

SECTION 1 OVERVIEW

Purpose

The purpose of this plan update is to provide guidance for a hazard resistant Knox County that vigilantly assesses, plans for and mitigates any natural hazard.

Geography

The County has a total area of 1,142 square miles, of which, 366 square miles is land and 776 square miles (68%) is water. Thirteen of the County's municipalities, including five islands, are coastal communities with frontage on Penobscot Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. There is approximately 768 miles of ocean coastline. The mainland portion of the County includes 13 lakes and great ponds. Rolling hills and mountains rise in both coastal and inland communities to a maximum elevation of 1,385 feet.

Climate

Knox County's climate has an influence on the occurrence and severity of natural hazards. During the winters, temperatures range on average from 10 to 29°F. Ice, sleet, rain, snow, and heavy winds are common. The highest monthly precipitation is 5.37 inches on average in November. During the summers, temperatures are pleasant. The warmest month, July has an average daily maximum temperature of 76.2°F. However, storms are common and bring heavy winds and rain. The lowest monthly precipitation for the County is 2.91 inches on average in August.

Transportation

With the exception of school bus services and on-demand response services for special needs individuals, and limited public service bus routes, regularly scheduled, fixed-route municipal public transportation services are not provided within the County. Therefore, most are dependent on private vehicles and the road network. Additionally, island communities are served by state and private ferries and essential air services which can be severely impacted by extreme weather. US Route 1 is the principal arterial serving Knox County residents and businesses. It is an economic lifeline to the region. State Route 17 is a minor arterial, providing the main east-west inland access to the state capital Augusta. The other state routes are collector roads that link coastal, peninsular, and inland communities. The region has freight rail service only. Year-round passenger rail is not currently available but is expected to return with limited passenger service to Boston within the next five years. The Knox County Regional Airport provides scheduled commercial air service to Boston and beyond.

Governance

Knox County has the following governmental units:

- **County** - One county government that is run by a county commission/county administrator form of government. The county commission sets policy, adopts plans, and approves annual budgets for the county, and adopts ordinances as appropriate for townships of the unorganized territory. The County includes the County Sheriff's Office and County Jail, County Administrative Office, County Treasurer's Office, Registrar of Deeds, Probate Judge, District Attorney, Regional Communications Center, Regional Airport and the Emergency Management Office.

- **City** - One city that is run by a city council/city manager form of government. The city council sets policy, adopts plans and ordinances, and approves annual budgets. The city office has regular hours, and provides a range of public services, like sewer, water, police, ambulance, fire protection, and public works. The city is responsible for tax collection, local road maintenance and snow removal, land use planning and permitting and code enforcement. Most city officials are paid employees.
- **Town** - Sixteen towns that are run by publically elected select boards, some with town administrators or managers. The town meeting form of government is used, in which registered voters adopt ordinances and plans, and approve budgets at yearly and special town meetings. Town offices are open to the public on a limited basis, and most town officials are volunteers. Towns provide limited services, and most depend upon the County or neighboring communities to assist with police and fire protection. The towns are responsible for tax collection, local road maintenance and snow removal, land use planning and permitting and code enforcement.
- **Plantation** - One plantation that is run by a Board of Assessors. Few services are provided locally, and the plantation depends upon the State and the County to assist with police protection and other essential services. Plantation office hours are irregular.
- **UT** (Unorganized Territory) - The State regulates land use development and permitting through the Land Use Planning Commission (LUPC), and tax collection. The County provides police protection and other essential services. The Unorganized Territory has no local government.

Employment

Most employment is located in the service center community of Rockland, followed by the specialized service center communities of Camden, Rockport, and Thomaston. Medical, social services and education professions have seen growth over the past decade, while many other sectors have stagnated or decreased. Hospitality occupations provide low wage employment in season. Traditional industries including construction, maritime activities, and related occupations remain important sectors, although they employ fewer people today than they once did.

Demographics

County, State, Nation Profile						
Measure	Knox County		Maine		United States	
	2010	ACS 2017	2010	ACS 2017	2010	ACS 2017
Population	39,736	39,700	1,328,361	1,330,158	308,745,538	321,004,407
Total Housing Units	23,744	24,215	721,830	735,711	131,704,730	135,393,564
Total Households	17,258	17,022	557,219	554,061	116,716,292	118,825,921
Median Household Income	\$45,264	\$53,117	\$46,933	\$53,024	\$51,914	\$57,652
% of population under 5	4.8%	4.4%	5.2%	4.8%	6.5%	6.2%
% of population 18 and over	80.6%	81.7%	79.3%	80.7%	76.0%	77.1%
% of population 65 and over	19.1%	22.9%	15.9%	18.8%	13.0%	14.9%

Source: US Census 2010 and ACS 5-yr Estimates 2017

Municipal Profile						
Area	Population				Housing Units	
	2000	2010	2017 ACS Estimates	2010-2017 % Change	2010 Total	2010 Occupied
Appleton, Town of	1,271	1,316	1,358	3.2	646	545
Camden, Town of	5,254	4,850	4,837	-0.3	3,165	2,382
Cushing, Town of	1,322	1,534	1,475	-3.8	926	642
Friendship, Town of	1,204	1,152	1,035	-10.2	896	508
Hope, Town of	1,310	1,536	1,522	-9.1	805	603
Isle au Haut, Town of	79	73	27	-63.0	172	42
Matinicus Isle Plantation	51	74	81	9.5	147	41
North Haven, Town of	381	355	540	52.1	515	165
Owls Head, Town of	1,601	1,580	1,559	-1.3	1,060	737
Rockland, City of	7,609	7,297	7,204	-1.3	3,925	3,423
Rockport, Town of	3,209	3,330	3,356	0.8	1,956	1,422
St. George, Town of	2,580	2,591	2,583	-0.3	2,107	1,204
South Thomaston, Town of	1,416	1,558	1,453	-6.7	893	674
Thomaston, Town of	3,748	2,781	2,767	-0.5	1,385	1,219
Union, Town of	2,209	2,259	2,507	11.0	1,203	981
UT (Unorganized Territories)	0	7	8	14.3	91	3
Vinalhaven, Town of	1,235	1,165	1,168	0.3	1,295	545
Warren, Town of	3,794	4,751	4,706	-0.9	1,760	1,508
Washington, Town of	1,345	1,527	1,514	-0.9	797	614
Knox County	39,618	39,736	39,700	-0.9	23,744	17,258

Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2013-2017