ELM & GREEN STREETS NEIGHBORHOOD

REVITALIZATION PLAN

Prepared for:
Town of Topsham
100 Main Street
Topsham, ME 04086

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Introduction

Context

Over the past two decades, Topsham has invested much effort in planning and improvements aimed at creating an urban center of business and community activity within the Lower Village supported by vital residential neighborhoods. However the Elm and Green Street area is not geographically included in either the 2007 revision of the Comprehensive Plan or the 2007 Main Street Plan- even though both plans establish goals for immediately abutting neighborhoods.

Purpose

This omission of a significant, protected historic neighborhood in the core of the Topsham downtown is the primary catalyst for creating a Neighborhood Revitalization Plan for the Elm and Green Streets neighborhood - especially with the update of the Topsham's Comprehensive Plan due within a couple of years. Other compelling reasons include concerns about blight within the area and a desire to ensure that the neighborhood would continue to be an economic asset to the community that is not devalued by inappropriate development. The Town's purpose in drafting this Plan is to "complete the puzzle" for our downtown.

Balanced Approach

Community Revitalization emphasizes improving functionality and prosperity by maintaining and strengthening – without sacrificing - existing valued neighborhood characteristics and quality of life. The Plan addresses this balanced approach by:

- drawing from the past by examining and synthesizing previous studies to identify common themes
- planning for the present and future by focusing and coordinating joint public, private and community efforts.

The Plan implements the approach through the following topics:

- an assessment of the existing physical structures and infrastructure of the area,
- detailed policy goals with respect to the improvement or expansion of infrastructure, the rehabilitation or development of housing (including multi-family rental housing), and economic redevelopment,
- activities and a timetable for implementing the policy goals.

Significance of the Neighborhood

The Elm/Green Street Neighborhood plays a critical, though under recognized, role in the Lower Village. Typical patterns for Maine's cities, towns and villages consists of a densely developed commercial core surrounded and supported by less concentrated residential neighborhoods. This 19th and early 20th century pattern closely corresponds to an easy 5 to 10 minute walk from home to goods services and social activity in the community's "heart".

These patterns lost favor during the famously auto-oriented mid 20th century, but recently their value reemerged as towns and citizens turned their attention to "quality of life", especially walkablity.

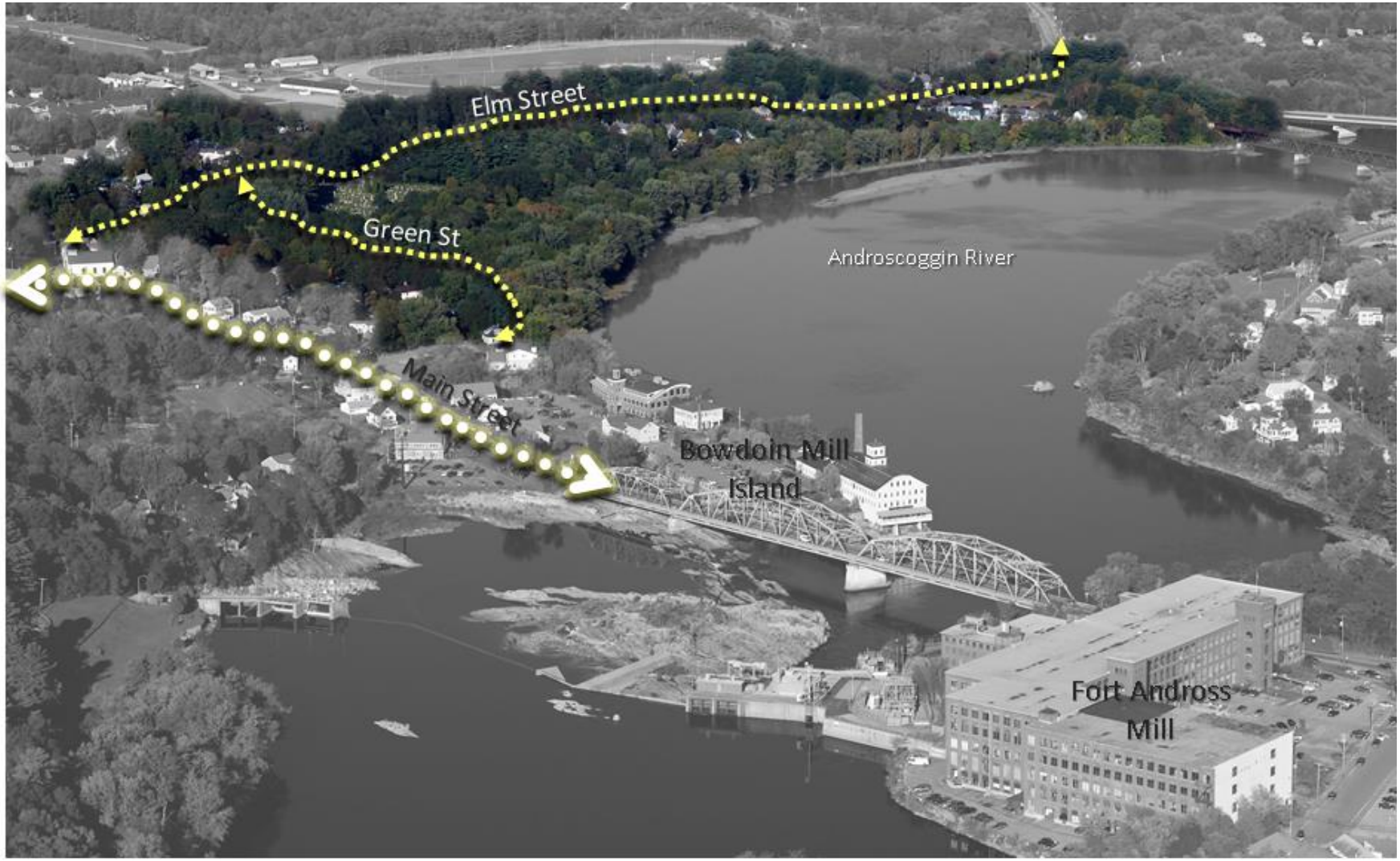
The Elm Green Street Neighborhood is a "picture perfect" example. The neighborhood's adjacency to Main Street, attractive historic architecture and proximity to the scenic and recreational Androscoggin River, are important reasons why many choose to live and work there. The neighborhood's growing network of pedestrian routes, from sidewalks to trails, and improved waterfront access offer many benefits to both

residents and community members and leverages Topsham's spectacular natural, scenic and cultural assets.

These prized characteristics are why residents and potential residents alike currently find the Elm and Green Street Neighborhood attractive and investment worthy. Looking to the future, the neighborhood's value will only increase because of its attractiveness to aging, downsizing and health and community conscious boomers plus young urban-oriented millennial families – but only if we act now to plan for the protection and revitalization of this unique community asset. Given its current and future importance, this Elm and Green Street Neighborhood Revitalization Plan finally gives the neighborhood the attention it deserves.

Elm Street Neighborhood

0 1,000 2,000 4,000 Feet


Elm Street
Green St
Androscoggin River
Main Street
Bowdoin Mill
Island
Fort Andross
Mill

Acknowledgments

Collaborative Effort

This Community Revitalization Plan was a collaborative effort, and its success is due to participation by many, especially the following:

The Select Board supported the effort by dedicating funds and committing Town resources.

- Don Russell Chairman
- David Douglass Vice -Chairman
- Ronald Riendeau
- Marie Brillant
- Jim Trusiani

The Lower Village Development Committee's dedicated members provided wise guidance and insight :

- Douglas Bennett
- Jim Howard
- Jane Scease
- Gary Smart
- Angela Twitchell
- Fred Wigand

Topsham's Professional Staff provided critical support and without their exceptional leadership this effort would not have been possible.

- Richard Roedner - Town Planner
- John Shattuck - Director, Economic & Community Development
- Rod Melanson, Assistant Planner
- Molly E. Sun, Bowdoin College Psi U Fellow

The Downtown *re*Vitalization Collaborative is founded on the four cornerstones of Downtown Revitalization – Economics, Streets, Buildings and Citizen Participation. The Team purposefully integrates the allied disciples of Planning, Design, Engineering, Funding, Financing and Implementation to provide comprehensive services - from Great Ideas to Ribbon Cutting!

The Downtown *re*Vitalization Collaborative includes:

- Denis Lachman, Lachman Architects & Planners – Team Leader & Citizen Participation
- Regina Leonard - Landscape Architecture & Design
- Mike Sabatini, P.E, & Tom Fowler, Landmark Corporation Surveyors & Engineers
- Rodney Lynch AICP – Community & Economic Development Planner

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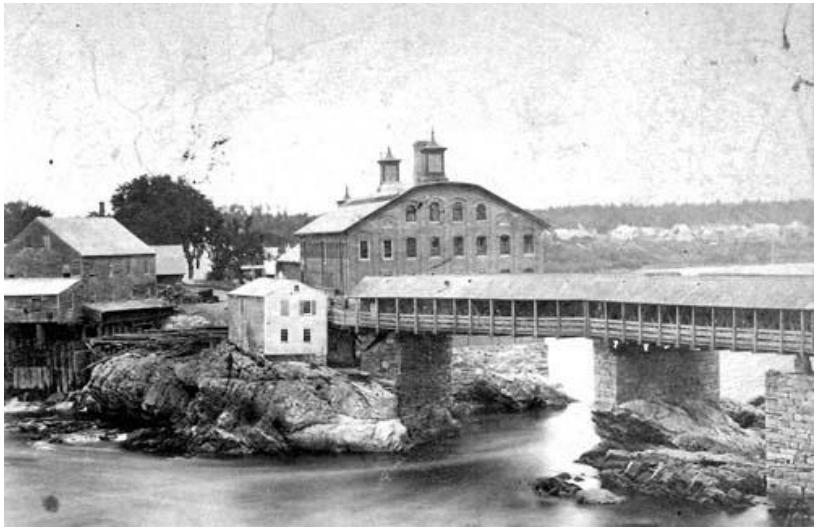
◊ Existing Character

Introduction to Existing Character

The Androscoggin River serves as a dramatic backdrop to Topsham's core village area. Like many other Maine towns, waterways shaped early development and settlement patterns. From the current Main Street Lower Village area and stretching downstream to the terminus of Elm Street, this area maintains an historic appeal.

Between 1800 and 1840, most of what is Topsham's present historic district was built. Beginning at this time the Elm and Green Street area served as the civic center of Topsham, with the Town Office (until 2008), the nearby Pejepscot Paper Mill on Bowdoin Mill Island, the Baptist Church, and several schools located off of Elm Street. The area has been a long-established residential area, most of which is within the current Topsham Historic District Overlay Zone, and part of it is included in the National Register of Historic Places. Although there have also been some business uses in the area they are minimal: the district currently contains 198 housing units, but only 7 business units (less than 4%), all low impact uses, including an inn, a doctor's office, general office space, etc.



Village Center & Main Street

When one crosses the Frank Wood Bridge from Brunswick, one is struck with the dramatic view of the historic Bowdoin Mill overlooking the falls on the Androscoggin River. Travelling along Topsham's Main Street towards Elm Street you enter into a village area, with an array of uses and architectural styles. What is most striking however is the pattern of development that respects the natural topography of the landscape, and as you gently rise upon the hill, you enter the Elm Street neighborhood. The intersection of Elm and Main Street serves as a major gateway in this area as it defines the transition between the bustling village area, and the residential Elm Street neighborhood.

The Elm Street gateway to Main Street is defined by existing historic buildings, particularly the church steeple and the yellow house.

Adjacent Residential Neighborhoods, Natural Areas & Recreation

Directly abutting on to the Elm Street neighborhood is the Perkins and Pleasant Street neighborhoods. A transition of the Historic pattern is evident along the length of Pleasant Street, and was well documented in the 2010 architectural survey. The homes along Pleasant become more spread out, and smaller in size (ie: one story ranches and capes) which produces an entirely different feel to this neighborhood.

Adjacent to Pleasant Street is the Williams Cone elementary school, where large ball fields transition to a wooded area locally known as the Ravine Trails. This area serves both the Pleasant and Elm Street neighborhoods as both a passive and active recreational resource within close proximity.

Streets

The Elm Street neighborhood is bound by State Route 24, and Route 201. Prior to the 1996 construction of the Coastal Connector this area saw far more traffic issues than current numbers, and was the topic of many traffic related debates in the mid 1980's. Historically Elm Street was one of Topsham first roads, connecting the village area to the local farms in the area, and eventually connecting to neighboring towns to the north (becoming Middlesex road directly after the train trestle overpass). Today, modest traffic counts exist on Elm Street due to the coastal connecter, and this provides an opportunity for this area to maintain the historic character with wide paved shoulders, a sidewalk on the south side, well maintained historic homes and yards, and mature street trees enveloping the travel way.

Typical view along Elm Street

1. Green Street

2. Historic Homes on Elm near Main St.

3. Riverview Cemetery

4. Former Municipal Building

5. Former Amenity Manor

6. Homes along south side of Elm Street

6. Historic Homes along North Side of Elm Street

8. Commercial complex

9. Eastern "Gateway" to Historic Elm St.

Androscoggin River Trail
Lower Village
Main Street
Lower Village Waterfront
1
2
Cone School
Riverview Cemetery
3
4
Future Town Landing Trail
5
Highlands
6
7
Topsham Fairgrounds
8
Androscoggin Bike and Pedestrian Path Connection
9

◊ Planning History & Citizen Participation

Introduction to Planning History & Citizen Participation
Planning efforts in Topsham's Lower Village and surrounding neighborhoods have been a focus since the 1992 Comprehensive Planning effort. Stemming back to the mid 1980's there were many public debates about the traffic issues along Main Street and Elm. Cited in the 1992 Comp Plan, the 196 bypass effort gave a new focus to the planning efforts along Elm and Main Streets (now the Lower Village area). This was the start to the revitalization planning efforts for the Lower Village, where there was a vision created in 1996 with the Main Street Vision Plan.

Many Planning Efforts Over Years
Since this planning effort, the Town of Topsham has focused many efforts within this area including all of the planning efforts listed below:

- 2000 Design Guidelines Study
- 2004 Bike Path Feasibility Study
- 2005 Comp Plan
- 2005 Transportation Study
- 2008 Main Street Village Plan
- 2010 Historic Survey
- 2011 Water Access Study
- 2013 Androscoggin River Trail Plan

Elm and Green Streets Omitted
It should be noted that the Elm and Green Street area is not geographically included in either the 2007 revision of the Comprehensive Plan or the 2007 Main Street Plan, though both plans establish goals for immediately abutting neighborhoods and specifically for neighborhoods with those important historic characteristics that are abundantly present in this area. This omission of a significant, protected historic neighborhood in the core of the Topsham downtown was a primary catalyst for the development of a Neighborhood Revitalization Plan for this area, especially with the update of the Topsham's Comprehensive Plan due within a couple of years. Other compelling reasons included concerns about blight within the area and a desire to ensure that the neighborhood would continue to be an economic asset to the community that is not devalued by inappropriate development.

Long History of Citizen Participation
All of the planning efforts consisted of a participatory form of planning where a committee was developed with authority from the Selectboard, and multiple public meetings were conducted to ascertain the public sentiments regarding each effort. Each effort typically allowed for three meetings with the public, where; 1. The planning process and needs/ issues were presented, 2. The public provided input based upon the information gathered, 3. The public provided feedback on recommendations of the plan. All combined these efforts have received input from hundreds of citizens over the past decade, each with a focus on a particular planning issue.

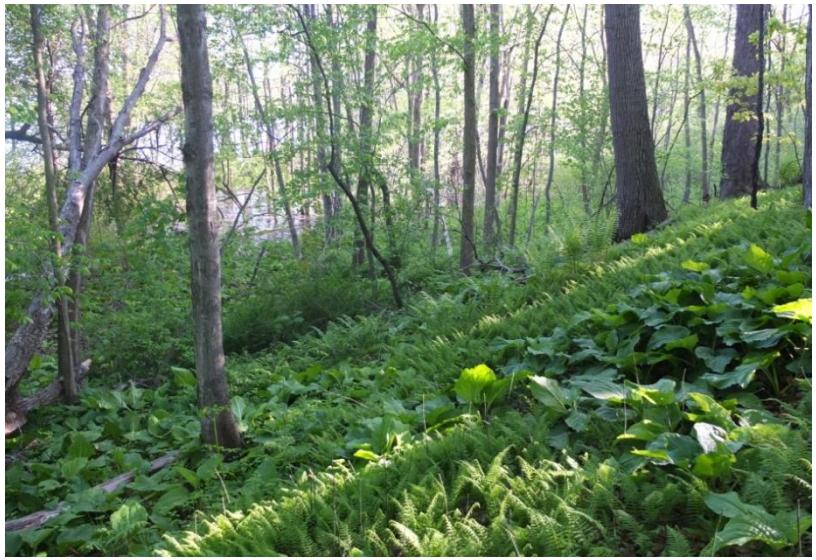
This current planning effort extends from the Lower Village Development Committee's recent efforts, and as such includes many neighborhood focus group meetings. The Lower Village Development Committee was developed as a result of focus group meetings based upon the 2011 Water Access Study. It was clear from these public meetings that there was a strong desire to implement what many see as a pinnacle piece to the Main Street planning efforts, which is public access to the Androscoggin River. While undertaking this effort, the committee realized the complexity of the issue is not simply identifying water access sites, but rather a more holistic

planning approach that involves interconnected issues. It is with this realization that we now look to connect the dots with all of the above referenced plans.

Public Support Themes

Citizen participation showed strong support for:

- protecting and promoting a walkable, pedestrian-friendly village environment throughout the Study Area.
- protecting and enhancing historic character with village-scaled development throughout the Study Area
- village-scaled, mixed-use buildings, especially to provide live/work ("mom & pop") commercial and professional opportunities
- 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
- enhancing trails and other pedestrian connections between neighborhoods and natural areas /parks / schools throughout the Study Area developing the riverfront park at the old fire station site
- more pedestrian connections between Main Street and the adjacent residential neighborhoods
- moving the Route 201 and Route 24 designations from Main Street to the Coastal Connector.



Natural and recreation areas along the river

◊ Executive Summary, Goals, Activities & Implementation Timetable

Executive Summary

The Elm and Green Streets Community Revitalization Plan is composed of multiple components, which working in consort creates an integrated strategy to focus and coordinate joint public, private and community efforts in the area. These neighborhood-specific Policy Goals, Activities and Implementations also fit into other community-wide plans, creating a broader integrated effort to continuously improve Topsham.

Planning efforts in Topsham's Lower Village and surrounding neighborhoods have been a focus since the 1992 Comprehensive Planning effort. Stemming back to the mid 1980's there were many public debates about the traffic issues along Main Street and Elm. Cited in the 1992 Comprehensive Plan, the 196 bypass effort gave a new focus to the planning efforts along Elm and Main Streets (now the Lower Village area). This was the start to the revitalization planning efforts for the Lower Village, where there was a vision created in 1996 with the Main Street Vision Plan.

Regrettably, the Elm and Green Streets neighborhood area was not included in either the 2007 Main Street Plan or the 2007 revision of the Comprehensive Plan - even though both plans establish goals for immediately abutting neighborhoods on the Main Street corridor. Given that the Main Street plan was focused on the Main Street corridor, this omission is not surprising. However, the omission is unfortunate in that the Main Street Plan is, in essence, Topsham's plan for its downtown and the Elm and Green Streets neighborhood is indisputably a key element of our downtown. Indeed, until quite recently, Elm Street functioned as the town's civic center, being the previous location of the Town Office and several schools.

So this Community Revitalization Plan for the Elm and Green Streets neighborhood seeks to resolve this gap in Topsham's downtown planning. In addition to sections reviewing the Existing Character of this neighborhood and the extensive Planning History & Citizen Participation that support and inform this Plan, the bulk of this Plan is devoted to outlining policy goals and specific activities to revitalize this neighborhood – and great asset – at the core of Topsham's downtown. These goals and activities are defined and explained in sections covering these five categories:

1. Infrastructure 2. Transportation 3. Housing 4. Historic District 5. Economic Impact

Policy Goals, Activities & Implementation Timetable

The following table of Policy Goals, Activities & Implementation Timetable is organized by following the above categories and provides a concise, but detailed, summary of the recommendations explored in greater depth in each section.

Chapter 1 – Infrastructure

Policy Goals	Activities	Timetable
1. Maintain and upgrade (as needed) infrastructure to minimize interruptions of vital services.	• Evaluate existing infrastructure on a routine basis to identify pending problems or concerns. • Invest in infrastructure upgrades to adapt to changing community needs. • Work with Topsham Sewer District and Brunswick Topsham Water District to coordinate utility system upgrades, maintenance or replacement to coincide with municipal infrastructure improvements	(1-10 years) (5-20 years) (1-10 years)

2. Evaluate changes to existing infrastructure to better served community	• Evaluate on-street parking provisions as appropriate to determine if on-street bike lanes are feasible and/or desirable. • Evaluate the capacity of existing sidewalks to be upgraded to provide to multi-use paths. • Expand the existing network of trails and paths to make connections to existing facilities in Topsham, or in adjoining communities. • Evaluate changes to existing roadways to improve traffic flow, including vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle. • Evaluate the provision of public and private parking, to determine whether new parking opportunities are needed. • Evaluate existing green infrastructure, specifically public street trees, to determine status and health, and develop a long term maintenance and replacement plan.	(1 -5 years) (1-5 years) (1-20 years) (1-5 years) (1-5 years) (1-5 years)

Chapter 2 – Transportation

Policy Goals	Activities	Timetable
Specific policy goals for Elm and Green Streets: 1. Reduce regional traffic on both Elm St. and Green St.	• Re-designate Elm St. at Business Rt. 24 • Make Green St. one way from Elm St to Main St. • Evaluate traffic improvements to Main Street and adjoining side streets to reduce traffic backups and long waits for left turning traffic	(1-5 years) (5-10 years) (10-20 years)
2. Monitor speeds on Elm and Green Streets to determine need for traffic calming measures	• Routine radar patrols • Periodic in-depth traffic analysis to determine speed and type of vehicles	(1-5 years) (1-10 years)
Overall policy goals that relate to Green and Elm Streets: Create a flexible transportation network that allows residents, visitors, and commuters to move safely and efficiently within and through Topsham, utilizing all means of transportation. 1. Improve the quality and safety of Topsham's existing transportation network.	• Create a Gateway Plan to identify prominent entrances to the Lower Village Historic District. • Monitor and, where appropriate, take measures to improve the safety of high-crash locations and areas of significant speeding. • Ensure that traffic in and around the Lower Village does not hamper pedestrian access into, through and within the Lower Village and its supporting residential neighborhoods.	(1-5 years) (1-10 years) (1-10 years)

2. Ensure that regional traffic does not over burden Topsham's arterial road network.	• Work on regional efforts to improve the transportation network. • Request DOT re-sign and re-designate	(1-5 years) (1-5 years)

3. Improve the local transportation network so that neighborhoods, commercial centers, schools, and community facilities are better connected to each other.	• Evaluate the need for expanded or new pedestrian and bicycle connections. • Evaluate the need for transportation improvements to facilitate the safe passage of traffic through the Lower Village. • Provide bike path along Elm St. (either striped on roadway, or widen sidewalk into a bike/ped path) • Evaluate need for parking on both sides of Elm St.	(1-5 years) (5-10 years) (5-10 years) (1-5 years)

4. Increase the number of bicycle and/or pedestrian connections between Elm and Green Streets, adjoining neighborhoods, commercial centers, schools, and community facilities.	• Install sidewalk on Green St. • Make Green St. one-way from Elm to Main • Improve automotive, bicycle, and pedestrian connections throughout the Lower Village between residential neighborhoods, community facilities, recreation areas, and commercial areas. Special attention should be given to designs that improve pedestrian and bicycle safety. • Improve the bicycle and pedestrian connections between our town and neighboring communities. Special attention should be given to the Swinging Bridge, the Merrymeeting Bridge and the Frank Wood Bridge. • Increase opportunities for downtown waterfront access, and for pedestrian/bicycle access along the Androscoggin River.	(5-10 years) (5-10 years) (5 – 20 years) (5-20 years) (1-10 years)

Chapter 3 – Housing

Policy Goals	Activities	Timetable
1. Use development as a tool to improve the integrity and character of Topsham's residential areas	• Create a density transfer program to allow for higher densities in growth areas in exchange for preservation of developable land in limited growth areas of Town • Encourage the preservation of the Historic District's character by maintaining historic development standards • Review the Land Use Ordinance to ensure that residential areas are adequately buffered from the adverse impacts of new development and new transportation connections. • Draft adequate development standards for commercial uses in residential areas to preserve the integrity of existing residential neighborhoods	(1-5 years) (1-5 years) (1-5 years) (1-5 years)

2. To increase the amount of affordable housing available in Topsham and work to see that 10% of all new housing meets affordability criteria.	• Adjust the Land Use Ordinance to promote the development of affordable housing, for all housing groups, in our community with increased densities in appropriate areas. • Create programs that encourage the provision of affordable housing, through Affordable Housing TIFs, affordable housing trust funds, or other mechanisms • Work with Highlands to increase its provision of affordable housing for seniors	(1-5 years) (1-5 years) (1-5 years)

3. Use residential development as part of a strategy to manage growth	• Provide for increase densities in areas with sewer and water	(1-5 years)

Chapter 4 – Historic District

Policy Goals	Activities	Timetable
1. Identify and preserve Topsham's important historic and archaeological resources for future generations.	• 2010 Architectural Survey and designation of contributing and non-contributing resources • 2012 Historic District Overlay Zone Ordinance Update	Complete Complete

Chapter 5 – Economic Impact

Policy Goals	Activities	Timetable
1. Preserve Residential & Historic Character And Value As Visitor Attraction.	• Maintain Historic District Commission • Maintain Certified Local Government Status • Develop Gateway to Historic District • Develop and install interpretive signage for District	on-going on-going 1-5 years 1-5 years

2. Develop Affordable Senior Housing	• Amend ordinances to provide density bonuses for elderly affordable housing	1-5 years

3. Maintain Vibrant Mix and Scale of Residential and Commercial Use	• Implement development standards to protect residential uses from impacts of commercial properties • Evaluate permitted commercial uses on periodic basis to determine o-going compatibility with residential area • Encourage use of on-street parking versus development of commercial parking areas • Encourage locational standards for non-residential parking areas	1-5 years on-going 1-5 years 1-5 years

4. Repair & Maintain Neighborhood Infrastructure And Amenities	• Evaluate existing infrastructure on a routine basis to identify pending problems or concerns. • Invest in infrastructure upgrades to adapt to changing community needs. • Work with Topsham Sewer District and Brunswick Topsham Water District to plan for system upgrades, maintenance, or replacement, as needed, to correspond with municipal infrastructure work.	1-10 years 5-20 years 1-10 years

5. Consider Development of Public Transit	• Identify demand for public transit • Continue working with adjoining communities and providers to evaluate the feasibility of extending public transit to Topsham	1-10 years 1-10 years

6. Remove Blight	• Maintain integrity of Historic District through HDC review process • Partner with developers/owners for re-development of identified blighted parcels • Explore the use of Community Development Block Grant funds for blight removal • Explore use of Certified Local Government funds to assist in the re-development and restoration of blighted properties, when appropriate	On-going As-needed On-going As-needed

7. Utilize Historic Tax Credits	Leverage this powerful economic revitalization tool to offset the often high cost of rehabilitating historic buildings. Because it is generally not-well-known and little understand, sponsor a orientation workshop to make sure eligible property owners are aware of the opportunity, then provide support for them to lean more.	1-5 years

1 Infrastructure

Introduction

The adequacy of infrastructure is related to the changing needs of the residents of Topsham. Fifty years ago, a street was perfectly adequate if it was 20' wide and provided for automobiles. Thirty years ago, that same street was adequate if it was 24' wide and also provided a sidewalk for pedestrian access. Today, that same street or right of way is adequate if it has safe provisions for bicycle traffic, either on-street, combined with a sidewalk, or separated from vehicular traffic.

Similarly, over time, the provision of access to the Androscoggin River has changed in the community's perception. Fifty years ago, nobody wanted to be anywhere near the Androscoggin River due to the historic uses the river had been saddled with. However, as the river water quality has improved, a desire to reconnect to the river has developed within the community, such that trails along the river are now highly desired by Town citizens, as is the ability to access the river, either visually or physically. As these community desires grow, the Town's infrastructure must adapt to satisfy these new needs.

Within its identified fiscal constraints, Topsham strives to maintain its existing infrastructure to a high level, and to develop new infrastructure to meet the community's changing needs. At times, new infrastructure is developed as part of new residential or commercial projects, and the public portion of that infrastructure is ultimately turned over to the Town. Other times it is incumbent on the Town to provide its own infrastructure, whether totally new, or an expansion/improvement or existing.

The overriding goal of the community is to ensure that its infrastructure continues to serve the public's needs, both today and into the future, and to reduce/eliminate service interruptions. This includes ensuring the adequacy of the sewer and water systems, as well as the general transportation network, and the community's "green infrastructure", including parks, stormwater management systems, paths, trails and community trees, specifically street trees.

Larger Vision

The Elm Street and Green Street neighborhood, including adjacent residential streets, were the historic center of the community, and today are the core of the Town's Historic District. Maintaining this visual identifier for the community is paramount to helping future residents better understand the community. At the same time, as noted above, the historic pattern of infrastructure development does not always sustain current needs and wants of the community.

A similar conundrum can be found in the community's long-supported goal for a waterfront park in the Lower Village, and its potential impacts on the Elm/Green Street neighborhood. This report does not try to re-interpret this community goal, nor does it attempt to elaborate on it. Instead, it assumes this goal is still in place, and looks at the adjacent neighborhood to determine what should happen in order to support this long-standing community goal.

Partly, this is recognition that nothing stands on its own, and that everything is connected to everything else. If you construct a park, how will people get there? Where will they park? What Streets will they drive on, or walk on? What other connections can/should be made to other public and private facilities? How does the existing transportation network support or hinder the development of a park?

With this “inter-connected” model in mind, there are several recommendations that this report makes that help to ensure the long-term viability of the Elm Street and Green Street neighborhood, while support the broader vision the Town has for itself.

- Reduce the impact of regional traffic on Elm Street by re-designating Elm Street at Business Rt. 24, and by making Rt. 24 follow the Coastal Connector into Brunswick
- Improve connections between Main Street and the Androscoggin River Bike Path
- Reduce intra-town traffic on Green Street
- Monitor speeds on Elm and Green Streets to determine need for traffic calming measures
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle access along Elm Street to Green Street, and ultimately to Main Street

Elm and Green Streets Infrastructure

The Elm and Green Streets neighborhood is primarily a residential neighborhood, with residentially-scaled infrastructure. Green Street is a publically owned right of way, with a street width of less than 20’, with no sidewalk. Elm Street is approximately 30’ wide with a sidewalk on one side. Parking is allowed on both sides of Elm Street, while parking is limited on Green Street.

<u>Sewer</u>

Size/Type/length of sewer lines:

- Green St.--8 inch gravity and 6 inch pressure main.
- Elm St.--16 inch gravity

Age of lines

- Green St. 38 years old
- Elm St. 38 years old

Condition of lines

- Green St. excellent
- Elm St. excellent

Planned upgrades/replacement?

- Green St. upgrade planned, no date as of yet.
- Elm St. none

Known issues – condition/capacity, etc.

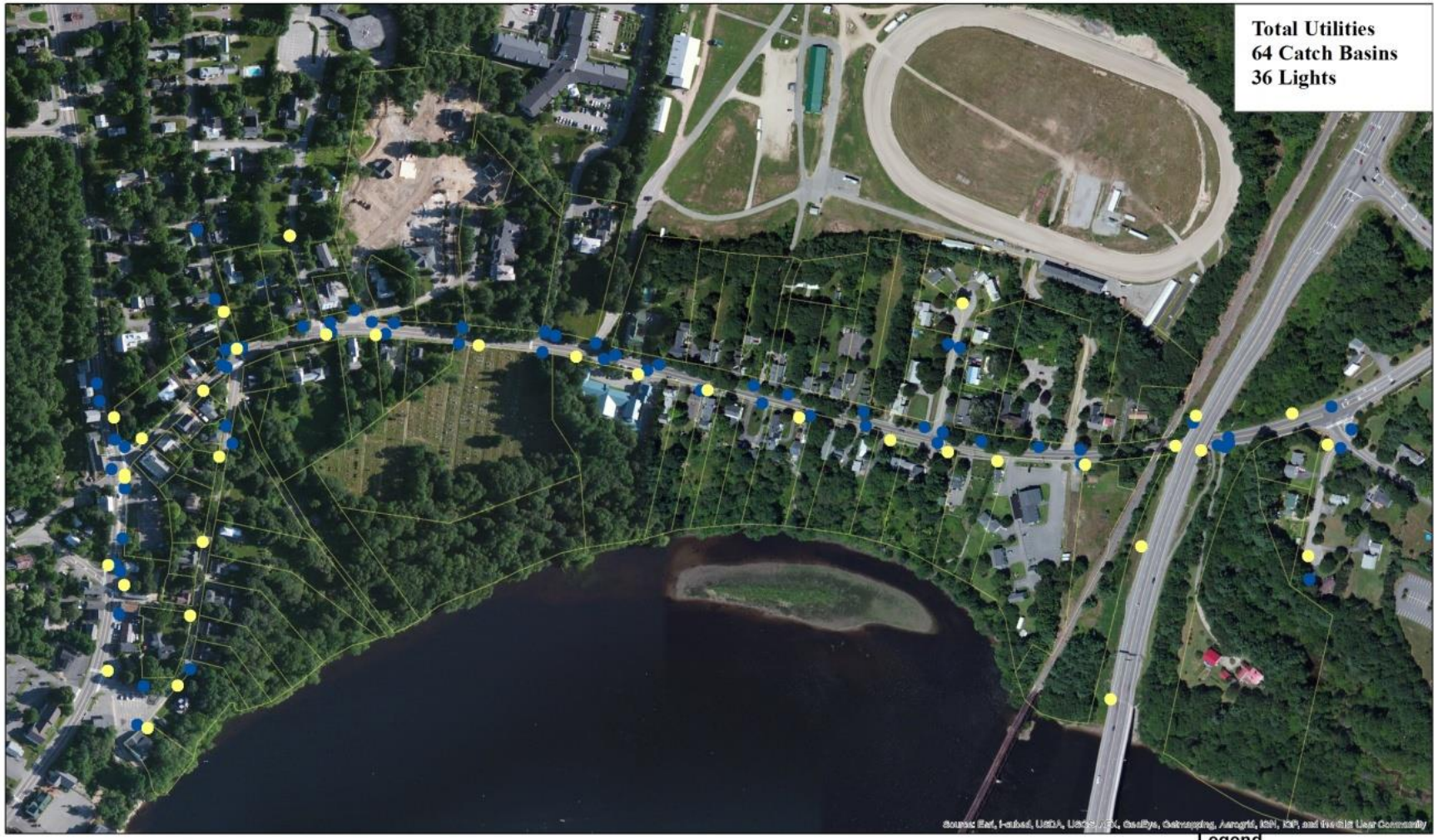
- Green St. equipment is 38 years old.
- Elm St. none

<u>Water</u>

Green Street: 6" CI installed in 1951 from Elm to the South side of 5 Green Street (~905'), with a 1" copper service installed in 1990 extending to 3 Green St

Elm Street: 12"AC installed in 1970 from Main to Green (~475'), 12"PVC installed in 1984 from Green to Foreside (~2,910'). Also an abandoned 8" CI line from Main to Foreside along Elm Street

The District does not have repairs or replacements scheduled in this area for the foreseeable future

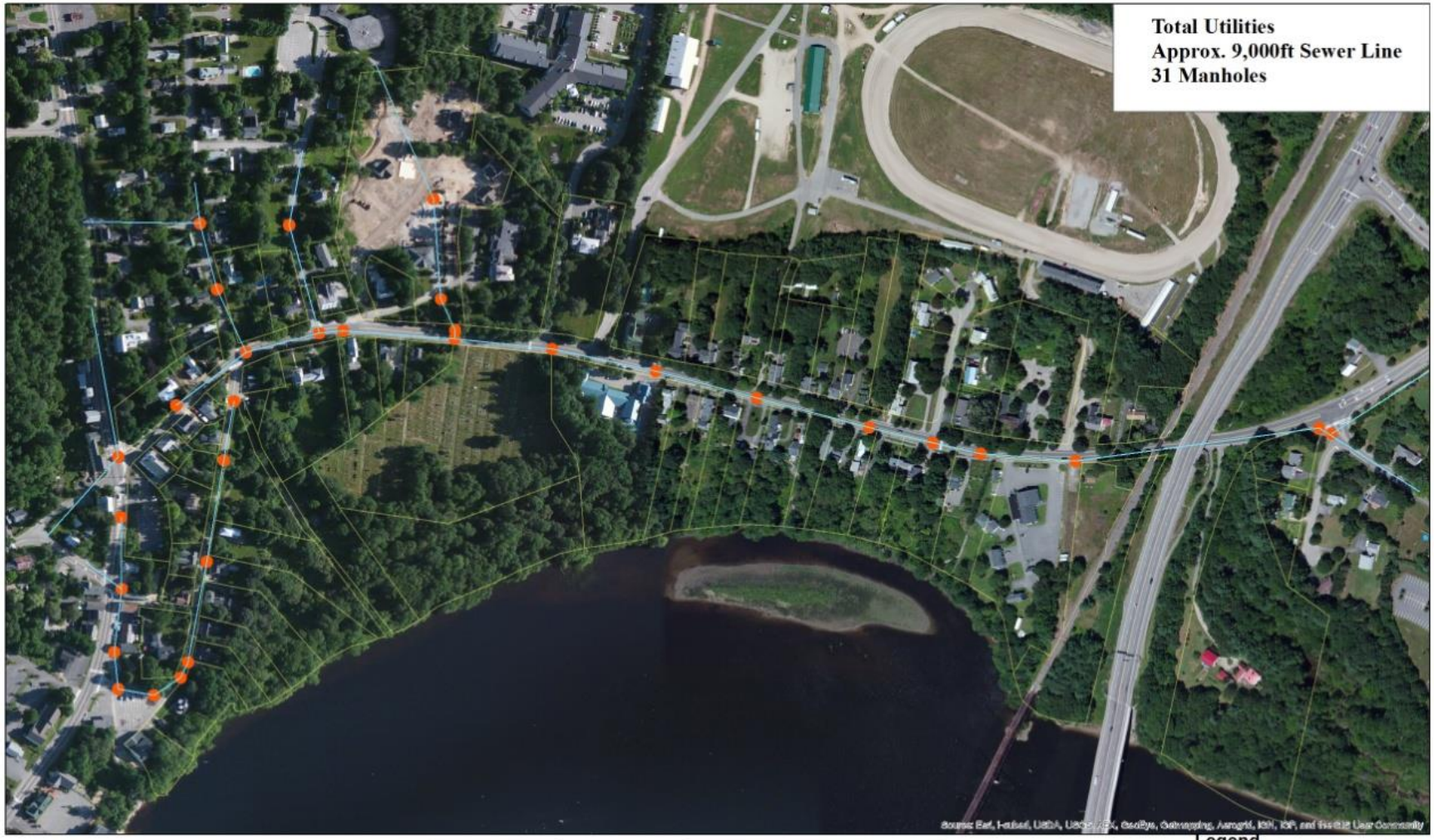


Elm Street Neighborhood
Town Utility Survey

0 375 750 1,500 Feet

Legend

- Town Lights
- Catch Basins



Elm Street Neighborhood
Topsham Sewer District Survey

0 375 750 1,500 Feet

Legend

SewerLines

Manholes

2 Transportation

Introduction

Elm Street serves multiple transportation roles in Topsham. First and foremost, it is a residential street serving the Elm St. neighborhood and the adjoining residential areas, including the Highlands. In addition, it is Rt. 24, and as such, serves a regional role as travelers move between Bowdoinham/Richmond and Brunswick/Harpswell. It is also a connecting location for the existing Androscoggin River Bike Path, as it comes from Brunswick and stops on Elm St. This trail will ultimately continue over Elm St. towards Community Drive. Lastly, it serves as the infrastructure spine of the Elm St. Historic District.

The overriding goals for Elm St. are:

- To have it used by those that need to be there. This means moving regional traffic to more appropriate roads, such as the Coastal Connector (Rt. 196) and Rt. 1 in Brunswick.
- As a neighborhood street, it should constructed and maintained to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists safely
- To have the road complement the Historic District, in terms of construction and amenities

Green Street is a purely neighborhood street. However, recent traffic growth and traffic control changes have resulted in Green Street being used as a 'cut through' for cars travelling east from Winter St. The goals for Green St. are:

- Restore the street to neighborhood traffic
- Improve the road to provide for safe pedestrian and bicycle access
- Consider making Green Street one-way

Vehicular Transportation

Topsham has adopted multiple plans concerning the area in and around Elm St. over the last 20 years, and nearly all of them have included sections on transportation, including traffic concerns, pedestrian access and safety, and bicycle access. These studies include the 1992 and 2005 Comprehensive Plans, the 1996 and 2008 Main Street Plans, the 2004 Trail Feasibility Study and the 2005 Transportation Study. Work is continuing in this vein today, with a soon to be adopted plan from the MidCoast Council of Governments on the Rt. 24 Corridor.

These plans all acknowledge to one degree or another, the impact of traffic on the quality of life in Topsham. Recommendations in the past have included a reconstruction of Main Street (which was completed in 2001) and a Rt. 196 By-Pass around Topsham (completed in 1997). These two improvements have dramatically changed the traffic flows into/out of the Lower Village area. What was once a traffic-clogged center of town, has become a Main Street where we are now concerned about traffic calming, as a way of reducing speeds, and making the corridors safer for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Elm Street is currently designated as State Rt. 24, and serves as a connector from Harpswell to Richmond. This through traffic creates higher levels of traffic on Elm St. than would normally be anticipated for a residential neighborhood, resulting in concerns for pedestrian safety from many of the residents.

Speed has routinely been an issue for residents on Elm St. The posted speed limit is 25 mph, but average speeds exceed

this, particularly toward the easterly end of the street. This raises concerns to the residents for the safety of children and pedestrians. It also raises concerns over the location of the current terminus of the Bike Path.

Bike/Pedestrian Access

The Androscoggin River Bike Path, which runs from Cooks Corner in Brunswick to the Rt. 196 Merrymeeting Bridge, currently terminates at Elm St. The location of the connection is poor, as it lies immediately to the east of the railroad trestle and the Merrymeeting Bridge. The trestle crossing over Elm St. is narrow, resulting in the standard 5' wide sidewalk on Elm St. to constrict to approximately 2'. The end result is a bicycle connection to Elm St. that is screened from the view of drivers heading east, and forces pedestrian/bicyclists who are using Elm St. to enter the roadway under the trestle. Likewise, bicyclists coming down the trail to Elm St. have no site line to the west to see oncoming traffic. The proposed extension of the Bike Path from Elm St. to Topsham Fair Mall Road will eliminate the need for this point of entry to the Bike Path.

Topsham is undertaking a feasibility study of extending a woods trail, the River Landing Trail, from the top of Green St. down Town Landing Road, and then along the Androscoggin River. An overlook at the back of the cemetery will be created, along with a crossing to the former Amenity Manor Nursing Home. Connections to Elm St. will be provided through both of those parcels. As part of the feasibility study, it has been noted that Green Street currently lacks a sidewalk, making connecting the River Landing Trail to a hoped for park at the bottom of Green St. very difficult.

The plans call for making Green St. a one-way street, with a sidewalk on one side. This will provide safe and convenient pedestrian/bicycle access to the Lower Village on Main Street, as well as address traffic concerns on Green St.

General Goals

Topsham's Comprehensive Plan includes multiple strategies and goals related to transportation, including improving connections between neighborhoods, improving pedestrian access throughout the Town, making provisions for bicycles in transportation decisions and improvements, and making sure that traffic is where it belongs – local traffic on local roads, connecting traffic on connecting roads, and regional traffic on regional roads. The impacts of the wrong type of traffic in the wrong location are numerous, including speeding, pedestrian/vehicular conflicts, impacts on adjacent landowners, and structural impacts on roads carrying traffic they weren't designed for.

Synthesis

Elm and Green Streets are considered to be local, neighborhood streets by the residents that live on them, and generally by other residents in Town. However, both streets, to one degree or another, serve as higher level streets at different times.Elm Street provides quick and direct access to Main Street for the population in Topsham that lives to the east of Main Street, including Middlesex Road (Rt. 24) and Foreside Road, as well as the roads off of these collector roads. This connection will not change in the future. Elm St. also serves as a portion of Rt. 24, which brings regional traffic from Richmond to Brunswick, Rt. 1 and I-295. This regional traffic can be diverted from Elm St. through new signage and a re-designation of Elm Street as Business Rt. 24. Rt. 24 could then be directed onto Rt. 196 at Bypass Drive and directly to Rt. 1 for traffic headed towards Harpswell or Cooks Corner, and to I-295 for traffic heading south toward Portland.

This diversion of traffic will result in a reduced number of trips on Elm St. daily, making for a quieter neighborhood, and for safer pedestrian travel.

Green Street likewise takes non-neighborhood traffic, primarily traffic from Winter Street heading east. The assumption is that this is traffic from the Mall that can't turn left onto Main St, so it proceeds across Main St. to Green and on to Elm St. Consideration is underway to make Green St. one way (identified in the 2005 Transportation Study and again in the Lower Village Development Committee deliberations) from Elm St. to Main St., eliminating this through traffic. To the extent that travelers will adjust travel when leaving the mall via Winter Street and onto Rt. 196, this will again reduce traffic on Green, and ultimately Elm St. as well.

Together, these traffic/transportation improvements will reduce non-local traffic through this neighborhood by diverting it to roads more regional in nature.

Pedestrian access to Elm St. is via its intersection with Main St. With future redevelopment of the Fire Station area in the Lower Village, pedestrian access will be extended up the first portion of Green St. Completing the pedestrian connection up Green St. to Elm would make for a more pleasant pedestrian experience by putting pedestrians onto a road with lower traffic levels. This change could also affect the need identified in the 2005 Transportation Study of providing pedestrian signals at the Main/Elm/Elm St. Extension intersection.

Bike access is currently on-road, with no segregated designations for bicyclists. While this will likely be the norm for Main Street into the future, due to a lack of right of way, improvements to the sidewalk on Elm Street could be made to create a multi-use path, similar to what the Town has done on Monument Place. A single 8-10' path would accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians, and would provide a sound connection to the Androscoggin River Bike Path. An alternative to consider would be to stripe a bike lane on Elm St. However, this would impact parking on whichever side of the road was selected.

Goals

1. Improve pedestrian access to Green St.
2. Improve connections between Main Street and the Androscoggin River Bike Path
3. Re-designate Elm Street as Business Rt. 24, and install signage appropriate to re-direct Rt. 24 to the Coastal Connector
4. Reduce regional traffic on both Elm St. and Green Street
5. Monitor speeds on Elm and Green Streets to determine need for traffic calming measures

1. Gateway at the western end of Elm Street at Main Street

2. Traffic on Elm Street

4. Pedestrians on Green Street

3. Gateway at the eastern end of Elm Street

3 Housing

Introduction

For decades, plans have recognized the goal of increasing housing in general, and affordable elderly housing in particular. To achieve this goal Topsham instituted changes to its Land Use Ordinances designed to encourage development in the Growth Area - that area easily served by sewer and water, or serviced by existing major arterial roads. The Elm and Green Street neighborhood clearly fits because it possesses adequate water and sewerage and because it is in close proximity to the Lower Village with a sidewalk/trail network providing excellent pedestrian access to the Lower Village – making it an excellent candidate for neighborhood-compatible affordable elderly housing.

Housing Goals

The community has established goals for the development of housing within the town, as follows:

1. **Affordable housing:** Provide adequate affordable housing for the community's needs, with a goal of 10% of all new housing units meeting the definition of affordable.
2. **Higher density:** Create provisions for higher density housing development in those areas of the Town served by public sewer and water.
3. **Affordable Housing TIF:** Develop an Affordable Housing TIF to encourage the development of affordable housing.
4. **Preserve neighborhood character:** Preserve the integrity of existing neighborhoods, and where limited commercial development is allowed, ensure that adequate development standards are established to reduce any negative impacts from such development.
5. **Strengthen neighborhoods:** Use development and redevelopment as a tool to strengthen existing neighborhoods.

Background

The provision of high quality, affordable and varied housing types has long been a goal of the community, as identified in the 1992 and 2005 Comprehensive Plans. Topsham has used zoning to encourage the development of housing, including small lot zoning, Planned Residential Developments and Elderly Housing provisions. In 2011, the Town changed its zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to provide for additional styles of subdivision, including Opens Space subdivisions and Large Lot subdivisions.

In 1992, the Town recognized the need to "promote the availability of affordable housing and housing for the elderly". This policy was repeated in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, by recognizing the need to "create more affordable housing opportunities in our community….. Topsham can increase opportunities by updating our Land Use Ordinance, adopting an affordable housing program, and creating a Tax Increment Financing policy for affordable housing".

This 2005 policy was further amplified with specific goals and strategies, including:

- Working toward 10% of all new housing being affordable;
- Develop policies to increase densities, where appropriate;

The 2008 Main Street Village Plan called for policies to support workforce housing and for housing in the Lower Village area to support the commercial core of the Lower Village. It noted several locations in and around the Lower Village that could be redeveloped to increase the number of dwelling unit in and adjacent to the Lower Village.

Synthesis

The major land use planning documents that Topsham has adopted over the last several years includes the 2005 Comprehensive Plan and the 2008 Main Street Village Plan. Both plans recognize the importance of affordable housing to the overall community. The Main Street Plan specifically notes the importance of housing in and around the Lower Village to help extend the commercial sector to a “16-hour” business community, not just the 8-5 sector that it currently is.

In addition, Topsham has recognized the higher costs involved in providing services to large frontage rural subdivisions, as well as the increased burden on transportation networks from housing located “out of town”.

To address these issues, and to achieve these goals state above, Topsham has instituted several changes to its Land Use Ordinances, including:

- Higher densities and more flexible parking standards for elderly housing;
- A Transfer of Development Rights ordinance to grant higher densities in the Growth Area, in exchange for a fee used to acquire density in the Limited Growth part of town;
- Density bonuses for the provision of affordable housing, particularly with respect to elderly housing projects.

Together, these new ordinances are designed to encourage development in our Growth Area, that area easily served by sewer and water, or serviced by existing major arterial roads.

The Elm Street/Green Streets neighborhood clearly fits the description outlined in our existing plans. It possesses adequate water and sewerage. It is in close proximity to the Lower Village, and with appropriate upgrades in the sidewalk/trail network, it will provide excellent pedestrian access to the Lower Village. Additionally, Elm and Green Streets neighborhood presents great potential for synergies and leveraging of the resources of other senior housing assets already present in the neighborhood.

The Elm & Green Streets neighborhood also hosts a concentration of senior housing (Highlands, Frost House, Town Hall development), as well as assisted living facilities (Elm Street Assisted Living, Cadigan Lodge at the Highlands and, until it closed recently, Amenity Manor). Affordable senior housing, however, is conspicuously absent from the area and is much desired in Topsham. Community goal to increase affordable housing has been largely met by the conversion of the Annex residential area to civilian ownership and use, but affordable senior housing remains an unmet goal.

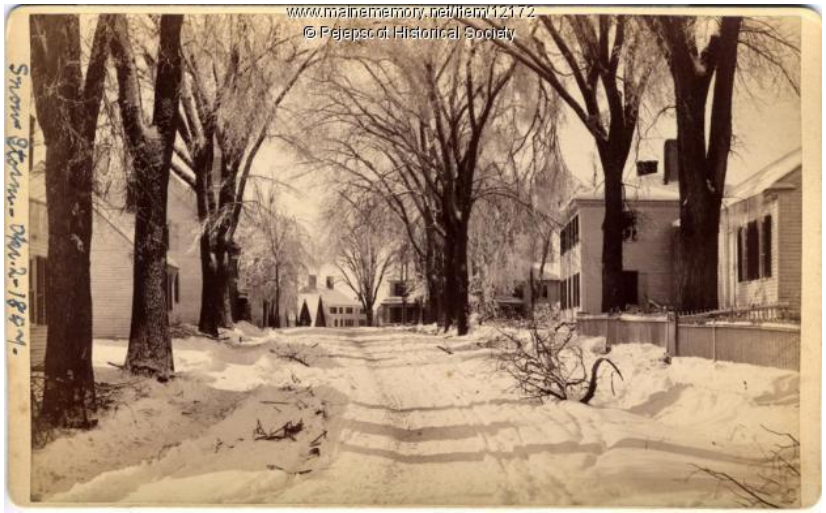
Elm Street is currently designated as State Highway 24, and serves as a transportation corridor from outlying areas. With a proposed re-designation to Business Rt. 24, Elm Street should see a reduction in the overall traffic volume with the elimination of through traffic, resulting in a street that will be even more attractive to residential uses. The proximity to existing aging in place facilities on and just off of Elm Street make this an area that would be attractive to additional similar uses.

Former Amenity Manor site: opportunity for neighborhood redevelopment

4 Historic District

Introduction

Elm Street is truly the heart of the current Historic District in Topsham. Photographs of the bygone era where beautiful elm trees towered over the homes and street paint a picturesque scene that can remarkably be resembled even today.



Citizens of Topsham recognized this resource at an early stage in the national movement to preserve historic resources, and placed the local "Elm Street District" on the national register of historic places in 1977. The district also received survey work to identify the historic character and integrity that has remained in this neighborhood: the first occurring in the early 1980's, and a follow up recently in 2010. Both surveys recognize and account for an intact historic neighborhood that has retained much of its 19th century integrity, in regards to architectural detail as well as directional expression and mood. The district has continually been identified in planning efforts as an important resource worthy of protection. This is also evident in the community support for the ongoing efforts of the Historic District Commission, as they continually act as the stewards for the architectural and historic character of the area. In assisting the HDC with their responsibilities, Topsham has retained its status as a Certified Local Government with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission.

Background

The earliest permanent European settlement of Topsham began in 1717 with homesteads built on 100 acre lots fronting on the Androscoggin River, with most homes several miles east of where the village eventually developed. The first saw mills were built on the Cathance River, which was undoubtedly far easier to dam and control with the available manpower and technology than the Androscoggin River at the falls. By 1753 the first wooden dam across the Androscoggin was constructed. Other dams followed in 1756, 1760, and 1772. In 1772 there were mills on the Topsham side of the upper and middle dams.

Elm/Winter Street (then called High Street) ran east to west as a continuation of the main road between Bowdoinham and Lisbon, built 1761-62. Main Street was built in 1790, running from the ferry (and later the bridge) to Brunswick toward Bowdoin and Augusta. Water (now Green) Street (1799) ran from the island up to Elm, east of the intersection of Elm and Main. Thompson's Lane ran between Main and Green Streets (1798). These were the streets of the village in 1802.

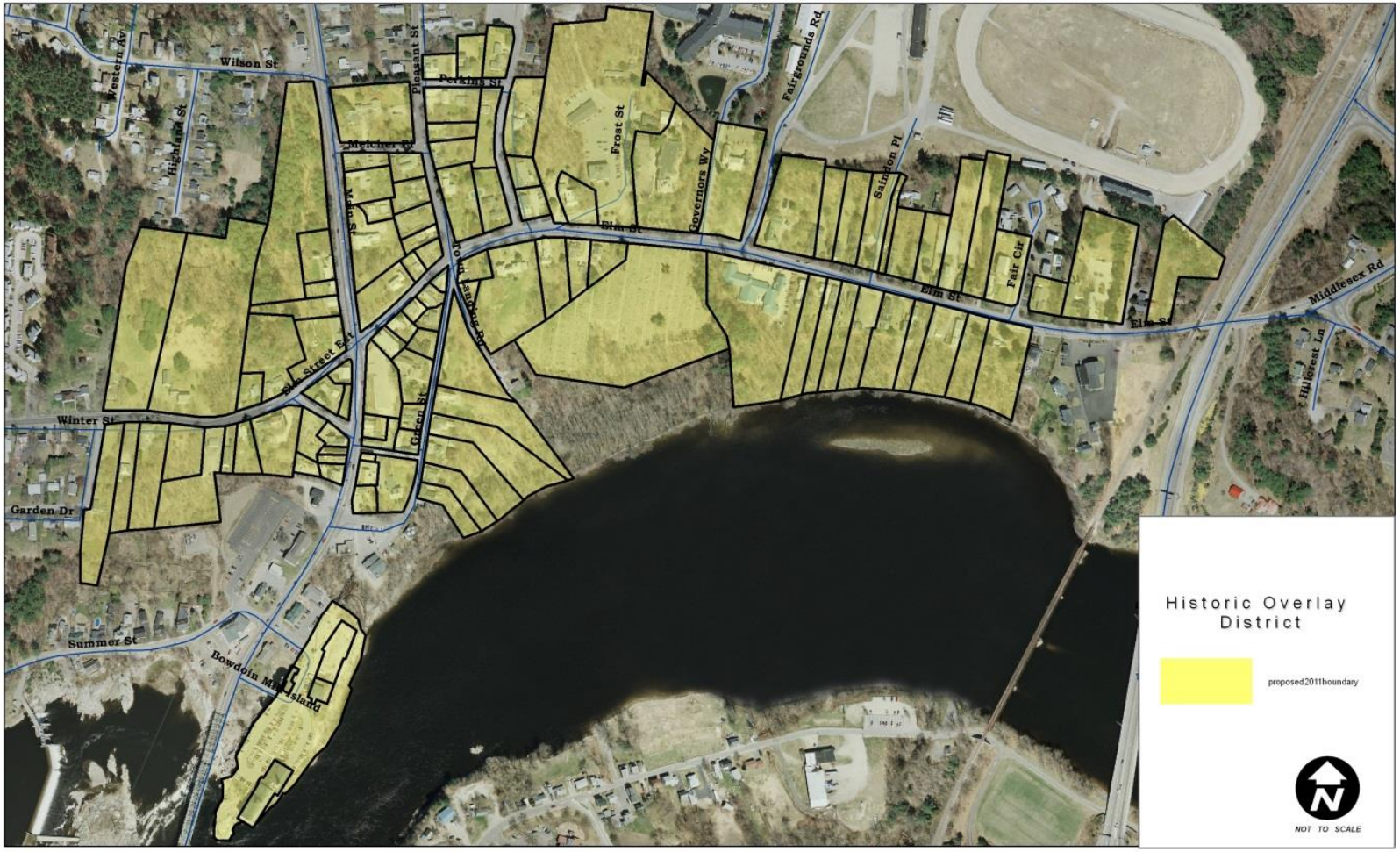
The area represents a remarkably intact New England village demonstrating a continuous pattern of related development that was sustained over a period of nearly 150 years. The architectural styles of several periods represented share an architectural vocabulary that allows them to be seen as a

unified whole while also being distinct enough to allow the history of development to be clearly "read" by a careful observer today. [1] [1] 2010 Topsham Architectural Survey, pg. Scott T. Hanson

The essential historic character of Elm Street remains intact as noted, and through various planning efforts documented since the mid 1970's the emphasis of protecting the historic character has been paramount.

