

TOPSHAM MAIN STREET VILLAGE PLAN



TOPSHAM MAIN STREET ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DRAFT—December 2007

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Elizabeth Armstrong
Ted Crooker
Rich Csenge
Mike Hamilton
Jay Herrick
Terry Gray
James Howard
Arlene Morris
Al Obrey
Harold Sandelin
Marilyn Sandelin
Sue Spann, Chairperson
Mike Wilhelm

Rod Melanson, Assistant Town Planner, was the primary Town staff support. Other Town staff input and guidance essential to the process included: Richard Roedner, Town Planner; Suzanne Watson, Former Director of Topsham Development, Inc.; Wes Thames, Public Works Director; Gary Brown, Former Town Manager, and Jane Scease, Liaison to the Board of Selectmen.

MRLD, a landscape architecture and planning firm based in Yarmouth, Maine, was the lead consultant for The Main Street Village Plan. The team also included: Holt & Lachman Architects of Portland, Maine; Gorrill-Palmer Consulting Engineers, Inc., a transportation engineering firm from Gray, Maine; and Sitelines, PA, a civil engineering firm based in Topsham. Project staff included:

Mitchell Rasor, MRLD: Project Manager, Planning & Zoning, Gateway & Design, Traffic & Safety
David Versel, MRLD: Housing & Economic Development, Planning & Zoning
Katie Benedict, MRLD: Graphic Design Support
Antje Kablitz, MRLD: Site Inventory & GIS Analysis
Christopher Kittredge, MRLD: GIS Analysis
Alan Holt, Holt & Lachman: Public Participation, Gateway & Design
Dennis Lachman, Holt & Lachman: Gateway & Design
Peter Hedrich, Gorrill-Palmer: Traffic & Safety
Curtis Neufeld, Sitelines, Engineering Support

The committee appreciates the input from the many citizens and business owners who participated in the Public Forums and stakeholder interviews. Their contributions are critical, ensuring that the goals of the plan reflect the needs of the community. Theresa Oleksiw is also recognized for her efforts as the original chairperson of the committee.

Chapter 1:

Introduction

The Town of Topsham is proactively planning for a pedestrian friendly, mixed-use village along Main Street. Over the past ten years, the Town's efforts have transformed Main Street into a more attractive and safe place to live, work and play. Main Street already includes many of the essential ingredients of a village center: historic character; a dramatic riverfront; a mix of uses, and civic, educational and arts facilities. The two-mile long Main Street, stretching from the Androscoggin River to I-295, includes a series of dynamic neighborhoods. The primary goal of this plan is to make Main Street a place, rather than a conduit for traffic, by protecting or promoting the inherent positive qualities of each neighborhood.

Many recent initiatives support the Town's goal of reclaiming and revitalizing Main Street Village area: the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan; the Topsham Trails Feasibility Study; the Transportation Improvement Study; civic investments like the relocated Department of Public Works, the new Town Hall Complex and the Monument Place Extension. These efforts have been supported by MaineDOT improvements to Main Street, visible private sector investment such as the Bowdoin Mill complex and past planning efforts such as the Zoning and Design Standards, The Main Street Vision Plan, The Lower Village Plan and Summer Street/DPW Redevelopment Study.

In 2005, the Town completed the Comprehensive Plan update. The plan laid out the following vision for Topsham's Main Street Village:

“In two decades, the Village, will remain the core of our community, containing smaller-scale shops and businesses, historic homes, a riverfront park and many of our town's public services...

pedestrians will be able to move about in safety and with ease thanks to more sidewalks, better traffic flow, more parking, more bike trails, and safe sidewalks.”

To achieve this vision, the Comprehensive Plan recommended a Main Street Master Plan. A Main Street Advisory Committee was formed in 2005 to oversee the master planning process for Main Street.

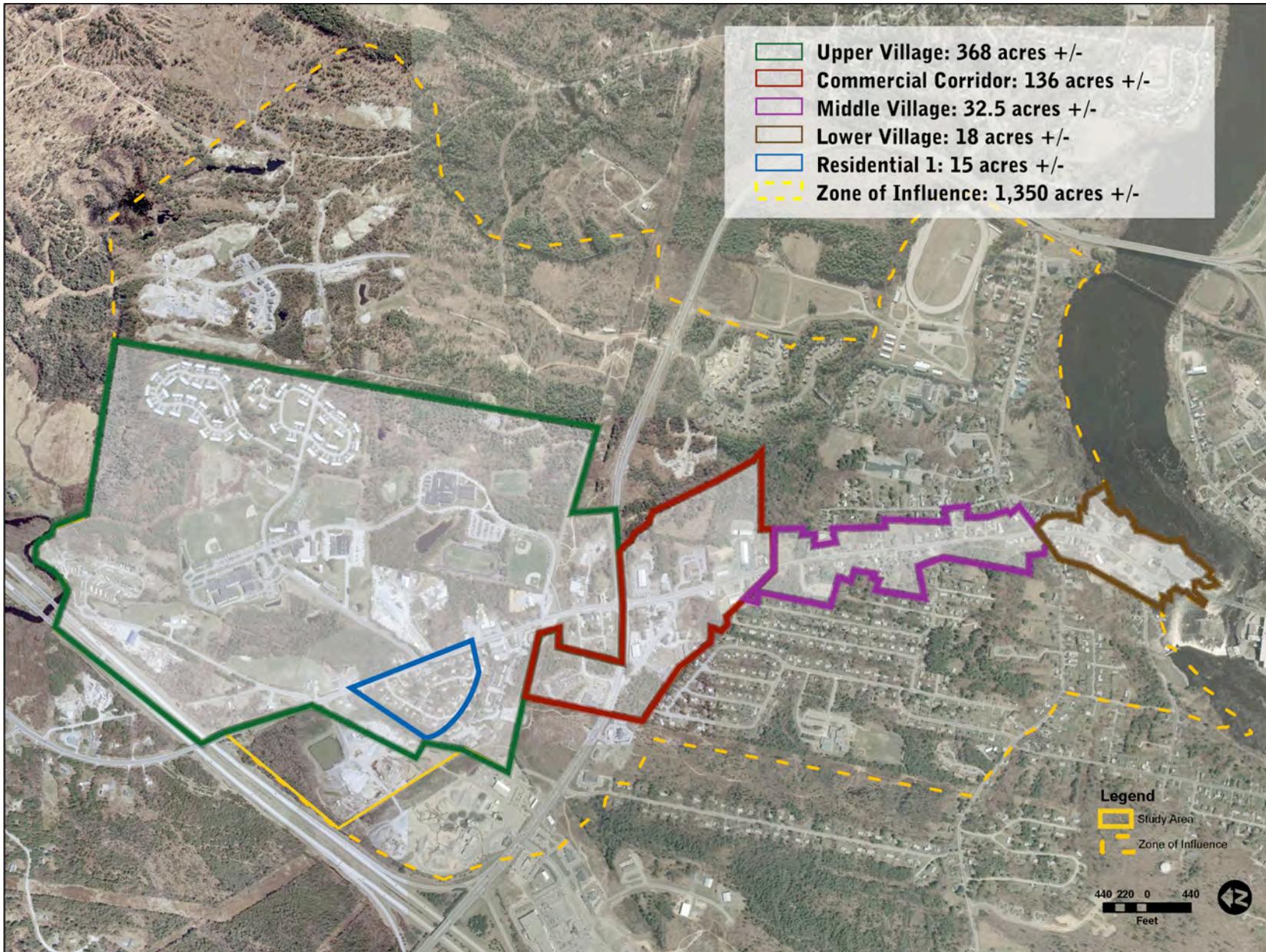
The central goal of the planning process has been to ensure that Main Street will serve as the true heart of Topsham for many years to come. The committee set out several goals for the plan:

- Opening the planning process to all community members
- Guiding growth through carefully crafted zoning and performance standards
- Encouraging diversity in housing and local economic development
- Creating an overall sense of place with clear gateways and other unifying themes
- Identifying infill/redevelopment opportunities
- Establishing and maintaining civic buildings on Main Street
- Locating opportunities for parks, trails and civic gathering areas
- Targeting short term and long term infrastructure/maintenance projects
- Creating safe pedestrian and vehicular circulation patterns
- Protecting and enhancing the historic character of the Main Street Village area

This document represents both the culmination of a two year-long planning process and the beginning of a ten-year transformation of Topsham's Main Street into a safe, attractive and sustainable village area that serves the entire community.

Figures 1 and 2 on the following pages outline the boundaries of the study area with existing zoning and the adjacent “zone of influence” as well as document the existing land uses in the Main Street Village area. Figure 3 locates the Main Street Village area within the context of the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map. It is important to note that the entire study area is within the designated growth boundary.

Figure 1: Main Street Village Area Map (Existing Zoning)
550 acres +/-



**Figure 2: Main Street Village Area Land Uses
550 Acres +/- (land uses noted by acreage)**

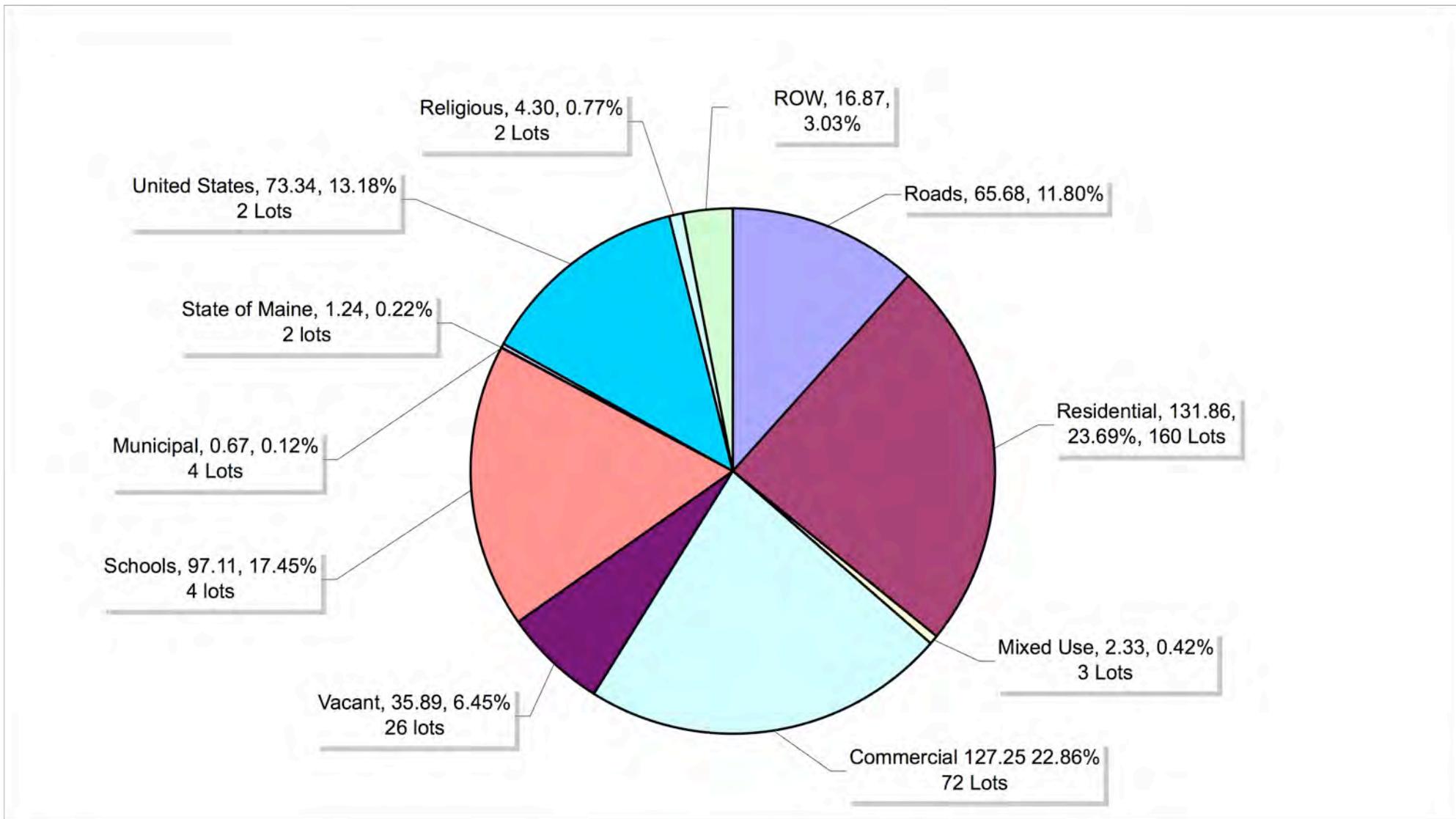
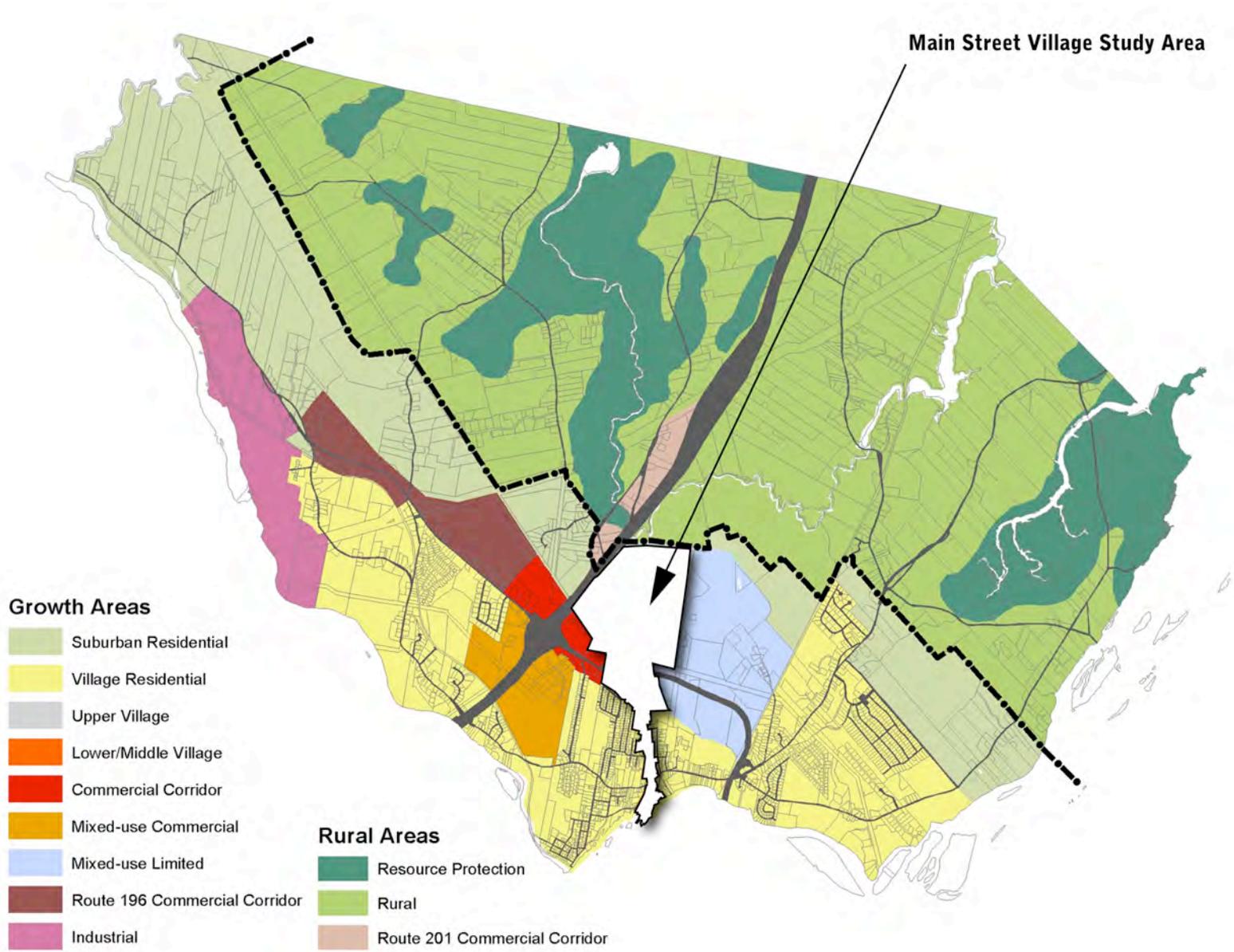


Figure 3: Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map (with Main Street Village Study Area)



Chapter 2:

Planning Process

Overview

The process of developing this plan began in the summer of 2005 with the appointment of the Main Street Village Advisory Committee by the Board of Selectmen. In August 2005, the Town issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking consulting services for the completion of the plan. The MRLD team was chosen.

MRLD began its work in September 2005. Beginning at that time, the Advisory Committee met at least twice per month, sometimes meeting weekly. Various members of the consulting team attended most committee meetings, though some committee-only workshops were held as well.

This plan is a continuation and refinement of a 1996 study entitled, *The Main Street Vision: A Plan for Reclaiming Topsham Village*. As previously mentioned, this current plan is a specific implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan.

Public Input

One of the first tasks undertaken by the committee and the consultants was the staging of three public forum sessions. These sessions were organized to gather public input about the Main Street Village area and help citizens and businesspeople articulate their hopes and concerns for the future of the area.

The three public sessions were held at the Topsham Public Library on October 13, October 25 and November 10, 2005. Each session was designed with a unique purpose:

- The October 13 session concentrated on Lower and Middle Villages. The purpose of this meeting was to identify strengths and weaknesses of this section of the Village and to develop a list of key ideas and concerns for this part of town. 30 citizens attended the Forum (not including town staff, committee members, consultants and facilitators).
- The October 25 session was a similar exercise to the October 13 session, but was focused on Upper Village and the Commercial Corridor. 27 residents attended the Forum.
- The November 10 session involved taking the lists of key ideas and concerns from the first two sessions and then beginning the process of developing responses and solutions. 40 residents attended the Forum.

Summary of Forum Results

The Forums resulted in a broad range of specific and general recommendations and concerns regarding Main Street issues. Following are the key findings categorized by the four primary aspects of the Main Street Village Plan:

Zoning & Comprehensive Planning

- Strong support for protecting and promoting a walkable, pedestrian-friendly village environment throughout the Study Area
- Strong support for protecting and enhancing village-scaled development throughout the Study Area
- Strong support for the recent development patterns in the Lower Village
- Strong support for the village-scale and historic sense of the Middle Village
- Strong support for the new Town Hall Complex
- Support for implementing the Comprehensive Plan, including development of zoning and other regulatory measures to ensure village-scaled and village-compatible development (specifically the adoption of a Main Street master plan)

- Support for implementing zoning and other regulatory measures to protect the historic quality of the Lower and Middle Village
- Support for flexible parking requirements, and development of small-scaled and attractive parking models for Main Street
- Concern with the recent rezoning of the northern edge of the Middle Village to Commercial Corridor
- Concern with the future of the BNAS Annex and support for zoning in this location allowing village-scale neighborhoods with a blend of market rate and workforce housing
- Strong opposition to big box and strip development along Main Street
- Strong opposition to expansion of auto dealerships and other strip commercial development into the Middle Village or along Main Street
- Support for long-standing businesses north of Route 196 as an important part of the economic base for the Town. However, there was expressed concern for ensuring adequate buffering between potentially incompatible uses and more clear guidelines for new development.

Gateway & Design

- Strong support for the recent development patterns in the Lower Village including reuse of historic structures, placement of new buildings along the street, placement of parking behind new buildings, and development of compatible architecture and extending these patterns north on Main Street
- Strong support for the traditional, village-scaled quality of architecture in the Middle Village
- Strong support to protect and enhance the residential character of the Middle Village
- Strong support to protect the “Apple Orchard” site as an open space buffer, and ideally, secured as a public park
- Strong support for enhancing trails and other pedestrian connections between neighborhoods and natural areas / parks / schools throughout the Study Area

- Strong support for developing the riverfront park at the old fire station site
- Strong support to extend sidewalks on both sides of the street, where possible, throughout the length of Main Street
- Strong support for making the length of Main Street function and look like a traditional Main Street, not a strip mall

Housing & Economic Development

- Strong support to promote development of workforce housing opportunities in the currently zoned Upper Village, especially with redevelopment plans for the BNAS Annex
- Strong support for village-scaled niche commercial development on Main Street as an alternative to the Topsham Fair Mall
- Strong support for village-scaled, mixed-use buildings, especially to provide live/work (“mom & pop”) commercial and professional opportunities
- Respect for existing businesses in the Commercial Corridor and north of Route 196 while expressing concerns about the long-term appropriateness of aesthetics and scale of these operations.

Traffic & Safety

- Strong concern with the pedestrian and vehicular safety of the Route 196 intersection
- Strong support for sidewalks along both sides of Main Street
- Strong support for more cross walks along the length of Main Street, especially at the Town Hall Complex and the entries to the schools
- Strong support for reducing traffic volumes on Main Street
- Strong Support for raising Route 196 over Main Street
- Strong support for moving the Route 201 and Route 24 designations from Main Street to the Coastal Connector.
- Support for more pedestrian connections between Main Street and the adjacent residential neighborhoods
- Support for traffic calming measures along Main Street

- Support for more on-street parking
- Support to implement the recommendation of the traffic study to improve pedestrian safety and vehicular flow
- Strong support for the addition of on ramps to Interstate 295

A detailed description of the Public Forum sessions is included as Appendices B and C.

Another public input task was to reach out to students at the two Elementary schools in the neighborhoods surrounding the Main Street Village (Woodside and Williams-Cone). Members of the Main Street Advisory Committee visited the two schools in October 2005 to get feedback and ideas from children in these schools. Each student was asked to sketch out their thoughts for the future of the village. Results from these visits were hung on the walls at the November 10 public forum session

Existing Conditions Report

Another initial task in the planning process was the completion of an Existing Conditions Report. This report documented a wide variety of data and information regarding the past and present situation in the Main Street Village Area, including:

- Physical conditions
- Economic and housing conditions
- Traffic and safety conditions
- Review of previous studies

As part of the process of developing the Existing Conditions Report, the consulting team held a series of private meetings with key village-area stakeholders. These stakeholders included citizen leaders, business owners, real estate professionals and town officials. Key findings from the Existing Conditions Report are summarized below.

Physical Conditions Findings

- Existing land uses vary widely in the Main Street corridor, ranging from historic, pedestrian-oriented areas to suburban-style automobile-oriented strips
- Land uses tend to be segregated from one another in many parts of the corridor—there is a need to better integrate them.
- The section of Main Street crossed by Route 196 is currently part of the Commercial Corridor, but should be rethought as a “Village Center,” focused around the new municipal campus development.
- Lower and Middle Villages are in need of stabilization, while the north Main Street area needs a well-planned transformation addressing the complexity of uses and adjacencies. This transformation will include the area master plan of the Naval Annex overseen by the Topsham Local Redevelopment Authority as well as creating new zones to encourage economic development, bolstering the diversity of uses on Main Street.
- The Village Area needs to have stronger design standards and a unified and continuous pedestrian environment. This should include a more pedestrian friendly crossing at Route 196.
- New development in the proposed Village Center, Limited Industrial, Civic Mixed Use and North Main Overlay Zones needs to look and feel more like a village and less like an auto-oriented commercial strip.
- Main Street lacks parks/public spaces and amenities. These civic spaces and natural areas need to complement the built environment, create focal points, mitigate the impacts of development and provide access for natural resource education and recreation.
- A cohesive design strategy is needed to delineate approaches to Main Street from its major and minor gateways.
- The Main Street Village has excellent basic infrastructure and only has minor needs for improvements to these elements.

Economic and Housing Conditions Findings

- Conceiving Main Street as a diverse, but locally focused continuous village area presents an opportunity to enhance Topsham's overall attractiveness as a community center.

The closing of BNAS will have mixed effects on Topsham's village area, creating short-term challenges for local real estate markets, but presenting longer-term opportunities related to the redevelopment of the base in Brunswick and the Annex in Topsham.

Lower and Middle villages both have potential for pedestrian-scale development and niche housing and commercial developments.

Landowners north of Route 196 are wary of change or zoning restrictions that will impede the growth of existing successful businesses.

Change in the Village Area will be incremental and cannot occur overnight.

Topsham's Industrial zones lack infrastructure and existing industrial like uses on Main Street, particularly north of Route 196, do not have practical options for relocation and need to be accommodated.

Traffic and Safety Conditions Findings

Main Street's role as a regional transportation corridor puts a great deal of strain on its historic function as Topsham's civic and commercial center.

Curves and slopes on Main Street may slow traffic, but they also add to the visual appeal of the corridor.

Sidewalk improvements are needed in several locations throughout the corridor.

Need for highly visible crossings throughout the Main Street corridor

Designing buildings and the street environment to a Village-scale will change the psychology of motorists and likely cause drivers to slow as they proceed through the area.

The full Existing Conditions Report is included as Appendix A.

Section Reports

After completing the Existing Conditions Report the committee and the consultant team began work on the four separate elements of the Main Street Village Plan:

1. Zoning & Comprehensive Planning
2. Gateway & Design
3. Housing & Economic Development
4. Traffic & Safety

The committee dedicated multiple meetings to each of these elements. Each element concluded with the completion and approval of a memorandum report. These reports have been adapted as Chapters 3 through 6 of the plan document and their contents form the basis for the Implementation Plan in Chapter 7.

Final Report

After completing the section reports the committee and consultant then set about assembling the final report. This document is the culmination of the entire planning process and representing the vision and strategies for transforming the Main Street Village area into a series of diverse neighborhoods defined by a safe, attractive and sustainable Main Street.

Chapter 3:

Zoning and Comprehensive Planning Issues

Overview

This chapter explores the regulatory environment affecting the Main Street Village area. For each of the four sub-areas existing visions, plans and ordinances were evaluated to determine what issues need to be reexamined or what changes are necessary to fulfill the vision of the plan.

Documents reviewed in the process included:

- Topsham Comprehensive Plan (2005)
- The Main Street Vision: A Plan for Reclaiming Topsham Village (1996)
- Topsham Historic Districts Design Review Manual (2000)
- Transportation Improvement Study (2005)
- Topsham Land Use Ordinance
- Evaluation of the Green Street Pump Station for the Topsham Sewer District (2006)

Figure 4 below displays proposed changes to the boundaries of zoning districts in the Main Street Village area. There are many references to Figure 4 throughout this Plan.

