



## TOWN OF HARRISON, MAINE

### Downtown Revitalization Action Plan

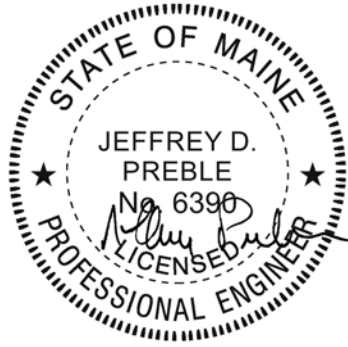
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# Downtown Revitalization Action Plan

## TOWN OF HARRISON, MAINE

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# Acknowledgements

This Downtown Revitalization Action Plan was developed for the Town of Harrison by Wright-Pierce with assistance from the Town's Economic Development Consultant Darryl Sterling. The project was supported by local funding. Key contributors to the Action plan include:

## Wright-Pierce Team

- Jeffrey Preble, PE, Regional Group Leader
- Kalle Maggio, PLA, Landscape Architect
- Christine Manderson, GIS Analyst

## Harrison Contract Grant Writer Community Development Consultant

- Darryl Sterling

## Town of Harrison Team

- Cass Newell, Town Manager
- Denise Dumont, Executive Assistant
- Andy Ward, Former Public Services Director
- Harrison Board of Selectmen

## Harrison Downtown Planning Committee

- Matthew Frank
- Wendy Gallant
- Traci Williams
- Brian Williams
- Patrick Bracken
- Jacqui Gray

The input from Harrison residents has proved extremely valuable in developing the Action Plan through participation in the public meetings and responding to the questionnaire. This Action Plan accurately represents the wishes and vision of the citizens of Harrison.

## Section 1 Project Goals

The Town of Harrison recognizes the need to reinvigorate areas of the downtown and began the process to develop a Downtown Revitalization Action Plan. This plan outlines the improvements within the downtown area over the next several years. The plan identifies a number of action items to be undertaken and assigns priorities to the items. The action items are organized into immediate items, short term, and long-term action items. Specific goals of the effort are outlined below.

### 1.1 Define the Downtown Area

The target area for the Downtown Revitalization Action Plan originally established the area from the Crystal Lake Park to the boat launch at Long Lake and includes the side streets from Front and School Streets extending over to High and Dawes Hill Road. At the initial public meeting the area was expanded to include the Farmer's Market at the Bear River, and Depot and Waterford Road. In addition, the area was extended to include Deertrees Road and the Deertrees Theater.

### 1.2 Engage the Public

Obtaining public input during the development of a downtown plan is essential to having a workable plan. A series of meetings have been established to gain the ideas of Harrison residents and present/refine the potential action items that come from the process. In addition to the public meetings held during the plan development, a questionnaire was developed and distributed to area residents over the town website and by having hard copies available at regularly visited points in the town. Distribution of the questionnaire was a great success and nearly 50 responses were received.



### 1.3 Program Elements

Initial meetings with Town staff identified several areas where potential improvements could be made within the downtown area. These included:

- Addressing ADA accessibility issues with existing sidewalks and handicap ramps.
- Enhancements to the public parks within the downtown area.
- Addressing parking concerns.
- Improving vehicle flow through the downtown and protecting pedestrian safety.
- Targeting the Front Street sidewalk and paving project as an initial step towards downtown improvements.
- Improving the walkability of the downtown area.
- Maintaining the village character within the downtown.
- Improve economic viability on a year-round basis.
- Improving lighting and nighttime visibility.
- Enhancing areas of the downtown to include historical elements, benches, plantings, and other features.

### 1.4 Snapshot of Harrison Village

#### 1.4.1 Assets

- Friendly village atmosphere
- Large lakes accessible by downtown
- Year-round recreational opportunities
- RADR Complex
- Active recreation department
- Scenic vistas
- Public access to outdoor recreation
- Welcoming community
- Public parks with public restrooms
- Active social media sites
- Proximity to area commercial centers
- Low crime rate
- Accessibility to major transportation routes
- Quiet agricultural community
- Sidewalks present throughout the downtown

#### 1.4.2 Weaknesses

- ADA accessibility issues with existing sidewalks and handicap ramps
- Lack of breakfast or cafes
- Lack of banking or credit unions
- Façade improvements needed
- Messy properties
- Road conditions
- Limited public utilities
- Affordable housing
- Senior housing
- Broadband service
- No pharmacy or health care business

- Need more dining options
- Public safety in park areas
- Lack of indoor recreational facilities
- Downtown amenities – benches, planters, etc.
- No public restrooms – with year-round access
- No public transportation
- Anchor employer
- Under-utilized spaces
- Way finding signage
- Community identity

### 1.4.3 Opportunities to Build From

Harrison has a good baseline to develop from. With Crystal and Long Lakes anchoring the downtown area, there are opportunities to enhance existing parks, improve walkability in the area, enhance the historic nature of the downtown, and establish a more diverse mix of businesses in the downtown while preserving the character of Harrison.

### 1.5 Final Plan

The final downtown Revitalization Plan presented to the town not only lists the various action items, but also identify potential sources of funding to implement the action items. Once the plan is approved by the State Economic Development office, the town will be able to seek Community Block Grant funds. The planning effort will also enable the town to partner with other state agencies such as the Maine Department of Transportation to plan and implement improvements.

The Downtown Revitalization Action plan is intended to be a living document that is updated on a regular basis to track progress and re-prioritize action items. Additional action items may be identified to address specific issues that may develop within the downtown area or to take advantage of funding opportunities that may arise.

## Section 2 Executive Summary

The purpose of developing the Downtown Revitalization Action Plan is to serve as an instrument for identifying and prioritizing revitalization goals in a defined downtown area. Such an area within a community is defined by the State of Maine as:

*“a cohesive core of commercial and mixed-use buildings, often interspersed with civic, religious, and residential buildings and public spaces, often arranged along a main street and intersecting side streets, walkable and served by public infrastructure.”*

Once an area has been designated and a set of publicly supported Downtown Revitalization Action plan goals are identified, the plan outlines prioritized recommendations for implementing the community’s vision. There are two primary means of implementing the Downtown Revitalization Action plan. One is by capital investment to support physical improvements (utilities, parking, sidewalks, streetscape elements, park improvements, etc.). The other is promotion of the vision for the Downtown through volunteerism, establishment of a committee to advocate for the implementation of the plan after adoption, continued public outreach, and adaptation of new and/or revised local policy measures in terms of regulatory ordinances.

Both of these means are achieved in a collaborative effort between the residents of Harrison, local municipal government, and private/non-profit stakeholders.

To utilize potential funding instruments like a Downtown TIF or other local, private, state, and federal funding programs, the downtown plan is being strategically developed in conformance with the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development’s “Downtown Plan Components” criteria which serve as the organizational format of this planning initiative and include:

- Definition of the downtown area
- Action Plan – Findings and Recommendations that are supportive of public involvement in development of the plan, to serve as a means for implementation of the plan going forward.
- Building inventory conditions assessment
- Inventory of retail / commercial space
- Employment opportunities
- Inventory of residential units
- Pedestrian / Bicycle infrastructure and accessibility
- Sidewalks and Crosswalks
- Infrastructure – Streetscape and Utilities
- Signage
- Parking Management
- Recreation
- Capital Improvement Program
- Information regarding zoning ordinance effects on the downtown area, and consistency of the Downtown Revitalization Plan with the Comprehensive Plan

Assessment of the current state of each of these plan components is expanded upon further in the following respective sections of the Downtown Revitalization Action Plan, culminating in specific recommendations for

implementing each component of the plan. The plan concludes with a prioritized action plan for downtown revitalization implementation strategies in a phased approach.



## 2.1 Retaining the Character of Harrison

It is evident that the residents of Harrison want to keep the rural character of the downtown while making improvements aimed at enhancing the rural and historic character of the area. Space is generally not available in the downtown area to support large retail developments. While enhancements are welcome, the town wishes to maintain its distinctive character and nature compared to the adjacent communities. The area lends itself to small family businesses that would support the recreational opportunities in Harrison.