Establishment of Historic Districts

In 1977, the first historic district was created in Topsham and it was a National Register Historic District which includes the North side of Elm Street. Listing on the National Register of Historic Places is an honor and recognizes "sites, buildings, objects, districts and structures that are significant in American history, architecture, archaeology and culture." These can be significant on a local, state or national level.



Proposed Historic District Boundary
January 30 2012

0 600 1,200 2,400 Feet

Upon the completion of a 1983 reconnaissance level architectural survey, the Town adopted five distinct districts to incorporate into a Historic District Overlay Zone in 1986. This overlay zone incorporated the 1977 National Register District, and added the entirety of Elm and Green Streets. The Overlay Zone empowered a local commission to review and authorize any architectural alterations in the district to comply with standards to receive a certificate of appropriateness prior to any work being undertaken on structures within the district. Establishing this overlay district also gave Topsham the eligibility to be one of Maine's few Certified Local Governments (CLG) at this time, which has allowed the Town to work closely with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) to ensure the stewardship of the historic character of this area.

In 2000 the town developed a design review manual to assist the Historic District Commission in their review process. More recently the Town undertook a 2010 architectural survey which compiled information in regards to the significance of structures within and adjacent to the district. In 2012, The result was adopting an ordinance that took into account each individual properties status in regards to it contributing or not-contributing to the integrity of the district. The current area of the Historic District Overlay Zone closely aligns with the revitalization plan study area:

Historic District Existing Conditions

The 2010 architectural survey identified 82 buildings, sites and structures within the Elm and Green Streets area and designated them as contributing or non-contributing in regards to their local historic significance. Local historic significance is based upon the period of significance (1784-1932), and the maintenance of historic integrity. The following table and image provides specifics in regards to historic significance to the built environment in the area.

Contributing Buildings	64
Contributing Sites	1
Contributing Structures	3
Non-Contributing Buildings	13
Non-Contributing Sites	1

Planning Goals and Objectives

In 2005 the town adopted an updated comprehensive plan that provided specific goals and recommendations in regards to the Historic District. The overall goal for Topsham's historic resources states:

"***Our Goal*** *is to identify and preserve Topsham's important historic and archaeological resources for future generations."*

The Comprehensive plan recommends a number of objectives and strategies that address how to accomplish this goal with a focus on zoning updates, and more detailed information to inform those updates.

Much of these recommendations have been implemented (Architectural Survey 2010, and the 2012 Ordinance update). **Of note, are the opportunities to use redevelopment as a tool for historic preservation.

Given the fact that Elm Street has seen major redevelopment/ rehabilitation and change of use among its most iconic structures (Town Hall, Frost and Porter Mansions), this proposed strategy has been proven to work within this area. Opportunities exist in the study area for this on many sites within the Historic District, the key factor being the maintenance of the architectural historic character.

More recently the Main Street planning efforts identified the Historic District as a major gateway into the Lower Village area within Topsham. This occurs at the Elm Street and Main Street intersection. It could also be argued that when entering from

Middlesex/ Route 24, when one passes under the coastal connector, they have crossed a gateway threshold into the Elm Street neighborhood…the Historic District. Again the emphasis as this neighborhood as a gateway, serves to protect the character of the neighborhood.

2010 Architectural Survey Designations
Elm &Green Streets

0 187.5 375 750 1,125 1,500 Feet

5 Economic Impact

Introduction

The Elm and Green Street area has significant value to the community as a high quality in-town residential area and as an attraction to cultural tourism visitors drawn to this nationally significant historic district. Unfortunately, the neighborhood faces some significant infrastructure repair issues, and has at least one large-scale instance of blight. Removing this blight, and enhancing the area's housing inventory, especially affordable housing, as well as improving other key amenities, such as trail and sidewalk connectivity, would be appropriate strategies to revitalize the neighborhood and increase its value as an economic asset for the community as a whole.

Economic Goals

1. Preserve Residential & Historic Character and Value As Visitor Attraction
2. Develop Affordable Senior Housing
3. Maintain Vibrant Mix and Scale of Residential and Commercial Uses
4. Repair & Maintain Neighborhood Infrastructure and Amenities
5. Support Development of Public Transit
6. Remove Blight
7. Utilize Historic Tax Credits

Preserve Residential & Historic Character and Value

The concentration of almost exclusively historical residences in this neighborhood is one of Topsham most valuable cultural assets. This key neighborhood characteristic, and the ability of visitors to enjoy it, can be substantially improved by the development of appropriately scaled amenities, especial those that enhance connectivity with other neighborhoods and recreational opportunities.

The Town has a long-term commitment to completing the Androscoggin Bike Path, which would connect Elm Street to other neighborhoods of Topsham and Brunswick, as well as providing access to an exceptional, lengthy walking path along the Androscoggin River. The Town is also currently exploring the feasibility of constructing a new trail (Town Landing Trail) connecting the Lower Village to Elm Street with a path along the river. Funding these enhancements to walkability, together with streetscape amenities (improved sidewalks, lighting, benches) will strengthen the area's character and quality as a residential neighborhood, thus increasing the likelihood that it will be preserved as such. These improvements will also increase the neighborhood's value as an area that attracts visitors interested in a walkable, nationally significant historic district and interconnected riverside trails. The very positive economic impact of such amenities has been amply documented. [1]

Develop Affordable Housing

This topic is covered in more detail in the Housing section or this report, which focuses on the Town's planning and policy goals for the development of housing. From an economic development perspective, an increase in affordable housing, particularly empty-nester and senior housing, in the Elm and Green Streets neighborhood would be a fully complementary use to the existing higher cost housing in the area. In addition to providing the community benefit of affording Topsham residents the much-desired opportunity to age in place, affordable senior housing would contribute to the preservation, and enhancement, of this area's residential character which, in turn, will provide economic benefits by supporting the Town's ongoing efforts to strengthen business uses in the abutting Main Street and Lower Village areas.

Maintain Vibrant Mix and Scale of Residential and Commercial Uses

As noted above, business uses represent less than 4% of the total units in this neighborhood but, if they are appropriately scaled and low impact, a limited number of additional businesses could both provide economic benefits (employment, tax base) for the Town and help preserve the predominant historical and residential qualities of the area. Maintenance of antique buildings in accordance with the requirements of our Historic District is not inexpensive, so the opportunity to lease first floor space to a compatible business may be a source of needed revenue for property owners challenged with the costs of maintaining a historic building.

Repair And Maintain Neighborhood Infrastructure And Amenities

The Elm and Green Streets area faces several high-cost infrastructure issues:

- Elm Street culvert: assessment, design & construction ~$ 275,000
- Elm Street regrind, repaving & sidewalk construction ~$250,000
- Elm Street regrind, repaving & sidewalk construction ~$100,000

Additionally, there are a variety of recreational and streetscape amenities proposed herein which will present significant costs of their own:

- Androscoggin Bike Path ~$400,000
- Town Landing trail ~$90,000
- Public transit ~$140,000 initial capital cost, `$100,000 annual operating cost

Topsham, like all Maine municipalities, is facing budgetary constraints due to the sustained recession and reductions in revenue support from the State. Funding the above-listed infrastructure and amenity improvements for this neighborhood could be expedited by the creation of an Affordable Housing TIF that would also support the development of a compatible housing use in this area. The 2007 Main Street Plan specifically proposed the use of such a TIF (p. 83). If appropriately structured, an Affordable Housing TIF could provide the Town with sheltered revenues to fund the other enhancements outlined herein for the revitalization of this neighborhood.

In this fiscal environment, finding funding for these projects could be a daunting challenge but, as noted above, the formation of a properly structured Affordable Housing TIF could provide the Town with new – and sheltered - revenues to fund these projects.

Determine Feasibility of Public Transit

Topsham has been discussing the development of public transit, connecting the communities from Bath to Freeport, as well as service within Topsham, for nearly a decade, but has been hindered, in part, by the lack of a “critical population mass” for sufficient, sustained ridership. The growth of senior housing in and abutting this neighborhood, however, may well have reached the point of making a limited public transit system (eg: extension of the Brunswick Explorer) feasible. In addition to providing obvious service benefits to residents (especially seniors who no longer drive), such a system would also provide direct economic benefits for Topsham businesses which would benefit from existing and new customers being able to reach them more frequently. The Town should continue discussions with Coastal Trans (the operator of the Brunswick Explorer), and neighboring communities, regarding the feasibility, and affordability of extending transit service into Topsham.

Remove Blight

While most buildings in the neighborhood are generally well maintained, the area does contain a large structure that is already blighted and deteriorating rapidly: the former Amenity Manor. Until three years ago, this was an assisted living/nursing home facility which became economically untenable due to the age of the structure and rising maintenance costs. Its redevelopment would not only remove this blight but, obviously, could create substantial tax base and employment benefits for the Town. Given the property's larger size (over three acres), this could be an appropriate site for the development of affordable senior housing.

Utilize Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits

Because the Elm and Green Street area represents a remarkably intact New England village demonstrating a continuous pattern of related development sustained over nearly 150 years, a substantial portion has been included on the National Register as the Topsham Historic District.

There are 58 properties within the district, and those that are designated "contributing" plus are "income producing" are potentially eligible for Historic Rehab Tax Credits. Maine provides tax credits for eligible historic rehab expenses, as does the Federal Government. These programs offset the often high cost of rehabilitating historic buildings, and to incentivize the reuse and rehabilitation of these structures. The tax credits provided are calculated as a percentage of the eligible rehabilitation expenses in the project. Maine provides a Tax Credit of 25% of the cost of rehab, spread over the 4 years following completion of the project. The State of Maine credit is refundable, meaning that if the Owner or Partner has low or no tax liability, the tax credit is refunded back to the Owner or Partner each year. The Maine HRTC is not competitive. The Federal HTC is very much like the ME credit, except that the credit is 20% and not refundable.

This program is a powerful economic revitalization tool and unprecedented opportunity for property owners to offset the often high cost of rehabilitating historic buildings. However it is generally not-well-known and little understood. A good first step is to make sure eligible property owners are aware of the opportunity then provide support for them to lean more.

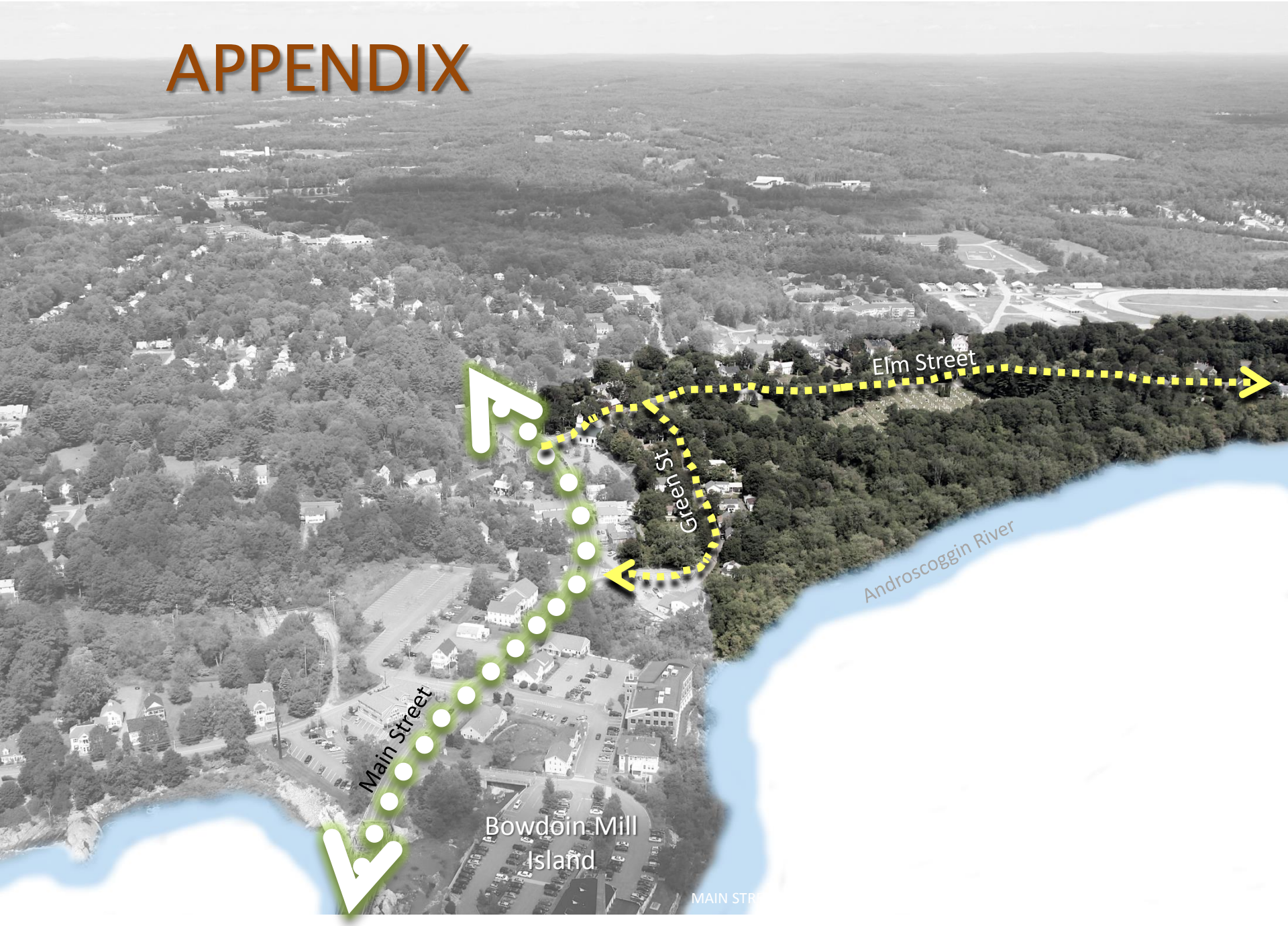
Conclusion: Neighborhood Revitalization Would Create Positive Economic Impacts

From an economic perspective, the highest and best use of this neighborhood would be to continue – and enhance - its current use. The strengthening and revitalization of the Elm and Green Street area as a predominantly residential historic area would yield substantial benefits for the neighborhood's residents and provide important economic benefits to the larger community. Maintaining the residential and historic characteristics of the area, and enhancing them with targeted amenities and infrastructure improvements would increase real estate values for area property owners and correspondingly increase tax revenues to the Town.

Adding walkability and recreational amenities would strengthen the area's ability to attract cultural/historic tourism with obvious benefits to local businesses. The development of a limited number of compatible business uses would create positive employment, property value and tax impacts for the community, as well as providing revenue for the owners of high-maintenance historic structures. Finally, the development of affordable senior housing would bring new customers to support the businesses in the abutting Lower Village and Main Street areas.

1. http://www.peri.umass.edu/fileadmin/pdf/published_study/PERI_ABikes_June2011.pdf, www.localmotion.org/documents/advocacy/Working_Paper_3_Econ_Impact_Walking_and_Biking_Sept_2011_2.pdf, http://www.etminc.com/SJR2C/sg_userfiles/SJR2C_Summary_Report_09-19-11.pdf

APPENDIX


Elm Street
Green St
Androscoggin River
Main Street
Bowdoin Mill
Island

APPENDIX - Table of Contents

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APPENDIX - Existing Conditions	◊	a3-6
CHAPTER-SPECIFIC		
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APPENDIX - Housing	A3	a19-20
APPENDIX - Historic District	A4	a21-24
APPENDIX - Economic Impact	A5	a25-26

Left Image Citations

REPORT IMAGES & GRAPHICS

COVER:	AERIALS: © Dave Cleaveland/MaineImaging.com PANORAMICS: © Craig P. Snapp Graphics by Leonard / Lachman
Page i-2:	Aerial & GIS data by Town of Topsham Graphics by Leonard / Lachman
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Page 1:	Photograph by Leonard / Lachman Bowdoin Mill photograph, property of Maine Historic Preservation Commission (Originally included in Historic Resources Survey by Scott Hanson)
Page 2:	Photographs by Leonard / Lachman
Page 3:	Photographs #1-6, 9 by Town of Topsham staff Photograph #6 by Leonard / Lachman
Page 4:	Birdseye imagery: www.bing.com/maps Graphics by Leonard / Lachman
Page 6:	Photographs by Leonard / Lachman

REPORT IMAGES & GRAPHICS, CONTINUED

Page 15: Elm Street Utility Survey
GIS mapping by Town staff

Page 16: Elm Street Sewer District Survey
GIS mapping by Town staff

Page 20: Aerial photograph by
Graphics and inset photographs by Leonard / Lachman

Page 22: Photograph by Leonard / Lachman

Page 23: Elm Street photograph, dated 1887, property of Pejepscot Historical Society
http://www.mainememory.net

Appendix
Cover: AERIALS: © Dave Cleaveland/MaineImaging.com
PANORAMICS: © Craig P. Snapp
Graphics by Leonard / Lachman

SECTION REFERENCES:

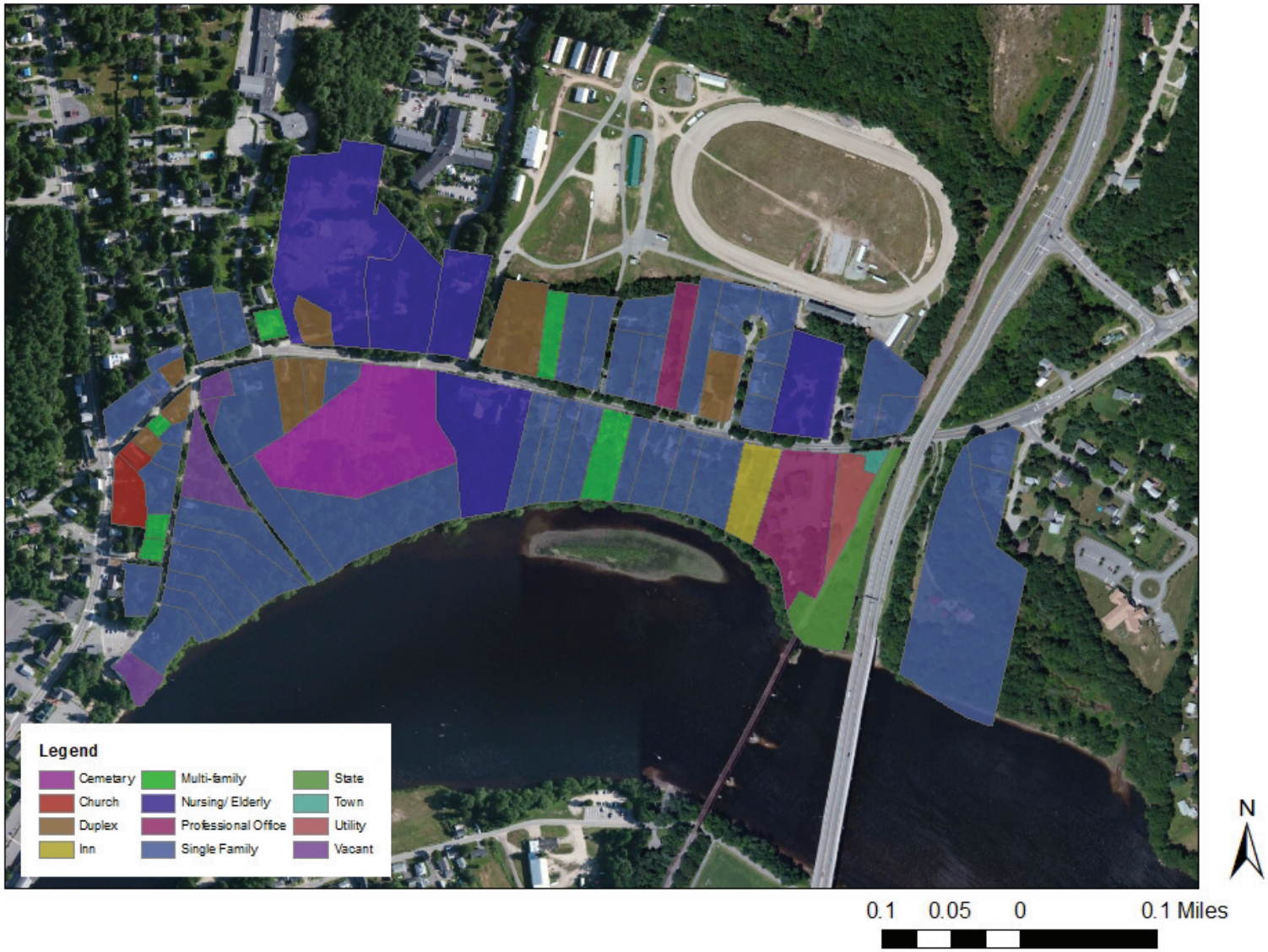
United States Census Bureau
Census Data Reports 2010
Compiled by Molly E. Sun

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION:

Land-Use map for Study Area, 2013
Elm Street Parcels Categorized by Type
GIS database, Town of Topsham

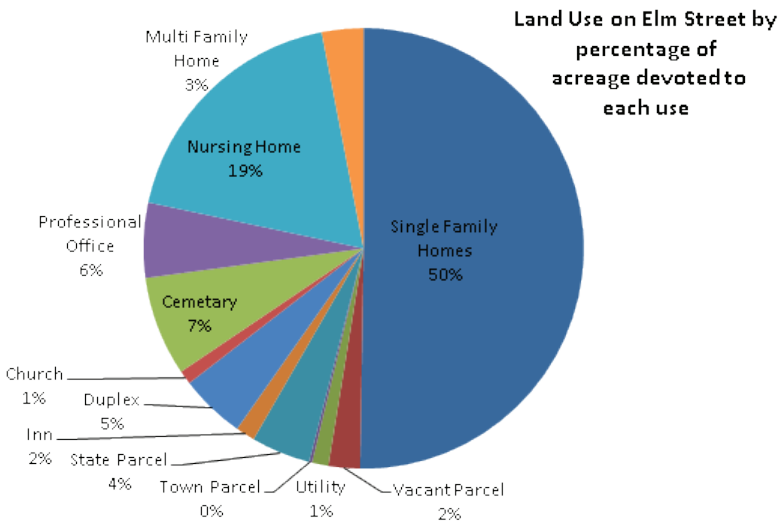
Census data for Study Area, 2010
Compiled by Molly E. Sun

Elm Street Parcels Categorized by Type



Study Area Census Data

LAND AREA SUMMARY



Total Acreage of Study Area – 75.173049

Acreage of Parcels containing Single Family Homes– 39.289923

Acreage of Vacant Parcels – 1.799977

Acreage of Utilities – 0.93991

Acreage of Town Parcels – 0.169995

Acreage of State Parcels – 3.4

Acreage of Parcels containing Inns – 1.1

Acreage of Parcels containing Duplexes – 3.751216

Acreage of Parcels containing Churches – 0.790014

Acreage of Parcels containing Cemeteries – 5.710009

Acreage of Parcels containing Professional Offices – 4.3

Acreage of Parcels containing Elderly/Nursing Homes -14.531933

Acreage of Parcels containing Multi Family Homes – 2.389991

Study Area Census Data, continued

ASSESSED VALUE

Median Assessed Value of Parcels in Study Area: 221,450

Mean Assessed Value of Parcels in Study Area: 310,396

Median Assessed Value of Parcels in Topsham: 114,300

Mean Assessed Value of Parcels in Topsham: 144,401

RESIDENCES

198 Housing Units on Elm Street

Median Gross Building Area – 4705 Square Feet

Mean Gross Building Area – 5005 Square Feet

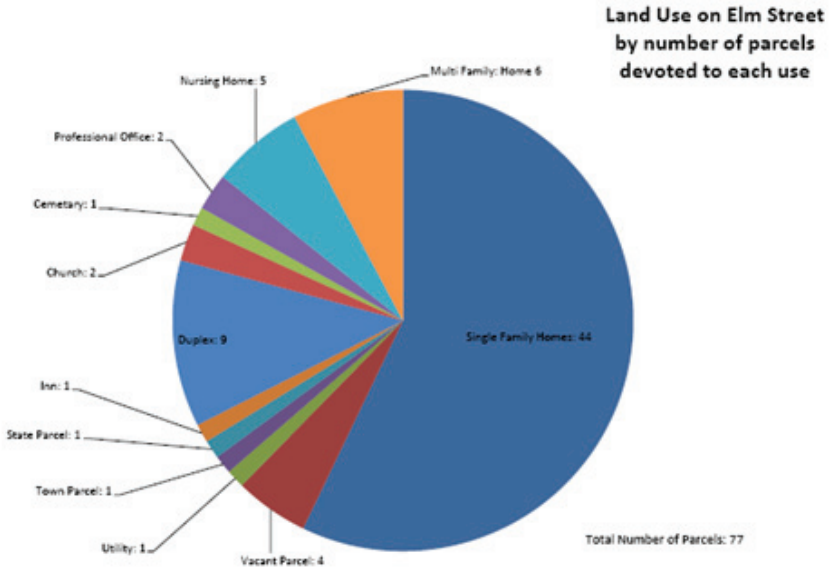
Median Living Area – 2305 Square Feet

Mean Living Area – 2462 Square Feet

Land Associated with Residential Use – 59.963063 Acres

Number of Parcels Associated with Residential Use – 64

(There are 77 Parcels total on Elm St)



OTHER STATS

Total Androscoggin River Frontage of the Area – 3660 feet

Elm Street Length – 3245 feet

Green Street length – 1152 feet

Total Length of Sidewalk on Elm Street – 3145 feet

SECTION REFERENCES:

Historic Resources Survey: Report & Resource Inventory List, 2010
Prepared by Scott Hanson

Lower Village Waterfront Access Study, Dec. 2011
Prepared by Wright-Pierce

Merrymeeting Trail Plan, May 2012
Prepared by Wright-Pierce

Riverfront Feasibility Study Draft, July 2013
Prepared by The Downtown *re*Vitalization Collaborative:
Lachman Architects + Planners / Regina Leonard RLA
With Rodney Lynch AICP / Landmark Corporation

Topsham Main Street Village Plan, 2007
Prepared by MRLD / Holt & Lachman Architects / Gorrill-Palmer / Sitelines

Town of Topsham Municipal Facilities Report, 2000
Prepared by Municipal Facilities Committee

Traffic Feasibility Study for Roundabout at Green / Main Streets, April 2013
Prepared by Gorrill-Palmer Consulting Engineers

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION:

Elm Street & Green Street Long-Range Project List, July 2013
Prepared by Town of Topsham staff

Waterfront Access Development Scenarios
Lower Village Waterfront Access Feasibility Study
Prepared by Wright-Pierce

Pedestrian / Bicycle Access Improvements Recommendations
Lower Village Waterfront Access Feasibility Study
Prepared by Wright-Pierce

Elm St. and Green St. Long Range Project List

2013-07-18

ROAD WORK	EST COST
Elm Street - grind & repave & sidewalks (25K)	175,000
Green Street - grind & repave	75,000
Elm Street culvert - rebuild	200,000
Elm Street culvert - assement & design	75,000
TOTAL	**525,000**

PUBLIC TRANSIT	EST COST
Explorer route extension - per year	100,000
Explorer initial capital costs	140,000
TOTAL	**240,000**

TOWN LANDING TRAIL	EST COST
Riverfront Trail - design & build (not including acquisition)	40,000
TOTAL	**40,000**

ANDROSCOGGIN BIKE PATH	EST COST
Phase 3 - local match (Merrymeeting Bridge to Community) 20% local match	400,000
TOTAL	**400,000**

MISC INFRASTRUCTURE	EST COST
Green Street sewer pump station relocation	800,000
TOTAL	**800,000**

LV WATERFRONT PARK & RIVERFRONT TRAIL	EST COST
Waterfront Park - design & build (not including acquisition)	250,000
TOTAL	**250,000**

GRAND TOTAL - all projects	**2,255,000**

Waterfront Access Development Scenarios

Development Scenario Considerations

General

The following diagrams represent potential development patterns for development of public waterfront access within and surrounding the Town's Green Street parcel. These scenarios are based on physical site constraints and opportunities and do not represent specific detailed design recommendations or opinions regarding the acquisition of land to accomplish the Town's goals. It is anticipated that those decisions will be made during the next phase of the project.

Key

Red Line = Property Lines

Blue Shading = 250 Foot Town Shoreland Zone

Red Shading = Delineated Wetlands

Yellow Shading – 25 Foot Regulatory Buffer

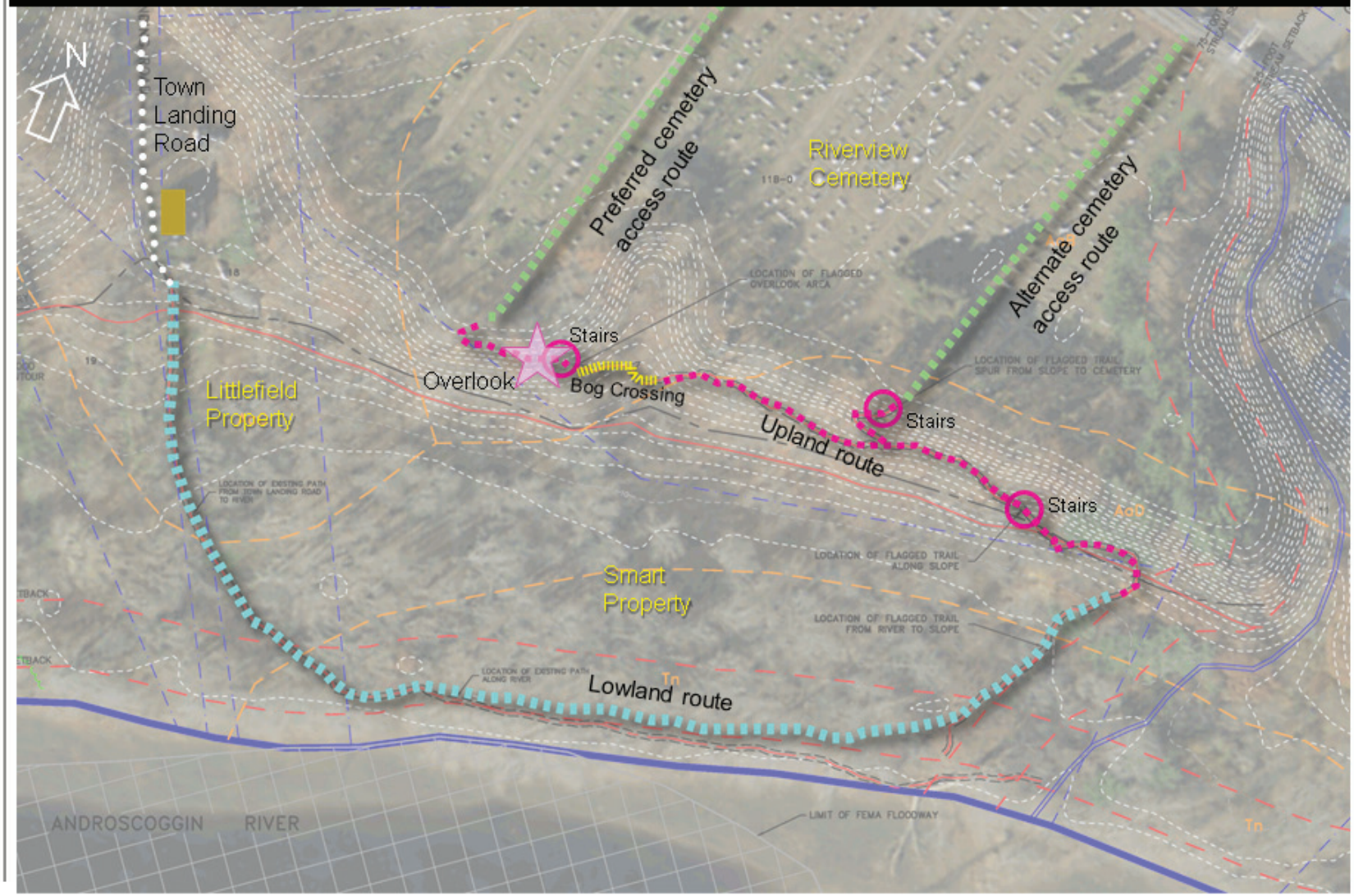
Magenta Line = 300 Foot Handy-Carry Access Path

Green Line = Travers Hand Carry-Access Path

Pedestrian / Bicycle Access Improvements Recommendations

Green = Existing Sidewalks / Blue = Planned Androscoggin Riverwalk Trail / Orange = Existing crosswalks / Red = Public Identified Crosswalk and Pedestrian/Bicycle Access Improvement areas

Preliminary Routes – Riverfront Trail



Downtown reVitalization Collaborative

SECTION REFERENCES:

Comprehensive Plan, 2005; Amended 2007
Adopted May 19, 2005; Amended May 24, 2007
Prepared by Topsham Comprehensive Plan Committee, 2005
Prepared by Topsham Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee,
Assisted by Planning Decisions, 2007

Route 24 Corridor Management Plan -
Harspwell, Brunswick, Topsham, Bowdoinham & Richmond, 2013
Prepared by Maine Council of Governments

Topsham Main Street Village Plan, 2007
Prepared by MRLD / Holt & Lachman Architects / Gorrill-Palmer / Sitelines

Transportation Plan - Topsham, Maine, Aug, 2005
Prepared by Gorrill-Palmer

Traffic Feasibility Study for Roundabout at Green / Main Streets, April 2013
Prepared by Gorrill-Palmer Consulting Engineers

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION:

Existing and Proposed Gateways
Topsham Main Street Village Plan
Prepared by MRLD et al.

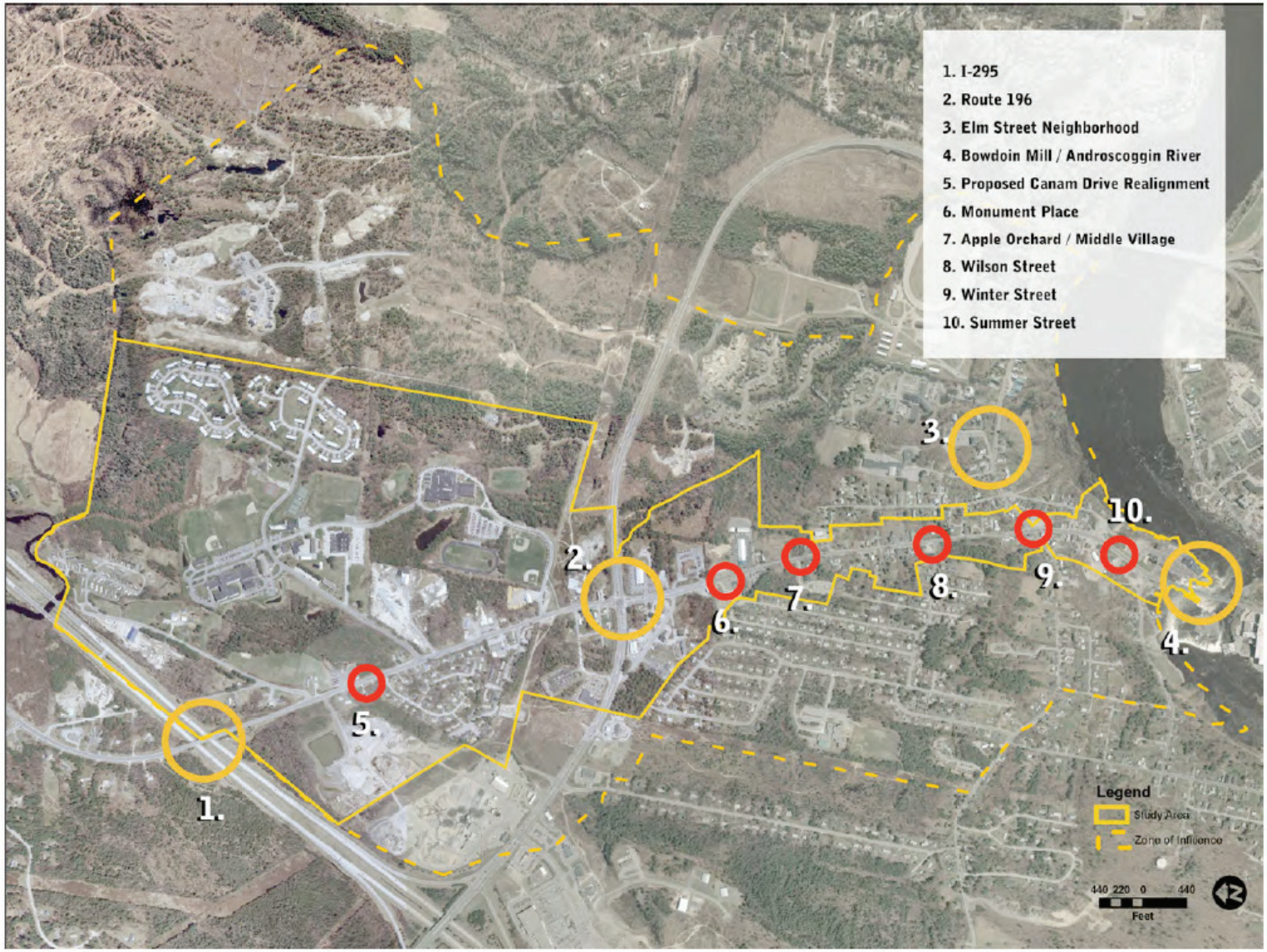
Traffic Improvement Recommendations
Transportation Plan - Topsham, 2005
Prepared by Gorrill-Palmer Consulting Engineers

Roundabout Concept Plan
Traffic Feasibility Study for Roundabout at Green / Main Streets, April 2013
Prepared by Gorrill-Palmer Consulting Engineers

Route 24 Recommendations
Route 24 Corridor Management Plan -
Harspwell, Brunswick, Topsham, Bowdoinham & Richmond, 2013
Prepared by Maine Council of Governments

Existing & Proposed Gateways

Figure 9: Major and Minor Gateways



Traffic Improvement Recommendations - South

Rev.	Date	Revision
-	-	-

Design: RLB	Date: DEC 2004
Draft: JF	Job No.: 974
Checked: PAH	Scale: 1"=500'±
File Name: 974-AERIAL-SKEWMP-CONCEPTS.DWG	

GP Gorrill-Palmer Consulting Engineers, Inc.
Traffic and Civil Engineering Services

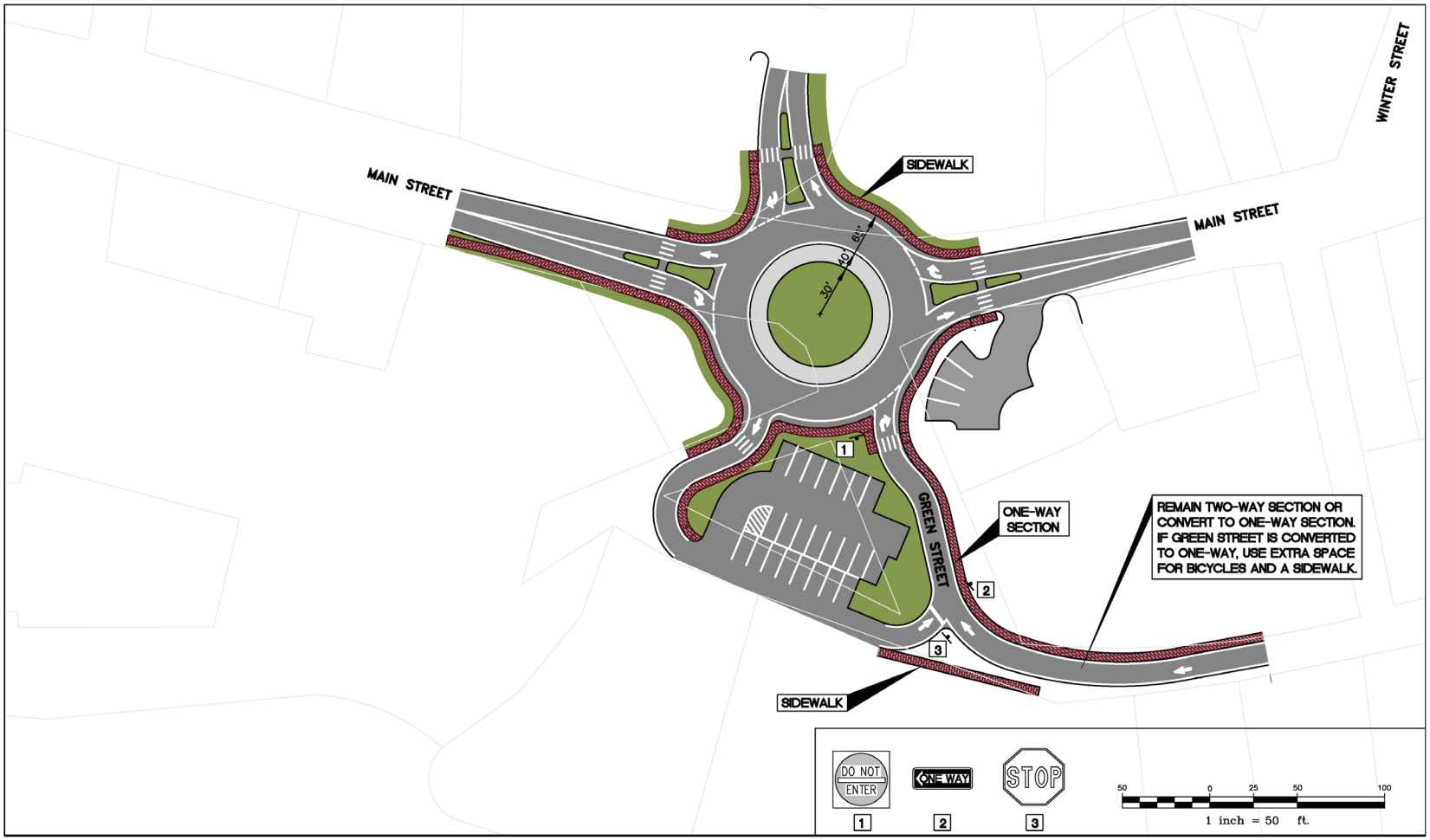
PO Box 1237
15 Shaker Road
Gray, ME 04039
207-657-6910
FAX: 207-657-6912
E-Mail: mailbox@gorrillpalmer.com

Drawing Name: OVERALL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN – SOUTH

Project: TOPSHAM TRANSPORTATION STUDY
TOPSHAM, MAINE

Figure No. 2

Concept Roundabout Plan



Rev.	Date	Revision
–	–	–

Design: RED	Date: DEC 2012
Draft: LAN	Job No.: 2724
Checked: TLG	Scale: 1"=50'
File Name: 2724_CONCEPT_C.dwg	

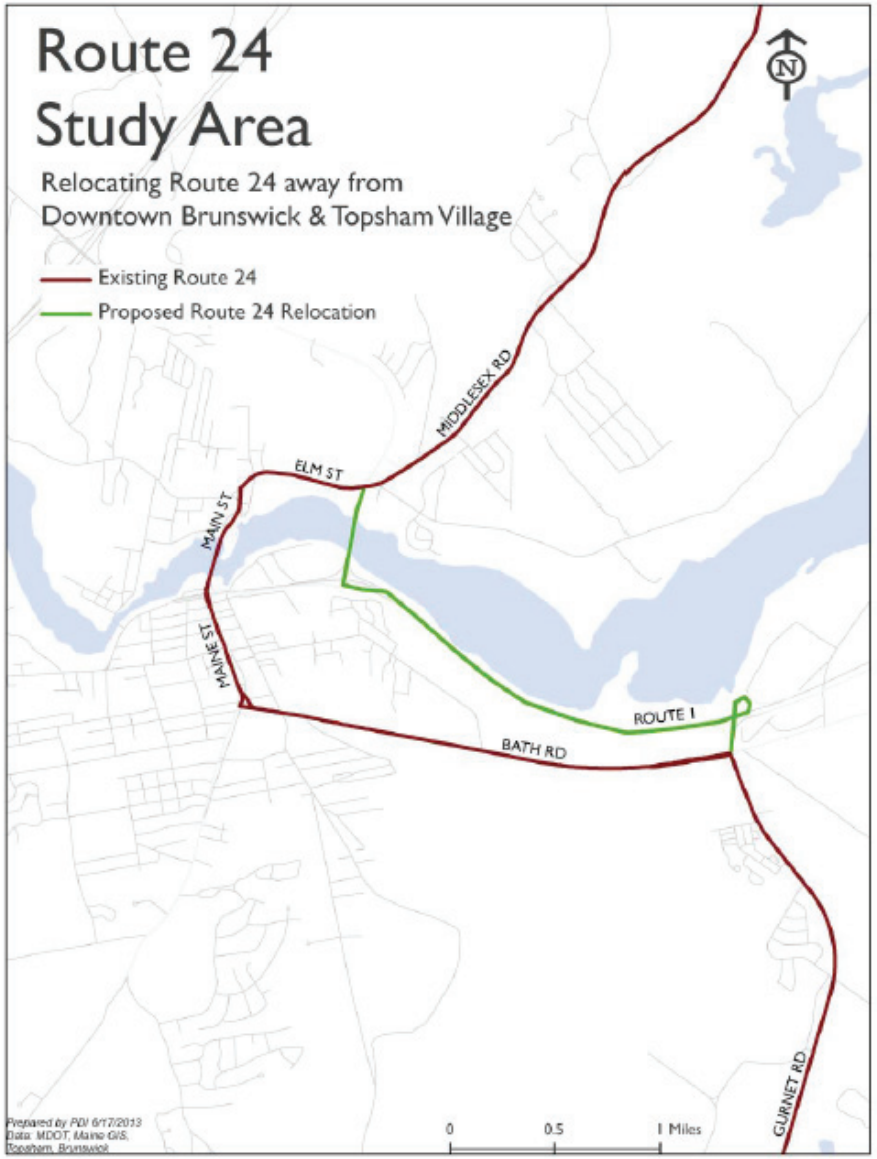
Gorrill–Palmer Consulting Engineers, Inc.
Engineering Excellence since 1998
PO Box 1237
15 Shaker Road
Gray, ME 04039
207–657–6910
FAX: 207–657–6912
E–Mail: mailbox@gorrillpalmer.com

Drawing Name: Conceptual Roundabout Plan

Project: ROUNDABOUT FEASIBILITY, TOPSHAM, MAINE

Figure No. C

Route 24 Recommendations



SECTION REFERENCES:

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Prepared by Topsham Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee,
Assisted by Planning Decisions, 2007

Historic Resources Survey: Report & Resource Inventory List, 2010
Prepared by Scott Hanson

Methodology in Determining the Designation of Contributing and
Non-contributing Resources, 2011
Prepared by Topsham Historic District Commission

Topsham Main Street Village Plan, 2007
Prepared by MRLD / Holt & Lachman Architects / Gorrill-Palmer / Sitelines

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION:

For more background information regarding these recommendations, please consult Section A, Housing, pp. 19-21 of the Updated Comprehensive Plan, 2007 as well as the Topsham Main Street Village Plan, pages 68-73.

SECTION REFERENCES:

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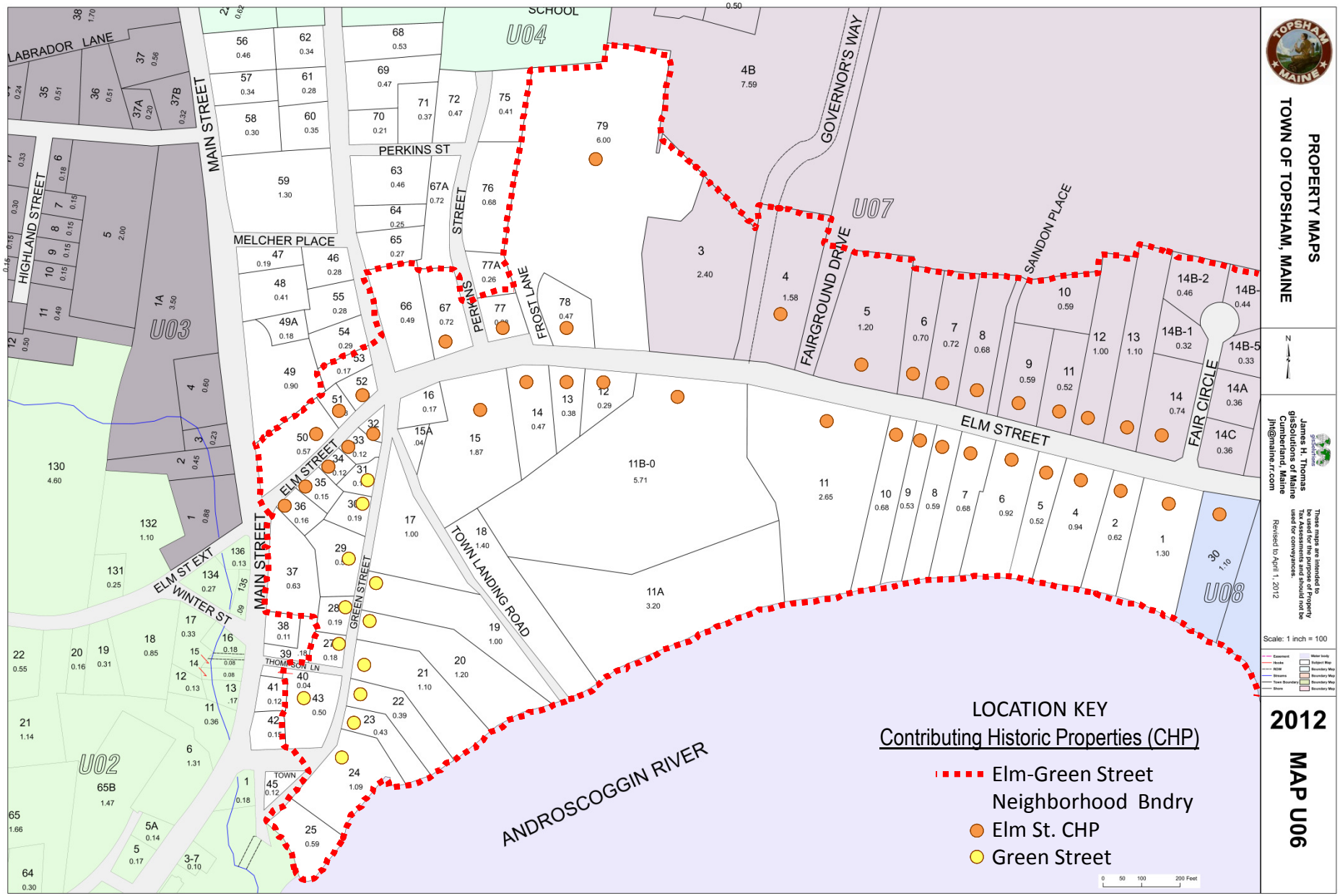
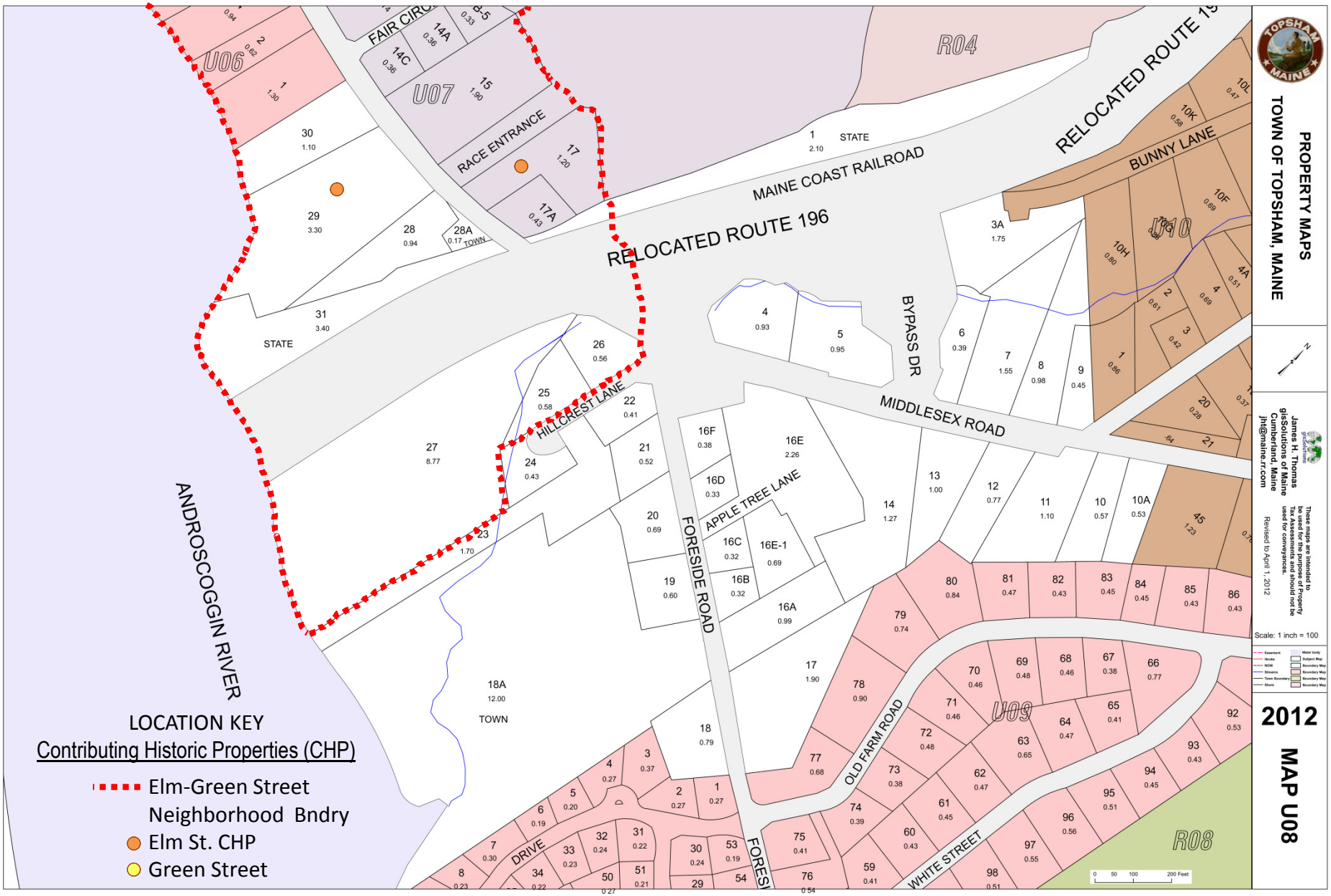
Topsham Main Street Village Plan, 2007
Prepared by MRLD / Holt & Lachman Architects / Gorrill-Palmer / Sitelines

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION:

Location Key: Contributing Historic Properties
Prepared by Lachman / Leonard
Based upon Historic Resources Survey by Scott Hanson

For more background information regarding these recommendations, please also consult Section E, Goals, Objectives & Strategies, pp. 33-35 of the Updated Comprehensive Plan, 2007.


PROPERTY MAPS
TOWN OF TOPSHAM, MAINE
2012
MAP U06
LOCATION KEY
Contributing Historic Properties (CHP)
Elm-Green Street Neighborhood Bndry
Elm St. CHP
Green Street
ANDROSCOGGIN RIVER
ELM STREET
MAIN STREET
GREEN STREET
PERKINS ST
PERKINS STREET
FROST LANE
GOVERNOR'S WAY
FAIRGROUND DRIVE
SAINDON PLACE
FAIR CIRCLE
TOWN LANDING ROAD
MELCHER PLACE
LABRADOR LANE
HIGHLAND STREET
ELM ST EXT
WINTER ST
THOMPSON LN
TOWN
SCHOOL
U02
U03
U04
U07
U08
Scale: 1 inch = 100
Revised to April 1, 2012
These maps are intended to be used for the purpose of Property Tax Assessments and should not be used for conveyances.
James H. Thomas
gisSolutions of Maine
Cumberland, Maine
jht@maine.rr.com


PROPERTY MAPS
TOWN OF TOPSHAM, MAINE
2012
MAP U08
Scale: 1 inch = 100
James H. Thomas
gisSolutions of Maine
Cumberland, Maine
jht@maine.rr.com
Revised to April 1, 2012
These maps are intended to be used for the purpose of Property Tax Assessments and should not be used for conveyance.
RELOCATED ROUTE 196
RELOCATED ROUTE 19
MAINE COAST RAILROAD
BYPASS DR
MIDDLESEX ROAD
BUNNY LANE
HILLCREST LANE
APPLE TREE LANE
FORESIDE ROAD
OLD FARM ROAD
WHITE STREET
RACE ENTRANCE
FAIR CIRC
ANDROSCOGGIN RIVER
U06
U07
U09
U10
R04
R08
STATE
TOWN
LOCATION KEY
Contributing Historic Properties (CHP)
Elm-Green Street Neighborhood Bndry
Elm St. CHP
Green Street

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Topsham Main Street Village Plan, 2007
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SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION:

For more background information regarding these recommendations, please consult Section B, The Local Economy, pp. 21-23 of the Updated Comprehensive Plan, 2007 as well as the Topsham Main Street Village Plan, pages 68-73. Also reference Action 15, Chapter 7 of the Implementation Plan, p.83 for a discussion of Downtown TIF District.