I. Lower Village Zone

The Lower Village Zone includes the most dramatic natural feature and some of the most favorably recognized historic buildings and village-scale redevelopment in Topsham. The Bowdoin Mill and panoramic views of the Androscoggin River all contribute to a strong local sense of place. The Lower Village revitalization is an example of smaller scale development

fostering pedestrian-scaled spaces, well-designed buildings and parking and an overall sense of visual harmony. This type of development is a counterpoint to the more regional and auto-oriented development at the Topsham Fair Mall. The ongoing Lower Village revitalization is proof that old and new can mix and that Main Street has a place in Topsham's future.

Vision Statement

The statement of purpose for the Lower Village found in the Zoning Ordinance reads:

The objective of the Lower Village is to provide for an area that is a dense, mixed-use pedestrian-scaled historic village. Development should be a village scale with an historic appearance.

Comprehensive Plan Vision

The Lower Village vision in the Comprehensive Plan reads:

The Lower Village designation is intended to encourage redevelopment that complements the existing dense, mixed-use pedestrian scaled village. The Lower Village should be developed according to the Lower Village Master Plan.

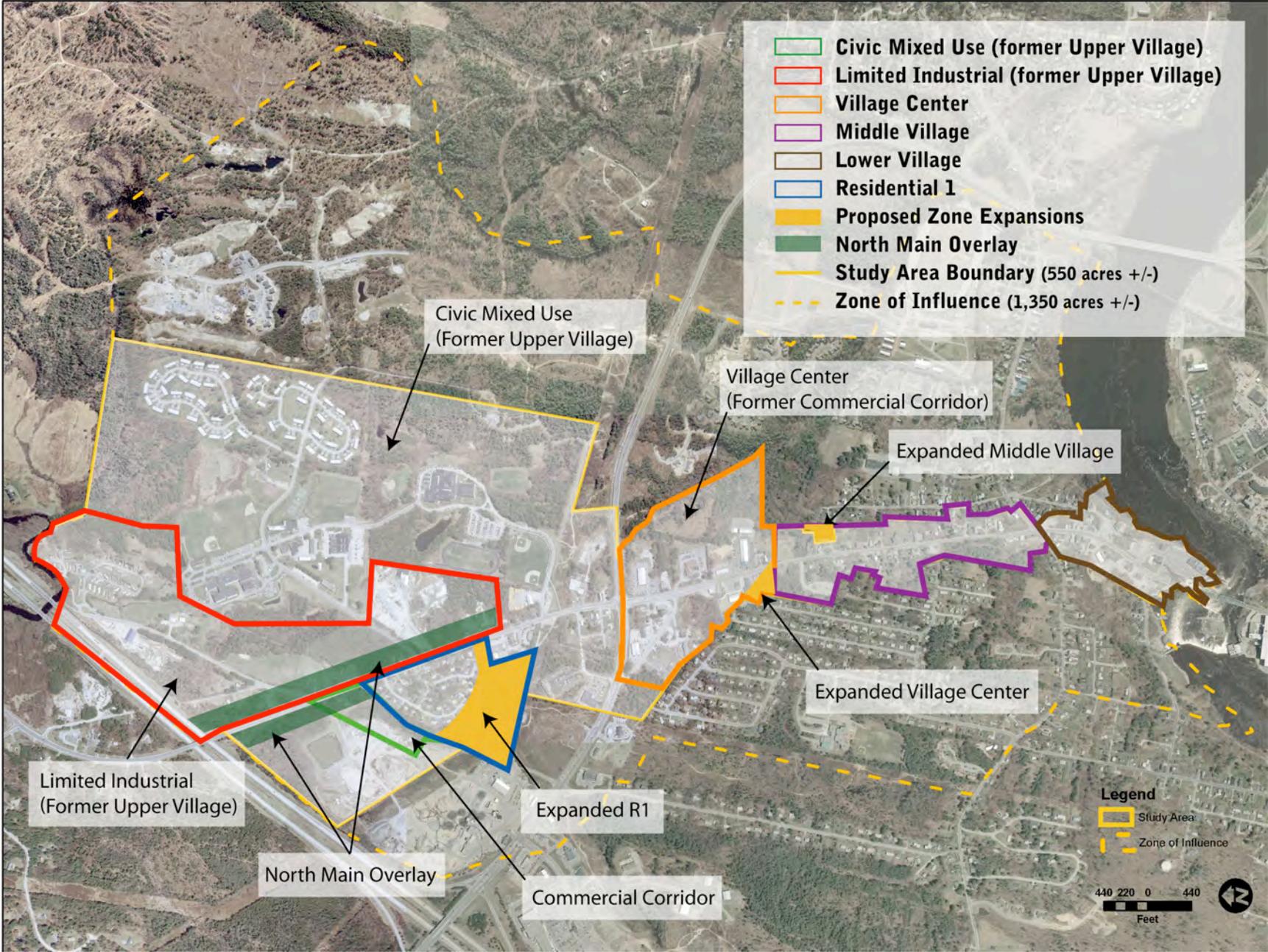
The Plan is optimistic about the future of Main Street, citing the revitalization of the Lower Village as critical to encouraging more investment and attention to the local importance and quality of design along Main Street. The 2005 Comprehensive Plan states:

In two decades, the Village, will remain the core of our community, containing smaller-scale shops and businesses, historic homes, a riverfront park and many of our town's public services...pedestrians will be able to move about in safety and with ease thanks to more sidewalks, better traffic flow, more parking, more bike trails, and safe sidewalks. The commercial cluster at the Bowdoin Mill will spark additional commercial and mixed-use redevelopment opportunities farther up Main Street...despite these changes the Village will retain its New England character

through high design standards, more landscaping, and infill development that complements the area.

A special issue to address noted by the Comprehensive Plan is the creation of more flexible parking standards enabling the continued redevelopment of the village scaled projects. It should be added that more flexible parking standards are also needed for the viability of existing businesses and housing.

Figure 4: Proposed Zoning Changes



In reviewing the Goals, Objectives and Strategies of the Comprehensive Plan, the following key issues are outlined for the Lower Village:

- Use the commercial redevelopment of the Lower Village as a catalyst for revitalization of Main Street.
- Adjust the Land Use Ordinance to allow for denser infill redevelopment opportunities by decreasing lot sizes and other dimensional standards.
- Continue to improve bicycle and pedestrian connections.
- Strengthen neighborhoods by encouraging neighborhood-scale retail and service opportunities.
- Review Table of Permitted Uses to ensure that appropriate businesses are allowed in the Lower Village and that building and lot sizes are appropriate for the Zone.
- Develop the Lower Village riverfront park as a civic space, recreational / pedestrian hub and defining feature promoting Topsham's commitment to environmental access and ecotourism.
- Update the Land Use Ordinance to allow more flexible on-site parking arrangements in the pedestrian oriented Lower Village.

The Comprehensive Plan vision for the Lower Village is consistent with what people want and expect for the area, specifically visual quality. While many residents identify the Lower Village as a positive example for redevelopment for the other neighborhoods along Main Street, it is important to note that each area is different in scale, land use and visual quality making Main Street dynamic. This dynamic quality and the unique opportunities of each neighborhood should be reinforced.

Ensuring this vision through specific design standards, appropriate infill development and the protection of the positive aspects of the different neighborhoods is a long-term effort. Topsham has shown commitment to this vision through numerous efforts including: the development of a master plan for the Lower Village in 1996 entitled *The Main Street Vision: A Plan for Reclaiming Topsham Village*; revising zoning, dimensional

and performance standards in 1999; creating the Topsham Historic Districts Design Review Manual in 2000; adopting a new Comprehensive Plan in 2005; completing a town-wide Transportation Plan in 2005; and, proceeding with the development of the Main Street Village Plan.

Public Input Summary

Three public forums were held at the beginning of the Main Street Village Plan establishing a foundation for the community's concerns and opportunities for the different neighborhoods along Main Street. These forums were interactive. Participants were involved in a series of hand on exercises. The results from the forums are summarized in the introduction to the Main Street Village Plan and the work products and follow up analysis are included as an appendix.

The majority of participants in the public forums affirmed that the existing pattern of development and the scale of redevelopment are successfully conforming to the purpose and vision for the Lower Village. A majority of the people at the public forums also emphasized the importance of developing a riverfront park adjacent to the existing fire station. The fire station parcel is one of the few key remaining parcels in the Lower Village and any future use of the parcel should take advantage of the proposed riverfront park.

People are generally impressed with the quality of the architecture, streetscapes, the location of new parking behind buildings and the proportional relationship between the buildings and the street.

Some noted that the redevelopment projects are almost exclusively non-residential and would like to see more developments with commercial on the first floor and residential on the upper floors.

A concern for all the Zones is the high volume of traffic on Main Street. The existing traffic volume, approximately 28,000 cars a day, creates unsafe pedestrian conditions, impedes local traffic movement and produces visual, sound and environmental

pollution. Traffic volumes will continue to increase. Chapter 6, Transportation and Safety Issues addresses measures to mitigate traffic impacts and improve pedestrian safety.

Existing Land Use Patterns

Mixed-use is not defined in the Zoning Ordinance, but it is commonly defined as a building with both residential and non-residential uses or a neighborhood with equal proportions of housing and work environments related in time and space. Mixed-use neighborhoods promote walking and accommodate a population helping to sustain non-professional uses such as the arts, restaurants, civic spaces and entertainment.

The Lower Village is approximately 24 acres including roads. This is a small area and to expect the actual distribution of land uses to create a self-sustaining mixed-neighborhood is not realistic. If this were Manhattan with 50 story tall buildings, one could expect a more equal distribution of land uses.

Approximately 50% of the Lower Village is classified commercial, 16% residential and only 3% mixed-use (Figure 5). Most of the mixed-use buildings are older structures with stores on the first floor and businesses on the second floor. The redevelopment efforts, which received high positive ratings from the public, include only one mixed-use building. There has been no redevelopment of residential only buildings. There is a disparity between what people perceive and what exists.

The Lower Village is within a 15-minute walk of hundreds of homes and is located near high volumes of traffic and critical intersections. As the area evolves, there may be more opportunities for people to walk or drive to the area after work.

Concerns

As with many dense village areas, there is concern that the redevelopment of the fire station site, the riverfront park and adjacent parking could further limit public parking. All redevelopment in this area should include flexible parking serving private and public uses. On-street parking is limited, although more on-street parking is available in the Lower Village than all

the other Zones on Main Street combined. Planning for adequate parking for the proposed riverfront park needs particular attention. Ample, flexible parking is critical to the sustainability of a mixed-use, walkable neighborhood.

There is also the concern that as land values rise in the Lower Village and parcels are redeveloped, the highest and best use may not include residential units or mixed-use buildings.

There are very few opportunities for developing residential buildings along the Androscoggin River. Current density and dimensional standards make investment by developers in housing problematic throughout the Lower Village, as noted by stakeholder input and recent trends in commercial only development.

There is also a concern that existing regulations for Temporary and Portable signs are not enforced, resulting in illegal situations and a cluttered appearance in certain locations.

Opportunities

Many of the key redeveloped parcels in the Lower Village are built out as commercial uses. However, starting at the former location of Waterfall Antiques on the western side of Main Street and moving north up the hill, there are several buildings fronting Main Street where redevelopment opportunities exist behind these buildings that can support both commercial and residential uses.

Many renters, first time homebuyers and retirees could be attracted to live in the Lower Village if new, quality units were available. A recent study by the Maine State Planning Office noted that 37% of homebuyers would locate in village centers, such as the Lower Village, if the units were available.

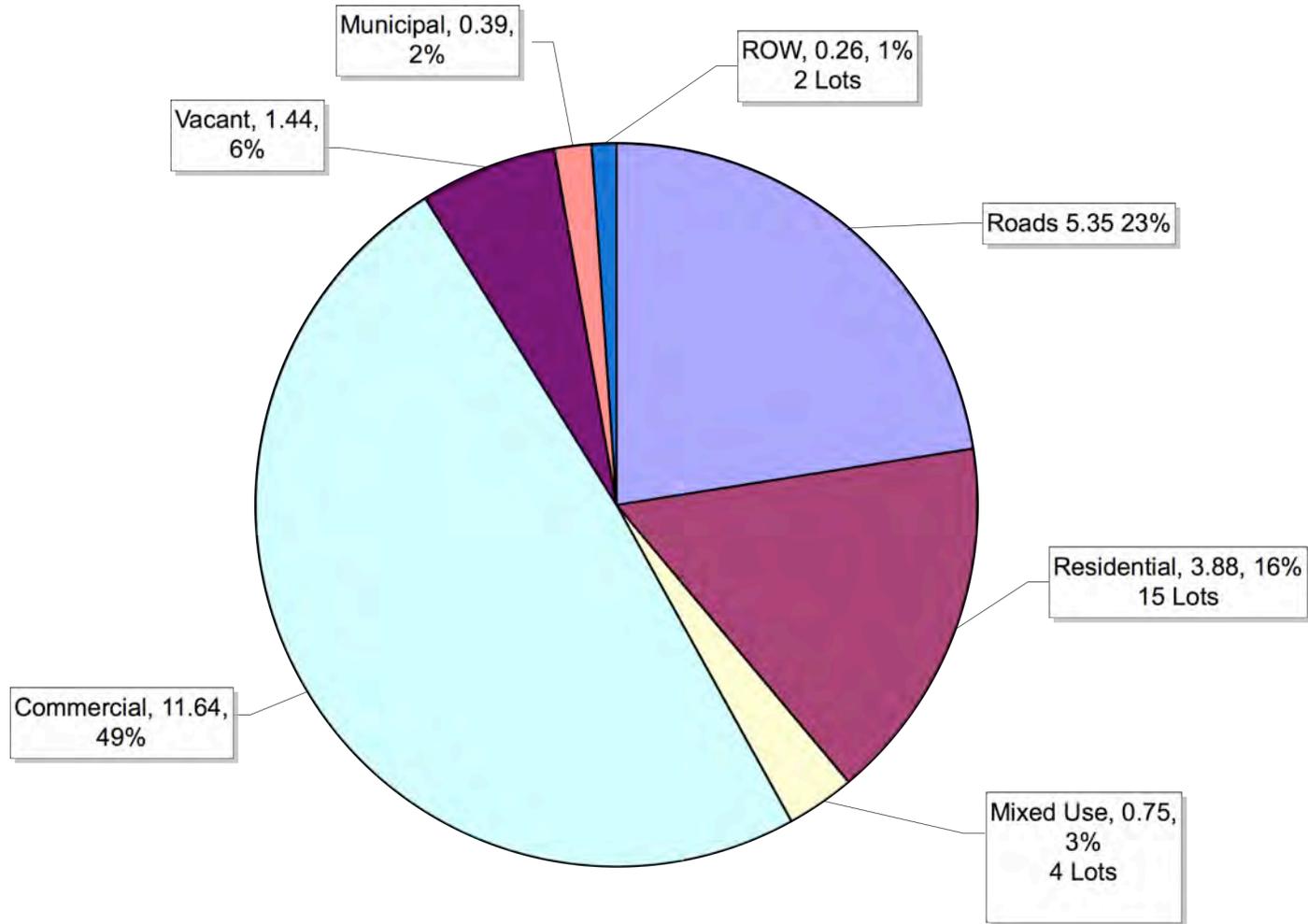
It is interesting to note that the recent building boom in Portland has a strong emphasis on residential development. These units are expensive. Topsham's Lower Village, with proximity to the Androscoggin River, Brunswick's Maine Street, Bowdoin College and easy access to shopping malls and the midcoast region,

would appear to be an appealing alternative to buying in the Portland market.

The development of a riverfront park could create a local and regional draw unsurpassed by the existing non-commercial uses. The careful design, integration and programming of this civic space could be a catalyst for making the Lower Village mixed-use in character if not in actual distribution of uses. The recent renovation of the Androscoggin Swinging Bridge and potential “riverwalk” loop between Brunswick and Topsham will also play a role in integrating a mixed-use distribution in the Lower Village.

The Town should work with stakeholders to create a plan for maximizing public parking serving the riverfront park. Options such as making Green Street one way creating on-street parking should be analyzed potentially benefiting traffic flows and creating more public parking in the Lower Village.

Figure 5: Lower Village Land Uses
23.70 acres +/- (land uses noted by acreage)



Recommended Land Use Changes

There are currently no recommended changes to the Land Use Table in the Lower Village, although incentives for residential development, particularly mixed-use projects, should be embedded in the dimensional standards, allowing for more flexibility in developing a site if residential uses are included on the second floor and above.

It is recommended that a new use, Planned Village Development (PVD) be created with specific performance standards just as there are standards for Planned Commercial Development and Planned Residential Development land uses. The intent of a Planned Village Development is to allow for flexibility in creating a mixed-use neighborhood and establish parameters for implementing the intentions of a PVD. The basic criteria for a PVD are detailed in the north Main Street section below.

Please note that Table 1: Land Use Table, is located at the end of this section and includes all existing and proposed revisions to the Land Use Table for the four zones comprising the Main Street Village Area.

Recommended Dimensional Changes

A goal for the Lower Village is to promote and provide incentives for mixed-use developments, which typically means two to three story buildings, a higher floor area ratio gives the developer the opportunity to build, for example a three-story building with commercial uses on the first floor and residential uses on the second and third floors, while meeting setbacks, open space and parking requirements.

The current maximum building height of 45', as measured to the roof peak, allows for a first floor space with 10' high ceilings, second story spaces with 8' ceilings and third story spaces with 8' ceilings and higher if dormers and vaulted ceilings are utilized. A typical residential building has a height of 35', allowing for two full floors. Most developers do not want to build above three floors, avoiding the cost of an elevator. To achieve buildings with third floor residential units, either the sale price of the units or an

increase in the allowable number of units has to justify the cost of an elevator

The average lot size in the Lower Village, not including roads or rights-of-way is 17,000 square feet.

The other general dimensional requirements for the Lower Village seem appropriate, except potentially for the floor area ratio of 0.4 or 40%. In theory this means that a one-story building can cover 40% of the site. However, the math is not that simple because area within setbacks, maximum building height and required open space all work together in a formula, which is different for every project depending on the building, land use, lot size and required parking and buffers.

In terms of protecting existing residential uses and promoting new mixed-use or residential buildings, there are several options worth exploring:

1. A minimum building height of 35' and a maximum of 45'.
2. 45' tall buildings with three full floors clearly defined in the elevation should have a cornice above the third floor. The fourth floor should step back and the roof should pitch to not be visible from Main Street, minimizing the scale of a four-story building (see Figure 13.)
3. Building footprints should be limited to 15,000 square feet with conditional review by the Planning Board allowing for flexibility in development without sacrificing architectural quality and the integrity of the streetscape.
4. Roof pitches should be 8/12 or greater (recommended for all zones.)
5. A maximum front setback of 15' on Main Street and corner lots.
6. 0' front lot line development should be allowed as long as a minimum 10' wide pedestrian zone, including street trees, sidewalks and other amenities, is created between the building and curb line. The current minimum is five feet.
7. Zero lot line development should be allowed with conditional review.

8. If a new building or rehabilitation includes a minimum of two residential units on the second floor, then the floor area ratio can be increased from 0.4 to 0.8.
9. Sidewalks should be a minimum of 5' to comply with ADA standards (recommended for all zones.)
10. Section 225.17.B Two-family dwellings requires that two-family dwellings located in the Lower Village Zone have a lot at least 1.5 times the minimum lot size for the zone. This is a disincentive for mixed-use developments and should be struck from the Zoning Ordinance.

Recommended Performance Standard Changes

1. Section 225-14 B.1 Resumption prohibited. The current timeframe for discontinuance is two years. This period should be reduced to the legal minimum of one year.
2. Section 225-14 B.3 Change of use. Do not allow a nonconforming use to be changed to another nonconforming use under any circumstances.
3. Section 225-27 Off-street parking and loading. The Zoning Ordinance has a number of mechanisms allowing for shared and flexible parking standards. These mechanisms might be more frequently utilized if an appeal for the joint use of a parking facility could be approved by the Planning Board rather than having to make a separate application to the Board of Appeals. It is also recommended that the two required residential parking spaces be waived for the first unit (not for any additional units) in the parking calculation for a mixed-use building.
4. Section 225-33 Signs. Roof signs should be prohibited.
5. Section 225-33 Signs. The definitions and standards for portable and temporary signs should be reviewed to avoid visual clutter. This is also an enforcement issue.
6. Section 225.50.C.1.f. Density requirements for the first four residential units shall be waived if part of a mixed-use building. Any residential units above the four-unit threshold shall have at least a minimum lot size of ½ the minimum lot size for the zone. In mixed-use buildings, residential units shall only be on the second floor and above.

I.X Recommended Zone Changes

The Historic District overlaps part of the Lower Village Zone. The language in the boundary definitions should be updated to reflect changes to the Lower Village, particularly the former “granny hole stream” defining the Bowdoin Mill parcel prior to redevelopment. This parcel is no longer an “island” and the language should reflect the changes to land use.

The Shoreland Overlay District (250' horizontal distance of normal high-water line of the Androscoggin River) controls certain activities and has more restrictive standards than the Lower Village Zone standards. Section 225-19.A.6 divides the Shoreland Overlay District into five categories. It is recommended that the Lower Village be classified as General Development from the bridge around the Bowdoin Mill to the proposed riverfront park parcels, including the fire station lot. This would reduce the Shoreland setback to 25', allowing for denser infill development.

II. Middle Village Zone

The Middle Village Zone is residential and historic in nature with a prevalence of mature trees adding to the character of the area. Of the four zones in the study area, the Middle Village has the highest percentage of residences fronting Main Street. Most of the homes are single family in appearance, but a number have apartments and home occupations. While the trend in the Lower Village is the commercial redevelopment of properties, the preservation of the residential and historic character of the Middle Village is a priority. Only one new building, a commercial use, has been constructed in the Middle Village in the last ten years. This is evidence of the general residential stability of the Middle Village, the lack of infill or redevelopment opportunities and minimal market forces.

Vision Statement

The statement of purpose for the Middle Village found in the Zoning Ordinance reads:

The objective of the Middle Village is to provide for a village/residential scaled mixed-use area with strict parking and landscaping standards. The overall goal is to maintain the current residential character of the area while closely monitoring renovations and changes in use to ensure that they fit with this goal.

Comprehensive Plan Vision

The vision for the Middle Village in the Comprehensive Plan reads:

The Middle Village designation is intended to encourage redevelopment that complements the existing dense, mixed-use pedestrian scaled village. The Middle Village should retain its residential village scale while attracting a mix of uses. The Middle Village should retain its strict parking and landscaping standards.

Public Input Summary

The majority of participants in the public forums affirmed that it is important to protect the existing residential character of the Middle Village by controlling the scale and visual quality of non-residential uses, including home occupations. As with the riverfront park in the Lower Village, a majority of people at the public forums recognized the “apple orchard” as a key open space to be protected and ideally secured as a public park. This landscape is seen as an important buffer between Commercial Corridor and the Middle Village.

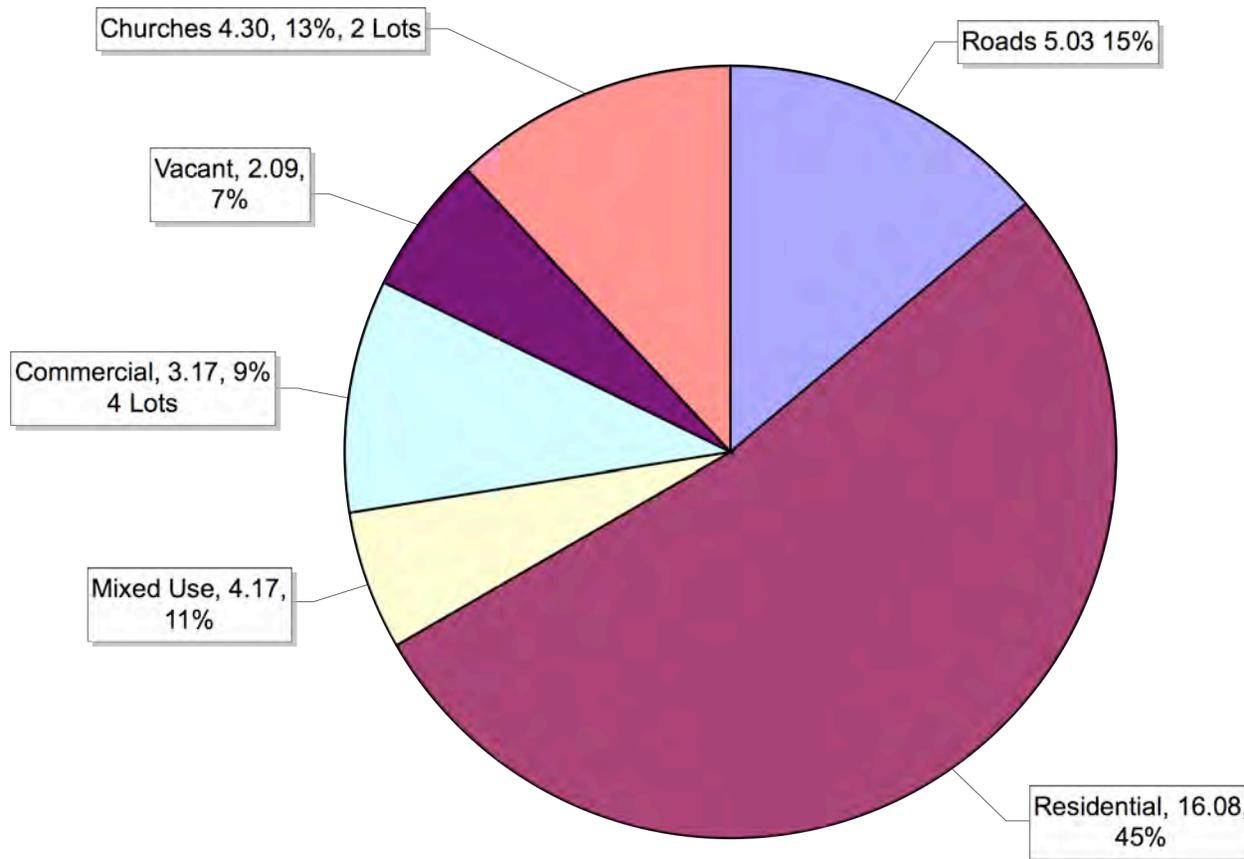
The mature trees found throughout the area were recognized by the participants as a defining character of the Middle Village to be preserved.

A common concern expressed at the public forums is that the recent rezoning of the northern edge of the Middle Village to Commercial Corridor is a dangerous precedent. This rezone probably contributes to the strong desire to see the “apple orchard” turned into a public park, thus stopping the encroachment of the Commercial Corridor into the Middle Village.