## 2.2 Action Item Development

Based on the public's input an action item list has been compiled and presented in Section 15 of this report. The action items have been grouped into two categories – Immediate items to take place in year 1, and near-term items to be undertaken in years 2 through 4. Future items in year 5 and beyond are included in Appendix C of the report. The primary action items in the immediate category are focused around four main areas:

- **Downtown Transportation Planning Study** - Initiating a study of the Main Street corridor focused on pedestrian and traffic safety, pedestrian connectivity, parking, addressing ADA deficiencies, and improving traffic flow. This study will be partially funded by the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) through their Planning Partnership Initiative program. MDOT will assist the town in preparing a Request for Proposals. The study will take place over a 9-month period once a consultant is selected for the work. The expected cost range for a study of this nature is in the \$60,000 to \$80,000 range.
- **Parking Study** – Initiating a study of potential downtown off-street parking opportunities adjacent to the downtown area. The parking spaces in front of the post office on Main Street have been identified as a hazard area by residents. It is possible the transportation study noted above will recommend changes in this configuration to improve safety resulting in a net loss of space on Main Street. This study will look at the town owned parcels adjacent to the Olde Mill Tavern, Mill Park, and possibly the Town Office lot as potential areas to add parking adjacent to the downtown. Property boundaries will need to be identified for portions of this study. The study would generate concept plans illustrating how parking could be arranged in these key areas. The town should budget approximately \$15,000 to \$20,000 for this effort.
- **Façade Program** – Many communities have developed a façade program to help fund improvements to store fronts and businesses in their downtown areas. These programs often offer grants and low interest loans to help fund improvements to the fronts of buildings and businesses. Improvements the funding could be utilized for includes painting, window or door repairs or replacements, signage, awnings, lighting, masonry repairs, fire escapes improvements, and storefront restorations. Funding for these programs are often received through a tax increment financing district.
- **Downtown Parks Study** – Undertaking a study of potential improvements to parks within the downtown area footprint of Harrison. This would look at additional uses of park space, creating more connectivity between the public spaces and downtown, and various enhancements to the park spaces.

An important aspect of the items noted above is continued public involvement in the planning projects. There will be opportunities for additional public input as these studies are undertaken. More detailed concepts will be developed from the studies so construction costs associated with recommended improvements can be provided.

Other efforts important to managing and implementing the action items include continuing to engage the Downtown Advisory committee, identifying a key contact person in the town to coordinate the various efforts associated with the downtown plan and keeping the public informed of the progress on the plans.

Relocation of the town clock and bell into a central area of the village is a goal of the town. Concepts have been developed showing the bell and clock as central features of a re-vamped open space area adjacent to the post office. This area would retain the historic signpost and improve the crosswalks across Front and Main streets. Images of these concepts are contained in Appendix D.

In years 2 through 4, one of the main objectives will be to explore a public restroom in the area near the Long Lake boat ramp. The nearest restroom facility is a porta-potty that is provided and maintained by the owners of the Village Tie-Up. Preserving water quality is a high priority item for Harrison and maintaining a public restroom near the boat ramp will help preserve and protect the water quality of Long Lake.



### 2.3 Pedestrian Safety

One of the top priorities in the downtown area is to improve pedestrian safety. In several areas of the downtown the sidewalks and curbing have settled over time creating tripping hazards. While many of the crosswalks have detectable warning plates present, the landing areas for handicap accessibility do not meet current standards. The locations of crosswalks and possible addition of new crosswalks in key areas will be studied as part of the transportation study project. It was somewhat surprising that rapid flashing pedestrian crossing beacons were not ranked favorably in the community questionnaire results.

### 2.4 Pedestrian Connectivity

During the course of the public workshops, it became apparent that residents in the town want to improve the walkability of the downtown. Some key pedestrian connections are missing or could be improved as part of future downtown improvements. Some of these connections include:

- Connecting the Crystal Lake parking area to the Crystal Lake boat ramp.
- Creating a sidewalk loop from Waterford Road to Depot Street and back to Main Street.
- Improving sidewalk access from the Long Lake boat ramp to nearby businesses.
- Potentially adding a sidewalk on Lincoln Street.
- Connecting Mill Park to Main Street along the stream.
- Potential new sidewalks in the School, Smith Winslow, and High Street neighborhood.

## **2.5 Findings and Recommendations**

Each of the sections in the report contains findings and recommendations associated with each of the report sections. The findings have been developed based on feedback from the town questionnaire and public comments received at the various public workshop sessions. Input received at the workshops helped prioritize the recommendations into the action items presented in the report.

## **2.6 Funding Opportunities**

This report has been formatted in conformance with the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development. The report will be forwarded to them for review and once accepted by the Department, the town will be eligible to apply for funding under their various programs such as Community Development Block Grants, Public Infrastructure funds and the like. In addition, several discussions with the Maine Department of Transportation have been held to position the town for future funding with their various programs. The Front Street sidewalk project utilized the Municipal Partnership Initiative funding for 50% of the project costs. Other funding opportunities through MDOT include their Planning Partnership Initiative and the Village Partnership Initiative. Planning partnerships will fund up to 50% of future transportation studies and the village partnerships will fund a majority of the construction cost for future projects.

## Section 3 Downtown Harrison Village

### 3.1 Study Area

The Harrison downtown area has been defined based on input from residents and business owners, the Town’s Downtown Revitalization Committee, and Town staff during development of the Downtown Revitalization Action Plan. The area serves as a strategic means to focus revitalization goals within the developed cores of the community. Harrison and the surrounding communities contribute to viability of the downtown area.

Harrison’s downtown area has been defined as the area from the Crystal Lake boat launch to the Farmer’s market at the Bear River along Route 117, the Waterford Road and Depot Street corridor to the Harrison Food Bank, and Front Street to School Street and over to High Street. In addition, the section of town leading to Deertrees Theater is included. Although not connected to the immediate downtown area, the RADR Sports Complex is included as part of the defined area given its importance to the community and the events that are held at the complex.



The Harrison Village area comprises a total of 263 acres and 211 parcels of property. The village is at a walkable scale with easy access to Main Street from the local parks and adjacent side streets. Total distance from the Crystal Lake boat ramp to the Bear River bridge is approximately 4,100 feet or roughly 0.8 miles. In more urban areas the distance that most Americans will consider walking versus driving is up to 0.5 miles.



The RADR athletic complex is located on a 135 acre parcel off from Route 117. The RADR complex is located to the north and is approximately 3 miles from the Crystal Lake Park. Given its location people use vehicles to attend events at the complex.

The mix of land use development within Harrison Village consists of a mix of residential, business, public parks, and civic functions. Some of the properties have not been kept up and are run down in appearance.

### 3.2 Community Profile and Regional Context

Harrison is a community with a base population of approximately 2,447 (2020 census) that swells in the summer months with seasonal property owners. Harrison is situated between the Oxford Hills and Lakes Regions of Maine and provides decent access to the greater Portland area. The location and quiet rural setting draws potential workforces from greater distances that are interested in Harrison's quality of place and peaceful setting. Many workers are able to work remotely from their place of dwelling with the availability of high-speed broadband service. Harrison is situated perfectly to attract available workforce with a vibrant downtown area situated

between two lakes and offering walking and biking opportunities to reach the downtown businesses, food service, arts, and recreational resources.

Harrison's central location to the Oxford Hills and Lakes Region areas is a challenge to some while an attraction for others. There is a limited amount of local health care such as a pharmacy, no banks or credit unions, and lacks a local breakfast/lunch diner or café that offers sit down meals. Much of these types of services are available nearby in Norway, Bridgton, or Naples. There are high quality roadway connections to these communities via State Routes 117 and 35. Expansion of high-speed broadband connectivity is a high priority for the Town to continue to attract citizens to the area and establish new business opportunities.

Of primary importance to the community is continued support of its main assets with the two lakes bookending the downtown area and supporting continued recreational access. There are a few organizations focused on protecting these resources and one of the keys to continued success will be a continued level of coordination between these entities to work together in supporting economic growth and quality of life for the community.

### 3.3 Community Vision of the Village

For the downtown revitalization effort to be successful, it is essential that the entire community play an active role in supporting the vision for the downtown area and implementing the recommendations. During the development of the plan there was a significant amount of public participation during the public hearings and questionnaire responses sharing input on what they see as important elements of the downtown plan. The input gathered during the public hearing and questionnaire responses have been boiled down to and formulated into a community vision and goals for the downtown revitalization action plan.

#### 3.3.1 Vision

*"The Harrison Downtown Revitalization and Action Plan should preserve and support the Town of Harrison's friendly village character, history, and recreational opportunities on a year-round basis."*

#### 3.3.2 Goals

- Develop a Downtown Revitalization Action Plan that reflects the consensus of the community and provides specific achievable action items.
- Improve the walkability of the downtown area addressing ADA issues and establishing new sidewalk connections.
- Promote and preserve the historic character of the village area.
- Improve the appearance of the village encompassing building façade and streetscape elements.
- Support and promote a diverse economy.
- Improve vehicle and pedestrian safety throughout the downtown area.
- Create more opportunities for off-street parking, and trailer parking.
- Improve features and elements of the public park spaces within the downtown.
- Improve cellular and broadband service.

These consensus community goals serve as the basis for the recommendations in the following plan sections, and prioritization of the action plan. The goals established as part of this plan is only the beginning for the Town of Harrison. Successful downtown efforts are an ongoing process with constant communication, taking advantage of development opportunities and funding sources as they arise. The plan's goals should be reviewed and

adjusted/updated on a regular basis. Public, private and civic interests must continue to work together to achieve the goals of the action plan.

The findings of the public outreach efforts are included in Appendix B of the plan.

### 3.3.3 Findings

- Consensus for the Harrison Study Area was delineated as the area between the boat launches for Crystal Lake and Long Lake and includes the area west of the Long Lake boat launch to the Bear River.
- The Waterford Road and Depot Street area is included in the study and extends to the north to the Harrison Food bank building.
- On the south side of Main Street, the study area includes Smith, Winslow, and High Street to the School Street intersection.
- Given its importance to cultural and arts entertainment the Deertrees Road area is included to Deertrees Theater.
- While not considered a part of the downtown study area the RADR athletic complex is an important asset in the community and offers considerable recreational opportunities.
- There is a mix of residential, commercial, and civic development within the downtown area.
- The history of the Harrison Downtown area is evidenced by the older, well-kept colonial style houses.

### 3.3.4 Recommendations

- A study area needs to be defined in the Downtown Revitalization Action Plan for State approval and subsequently for potential financial support. The study area can be fluid and adjusted over time as the need demands.
- Continue to seek public input throughout the implementation phase of the action plan.
- Evaluate and update the Downtown Revitalization Action Plan goals on an annual or biannual basis.
- Support a diverse pattern of development and activities in the downtown area.
- Establish and invest in an active ongoing downtown organization that represents the interests of the community. Many Maine communities have been successful through collaboration with the Maine Development Foundation's Maine Downtown Center and the nationally recognized Main Street approach. Other opportunities could include coordinated efforts with the Harrison Climate Action group, the local lakes region watershed protection group, and other local organizations.
- Promote a collaborative approach through good communications with town appointed committees, town staff, selectmen, downtown business owners, key stakeholders, and the community at large to support efforts to implement the goals of the plan.

The following is an overview of utilizing the Main Street approach which has had demonstrated success for a variety of communities throughout the State with similar revitalization goals.

## Utilizing the Main Street Four-Point Approach

Many communities in Maine and other states have employed the "Main Street Approach" as a model for organization which has proven successful for downtown revitalization. In Maine, communities may formally apply to become a Main Street Maine community (as a full or "Network" member), to receive support and assistance from the Maine Downtown Center and increase their scoring on many of Maine's downtown grants. However, it is not a requirement to be a Main Street community to utilize the Main Street Approach, and many downtowns can benefit from applying this model on their own. For Harrison, there are a few key considerations under each of the Four Points that the community should keep in mind as it works to build and support a sustainable downtown.

### The Main Street Four-Point Approach (From Main Street Maine)

The four points of the Main Street approach work together to build a sustainable and complete Community revitalization effort.

- **Organization** involves getting everyone working toward the same goal and assembling the appropriate human and financial resources to implement a Main Street revitalization program. A governing board and standing committees make up the fundamental organizational structure of the volunteer driven program. Volunteers are coordinated and supported by a paid program director as well. This structure not only divides the workload and clearly delineates responsibilities, but also builds consensus and cooperation among the various stakeholders.
- **Promotion** sells a positive image of the commercial district and encourages consumers and investors to live, work, shop, play and invest in the Main Street District. By marketing a district's unique characteristics to residents, investors, business owners, and visitors, an effective promotional strategy forges a positive image through advertising, retail volunteers. These activities improve consumer and investor confidence in the district and encourage commercial activity and investment in the area.
- **Design** means getting Main Street into top physical condition. Capitalizing on its best assets, such as historic buildings and pedestrian orientated streets. An inviting atmosphere, created through attractive window displays, parking areas, building improvements, street furniture, signs, streetlights, sidewalks, and landscaping conveys a positive visual message about the commercial district and what it has to offer. Design activities also include instilling good maintenance practices, enhancing the physical appearance of the district by rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging appropriate new construction, developing sensitive design management systems, and long-term planning.
- **Economic Restructuring** strengthens a community's existing economic assets while expanding and diversifying the economic base. The Main Street program helps sharpen the competitiveness of existing business owners and recruits compatible new businesses and new economic uses to build a commercial district that responds to today's consumers' needs. Converting unused or underused commercial space into economically productive property also helps boost the profitability of the district.

### Community Heart and Soul Approach

- Resident driven process engages entire population of a town in identifying what they love most about their community.

## Section 4 Zoning and Ordinances/Consistency with Comprehensive Plan

### 4.1 Comprehensive Plan

Harrison's Comprehensive Plan was developed in 2008. The Plan contains inventories and analysis of several topics along with goal and policies and implementation sections. The comprehensive plan recognizes the importance of several natural features with the town boundaries including the Bear River Aquifer, 100-year flood zones, natural and wetland areas, scenic resources, and shorelands. The full comprehensive plan can be found on the Town's website:

[Town of Harrison, Maine Comprehensive Plan](#)

An important element contained in the comprehensive plan is the Historical Resources that are present in Harrison. Several of these are located within the downtown area including Deertrees Theater, The Caswell Public Library, Lakeside Grange, and The Block Building.

Other ordinances and zoning maps can be found on the Town's website:

[Town of Harrison, Maine Ordinances](#)

### 4.2 Zoning and Ordinances

The study area for Harrison includes several defined zoning districts. These include Limited Commercial, Limited Residential, and Bear River Aquifer District A. The Stream Protection Zone is also along the shore of the Bear River at the westerly limits of the study area. Definitions for the Limited Commercial and Limited Residential Districts are contained in the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance.

Limited Commercial is defined as those areas established to provide locations for the traditional retail and service needs of the local community. The scale of development in these areas is intended to be in keeping with the existing residential rural development in these areas.

Limited Residential is defined as those areas suitable for residential and recreational development.

Allowable uses within the Limited Commercial District include:

- Single Family residences
- Grocery and general store
- Restaurants (excluding drive-in/through restaurants)
- Inns/bed and breakfast establishments
- Retail service establishments
- Professional or business offices
- Churches, schools, municipal facilities and public utilities
- Low intensity commercial uses and employing less than 12 employees.

### 4.3 Findings

- The Comprehensive Plan rejected by State when submitted in 2008
- The downtown area encompasses four zoning districts
- There are no stand-alone ordinances for Historic Districts or Places, and signage.
- Medical marijuana dispensaries are not allowed
- Fireworks are not permitted to be sold in the town.

### 4.4 Recommendations

- The Town should continue to update its ordinances pursuant to and consistent with the comprehensive plan.
- After adoption of the Downtown Revitalization Action Plan, the comprehensive plan should be updated to reference the planning initiative to support the community's vision for the downtown.
- Consider adoption of Form Based Codes to address architectural character for new, non-residential development and conversion from residential to non-residential uses within the downtown. The State of Maine's Municipal Planning Assistance Program has good reference material for how such codes may best be applied. This recommendation is supported in the Town's current Comprehensive Plan.

[http://www.maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning/technical/form\\_based\\_codes.shtml](http://www.maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning/technical/form_based_codes.shtml)

- Consider making mixed use development a standard for ordinance zones regulating the Harrison downtown area. Many communities in Maine have implemented such standards including the below reference to Freeport as an example. It has been demonstrated by subsequent development in these communities that the residential units required above commercial first floor space have been well occupied and have been a benefit to downtown revitalization for the community, and to the private developer alike.

[http://www.freeportmaine.com/page.php?page\\_id=103&title=Ordinances%20&%20Codes](http://www.freeportmaine.com/page.php?page_id=103&title=Ordinances%20&%20Codes)

- Consider ordinance standards versus guidelines when amending / developing design related regulations impacting the downtown area. There are many pros and cons to this issue regarding regulations requirements versus suggested guidelines that communities throughout Maine have considered on a variety of levels. Peer advice can often be productively received from other municipalities.
- The Town should continue to review their ordinances on an annual basis and make changes proactively to address potential new development trends that may benefit or threaten the quality of place within the villages.

## Section 5 Buildings Inventory and Conditions Assessment

The buildings throughout the downtown study area are predominately residential houses with a few business and commercial buildings mixed in. Civic buildings within the downtown area include the Church, Post office, Grange Hall, Library, and Town Office. Many of the houses are older style, 2-story, well-kept houses with stone or granite foundations. Granite retaining walls are present with several of the buildings giving the downtown its historic feel. In the Depot Street and Waterford Road area the housing stock is newer and primarily single-story units. Very few houses are listed for sale within the planning area.

A few of the structures are in need of cleanup or façade improvements.

### 5.1 Block Building

In the heart of the downtown, the main building is the Block Building. The block building has several owners in a condominium type arrangement. Several different businesses are located in the building, primarily on the ground floor. Some of the upper floor space is utilized for private offices. As with many buildings of this vintage the stairway to the upper floors is very steep and not in compliance with current standards. A common issue with multi-story downtown buildings is the lack of adequate access to the upper floors to allow full utilization of those spaces. This is typically seen as lost opportunities for housing units in many of Maine's downtowns. Another issue with having multiple owners to a building is determining the responsibility of the common area maintenance,



upkeep, and façade improvements. Depending on the ownership arrangement, a traditional method to ensuring a condominium is properly maintained is establishing either a Condominium Owners' Association (COA) or Property Owners' Association (POA). Members of a COA can expect to pay a fee to assist with basic maintenance, repairs,

and improvements to the building and common areas. A POA can oversee both commercial and residential building(s) in a historic district or an entire town. Once a COA or POA is established, The Block Building can be managed and maintained accordingly and may be eligible for state or federal grant for things like façade improvements. Given the historical significance of the Block building, it may be advantageous for the COA or POA to apply for the National Register of Historic Places to which would support the organization in how to manage and elicit funding for upgrades such as façade improvements.

### 5.1.1 Town Clock

The tower section of the Block Building houses the town clock. The bell in the tower is approaching its 100-year anniversary. The clock itself is in immaculate condition given its age. Unfortunately, the bell and clock mechanism are shielded from public view and located in the confined spaces of the tower. Access for maintenance of the clock mechanism is difficult at best.

The bell was manufactured by McShane Bell Foundry in Baltimore Maryland in 1923. The McShane Foundry was established in 1856 and still produces bells to this day.



### 5.1.2 Grange Building

The Grange building is situated along the waterfront of Long Lake at the corner of Lincoln and Main Streets. Lakeside Grange No. 63 was founded in 1874 and the grange building constructed in 1905. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



### 5.1.3 The Caswell Building

The former Caswell Public Library is located at 42 Main Street, within the Harrison Downtown Limited Commercial District. Considered one of the most architecturally distinct historical buildings, it was built between 1908-1909 by a local architect, John Proctor. The library was named after its benefactor, Daniel Caswell, was operating as a library until 2004 and at the time of this action plan, it is presently vacant. This single-story cobblestone building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



## 5.2 Historic Character

Harrison’s village area has numerous older colonial homes and a couple of structures on the National Historic Register. Many of the homes and businesses are constructed on stone or granite foundations. Granite curbing is located throughout the downtown and many yards have granite retaining walls. Structures on the National Historic Register include the Caswell Conservancy Building, lakeside Grange, and the Deertrees Theater. The Lakeside Grange Building was constructed in 1905 and notably survived a 1907 fire that destroyed much of the town center. The church at the School and Front Street intersection was constructed in 1830 and is now renovated into an Airbnb space. Given the number of buildings and properties that have historic significance, the town may want to consider establishing a Historic Overlay District to help maintain and preserve the historic character. Historic Overlay Districts can be established with the support of the [Maine Historic Preservation Commission](#) which has

plethora of local preservation resources such as guidelines, planning, procedures, and boiler plate laws and regulations that can be adopted by the municipalities.



## Section 6 Inventory of Retail/Commercial Space

Harrison is unique in that much of the defined downtown study area is primarily residential with a few retail and commercial spaces mixed in. The prominent commercial space within the downtown area is the block building with its several tenants.

### 6.1 Findings

- The town of Harrison does not keep a database of currently available retail/commercial space in the village area.
- Public input has indicated that there is a demand for a local sit-down breakfast or café establishment, a bank or credit union, and a pharmacy or local health care store such as a CVS or Walgreens. Financial institutions and health care retail stores are located largely based on the area population. Harrison's population and proximity to the Bridgton, Naples, and Norway shopping areas would make it unlikely to attract such businesses, especially without workforce housing options. On-line shopping trends have changed dramatically over the past few years with a greater dependence on on-line ordering and mail order delivery.
- The block building's commercial spaces are divided up in a condominium type arrangement with several owners. The building also contains one of the town's great assets with the clock and bell which will be 100-years old in 2023.

### 6.2 Recommendations

- Establish, maintain, and update a current database of available commercial/retail space for marketing and promotional efforts aimed at potential developers.
- Utilize available funding sources and state and federal programs to make infrastructure improvements and assist private businesses supporting Downtown Revitalization Action Plan goals. The town should consider adopting zoning ordinance guidelines/standards to ensure new development is in line with the historic and rural character of the village area.
- The Town should make infrastructure investments in terms of off-street parking, signage to direct people to the parking areas, streetscape, and utility improvements in collaboration with state and federal funding opportunities, along with new development proposals.



## Section 7 Employment Opportunities

With Harrison being a primarily residential community, the importance of high-speed internet is critical for creating opportunities to work remotely and take advantage of Harrison's quality of life. Many year-round homes have been established along the shores of Long Lake and Crystal Lake which offer excellent living and remote working spaces. In addition, with plenty of areas offering views of the western mountains, the opportunity to work remotely from Harrison should be promoted and increasing high speed internet throughout these areas is vitally important.

### 7.1 Findings

- Harrison offers a unique opportunity to take advantage of its natural environment to allow residents to connect to their workplaces remotely. This can lead to an increase in diversity of workplace opportunities on a year-round basis. With two lakes within its downtown area, the potential to offer increased recreational opportunities is significant.
- National trends note increasing opportunities to work from “anywhere” and the desire to move to downtown's where people can live, work, and play is growing.
- The camps along Long Lake offer many seasonal opportunities for seasonal employment.
- Diversification of the downtown by encouraging new antique shops, cafes, and other businesses can lead to increased employment opportunities.
- 130 approximate home-based businesses

### 7.2 Recommendations

- Provide financial and technical assistance and support for business development through various avenues such as a loan/grant program, marketing and branding, to assist with recruitment of additional private investment.
- Establish a downtown Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District to help fund future downtown improvement projects.
- Utilization of marketing tools such as social networking, examples of successes from other Maine communities, local community programs, Oxford Hills Chamber of Commerce to coordinate promotion of Harrison village.
- Expand on opportunities to promote diversity of professional career development at the high school level and at potential post-graduate facilities such as technology incubators for manufacturing and technology-based professions, and for emerging expanding business opportunities related outdoor recreation / eco-tourism and more global internet-based services.
- Investment in infrastructure such as high-speed broadband to support an increasing technology-based economy.
- More meaningful information regarding potential economic development ideas for unique regions such as Harrison's may best be informed by what other comparable efforts are currently taking place in Maine such as in the Moosehead Lake Region: <http://mooseheadlakeedc.com/>
- Another important social trend to consider is that the federal government is becoming less and less of the “Calvary” that supports all economies and that Maine as a “city state” is in similar decline of support for all local economies. It is increasingly common for towns and smaller economic regions such as the area that comprises the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) to provide, policy, personnel resources and financial support for their own economic development initiatives.

## Section 8 Inventory of Residential Units

### 8.1 Findings

- A majority of the housing units in the downtown area and throughout the town are single family homes with several seasonal homes and cabins along the shores of Crystal and Long Lake.
- There is limited available workforce housing (rental units and apartments) or affordable housing.
- A number of homes are available for rent on websites such as Airbnb, and VRBO which are lightly regulated home-sharing sites.
- There is general support for creating low income and work force housing opportunities within Harrison.
- There is a studio apartment in the upper level of block building.

### 8.2 Recommendations

- Examine ordinance standards for mixed use development such that minimal residential unit square foot requirements are large enough to encourage alternative levels of housing to the predominant stock of current rental units.
- Involve Maine State Housing Authority, the Maine Real-Estate Development Association (MEREDA) and private housing developers that have access to New Market Tax Credits and other capital funding sources in support of workforce housing.
- Maintain a database of unoccupied housing, for advertisement by the Town or a supporting downtown organization such as a Main Street Program to new residents / seasonal work force populations interested in Harrison.
- Consider zoning ordinance updates that allow lower square footage requirements for residential units (Apartments, multi-families, in-law apartments, tiny houses, Airbnb's) to encourage a greater diversity of housing opportunities for young families, seasonal work force, seniors and visitors alike.



## Section 9 Pedestrian/Bicycle Infrastructure and Accessibility

The Harrison village area has the beginning of a walkable downtown that connects Crystal and Long Lake. With some extensions and new walkway connections, a pedestrian friendly sidewalk system would be a major benefit to the downtown. Existing concrete sidewalks with granite curbing exist from the park at Crystal Lake to Cornshop Road. Outside of the Main Street corridor the sidewalk system becomes sparse.

### 9.1 Findings

- The sidewalk from the Library to School Street is in poor condition and reconstructed in 2023.
- Safe pedestrian access from the Long Lake boat ramp to the businesses along the shoreline is poorly configured.
- There is support for creating new sidewalks along Lincoln Street, Depot Street and Waterford Road. The Lincoln Street sidewalk would require making Lincoln a one-way street. Sidewalk on each side of Main Street has also been mentioned.
- Many sections of the existing sidewalk are in fair to poor condition and many of the handicap ramps are not in compliance with current American Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.
- There is limited support for pedestrian safety elements within the downtown area such as rapid flashing beacons, or curbed bump outs.
- There are no dedicated bike lanes or off-road paved paths in the village area.
- A trail connection from Mill Park to Main Street is favored by many in the community.
- Improvements related to pedestrian safety were recognized as one of the highest priorities for the downtown based on public input received during this downtown revitalization planning process.

### 9.2 Recommendations

- Continue to implement pedestrian improvements in a phases approach that is affordable within the Town's capital improvement plan.
- Consider making Lincoln Street one-way vehicular travel lane and construction of a sidewalk that offers views of Long Lake.
- Seek funding opportunities to partner with agencies such as the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) to address pedestrian safety deficiencies within the downtown area.
- Continue to evaluate strategic pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements in association with other downtown revitalization improvements, including roadway, streetscape and utility infrastructure improvements, as well as private development projects so that bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure does not have to be reconstructed "after the fact" since these other initiatives often involve an underground infrastructure component within the sidewalk and bike lane areas.
- Examine current street and sidewalk ordinances during their update process to consider requirement of individual commercial property owners maintain sidewalks in a safe manner immediately in front of their property.
- Continue to coordinate with MDOT to ensure that bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvement projects are consistent with MDOT policies and regulations.
- Consider pedestrian and bicycle improvements in coordination with other vehicular infrastructure and streetscape elements (street trees, period lighting, benches) from a complete streets approach.

- Consider creating a historic walking map of the downtown area. The City of Sanford has developed historic walking paths for both Sanford and Springvale villages.



## Section 10 Infrastructure – Streetscape and Utilities

Downtown Harrison has the basic infrastructure in place that can be enhanced to create a vibrant and scenic downtown village area. One of the big obstacles to development with the downtown district is the lack of public sewer system. Public water is available and maintained by the Harrison Water District. Sewer disposal is accomplished through private systems with a combined disposal field located on Harrison Heights.

### 10.1 Findings

- State Routes 117 and 35 are owned and maintained by the MDOT.
- Existing streets within the village area are able to accommodate two-way traffic.
- Street lighting is provided by cobra head style lighting mounted on existing utility poles.
- Overhead utilities are prevalent throughout the downtown area.
- The village area is served by public water and private wastewater disposal systems.
- There are opportunities to introduce period style street lighting throughout the downtown.
- There are minimal streetscape elements along Main Street and the side streets.
- The greenspace at the intersection of Route 35 and 117 offers an opportunity to provide historical elements to document Harrison’s story.
- Broadband and cellular service is limited in the area. Current initiatives are being developed to improve overall broadband availability throughout the town.
- Public wifi is available at the Town Office, Crystal Lake Park, and at the Harrison Food bank.
- Front Street is scheduled for improvements to the sidewalk and road surface in the spring of 2023. This project consists of reconstructing the sidewalk to School Street and milling and paving Front Street.
- In an increasingly globally connected economy and social world, the internet is fast becoming the “brain” of civilization and those that are not connected have an increasingly difficult time developing business opportunities and being able to maintain a quality of living in remote areas in particular. Where broadband is present, the creative economy is flourishing and those that choose to live work and play, as well as those that desire to “age in place” for a longer period of time, due to availability of access to the medical field via opportunities like telemedicine services can do so with increasing flexibility.

### 10.2 Recommendations

- Expand broadband, cell service, and Wi-Fi service at public facilities
- Define a streetscape standard for the Harrison downtown area for items such as sidewalks, curbing, additional sidewalks, site lighting, amenities, signage and crosswalks.
- Raise capital funds for streetscape improvements and consider amending ordinances to require new development to meet these standards in both villages.
- Continue to maintain and upgrade public water system in the downtown area.
- Determine the feasibility of creating a central wastewater treatment facility for the downtown and surrounding area. Not only will this enhance growth potential within the area but will help protect water quality in Crystal and Long lakes.
- Coordinate with MDOT regarding highway improvements to Routes 117 and 35 in association with MDOT’s Village Partnership program.



## Section 11 Signage

### 11.1 Findings

- Signage in a downtown area serves several purposes. Signage provides a source of information for visitors in terms of wayfinding and education, for businesses for advertisement, for vehicular and pedestrian safety, and promotion of the community's historic character and civic interests.
- The tall directional sign at the center of the village is an iconic sign that provides direction to various camps and attractions in the area.
- There is a lack of informational placards in town depicting the town's history and geological features.
- One of the missing sign components associated with the downtown is the lack of gateway and wayfinding signage dedicated to the village.

### 11.2 Recommendations

- Consider creating a standalone sign ordinance when updating the overall zoning ordinances to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and newly adopted Downtown Revitalization Plan.
- Develop consistent Wayfinding Signage within the village that is distinct from other present regional signage programs. This should be initiated by an overall village Wayfinding Signage Master Plan and will need to be coordinated with MaineDOT for signs within their right of ways (Routes 35 and 117).
- In addition to the signs that promote the downtown at the municipal boundaries, additional gateway signage at the village borders along Routes 35 and 117 as you approach the village areas are recommended.
- Improve wayfinding signage guiding pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular visitors to village amenities, adjacent neighborhoods, regional trail systems, cultural resources.
- Coordinate with MaineDOT to implement pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements. This signage should meet the objectives of AASHTO and ADA federal safety objects and be consistently applied throughout the downtown.
- Consider promotional signage banners to improve the streetscape experience along Main Street.



## Section 12 Parking

### 12.1 Findings

- Availability of parking along Main Street was noted frequently through the public input process. Main trouble areas identified include the diagonal parking in front of the post office, and parking impeding the vision at the Harrison Heights intersection.
- Parking for boat and snowmobile trailers is limited at the Long Lake boat launch.
- Parking for boat trailers at the Crystal Lake Boat launch is limited to just a few spaces but is likely sufficient.
- Off Street parking is available at the town office and adjacent to the Olde Mill Tavern.
- Expanded off street parking is feasible within Mill Park.
- The town zoning and site plan ordinances define parking needs for new developments. These ordinances appear adequate for the town's current needs.
- The gravel parking lot at Crystal Lake Park is inefficient in parking capacity use versus paved parking lots with clearly marked parking spaces and access aisles.
- Limited parking is available at the Farmer's market area adjacent to the Bear River.

### 12.2 Recommendations

- Improve directional wayfinding signage to parking areas within walking distance of the villages.
- Improve Main Street streetscape infrastructure, sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, to create a greater sense of security and aesthetic interest for pedestrian traffic traveling to and from off-street parking facilities and the surrounding village areas.
- Consider a parking study master plan as a long-term strategy for downtown revitalization after initial phased plan improvements are made, which may, along with changes in the economy and social trends, result in different parking demands than what exists currently.
- Consider developing better defined parking area within the Mill Park footprint.
- Coordinate with businesses regarding employee policies / require that employees have designated parking space beyond the "prime" spaces which are most visible and convenient for visitors to the downtown.



## Section 13 Recreation/Public Spaces

Harrison is unique in having two lakes and five public spaces within its downtown footprint. These spaces offer an abundance of recreational opportunities within the downtown. With some investment in the existing public spaces these areas can become the focal points for drawing new business ventures and economic growth to Harrison.

### 13.1 Findings

- Recreational opportunities in Harrison are primarily outdoors with parks located at Crystal Lake, Mill Park, and Long Lake Park. In addition, there is a public swimming area adjacent to the Long Lake boat ramp and the farmer's market field next to the Bear River.
- Crystal Lake Park offers an abundance of recreational activities with a public swimming area, ball fields, basketball court, playground, public restrooms, and the Gazebo. Picnic tables are also available at the park.
- Adjacent to Crystal Lake Park is Mill Park. This area focuses on the historical use of the stream between Crystal Lake and Long Lake. This area is overgrown and has private residences at the shoreline of Crystal Lake.
- Long Lake park is a small public space adjacent to the Village Tie-Up. This area has several picnic tables and a gazebo with nice views of the lake.
- Boat slips are available along with moorings adjacent to the boat launch.
- Crystal Lake Park is utilized for various public events.
- Long Lake Park is utilized by the local Lions club for breakfast events.
- The RADR complex offers access for snowmobiles, sporting events, and concerts.

### 13.2 Recommendations

- Promote seasonal recreational events hosted at the park areas such as ice fishing, vintage snowmobile events, triathlons, etc.
- Improve parking and pedestrian connections at the public spaces.
- Thin vegetation and remove overgrowth at Mill Park.
- Improve the trail along the stream from Crystal Lake and add historical placards to depict the mill history of the area.
- Consider adding an area for a designated Dog Park within the Mill Park footprint.
- Consider adding a public parking area within the Mill Park footprint.
- Promote recreational business within the downtown area to take advantage of the recreational opportunities that surround the downtown area.



## Section 14 Capital Improvements Program

### 14.1 Findings

- The Finance Officer handles all financial aspects of the Town with direction from the Town Manager in a fiscally sound and professional manner.
- The Town regularly sets aside funds for upkeep and minor improvements to the Town's public spaces and infrastructure in its annual budget.
- The Town does not currently have a defined capital improvement program that takes a wide view of capital needs within the community.
- Capital projects scheduled for construction in 2023 include the Front Street Sidewalk project and the new Public Works Garage.

### 14.2 Recommendations

- Examine these capital plans on an annual basis and have the Town Selectmen prioritize both immediate and short-term (2-4 years) action items. Long term (5-10 years) goals for capital improvement expenditures are noted and included in Appendix C for future reference.
- Explore opportunities to partner with the Maine DOT to leverage funds from their Village Partnership program to improve sidewalks, handicap ramps, lighting, and parking along Main Street.
- In addition to funding for implementation of the revitalization projects, dedicated funding for maintenance and operations also needs to be addressed on an ongoing annual basis.
- Look at municipal bond opportunities to be issued by the Town.
- Look for opportunities to leverage local matching funds with private investment funds as well as state and federal grant programs.

## Section 15 Action Plan/Funding Opportunities

The following is a summary of the prioritized improvement initiatives based on findings from each of the sections of this report and input from the public during the development of this Downtown Revitalization Action Plan.

### 15.1 Prioritized Action Plan

The action plan is organized in terms of immediate needs, near term needs within a 2 to 4 year period, and longer term needs greater than 5 years. The longer term action items are included in Appendix C. The items in the action plan should be reviewed by the community on an annual basis, given changing economic conditions, available funding local, state and federal opportunities, and any cultural and social needs. Some of these prioritized action items will be supported primarily but volunteer efforts and/or institution changes (e.g., continuation of the downtown revitalization committee, zoning ordinance amendments) at little to no costs. Other items will require significant capital expenses for implementation, operations and maintenance and should be discussed further in terms of development technical design, permitting and construction cost estimates to guide prioritization of some of the action items (gateway signage, streetscape improvements, public sewer, etc.) which are often implemented in a phased approach. These preliminary project due diligence efforts will also serve the community in terms of identifying available funding sources (TIF, Capital Reserves, State and Federal Grants, etc.) in support of the applicable action items.

15.1.1 Immediate Needs (1 Year)

YEAR 1				
Strategy		Level of Effort	Notes	
Month 1-3	Appoint a Downtown Committee to begin the initial implementation of the Plan.	▶▶	Low: Town action to establish the Committee	Recommend starting with 5-7 members.
Month 3-9	Initiate a Downtown Transportation Planning Study to develop concepts for improving the Main Street Corridor from the Crystal Lake Boat Launch to the Bear River.	▶▶ ⌚ \$	High: Time and effort to secure funding with MDOT issue RFQ and select consultant.	MDOT has indicating willingness to partner on the planning study to establish overall project scope and costs as well as potential project phasing.
Month 1-12	Identify an organization or staff leadership position as the Downtown Champion responsible for coordination of the Downtown Revitalization Action Plan with the Committee and with complimentary downtown revitalization efforts led by other organizations / interests.	▶▶ ⌚ \$	Medium: Time and effort on selecting the position that is best for Harrison (Paid staff, versus 3rd party staff person / organization).	Local Funding for a Community Development Director or provide financial support for a 3rd party organization.
Month 1-12	Explore establishing a Tax Increment Financing District to fund future downtown related initiatives	▶▶ ⌚ \$	High: Time and effort to establish the program. Requires legal advice and approval at a town meeting.	Select Board committee working with the Town’s legal team and Economic Development Consultant.

⌚ = Significant Time/Personal Effort    \$ = Capital Funding    ▶▶ = Initiation of an On-Going Action Item

Notes: Implementation of Action Items will fluctuate based on available funding.

YEAR 1				
Strategy			Level of Effort	Notes
Month 3-12	Develop a building façade program to provide grants and low interest loans to buildings within the downtown area.	▶▶ ⌚ \$	High: Utilize models from other community programs to frame up a program that works for Harrison.	Establishment of TIF could help fund this program, but some up-front seed funds will be needed. Evaluate alternate funding opportunities.
Month 6-12	Initiate a parking study to identify parking needs in the downtown area. Identify off-street parking locations and implement way-finding signage to direct public to off-street parking areas.	▶▶ ⌚ \$	Medium: Time and effort selecting a consultant and developing a parking master plan.	Review options for off-street parking adjacent to Main Street, Mill Park, and Town Office. Crystal Lake Park should be included as well.
Month 6-12	Evaluate options for relocation of the Town Clock and Bell currently located in the tower of the Block Building.	▶▶ ⌚ \$	High: Time and effort to develop strategy for relocation of these assets and coordination with Block Building Owners.	Funding source availability and replacement of tower clock.
Month 6-12	Initiate a Downtown Parks Master Plan Study and establish a funding / implementation strategy. Study would evaluate potential improvements, additions, and connectivity to the existing public spaces.	▶▶ ⌚ \$	High: Time and effort developing project cost estimates, funding strategies, and potential funding source applications. Selection of consultants to assist as needed.	Funding source availability and application schedules.  Leveraging resources (local capital and in-kind assets) with other funding program resources.

⌚ = Significant Time/Personal Effort    \$ = Capital Funding    ▶▶ = Initiation of an On-Going Action Item

Notes: Implementation of Action Items will fluctuate based on available funding.

15.1.2 Near Term Needs (2-4 Years)

Years 2-4				
	Strategy		Level of Effort	Notes
Year 2-4	Continue to improve broadband and cell phone service. Expand downtown Wi-Fi access.	⌚ \$	Medium: Time and effort coordinating with regional partners, utilities and funding sources. Capital costs for infrastructure.	The Town has several improvement initiatives underway. New technological advances and potential funding sources should continue to be explored.
Year 2-4	Continued identification of infrastructure action items in need of capital investment and establish a funding / implementation strategy. Review condition of existing sidewalks adjacent to Main Street and areas for new sidewalks (Lincoln Street, Depot Street, Waterford Road).	⌚ \$	High: Time and effort developing project cost estimates, funding strategies, and potential funding source applications. Selection of consultants to assist as needed.	Funding source availability and application schedules.  Leveraging resources (local capital and in-kind assets) with other funding program resources.
Year 2-3	Explore areas for year-round public restrooms	⌚ \$	Medium: Time and effort to explore locations, and review utility accessibility.	May require hiring of outside assistance for design development and construction assistance.

⌚ = Significant Time/Personal Effort    \$ = Capital Funding    ▶ = Initiation of an On-Going Action Item

Notes: Implementation of Action Items will fluctuate based on available funding.

## 15.2 Funding

Most of the funding programs traditionally used as a significant portion of downtown revitalization capital support originate from federal sources and are administered by various state agencies. In recent years, these funding programs have been subject to similar fluctuation and budget constraints as has been seen at the state and local levels in Maine. As noted in other sections of this plan, the Town should develop a working understanding of the value of a variety of assets within your community beyond traditional capital reserve accounts to identify opportunities to either leverage state and federal funding programs with local matching resources, or to consider more consistent and often more sustainable revitalization initiatives based on a steady stream of capital support, while still being in a position to be opportunistic when specific state and federal project funding resources are available.

The information provided here on various programs is the most current available, but program details such as availability, deadlines, and requirements may change, and communities should contact the appropriate agencies to ensure they have the best information about a funding program. Development of the Downtown Revitalization Plan and a well-defined local capital improvement program are critical steps to position the community to apply for these increasingly competitive funding sources and to be well positioned for less traditional and/or less frequent funding opportunities such as state bonds and private philanthropic groups.

### 15.2.1 CDBG Programs

The CDBG program is a federally funded program administered by the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). The purpose of the program is to provide grants to local communities to support economic and community development that primarily benefits low- and moderate-income persons. Federal funding to underwrite the program is provided through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The CDBG program consists of several grant programs for economic and community development. Applications and funds are available annually from the DECD.

To be eligible for additional CDBG funds, a community must have completed a comprehensive downtown strategic plan or update to an existing plan within the past five years. Also, to be eligible for CDBG funding, projects and activities must meet one of two national program objectives. The project must achieve one of the following:

- Benefit at least 51% low-moderate persons in an area, or
- Eliminate slum and blight

For more information: <http://www.meocd.org>

Two of the most commonly used grants for downtown revitalization are highlighted below. The Town may wish to explore the other CDBG programs for applicability such as: Public Facilities; Business Assistance, Micro-Enterprise Assistance and Housing Assistance. These programs are updated on an annual basis and some adjustments in program availability and funding within each program should be expected.

#### **Downtown Revitalization Grant**

The Downtown Revitalization Grant (DR) Program provides funds to communities to implement comprehensive, integrated, and innovative solutions to the problems facing their downtown districts. These community revitalization projects must be part of a strategy that targets downtown service and business districts and will lead

to future public and private investment. Qualified applicant communities must have a downtown district meeting the definition. Communities applying for funds must provide a direct cash match of at least 25% of the total CDBG grant award. This match may consist of non-CDBG loans, grants, endowments, etc. contributed to the project. The proposed DR activities must be in a downtown plan (completed or updated within 5 years of the application) as recommended actions necessary for downtown revitalization. Applicants will receive three bonus points if they have been designated as a Main Street Maine Community by the Maine Downtown Center or one bonus point if they have been designated as a Maine Downtown Network Community.

### **Eligible Projects Include**

- Construction, acquisition, reconstruction, installation, rehabilitation, site clearance, historic preservation, and relocation assistance associated with parking, streets, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, recreational facilities, parks, removal of architectural barriers, or neighborhood revitalization.
- Site amenities (benches, lighting, trash receptacles), landscaping and pedestrian improvements.
- Eligible activities include all those eligible under the Public Facilities, Public Infrastructure, Housing Assistance or Community Enterprise programs as relevant to the revitalization of a downtown district.

Letters of Intent are typically due in January, and applications typically due in March.

### **Public Infrastructure Grant**

The Public Infrastructure Grant (PI) Program provides gap funding for local infrastructure activities, which are part of a community development strategy leading to future public and private investments. Eligible activities in the PI Program are construction, acquisition, reconstruction, installation, relocation assistance associated with public infrastructure. A cash match of at least 25% of the total grant award is required. This match may consist of non-CDBG loans, grants, endowments, etc. contributed to the project. Regional Service Centers and Contiguous Census Designated Places and Compact Urban Areas Designated as Regional Service Centers and activities supporting the revitalization of downtown areas will be given priority.

### **Eligible Projects Include**

- Water system installation/improvements, sewer system installation/ improvements, water/sewer system hookups, storm drainage, utility infrastructure (road or street reconstruction is not eligible)
- Streets and roads, parking, curbs, gutters and pedestrian safety improvements in association with roadway and storm drainage infrastructure improvements.

Letters of Intent are typically due in between December and February, and applications are typically due in between February and April. Grant awards are typically between May and July.

### **15.2.2 Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Program**

The purpose of developing the Downtown Revitalization Action Plan is to serve the community as an instrument for identifying and prioritizing revitalization goals in a defined downtown area. Such an area within a community is defined by the state of Maine as:

“a cohesive core of commercial and mixed-use buildings, often interspersed with civic, religious, and residential buildings and public spaces, often arranged along a main street and intersecting side streets, walkable and served by public infrastructure.”

Once an area has been designated and a set of publicly supported Downtown Revitalization Action Plan goals are identified, the Downtown Revitalization Action Plan outlines prioritized and actionable recommendations for implementing the community’s vision. There are two means of implementing the Downtown Revitalization Action Plan. One is by capital investment to support physical improvements, such as utilities, parking lots, and streetscape amenities. The other is promotion of the vision for the plan after adoption of the Plan, continued public outreach, and adoption of the new and/or revised local policy measures in terms of regulatory ordinances. Both means are best achieved in a collaborative effort between the citizens of Harrison, local municipal government, and private / non-profit stakeholders.

To that end, Harrison anticipates initiating development of a Downtown Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district as a tool to provide funding in support of many of the Downtown Revitalization Action Plan goals and is considering updating the Town’s Comprehensive Plan and local Zoning Ordinances which should adopt and therefore be consistent with the goals of the Downtown Revitalization Plan.

To utilize potential funding instruments like a Downtown TIF or other local, private, state and federal funding programs, the downtown plan is being strategically developed in conformance with the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development’s “Downtown Plan Components” criteria which serve as the organizational format of the planning initiative and include:

- Definition of the downtown area
- Information regarding zoning ordinance effects on the downtown area, and consistency of the Downtown Revitalization Plan with the Comprehensive Plan
- Building inventory conditions assessment
- Inventory of retail / commercial space
- Employment opportunities
- Inventory of residential units
- Pedestrian / Bicycle infrastructure and accessibility

TIF Districts can be established for site specific projects, specific use projects, downtown projects, economic development, municipal improvements, or private investment/developer projects. Activities from TIF proceeds can be utilized for various functions including:

- Economic development
- Job creation
- Credit enhancement agreements
- Public infrastructure
- Planning services
- Streetscape and façade improvements
- Marketing and promotions
- Establishment of a revolving loan fund
- Staffing and operations

### 15.2.3 Maine Department of Transportation Programs

There are a number of ways that communities in Maine gain funding for road, pedestrian, and bicycle improvements through the Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT). The most prominent pedestrian/bicycle funding is the Quality Communities Program, described below.

#### Village & Municipal Partnership Programs

MaineDOT has established Village and Municipal Partnership Programs, which encompasses both Transportation Enhancements and Safe Routes to School programs as well as other improvements on State highways.

This competitive program is intended to improve community transportation related facilities through bicycle and pedestrian improvements, safety improvements, environmental improvements, scenic, historic, and other quality community improvements. The program is intended to support new pedestrian and bicycle facilities, with an emphasis on the transportation value the proposed project has for the community.

Recent changes to the program require separate applications for design and construction phases. Projects now must have their design phase complete and approved by MaineDOT before applying for construction funds. Harrison is familiar with this program and should continue to contact the MaineDOT Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Quality Community Program Manager for questions or to coordinate a potential application.

#### For more information:

[MPI2020.pdf \(maine.gov\)](#)

### 15.2.4 Other Funding Programs and Strategies

#### Leveraging Private Funds

In many communities, partnerships with private entities such as landowners/developers, banks, non-profits or other institutions can result in important funding or implementation opportunities. Communities should be strategic in identifying specific ways in which such entities could participate in revitalizing the downtown. This may include initiatives like creating a 501 3C non-profit organization that can apply for philanthropic endowment grants or growing social media outlets like crowdfunding.

#### Maine Arts Commission

The MAC has several competitive grant programs to help promote arts & culture, several of which have been successfully used in downtowns across the state.

<http://mainearts.maine.gov/grants.aspx>

Efficiency Maine / Maine Development Foundations Maine Downtown Center "Green Downtowns" Program

If there is a strong interest in promoting green and energy efficiency initiatives in the downtown, contact programs such as these to find out if they offer any appropriate opportunities.

Efficiency Maine has a number of Business Programs, Energy Audit programs, and tools and resources for Renewable Energy and improving energy efficiency.

<http://www.energymaine.com/at-work/tools-resources>

The MDF Maine Downtown Center Green Downtowns program is geared towards supporting sustainable green initiatives for Maine's downtowns. Although their emphasis is on member communities, the Town can contact MDF to see if aspects of the program might apply to Harrison.

[http://www.mdf.org/mdc\\_green\\_downtowns.php](http://www.mdf.org/mdc_green_downtowns.php)

### **Project Canopy Grant**

Project Canopy funds could be used for street tree plantings in the downtown or at the Town's parks and public facilities. Funding and administration is through the Maine Forest Service and Growsmart Maine; the funding limit is usually \$8,000. This program has typically required attendance at a training workshop.

<http://www.maine.gov/doc/mfs/projectcanopy/pages/resource.htm>

### **Historic Tax Credit Programs**

Maine has several tax credit programs which can aid in revitalization efforts such as historic preservation and housing. These programs are complex, but for the right project, may serve as an important financial component. Tax Credit projects are typically a private effort with support from a municipality (public-private partnership).

[http://www.maine.gov/mhpc/tax\\_incentives/index.html](http://www.maine.gov/mhpc/tax_incentives/index.html)

### **Low Income Housing Tax Credit**

The federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) provides subsidy in the form of a federal tax credit to developers of affordable rental housing. Developers using funding must reserve a portion of the rental units for lower income renters. This can include Senior Housing.

<http://www.mainehousing.org/HOUSINGDEVProgramsDetail.aspx?ProgramID=51>

### **New Market Tax Credits**

The Maine New Markets Capital Investment Program provides refundable state tax credits of up to 39% to investors in qualified community development entities (CDEs) that reinvest in certain businesses in eligible low-income communities in Maine. The program is modeled after the federal New Markets Tax Credit Program, and is administered by the Finance Authority of Maine, in cooperation with Maine Revenue Services and the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development.

### **For more information**

[http://www.famemaine.com/files/Pages/business/businesses/equity\\_capital/Maine\\_New\\_Markets\\_Capital\\_Investment\\_Program.aspx](http://www.famemaine.com/files/Pages/business/businesses/equity_capital/Maine_New_Markets_Capital_Investment_Program.aspx)

### **State Bonds**

Although unpredictable, special state bond programs such as Communities for Maine's Future or the Riverfront Communities are sometimes funded by the legislature. Communities may be able to take advantage of such funding if appropriate to the downtown revitalization effort.

### **Municipal Bonds**

More predictable and often misunderstood and increasingly underutilized are municipal bonds. This source of funding provides a greater level of local control and flexibility in funding projects that may not meet objectives of state and federal grant programs, while allowing local investors to put their financial resources into projects that are of particular value to the community.

Municipal bonds are used by local governments or territories, or other agencies (commonly including financial institutions and if the Town of Harrison is not familiar with this project, it is recommended that the Maine Municipal Association be contacted for peer assistance: <https://memun.org/>

One organization particularly focused on municipal bonds for broadband projects that the Town may be interested in contacting is Neighborly: <https://neighborly.com/>

### **Coastal Enterprises and Maine Community Foundation Partnership**

The Maine Community Foundation has partnered with Wiscasset-based CEI (Coastal Enterprises Inc.) to boost downtown and fisheries-related development in rural Maine.

This partnership results in a provision of \$500,000 in new loan funds, which will be available for rehabilitation of downtown buildings and development of fisheries-related enterprises in the state's rural communities.

### **Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC)**

The NBRC is an important regional coordination mechanism for the Northern Forest states as well as a potentially significant new source of investment for economic and community development in the region. The Center coordinates with NBRC stakeholders across the region, with the Commission members (a federal co-chair and the region's four governors), and with the regional congressional delegation to align the work of the Commission with regional priorities and to secure additional funding for its activities.

[http://www.northernforest.org/northern\\_border\\_regional\\_commission\\_nbrc\\_.html](http://www.northernforest.org/northern_border_regional_commission_nbrc_.html)

### **Recreational Trails Program**

The program is authorized through the Federal Highway Administration and is administered by the Maine Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Parks and Lands:

[https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/grants/recreational\\_trails\\_program.shtml](https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/grants/recreational_trails_program.shtml)

### **Land and Water Conservation Funds**

The program is authorized through the National Park Service and is administered by the Maine Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Parks and Lands:

[https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/grants/land\\_water\\_conservation\\_fund.html](https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/grants/land_water_conservation_fund.html)

### **Water & Sewer Utility Funding**

Water and sewer infrastructure improvements are most often funded through USDA Rural Development or through the State Revolving Loan Funds administered by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and the State Drinking Water Program. Both sources of funding offer a grant and loan packages that are often tied to existing user rates and median household income numbers. Harrison has successfully utilized funding through Rural Development for improving its pump stations in the sewer collection system.

The link for the Rural Utilities program is provided here:

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-loan-grant-program/me>

Information on the Maine Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund can be found here:

<https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/grants/srfparag.html>

The drinking water SRF program is linked below:

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/dwp/imt/documents/DWPFundingTableSummary.pdf>

### **Donations / Volunteers**

There are often a variety of local grass roots fund raising campaigns that can successfully obtain capital donations and/or volunteer labor to implement a variety of community revitalization initiatives. Opportunities to seek out this support could be sought out at town sponsored public gathering events and public meetings (voting polls, school events, etc.), in terms of donations or sign-up opportunities for future volunteering, through online crowd funding, community meetings.



## