lot size requirement in the zoning ordinance. However, this is politically unpopular because many people take the existing provisions of the zoning ordinance as a 'given' and make plans, for example, for giving property to children, based on it. Increasing lot size may also increase land values, and makes housing more expensive. An alternative to reducing development simply by regulation is to do it by relying on both voluntary strategies for land protection and on providing market value for some land. This is primarily but not entirely a strategy for protecting open space. Ways to do this include:

Donation of land, or easements on land, to the Town or the Cumberland Mainland and Islands Land Trust. A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement between a land owner and a public or non-profit group that usually limits development in some way or protects access rights. The owner still owns and uses and can sell, mortgage or will the land but s/he binds the other party to abide by the agreement in perpetuity. There are many other options for limiting development through the use of easements. Donation of land or easements provides tax deductions for the donor.

Public or Land Trust purchase of land.

Public or Land Trust purchase of development rights to land -- the owner still owns the land itself, can sell or will it, but s/he sells the right to develop it more intensively. Typically used to keep farms in production; useful for preserving any business that is land intensive.

Lease by the Town or the Land Trust of easements on land.

Reduction in property taxes by enrollment in State programs for Open Space or Tree Growth. These are discussed in the Open Space section, below.

**Goals:**

WORK TO MAINTAIN CHEBEAGUE AS A SMALL COMMUNITY WITH RURAL CHARACTERISTICS

**INSURE THAT LAND USE REGULATIONS PROTECT THE ISLAND'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.**

In general the regulations that govern land development provide adequate protection for the natural environment. Much of Chebeague's appeal comes from its natural beauty as an island, but we are uniquely vulnerable, as well, to environmental problems such as groundwater pollution. The addition to Cumberland's zoning of the Shoreland Zone, for example, responds to this concern. So does the designation of Chebeague as an Aquifer Protection Zone. However, the Committee's discussions did identify several ways in which these provisions could be strengthened.

**MAINTAIN VISUAL, HISTORICAL. AND ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER OF THE ISLAND AS FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OCCURS**

The way Chebeague looks now is a combination of the semi-rural character of the Island and the succession of different styles of houses and other buildings that have been built over the past 200 years. Preservation of the rural character of the Island has been discussed above. The Island is fairly unique in having the majority of its present houses and other prominent buildings such as the Church, the Inn, the old schools and the Hall built before 1940. There are many fine Victorian and Greek Revival houses, along with a few Federal ones. Together with the large and small summer cottages from 1890 through the 1920s, these define "the look" of Chebeague. Most older houses have lasted long enough for people to appreciate their style. And many have been occupied by several generations of the same family who value their memories as well as their style. The problem primarily lies in the future as some old houses are torn down and new houses make up an increasing part of the stock.

**Recommended Actions:**

Maintain the rural character of the Island by preserving significant parcels of land in their undeveloped state.

Acquire open space: Use public mechanisms proposed by the Town's Growth Management Committee and adopted by the Town Council: purchase and lease of conservation easements, purchase of development rights and purchase of right of first refusal when land is sold. There is additional discussion of priorities for open space protection in the section on Open Space.

Education about open space options: On Chebeague, an implementation committee should develop a program for educating landowners about the Town and private options available to them for land conservation.

Encourage the Cumberland Mainland and Islands Trust to preserve land. They have worked with landowners in the past to achieve purchase or donation of land and easements. This activity should continue and be increased.

State Real Estate Transfer Tax: In past years the State Legislature has considered changes in the real estate transfer tax to fund open space acquisition. Chebeague should support such a change, and we urge the Town to support such a change.

**Review subdivision ordinance:** Explore whether there are ways to make major subdivisions more difficult and to insure that they preserve significant open space.

Insure that land use regulations protect the Island's natural environment.

**Pollution and lot size:** If on-going groundwater monitoring identifies areas with groundwater quality issues that may be related to the pattern or density of development, an implementation committee should work with the Planning Board and Town Planner to explore options such as increased minimum lot sizes in those areas, or upgraded standards for septic systems.

Aquifer recharge: The importance of wetlands to aquifer recharge should be explicitly stated in the Aquifer Protection provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.

**Bluff zoning:** An implementation committee should work with the Planning Board and Town Planner to develop revised setback requirements in shore areas with eroding bluffs. The revised provisions should tie the required setback to the edge of the bluff rather than the high water mark. In addition, the Town should explore the possibility of requiring the active stabilization of these eroding banks when new construction is proposed.

**Education about the Shoreland Zone:** An implementation committee should work with the Town Planner to develop an educational program and materials to inform property owners about the requirements in the Shoreland Zone. This effort should also focus on the importance of maintaining natural vegetation and trees in these areas to stabilize the soil. As part of this program, the Town should consider having a forester or similar expert available to work with property owners to assess what they should and should not do when working with their property.

Maintain the visual, historical and architectural character of the Island as future development occurs.

Historical and architectural inventory. Inventories of archaeological and historic resources on Chebeague. This has been completed but needs to be mapped in to the Town's GIS system as they have done on the mainland.

**Tax rebate for historic or scenic houses:** Explore the implications for Chebeague of the recent State constitutional amendment adopted by the voters for Towns to rebate a portion of the property tax to owners of historic and scenic properties. This program provides no reimbursement to the Town for the reduced tax collection.

**Historic Preservation Easements:** Educate homeowners about protecting architectural and historic character through private easements.

Design review: We urge further study of design review for new houses on Chebeague. The purpose would be to insure that new houses would harmonize

with the character and scale of existing houses on the Island. The discussion in the Committee suggested that this would not be strict historic preservation review, and would not require new houses to be in 'period' styles. It would require the development of architectural design standards, and the setting up of a committee to review applications. The guidelines could analyze and explain characteristic scales and building styles on Chebeague. Initially, at least, such design review might be voluntary. Demolition Ordinance: Review the Town's demolition ordinance to see if it has loopholes that allow builders of new houses on the sites of old ones to avoid the usual regulation of their construction. Any person making a building permit application that involves the demolition of an existing house on Chebeague could be required to post a large notice on the house itself for a period of 30 or 60 days.

**Front Setback:** The character of the existing development varies from place to place on the Island. Current setback provision of 55 feet is appropriate in the more rural sections, but may not be in areas where established setback pattern that is less than that currently required. An implementation committee should work with the Planning Board and Town Planner to develop a flexible setback provision that allows setback to be reduced in developed areas to the average of the setbacks of existing buildings.

#### **D: Affordable Housing**

Housing is both an issue related to land and one related to the social and economic aspects of life. This section introduces a number of issues that will be dealt with in more detail in Section IV on Preserving Community. It is introduced here because insuring a supply of affordable land for housing is as central a goal in this plan as preserving rural character and open space.

If Chebeague is to continue to have a diverse population that includes fishermen, local business people, summer people of diverse incomes, and retirees, maintaining the limited supply of affordable housing is essential. Traditionally affordable housing on Chebeague has been built by individuals either on their own land or on land provided by family members. Year-round rental housing is scarce, and there are year-round residents who have to move seasonally from house to house as they try to create a permanent home on the Island. Others manage to have year-round houses only with the help of other family members. This issue will become even more pressing if an effort is made to preserve significant amounts of open space. The price of the remaining land will be bid up, so that buying land and building a house will become more and more out of reach of people with modest incomes. So the issue here is not simply to maintain existing affordable housing but to be sure that more is built to serve future Chebeaguers.

One key to having affordable housing in the future is the ability to retain what's affordable now. This is an especially pressing problem for affordable houses on the water. As the most desirable land, such as waterfront property, becomes scarcer, strong demand may result in the purchase of smaller or more poorly maintained houses and their demolition or upgrading, reducing the supply of what is now affordable.

More important than houses being torn down, however, is the basic value of land and the impact that increasing land values have on property taxes, and so on affordability. This is a problem everywhere on the Island but is especially accentuated for houses on the shore where the problem can be seen most clearly. A property's value is based on the market value of both the

buildings on it and of the land itself. Because building sites on the shore are both very desirable and scarce, new buyers may be willing to pay very high prices for them. A low-income homeowner may have a modest home on the water and although the home itself is assessed at a moderate value, the land value soars because of sales of 'comparable' shoreland, and the taxes become beyond the homeowner's means. This same dynamic can happen in any area of the Island that is desirable for development.

If more land is taken out of the housing market to be preserved as open space, as this plan recommends, the remaining developable land will be more scarce and will increase in value. This increase in the selling price of land will increase assessments and property taxes for all land on Chebeague. The plan must deal with this core dilemma.

Not surprisingly, lower income families are more heavily burdened by the property tax than more affluent ones. In 2000, an analysis of the fiscal impact of Cumberland property taxes on low and moderate income people was done for the Town by Planning Decisions Inc. It included data for the whole town, including Chebeague. For the 20 percent of the population with the lowest incomes, the average home value was \$84,800 in 1998 and this group paid, on average, 9.76 percent of their income in property taxes. The proportion of income they spent on property taxes had increased from 6.89 percent in 1990 to the 9.76 in 1998. This compares with an average home value of \$143,150 for the top 20 percent, who paid only 3.56 percent of their income in property taxes. Among this group, the proportion of their income that they paid in property taxes remained the same since 1990.

How to allow existing low and moderate income homeowners to stay in their homes in the face of this kind of increase in land values and property taxes is a difficult question. The Maine Property Tax Refund Program for low income people, and the Homestead Tax exemption provide some tax relief. They may not do enough to assist homeowners on the water who have seen property taxes rise more than they have in other parts of the Island.

For low income homeowners, especially the elderly, maintaining their houses may also be financially difficult. About 20 percent of Chebeagues' housing stock is rated by the Town Assessor's Office as being in 'minimum' or 'below average' condition. Many of these houses may be summer houses or camps, but some are lived in year-round.

Another implication of increasing land values is that construction of new 'starter' or less expensive houses is more and more difficult. Land is expensive. Putting in a septic system and a well involves a large initial expense. And having to bring building materials out to the Island is considered to increase costs of construction by about 25 percent.

Finally, year-round rental housing is difficult to provide on Chebeague for several reasons. One is simply that much of the housing is only suitable for summer occupancy. The other is that owners of year-round housing that can be rented face the economic incentive to charge high rents during the summer 'season'. This is why some year-round residents, especially younger people who are just getting started economically and have less money, either have to live with family or move from house to house as the seasons change.

**Goal:**

DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO MAINTAIN EXISTING AND TO DEVELOP NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING

## **Recommended actions**

**Affordable housing committee:** It is important to insure that the issue of affordable housing gets attention and action before this problem gets worse. An Island Committee on Affordable Housing should be appointed by the Town to work on this issue.  
Maintain the existing supply of affordable housing.

**Property tax relief:** Work with Cumberland to explore ways of lessening the tax burden on homes owned by low-income people. The Town can help to encourage people to take advantage of existing programs and can adopt additional ones such as a tax rebate for historic houses.

**Reapply for CDBG grant:** In 2000, the Town developed a grant proposal to the State to provide funding for a program to rehabilitate existing, owner-occupied low-income housing. This proposal was not funded, at least in part because of insufficient documentation of the need for such funds. Continue to work with Cumberland to pursue CDBG funds to upgrade existing homes.  
Increase the number of year-round rental units.

**Use existing zoning regulations:** The existing zoning regulations may be looked at as a way to make land costs for new housing lower, to provide sources of income for some homeowners and, perhaps, to provide badly needed year-round rental housing. When building, people should be encouraged to consider:

Accessory apartments may provide affordable housing for a renter and also a source of income for the owner. In-law apartments are often allowed with no needed increase to a septic system, as they are usually limited to one bedroom.

Two family homes might provide a source of income for the owner and provide rental housing as well.

**Section 8 rental subsidy:** Year-round rental housing could be increased if the Federal government's Section 8 rental subsidy program could be used. This program provides a certificate to a qualified low-income renter. The renter finds a place to rent where the landlord is willing to accept the certificate. The renter then pays 30 percent of his or her monthly income for rent, and the difference between that amount and the 'fair market rent' for the metropolitan area is made up by the government. The owner may get a higher rent during the winter than would be usual for Chebeague and would not have to depend on the higher summer rental.

**Lower the cost of construction of new houses in affordable housing program Town parcels:**

The Town should explore setting aside town owned parcels and making them available for affordable housing construction.

Cluster zoning is a method that allows houses in a subdivision to be built on smaller lots with the land saved being used as open space. As there is no public water or sewer on Chebeague, however, it may not serve as a viable means of increasing density and housing affordability.

**Silent second mortgage:** Silent second mortgages, as Cumberland developed for Smalls Brook Crossing, may also be a creative method of ensuring affordability.

**Non-profit developer:** Consider establishing a community land trust that could do housing development. The Cumberland Mainland and Island Trust has worked to get conservation easements to preserve open space. Would it be

interested in exploring private-public partnerships to develop affordable housing? Should another organization be created to do this?

Work with public and non-profit groups: Work with the Maine State Housing Authority, Farmers Home or other groups which might assist in finding a developer and funding sources to develop affordable housing. In addition, work with such groups as the Maine Affordable Housing Alliance or Habitat for Humanity for funding or construction for an affordable housing program.

Lower building costs: Explore ways of lowering costs of transporting materials and of labor to reduce cost of construction for houses in the affordable housing program.

Encourage owner-built homes on family land. Work with the Town Planner and Code Enforcement Officer to explore ways to make this easier.

### **E: Open Space and Recreation**

If the recommendations made in the earlier section on Land Use are accepted, then an open space plan for Chebeague is critical for preserving the Island's rural character. Fortunately, during the year that Chebeague worked on its plan, an Open Space Committee developed an Open Space Plan for the mainland part of the Town. Since the goals and strategies on this issue are quite similar on both sides of the water, this section borrows heavily from the mainland plan. As they say in pulp fiction "only the [place] names have been changed."

We concur with the primary statement of purpose for the mainland plan which states:

'the growth management section of the [Town] Plan discusses the desirability of keeping large parcels of land undeveloped, and of helping landowners to do so by letting them realize financial benefit from their land without selling it. Benefits may be in the form of lowered property taxes, or actual payments. In return for the benefit the owner would agree not to develop the land. To achieve this, the Plan makes suggestions such as; (1) creating a local conservation easement or lease purchase program, (2) purchasing rights-of-first-refusal and development rights, and (3) acquiring land. In all cases, the Plan suggests that the affected land have "high value", or provide a "public benefit", but it doesn't state what those qualities or benefits are -- that is the purpose of the Open Space Plan. The land inventories and recommendations included in this plan can provide the Town Council [and others] with the information necessary to make decisions.' (Open Space Plan, 2000, p. 1).

What lands on Chebeague have "high value" as open space or would particularly provide a "public benefit"? Chebeague can provide the mainland with public ocean front property -- the one kind of open space it most notably lacks. Other high value lands include the few remaining open fields on the Island, forest lands, wildlife habitat and particularly scenic views. It is not simply a matter of allowing people to see the ocean or the woods and fields. They need to be able to get to and walk along the shore, or enjoy the fields and forests by walking through them. The top priorities for preserving open space and access to it are:

- land along the shore
- wetlands
- land that has paths or trails on it
- sizable tracts of woodland

### **Preserve access to the shore**

Chebeague has 13.15 miles of coastline. Access to the shore on the Island has always been a very visible issue for everyone, and part of the Island's

traditions are that people can not only get to the shore, but walk along it. Fishermen, who often don't live on the shore, obviously have to reach it to put in and take out their gear and to reach their boats. Some use the Island's wharves for the former. But many others take their equipment out over the beach and get to their boats the same way. Access to the shore is also important for clamming. Chebeague's clam flats have been managed by the Town since 1981 and most are now open for recreational and limited commercial clamming.

Unlike the mainland, Chebeague has areas of both rocky coastline and of sandy beaches that all residents love to use for swimming and picnicking. Access to the water has not been a problem on Chebeague in the past. And one of the purposes of this plan is to ensure that, as development pressures grow along the shore, it does not become a problem. Donna Damon's work since 1989 for Cumberland's Coastal Access Project has documented the underlying legal history and rights to many of the roads and paths that give access to the shore. Some are Town-owned, and some are easements granted to the public by developers or abutters.

### **Preserve Chebeague's fields and forests**

In the past Chebeague had both farms and wood lots. Much of the land was actually cleared; you could see the water from almost any part of North and South Roads. Today there are only some sheep that are moved around the Island, a couple of horses and some goats. And there are still some fields that are kept mowed that give a sense of the old farming landscape. Since the 1930s, the rest of the Island has grown up in dense woods except where people have kept their house lots cleared, so there is still a lot of undeveloped land, much of it forested.

There are two State 'current use' programs that tax land at less than its full value for development. One is the Tree Growth program. Some land on Chebeague is in the Tree Growth program. Land may be placed in this program if a parcel is larger than ten acres and is used for commercial (not personal) timber harvesting. Once the land is enrolled, it is taxed at its value as commercial forest land and must be managed and harvested as laid out in a Management Plan. The difficulty with this on Chebeague is that there is little interest in selective harvesting, which would maintain the forest but allow it to be commercially harvested. In addition, tree Growth does not provide permanent protection; land can be taken out of the program if a penalty is paid.

An alternative to the Tree Growth program is the State's Open Space program. The amount of the property tax reduction here varies from 20 percent for ordinary, private, unprotected open space land, to 50 percent for land permanently protected by a conservation easement, up to 95 percent if it is kept forever wild by conservation easement and is accessible to the public. There is no minimum lot size for the program. This land can be protected by permanent easements. If land without the protection of easements is taken out of the program, a penalty must be paid. The factors that the state takes into account when they decide public benefit gained by preserving a particular piece of land include:

The importance of the land by virtue of its size or uniqueness.

The opportunity of the general public to appreciate significant scenic values of the land.

The opportunity for regular and substantial recreational or educational use.

Whether the land is included as open space as part of a comprehensive plan or in a zoning ordinance.

The existence of a conservation easement.

The proximity of other public or private conservation lands

The Town Assessor is willing to accept applications for Open Space designation. To further encourage use of the program Chebeague should have a plan indicating land that is particularly desirable as open space. On Chebeague, because of the closeness of the shore and the undeveloped woods and fields, virtually any undeveloped land would be suitable for open space. However it would be useful to develop specific criteria, based at least in part on the State factors, for what land would be most suitable.

#### **Preserve access to the established paths on the island**

Chebeague has lots of paths. In the past, people often had to get around the Island on foot, and many people still do. The Cumberland Mainland and Islands Trust is working on gaining formal easements to traditional paths. They are now in the process of mapping the trails so protected. Many of the paths pass through wooded parts of the Island that might be protected by the Open Space program. This can, but would not always, involve permanent protection.

#### **Preserve scenic areas and views**

What is a scenic area? It provides a special view that members of the public can enjoy without necessarily owning or even having access to it. Often these are places that are seen from the road as people walk or drive one day to day trips. A scenic area can be either a natural feature -- a view of the ocean, for example -- or something manmade, such as a stonewall with mature shade trees along a road. When you want to view the sunset, or watch the waves crash on the shore or view the fall color, where do you go? Here we have mapped some candidates for this kind distinction. The map is illustrative rather than exhaustive. Criteria used include:

- Views from roads across open fields to the ocean.
- Roads or paths through especially dense forest.
- Views of nice groups of houses, especially historic ones.
- Flowering fields and roadsides or fall color.
- Views of other distinctive human landscapes.

As the Land Use section indicated, we would like to have included an inventory of historic buildings and other cultural resources. The Town survey done in May 2000 should be analyzed and mapped. Grants may be available for such work.

#### **Support opportunities for recreation and intellectual enrichment**

Chebeague doesn't have "public parks" in the urban sense, but we do have many of the kinds of recreation facilities that are commonly found in city parks. What is different on Chebeague is that they are typically not grouped together the way they might be in a public park, and they often aren't publicly provided. Some are provided by individuals such as Sanford's skating pond or the picnic tables at the Store, some are provided by clubs such as the Golf and Tennis Clubs, some are provided by community supported voluntary organizations such as the Library and the Recreation Center, and some have just to be used where they naturally are, like swimming at the beach.

Chebeague does have a significant recreation "complex" in the recently expanded and improved School/Recreation Center that has outdoor play areas, swimming, tennis, basketball and baseball, as well as all the year-round recreation facilities of the Chebeague Recreation Center. The Town provides limited funds for staff to CRC, MSAD 51 provided the land, and local donors brought the building and the CRC as an institution into existence.

The Town owns a 10-acre parcel of land at Chandler Cove Beach. It has an access road and some rather informal parking. Its deed requires that it be kept in its natural state. There are steps and small bridges over a stream that protect the fragile dune grass. It is a beautiful site for swimming, and is used for community functions such as the 4th of July Picnic. However, it is also a source of problems, in that it is the place where young people go at night to party with bonfires and drinking. Both the social issue of underage drinking and the damage being done to the land itself by these activities have led to calls for 'the Town' to stop the parties.

This is not an easy problem to solve. The LRPC proposes that islanders and Town staff work together to develop a plan for both the physical maintenance of the public property and more effective control over its use. Other Town-owned parcels at Sunset Landing and Waldo Point could be used more in the future for recreation and might be included in this effort.

**Goals:**

PRESERVE SIGNIFICANT TRACTS OF OPEN SPACE ON CHEBEAGUE

**SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION AND INTELLECTUAL ENRICHMENT**

**Recommended Actions**

**Preserve Access to the shore**

Documentation of shore access: Continue the work of the Coastal Access Project, documenting and providing recommendations for the protection of existing public access points to the shore.

**Sunset Landing:** This planning process has found no strong support for using the Town's Sunset Landing property for a wharf, as had been proposed in the past. However, it remains the only undeveloped deep-water access without a wharf that is publicly owned. We recommend that Sunset be considered to be Town open space and that future development there be of that nature. But we also recommend that any development done there not preclude use of the site as a wharf if that should be necessary in the future.

**Acquire access to the shore:** The Town and the Land Trust should acquire additional public rights of way or easements to the water when shore front land is developed or when other opportunities arise. Make sure that access roads and paths are regularly maintained so that they can be used.

**Clam flats:** Continue management of the Island's clam flats and insure access to them for harvesting.

Purchase shore land: The Town is urged to purchase additional shore front land and land behind the shore when it is available. This is especially important because of the limited legal right to use of the shore by the public without purchase of it.

**Other Cumberland islands:** Review the zoning on Cumberland islands other than Chebeague to see if it is appropriate.  
Preserve Chebeague's fields and forests

**State Open Space program:** Encourage the use of the State Open Space current use tax program by developing a set of criteria that define what land is suitable for the program.

**Education on State Open Space:** Have an informational session on the State Open Space program during the summer, similar to the one held on the mainland for farmers and other large landowners.

**Conservation easements:** Where neither public purchase nor enrollment in State current use programs is feasible, use other private and town programs, discussed in the Land Use section, for protecting important open space, such as donation of easements or purchase of development rights.

**Prevention of Spruce blow-downs:** Consider requiring the Town Code Enforcement officer to review a site plan for any clearing of trees for construction in Chebeague's spruce forests.

Preserve wildlife habitat

**Wildlife habitat study:** Get expert help to identify whether there are any animals or birds of Chebeague and other Cumberland islands that are especially in need of protection. Identify what wildlife habitat areas exist, which should be protected and what problems there may be in trying to provide this protection.

**Wildlife management:** Explore the possibility for wildlife management on the other Cumberland islands.  
Preserve access to established paths on the Island  
Map and document paths: Map existing paths accurately and document any that are public.

**Path easements:** Try to get formal easements from landowners for non-public paths, especially if development occurs on the land.  
Preserve Scenic Areas  
Public education on ways of preserving scenic views and historic houses.

**Scenic easements:** Encourage purchase or donation of scenic easements.  
Tax rebate for scenic properties: Explore the use of the recently adopted State constitutional amendment to allow towns to provide a rebate on taxes on historic and scenic properties. The Town would not be reimbursed by the State for tax revenues lost.

**Protect open space:** Probably the best way to preserve the natural views in this inventory is by protecting significant amounts of open space as discussed in other elements of this plan.

**Historic and cultural inventory:** As noted above, the process of making an inventory of historic houses and other buildings is in progress.

#### **SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION AND INTELLECTUAL ENRICHMENT**

**Financial support:** We urge the Town to continue and increase its financial support for the Library and the Recreation Center.

**Maintenance of recreation areas:** Chebeague's public recreation areas such as Chandler Cove and, possibly, Sunset Landing are kept in their natural state, and this is what residents want. We are proposing that islanders and Town staff develop a plan for physical maintenance of these areas and for control over their use.

#### IV: PRESERVING COMMUNITY

There are two major threads to Chebeague's strategy to maintain the essential character of the Island. One, discussed in the previous sections, is to preserve its semi-rural character, by protecting open space and the ability of people to have access to it and to use it. The other, discussed in the section to come, is to maintain the social and economic structure of the Island that combines a year-round working community and a summer population of people who come year after year. The two threads are tightly intertwined. Maintaining the physical character of the Island without its social structure keeps the shell without the spirit. Maintaining the economic and social structure while the undeveloped land on the Island is developed, will be difficult.

In Section IV the plan's focus is on the Island's economy, and on a variety of public and voluntary services, such as health care and education, that are essential elements of a year-round community. Recommendations will be made about ways to improve Chebeague's quality of life. However they all assume that the Chebeague community as we know it -- a working year-round economy augmented by additional residents in the summer -- will continue to function over the long run. Here we need to explore ways that this can be assured.

##### A: Economic and Social Life

If the recommendations in the Land Use and Open Space sections to preserve significant areas of open space are adopted and carried out, it will be necessary to put as much effort, energy and money into maintaining Chebeague's diverse economic, social and age structures as well. The effect of preserving land would be to reduce the supply of land available for development. As long as there is a strong market for land on Chebeague -- people who want to buy and build, and who have plenty of money to do so -- then the value or price of the remaining land will rise significantly. Indeed, the act of protecting at least some of Chebeague as present residents know it, would make it all the more attractive to people who want to live on an unconnected rural island. The rise in the selling price of land will drive up assessments and taxes, making Chebeague less affordable to year-round and summer people with ordinary "working or middle class" incomes, much less those on fixed retirement incomes.

Preserving the island community is primarily an issue of capping the island's property taxes. John Cole, founder the Maine Times, puts the issue well. Quoting from a recent column by Cole in the Forecaster:

As accelerating demand for coastal property continues to gather even more momentum, taxes on that land increase with skyrocketing market values. The relatively benign property taxes of the past become a potent force for social engineering, strong enough to replace one group of Maine residents with another. Hundreds of traditional fishing communities from Kittery to Machias, coastal towns that have been home to the same fishing families for five or more generations, are facing or soon will, inevitable property tax increases that will force most of them from their family land.

In this section a number of ideas are 'cobbled together' in an effort to control rising property assessments and taxes. Several other sections in Part IV characterize the Island's economy and lay out a specific set of recommendations as to how it may be preserved. Others are concerned with the provision of various services on the Island.

**Goal:**

MAINTAIN CHEBEAGUE AS A COMMUNITY THAT IS AFFORDABLE AND ATTRACTIVE TO A DIVERSE GROUP OF PEOPLE

**Recommended Actions**

Moderate increases in Tax assessments.

**Current use taxation on open space:** Encourage use of the Open Space program on Chebeague. The Town could have informational meetings with landowners as it did on the mainland. The Land Trust or some similar organization could help to negotiate and hold the conservation easements.

**More State money for Open Space:** The Town and Chebeague residents should lobby the State Legislature for more State reimbursement of towns for taxes lost by enrollment of land in the Open Space program.

**Current use valuation of marine uses:** Chebeague residents should actively support another statewide vote on a constitutional amendment to allow current use taxation for commercial fishing uses on the shore.

**Homestead exemption:** Encourage Chebeague residents to take advantage of the State Homestead tax exemption as it exists now. Some states have much more generous homestead exemptions. Enlarging the exemption would be something Chebeague and the Town might lobby for in the State Legislature.

**Moderating tax assessments:** Town actions

**Purchase of development rights:** The Town of Cumberland has already begun to establish a fund for purchase of development rights. We urge that land on Chebeague be included in this program. The Town has also adopted other mechanisms for preserving open space, including purchase and lease of conservation easements. We urge that land on Chebeague be included for this funding as well.

Lower tax assessments through use of easements with individual landowners. Develop a program with the Town then approach CMIT for the formulation of such an island wide program focusing especially on shore front properties. Reducing tax payments

**State Property Tax Refund program - 'Circuit-breaker':** Educate Chebeague residents who may be eligible for the circuit-breaker program about it.

**Rebate of taxes on historic and scenic properties:** We request that the Town use the option for a tax rebate on historic and scenic properties as authorized by the Constitutional Amendment in 1999. In order to do this a historic preservation ordinance would need to be developed and adopted by the Town Council, as well as adoption of the tax rebate.

**B: The Island Economy**

Chebeague is one of a handful a Maine islands that maintains a viable year round economy and thus a diverse year round population. An understanding of the Island's year round economy is essential to planning for the future of the island since maintaining a viable year-round economy is essential to the future of the island.

Unlike most mainland residents of Cumberland, islanders often depend on a number of sources of income. While some Chebeaguers have full-time, nine-to-five jobs on the Island or the mainland, many island households rely on doing a number of things to generate the family income. The ability to develop a number of sources of income is an essential element of the island economy.

## **Components of the Island Economy**

**Chebeague's economy** - or the source of the livelihood of the year round residents - consists of four sectors:

**The Fishing/Marine Component** (Treated separately below) - Of the year-round population, approximately 52 people (15 percent of the population) earn some or all of their income from fishing or marine related activities such as the boatyard, boat building, CTC, etc. About 15% of the year-round households derive all or most of their income from fishing or marine related businesses. An additional 15% of year round households get a majority of their income from fishing and marine activities.

**The Commuter Component** - About 30 island residents (9 percent of the year-round population) commute to the mainland for work on a regular basis. Almost 15% of island households rely on commuting as the principal source of household income, while another 8% have some income from commuting.

**Island Business Component** - Over 80 island residents (24 percent of the year-round population) work at some type of activity on the island. About 20% of year round households derive all or most of their income from on-island work other than marine related activities, while another 20% of households received some of their income from involvement in on-island business activities. A substantial portion of these on-island businesses involve providing services to both year-round and seasonal residents.

It is very difficult to know how many summer visitors there are who contribute to Chebeague's economy. There are an estimated 215 "regular" summer households. In the survey, 37% of the respondents who were summer people came for long summers, usually May to October and so would be a stable source of demand. The other 63% percent were short summer people, adding less. Beyond these "residents" who were surveyed, there are their family members and guests, people who rent cottages for a week or a month, people who come to stay at the Inn and at B&Bs, and people who come for weddings at the Inn or day trips on the CTC and the Casco Bay Lines. A 1990 "census" on the Fourth of July found about 1700 people on the Island on that week. This may represent about the maximum number on the Island at any given time.

Retired Component - Over 25% of the island's year round households are retired. An additional 5% of households can be considered to be partially or semi-retired households.

Most of the island's businesses are small, with only a few employing any significant number of workers. Many business activities involve self-employed people fishing or providing services. Many of the businesses fall into the category of home occupations or what we will call here "residential businesses". Part of Chebeague's economy is independent of people who live on or come to the Island. Fishermen (and women) sell most of their catch to wholesalers on the mainland, and a few other businesses supply outside markets as well. Commuters are limited in jobs only by the ferry schedules and the distance they are willing to travel. But other Island businesses must be able to make at least part of a living from the limited local market of year round and summer people and some must be able to get workers on the Island as well. The struggles of the Chebeague Inn to keep going, and the brief existence of the Nellie G. Cafe are examples of the limits of both the consumer and labor markets. This situation protects Chebeague from

"commercialization" that some residents worry about, but also leaves us without businesses and services we might wish to have.

Because of the existence of relatively frequent and convenient ferry service, businesses serving the island market that have to compete directly with comparable mainland ones are at a particular disadvantage. This kind of competition from the mainland can be found even in construction, which has always been a staple of Chebeague's local economy. On the other hand, suppliers of things that are difficult to get from the mainland such as island car repairs, gasoline or heating oil are clearly more viable as long as the minimum market is large enough.

Maintaining a year-round population is dependent on maintaining a viable year-round economy that allows residents of the island to earn reasonable incomes. Fishing issues are discussed separately. However, there are a number of issues related to the island's ability to maintain a viable year-round, non-maritime economy raised by Island business people. Cumberland's zoning regulations sometimes make it difficult for residents to operate small, home based businesses that can be an important source of income for some households. Some revisions would help the Island businesses. The zoning reviews that new businesses face seem elaborate to them. In addition, since most businesses are in or next to peoples' houses, the standard separation between business and residential uses that works on the mainland does not quite fit the circumstances on Chebeague. Finally, there are some land uses presently allowed that the committee thought should not be permitted.

**Goal:**

MAINTAIN A DIVERSIFIED, HEALTHY, YEAR-ROUND ECONOMY THAT INCLUDES PEOPLE WHO MAKE THEIR LIVING ON AND AROUND THE ISLAND, COMMUTERS TO THE MAINLAND AND RETIREES

**Recommended Actions**

Zoning revisions

**Inappropriate land uses:** One objective would be to remove those uses that are not appropriate on the Island such as private heliports and the extraction and bulk storage of groundwater. The latter, in particular, if ever done, would be harmful to Chebeague's sole source aquifer.

**Residential businesses:** An implementation committee should work with the Planning Board and Town Planner to create a new 'residential business' use in both Island zones to allow a broader range of business activities within a residence than is currently allowed as a home occupation. This would provide the homeowner with more flexibility while protecting the neighbors. It would only apply on Chebeague. The following are some ideas discussed by the LRPC. It would cover any business on Chebeague Island, conducted in a house that does not involve external changes to the house, require extra parking, or create noise, vibration, smoke, dust, odors, glare or potential pollution of groundwater beyond the property line of the house. Such business could include home production and sales of things such as crafts and food; business conducted largely off-site such as fishing, construction and landscaping; personal and professional services such as day care, hairdressers, accountants, lawyers or writers. The business would have to be managed by a member of the family living in the house and some employees would be allowed. Exterior storage of materials or exterior display of wares would be regulated, as would exterior signs.

**Food carts:** An implementation committee should work with the Town Planner to develop an approach for allowing portable 'food carts or wagons' at limited locations on the Island.

**Saw mills:** Work with the Planning Board and Town Planner to amend the zoning ordinance to allow permanent small-scale saw mills and accessory uses such as a kiln, with appropriate performance standards to be a special exception in both the Island Residential and Island Business Districts.

**Child care:** Work with the Planning Board and Town Planner to explore ways of insuring that reliable child care is available to parents who need it. One approach would be to amend the zoning ordinance to make day care homes and day care centers permitted uses in any Island district.

#### **Other non-marine economic issues**

**Construction waste:** The Town should consider either setting the construction waste bin into the ground or building a ramp to get up to it. At present it is very difficult to get bulky materials into the bin because of the height of the sides.

**Vocational training:** Explore using the Island Institute's Fund for Maine Island Education to provide technical or vocational training to Island residents who would fill gaps in Chebeague's services for which there is a sufficient market. If the market is too small, seek help in developing business plans that would allow expansion of service, perhaps to other Casco Bay Islands.

#### **C: Island Economy - Fishing**

As the survey of Island business above indicated, marine related activities make up the largest portion of Chebeague's economy, and there is strong support for maintaining the fishery on the Island. Fishing, primarily lobstering, is its main element. There are 38 boats hauling approximately 35,000 traps, making this the largest island fishing community in Casco Bay. Additional marine related services include boatbuilding and repair, and the boatyard which is essential to both the Island's fishermen and the year-round and summer people who keep recreational boats. Since CTC is dealt with in the section on Mainland Transportation, this section primarily focuses on the fishing industry.

#### **Water Access**

Easy access to the water is a primary factor in making the island work well for the fishermen. Legally, fishermen have access to the shore across private property to fish or clam. However, this legal right is not as useful as it appears on its face for several reasons. One is simply that property owners may not be aware of this and may object to having their land crossed. The other is that this legal right provides no right to park on private property. Over the past 40 or more years, the traditional fish houses on the shore have been replaced by the use of pickup trucks. Gear is kept at home, which is usually not on the shore, and taken to the shore when needed. This, obviously, requires places to park. This only exists on private land by arrangement with the owner. Most of the public access points which date from the days before cars, have little parking. However, they are even more important than in earlier years because they do provide road access and at least some parking. There are also people who use shore access points with parking to keep boats that they use to get back and forth to the mainland.

Some, but not all are Chebeague fishermen. Others come out from the mainland to work on the Island.

There are at least ten access and mooring sites that are used by most of the fishermen as well as others. Several others could be used, but are not at present. All of these sites have characteristics that make access at least somewhat difficult. Two of the active access sites have wharves and formal parking lots, but no place for regular storage of traps. Some people keep their boats at these wharves, and more people use them for putting off their traps in the spring and bringing them in the fall. At the other sites, people park on the side of the road, and there are varying amounts of space for trap storage. Coleman and Johnson Coves and Central Landing are considered the best sites by the lobstermen as they are closest to the prime areas for setting traps. A few fishermen have access to the shore across their own property.

**In 2000-2001 a new wharf was built by the State at Chandler's Cove.**

**The design**

Extended the trestle width from 12' to 20'

Lengthened the whole structure 14.5'

Increased the landing part of the wharf from 40'x40' to approximately 70'x70'

Allows space for two or three floats in place of a single one.

At the Stone Wharf the system of closing off eight of the parking spaces during June and November so that fishermen can take their traps off and bring them in seems to work fairly well as long as it is enforced. The seasonal need for parking results from many fishermen transporting their traps from their trucks to their boats. At other times of year, the only parking need by the fishermen is for those who keep their boats in the Stone Wharf anchorage. A new Stone Wharf Committee has been formed and will be reviewing this situation.

At a meeting with the fishermen, the need for a new wharf, specifically to accommodate fishing activities, was discussed. Sunset Landing was one obvious site. However, the fishermen recognized the large cost involved in building a wharf. They think that a new facility is not needed, as long as present access sites are legally documented and properly maintained. Also essential to the present system of fishing is being able to keep boats, traps and other gear in outdoor storage at fishermen's houses.

**Moorings**

The presence of a harbormaster and a mooring permit system provides a legal framework for defining and protecting mooring rights in case of legal challenge. However, the system does not seem to work well and needs to be examined more fully than the LRPC was able to do. The Town may simply collect the permit fee but not record the location of moorings. There have been problems with other people putting moorings where fishermen have traditionally moored their boats. This is a particular problem at the Stone Wharf. Enforcement is also an issue. The Inn has moorings, but also apparently tells their visitors to moor to any buoy available. There is interest in limiting moorings to residents and property owners of the Town of Cumberland.

**Aquaculture Leases**

The leasing of the bottom to aquaculturists growing mussels is a recent development in Casco Bay. Mussel grow-out rafts, which require deep water

and strong tidal flushing could be practical at almost any protected cove or area near the Island, though this does depend on the season and weather conditions as well. The Chebeague fishermen are concerned about the impact of this new fishery on their access to places where they have set their traps in the past. The survey suggests that this is not a widely understood or recognized issue among Islanders who are not lobstermen.

Currently, regulatory authority for aquaculture lease applications rests with the State Department of Marine Resources. In towns where there are existing shellfish ordinances, recent legislation allows the town to govern aquaculture leases throughout the intertidal zone. The DMR continues to govern aquaculture leases in the sub-tidal zone, below low water. However, the town is granted intervener's status, contingent upon their existing shell fishing ordinances. This status assures the town of proper notification when lease applications are filed, and gives the town a strong voice during the public hearing process.

#### **Other Fishing Issues**

There are a variety of other issues related to the success of the fishing relating to the Town. These are fairly self-explanatory in the recommendations.

#### **Goal:**

MAINTAIN THE FISHING INDUSTRY AS A MAJOR ELEMENT OF CHEBEAGUE'S ECONOMY

#### **Recommended Actions**

Insure access to the shore for fishermen

**Document access points:** Continue the Town's Coastal Access Study process that provides legal documentation for public access to the shore. Maintaining access points is a critical need for fishermen.

**Parking:** Study specific parking improvements at access points used by fisherman and develop parking plans. Trucks and storage of gear at home have replaced the fish houses on Chebeague, so fishermen need parking at access points.

**Clam flats:** As is indicated in the Open Space section of this plan, the Town should protect and, whenever feasible, increase access to clam flats for commercial and recreational harvesting.

**Wharf:** If there is future exploration of a site for a new wharf for fishing rather than ferry purposes, the fishermen would prefer a wharf on the outside of the Island.

Implement recommendations of the new Stone Wharf Committee  
Improve regulation of moorings

**Mooring location:** Review the provisions of the mooring ordinance to ensure that it has adequate provisions related to the location of moorings. Any provisions related to rafting of boats should also be reviewed.

**Enforcement:** Enforce regulations about how long boats can be left at floats.

**Utility moorings:** CMP and Bell Atlantic leave their boats at the float at Chandler Cove. They should be encouraged to have moorings and a punt and to use them if the weather is suitable and they expect to be on the Island for more than a few hours.

Increase Town role in aquaculture leasing

**Plan for bottom leases:** The Town is urged to carefully review any proposed leases and to play an active role in the leasing process. This may involve developing a plan, with the participation of the fishermen, to designate areas suitable and not suitable for leasing. The Town's process for handling the leasing hearings should also be reviewed as part of this planning process.

#### **Other Marine Recommendations**

**Gear storage in Zoning Ordinance:** Reaffirm the provision in the Zoning Code that allows "uses related to commercial fishing, including storage and repair of traps, seines, boats and other equipment, the keeping and cooking of fish for sale at retail on the premises, and fish processing as a home occupation" at houses in both the Island Business and Residence zones. There is support for this by both year-round and summer residents. If the provisions of the Island zoning are revised, this provision must be included in any new ordinance in at least as strong a form.

**Clam flat management:** The Town should continue to manage the clam flats so that they can produce a sustainable harvest. This includes providing assistance with applications to the State to homeowners who have septic systems that are polluting clam flats.

**Boatyard:** Provide any feasible assistance to the Boatyard to assure its continued operation.

**Disposal of traps:** Encourage lobstermen to dispose of old metal traps at the transfer station by having free disposal days during the winter. Disposing of metal traps by squashing them and taking them to the transfer station costs about \$150 per pickup truckload. It can be done free by cutting the lines and leaving them in the water, but this is harmful to the lobster fishery and to the marine environment. The Island in general has a weekend when people can dispose of any bulky or metal waste free of charge. This has always been done in the summer when lobstermen have their traps set out. A similar time during the winter would allow them to dispose of old traps. These actions would also discourage fisherman from dumping traps in the Chandler's Cove field.

#### **D: Health, Welfare, and Safety**

This section focuses on the health, welfare, and safety of the people on Chebeague. The wellness of our people & our human resource - has a direct impact on the general health of our entire community.

##### **Health**

Primary care is usually accessed through mainland physicians and specialists. An on-island physician's assistant offers office and home visits for acute or chronic care two to three days per week. In addition, she draws blood, and assists with billing, pharmacy deliveries, appointments with specialists, and home care concerns. The service rendered by our PA is highly valued by the community.

Home care is an island concern because of access, transportation, and changing programs. Skilled care, often funded by Medicare, is accessed through reliable mainland agencies and privately paid caregivers. The lack of non-skilled care, rarely funded by Medicare, and intermittently available through Medicaid is of great concern to this community. It is evident that affordable and readily accessible non-skilled home care can lead to

healthier, richer, and more meaningful lives for Chebeaguers. We lack effective home health care.

Long term care is a relatively new concept, and will take time to be fully recognized as a natural continuation of primary health care. It involves a great amount of community input, patience, and respect. It starts as is a family issue, then often stressed families need support and help. CCR has set up on-island programs to help educate families on this vast, sometimes non-medical subject.

Preventive care is a sleeper, and often goes unnoticed as an element of well being for personal and community health. Usually the least costly form of care, several island non-profits are actively advocating for better access to preventive care for all of us.

Emergency care, funded by the Town, staffed by island EMT's, with transportation provided by CTC, is an excellent example of a service partnership. This professional team is respected from all views, and has been noted and recognized as a true lifeline from any home on Chebeague to the ER.

### **Welfare**

Personal welfare involves responsibilities of individuals and families. Sources of support and assistance are available on the island or through the Town, but must be sought out. Personal welfare becomes a community concern when a need is so great that another person must act for the recipient. Awareness, education, advocacy and responsibility are essential tools to ease and comfort those in the process of helping themselves. This is a most tender subject for the recipient, but there are sources of help. We need to talk about this more openly.

Community welfare on Chebeague is widely accepted as culturally, emotionally, physically, and financially possible. Many island organizations participate in programs and activities that benefit all people, all ages. Two concerns, however, are voiced by islanders: affordable childcare and substance abuse among the island's youth. The needed, flexible childcare is not easy to provide, and the best way to deal with this at this point may be just to reduce barriers to providing childcare. Substance abuse among island youngsters continues to be uncontrolled, and of great concern to Chebeaguers. The apparent lack of existing enforcement is seen as a contributing factor.

### **Safety**

Personal, home and community safety hazards are threats to the general health and welfare of the island. Concerned citizens, health professionals, and fire, police and rescue officials must continue to work together to help prevent accidents as diverse as auto accidents and falls at home by identifying and correcting public hazards such as unsafe road conditions and educating people about correcting safety problems at home. When people fail to recognize and implement acceptable safety practices, the issues then become a common or community concern. This means safety then becomes an enforcement issue. Staffing facilities for police, fire, and rescue were not examined by the LRPC. However, there are issues that call for study in this area.

### **Summary of Concerns:**

Holes in the existing system of child care.  
Reluctance of people to ask for help,

Insufficient research conducted for people discharged from mainland facilities to their island homes,  
Health insurance opportunities for greater numbers of island families,  
Fearful and often dehumanizing process to receive affordable medical help,  
Surprisingly small numbers of island people in assistance programs,  
Lack of adequate non-skilled home care on the island,  
Little to no enforcement of substance abuse laws among island youngsters, and  
Staffing and facilities for police, fire, and rescue.

**Positive notes:**

Island organizations and programs are providing many helpful services.  
Island people care about each other, and will advocate for them and help them.  
Town police, rescue, fire, and public works departments work in partnership with island people to enhance health, welfare, and safety.  
CTC (transportation to the mainland) is our ultimate lifeline.  
Our island PA has proved to be a major influence upon the quality of life of our older population.

**Goal:**

WORK TOWARD MAKING THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF CHEBEAGUE RESIDENTS AS GOOD AS POSSIBLE BY PROVIDING EDUCATION ABOUT OUR SERVICES TO MAINTAIN PEOPLE'S HEALTH, WELFARE AND SAFETY.

**Recommended Actions**

Health

**Childcare:** Reduce barriers to provision of childcare (see Section III B).  
Home care services: The Town should explore ways to get supplemental funding for all levels of home care to assure that Chebeaguers have equal access to available home care services. In particular, reducing the transportation cost to the Island could make providers more willing to come out to the Island.

Welfare

**Substance abuse:** Facilitate community discussions and have the Town take action to discourage substance abuse,  
Personal welfare: Talk openly about issues of personal welfare and safety, including having the Town be involved in education on entitlements and Town assistance programs.

**Regional Transportation:** Work to connect Regional Transportation Program services to ferry.

Police, Fire, and Rescue: Establish a committee to review the staffing and facility needs of the police, fire and rescue services.

**V. TRANSPORTATION**

Chebeague faces all the normal issues about roads that any rural community would, though with the complication that equipment and materials often have to be barged from the mainland. But Chebeague is also in the unusual position of relying on non-car ferries for its transportation to the mainland.

**A: Transportation to the Mainland**

During most of the 20th century, Chebeague has been served by two providers of ferry services. In the early 20th century, both Casco Bay Lines and the Harpswell Steam Ship Company served Chebeague. Since the 1930's, Chebeague has been served with public ferry service both by Casco Bay Lines from Portland, and an inner-bay service, first from Portland, then from Falmouth

and, since 1959, from the Cousins Island wharf at Doyle Point on Cousins Island in Yarmouth.

Today the inner-bay service is based on Chebeague and is operated by Chebeague Transportation Company. It has become Chebeague's primary carrier of passengers handling 90% of the passenger volume with Casco Bay Lines carrying the remaining 10%. CTC operates 8-10 trips per day year-round on vessels licensed to carry 58-119 passengers. Casco Bay Lines provides 4-5 trips per day serving Chebeague on vessels licensed to carry 300-400 passengers and is the primary shipper of freight to Chebeague.

Together CTC and CBL provide the "underwater roads" connecting Chebeague to the mainland highway system. These roads, however, are narrow lanes and, in the case of the inner-bay service, in danger of disappearing entirely due to impassioned controversy for the past 40 years surrounding the use of the Cousins Island wharf and Blanchards parking lot.

#### Passenger Service

Casco Bay Lines ("CBL") operated by Casco Bay Island Transit District ("CBL") runs from the Maine State Pier on the Portland waterfront to Chandler's Cove at the West End of Chebeague. CBL was established by the legislature in 1981 upon the bankruptcy of the former private ferry operator. CBL is a political subdivision of the State of Maine encompassing Peaks, Little Diamond, Great Diamond and Cliff Islands in the City of Portland, the Town of Long Island, and Chebeague in the Town of Cumberland.

Chebeague Transportation Company ("CTC") runs from the Stone Wharf at the East End of Chebeague to the Yarmouth Town Wharf at Doyle Point on Cousins Island in Yarmouth. CTC undertook ferry operations following the retirement of the former sole proprietor who began operating water taxi services in his lobster boat on the last leg of the inner-bay route abandoned by CBL after the completion of the bridge from the mainland to Cousins Island in 1959. CTC's ferry operations are conducted in a business corporation that was originally capitalized through the purchase of shares by residents of Chebeague and now operates as a common-carrier on a break-even basis as a public service.

Use of the Cousins Island wharf on Doyle Point at the foot of Wharf Road on Cousins Island in Yarmouth is central to CTC's operations. The wharf has been used as a ferry landing for at least a century. When the bridge linking Cousins Island to the mainland ended the need for the inner-bay ferry service to Cousins and Littlejohn islands, the Cousins Island wharf changed, from being the arrival point to Cousins Island, to being the mainland terminus of the last leg of that inner-bay service which continues to run between Cousins and Chebeague. Because of the greater time needed to travel the longer distance between Portland and Chebeague, and due to the destinations north of Portland needing access by Chebeaguers, particularly students and other personnel of the SAD 51 schools, and the Chebeague Rescue which connects with the Cumberland Rescue, CTC provides about 90% of Chebeague's passenger transportation services. Among its users are seasonal residents who own and pay taxes on about 300 Chebeague properties. Many of these people have been coming to Chebeague for generations. The seasonal population provides the "critical mass" necessary to make a year-round ferry service economically feasible.

In the mid-1980's, perceived growth in the use of the wharf and public concern surrounding the scarcity of coastal access, lead to an agreement

between the towns of Yarmouth and Cumberland for use of the wharf by CTC from 1989 through the end of 1999. This agreement was intended as a 10-year growth moratorium while the towns worked to find an alternative site for a permanent ferry landing location. In addition to limiting the number of daily ferry landings and the size of ferry vessels to 1989 levels, the 1989 agreement contemplated Yarmouth's adoption of traffic ordinances restricting use of Wharf Road beyond the entrance to the Blanchard's Lot limiting commercial deliveries to the wharf and prohibiting access to the wharf-head by private vehicles on weekends from May through September. These ordinances have come to be called the "over-the-hill" rules.

Notwithstanding the protections to their community represented by the 10-year agreement and the restricted access accomplished by the over-the-hill rules, residents of the wharf neighborhood petitioned for a municipal referendum in November of 1989. If it had been successful, the referendum would have rejected the 10-year agreement and, in its place, would have imposed confiscatory landing fees on the ferry service designed to make it unaffordable for the users and drive it out of business. Wide-spread support among Yarmouth citizens for Chebeague's need for access to the mainland via Cousins Island, however, worked to defeat the referendum by a two-thirds majority in November of 1989.

In the early 1990's, Cumberland and Yarmouth worked together to analyze other possible landing sites and found no alternatives other than undeveloped land on Spruce Point at the Wyman Power Station on Cousins Island. At that time, Central Maine Power expressed interest in a sale of the Spruce Point land if agreement could be reached between the towns. In 1995, negotiations between the towns broke down over access restrictions on Cousins Island Road, and Maine's Department of Transportation was asked to assist the communities to resolve the situation.

In 1996, MDOT empaneled a group of representatives from both communities known as the Chebeague/Cousins Transportation Resolution Team. The Resolution Team was charged with the task of making recommendations to MDOT on a permanent resolution of the controversy by selecting an alternative site acceptable to both communities. The Spruce Point site was unanimously identified in 1997 along with a set of guidelines on its use including a Mainland Access Authority to manage future growth. After studying this recommendation for over a year and reviewing all 23 alternative sites considered by the Resolution Team, MDOT determined both that the Spruce Point location was not available due to the impossibility of obtaining necessary environmental permits for construction of the new wharf in an environmentally sensitive marine habitat, and that no other practical alternative to the existing Cousins Island wharf existed.

In July of 1998, MDOT announced that the current wharf location would serve as the permanent mainland access point for the inner-bay ferry service. MDOT said that they would preserve the status quo and, with the agreement of both towns, improve the situation. The first step in maintaining the status quo was MDOT's acquisition of the Blanchard Lot in October of 1999 (discussed below) and considerable work was undertaken to obtain a new agreement on the use and future maintenance of the Cousins Island wharf upon the expiration of the 1989 Wharf Agreement at the end of 1999. Negotiation of a long-term agreement including a mainland access authority with representatives from both towns and MDOT failed in the fall of 1999.

The 1989 agreement expired without a new agreement in place on January 1, 2000, but Yarmouth has consistently provided assurances that access will be maintained. In fact, a 10-year agreement providing for limited growth acceptable to Cumberland was conditionally approved by the Yarmouth Town Council in February of 2000. Yarmouth conditioned its approval, however, on changes to the Blanchards Lot lease agreement between MDOT and Cumberland. Restrictions on the Blanchards Lot had not previously been linked to use of the Cousins Island wharf and have thus far been unacceptable to MDOT and Cumberland.

### **Parking and Highway Access**

Since neither of Chebeague's ferries is a car ferry, parking, both on the island and the mainland, is a necessary component of any island transportation system. Parking at Chandler's Cove has increased from 10 to 17 spaces with the completion of the new wharf. In Portland's Old Port district there are various garages and lots at varying distances from the Casco Bay Ferry Terminal, and the residents of all six islands compete with city dwellers, commuting office workers, Old Port shoppers and tourists for them. METRO buses run to the terminal which is located at the foot of the Old Port shopping and commercial district.

The Stone Wharf has approximately 70 parking spaces, but is still woefully inadequate. Mainland parking areas for CTC's passengers are located at two sites. The Blanchards lot provides 165 parking spaces located within walking distance of the wharf on Cousins Island. A new satellite lot has operated year-round since 2000. It provides 300 parking spaces accessed by a 6.3 mile shuttle bus ride to a fourteen acre site located on Route 1 near Exit 16 of I-95. The proximity of the satellite lot to the Cousins Island dock and to the two major north-south arteries is anticipated to make access comparatively easier than the former remote lot in Cumberland Center. The land for the Satellite Lot was given to Cumberland by MDOT and the Town financed the approximate \$200,000 cost of development of the parking facility with a lease to CTC at its cost.

Access to the wharf head on Cousins Island is both physically limited by geography and legally restricted by Yarmouth's (so called) "over the hill" ordinances. The physical limits of the current road and turn-around area at the wharf-head prevent shuttle buses from turning around at the wharf head. Consequently they must back down the hill from the entrance to the Blanchard Lot sounding back-up warning alarms that disturb the neighborhood. The over-the-hill access restrictions limit commercial deliveries to the dock and prohibit private vehicles from driving beyond the entrance to the Blanchard Lot on weekends during May through September unless physically handicapped passengers are being dropped off.

MDOT has offered to work with both towns to improve the road way and turn-around area in order both to relax the over-the-hill access restrictions, and to permit the use of smaller shuttle buses that are expected to turn around at the wharf head after the road and turn-around are reconstructed. Further, MDOT has offered to provide 80% of the funding (i.e., \$300,000) for acquisition of the smaller buses as a means of ameliorating neighborhood noise created by the back-up alarms of the current shuttle buses.

The 20% local share (i.e., \$60,000) of the capital cost of these buses is expected to be provided by Cumberland, but the increased operating cost of staffing more buses with additional drivers will be born by users of the ferry service. The cost of design and construction of improvements to the

road and turn-around, as well as the \$600,000 cost of acquisition of the Blanchard Lot, will be shared by MDOT and the Town of Cumberland on an 80/20 ratio, respectively. The design budget established by MDOT is set at \$200,000, but the cost of construction is not yet known.

MDOT's lease of the Blanchard Lot to Cumberland limits parking for the next 50 years to 165 spaces, including 15 spaces with priority for Yarmouth residents. Historically it was privately operated by Robert Blanchards, but for the past 20 years or so it was leased to CTC under a long-term lease expiring at the end of 1999. Faced with the expiration of this arrangement, MDOT acquired the Blanchard Lot in 1999 for a price of \$600,000 and has made it available as part of the public ferry transportation system operated by CTC through a lease to the Town of Cumberland and sublease to CTC for \$1.00 per year, but this arrangement is currently being challenged in court by the former owner.

Prior to the current litigation, the competing needs of the Cousins Island community and users of CTC's ferry service had been the subject of litigation three times since 1976 resulting in a series of court ordered consent decrees regulating levels of parking and barging activities. The capacity of the Blanchard Lot has been inadequate for many years and operation of shuttle bus services and remote parking between Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends has historically been the solution proposed by Cousins Island residents to protect the neighborhood from the burden of summer traffic. Physical and legal limits on the number of cars that can park at the Blanchard Lot now causes use of the Satellite Lot all year, long after summer cottages near the Cousins Island wharf have been closed for the season. Operation of the shuttle bus service all year costs approximately \$5,000 per month. The need for additional parking for year-round residents is driven, not by a significant increase in population on Chebeague, but by an increase in Island residents seeking access to mainland employment opportunities and the pressure on island residents to maintain automobiles on the mainland in order to participate in an increasingly car-dependent society.

In 1997 MDOT's Chebeague/Cousins Transportation Resolution Team recommended that parking near the wharf be increased from the current 165 car limit, to 286 (with provision for further future expansion) in order to permit shuttle bus operations to cease after Columbus Day, but this recommendation was predicated on the development of a new site for wharf and parking facilities located on land adjacent to the Wyman Power Station on Cousins Island. MDOT was unable to implement the recommendation due to permitting difficulties with the site, but the fact remains that a balanced group of representatives from both communities recognized an immediate need for additional parking for Chebeaguers near the wharf.

The harsh fact remains that use of the Satellite Lot and costly shuttle bus operations, originally intended for summer residents, must operate year-round. Now that MDOT has determined that the site for mainland access for Chebeague will permanently remain at the Cousins Island Wharf, the need for more parking near the Wharf must be addressed in the future.

#### **Barging and Freight**

Transportation of vehicles of all kinds is critical to the functioning of an Island community. CTC's 100-ton barge predominantly transports private autos and small to medium sized trucks on a tide-dependent schedule between the beach at the Blanchard Lot and a vehicle ramp on the Stone Wharf. CTC's barge operations are legally restricted to operate only between 7:00 AM and

5:00 PM Tuesdays through Thursdays. In 1997 CTC's barge carried 519 vehicles.

Other barge operations in Casco Bay include Lionel Plante Associates and Intercoastal Marine, operating principally from Portland's east end beach. These companies each have two barges with larger carrying capacities than CTC's. These barges generally land on the beach at Bennett's Cove on the West End of Chebeague due to its proximity to Portland. They are not allowed to land on Cousins Island.

CBL carries the United States Mail, UPS, and Fed Ex, as well as commercially shipped groceries, appliances, and other large household items on its passenger vessels (one of which is equipped with a crane for transferring freight). Also one or two cars can be carried on the Maquoit II.

CTC handles smaller items, including groceries and supplies-- most of them hand-carried by the passengers -- on its passenger vessel.

**Goal:**

ASSURE AFFORDABLE AND RELIABLE FERRY TRANSPORTATION CONNECTING CHEBEAGUE WITH THE MAINLAND TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS BOTH IN PORTLAND AND ON COUSINS ISLAND.

**Recommended Actions**

Secure a permanent arrangement for continued use and maintenance of the Cousins Island wharf allowing for reasonable growth in ferry services;  
Design and construct improvements to Wharf Road and the turn-around area at the wharf-head sufficient to insure safety and permit repeal of Yarmouth's over-the-hill ordinances;  
Explore relaxation of barging restrictions for transportation of cars and trucks from the Blanchard Lot in order to increase flexibility so as to deal with uncertain factors such as the weather and the tides, within a framework of reasonable limits.  
Continue involvement by Cumberland and MDOT in order to maintain affordability of ferry and parking rates;  
Continue to support Casco Bay Lines (CBL) service to Chebeague.

**B: Transportation on Chebeague**

Chebeague's road system and the access points to various wharves and landing places were established before cars became the dominant form of transportation. Over the years, roads have been upgraded to allow for cars, and parking has been created for them in places where people gather, such as at stores, public buildings and ferry wharves. Sometimes this accommodation to cars has been satisfactory and sometimes it is inadequate. Chebeaguers are ambivalent about cars. On the one hand, they like the idea that Chebeague is not as dominated by cars as the mainland is. On the other, they want to use and park their own cars just like they do on the mainland.

Because a substantial part of the passenger, freight and commercial fishing activity is focused on Chandler Cove Wharf and the Stone Wharf, conflicts among uses, safety and parking have been chronic issues for many years. Especially at the Stone Wharf, the growth of the CTC as the Island's major transportation link to the mainland, has brought these issues to the fore and has resulted in a series of past proposals for dealing with them.

As the Long-Range Planning Committee discussed options for dealing with parking at the Stone Wharf, however, it became evident that this is one of the most contentious issues that it is examining. There are many users and

abutters -- fishermen, people taking the CTC ferry, people barging on the CTC barge, recreational boaters, workmen coming over to the Island in their own boats, the owners of the historic Kendall house next to the wharf, and golfers using the Golf Course that comes almost down to the water, with a tee on the wharf itself. After several discussions, the Committee decided that the most realistic recommendation on this issue would be to have a separate process to try to find solutions to these conflicts.

### **Roads and Traffic**

Today there are about 350 registered (functioning as opposed to junked) cars on the Island. Because additional cars are brought out during the summer, there may be 200 to 250 cars being driven around during the winter and maybe 500 at any given time during the summer. The Island now has 10.3 miles of paved public road and 4.7 miles of public gravel roads. There are many more private gravel roads, sometimes serving one house, but often providing access to several. Besides using cars, residents also get around on the Island by walking and biking. Chebeague now has a 30 mph speed limit, set by State DOT in 1997. The issue now is to educate people that there is a speed limit and what it is. At present there are no speed limit signs on the Island.

Chebeague has a few "major" paved public roads -- North, South, Cottage, John Small, two crossroads and the roads to the ferry docks. There are additional unpaved public roads, like the other crossroads and the various Town roads to the shore (e.g. Fenderson Road and South Shore Drive). But most of the other roads on the Island are unpaved private roads that may have begun as driveways for one house, but now often serve several.

Design standards for roads insure that they are accessible to service vehicles that need to use them, especially the fire trucks and ambulance, but also the school bus, police car and snowplows. Standards normally apply to public roads, though Chebeague's roads do not meet the present Town standards for public roads. Standards can also be set for private roads. On the mainland the Comprehensive Plan has a policy that the Town should not allow private roads that do not conform to Town design standards. This is because it is not uncommon for owners of private roads, after a while, to ask the Town to take them over as public roads, especially for snow plowing. When standards for private roads were recently adopted on the mainland, however, Chebeague was largely exempt from them because so many more of the roads on the Island are private

It may make sense to have specific public road design standards on Chebeague to strike a balance that is suitable to the Island between the need to provide adequate access for vehicles, and the desire to not have roads that are "over designed" -- too wide, too straight or too paved. New public roads are not built often, but new subdivisions do have them.

### **Road Maintenance**

The condition of Chebeague's roads ranked 12th overall among the Town services rated on the questionnaire, and 13th, or last, among year-round residents. On the other hand, this could be an expensive item. In making the calculation of whether it is useful to spend money on road maintenance, it is essential to have some understanding about road condition, maintenance and maintenance costs. Regular and timely maintenance of roads, even ones that don't carry a lot of traffic, is essential if the roads are to remain usable. The basic "take home" message is that the least costly option is to do routine and preventive maintenance of roads when they are in good condition.

Many of the island's paved roads show signs of distress -- alligatoring of the surface, potholes and tire ruts. If these processes are not reversed, the cost to bring roads up to an acceptable condition can be many times more expensive than the cost of timely repair. Allowing a road's condition to deteriorate from "fair" to "very poor" will increase repair costs five times. In recent years DPW has focused primarily on "road", rather than "surface" maintenance. They have been renewing the drainage ditches besides the roads. Proper drainage underneath the road is necessary for the pavement on top to last. However, surface maintenance has been limited to patching.

In the Town's detailed 1999 Pavement Management Study done by Casey and Godfrey, Engineers, 34 percent of Chebeague's paved road mileage was rated as less than "fair" (very poor, poor and poor/fair), 36 percent was "fair" and the balance of 32 percent was graded better than fair (fair/good, good or very good). If little or no maintenance is done, by 2003, 86 percent of the paved mileage on Chebeague would be in poorer than fair condition. To maintain our current road conditions, that is, to stop normal deterioration from fair to poor, our surface maintenance budget would need to increase from its current \$15,000 to \$50,000 per year.

This is obviously an expensive proposition, but it is also the kind of basic capital improvement that the Town should be planning for over a period of years and paying for with bonds. We recommend that the Town develop a six-year, rolling plan for capital improvements covering such things as road construction, purchase of land for open space and other Town construction projects, not just for Chebeague but for the Town as a whole.

#### **Paper Streets**

On Chebeague in the past when land was subdivided for development the individual or company that created the subdivision laid out streets to provide access to the lots. These were dedicated as roads on the plan. In some cases development of the subdivision never took place or was much less than the developer hoped. In other cases the road may was built initially but later abutting property owners encroached on the right of way. In either case, the roads legally continue to exist as "paper streets". In the late 1980s, because of confusion about the status of paper streets, the Maine State Legislature adopted a law allowing towns to review all their paper streets and decide whether they wanted to keep their claims or let them lapse. These paper streets can be a valuable asset to Chebeague, in particular, since they are often located in subdivisions laid out on the shore.

Cumberland has commissioned Donna Damon to study Chebeague's paper streets in detail. She has made recommendations to the Assistant Town Manager on the streets in the Nubble View and Waldo Point subdivisions, and is completing a report on Sunset Landing. These reports are being reviewed by the Town attorney. She has identified several other subdivisions that still need to be examined.

#### **Goals:**

ENSURE SAFE AND EFFECTIVE ROADS WITHOUT CHANGING THEIR BASIC CHARACTER.

## **Recommended actions**

### **Traffic regulations**

**Speed limit signs:** To allow enforcement of speed limit, speed limit signs should be posted or painted on the pavement (if concern exists about their disappearing) at the Stone Wharf and at Chandler Cove. Speed limits should be enforced. In order to help in this process, the Town should provide a radar gun for the police on the Island.

**Bicycle safety:** Since Chebeague has large numbers of bicyclists during summer, speed limit signs at both wharves should include traffic regulations for bikes and requests that bicyclists abide by them.  
Enforcement: The Police Department should enforce the speed limit and bike regulations.

**Traffic control:** We request the Town review signs for traffic control on Chebeague. For example, at the intersection of John Small Road and South Road people often don't know who is supposed to yield. This may not be the only place where signs would make driving safer.  
Road standards

**Traffic study:** We ask the Town to consider doing traffic volume studies for various roads on Chebeague. This would give us better information for deciding about road standards.

**Public road standards:** An implementation committee should work with the Director of Public Works to develop a set of standards for the public roads on Chebeague. These standards should then guide Town maintenance and improvement programs.

**Private road standards:** Explore creating standards for private roads. An implementation committee should work with the Town Planner, Public Works Director and Planning Board to develop minimum standards for private roads that are used to provide access to new homes and/or to meet the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance for 150 feet of road frontage. These standards should reflect the rural character of Chebeague, but assure that there is reasonable access for emergency purposes.

### **Road maintenance**

**Objectives and process:** Adopt a Town-wide six-year capital improvement plan. This would show what projects are planned on Chebeague as well as in other parts of the Town. Publicize information about how to report needed road work to DPW.

**Surface maintenance:** Over the longer run, the Town's Pavement Management Study recommends regular surface maintenance of roads in fair condition or better. It also recommends that roads that are in less than fair condition be reclaimed or reconstructed altogether. Chebeague and DPW should have a public discussion about the costs and benefits of these recommendations based upon the proposed public road standards in order to develop a plan or surface maintenance.

**New gravel pit:** One action that the Town should take that would reduce the cost of road maintenance would be to open a new gravel pit. Having to bring gravel out from the mainland increases the cost of roadwork substantially. However, some possible sites for a new gravel pit may be aquifer recharge

areas and should not be used. We urge the Town to have a study done of aquifer recharge areas and areas of gravel in order to chose a new gravel pit location.

**Paper streets:** The Committee recommends that the Town act on the process for holding hearings and making decisions on Chebeague's paper streets as the reports on them are completed.

Provide adequate public parking arrangements at wharves and other public parking spaces as needed.

Implement recommendations of the new Stone Wharf Committee on Parking at the Stone Wharf.

**Chandler Cove Wharf:** Develop regulations about the use of the parking lot at the Chandler Cove Wharf.

#### **VI: Chebeague's Relationship with Cumberland**

Chebeague is part of the Town of Cumberland. This is both a statement of obvious fact and an affirmation of that fact. Affirmation is necessary because there are many characteristics of the town that create inevitable tensions between Chebeaguers and both residents of the mainland and the Town government. Here we develop a series of recommendations to create institutionalized structures and processes to overcome these tensions.

Cumberland is unusual in being partly on the mainland and partly on an island. Portland, of course, faces the same situation, and tensions with Long Island ultimately lead to its succession. At the simplest level, Chebeague is an unconnected island. Our most used ferry service lands in Yarmouth. The new "remote" parking lot for the CTC is almost in Yarmouth. Once Chebeaguers get to the mainland, Cumberland Center and the Town Office is still a 20 to 30 minute drive away. Many Chebeague residents are summer people who hardly know mainland Cumberland and don't follow Town affairs. On the other side, most mainland Cumberland residents have probably never been to Chebeague because the trip is cumbersome and expensive. So the old saying "out of sight, out of mind" seems relevant on both sides.

At the next level, institutional and governmental structures have allowed a political distance to develop. The shift from the Town Meeting to the Council Manager form of government in the early 1970s is one factor. In yearly Town Meeting, islanders and mainlanders had to argue, negotiate and trade off over ordinances and the budget. Now, the Town Administration is more professionalized and the Council, on which Chebeague is represented, is more distant.

The separation between the Town government and MSAD 51 which spends a substantial amount of our tax money makes the situation more complicated. Many Islanders do not realize that they operate completely separately and that Town taxes have not risen in the same manner as school taxes.

Many necessary "practical" actions on the part of the Town and the Island accentuate the distance. Planning for growth management and open space, for example, has taken place separately for the mainland and for Chebeague. Chebeaguers probably would not want a committee made up primarily of mainlanders to be recommending policies for them, but initially, at least, this left Chebeague with no growth management or open space plans. The comprehensive property revaluation of 1996 provoked many questions on Chebeague about whether we were getting our "share" of Town services. On the other hand, a study completed in 1999 by Sam Ballard and the Town departments

concluded that there is an essential balance between taxes paid services received.

On the planning survey, there was a question that tried to find out about residents' perceptions about Islanders' roles in Town and MSAD 51 decision-making and the responsiveness of those governmental units to the Island's concerns. One of the most interesting things about the responses was the number of people who felt they just did not have enough information to answer. This was especially true of summer people, about 25 percent of whom did not answer in relation to the Town. Of course they are not around as much, generally cannot vote, and may not want to be paying attention to political issues when they are on vacation. But they do pay taxes and do get involved on issues like the property reevaluation and the CTC's dispute with Yarmouth.

Year-round residents, for their part considered both that Islanders were not enough involved in Town government and that the Town was not responsive enough on Island issues. The scale ranged from 1 (not enough involvement/responsiveness) to 5 (too much involvement/responsiveness). The general pattern was a majority who gave scores of 1 or 2, and a substantial minority who gave a score of 3 indicating that involvement and responsiveness was "about right". The mean evaluation by year-round residents of Islander involvement was 2.21, and of Town responsiveness was 2.05.

Like questions about taxes, questions about the responsiveness of government may tap into some generalized cynicism or discontent. Respondents' specific evaluation of "general government services" provided by the Town was actually quite high, with a mean of 5.08 on a scale from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 7 (very satisfied). But in their evaluations here, respondents did not spare Islanders either, saying, on average, that they should be more involved. Some people also did comment in the open-ended questions that Islanders should work more on having better relations with the Town.

#### **Common Interests and Needs**

Despite the tensions, Chebeague and the mainland have much in common, and Chebeague certainly needs, and benefits from, being part of the Town. For example there are parallels between the desire on the mainland to preserve some of the Town's agricultural character and heritage in the face of suburbanization and Chebeague's desire to preserve its fishing industry in the face of development for summer people and retirees.

More important, since the shift to the Council/Manager system, the Town has had a unified budget that does not distinguish between mainland and island expenditures. Chebeague has a small year-round population, about 5 percent of the Town, and some Island services have higher costs than on the mainland because of things like the expense of transportation. Over the last several years it has gotten about 11.5 percent of Town expenditures including capital items. Chebeague pays about 13 percent of the Town's taxes. Is this fair? This was a big issue after the comprehensive reassessment.

In 1998, Sam Ballard, with the cooperation of Bob Benson, Melody Main and the various department heads, identified those elements of the town budget that reflected services for Chebeague. There was a disparity as Chebeague taxes represented 13% of the total while we represented 5% of the population in 2000. This could be viewed as "unfair". However, as this planning effort has proceeded, it has become clear, that such concerns are not the major issue. The real issue is not 'fairness' since the mainland's needs are different

than Chebeague's. Rather what is required is to evaluate what Chebeague needs and then examine whether those needs have been reasonably met.

When Ballard's analysis was presented in 1999, a consensus was established that the budgeting mechanisms then in place did in fact reasonably serve the island's needs. This information can be extracted from the spread sheets the town manager submits to the Council. With this information we can figure out what is being spent in relation to what the island's needs are.

For capital items, such as purchase of land or major road work, the yearly budget process would be much more informed if the Town also had a six-year capital improvement plan. This would lay out future projects both on Chebeague and on the mainland.

**Goal:**

INCREASE INSTITUTIONALIZED INTERACTION AND COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CHEBEAGUE RESIDENTS AND TOWN POLICY-MAKING AND ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS

**Recommended Actions**

Budget meeting on Island with Council & Town Manager, continuing the budget review process initiated in 1999.

**Adoption of a Town-wide Capital Improvement Plan.**

Coordination on Island policy-making and administration

Administrative meetings: We request that heads of Town departments that provide services on Chebeague come out to discuss what they see as their role on the Island. We also encourage them to develop mechanisms for increasing or improving routine communication on Island needs.

**Town staff on Chebeague:** Consider having a member of the Town staff come out to the Island at regular intervals -- once a week or once a month, for example -- to allow Chebeague residents to conduct Town business.

**Boat fare to public meetings:** In Town Meeting times the Town paid the ferry fare for Chebeaguers to encourage as many people as possible to go to Meeting. We urge that the Town now pay the fare of individuals attending Council, Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals meetings.

**Televising Town meetings**

Now that the Town is televising Town Council and School Board meetings on cable TV they should explore options such as Internet technology for including Chebeague in the real-time broadcast. As an interim measure, meetings are taped and available to viewers on the Island.

**Police, Fire, and Rescue:** Establish a committee to review the staffing and facility needs of the police, fire and rescue services.

**Appendix 1: Chebeague Schools**

These recommendations to S.A.D. 51, the Town of Cumberland and the Chebeague community rest on the assumption that high quality educational opportunities are essential to the future of the Island. Attracting and keeping young families is crucial to maintaining a diverse, year round economy and community on the Island. We seek to sustain the strengths in the present school situation and remedy the deficiencies.

The goal of this section is to:

**MAINTAIN A QUALITY EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS FROM PRESCHOOL THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL**

### **Schooling on Chebeague**

In one dimension the history of schools on Chebeague is a story of decline and loss. From the late nineteenth century to the present enrollment in Chebeague schools dropped from the largest in the town of Cumberland (larger even than all of the town's mainland schools put together) to the smallest in the town. In the years since World War II, the Island lost its high school, then the junior high, so that now the Island School provides only kindergarten and six grades of multi grade elementary education with two teachers. Since the higher level schools closed, Chebeague children have commuted by boat and bus to mainland schools from seventh grade through high school. And some Chebeague families are sending children across the water to elementary grades on the mainland, or schooling them at home. These facts suggest that the surviving Chebeague School may be in jeopardy.

Yet the Chebeague School draws praise from parents, teachers and administrators in School Administrative District 51. The Island School's proponents cite the quality of education that a favorable teacher/student ratio (superior to any other school in the district) and effective multi age teaching make possible. On the other hand, the advantages of the Chebeague School are also the sources of its limitations. Smallness may bring educational shortcomings as well. Even moderate changes in enrollment from year to year can have a significant impact. In any given year, particular grades in our K-6 program may have no students or only a single student enrolled or an imbalance of genders. And in the later years (grades 4-6), when sequential learning of certain subjects such as mathematics becomes more important, it may be difficult to provide for each student particular courses in the order he or she needs.

Chebeague children with special needs schooled on the Island may be less well served, in a less timely way, than their counterparts on the mainland. While the system does provide these services, the circumstances of island living and transportation make it harder to deliver services these children need. Island teachers and parents must be more aggressive than mainlanders in assessment of students' needs and insistence that special education staff come to the students rather than transporting the children to the service provider. Services for challenged or gifted students are available within SAD 51's excellent system, but delivery of them to Chebeaguers can be problematic.

The success of the Chebeague School depends even more heavily than in other school situations on who is teaching and on persistent involvement by parents in their children's educations. When good veteran teachers, experienced in multi age classes, familiar with the structure, resources and decision-making processes of SAD 51 and positive toward Chebeague's distinctive community and way of life, teach in the Island School, things go well. Openness to the Island and to parental concerns is a requirement for Chebeague teachers to succeed in educating our children. Similarly, the Island School is at its best when parents take a sustained interest in the experiences and education of their children and communicate regularly with their teachers. Since the Island enjoys a population diverse in background, but joined by allegiance to a shared way of life, any problems related to diversity among students within the school may be resolved by communication and cooperation among parents and teachers.

## Schooling off Chebeague

When Chebeague children commute to mainland schools, they face the challenge of joining a separate and larger community of students. By all reports from Cumberland school officials, academic integration is not a problem for commuting Chebeaguers. Well prepared, except perhaps for some children with special needs, island children move readily into their classes on the mainland, exhibiting the same diversity as their mainland counterparts. But the Chebeaguers encounter an already established social structure, which they may find difficult to enter, especially because of transportation schedules. The present arrangements for transport by the Chebeague Transportation Company's ferryboats and the school buses do impede Chebeague children's participation in weekday evening and weekend activities unless parents make special efforts to include them in sports and other extracurricular activities. These efforts are virtually impossible for families where both parents work full-time on the Island. Even then, the present CTC ferry schedule keeps both students and parents from full participation in weeknight evening events, unless they stay overnight on the mainland. The commuting routine, with normal departure from school by bus to the ferry as soon as the school day ends, is presently supplemented by a late afternoon bus that enables Chebeague children to take part in after school activities and return home in time for supper.

We were surprised to discover that there is no emergency plan in case normal transportation between the mainland schools and the Island is disrupted by severe weather or mechanical breakdown. If Chebeague children were stranded on the mainland, the school authorities would need to improvise arrangements for their care until transportation was restored.

Distance and transportation are the principal obstacles to the integration of Chebeague children into the Cumberland schools. These factors also may be barriers to appreciation of the island way of life by mainland families and their school children, most of whom know little about Chebeague. There is evidence that ignorance fosters in some mainlanders prejudiced toward Chebeague as remote and inaccessible, isolated and backward, with little to offer the more rapidly growing, seemingly more cosmopolitan and increasingly suburban coastal town. Such attitudes suggest that Chebeague children may be stereotyped as different, out of the mainstream, needing less education, likely to lead insular lives on the island they come from. However, not everyone agrees that this problem exists or that it is useful to raise it.

### Preparation for Jobs, Careers and Further Education

In the high school years, the course of study prepares students for post-secondary education, vocational, technical or collegiate. Our inquiries left some doubt as to whether Chebeague students are encouraged to view high school as a stepping stone to further education or training that would enhance their success or enlarge their opportunities in jobs or careers. There is some evidence that when Chebeague families deal with mainland school teachers or counselors they are less assertive than more suburban mainlanders. In some cases, it may be assumed by the mainland school or the island family that the student will take up a traditional island occupation for which schooling beyond high school is irrelevant and unnecessary. But it is not clear that all Chebeague students and their families have the opportunity to understand and consider pursuing the benefits of further education. The resources for assisting all Chebeague families with educational choices for their sons and daughters are available in the Cumberland schools, but the use of these resources appears to be uneven.

### **Communication and Representation**

At present communication between Chebeague families and the school district leadership comprises regular meetings on Chebeague of school authorities with an active parents' advisory committee and occasional meetings on the Island of the SAD # 51 Board of Directors, on which no Chebeague resident presently sits. While these occasions for dialogue and identification of problems have been productive, we found interest in supplementing them with additional opportunities for school and community collaboration.

### **Recommended Actions**

Recommendations to the Town of Cumberland.

**Support Recreation Center and Library:** Continue and increase support to the Chebeague Recreation Center and the Chebeague Library, both of which supplement the educational and recreational resources of the Chebeague Island and the mainland schools.

**Exchange with mainland:** Help to develop a wider range of opportunities for mainland children to experience the Island and vice versa. This could include recreational programs through the Chebeague Recreation Center, but might involve historical, cultural or scientific exchanges sponsored by other groups such as the Library or other Island or mainland organizations.

Recommendations To S.A.D. 51:

**Teachers:** Appoint and retain first-rate teachers for the Chebeague Island School, teachers experienced in multi-age classrooms, familiar with the system and services of the district and interested in and knowledgeable about the island way of life. Orientation of new teachers to Chebeague and its school is essential. Review MEA results to identify strengths and weaknesses of the Island school.

**Coordination with mainland:** Expand coordination and communication between the Chebeague School and mainland elementary schools, beginning with recreational programs and, perhaps including student exchanges, and special programs for mainland students on Chebeague which draw on the special strengths of the island, e. g., maritime or marine studies, island history and ecology, and oral history; the Island Institute may be a significant resource in this regard.

**Library and Recreation Center:** Since the Chebeague Island Library serves as the elementary school library and the Recreation Center serves as the school gym, we request that SAD 51 increase its financial support to both.

**Equity:** Insure equity with the mainland in the educational programs offered at the Chebeague Island school. Prepare recommendations for bringing staffing, educational resources, services and facilities up to the same level as the mainland.

**Existing advisory committee:** Continue and support the role of the Chebeague Island School Community Advisory Committee.  
School Board meetings: Have two School Board meetings on Chebeague each year. Publicize the time and place of these School Board meetings and of meetings of the two school advisory committees as well as Chebeague school events like School Appreciation Night. These should

be included in the annual school calendar sent to all Islanders, and in the Island Calendar published by the Chebeague Island Council.

**Chebeague in-service:** Develop a teacher in-service training course on Chebeague to acquaint all school personnel with Chebeague, its community and its educational resources. This in-service should be learning-standards related.

**New Advisory Committee:** Create a new Community Advisory Committee for Chebeague Students on the Mainland to advise school administrators and policy-makers on issues related to academic, extracurricular and transportation issues relative to commuting students. Expand early orientation programs for Chebeague children and their families to acquaint them with and welcome them to the mainland schools before they begin commuting to them. Also begin this orientation earlier. Work to increase the aspirations of Chebeague students for post-secondary academic and vocational education. Encourage parental involvement with the schools on the mainland. Coordinate with CTC to make the transportation schedule -- buses and boats -- more flexible so that students, parents and other Chebeaguers can be involved in after-school activities, including those in the evening. Implement all items in the current school contract with CTC. Allow for parent participation in contract negotiations. Encourage the District to schedule administrative activities such as budget hearings so that Chebeaguers can go to them. Develop an emergency plan for any breakdown in transportation that would strand Chebeague children on the mainland. Recommendations to the Chebeague community:  
Education on education: The Island Committee should develop a program to educate all Island residents on the nature, needs and importance of the Island school and the issues related to commuting to school on the mainland.

**Involved non-parents:** The Island Committee, the Chebeague Parents Association and the two school advisory committees should recruit people without children in the schools, but who have an interest in educational issues to serve on the advisory committees  
Reciprocity: Island organizations should continue to support reciprocal relationships between Chebeague and mainland schools and families to improve mutual understanding and reduce the impediments to integrating Chebeague children into the mainland schools and after-school life. This could involve organizing events like a Get to Know Chebeague Day for SAD 51 decision-makers, administrators, teachers and other personnel.

**School Board:** Work to elect a resident of Chebeague to the District Board of Directors.

\_ Planning Decisions, Inc. 2000. Analysis of the Fiscal Impacts on Low and Moderate Income Households: Town of Cumberland. Part of the Residential Fiscal Impact Project.

\_ In 2000-2001 it is anticipated total enrollment will be 26, but there will be no students in the 4th grade.

Version of 5/5/02