Existing Land Use Patterns

The existing land use patterns found in the 36 acres in the Middle Village (Figure 6) attest to the mainly residential character of the Zone. Whereas 50% of the Lower Village is commercial and 16% is residential, 50% of the Middle Village is residential and 9% is commercial. 3% of the Lower Village is mixed-use and 11% of the Middle Village is mixed-use. The mixed-use land type is almost four times more prevalent in the Middle Village compared to the Lower Village. This is probably due to the presence of many historic homes, which have absorbed home occupations and commercial uses.

Figure 6: Middle Village Land Uses
36 acres +/- (land uses noted by acreage)



Concerns

The Middle Village does not need to be revitalized as much as it needs to be carefully monitored for revitalization.

The two general concerns are future encroachments of the Commercial Corridor into the Middle Village and the loss of residential properties to commercial uses, regardless of the visual quality of the redevelopment.

Opportunities

There are two vacant lots in the Middle Village totaling two acres or approximately 7% of the Zone. One of these lots is the “apple orchard” This limits development opportunities. The Zoning Ordinance is unclear on the potential of full scale development or redevelopment of commercial space in the Middle Village, stating in the same sentence that commercial uses are limited to maximum of 1,250 square feet within an “existing structure,” but then further elaborates, stating that commercial space must have a “façade of the scale of the majority of the residential buildings in the neighborhood.” Whether someone can tear down a home and redevelop the site with a commercial use is unclear. What is clear is that the public forum participants, the Zoning Ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan do not envision dramatic change in the Middle Village, such as the total conversion of a property from residential to commercial uses or the homes on two adjacent lots demolished and the lots combined to create a commercial use.

The wide range of land uses currently found in the Middle Village shows the resiliency and the need for certain historic neighborhoods to absorb change, especially when located in a high visibility area such as Main Street. But how much change can the Middle Village absorb until the valued qualities of the neighborhood are destroyed?

One of the opportunities in the Middle Village is to promote true mixed-use development by maintaining existing homes with the limited inclusion of home occupations or professional / service uses or completely redeveloping properties with new buildings that are required to have home occupations and professional / service business as an accessory use to the primary residential

use. There are a number of benefits to promoting living and working in the same building including: reduction in traffic; presence and awareness of neighborhood issues 24 hours a day and seven days a week; the general incentive to maintain the visual quality of the property; interactions with neighbors; and, fostering financial, political and emotional interest in the long term integrity of the neighborhood.

The other important opportunity in the Middle Village is to protect the “apple orchard” and adjacent back parcels as permanent open space through conservations easements, purchases or a combination of approaches.

Recommended Land Use Changes

To best protect the distinct historic/residential character of the Middle Village, while promoting mixed-use development, commercial uses should be limited to 1,250 square feet in new or existing structures as an accessory use to the primary residential function. There should be a minimum of one residential unit in the building.

No professional / service only buildings should be allowed.

The following uses were previously conditional and are now recommended as permitted:

- Bed-and-breakfast
- Boardinghouse

The following uses were previously conditional and are now recommended as not permitted:

- Commercial recreational facility
- Hospital/nursing home/congregate care
- Transmission tower
- Restaurant
- Neighborhood grocery store
- Printing

Recommended Dimensional Changes

1. The open space ratio is increased from 0.2 to 0.4.
2. A minimum building height of 25' and a maximum of 35' (see Figure 14.)
3. Roof pitches should be 8/12 or greater (recommended for all zones.)
4. Building setbacks that are no more than the average of existing structures on adjacent lots.
5. Section 225.17.B Two-family dwellings requires that two-family dwellings located in the Middle Village Zone have a lot at least 1.5 times the minimum lot size for the zone. This is a disincentive for mixed-use development and should be struck from the Zoning Ordinance.

Recommended Performance Standard Changes

1. Section 225-14 B.1 Resumption prohibited. The current timeframe for discontinuance is two years. This period should be reduced to the legal minimum of one year.
2. Section 225-14 B.3 Change of use. Do not allow a nonconforming use to be changed to another nonconforming use under any circumstances.
3. Section 225-27 Off-street parking and loading. The Zoning Ordinance has a number of mechanisms allowing for shared and flexible parking standards. These mechanisms might be more frequently utilized if an appeal for the joint use of a parking facility could be approved by the Planning Board rather than having to make a separate application to the Board of Appeals. It is also recommended that the two required residential parking spaces be waived for the first unit (not for any additional units) in the parking calculation for a mixed-use building. In the Middle Village, space saving, site specific parking arrangements such as stacked parking and reduced aisle and space dimensions should allowed with conditional Planning Board review allowing for parking to be better integrated into the existing conditions, not require the same parking standards as a shopping mall.
4. Section 225-33-N Sign table. Only one non-illuminated wall mounted sign totaling four square feet should be allowed per building.

5. The following signs should not be allowed:

- Roof
- Post
- Banner
- Portable
- Temporary
- Off-premises business
- Marquee
- Canopy

Recommended Zone Changes

There are two minor zone changes in the Middle Village, noted on Figure 4. The first is to include the Grange Hall on Pleasant Street and the second is to exclude the 3/4 acre area of Middle Village between the existing Commercial Corridor and Residential 1 Zones to the west of Main Street. As this site was highlighted as a gateway area, the existing trees should remain as a clear demarcation between zone boundaries and a “gateway” easement should placed on this area to protect the trees in this gateway. The recent Town Hall construction and consolidation of parcels in this area serve as potential for thoughtful Main Street development, while achieving the goal of creating an actual “Village Center” for the Town of Topsham.

Part of the Middle Village includes the Historic Overlay District. Further extension of the Historic Overlay District in the Middle Village should be reviewed as to whether this will promote or hinder the vision for the Middle Village.

III. Proposed Village Center Zone

Land uses and the overall character of the proposed Village Center Zone (currently zoned as Commercial Corridor and hereafter referred to as the Village Center Zone) included in the Main Street Village Plan are changing with the proposed Town Hall Complex, the realignment of Monument Place, the proposed Main Street crossing of the town-wide trail system and the development in the area defined by Route 196, Main Street and Monument Place, referred to as the Monument Place neighborhood. This area also includes the Post Office, several large-scale auto dealerships and potential redevelopment sites on the western side of Main Street south of the proposed Town Hall Complex.

In recognition of the evolution of this area and the need to strengthen the identity and prescribe appropriate land uses along Main Street, it is recommended that the Commercial Corridor land south of Route 196 included in the Main Street Village Plan be renamed the Village Center Zone.

Vision Statement

The statement of purpose for the Village Center:

The objective of the Village Center is to provide for civic and mixed-use redevelopment opportunities, with specific standards promoting pedestrian safety, second floor residential units, buildings that define Main Street and adequate buffering between new developments and existing residential uses. While mixed-use developments are encouraged for the Village Center, residential only developments are not envisioned. Safe and visible pedestrian links should be established between the Woodside neighborhood and Main Street to encourage pedestrian friendly development.

Comprehensive Plan Vision

The vision for the Village Center in the Comprehensive Plan blurs the lines between the Commercial Corridor and the Middle Village

Zones, designating a zone from Route 196 south to Melcher Place. This “expanded” Middle Village Zone, according to the Comprehensive Plan is “intended to encourage redevelopment that complements the existing dense, mixed-use pedestrian scaled village. The Middle Village should retain its residential village scale while attracting a mix of uses. The Middle Village should retain its strict parking and landscaping standards.”

The Comprehensive Plan does not accurately reflect the existing visual character and land use types found in the Middle Village and Commercial Corridor Zones along Main Street. There is a clear line of demarcation between the two Zones at the southern edge of the Volvo dealership on the eastern side of Main Street and southern edge of Brilliant Motors on the west side of Main Street.

Public Input Summary

The majority of participants at the Public Forums wanted to see a clear line drawn between the Village Center and Middle Village Zones along Main Street. There was expressed concern of the further expansion of the Village Center into the Middle Village.

The results of the Public Forums clearly indicated that the development of the Town Hall Complex on Main Street was a positive change and marked the beginning of more mixed-use village-scale area complemented by the existing Post Office and the realignment of Monument Place.

Many participants noted the lack of sidewalks on the western side of Main Street.

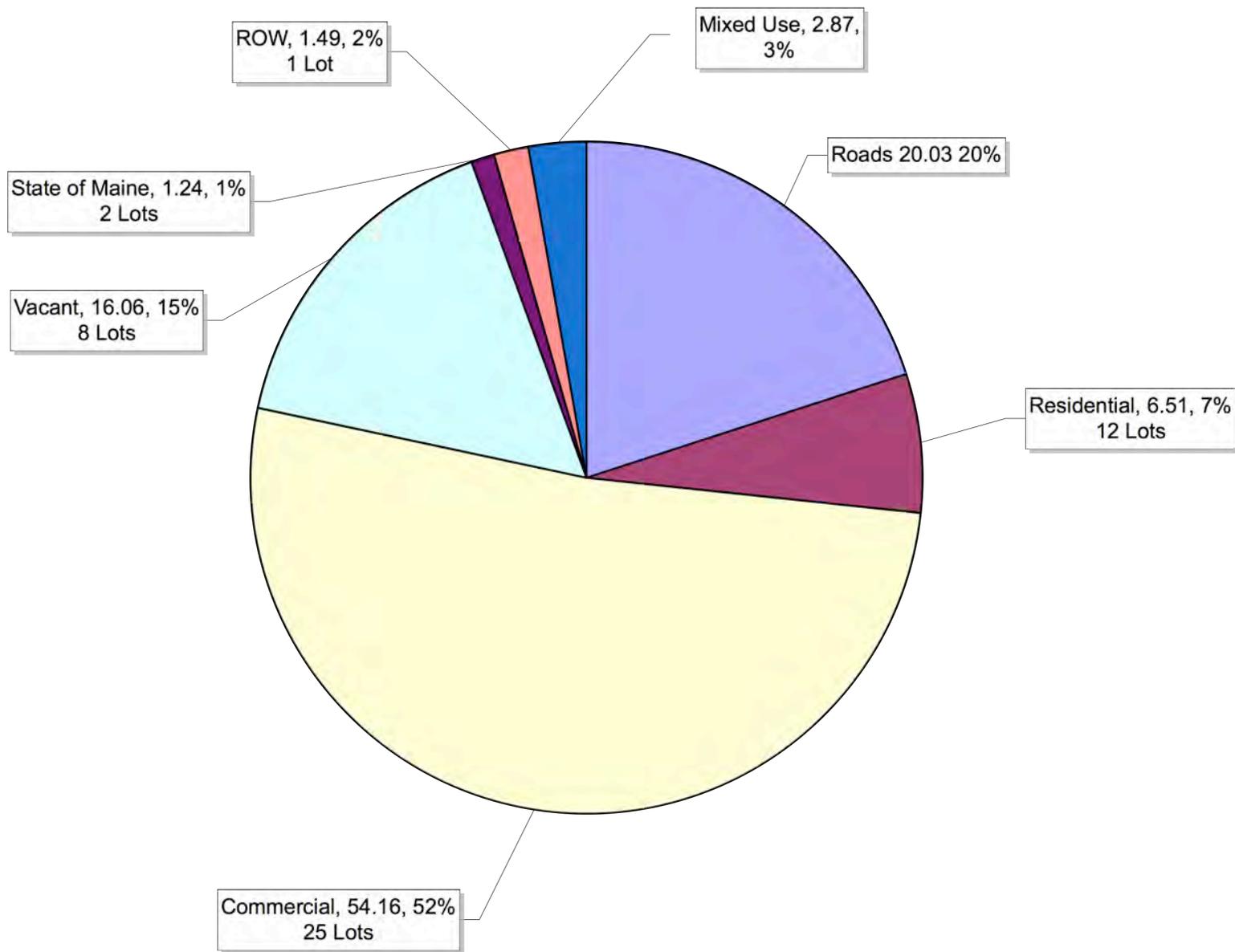
Existing Land Use Patterns

The existing land uses (Figure 7) in the 99-acre Village Center Zone reflect the commercial and auto-oriented nature of this area. Commercial uses represent 50% of the land area and roads account for 20%.

While the current land use on Main Street in the Village Center Zone is dominated by commercial uses, except for the Post Office, it is interesting to note that the Monument Place Neighborhood is one of the most mixed-use areas in Town, even though it does not have the form or visual appeal of the Lower Village. The realigned Monument Place will create a more defined street and pedestrian amenities in this area. Hopefully the current mix of uses including restaurants, single-family homes, mixed-use buildings and other service industries will remain. A walking tour of the area revealed that, in reality, between 50% and 70% of the buildings in the Monument Place neighborhood include commercial and residential uses.

The intention of Monument Place is to create a local parallel road to Route 196 connecting Main Street to the Topsham Fair Mall. The new parallel road will also create new pedestrian and vehicular connections to adjacent residential neighborhoods. The intersection of Monument Place and Main Street will be defined by the Post Office, the proposed Town-wide trail crossing, a proposed gas station / convenience store and the proposed Town Hall Complex. The standards for the proposed Village Center zone should encourage the development of this area as a civic/mixed use anchor for the Village Center.

Figure 7: Village Center (Commercial Corridor) Land Uses
99 acres +/- (land uses noted by acreage)



Concerns

The greatest concern expressed during the Public Forums regarding the entire Main Street Village Area was the Route 196 intersection. This is proposed as the northern boundary of the Village Center Zone. Another concern noted by many participants in the Public Forums was any further expansion of the Village Center into the Middle Village. Other concerns for the Village Center along Main Street included the scale and visual character of the auto dealerships, the need for sidewalks on the west side of Main Street, the need for a crosswalk between the Post Office and the new Town Hall Complex and general traffic calming measures.

These concerns will be addressed with revisions to the land use table, revised dimensional and performance standards and recommended pedestrian safety and traffic calming measures.

From a redevelopment viewpoint, the land to the west and east of Main Street is restricted. The eastern side is constrained by a stream and topography and the land to the west abuts an established residential neighborhood. This is part of the reasoning for reducing lot sizes, setbacks and frontage in this area. Allow larger parcels to be subdivided, enabling more development.

The area has been recently classified as part of a watershed with an urban impaired stream feeding the Androscoggin River. Both available land area and the additional complexities of developing in an urban impaired watershed will impact the nature of redevelopment, even village-scale projects.

Opportunities

Unlike the Lower Village, which is near build out, or the Middle Village, which has an established character to be protected, the Village Center Zone has a range of opportunities and capacity for change to achieve the goal of a safe, sustainable and attractive Main Street.

While the recent classification of the area as part of a watershed with an urban impaired stream may make redevelopment more complicated, it can be seen as an opportunity in the sense that it will make the expansion of existing sprawling projects more difficult and ultimately encourage more environmentally sensitive, pedestrian-scaled redevelopment.

Recommended Land Use Changes

The following land uses in the Village Center Zone should be changed from permitted to not permitted:

- Agriculture
- Gasoline sales
- Marina
- Motor vehicle services/repair
- Veterinary hospital
- Wholesale business

The following uses should be changed from conditional to not permitted:

- Adult entertainment establishment
- Boathouse
- Club
- Manufacturing, light
- Hospital/nursing home/congregate care

Standards for a new land use, “Planned Village Development” should be created, just as there are specific standards for Planned Commercial Developments and Planned Residential Developments in the Ordinance. This should be an allowable land use in the Village Center. The intent is to allow for greater flexibility in developing a mixed-use development with a master plan vision. The criteria for a Planned Village Development are outlined in the following north Main Street Zones section.

Recommended Dimensional Changes

1. A minimum building height of 35' and a maximum of 45',
2. 45' tall buildings with three full floors clearly defined in the elevation should have a cornice above the third floor. The fourth floor should step back and the roof should pitch to not be visible from Main Street, minimizing the scale of a four-story building (see Figure 13.)
3. Roof pitches should be 8/12 or greater (recommended for all zones.)
4. A maximum front setback of 15' on Main Street and corner lots.
5. 0' front lot line development should be allowed as long as a minimum 10' wide pedestrian zone, including street trees, sidewalks and other amenities, is created between the building and curb line.
6. Building footprints should be limited to 15,000 square feet with conditional review by the Planning Board allowing for flexibility in development without sacrificing architectural quality and the integrity of the streetscape.
7. The minimum lot size should be reduced from 20,000 SF to 10,000 SF
8. Minimum frontage should be reduced from 100' to 50'.
9. Minimum sideyard setback should be reduced from 15' to 10' and zero lot line development should be allowed with conditional review.
10. Sidewalks should be a minimum of 5' to comply with ADA standards (recommended for all zones.)
11. If a new building or rehabilitation includes, at a minimum, two residential units on the second floor, then the floor area ratio can be increased from 0.5 to 0.8.
12. Section 225.17.B Two-family dwellings requires that two-family dwellings located in the Village center Zone have a lot at least 1.5 times the minimum lot size for the zone. This is a disincentive for mixed-use projects and should be struck from the Zoning Ordinance for the Village Center Zone.

Recommended Performance Standard Changes

1. Section 225-14 B.1 Resumption prohibited. The current timeframe for discontinuance is two years. This period should be reduced to the legal minimum of one year.
2. Section 225-14 B.3 Change of use. Do not allow a nonconforming use to be changed to another nonconforming use under any circumstances.
3. Section 225-27.A.2.e Off-street parking and loading. Include Village Center with the Middle Village and north Main Street Zones standards only allowing only one 26' wide access drive for lots with less than 200 feet of frontage.
4. Section 225-27.A.5 Off-street parking and loading. The Zoning Ordinance has a number of mechanisms allowing for shared and flexible parking standards. These mechanisms might be more frequently utilized if an appeal for the joint use of a parking facility could be approved by the Planning Board rather than having to make a separate application to the Board of Appeals.
5. Section 225-33 Signs. Roof signs should be prohibited.
6. Internally illuminated signs should be prohibited.
7. Section 225.50.C.1.f If part of a mixed-use building, density requirements for the first four residential units shall be waived and five or more units each unit shall have at least a minimum lot size of ½ the minimum lot size for the zone. In mixed-use buildings, residential units shall only be on the second floor and above.
8. Landscaping, sidewalk components, lighting and building requirements should be developed to ensure a pedestrian scaled and visually cohesive streetscape.
9. Commercial to residential buffering shall be strictly enforced.
10. Section 175-10.F.3. – Add VC to this section. Commercial to residential buffering – a fifty foot wide vegetated buffer must be installed between a commercial and residential use.

Recommended Zone Changes

The boundary for the Village Center Zone is illustrated on Figure 4. The Village Center is an area that was formerly zoned Commercial Corridor. Starting at the “apple orchard”, the boundary follows the existing Commercial Corridor line north along the eastern side of Main Street. This line continues west along the northern side of Route 196 to Union Street and then south to the R1 line.

As noted previously, the 3/4 acre area of Middle Village between the existing Commercial Corridor and Residential 1 Zones to the west of Main Street behind the current location of Brillant Motors should be included in the Village Center Zone. As stated earlier the recent Town Hall construction and consolidation of parcels in this area serve as potential for thoughtful Main Street development, while achieving the goal of creating an actual “Village Center” for the Town of Topsham. The creation of a “Village Center” should integrate seamlessly with the adjacent neighborhoods. In order for this to happen, there should be special attention to neighborhood needs and identification of potential impacts. Screening and buffering of commercial uses must be enforced, and the creation of pedestrian connections to this area shall be put in place.

A conservation/trail easement for the stand of trees between the dentist office and Brillant Motors (the boundary between the Middle Village and Village Center Zones) should be established. This would create a direct pedestrian link from the Woodside neighborhood to the proposed “apple orchard” park as well as create a visual threshold between the Village Center and the north Main Street Zones.

IV. Proposed Limited Industrial / Civic Mixed Use and North Main Overlay Zones (Existing Upper Village)

The Limited Industrial, Civic Mixed Use and North Main Overlay Zones comprise 382 acres of the 550 acres in the Main Street Village Area. While the development along Main Street north of Route 196 is scattered and visually insignificant, the area has large land uses, such as the High School, Middle School and the Brunswick Naval Air Station Annex creating campus settings. Several long-established concrete product-manufacturing operations are located adjacent to these uses and the Main Street Village Plan increases flexibility for their expansions, while mitigating potential impacts on the residential and educational uses and striving to establish a village-scaled streetscape on both sides of Main Street from Route 196 to 295.

There is an analogy between protecting the interests of residential property owners in the Middle Village and the need to protect the interests of the property owners in the proposed Limited Industrial Zone.

This area currently zoned as Upper Village is proposed to become three zones as shown on Figure 4, meeting the needs of existing businesses, while protecting existing adjacent non-commercial uses and providing flexibility for redevelopment of the BNAS, new road alignments and pedestrian connectivity and safety.

Because these three zones are currently one zone and the proposed uses are spatially intertwined with each other, this area has been studied holistically and reviewed in consort throughout the Main Street Village Plan.

The six zones in the Main Street Village area have different characteristics, challenges and opportunities. However, the Limited Industrial, Civic Mixed Use and North Main Overlay Zones are probably the most critical areas in the long range planning of Main Street for a number of reasons:

1. While the Lower, Middle and the proposed Village Center Zones are contiguous; Route 196 divides north Main Street from the rest of Main Street. Pedestrian safety improvements may be possible at this regional crossroads, but in reality it is a clear dividing line between the northern and southern portions of Main Street.
2. The High School and the Middle School are located in the Civic Mixed Use Zone, yet many of Topsham's residential neighborhoods are located south of Route 196. With school enrollments across the State expected to drop 20% in the next 10 to 15 years, Topsham needs to create new housing, attracting families to support the schools, churches, sports teams and other aspects of civic life. The Civic Mixed Use and North Main Overlay Zones can accommodate new tight-knit neighborhoods such as the Heights, Forest Drive, Woodside, and Pleasant Street neighborhoods.
3. The BNAS Annex is in a transition period and the 73 acres comprising the site, twice the size of the Lower Village, is one of the greatest opportunities for redevelopment in the study area.
4. Approximately 600 linear feet of the Crooker property fronts Main Street. The Crooker land is known as one of the Route 196 / I – 295 interchange “quadrants” and could see development similar to the Topsham Fair Mall.
5. The northern boundary of Main Street Village is I -295. There is an opportunity for future access at this point, creating strong market pressure on the land in the area. Access to I-295 in this location could be a release valve for future traffic congestion helping to minimize future impacts on the Route 196 intersection.
6. One of the goals of the Main Street Village Plan is to reclaim Main Street for the Town, but north Main Street already serves more regional non-commercial needs than any of the other zones on Main Street and this trend will most likely continue. While the uses may be regional in character, the scale and style of the architecture and the quality of the streetscapes can be village scaled. The fact

that this area may see the greatest amount of investment is an opportunity to ensure that quality design is realized.

7. Utilizing single parcels or combining parcels creates opportunities for large-scale developments that are not feasible in other parts of Main Street. These parcels may be suitable for a new type of land use called Planned Village Developments or expansion of Limited Industrial uses. The basic components and intent of a Planned Village Development are outlined below.
8. The north Main Street area includes several established concrete related and industrial uses that are currently seen as a benefit to the community and not a nuisance. However, as the area evolves these uses might become less appropriate and the land may have a higher and better use. This plan allows for the responsible expansion of these uses, while also envisioning more “village-scaled” residential and commercial/professional uses.
9. The Limited Industrial and Civic Mixed Use Zones includes direct access to natural areas ideal for preservation and public access including the Cathance River and Mount Ararat.

The BNAS Annex and the Local Redevelopment Authority

Following the commencement of the Main Street Village Plan, the Brunswick Naval Air Station and the Topsham Annex were designated to be “re-aligned” or to be more specific, decommissioned for military purposes. In response to this Federal process, a Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA) was established to address the redevelopment of the 73-acre Annex site. The LRA’s work will eventually lead to a detailed master plan for the Annex. This is in keeping with the Comprehensive Plan’s recommendation that a detailed master plan should be undertaken for the area.

The Main Street Village Plan makes general recommendations for the Annex property, particularly as to how this land interfaces physically and conceptually with Main Street. It needs to be clearly understood that the recommendations for the area currently zoned as the Upper Village, including the Annex, will be further refined by the work of the LRA, future master planning

efforts and ultimately changes to the Zoning Ordinance guiding the actual build out of the Annex property.

The Main Street Village Plan is part of a process of unifying a vision for the north Main Street as expressed by the Comprehensive Plan, input from public participation and stakeholders and the work of the Main Street Advisory Committee. The work of the LRA is a further step guiding redevelopment of the Annex.

Vision Statement

The statement of purpose for the currently zoned Upper Village found in the Zoning Ordinance reads:

The objective of the Upper Village Zone is to provide for a mixed-use village that serves as the northern counterpoint to the Lower Village Zone. The development pattern may not feel as historic as the Lower Village but should facilitate pedestrian activity as a natural extension of Lower Main Street.

The north Main Street zones will be a diverse counterpoint to the Lower Village. Pedestrian connectivity, no matter how difficult, is important because many of the residential neighborhoods in Topsham are located south of Route 196 and the High School and Middle School are located in the currently zoned Upper Village. The potential for a pedestrian bridge at the Route 196 / Main Street Intersection or farther east on Route 196 as part of the Highlands development will create more connectivity, but this crossing serves the greater community more than the direct flow of pedestrian movement on Main Street.

Comprehensive Plan Vision

The Comprehensive Plan situates the currently zoned Upper Village in a larger area called the “crossroads.” The crossroads is a large area including the Route 196 corridor and the Topsham Fair Mall. The crossroads concept reflects the great capacity for change in this area.

In designating the currently zoned Upper Village as a growth area, the Comprehensive Plan provides a less generic, apparently contradictory “crossroads” definition of the Upper Village, stating that the Upper Village should be a pedestrian-oriented village with its center on the site of the Naval Annex. In specific, the Comprehensive Plan reads:

The Upper Village is intended to encourage the continued development of a pedestrian-oriented village along Route 201, with the potential for a large-scale redevelopment of the Naval Air Station Annex. The heart of the village should include small-scale retail uses, restaurants, offices and services. It should be surrounded by higher-density housing, that is affordable, accessible to nearby community resources, and in-scale with traditional New England Village development.

The Comprehensive Plan notes that redevelopment of the Annex should only be undertaken after a more detailed Upper Village Master Plan is completed. A special concern to be addressed in the Master Plan are “existing non-conforming uses, such as concrete manufacturing.”

The main critique of the vision for the north Main Street outlined in the Comprehensive Plan is that the integrity of Main Street is lost in the general wash of the “crossroads” concept and the reality is that the general trend is towards institutional campus settings or large scale private developments like the Highlands.

North Main Street should be an extension of the Lower Village, but in reality it will be a “counterpoint” due to the Route 196 intersection and the large-scale educational and concrete production uses. The north Main Street will most likely develop at a scale and pace much greater than the rest of Main Street, however there are several large parcels in this area that are either inadequately served or not served by public sewer and water and this could delay the pace of development and may be more critically, create less dense development patterns. Because of the size of the area, there may be several “Main Streets” providing a framework for neighborhoods with campus like

settings, mixed-use traditional linear Main Streets or high-density residential side streets. Ideally the range of and scale of developments in the three proposed zones should use defined streetscapes and green spaces and trails as common elements providing a unifying framework.

Creating a large mixed-use project north of Route 196 would require a developer with a vision countering traditional business practices. Most developers do not create mixed-use projects, but specialize in commercial real estate, single-family homes, retirement communities or strip malls.

Proposed Visions

Limited Industrial Zone

The intent of the Limited Industrial Zone is to create more flexibility for existing businesses, while minimizing the impact on the adjacent educational and residential uses with appropriate performance and dimensional standards. A proposed Canam Way realignment and the closure of several major curb cuts establishes more efficient land use patterns, traffic circulation and improved pedestrian safety.

North Main Overlay Zone

The intent of the North Main Overlay Zone is to allow for the appropriate development or expansion of the allowable district uses with a village-scaled transitional zone along Main Street. The zone runs along the eastern side of Main Street from Eagle’s Way to I-295 allowing for either Main Street scaled developments or allowing for the expansion of Limited Industrial District uses, but with appropriate performance standards reflecting the village scale of the western side of Main Street. The zone runs along the western side of Main Street from the R1 Zone to I-295.

Civic Mixed Use Zone

The Civic Mixed Use District is intended to encourage the development of a pedestrian-oriented neighborhood in the location of the former BNAS Annex and the existing schools, with the potential for recreation areas, village-scaled residential neighborhoods and other compatible uses such as small-scale retail uses, restaurants, offices and services. Pedestrian connectivity and protecting the integrity of the school campus settings is critical.

Public Input Summary

As noted earlier, the Route 196 intersection was recognized as the most negative aspect of the Main Street Village Area. Solutions for mitigating the impact of the intersection on the integrity of Main Street are complicated, but in terms of visionary ideas, participants in the Public Forums did not hold back on bold solutions. Ideas ranged from pedestrian bridges and tunnels to burying Route 196 under Main Street.

The Annex was noted as an area for a range of redevelopment opportunities. Many envisioned the area developed with tight-knit residential neighborhoods, in large part because the site is mainly used for housing already, and is compatible with the adjacent educational campus.

The schools were noted as important civic institutions and landscapes. Existing businesses and industries were respected, but many noted the visual quality should be improved.

In general, there was no cohesive vision of what the area currently zoned as the Upper Village is or what it could become compared to the other zones. During the course of developing the Main Street Village Plan it has become clear what people do not want: more generic big box development.

Many participants noted the lack of sidewalks on the western side of Main Street.

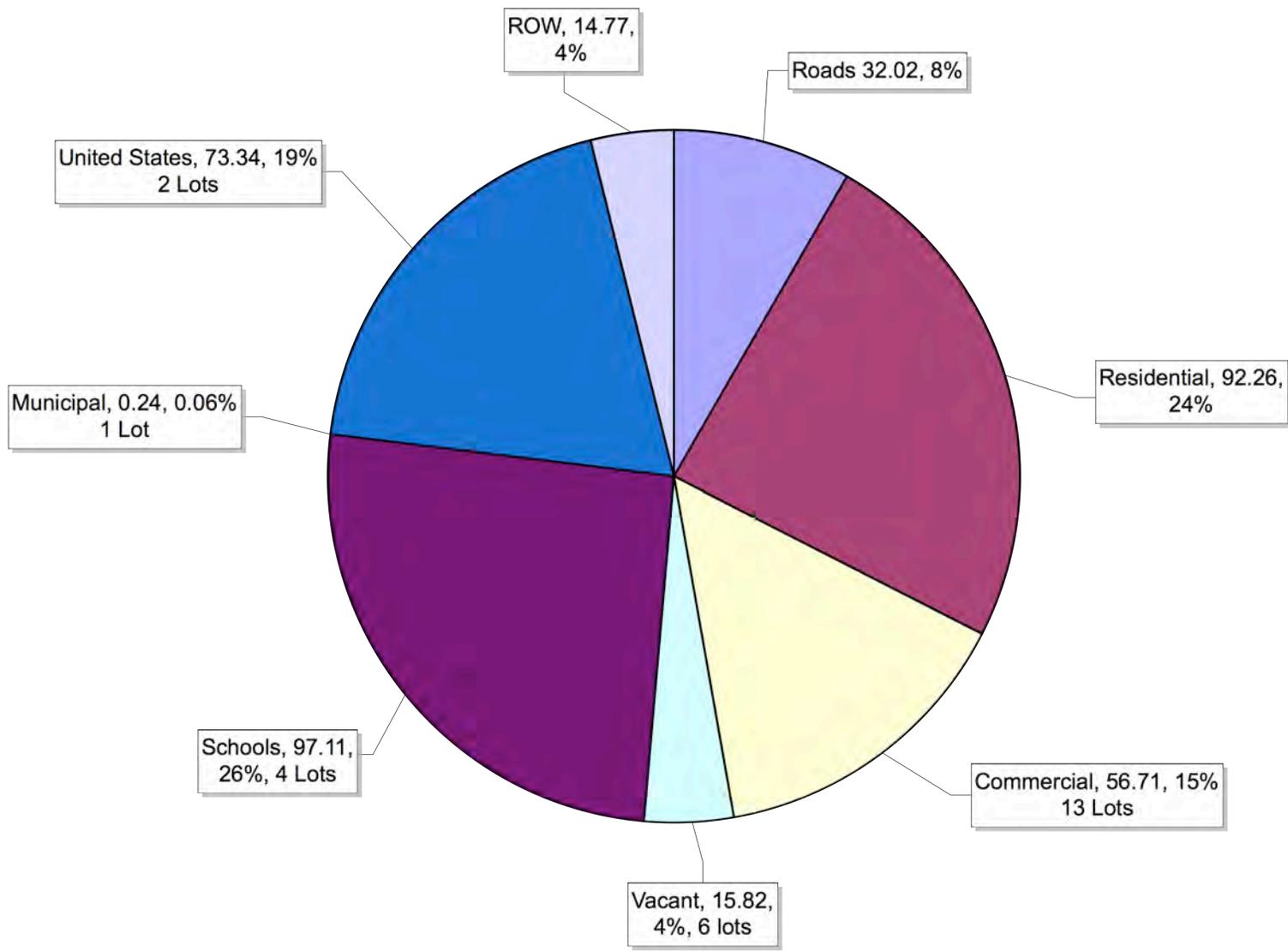
Existing Land Use Patterns

The currently zoned Upper Village has the most evenly distributed percentage of land uses, even if some of the land uses are only comprised of several parcels (Figure 8.) Schools are the greatest land area at 26% followed by residential uses at 24%, the Annex at 19% (mainly residential) and Commercial at 15%. The Forest Drive neighborhood, while remaining zoned as R1, is an example for new village-scale residential development with lot sizes averaging 10,000 SF +/- . The Main Street Village Plan expands the R1 Zone to the west and south, removing a finger of currently zoned Upper Village that wrapped the R1 Zone. The R1 Zone continues to run along Main Street between Eagle's Way and Canam Drive, protecting the residential character of this area. The proposed R1 expansion limits the allowable range of uses, further protecting and stabilizing this dense residential neighborhood.

Besides smaller redevelopment parcels along Main Street, the three parcels with the greatest redevelopment potential are the Annex with 73 acres, the manufactured housing park with 54 acres and two contractor sites totaling 15 acres.

These parcels are not infill sites, but part of the pattern of parcels far greater in size than typical parcels along Main Street. The average sized parcel in the north Main Street zones is 287,931 square feet or 6.6 acres. The average lot size in the Lower Village is 16,988 square feet or 0.38 acres. The proposed Limited Industrial and Civic Mixed Use Zones are not a continuation of the Lower Main Street in terms of scale. Land uses, building massing, new street networks and open space connectivity in these zones should be planned accordingly.

Figure 8: North Main Street Land Uses
382 acres +/- (land uses noted by acreage)



Concerns

There are three specific concerns for the redevelopment of the north Main Street study area:

1. The need to mitigate traffic impacts at the Route 196 intersection allowing for more safe pedestrian connections to lower Main Street.
2. The area consists of large parcels of land that, unlike the existing village-scaled lots in the Lower, Middle and Village Center Zones, may be developed in a manner creating large-scale independent uses that do not create a cohesive whole, but instead a series of separate developments driven by the nature of market investment.
3. The Topsham Fair Mall style of development could expand and possibly encroach on the area fronting North Main Street, creating a generic commercial landscape. This type of development would create significant traffic impacts and establish architecture along Main Street detracting from the character and scale of a Main Street Village. This type of generic development would make an unfavorable impression as the northern gateway to Main Street.
4. The need to provide upgrades or extended public sewer and water to support village style development.

Opportunities

There are many opportunities to create a varied, dynamic and sustainable north Main Street. If carefully planned, this area could support:

1. Campus style projects with interwoven green space and attractive, village-scaled architecture clustered on large parcels.
2. The preservation and expansion of existing concrete product manufacturing businesses.
3. Tight-knit village neighborhoods of single and multi-family homes.
4. A revitalized Main Street with streetscape improvements and new buildings defining the street edge.

5. Immediate access to natural areas including the Cathance River, Mount Ararat (the second highest point in Town), connections to a Town-wide trail system and the public use of the open space provided by campus style development.
6. Potential direct access to I-295 by the creation of on ramps.
7. Parcels large enough to justify the investment in quality architecture, planning and streetscapes.
8. The expansion of the Civic Mixed Use Zone on all lots fronting Main Street currently zoned Commercial Corridor creating a transition between Main Street and the eventual build out of the interchange area. This “transitional” area would mitigate the visual impact of generic big box retail; promote village-scaled development defining Main Street, creating an attractive gateway to the northern edge of Main Street.
9. Commercial and institutional developments employing large numbers of professionals. This scale of development is different than the small-scale niche development found along other portions of Main Street.

Recommended Land Use Changes for the proposed Civic Mixed Use Zone

The following land uses in the Civic Mixed Use Zone should be changed from permitted to not permitted:

- Boathouse
- Marina

The following land use in the Civic Mixed Use Zone should be changed from not permitted to permitted:

- Office buildings as accessory uses

The following uses in the Civic Mixed Use Zone should be changed from conditional to not permitted:

- Cement manufacturing
- Restaurant, fast food

The following uses in the Civic Mixed Use Zone should be changed from conditional to permitted:

- Club
- Inn
- Lab/research facility
- Medical clinic

The following use in the Civic Mixed Use Zone should be changed from permitted to conditional:

- Agriculture
- Planned residential development
- Planned commercial development
- Planned village development (a proposed new use- see note below)

Recommended Land Use Changes for the proposed North Main Overlay Zone

The following land uses in the North Main Overlay Zone should be changed from permitted to not permitted:

- Agriculture
- Boathouse
- Golf course
- Marina

The following land use in the North Main Overlay Zone should be changed from not permitted to permitted:

- Office buildings as accessory uses

The following use in the North Main Overlay Zone should be changed from conditional to not permitted:

- Cement manufacturing (see note below regarding a new “Concrete product manufacturing” land use.)
- Hospital/nursing home/congregate care

The following uses in the North Main Overlay Zone should be changed from conditional to permitted:

- Club
- Inn
- Lab/research facility
- Medical clinic

The following uses in the North Main Overlay Zone should be changed from permitted to conditional:

- Planned commercial development
- Planned village development (a proposed new use- see note below)

The following uses in the North Main Overlay Zone should be changed from not permitted to conditional:

- Planned residential development
- Gasoline sales

“Concrete product manufacturing” should be defined and added to the Ordinance as a conditional use in the North Main Overlay Zone. The definition should accurately reflect existing uses in the north Main Street area that have often been inaccurately categorized as cement manufacturing, which is a conditional use in the Ordinance, but not defined.

Recommended Land Use Changes for the proposed Limited Industrial Zone

The following land uses in the Limited Industrial Zone should be changed from permitted to not permitted:

- Boathouse
- Golf course
- Marina

The following land use in the Limited Industrial Zone should be changed from not permitted to permitted:

- Office buildings as accessory uses
- Concrete product manufacturing (a proposed new use- see note below)
- Gasoline sales

The following use in the Limited Industrial Zone should be changed from conditional to not permitted:

- Inn
- Hospital/nursing home/congregate care
- Restaurant, fast food
- Hotel/motel

The following uses in the Limited Industrial Zone should be changed from conditional to permitted:

- Club
- Lab/research facility
- Manufacturing, light
- Medical clinic

The following uses in the Limited Industrial Zone should be changed from permitted to conditional:

- Planned commercial development
- Planned village development (a proposed new use- see note below)

The following uses in the Limited Industrial Zone should be changed from not permitted to conditional:

- Planned residential development
- Animal husbandry
- Heavy equipment repair

“Concrete product manufacturing” should be defined and added to the Ordinance as a permitted use in the Limited Industrial

Zone. The definition should accurately reflect existing uses in the north Main Street area that have often been inaccurately categorized as cement manufacturing, which is a conditional use in the Ordinance, but not defined.

It is recommended that a new use, Planned Village Development (PVD) be created with specific performance standards just as there are standards for Planned Commercial Development and Planned Residential Development land uses. The intent of a Planned Village Development is to allow for flexibility in creating a mixed-use neighborhood and establish parameters for implementing the intentions of a PVD. The basic criteria for a Planned Village Development (PVD) might include:

- PVD's must be on public sewer and water.
- Density bonuses and other rewarding incentives should be established encouraging developers to pursue mixed-use developments.
- The PVD must include commercial and residential uses.
- Architectural, traffic engineering and landscape requirements should reinforce the street as a civic space and create a safe, pedestrian-scaled environment.
- Commercial and recreational uses should be located to act as thresholds between existing neighborhoods and the PVD.
- The street network should guide development, encouraging a hierarchy of streets, connectivity, neighborhood structure and density of development. The movement of traffic is a secondary concern.
- Dead end streets should not be allowed.
- On street parking on all streets should be required.
- Flexible parking requirements should be established to minimize parking lots and encourage on-street parking.
- Sidewalks and street trees on the both sides of all streets should be required, and the placement of appropriate crosswalks to improve pedestrian safety in the vicinity of the school zone.
- Buildings on main streets should be minimum of three floors with commercial space on the first floor and a mix of

commercial and residential spaces on the second and third floors.

- Zero lot line development is encouraged for mixed-use buildings on main streets.
- Side streets can be residential only and accessory apartments are encouraged.
- Residential lots on side streets should be a minimum of 5,000 square feet and a maximum of 15,000 SF.
- Workforce housing should be required and encouraged through incentives such as density bonuses and potential infrastructure cost reductions through TIF programs.
- No age exclusions for residential uses.
- Public spaces, ranging from a neighborhood pocket park to a nature preserve, should be within a five-minute walk of every residential unit.
- A variety of housing types is encouraged.
- Streets and open spaces should be public.

Recommended Dimensional Changes for the Civic Mixed Use and North Main Overlay Zones

It is difficult to recommend across the board changes to dimensional standards because of the nature of the north Main Street area. In the Lower, Middle and Village Center Zones, the parcels fronting Main Street are typically one-lot deep.

Lots fronting the existing Main Street utilizing the standards for the North Main Street or new streets in the Civic Mixed Use Zone with a Main Street dynamic should have:

1. A minimum building height of 35' and a maximum of 45'.
2. 45' tall buildings with three full floors clearly defined in the elevation should have a cornice above the third floor. The fourth floor should step back and the roof should pitch to not be visible from Main Street, minimizing the scale of a four-story building (see Figure 15.)
3. Roof pitches should be 8/12 or greater (recommended for all zones.)
4. Building footprints should be limited to 15,000 square feet with conditional review by the Planning Board allowing for flexibility in development without sacrificing architectural quality and the integrity of the streetscape.
5. A maximum front setback of 15' on Main Street and corner lots.
6. 0' front lot line development should be allowed as long as a minimum 10' wide pedestrian zone, including street trees, sidewalks and other amenities, is created between the building and curb line.
7. The minimum lot size should be reduced from 20,000 SF to 10,000 SF
8. Minimum frontage should be reduced from 100' to 50'.
9. Minimum sideyard setback should be reduced from 15' to 10' and zero lot line development should be allowed.
10. If a new building or rehabilitation includes, at a minimum, two residential units on the second floor, then the floor area ratio can be increased from 0.5 to 0.8.
11. Section 225.17.B Two-family dwellings requires that two-family dwellings located in the Civic Mixed use Zone have a lot at least 1.5 times the minimum lot size for the zone.

This is a disincentive for mixed-use projects and should be struck from the Zoning Ordinance for the Civic Mixed Use Zone.

Lots fronting new "side streets" should have:

1. A minimum building height of 25' and a maximum of 35'
2. Roof pitches should be 8/12 or greater (recommended for all zones.)
3. A maximum front setback of 15', including corner lots. (See Figure 16.)
4. The minimum lot size should be reduced from 20,000 SF to 5,000 SF
5. Minimum frontage should be reduced from 100' to 50'.
6. Minimum sideyard setback should be reduced from 15' to 10'.
7. Sidewalks should be a minimum of 5' to comply with ADA standards (recommended for all zones.)

Recommended Performance Standard Changes for the Civic Mixed Use and North Main Overlay Zones

Again, it is difficult to make across the board recommendation for the performance standards due to the nature of this area, but most of the recommendations for the Village Center apply to the Civic Mixed Use and North Main Street Overlay Zones:

1. Section 225-14 B.1 Resumption prohibited. The current timeframe for discontinuance is two years. This period should be reduced to the legal minimum.
2. Section 225-14 B.3 Change of use. Do not allow a nonconforming use to be changed to another nonconforming use under any circumstances.
3. Section 225-27.A.5 Off-street parking and loading. The Zoning Ordinance has a number of mechanisms allowing for shared and flexible parking standards. These mechanisms might be more frequently utilized if an appeal for the joint use of a parking facility could be approved by the Planning Board rather than having to make a separate application to the Board of Appeals.
4. Section 225-33 Signs. Roof signs should be prohibited.

5. Internally illuminated signs should be prohibited.
6. Section 225.50.C.1.f If part of a mixed-use building, density requirements for the first four residential units shall be waived and five or more units each unit shall have at least a minimum lot size of ½ the minimum lot size for the zone. In mixed-use buildings, residential units shall only be on the second floor and above.
7. Landscaping, sidewalk components, lighting and building requirements should be developed with mixed use or residential developments to ensure a pedestrian scaled and visually cohesive streetscape.

There is the possibility of realigning portions of streets in this area, establishing focal points for significant architecture, new intersections providing opportunities for more frontage development and a change in the overall development patterns.

If a stronger visual and pedestrian friendly link cannot be made between Main Street north and south of Route 196, there is an opportunity to add character to the north Main Street as the Lower Village Main Street due to changes in the alignment or the creation of a new overall street network structuring the character of neighborhoods by establishing a hierarchy of street types with respective performance standards and land uses.

Realignment and street network ideas are explored conceptually in Task 4.2, Gateway and Design Issues. Any changes to the alignment of Main Street or existing streets in the currently zoned Upper Village would require well-coordinated traffic and design standards and the cooperation of landowners and MEDOT.

Recommended Zone Changes

The existing Upper Village Zone should be reconfigured as shown on Figure 4 recognizing the complexity of this area, while allowing for potential build out scenarios that would not be an extension of the Topsham Fair Mall.

The lands comprising the Annex and the schools will be primarily zoned Civic Mixed Use. The land on the eastern side of Main Street from Eagle's Way to I-295 to will be zoned Limited

Industrial with a North Main Overlay Zone as a transitional tool. This Overlay Zone also reflects the more village-scaled residential uses along the western side of Main Street in this area.

The R1 Zone would be expanded to the south, west and north to the Commercial Corridor zone line, removing an awkward portion of the existing Upper Village in this area.

The North Main Overlay Zone would run along the western side of Main Street from the expanded R1 Zone to I-295, creating a transitional zone between Main Street and the Commercial Corridor.

Table 1: Recommended Land Use Changes:

Use Name	Current Status	Proposed Change
LOWER VILLAGE		
<i>Planned Village Development (PVD)</i>	NA	Conditional
MIDDLE VILLAGE		
<i>Planned Village Development (PVD)1</i>	NA	Conditional
Commercial recreational facility	Conditional	Not Permitted
Hospital/nursing home/congregate care	Conditional	Not Permitted
Transmission tower	Conditional	Not Permitted
Neighborhood grocery store	Conditional	Not Permitted
VILLAGE CENTER		
<i>Planned Village Development (PVD)</i>	NA	Conditional
Agriculture	Permitted	Not Permitted
Gasoline sales	Permitted	Not Permitted
Marina	Permitted	Not Permitted
Motor vehicle services/repair	Permitted	Not Permitted
Veterinary hospital	Permitted	Not Permitted
Wholesale business	Permitted	Not Permitted
Adult entertainment establishment	Conditional	Not Permitted
Boathouse	Conditional	Not Permitted
Club	Conditional	Not Permitted
Manufacturing, light	Conditional	Not Permitted
Hospital/nursing home/congregate care	Conditional	Not Permitted
CIVIC MIXED USE (UPPER VILLAGE)		
<i>Planned Village Development (PVD)</i>	NA	Conditional
Agriculture	Permitted	Conditional
Boathouse	Permitted	Not Permitted
Cement manufacturing	Conditional	Not Permitted
Marina	Permitted	Not Permitted
Office buildings as accessory uses	Not Permitted	Permitted
Planned residential development (PRD)	Not Permitted	Conditional
Planned commercial development (PRD)	Permitted	Conditional
Restaurant, fast food	Conditional	Not Permitted
Club	Conditional	Permitted
Inn	Conditional	Permitted
Lab/research facility	Conditional	Permitted
Medical clinic	Conditional	Permitted
1. Buildings in the Middle Village shall include a residential use. Non-residential uses shall be limited to 1,250 SF in existing and new structures. 2. The definition of Auto sales should be revised to include auto repair/maintenance as a secondary use.		

Table 1: Recommended Land Use Changes continued:

Use Name	Current Status	Proposed Change
NORTH MAIN OVERLAY (UPPER VILLAGE)		
<i>Planned Village Development (PVD)</i>	NA	<i>Conditional</i>
Agriculture	Permitted	Not Permitted
Boathouse	Permitted	Not Permitted
Golf Course	Permitted	Not Permitted
Cement manufacturing	Conditional	Not Permitted
<i>Concrete product manufacturing</i>	NA	<i>Conditional</i>
Gasoline sales	Not permitted	Conditional
Marina	Permitted	Not Permitted
Office buildings as accessory uses	Not Permitted	Permitted
Planned residential development (PRD)	Not Permitted	Conditional
Planned commercial development (PRD)	Permitted	Conditional
Hospital/nursing home/congregate care	Conditional	Not Permitted
Inn	Conditional	Permitted
Lab/research facility	Conditional	Permitted
Medical clinic	Conditional	Permitted
LIMITED INDUSTRIAL (UPPER VILLAGE)		
Animal husbandry	Not permitted	Conditional
<i>Planned Village Development (PVD)</i>	NA	<i>Conditional</i>
Boathouse	Permitted	Not Permitted
Gasoline sales	Not permitted	Permitted
Golf Course	Permitted	Not Permitted
Heavy equipment repair	Not permitted	conditional
Hospital/nursing home/congregate care	Conditional	Not Permitted
Hotel/motel	conditional	Not Permitted
<i>Concrete product manufacturing</i>	NA	<i>Permitted</i>
Manufacturing, light	Conditional	Permitted
Marina	Permitted	Not Permitted
Office buildings as accessory uses	Not Permitted	Permitted
Planned commercial development (PRD)	Permitted	Conditional
Planned Residential Development (PRD)	Not Permitted	Conditional
Restaurant, fast food	Conditional	Not Permitted
Club	Conditional	Permitted
Inn	Conditional	Not Permitted
Lab/research facility	Conditional	Permitted
Medical clinic	Conditional	Permitted
1. Non-residential uses shall be limited to 1,250 SF in existing and new structures in the Middle Village.		
2. The definition of Auto sales should be revised to include auto repair/maintenance as a secondary use.		
3. Concrete product manufacturing is a proposed use more clearly defining existing businesses north of Route 196.		

Table 2: Recommended Dimensional Standards Changes

STANDARD	PROPOSED CHANGES				
	Lower Village	Middle Village	Village Center	North Main Street Zones	
				Civic Mixed Use and North Main Overlay	Limited Industrial
Minimum Building Height	No less than 35'	No less than 25'	No less than 35'	No less than 35'	NA except no less than 25' for a PVD*
Maximum Building Height	No more than 45'	No more than 35'	No more than 45'	No more than 45'	NA
Roofline	Any fourth level must be stepped back and have roof pitch away from Main Street	NA	Any fourth level must be stepped back and have roof pitch away from Main Street	Any fourth level must be stepped back and have roof pitch away from Main Street	NA
Building Footprint	Maximum of 15,000 SF with conditional review allowing for greater size	NA	Maximum of 15,000 SF with conditional review allowing for greater size	Maximum of 15,000 SF with conditional review allowing for greater size	Maximum of 15,000 SF for retail with conditional review allowing for greater size for other uses
Roof Pitch	8:12 Min.	8:12 Min.	8:12 Min.	8:12 Min.	NA
Front Building Setbacks	Maximum setback is 15' on Main Street and corner lots	No more than the average of existing structures on adjacent lots	Maximum setback is 15' on Main Street and Monument Place.	Maximum setback is 15' on Main Street, new streets and corner lots.	Maximum 15' for a PVD*
Side Building Setbacks	Reduce to 10' (zero-lot line allowed with conditional review)	No changes	Reduce to 10' (zero-lot line allowed with conditional review)	Reduce to 10' (zero-lot line allowed with conditional review)	Increase to 25' (10' or zero-lot with conditional review as part of a PVD*
Floor-Area Ratio (FAR)	0.4 (0.8 if at least two residential units on upper floors)	No changes	0.5 (0.8 if at least two residential units on upper floors)	0.5 (0.8 if at least two residential units on upper floors)	No changes
Minimum sidewalk width	5'	5'	5'	5'	5'
Minimum lot size	No changes	No changes	Reduce to 10,000 SF	Reduce to 10,000 SF	Reduce to 7,500 for a PVD*
Minimum lot size for two-unit dwellings	Same as single-unit	Same as single-unit	Same as single-unit	Same as single-unit	Same as single-unit
Street frontage	No changes	No changes	Reduce to 50'	Reduce to 50'	Increase to 200'
Open Space Ratio	NA	Increase from 0.2 to 0.4	NA	NA	NA

*PVD: Specific standards need to be developed for the proposed Planned Village Development land use

Table 3: Recommended Performance Standards Changes

STANDARD	PROPOSED CHANGES					
	Lower Village	Middle Village	Village Center	Civic Mixed Use	North Main Overlay	Limited Industrial
Resumption of nonconforming uses	Reduce from 2 years to 1 year	Reduce from 2 years to 1 year	Reduce from 2 years to 1 year	Reduce from 2 years to 1 year	Reduce from 2 years to 1 year	Reduce from 2 years to 1 year
Change of use	Prohibit changing from one nonconforming use to another nonconforming use	Prohibit changing from one nonconforming use to another nonconforming use	Prohibit changing from one nonconforming use to another nonconforming use	Prohibit changing from one nonconforming use to another nonconforming use	Prohibit changing from one nonconforming use to another nonconforming use	Prohibit changing from one nonconforming use to another nonconforming use
Off-street parking and loading	Allow Planning Board to vary parking standards	Allow Planning Board to vary parking standards to better integrate cars into existing landscape	Allow Planning Board to vary parking standards. Require on-street parking on both sides of Main Street.	Allow Planning Board to vary parking standards. Require on-street parking on both sides of Main Street.	Allow Planning Board to vary parking standards.	Allow Planning Board to vary parking standards.
Signage	Prohibit roof signs and internally illuminated signs. Refine definitions of portable and temporary signs.	One non-illuminated w/ 8 SF Max*. No roof, post, banner, portable, off-premise, marquee or canopy signs	Prohibit roof signs and internally illuminated signs. Refine definitions of portable and temporary signs.	Prohibit roof signs and internally illuminated signs. Refine definitions of portable and temporary signs.	Prohibit roof signs and internally illuminated signs. Refine definitions of portable and temporary signs.	Prohibit roof signs and internally illuminated signs. Refine definitions of portable and temporary signs.
Residential Density	Waive density standards for first four units in mixed-use project. Additional units only need to meet half of minimum lot size.	No changes	Waive density standards for first four units in mixed-use project. Additional units only need to meet half of minimum lot size.	Waive density standards for first four units in mixed-use project. Additional units only need to meet half of minimum lot size.	Waive density standards for first four units in mixed-use project. Additional units only need to meet half of minimum lot size.	Waive density standards for first four units in mixed-use project. Additional units only need to meet half of minimum lot size.
Location of Residential Units	Upper stories only in mixed-use buildings	No changes	No changes	No changes	No changes	No changes
Site Design	Require sidewalk or easement for future walk.	Require sidewalk or easement for future walk.	Must ensure pedestrian scaled and visually cohesive streetscape	Must ensure pedestrian scaled and visually cohesive streetscape	Must ensure pedestrian scaled and visually cohesive streetscape	Require sidewalk or easement for future walk.

* Middle Village Sign Note: 1 sign with sliding dimensional scale:
 1 tenant: 4 SF
 2 tenants 6 SF
 3 tenants 8 SF
 Total dimension 8 SF

Chapter 4:

Gateway & Design Issues

Overview

In this chapter of the Topsham Main Street Village Plan, a range of gateway and design issues are analyzed and recommendations are made to establish or reinforce the intentions of the Main Street Village Plan. This section also illustrates the recommended dimensional changes to the six zones. The goal is to visually explain the implications of the changes to dimensional standards and the resulting character of the proportional relationship between building height, setbacks, streetscape and the right-of-way.

The gateway and design issues explored for each of the six zones are divided into five categories:

1. Gateways
2. Redevelopment diagrams
3. Open space and connectivity
4. Street sections

I. Gateways

Gateways are critical design components for Main Street because they not only mark the entrance to the area, but also heighten peoples' expectations for the Main Street experience.

It is the intent of this section to provide recommendations for creating or enhancing gateways in the Main Street Village Area.

Gateways are typically thought of in terms of landscape and signage "treatments." While unifying thematic signage and landscapes can help define the gateways to Main Street, they are not the most effective way to establish a sense of arrival or sense

of place. When utilized, gateway treatments need to be at a scale recognizable by car and should reflect a local theme. It has also been documented in the Existing Conditions Report that Main Street is dynamic and varied in land use, visual character and scale. This diversity is one of the strengths of Main Street. How does a consistent gateway treatment relate to the varied conditions of Main Street?



A standard "gateway" treatment. A coordinated signage system can be useful for providing directions to businesses and neighborhoods, but must be at a scale legible at the speed of car and should be unique, even three-dimensional. In general, an articulated neighborhood of buildings and streetscape elements is more effective at announcing the arrival to a place than a freestanding sign.

Significant architecture, views of outstanding natural features and visually cohesive neighborhoods at gateway locations are more visceral thresholds to an area, providing a defining character, a lasting impression for people arriving to Main Street.

There are four major gateways to the Main Street Village:

1. Frank Wood Bridge / Bowdoin Mill to the south
2. I-295 overpass to the north
3. Elm Street/Route 24 intersection
4. Coastal Connector/Route 196 intersection

There are six minor gateways to the Main Street Village:

1. Monument Place intersection
2. A proposed realignment of Canam Drive moved to the northern edge of the R1 Zone
3. Apple Orchard/Middle Village
4. Wilson Street intersection
5. Winter Street intersection
6. Summer Street intersection

See Figure 9 below for the location of major and minor gateways.

Lower Village Gateways

The Lower Village major gateways include the Frank Wood Bridge / Bowdoin Mill and the Elm Street Intersection. These gateways mark the arrival of local and regional traffic on Routes 201 and 24. The Summer Street and Winter Street intersections are minor gateways serving residential neighborhoods to the west. With the extension of the Topsham Fair Mall through to Winter Street and significant numbers of proposed and new homes in this area, the Winter Street intersection will most likely see increased traffic volumes. The recently completed Transportation Study for the Town recommends that Winter Street become a two way street leading up the hill to the signalized intersection.

The Frank Wood Bridge and view of the Androscoggin River and the Bowdoin Mill are the most iconic and memorable places in the

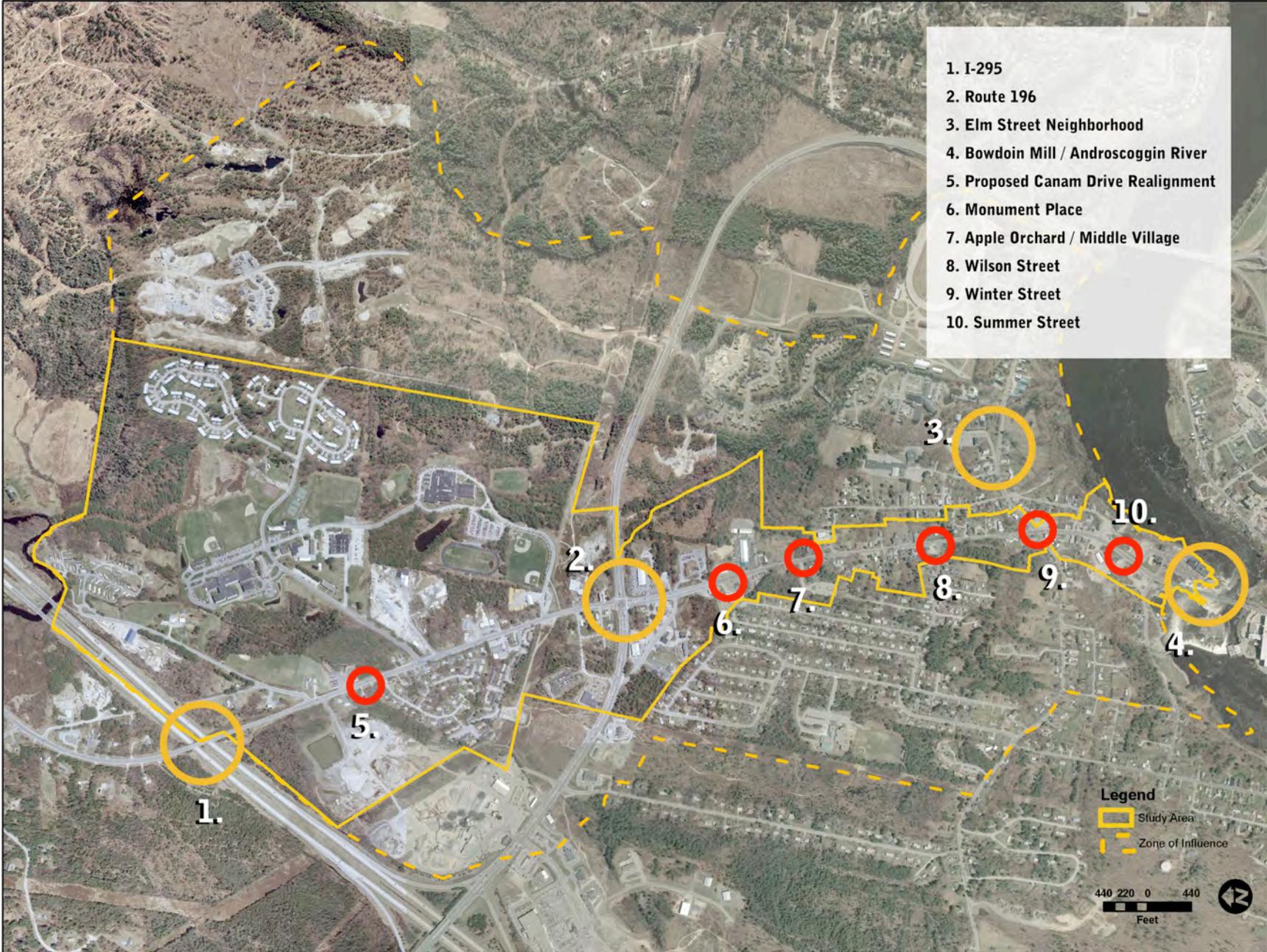
Main Street Village Area. These features are the southern gateway to Main Street.

The Border Trust building on the southern side of the Summer Street intersection is designed to reinforce this minor gateway to Main Street. The building is an interesting example of Main Street architecture because the angled footprint creates two facades with a positive relationship when both arriving and leaving the Lower Village. The building manages to reinforce the edge of Main Street and recognize the curve in the road.



A bold visual statement marking the southern gateway to Main Street.

Figure 9: Major and Minor Gateways





A strong visual terminus / gateway to Main Street when approaching from Elm Street.

The Elm Street intersection is a gateway for people arriving from the east on Route 24 and is defined by the church, the yellow home and the general historic character of Elm Street. This gateway is also the dividing line between the Lower and Middle Village Zones.

Lower Village Gateways Issues

The major and minor gateways to Main Street in the Lower Village are well defined by natural features, significant architecture and neighborhoods of character.

The church parking lot at the Elm Street intersection is a good example of where parking should not be placed. This intersection would be an even stronger gateway and better define Main Street if the church were at the corner and the parking placed to the east along Elm Street.

Lower Village Gateways Recommendations

- There are no recommendations for improving the gateways in the Lower Village, although there are both

examples positive and negative situations informing gateway design.

Positive:

- The revitalization of the Bowdoin Mill as an architectural landmark and the screening of parking with the brick wall.
- The revitalization of the home at the Elm Street intersection creating a visual terminus when arriving from the east.
- The design of the new building at the Summer Street intersection, which manages to reinforce the street wall while addressing the curve of the road when approaching from the north and the south.
- Maintaining views of the Androscoggin River, one of only a few significant natural visual resources along Main Street.

Negative:

- The church parking lot at the corner of Elm Street does not reinforce the street wall. During the week, the parking lot is empty. If this were a busy lot used everyday, there would be a stronger negative impact on visual character.



While the church and steeple create a visual landmark at the Elm Street intersection, the relationship with Main Street would be stronger if the building was located at the corner instead of the parking. This is more apparent when traveling south on Main Street.

Middle Village Gateway

The Middle Village includes a minor gateway at the Wilson Street Intersection and at the northern boundary as defined by the apple orchard and the stand of trees south of Brilliant Motors. The Elm Street intersection, as discussed above, is a major gateway to Main Street at the boundary between the Middle and Lower Village. The Elm Street intersection issues will not be addressed again.

The Wilson Street intersection is an important local minor gateway because it is the direct connection for pedestrians and vehicles to the Woodside neighborhood and school. Coming south on Main Street, the apple orchard is a distinct threshold to the Middle Village.

Middle Village Gateway Issues

Approaching Main Street from Wilson Street there is a visual terminus of homes and mature trees typical of the Middle Village.

To the south of the intersection is an undeveloped ravine with a stand of mature trees giving this intersection a unique character. To the north of this intersection is a small parking lot and mixed-use building. This is a similar undesirable situation as the church and parking lot at the Elm Street intersection.

Middle Village Gateway Recommendations

- If the lot to the north of the Wilson Street intersection is redeveloped or another building is placed on the lot, the building should address both Main and Wilson Streets with parking to the rear.



The Wilson Street intersection would be better defined if the building were placed at the corner of Wilson and Main Streets with the parking to the rear.

Village Center Gateways

The proposed Village Center Zone includes two of the most significant Gateways on Main Street: Route 196 and the Monument Place Intersection. Route 196 is the regional crossroads, with traffic volumes over 40,000 cars daily, approximately one third less than the cars passing the City of Portland daily on I-295. Monument Place is evolving into one of

the most important minor gateways, due to the extension of Monument Place to the Topsham Fair Mall and the placement of the Town Hall complex at the southern side of the intersection with Main Street.

Village Center Gateway Issues

Route 196 running east to west dominates Main Street running north to south. The traffic engineering of the intersection dominates the character of this gateway. Traffic engineering standards also create strict parameters for how this intersection and adjacent right-of-way land can be altered, mitigating the impacts of the traffic volume and the bland road design. However, as the currently zoned Upper Village sees extensive redevelopment and if the Coastal Connector is widened to serve the BNAS, more visionary measures such as tunneling Route 196 under Main Street should be considered.



View south on Main Street at the Route 196 intersection.

In addition to institutionalized standards for road design, the intersection is approximately ten years old and to expect Maine DOT to rebuild or alter the design is probably not feasible. However, there has been discussion about widening Route 196

as part of the redevelopment of the Brunswick Naval Air Station and this might provide an opportunity to address the situation. Realistic design improvements presented in the Main Street Village Plan can provide guidance for potential improvements. Some of these improvements are suggested in Chapter 6: Transportation Issues.



View west on Route 196 from Main Street.

The Monument Place intersection is evolving into focused area of change: The new Town Hall complex at the south of the intersection; the proposed Town-wide bike path system will cross Main Street here, connecting to the Town Hall and bike path on the redesigned Monument Place; the Post Office is located at this intersection; residual traffic from the Topsham Fair Mall and new frontage lots will increase vehicular volumes; connections to residential neighborhoods will create a direct link to Main Street for pedestrians and vehicles; and, what has been previously been described as the Monument Place Neighborhood is going to evolve as land values rise and the nature of the area continues to change.

There is also an opportunity to align the Monument Place intersection with a shared driveway accessing the post office, Wright-Pierce and Lee Auto. This would take the cooperation of several landowners, but might aid the warrant for a signal at this intersection.



View of Post Office at terminus of Monument Place.

Village Center Gateway Recommendations

Improvements to the Route 196 intersection are restricted, but the Main Street Village Plan will summarize a series of potential improvements providing visual mitigation. The goal, if possible, is to make people aware that they are crossing Main Street and at the very least create a visual link along Main Street.

It should also be considered that this intersection is not a local place. The intersection has been regionalized in appearance and function. It could be argued that Route 196 is an inevitable barrier between Main Street to the north and the south and money spent visually improving the intersection might be better allocated in other locations where there is a more realistic chance to improve visual quality and pedestrian safety.

Potential Route 196 Intersection improvements:

- Widen islands and plant street trees.
- Replace generic fixtures with custom fixtures.
- Install brick pavers or an embedded and colored paving pattern at the crosswalks or covering the surface of the entire intersection.
- Install large sculptural pieces or flagpoles at the four sides of the intersection establishing a unifying theme and scaling down the standard traffic fixtures.
- Create decorative archways on the eastern and western legs of the intersection making it clear that one is in Topsham (A historic example of this can be found at the town line between Rockland and Camden.)
- Wrap the signal poles with a mesh and grow grape vines, creating “green columns.”
- Paint the signal columns and arms.

The Monument Place intersection has tremendous potential because the area is changing and improvements can be included in some of the development plans. The following recommendations should guide development at this minor gateway:

- Town Hall should address both Main Street and Monument Place with a minimum setback and parking behind the building.
- The Post Office should remain on Main Street. If the Post Office moves, a building of greater height with more architectural character should be developed, recognizing this location as a visual terminus of Monument Place.
- A well-designed crosswalk treatment and pedestrian signal should be installed allowing for pedestrians to reach Town Hall and the Monument Place sidewalk from the east side of Main Street and to create a link in the Town-wide trail system.
-

North of Route 196 Gateways

The north Main Street area does not currently include visible gateways or a sense of entering Main Street. The I-295 overpass is a gateway of sorts, but does not make a statement that one has arrived in Topsham Village. The residential and commercial properties along Main Street in the currently zoned Upper Village are nondescript. But change is coming to this part of Main Street. Over the next 10 to 15 years this area has the most potential for change compared to the other areas along Main Street.

The currently dominant and defining land uses and architecture in the existing Upper Village are the High School, the Middle School and the Brunswick Naval Air Station Annex. None of these uses have a presence on Main Street. As the currently zoned Upper Village evolves, there will most likely be a linear pattern of development along Main Street and more large-scale developments on parcels that do not front Main Street.

However, as explored in redevelopment concept plans and strategies in Section II of this chapter, there are opportunities in the currently zoned Upper Village to break the linear character of Main Street and integrate the large back lots with Main Street by creating new side streets and even new road alignments.

North Main Street Gateway Issues

As one drives across the I-295 overpass, to the west is one of the “quadrants” that could be developed in a similar fashion to the Topsham Fair Mall. This would not be in keeping with the scale or types of land uses anticipated for Main Street. The proposed North Main Overlay Zone in this area would create a transitional zone along Main Street.

There is the possibility of working with the existing established pattern of dense residential development of the R1 Zone / Forest Drive neighborhood and use this as a threshold in conjunction with a potential realigned Canam Drive to create a new intersection and gateway south of I-295 (Figure12.) The proposed North Main Overlay Zone to the eastern and western sides of Main Street would also make this intersection the threshold from rural Topsham to Main Street Topsham.



Envision development like this along the Upper Village Main Street, but with two to three floors and more street trees and on-street parking. This frontage development would provide a transitional scale to development on the Crooker land. The same can be envisioned for the east side of Main Street transitioning back to the campus style developments.

The area currently zoned as the Upper Village may never have an inherently distinct gateway similar to the Bowdoin Mill and the Androscoggin River in the Lower Village. A strategy is that the north Main Street area could be developed with a wider range of uses and applying the standards and intent of the North Main Overlay Zone creating a sense of place and pedestrian scale.

I.IV.III North Main Gateway Recommendations

Potential north Main Street gateway options:

- Create a North Main Overlay Zone allowing for a transition in scale to the larger back lots.
- Main Street in the north Main Street area, particularly south of the proposed Canam Drive realignment should include extensive street tree plantings and pedestrian improvements. Of all the portions on Main Street, the area in the Civic Mixed Use and Limited Industrial Zones has the most potential to be reinvented. Using the standards for the North Main Overlay Zone would help create a transition in scale, while allowing a range of uses.
- Explore options for creating new intersections and street networks in the area north of Route 196, making Main Street less linear and providing new frontage, dynamic intersections, focal points for interesting architecture and civic spaces or connections to natural areas.

II. Redevelopment Diagrams

The four zones within the Main Street Village Area have varying degrees of capacity to absorb change or full-scale redevelopment. For example, the goal for the Middle Village is to stabilize the zone as a predominantly residential neighborhood in use and visual quality rather than revising standards for this area allowing for a wider range of uses and intensity of development. The redevelopment diagrams in this section are not intended to be site-specific site designs, but convey the general sense of scale and pattern of development, placement of buildings, identify potential landmark buildings and intersections and illustrate how streets should be civic spaces defined by the building walls.

Lower Village

The Lower Village is near build out. There are several opportunity sites where redevelopment could continue the positive development patterns established with recent construction. As noted in Figure 10, these sites are clustered around the Green Street intersection. Specific opportunities include:

- The redevelopment of the “Waterfall Antiques” site with the parking placed behind the building and a new building close to the street.
- Redevelopment of several buildings north of the Waterfall Antiques site, potentially with residential units.
- The redevelopment of the Finest Hearth & Home site with a landmark building, perhaps with a tower, to act as a focal point in the area, particularly when viewed from the Elm Street intersection traveling south on Main Street.
- The placement of parking behind the Finest Hearth & Home site to serve the new buildings, the riverfront park and local businesses.
- The development of a riverfront park, potentially the most important civic space in the Main Street Village Area.

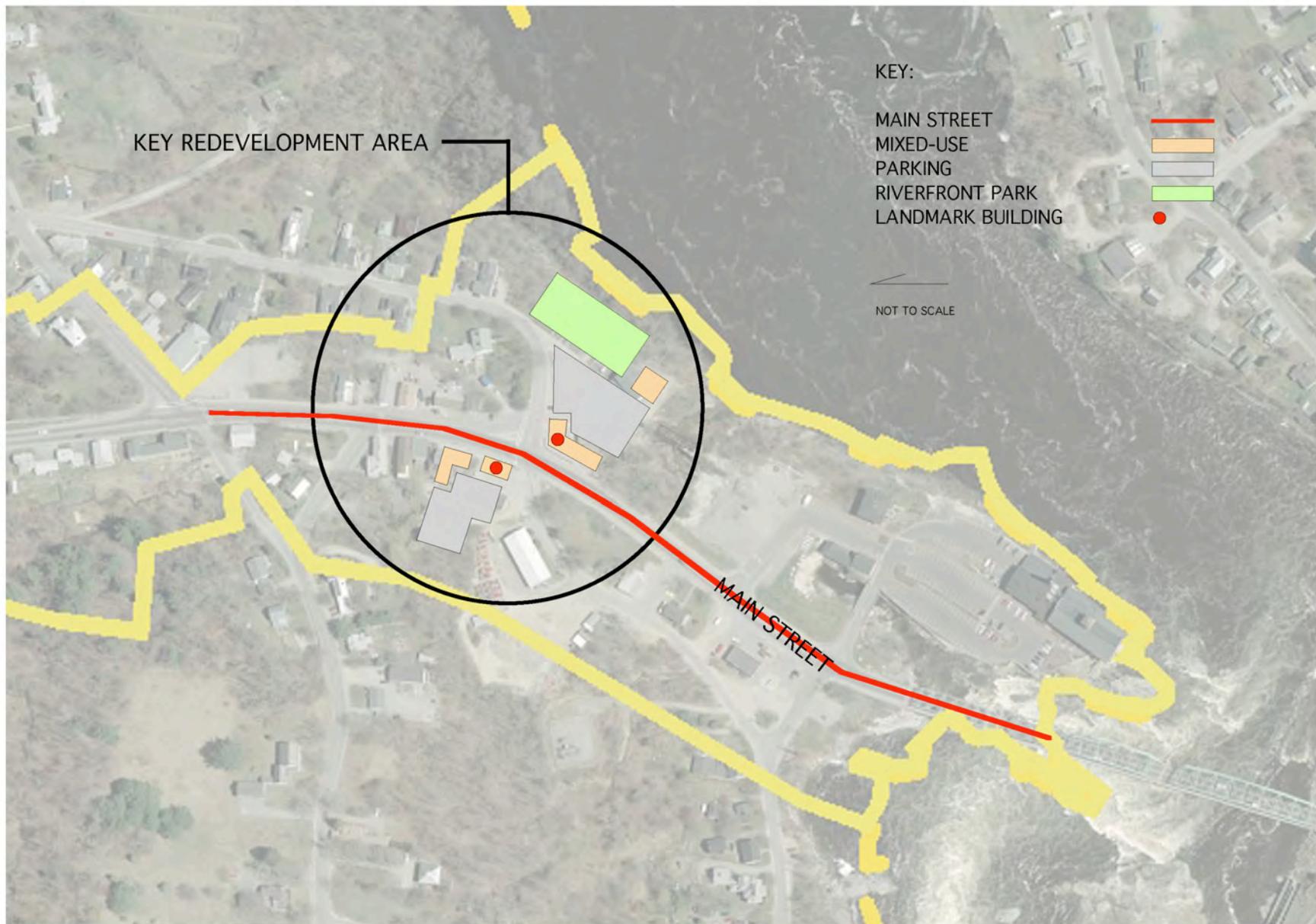
Middle Village

A redevelopment diagram has not been prepared for the Middle Village. Besides the Dairy Queen site, there are no parcels with

clear redevelopment potential. Many of the existing parcels need to be protected from overdevelopment to maintain the existing residential character. There are three basic recommendations for the Middle Village:

- If the Dairy Queen site is redeveloped, the primary use should be residential and the building located to reinforce the street wall. The site is large enough that a redevelopment scheme might include more than one building or a larger multi-family building.
- A building could be developed directly north of the Wilson Street intersection with the parking placed to the rear. Currently the parking is located at the intersection and does not define the street, detracting from the character of the Middle Village.
- The apple orchard site at the northern edge of the Middle Village should be preserved as open space.

Figure 10: Lower Village Redevelopment Diagram



Village Center

The Village Center is a proposed zone on Main Street that is currently part of the Commercial Corridor zone. This section of Main Street is becoming the civic core of Topsham with the Town Hall complex and the Post Office located at the intersection with Monument Place. Monument Place is currently being realigned as a local parallel road to the more regionally- oriented Route 196. Opportunities for village-scale redevelopment patterns are noted on Figure 11. The east side of Main Street includes two car dealerships, a gas station, the Post Office and a professional office. These businesses are healthy and are of value to Topsham, although Main Street may not be the optimal location for the car dealerships. The scale and visual quality of the dealerships is not in keeping with the vision for the area. Expansion of these businesses is limited due to the lack of developable land to the east of the parcels.

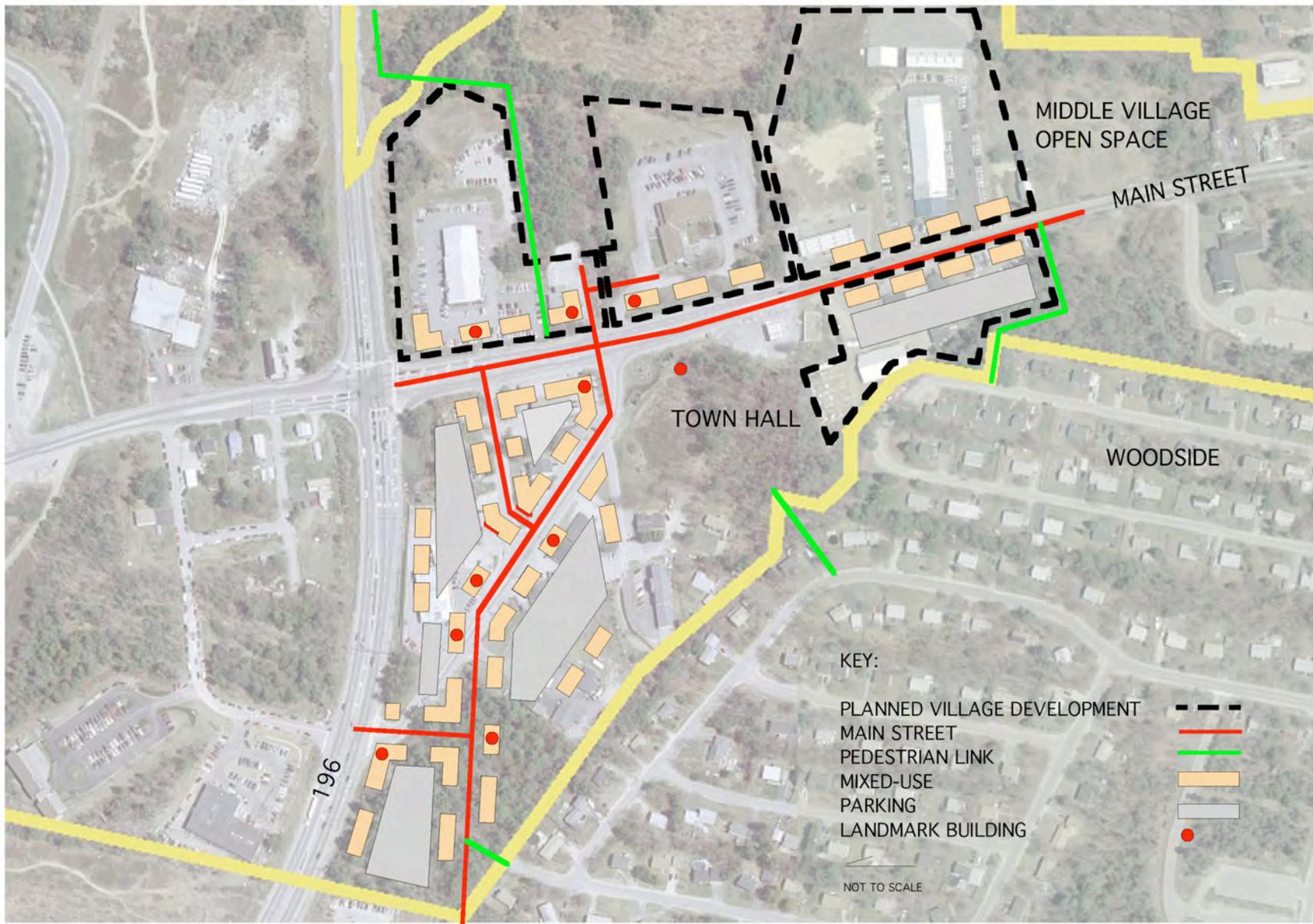
The western side of Main Street south of the proposed Town Hall Complex includes several parcels that are more likely to be redeveloped sooner than the lands to the east side of Main Street. The eastern side includes two vacant parcels and several underutilized parcels.

The parcels along the realigned Monument Place within the Village Center referred to in this plan as the Monument Place neighborhood, comprise the most mixed-use neighborhood within the Main Street Village Area; however, this area is not visually cohesive and the street is not defined by architecture. Because of the importance of the Monument Place intersection and the redevelopment opportunities in the Monument Place neighborhood, change in this area, as with the parcels south of the proposed Town Hall, may happen in the near future. Any redevelopment south of the Town Hall site and in the Monument Place neighborhood should be carefully monitored to establish a positive pattern/scale of development and mix of uses. There are already plans for “pad style development along the Monument Place extension and the Town should encourage these developments to work with the general development concepts outlined in the Main Street Village Plan.

There are several basic recommendations for the Village Center:

- New development should define the street and complement the evolving civic core at the Monument Place intersection.
- The Town should work with the three car dealerships within the Village Center to find more suitable locations in terms of access, visibility and conformance with long range planning. These parcels represent a large percentage of the potential redevelopment acreage in the Village Center and are ideal locations for “Planned Village Developments.”
- The Town should capitalize on the combination of market and civic forces changing the character of the Village Center, referring specifically to the Town Hall complex and the redevelopment along Monument Place extension, to guide the pattern and scale of development creating a well defined Main Street and vibrant sense of place.
- Pedestrian connections should be created to the Woodside neighborhood to the west of Main Street and to the open space to the east of Main Street.
- The Post Office should remain on Main Street, but redesigned in a more traditional New England style. There is a general trend to move post offices from village centers to corridor locations. If the post office needs to be expanded or rebuilt, every effort should be made to keep it at the visual terminus of Monument Place. If the Wright-Pierce parcel is redeveloped, there is an opportunity to include a new post office, expanded parking and shared driveway as part of the plan.
- Any new development on the western side of Main Street should be carefully buffered to protect the integrity of the abutting Woodside residences.

Figure 11: Village Center Redevelopment Diagram



North Main Street

The Main Street north of Route 196 includes non-descript commercial and residential development along Main Street, large campus settings to the east including the Brunswick Naval Air Station Annex, the Mount Ararat High School and the Mount Ararat Middle School and farther north a manufacturing housing development, a concrete product manufacturing facility and a traditional agricultural field.

As noted in several sections of the Main Street Village Plan, a Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA) is now overseeing a focused redevelopment study of the Annex. The Annex parcel is important for long term planning in the North Main Street area. This area will most likely be redeveloped before any other major redevelopment efforts in the area currently zoned as Upper Village. The Main Street Village Plan recognizes the ongoing work of the LRA, making general recommendations that are consistent with the overall visioning for Main Street and the supporting adjacent neighborhoods. Any redevelopment of the Annex will hopefully set a standard for growth in this area, knitting together patterns of development, pedestrian and vehicular connections and architectural scale into a place that relates to the overall North Main Street context. Figure 12 illustrates a possible development scenario for this area.

Recommendations for the new Upper Village zones:

- Main Street south of the proposed Canam realignment should be redeveloped with buildings defining the street wall, on-street parking, streetscaping and a mix of uses.
- The Commercial Corridor / interchange area with frontage on Main Street should be developed with village-scale buildings defining Main Street and creating a buffer / transition zone between Main Street and the remaining interchange area that could be commercially developed.
- A new street network should create a hierarchy of connectivity between Main Street, the schools, the Annex and other development parcels in the Civic Mixed Use Zone. Dead end streets should be avoided and on-street parking encouraged in Planned Village Developments and

in other cases to create more incentives for economic development.

- The Annex should set the standard for the quality of redevelopment in terms of architecture and streetscape, buildings defining the street wall and pedestrian and vehicular connectivity encouraging integration with adjacent parcels.
- The school parcels should be seen as campus / civic settings with beneficial open space.
- New housing at a range of prices should be encouraged in the North Main Street area supporting the schools, businesses and general sense of activity.
- Pedestrian connections should be created to the Cathance River and Mount Ararat. These are critical natural resources in the North Main Street area and will add to the over all quality of life as the area redevelops.

III. Open Space and Connectivity

The Main Street Village Plan identifies a range of open spaces and civic landscapes ranging from views of the Androscoggin River to the proposed apple orchard park in the Middle Village and the more natural areas such as the Cathance River to more refined spaces such as the proposed riverfront park in the Lower Village. But a consistent intent of the Main Street Village Plan is to treat Main Street as a safe and attractive civic space varying in character from the Androscoggin River to I-295. Main Street should be a place, a pedestrian space. Main Street should serve multiple purposes, but the use of Main Street as a conduit for cars should be subservient to an overall street design where the buildings, streetscape and sidewalk, on-street parking (south of Route 196) and traffic calming measures establish a pedestrian scaled environment, an activated and well defined civic space.

Open and civic spaces act as transitions between different types of development, add variety to everyday life and allow for the development of both personal and communal appreciation of a place. Figure 13 identifies key existing and proposed open spaces and connections within the Main Street Village Area. The spaces range from the “natural” to the built, but they all help unify the community. Following is a summary of the range of open spaces to protect and design in the various zones.

Lower Village

- Main Street should be an architecturally defined outdoor room with on-street parking and village style streetscaping.
- Sidewalks with streetscape elements (trees, lights, benches and other features) should be created on both sides of Main Street.
- The view of the Androscoggin River from the Frank Wood Bridge should be preserved.
- The riverfront park should be developed.

- The historic bridge leading from the existing fire station to the Bowdoin Mill complex should be restored as a footbridge, providing views of the river and the ravine.

Middle Village

- Main Street should have a residential feel with mature trees, an esplanade and sidewalk system on both sides of the street and homes with front yards and gardens.
- The apple orchard site and adjacent back lands should be purchased and preserved as public green space.
- A trail/buffer easement should be secured at the northern Middle Village boundary on the west side of Main Street, creating a pedestrian link between the Woodside neighborhood, Main Street and the apple orchard.
- The ravine south of the Wilson Street intersection is not physically accessible, but adds to the visual quality of the Middle Village.

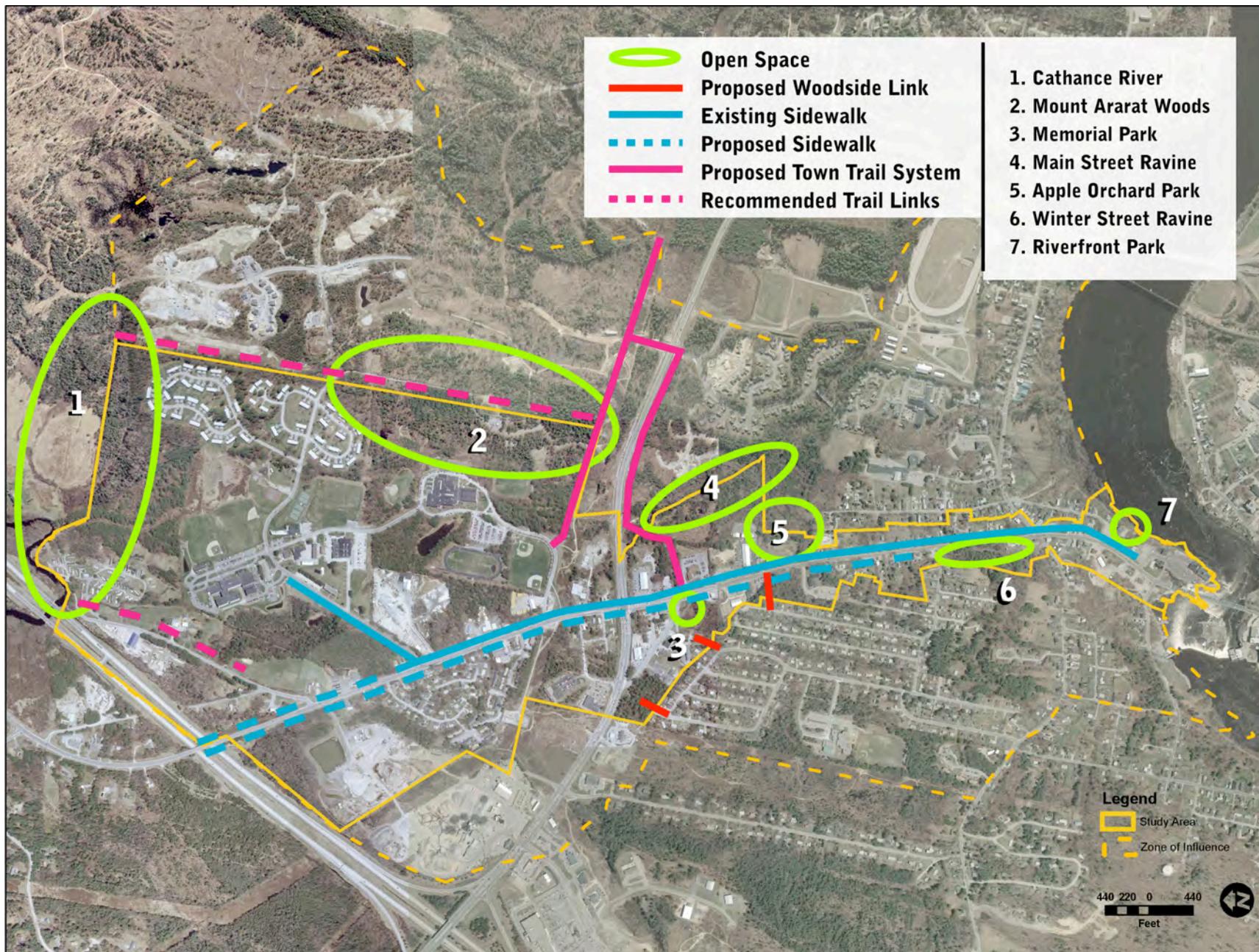
Village Center

- Main Street should be an architecturally defined outdoor room with on-street parking and village style streetscaping.
- The memorial park at the Monument Place intersection should be incorporated into the design of the Town Hall complex.
- Sidewalks with streetscape elements should be created on both sides of Main Street.
- Pedestrian connections should be created between the Woodside neighborhood and Main Street.
- Pedestrian connections should be created between Main Street and the conservation lands to the east.
- The Main Street crossing of the town wide trail system should be visible and safe.

North Main Street Zones

- Main Street should be an architecturally defined outdoor room by utilizing the flexible standards provided by the North Main Overlay Zone wherever feasible.
- Sidewalks with streetscape elements should be created on both sides of Main Street.
- Secondary residential and connecting streets should also have a sense of defined space, but less intensive than Main Street.
- The school campuses should be protected as civic open spaces for active and passive recreation.
- Mount Ararat and the Cathance River should be protected and made accessible as part of a town-wide trail network (275 acres +/- of the Cathance River is already in conservation and accessible from a trailhead and parking lot in Highland Green).

Figure 12: Open Space and Connectivity



IV. Street Design

Main Street in Topsham is basically a straight line without noticeable alignment or grade changes or defining architecture creating focal points or a contained civic space. There is an inherent lack of visual diversity and sense of place. The thoughtful design of the overall street, from building to building, can overcome the lack of topographic change and picturesque bends in the road. A sense of place can be created by design.

A notable exception is the alignment of Main Street in the Lower Village, as well as the change in grade, contributing to the dynamic quality of Main Street. When stopped at the Elm Street Intersection, one looks south to a curving wall of buildings with the *Finest Hearth & Home* at the focal point (and the *Bowdoin Mill* beyond.) One is also looking down over the Lower Village. This enhances the visual experience and sense of place. Driving north on Main Street from the Lower Village, the buildings rise on a curve culminating in the church steeple at the Elm Street intersection. This visual drama is part of the underlying character giving the Lower Village such appeal.

Any redevelopment of the *Finest Hearth & Home* site or other parcels that are a visual focal point should include landmark architecture punctuating the general visual character and built pattern. The building should have a distinct character, such as a tower, reinforcing or framing the view.

The Lower Village and the Middle Village provide both historic and contemporary street design precedents to be refined and applied along Main Street. The Main Street Village Plan includes concept street sections elaborating on these precedents, creating ideal street designs for the Lower Village, Middle Village, Village Center and North Main Street zones. The intent of these drawings is to graphically represent the recommended changes to dimensional and performance standards. The common theme in all the sections is that the street section should be viewed as a series of design elements working together to create a sense of place. The width of the sidewalks and travel lanes, the setback and height of buildings, on-street parking, sidewalk bump outs at

crosswalks and streetscape elements such as trees, seating, lighting and signs create a cohesive and energized space promoting civic pride, economic development, human interaction and the enjoyment of village life.



*The view south to the Lower Village is enhanced by the curve in the road and building wall and the visual terminus of the *Finest Hearth & Home* site. Redevelopment of this parcel should include a landmark building framing or punctuating the view. Potential landmark buildings should incorporate a bold vertical element such as a tower.*



The view north from the Lower Village is enhanced by the curve of the road and buildings and the change in grade culminating in the church steeple as a visual focal point.

In developing the Main Street Village Plan, focal points or opportunity sites for reinforcing the street wall in the Lower Village, Middle Village, Village Center and North Main Street zones have been identified in writing and in graphics. For example, the realigned Monument Place terminates with a view of the post office, which is an important civic land building, but the current architecture does little to define the intersection and take advantage of the visual importance of the site.

Figures 14-17 depict the ideal street sections resulting from the changes to dimensional and performance standards recommended in Chapter 3. Figure 17 compares the four street sections in one image, illustrating the proportions of the “outdoor room” as defined by the relationship of the width of the street and sidewalks and the height of the buildings.



The post office is an important land use on Main Street, but the architecture is insignificant. Any redesign should recognize its location as a visual terminus of the realigned Monument Place.

Figure 13: Lower Village Street Section

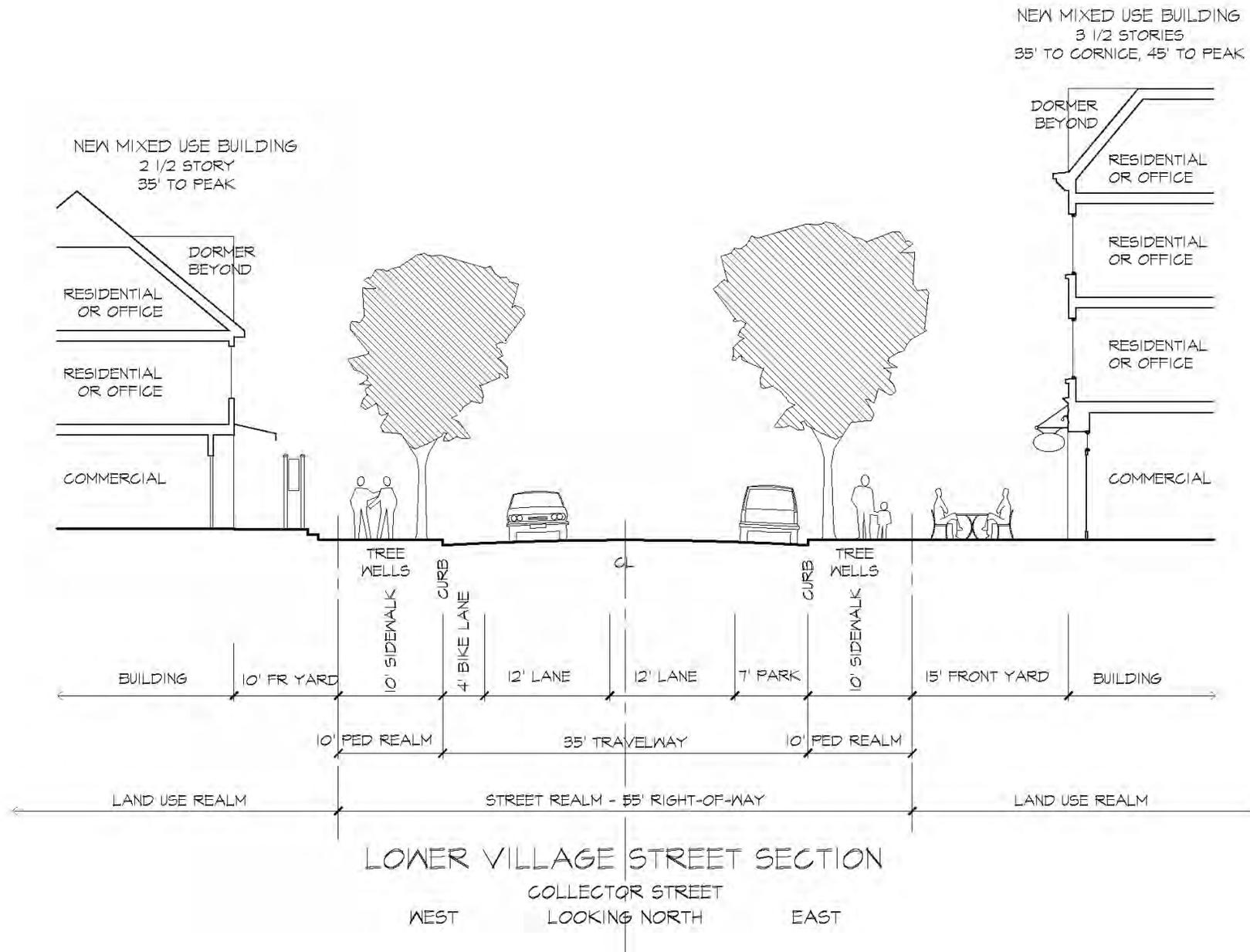


Figure 14: Middle Village Street Section

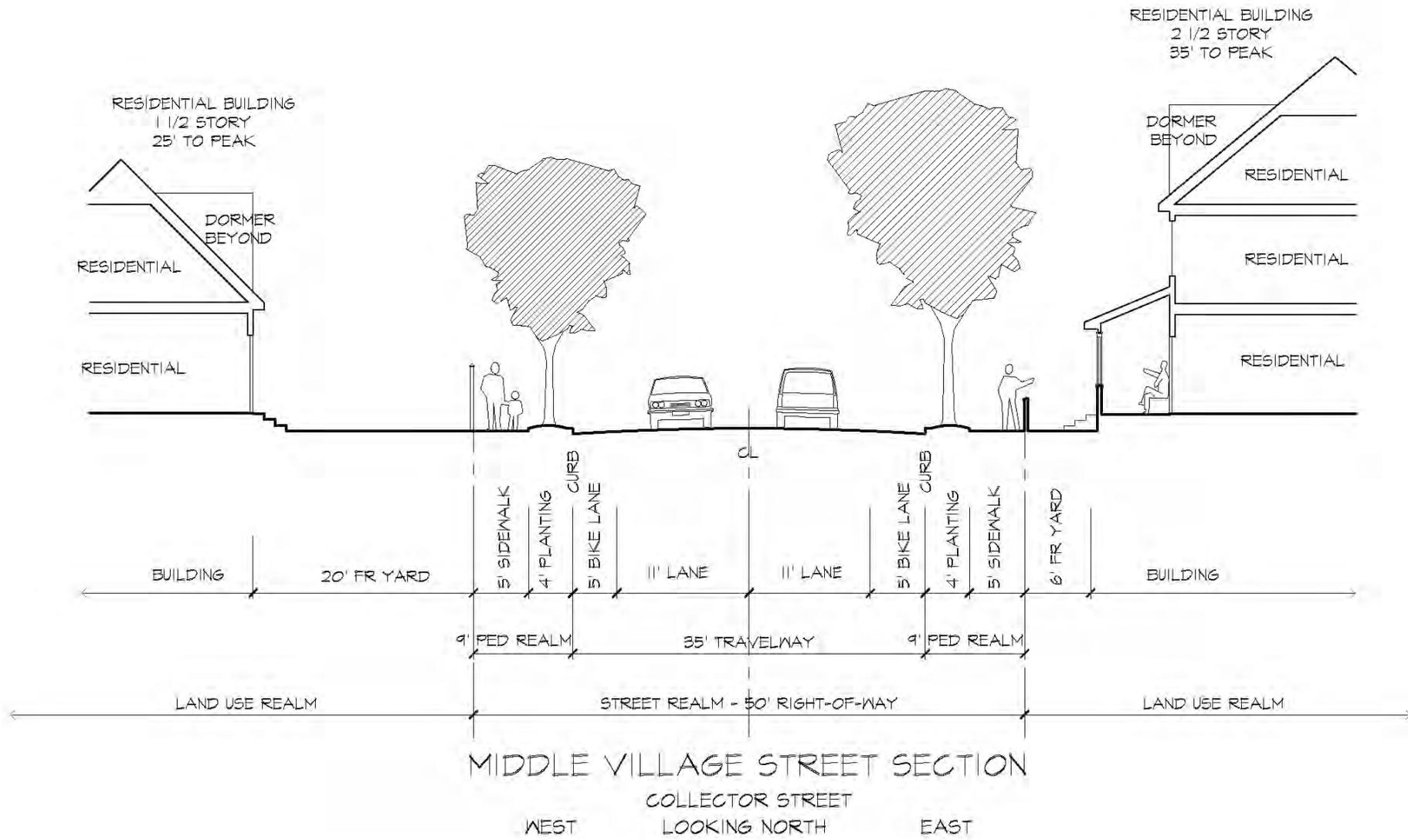
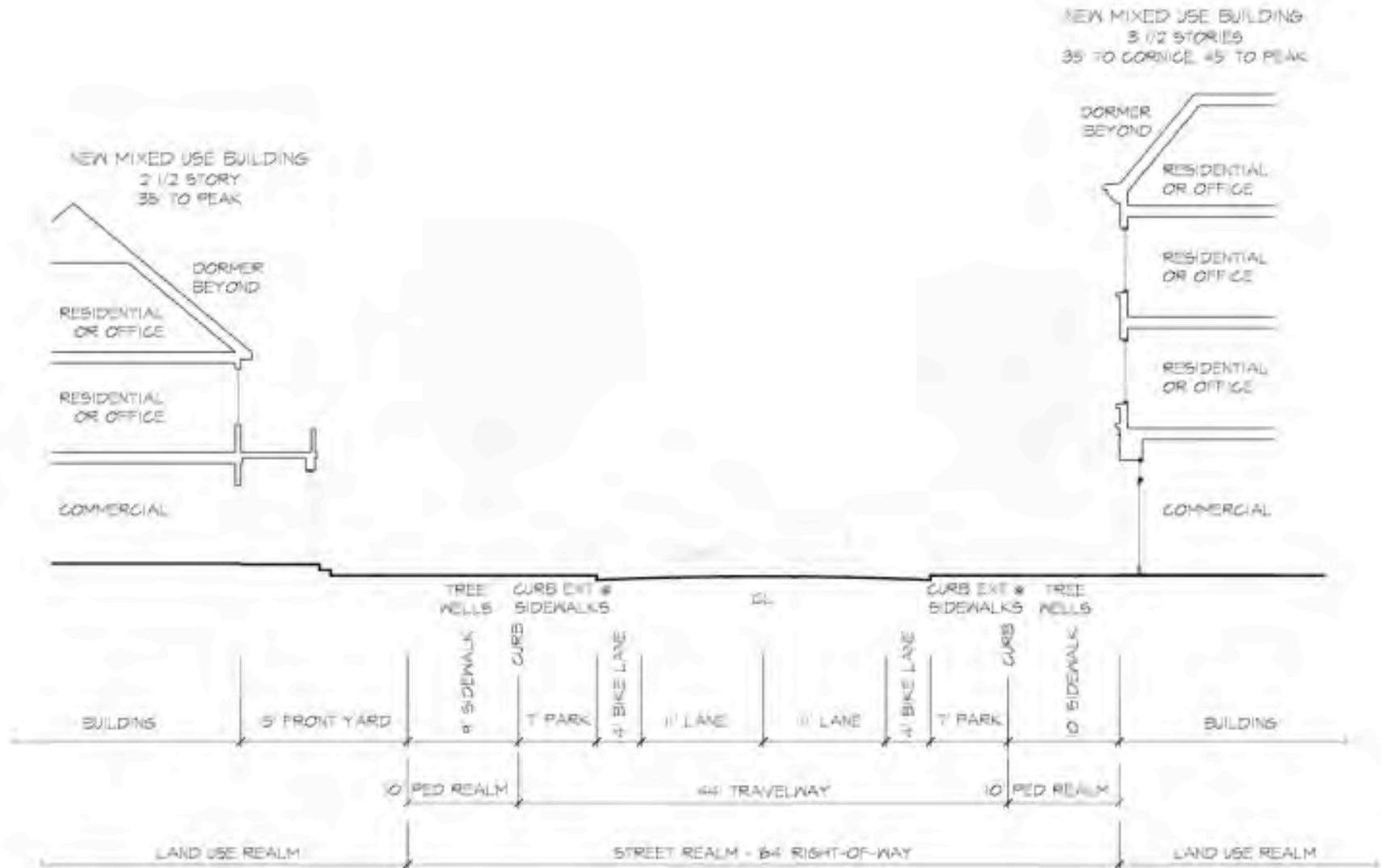


Figure 15: Village Center / Civic Mixed Use and North Main Overlay Street Section



VILLAGE CENTER & NORTH MAIN OVERLAY STREET SECTION *

WEST COLLECTOR STREET LOOKING NORTH EAST

* ON STREET PARKING NOT REQUIRED FOR NORTH MAIN OVERLAY ZONE

Figure 16: Civic Mixed Use Residential Street Section

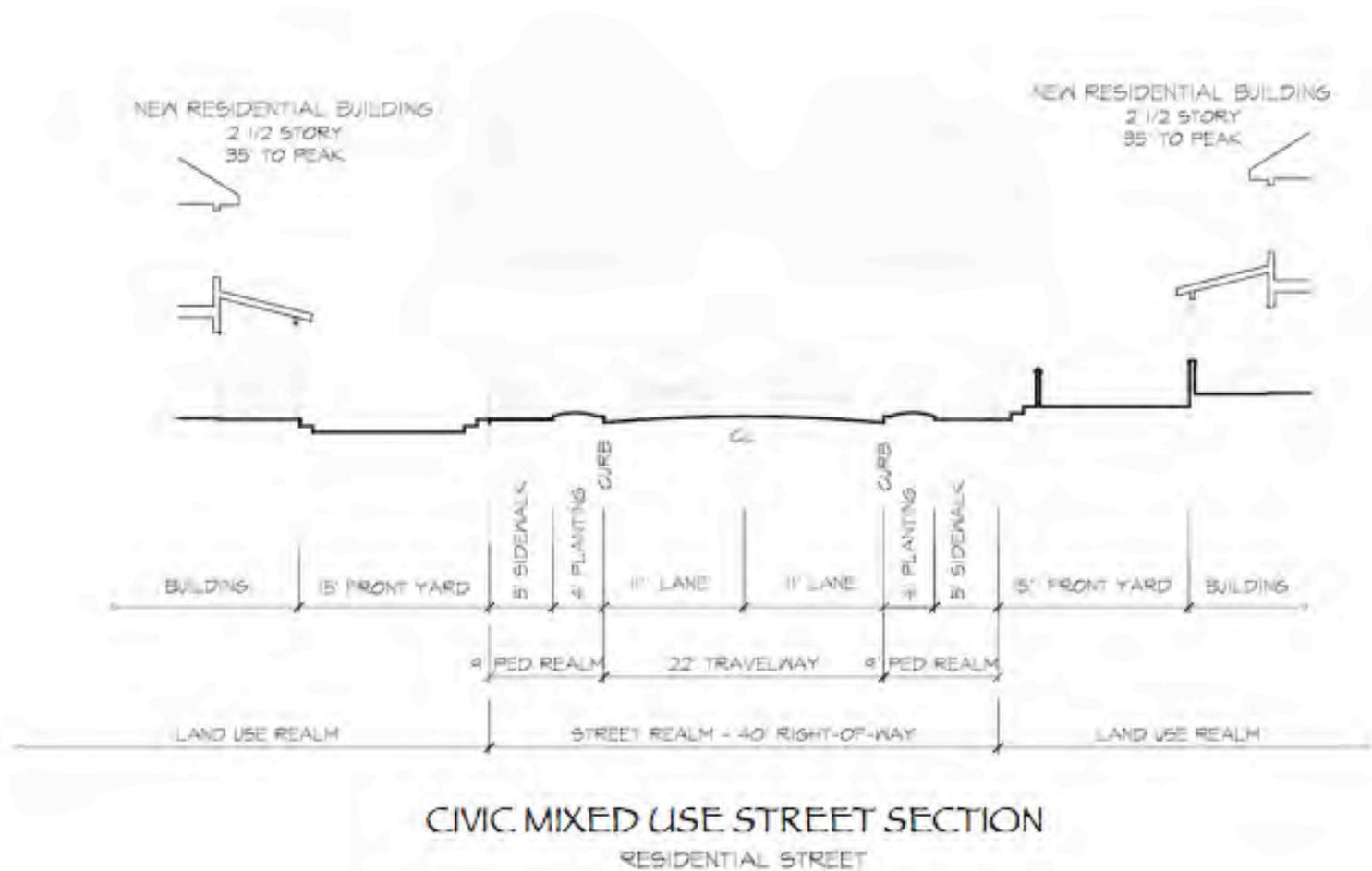
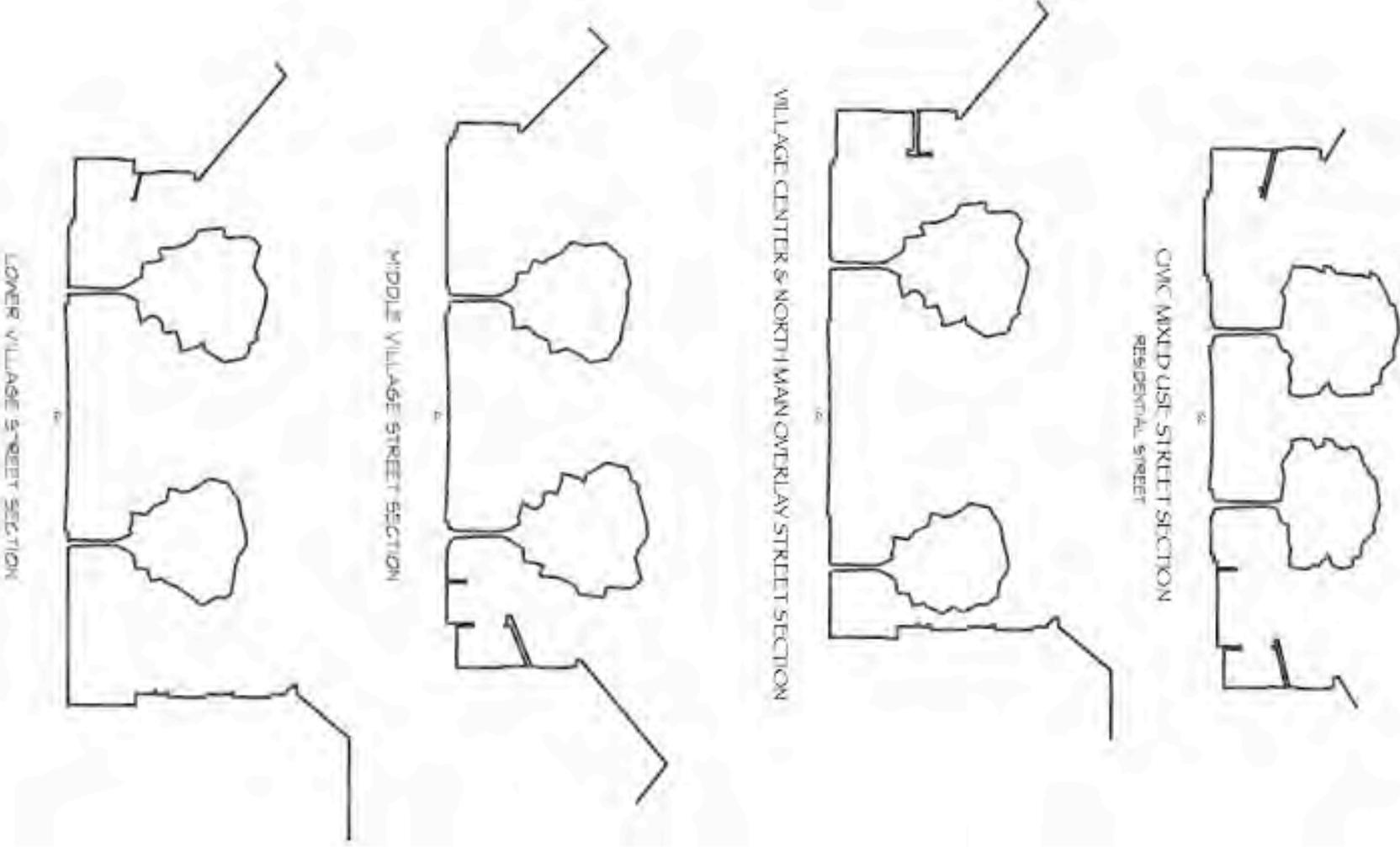


Figure 17: Street Section Comparisons



Chapter 5:

Housing & Economic Development Issues

Overview

This chapter examines how the proposed vision and supporting regulatory and design initiatives will affect housing and economic development prospects in the Main Street Village Area. For each of the four geographic sub areas, three different items are described:

- Potential/suggested redevelopment sites
- Desired development types
- Required public investments

This chapter concludes with a brief discussion regarding potential sources of funding for the public investments outlined for each sub-area.

I. Lower Village Zone

Potential/Suggested Redevelopment Sites

The Lower Village is mostly built-out, with no large redevelopment parcels remaining. There are several small sites that either contain obsolete buildings or may be suitable for redevelopment. While these are small sites with limited redevelopment potential, the quality of the architecture and the streetscape combined with the proposed uses is very important to the future of the Lower Village. Many of these parcels are concentrated in one cluster on the east side of Main Street near the intersection of Green Street. These parcels include the existing Fire Station (which is slated for relocation to the new Town Center complex) and the present location of Finest Hearth

& Home. Both of these parcels are adjacent to the planned riverfront park and should complement this public use.

On the west side of Main Street, there are a handful of potential redevelopment sites, the most significant being the Waterfall Antiques property. This parcel and its surrounding parking lot is an excellent location for a mixed-use infill project with street-level retail and residential units above. In addition to this site, there are a few small multi-family buildings further north on Main Street that may be candidates for redevelopment.

The two general development areas on the east and west sides of Main Street in the location of the Green Street intersection is an opportunity to create a “heart” for the Lower Village and complete the long-term vision for the area.

Desired Development Types

At the present time, Lower Village contains largely a mix of residential, office and convenience retail uses. Activity on the sidewalks of the area is largely concentrated around daytime office users, and there are few destination businesses that draw in visitors on evenings and weekends.

An essential component of the desire to ensure that Lower Village remains the true heart of Topsham is to have it accommodate uses that generate activity 16 hours a day for at least six days a week. Destination uses like restaurants, coffee shops, art galleries, bookstores would help achieve this goal, but few such businesses are likely to be supportable in this location due to its proximity to downtown Brunswick and Topsham Fair Mall.

It is likely that one or two restaurants and a small bookstore could be supported in Lower Village. Such businesses will depend on continued growth in the populations of residents and office workers. They will also benefit from pedestrian and bicycle traffic coming from nearby neighborhoods and over the Frank Wood Bridge from Brunswick.

The scale of residential development in Lower Village will be very small, due to the limitations of its small parcels, but there are ways to provide affordable housing in this area. One means would be to have live-work developments in which a retail shop owner lives above the store. Another would be for the Town of Topsham to enroll in the Maine State Housing Authority's New Neighbors Program, which provides incentives for moderate-income families to purchase and renovate multi-family properties and live in one unit while renting out others. Entering this program simply requires the Town completing a brief application.

Required Public Investments

The most significant public investment in Lower Village is the riverfront park, which will greatly enhance the appeal of the entire Lower Village area. This park represents an essential component of the Lower Village.

A second potential investment that may be needed concerns the sewer pumping station located on the current Fire Station site. This pumping station is a crucial component of the Town's sewage distribution system, but it is in need of replacement/upgrade

It is also important to maximize public parking in this area to aid revitalization, accommodating the desired mix of uses. A master plan for this area should be undertaken subsequent to this plan. Such a plan would need to address architecture, the streetscape, the riverfront park and the integration of public parking.

II. Middle Village Zone

Potential/Suggested Redevelopment Sites

The Middle Village has even fewer needs / opportunities for redevelopment than the Lower Village. It is a mature, mostly residential area and the Town's priority for this zone is to ensure the long-term stability of the character of the Middle Village.

The most important location in the Middle Village, in terms of this plan, is the northern boundary, the interface with the present

Commercial Corridor zone (which this plan proposes to rename the Village Center zone). At this location, the Town's priority is to provide a hard edge buffering the Middle Village from the adjacent higher-intensity, primarily commercial area. Two key parcels are the "apple orchard" site on the east side of Main Street and the forested buffer north of the dentist's office on the west side of Main Street.

Another key site at the northern boundary is the Renshaw property. Though it is located outside the Middle Village boundary, it is adjacent to the apple orchard and could be part of a larger open space.

A final key location in Middle Village is the present location of Dairy Queen, which is located in the center of the Middle Village. While this business remains viable and, to many people, represents an essential element of the neighborhood, it is a nonconforming use. As such, it may become a redevelopment site at some point in the future.

Desired Development Types

Recommended ordinance changes in Middle Village send a clear message that this area should remain residential in character. Any new developments in Middle Village must be residential with accessory businesses no larger than 1,250 square feet in size in existing and proposed buildings. No high intensity retail or commercial uses will be allowed at this location.

The most significant changes that need to take place in Middle Village concern open space and buffers. The apple orchard site is particularly important, as it both separates Middle Village from the Village Center zone and connects Main Street to a larger forested area located among rear parcels. More planning will be required to determine the viability of different scenarios for this site.

The forested area across Main Street from the apple orchard also provides an important buffer. The priority for this land is to ensure that it remains as an effective gateway between Middle Village and the Village Center.

Required Public Investments

The most notable public investment that will be needed in Middle Village is for the apple orchard site. This site is still in private ownership, and the owners are not likely to sell the site directly to the Town of Topsham. It will therefore likely have to be acquired by a nonprofit entity that will oversee its stewardship.

The wooded buffer north of the dentist's office may also require some investment. It may be necessary to purchase land or a conservation easement to ensure the permanent maintenance of the buffer area. However, the preferred scenario would be to tie the preservation of this land to the potential future redevelopment of the adjacent property in the Village Center zone. Securing this land as a permanent trail and buffer would create a direct pedestrian link between the Woodside neighborhood and the apple orchard site (see next section).

Another important consideration in Middle Village is pedestrian access. At the present time, there is only a sidewalk on the east side of Main Street the length of the zone. The need for a sidewalk on the western side of Main Street has been identified. This sidewalk would connect to redevelopment in the Village Center, particularly the proposed Town Hall complex and adjacent opportunity sites. The sidewalk should extend south to Wilson Street. At this intersection, the sidewalk cannot continue south due to a ravine and steep slopes.

III. Village Center Zone

Potential/Suggested Redevelopment Sites

Of the four sub-areas within the Main Street corridor, the Village Center zone is poised for the greatest level of immediate change. The connector road between Monument Place and Topsham Fair Mall, proposed zoning changes and town investments will induce several changes in the coming years:

- The Town Center project relocates much of the town government to a central location with buildings and grounds that are integrated into the area's village feel;
- A number of existing businesses may not be able to remain due to rising property values and site constraints.

In short, remaking the Village Center will not be a matter of incremental change on a few redevelopment sites. Rather, it will be a dramatic transformation from an automobile-oriented corridor to a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly area that is better integrated into the historic fabric of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Desired Development Types

The Village Center will accommodate a mix of civic uses, retail businesses, professional offices and residential uses. Proposed zoning changes would mandate multi-level buildings built close to Main Street and Monument Place with shared parking. The proposed changes would also encourage the use of upper levels of buildings for residential units, but would not allow for purely residential developments.

A critical aspect of the Village Center will be the presence of small, locally owned retail and service businesses. The Lower and Middle Village lack available space for extensive redevelopment of such uses, making the Village Center the practical location for such uses. Sit-down (non-drive through) restaurants, medical offices, small shops and boutiques and personal service businesses are the desired business types for this zone.

Required Public Investments

The most substantial public investments for the Village Center area are already in progress: the Monument Place realignment and the development of the Town Center. These two projects will combine to greatly enhance access, connectivity and the village feel of the area.

A longer-term issue concerns the intersection of Main Street and Route 196. During this planning process the public expressed a very strong desire to address this intersection. A central challenge for this plan is to improve the pedestrian environment at that location while ensuring the continued functionality of Route 196, one of the busiest surface streets in Maine. Several options exist to improve this intersection. Whatever scenario plays out, substantial public investment will likely be needed.

Other improvements to the village character will most likely occur one property at a time as sites are redeveloped, as proposed zoning changes will dramatically change the scale and location of buildings, the location of curb cuts, burying utilities, the nature of parking and the quality of pedestrian connections. The Town has to carefully review each redevelopment project to ensure that the desired streetscape and general sense of scale is achieved. Ideally, several projects might happen simultaneously, making it easier to implement the vision for the Village Center.

IV. North Main Zones

Potential/Suggested Redevelopment Sites

Changes north of Route 196 will be much more gradual and incremental than in the other three zones for three reasons:

- Much depends on the redevelopment of the Naval Annex;
- The area encompasses much more land area and road frontage than any of the other zones; and
- There are several industrial businesses in the area that are likely to remain economically viable for years to come.

The Naval Annex is the key redevelopment site north of Route 196. However, the Annex falls under the authority of the Topsham Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA), which will be overseeing its redevelopment process over the next several years. The LRA is still in its formative stage and, as such, has yet to devise plans for the area. For this reason, the Main Street Village Plan will only make recommendations regarding the

interfaces between the Annex and Main Street and the potential mix of land uses.

The North Main Street area may eventually have direct access to I-295 with on ramps. This would encourage redevelopment and relieve traffic pressure at the Route 196 intersection. The Town will need to coordinate with the Maine Department of Transportation in order to facilitate this recommendation.

Desired Development Types

The Development north of Route 196 will vary in nature depending on market forces and the proposed rezoning. Regardless, this should be a pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use area. This vision stands in contrast to its present condition: an automobile-oriented commercial corridor with residential and civic uses located on rear parcels. As discussed above, the North Main Overlay Zone is intended to create a transitional zone between Main Street and the Limited Industrial and Commercial Corridor parcels. This lays out the framework for a corridor that looks and functions more like a village, with multi-story buildings built close to Main Street, pedestrian safety improvement and a mix of uses.

Unlike the other zones, proposed zones north of Route 196 encourages a wide range of developments including tight knit residential-neighborhoods, research parks, light industrial uses, in addition to mixed-use buildings and Planned Village Developments. Furthermore, the Civic Mixed Use zoning would allow higher-density residential development than in other parts of town. Given the identified need to provide suitable housing for working families in Topsham, this area is an ideal location for innovative, village-oriented housing. These residential neighborhoods should be a mix of market rate and workforce homes, similar in nature to the Elm and Pleasant Street neighborhoods, the Heights and the Woodside neighborhood.

The new zones north of Route 196 also provide opportunities for commercial and mixed-use development utilizing shared off-street parking. These provisions reduce the development costs

for future commercial developments by reducing the size of off-street parking lots associated with new buildings.

Required Public Investments

The most significant investments needed in north of Route 196 concern public utilities, the creation of new street frontage and securing a network of greenways. Much of the Main Street corridor lacks public water service, which could be a hindrance to redevelopment. Also, efforts to achieve a village-appropriate visual environment would be enhanced by burying overhead utility lines and implementing the recommended architectural and streetscape standards.

Another major type of improvement concerns the Main Street/Route 201 corridor. As a significant transportation route for the region, any changes to this segment will require close coordination with MaineDOT. Limiting or combining curb cuts, burying utilities, adding streetscaping and other improvements will all require an active partnership with MaineDOT, the Town and developers. These improvements could be achieved by a combination of state funding, private investment and strategic Town investment.

V. Potential Funding Sources

Public improvements needed to support the Main Street Village Plan cover many different projects: roads, sidewalks, parks, paths, utilities, land acquisition, housing subsidies, etc. In addition to appropriations and local bonds, there are many other sources of funding available to the Town for these projects. These include:

- **Costs borne by developers:** Particularly in the Village Center and new zones north of Route 196, much of the transformation of the Main Street corridor will occur on a parcel-by-parcel basis, as private investors redevelop properties. Investments will include more than just new buildings—they will also include shared parking, consolidation of curb cuts, landscaping and, potentially, utility improvements.

- **Greenway/gateway grants:** Grant funding may be available for the acquisition of open spaces and improvement of trail and park facilities. Such funding would be particularly useful for the riverfront park in the Lower Village and the apple orchard site at the border of the Middle Village and Village Center. Lands can be protected through conservation easements, Land for Maine's Future funds, open space components of developments and other measures.
- **Maine State Housing Authority Programs:** Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) has a variety of programs that assist private investors with providing affordable housing. Many of these programs offer assistance for qualifying individuals or families looking to acquire and/or rehabilitate suitable housing.
- **Affordable Housing TIF:** Maine recently established the Affordable Housing Tax-Increment Financing program, an innovative approach to encouraging workforce housing. Under this program, a municipality may designate a district where affordable housing development is desired. Within that district, TIF funds may be used to support new housing for working families. A crucial aspect of this program is that property value generated is sheltered from the State's school funding formula. This program is administered by MSHA.

- **Economic and Community Development Plan Funds:** Per Section 6-19 of the Town Code, the Town must set aside from its General Fund an amount equal to 5% of the total revenues from its TIF district for an annual “economic and community development plan.” These funds are earmarked for “recreational, cultural, educational and other quality of life activities that enhance the overall quality of the Town of Topsham.” Many projects outlined in this Main Street Village Plan meet the requirements laid out in this section.
- **Potential Village TIF District:** If desired, a new Village TIF could be created to help fund some of the investments recommended by this plan.
- **Community Development Block Grants:** In the past Topsham has successfully utilized funds from the federal CDBG program, which is administered by the Maine Office of Community Development. This program funds planning and development projects for housing, economic development and infrastructure, and would be an excellent source of funds for several of the initiatives recommended by this plan, such as traffic calming measures and neighborhood gateway preservation and establishment. CDBG grants are typically targeted toward “blighted” conditions, which in the case of Main Street includes a few properties (which the market will probably address) but traffic is the fundamental blight issue.
- **Military Redevelopment Zone:** As part of the local response to the closure of Brunswick Naval Air Station, the State of Maine has authorized the designation of up to 1,000 acres of land on the base and an additional 500 acres of off-base land spread over the 12-town region surrounding Brunswick and Topsham as Military Redevelopment Zones. In such areas, tax incentives will be provided for businesses on designated parcels. This money could be used to aid infrastructure improvements, promote commercial development (which could then pay

into Affordable Housing TIFF District or a Village TIF District. Parcels have not yet been identified for this program, but several locations within the Main Street Village Area could be appropriate sites.

- **Nonprofit partners:** Many nonprofit entities are actively interested in supporting redevelopment in Topsham. These entities exist for a variety of reasons: workforce housing, economic development, land preservation, social services, etc. Partnering with nonprofits can lead to funding, staff support, volunteers, access to grants and other benefits. Examples of possible partners include churches, Habitat for Humanity, Land for Maine’s Future and Coastal Enterprises, Inc.

Chapter 6:

Traffic & Safety Issues

Overview

Traffic on Main Street is cited as the number one issue negatively impacting quality of life and pedestrian safety. Anyone trying to cross Main Street, making a left turn at an unsignalized location or trying to sleep at night can attest to the constant level and noise of traffic.

Besides refining the allowable land uses, zone lines and building and site performance standards, addressing traffic is the most significant issue for this study. Developing strategies for reducing and or minimizing traffic impacts and volume will be very difficult because Main Street is US Route 201 the entire length and State Route 24 from the Elm Street intersection south. There are specific laws governing the rerouting of traffic and the assignment of Route names. There has been consensus that all State and US designations should be removed from Main Street, except US Route 201 north of Route 196 where there is no alternative. Knowing the absolute restrictions and looking within the boundaries of the standards for traffic minimizing standards will require the most creative thinking in the Main Street Village Plan.

Approximately 19,000 cars use Main Street every day. This is in contrast to the approximately 26,000 cars using the Coastal Connector on a daily basis. This is without a doubt the most dominant “land use” in the Main Street Village.

From 7:00 AM to 8:00 AM, the AM peak hour, trucks account for 10% of the Main Street traffic and 10% of the 196 traffic. From 4:00 to 5:00 PM, the evening peak hour, trucks account for 4% of Main Street traffic and approximately 6% of 196 traffic.

When the Coast Connector opened in 1997, 24,500 cars passed through the lower village everyday. One year later the traffic volume decreased to 14,000 vehicles. From 2000 to 2004 traffic volume in Lower Village increased at an annual rate of 3.8%. While the area around the Main Street / 196 intersection was recently designated as an urban impaired watershed by the MEDEP, it is assumed over time the 400 +/- acres in this area in addition to the redevelopment of the BNAS Annex and other north Main Street properties will only add to local traffic volumes. Main Street and 196 are also regional roads. As housing and development continues in outlying parts of town and adjacent communities, this will further add to traffic impacting Main Street.

Route 24 / Elm Street currently adds about 900 cars a day turning left to the Lower Village. Currently the US Route One south left turn off ramp is closed for traffic trying to access Maine Street Brunswick. It is hard to determine how much traffic is coming off the Coastal Connector at Bypass Drive and using Elm Street to access Maine Street in Brunswick via Topsham. The assumption is that if the Route One southbound left turn lane on to Maine Street Brunswick is reestablished that some traffic will be diverted from the Lower Village in Topsham.

Recommendations

The Topsham Transportation Study dated August 23, 2005 prepared by Gorrill-Palmer Consulting Engineers, Inc. provides traffic analysis and recommendations for Main Street from the Route 1 ramp in Brunswick to the I-295 overpass in Topsham. This report outlines improvements in a twenty-year time frame to address pedestrian and vehicular traffic flows along and across Main Street. The intent of the Main Street Village Plan is to build on these recommendations in such a way as to make Main Street a “place” as opposed to a conduit to move vehicular traffic through the village.

The vehicular traffic volumes on Main Street create a number of difficult pedestrian crossings. There are various measures that may be employed to enhance pedestrian access and provide traffic calming along the Main Street corridor. These include

vertical deflections in the roadway (speed tables, raised crosswalks and raised intersections, all with 3” height maximum), in-pavement lighting at crosswalks, curb bump outs and traffic signals, as well as additional signs.

Vertical deflections further highlight the crossings and tend to improve driver compliance with yielding to pedestrians. These could be in the form of raised crosswalks (typically ten feet long with six foot ramps) or a raised intersection (elevated intersection with six foot ramps on each approach). Use of vertical deflection may also discourage truck traffic through this area. The MaineDOT will heavily scrutinize vertical deflections on roadways that are State and Federal routes.

Use of curb bump outs help by shortening crossing distances and improving driver view of pedestrians wishing to cross the street.

Traffic signals must meet certain “warrants” that generally consist of traffic volume thresholds, before the MaineDOT would allow their installation. There are separate criteria for vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Generally in this area, these criteria are as follows:

- Vehicular traffic volume of 75 cars per hour turning left out for at least eight hours per day.
- Vehicular traffic volume of 80 cars turning left out for the peak hour of the day (MaineDOT typically does not allow a signal based on the peak hour alone).
- Pedestrian crossing volume of 100 per hour for four hours of the day or 190 pedestrians crossing during the peak hour of the day.

Based on the above criteria, it is unlikely that traffic signal warrants would be met in the near term for any additional locations along the Main Street corridor except at Canam drive.

The following recommendations are in addition to the improvements recommended in the Transportation Plan detailed in the Existing Conditions Report (Appendix A) to further enhance

the Village character. See Figure 18 on the next page for the location of proposed pedestrian improvements.

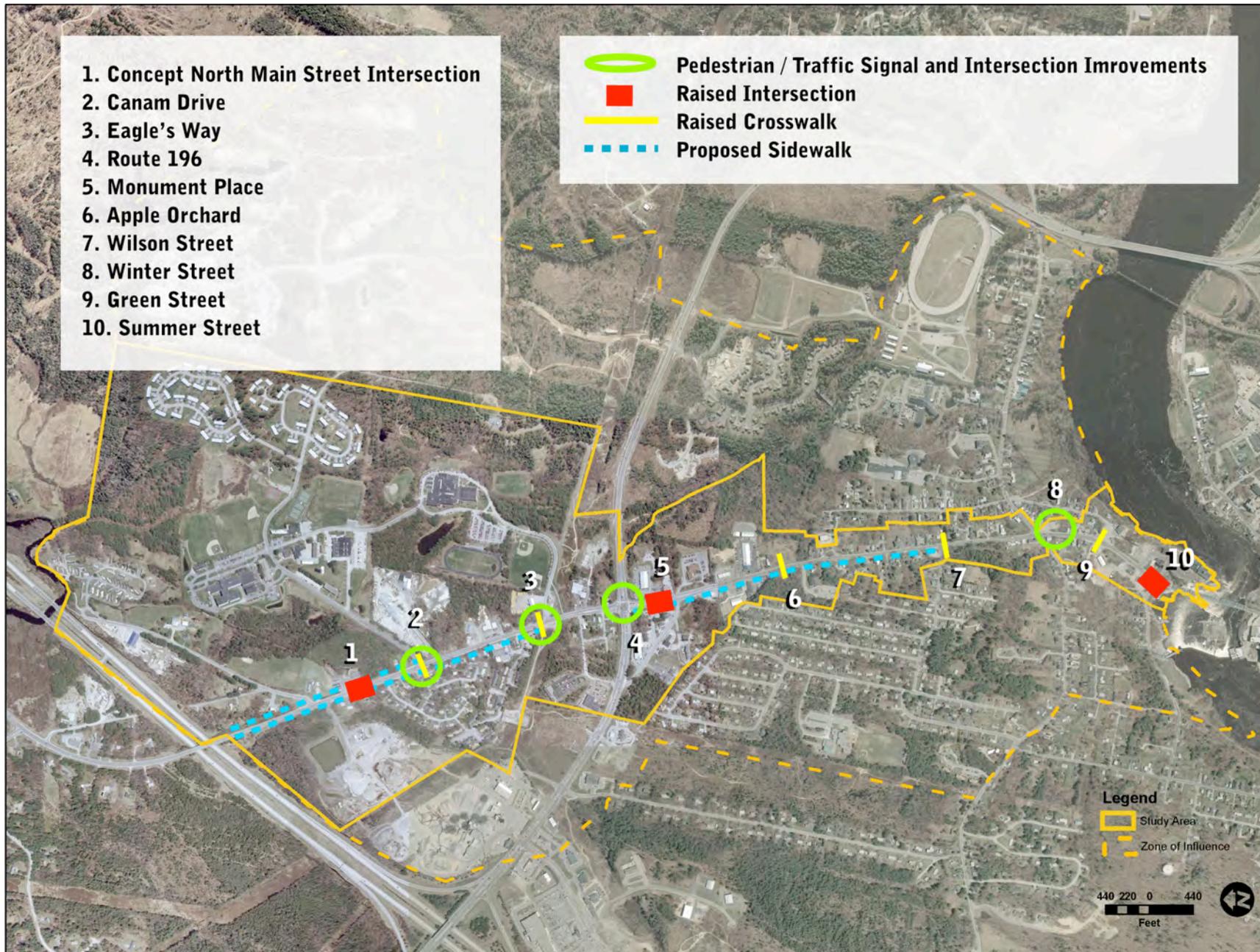
Route Redesignations

The possibility of removing the State and US route designations from Main Street has been considered and broached with MaineDOT. The value with regard to reducing traffic volumes on Main Street is considered by MaineDOT to be marginal as they believe that most of the traffic has local knowledge and is not simply following a route number. At most, the US 201 designation could be shifted to the Coastal Connector from Route 1 to Route 196, but would need to remain on Main Street north of Route 196 since there is no practical alternative route. Route 24 could be moved to the Coastal Connector and no longer have any portions on Main Street. Either of these measures would require a coordinated effort among Topsham, Brunswick and MaineDOT.

Monitor Speed Limits

The speed limit on Main Street north of Route 196 is 35 mph and 25 mph south of Main Street. These speed limits can be better enforced to improve pedestrian safety.

Figure 18: Proposed Pedestrian Improvements



Lower Village Zone

There are currently crosswalks at several locations in Lower Village, some of which are supplemented with pedestrian crossing roadside signs as well as in-road signs. These generally highlight the crossings efficiently. Potential improvements were considered as follows:

- Summer Street would be a good candidate for a raised intersection, which can serve as a gateway treatment as well as a traffic-calming device.
- A pedestrian-actuated flashing yellow light could be installed at the Summer Street intersection across the north leg to further emphasize this location.
- In-pavement pedestrian actuated flashing lights could be installed at the Summer Street intersection.
- The crossing at Green Street is a candidate for a raised crosswalk.
- The Winter Street crosswalk is too close to the hill up to Elm Street for consideration of vertical deflection.
- The option of closing the Winter Street Spur and creating a parking area with access from Winter Street should be explored. Analysis of how such a closure would impact proposed traffic improvements to the Main Street/Winter Street intersection is required.

In addition to the pedestrian improvements, it is recommended that Topsham work with Brunswick and MaineDOT to install a traffic signal at the Route 1 southbound ramp, allowing a left turn to Maine Street and establishing a no right on red improving pedestrian safety and the pulsing of traffic north of Main Street. The Topsham Transportation Plan also calls for designating the Winter Street Spur as one-way toward Main Street and allowing two-way traffic on Elm Street Extension. This would eliminate the left turn from Main to Winter Street Spur, thereby causing all left turns to be made at the Elm Street traffic signal. The Elm Street intersection will be a true four-way intersection allowing left turn access from Winter Street onto Main Street northbound.

Middle Village Zone

The Elm Street intersection provides a signalized crossing of Elm Street for pedestrians, but not across Main Street, which has a crosswalk but no pedestrian signals. A sidewalk runs up the east side of Main Street in this section, but there is no sidewalk on the west side. There is one crosswalk just north of the Wilson Street intersection. The land drops off steeply from Main Street to the west. The following are measures to consider for this section of Main Street:

- Install sidewalk on the west side of Main Street north of Wilson Street. The lack of development on the west side of Main Street south of Wilson does not generate a need for sidewalk in this area, which, if constructed, would likely need to be an elevated boardwalk due to the grade constraints.
- Consider a raised crosswalk for the crossing immediately north of Wilson Street.
- Consider a median refuge for pedestrians in the Wilson Street crosswalk, which is possible due to the presence of the northbound left turn lane for traffic turning onto Wilson Street. This could be in conjunction with a raised crosswalk. This should be marked as a school crossing.
- Consider a pedestrian-actuated flashing yellow light or in-pavement lights at the Wilson Street crosswalk to further emphasize this location, since all southbound pedestrian traffic on the west side will need to cross at this point.
- Possibly modify traffic flow at Dairy Queen to be one way if it results in reasonable on-site parking accommodations.
- Provide a raised crosswalk in the future in the vicinity of the orchard south of Goodwin's should the orchard become a town park. This raised crosswalk will mark the threshold to the Middle Village, slow cars and provide a connection from the Woodside neighborhood to Main Street and the orchard park via the proposed trail easement north of the dentist office.

Village Center Zone

The relocation of Town Hall to Monument Place and the Monument Place Extension to the Mall will change the dynamics of traffic flow in this area. There is also the potential of an off-road path to the east to enter Main Street in the vicinity of the Monument Place intersection. Main Street takes on a much more suburban feel and function in this area as it approaches the Route 196 intersection. However, as the area is redeveloped there are opportunities through adjacent architecture, streetscaping and traffic calming measures to mitigate the visual impact of the Route 196 intersection.

The primary civic focus of this area is the intersection of Main Street and Monument Place due to the above-noted changes, particularly the presence of the Post Office on the east side of Main Street and the development of the Town Hall complex on the west side of this intersection. Main Street consists of five lanes at this intersection, making this a potentially dangerous location for pedestrian crossings. Recommendations to consider for this area are as follows:

- Install a raised intersection to provide traffic calming and emphasize the importance of this location as the Town Center.
- Monitor after installation of the raised intersection to assess the possibility of an unsignalized pedestrian crossing of the north leg of the intersection. A pedestrian crossing would need to include installation of in-pavement pedestrian actuated flashing lights.
- Install crosswalk south of Monument Place where Main Street narrows to one lane in each direction. This could be a raised crosswalk and should have appropriate pedestrian crossing signs.
- Provide sidewalk down the west side of Main Street.
- Provide pedestrian guide signing at the Route 196 intersection directing pedestrians to cross at Route 196 to reach Town Hall or Monument Place from the east or the Post Office coming from the west.

- Monitor the intersection of Monument Place for the future installation of a traffic signal, at which time a signalized pedestrian crossing could be provided if warranted.
- Install pedestrian countdown signal heads for the two pedestrian crossings at the Route 196/Main Street intersection.
- Install pedestrian warning sign or signal for Route 196 westbound right turn lane to increase vehicle awareness of pedestrians crossing the intersection.
- Paint the traffic islands at the Route 196 intersection a contrasting color from the pavement such as brick red to visually break up the intersection, encouraging cars to reduce speed and at a minimum visually improve this critical Main Street gateway.
- Possibly widen the medians on the east and south legs of the Route 196 intersection to provide for pedestrian refuge.
- Conduct regular enforcement of red-light violations at the Route 196 intersection. Consider red light camera enforcement if allowed by the State in the future.
- Consider grade separation for pedestrian crossing of Route 196.
- Consider elevating Route 196 above Main Street, particularly if Route 196 is expanded with the redevelopment of BNAS.
- The intersection of Route 196 and Main Street warrants the creation of a “task force” to further investigate and implement the recommendations found in this plan.

North Main Street Zones

This section of Main Street north of Route 196 has a more rural feel. The middle and high schools are located in this area, which creates a pedestrian demand and also results in heavy traffic volumes for school arrival and discharge times. There are crosswalks at Eagle’s Way and Forest Drive, and sidewalk on the east side of Main Street up to Canam Drive. Recommended improvements in this area are as follows:

- Consider installation of a sidewalk along the west side of Main Street up to a potentially realigned Canam Drive.

- The Topsham Transportation Study recommends redesignating Eagles Way to be one way into the high school with all traffic exiting to Canam Drive.
- The Transportation Plan also considers installation of northbound on and southbound off ramps from Main Street to I-295. This should be considered a long-term goal and land preserved to allow this possibility.
- Install a traffic signal with pedestrian signals at the intersection of Main Street and Canam Drive.
- Reorient the Eagles Way Crosswalk to be 90 degrees to Main Street.
- Further pedestrian improvements should be considered north of Canam Drive as development continues in that area.
- Raised center median: \$7,000 for basic paved surface with granite curb (50 feet long).
- Pedestrian grade separation: \$500,000 plus

Typical Costs of Transportation & Safety Improvements

Both the timing and cost of the improvements are considerations in the implementation of these improvements. Most of the noted pedestrian improvements would be beneficial to have in place at the present time. However an improvement such as a pedestrian or vehicular traffic signal would need to demonstrate adequate demand based on national standards that have been adopted by the State. These should be monitored on a biannual basis. Vertical deflections in the roadway would need to be approved by the State since Main Street is a federal route for its entire length.

The primary controlling factor for implementation for most of these improvements is likely to be cost. As general guidance, measures identified above would have preliminary opinions of probable construction costs in 2006 dollars as follows:

- Raise crosswalk: \$3,000.
- Raised intersection: \$12,000 (more for special surface treatments)
- In-pavement pedestrian-actuated lighting: \$15,000
- Overhead pedestrian-actuated flashing yellow lights: \$15,000
- High grade pedestrian crossing signs: \$300
- Traffic control signal: \$100,000

Chapter 7:

Implementation Plan

Overview

This chapter compiles all recommended plan actions from preceding chapters into one complete implementation plan. For each action the following information is presented:

- Description of action
- Responsible party
- Time frame
- Potential funding sources (if needed)
- Related actions

Actions are organized by category:

- Comprehensive Planning & Zoning
- Gateways & Design
- Housing & Economic Development
- Traffic & Safety

There are references in this Executive Summary to Figures, Tables and page numbers that are part of the full Plan.

The Implementation Committee can be the existing Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee or it may be more effective to create a new Implementation Committee comprised of members of The Main Street Advisory Committee, maintaining continuity between the process and the intentions of the Main Street Village Plan and the required changes to policies, zoning and performance standards.

In terms of pursuing grant money for improvements to the Main Street Village area, traffic calming and safety measures are a priority along with targeted streetscape improvements coordinated with new developments and any work planned by

MaineDOT, Public Works and the Sewer and Water Districts. The coordination of projects is critical for sharing costs and taking advantage of what are often one-time opportunities.

Comprehensive Planning & Zoning

Action 1: Create new Village Center Zone

A central recommendation of this plan is to establish a new Village Center Zone in the area where the existing Commercial Corridor Zone crosses the Main Street corridor. Figure 4 (p. 12) shows the proposed location of this zone.

Responsible party: Implementation Committee

Time frame: 0-1 years

Related actions: 2, 3, 5, 6, 8

Action 2: Redefine Village Zone Boundaries

In addition to establishing the Village Center Zone, the plan also calls for changes to the boundaries of the Middle Village and north Main Street Zones. These changes are also shown on Figure 4

Responsible party: Implementation Committee,

Time frame: 0-1 years

Related actions: 1, 5, 6, 8

Action 3: Work with certain businesses in thoughtful expansions or relocations

During the Public Forums and throughout the planning process, certain businesses were identified as inappropriate in scale or land use for a village-scaled environment. However, these are respected, viable businesses that are important to the community.

Responsible party: Topsham Development, Inc., Town Planner,

Time frame: 0-10 years

Related actions: 1, 2, 6, 8

Action 4: Develop standards for Planned Village Developments

A recommendation affecting new developments, primarily in the Village Center and the North Main Street Zones, is the establishment of the Planned Village Development (PVD) land use. This use is envisioned as being comparable to the application of the existing Planned Residential Development and Planned Commercial Development uses. Details about the proposed standards for PVDs are located in Chapter 3 (p. 36).

Planned Village Developments would make ideal candidates for designation as Military Redevelopment Zones and larger re/development parcels. (see Action 14).

Responsible party: Implementation Committee, Town Planner
Time frame: 1-2 years
Related actions: 6, 10, 15

Action 5: Enact village-appropriate dimensional standards

The most transformative action of this plan is to enact dimensional standards for the zones resulting in buildings and environments reinforcing village identity. These standards, which are enumerated on Table 2 (p. 40), will affect development density, lot coverage, floor-area ratio (FAR), minimum and maximum building heights, building setbacks, etc.

Responsible party: Implementation Committee, LRA
Time frame: 1-2 years
Related actions: 1, 2, 6

Action 6: Enact changes to allowable uses and performance standards for each zone

Another action that will impact the future of the Main Street Village area is to revise the permitted, conditional and prohibited uses in the four village zones. Revisions to the land use table will help guide development to match the vision for each zone.

A full list of the recommendations supporting this action can be found in Tables 1 and 3 (p.40 and 41)

Responsible party: Implementation Committee, Planning Board
Time frame: 1-2 years
Related actions: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Gateway & Design

Action 7: Make Main Street/196 intersection safe for pedestrians

The intersection of Main Street and Route 196 is one of the most visible and busy intersections in the region. It is a major gateway for the Main Street Village area. While improving the visual quality and reconfiguring the layout of this intersection may be difficult, a range of solutions for mitigating the impact of vehicles and the nondescript visual character of the location are proposed.

A number of recommendations for this intersection are made in Chapter 4 (Gateway & Design Issues) and Chapter 6 (Transportation & Safety Issues). The solutions may not be practical or easy to implement, but they concepts need to be explored, meeting a primary mandate established by the Public Forums.

A “task force” that solely deals with implementing the recommendations of this plan for this intersection should be developed.

Responsible party: Town Planner, Public Works, “Task Force”
Time frame: 5-10 years
Funding sources: MaineDOT, public bonds, grants
Related actions: 8, 17

Action 8: Establish Main Street/Monument Place intersection as the Village Center gateway

The development of the Town Hall complex and the reconstruction of Monument Place are establishing this intersection as a key gateway to the Village Center and Main Street. As these projects proceed, the intersection of Main Street and Monument Place will become increasingly critical to building first impressions of Topsham’s Main Street Village.

Responsible party: Town Planner, Public Works Director
Time frame: 2-5 years
Funding sources: MaineDOT, public bonds, grants
Related actions: 9

Action 9: Ensure that new development produces appropriate design of buildings, gateways and street edges

Much of the proposed transformation of lands currently zoned Upper Village is dependent on the actual details of individual developments. Enforcing these details will fall to the Planning Board, which has the authority to hold new developments to the standards of Town ordinances and regulations. This action is simply meant to reinforce the Planning Board’s role in shaping future developments in the Main Street Village area.

Responsible party: Planning Board
Time frame: 2-10 years
Related actions: 7, 8, 18, 19

Action 10: Pursue trail and open space developments

There are several proposals in this plan regarding the acquisition and development of parks, open spaces and trails. These include the riverfront park; the apple orchard site and connections with neighborhoods and school related spaces as well as links with natural areas and a future trail system in the zones north of Main Street.

Many of these improvements will be costly. However, there are a variety of funding mechanisms available for funding them, and all of these must be explored. Such improvements can also be

mandated as part of Planned Village Developments and other new projects.

Responsible party: Conservation Commission, Topsham Development Inc., and Parks and Recreation
Time frame: 2-10 years
Funding sources: public bonds, grants, and mandates as part of new developments
Related actions: 4, 14, 16

Action 11: Conduct Master Plan for parking, circulation and open space in Lower Village

Recommendations for the future of Lower Village depend on improvements to open space, pedestrian connections and parking. Given the small size and intricate fabric of Lower Village, these improvements will need to be carefully coordinated. A Master Plan for such improvements is therefore recommended.

Responsible party: Town Planner, Public Works, consultants
Time frame: 2-3 years
Funding sources: public bonds, appropriation, grant
Related actions: 12, 14, 16

Housing & Economic Development

Action 12: Study feasibility of extending public water and sewer service to all of north Main Street

Public water and sewer does not adequately serve the area north of Main Street and in some areas there is no service between Route 196 and I-295. While new development may be able to pay some of the costs of extending this service, a master plan to extend water service would expedite the development of several sites in this corridor.

This action ultimately depends on cooperation from the Brunswick Topsham Water District and sewer district. As with the preceding action, the Town of Topsham should coordinate efforts to study the feasibility of fully serving the North Main Street area with public water and sewer. These improvements could be

assisted with grants and/or designating key sites as Military Redevelopment Zones.

Responsible party: Public Works (coordinating with Water and Sewer District)

Time frame: 5-10 years

Funding sources: MaineDOT, public bonds, transportation impact fees

Related actions: 14, 15

Action 13: Pursue grant funding for infrastructure, open space and business assistance

A number of different grants are potentially available to the Town to support the investments put forth in this plan. Foremost among these are Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), which are administered by the Maine Office of Community Development. CDBG funds are available to support a wide variety of infrastructure, business development, housing and community improvements. There may also be grants from other state agencies and nonprofits that can be used for such purposes.

Responsible party: Topsham Development, Inc.

Time frame: 1-5 years

Related actions: 10, 12, 13, 17, 19

Action 14: Work to designate key development projects as Military Redevelopment Zones

As part of the response to the closure of Brunswick Naval Air Station, the State of Maine has authorized the designation of a Military Redevelopment Zone (MRZ) in municipalities surrounding the base. Projects in this zone will be eligible for similar incentives as in Maine's Pine Tree Development Zones. MRZ designations will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis to individual developments based on criteria defined by the state.

Projects that are submitted as Planned Village Developments are likely to be the best candidates in the Main Street Village area for this designation.

Responsible party: Town Planner, Planning Board, Topsham Development, Inc.,

Time frame: 1-5 years

Related actions: 4, 13

Action 15: Consider establishing Downtown TIF districts

While projects in the Main Street Village area are eligible for funds from the Town's existing Economic and Community Development Fund, these funds are limited and available for projects town wide. There are two potential Tax-Increment Financing (TIF) districts that could be created to help support investments in the Main Street Village area:

1. Village TIF – this would be focused on funding infrastructure improvements in the Lower Village, Middle Village and Village Center areas.
2. Affordable Housing TIF – this would be aimed at supporting the development of affordable housing, specifically in the north Main Street Zones

Responsible party: Topsham Development, Inc., Town Manager and Board of Selectmen

Time frame: 2-5 years

Related actions: 10, 11, 17, 19

Traffic & Safety

Action 16: Improve sidewalks in Middle Village

Middle Village is a stable, mostly built-out area. For this reason the focus in this section of the Main Street Village is on stabilizing existing conditions. One key shortcoming of this area is the lack of a sidewalk on the west side of Main Street. A secondary issue is the lack of continuity of the sidewalk on the east side of Main Street in the area surrounding Dairy Queen. The plan recommends significant capital investments to correct this situation.

Responsible party: Public Works

Time frame: 3-5 years

Funding sources: public bonds, grants

Related actions: 14, 16

Action 17: Coordinate with MaineDOT to ensure proper execution of north Main Street improvements

The vision for Main Street north of 196 in this plan is predicated on the transformation of Main Street between Route 196 and the northern boundary of the R1 Zone from a commercial thoroughfare to pedestrian-friendly corridor. While this transformation will be incremental, it must be done in coordination with MaineDOT, since this segment of the road is designated as U.S. Route 201.

Responsible party: Implementation Committee, Public Works

Time frame: 2-10 years

Related actions: 7, 9

Action 18: Improve pedestrian crossings at key locations

Many intersections along Main Street have been identified as needing pedestrian improvements. Such improvements, depending on the location, include raised crosswalks, raised intersections, pedestrian/traffic signals, bump-outs and differentiated pavement. Recommended areas for improvements include:

- Summer Street
- Green Street
- The Middle/Village Center boundary at the apple orchard
- Wilson Street
- Monument Place
- Eagles Way
- Canam Drive
- A future intersection accessing the land across Main Street, approximately at the northern boundary of the R1 Zone.

Some of these improvements may be undertaken as part of the new developments. The Planning Board will need to determine this on a case-by-case basis.

Responsible party: Implementation Committee, Public Works, Town Planner, Planning Board

Time frame: 2-10 years

Funding sources: public bonds, grants, Village TIFF, impact fees

Related actions: 9, 14, 16

Action 19: Redesignation of US Route 201, Route 24 and US Route 1 access to Main Street

The US 201 designation should be shifted to the Coastal Connector from Route 1 to Route 196, but would need to remain on Main Street north of Route 196 since there is no practical alternative route. Route 24 should be moved to the Coastal Connector and no longer have any portions on Main Street.

It is recommended that Topsham work with Brunswick and MaineDOT to install a traffic signal at the Route 1 southbound ramp, allowing a left turn to Maine Street Brunswick and establishing a no right on red improving pedestrian safety and the pulsing of traffic north to Main Street Topsham. MaineDOT is currently studying this interchange. The Town must monitor this process, advocating for a solution that is beneficial for Main Street.

Responsible party: Implementation Committee, Board of Selectman, Town Planner and Public Works

Time frame: 0-5 years

Related actions: 6, 7

Action 20: Enforce speed limit the length of Main Street

The speed limit on Main Street north of Route 196 is 35 mph and 25 mph south of Main Street. These speed limits can be reduced to improve pedestrian safety and potentially reduce the volume of cars.

Responsible party: Implementation Committee and Police Department

Time frame: 0-5 years

Related actions: 19

Appendices

Appendix A: Existing Conditions Report

**Appendix B: Results of Public Forum
Sessions**

**Appendix C: Raw Data from Public Forum
Sessions**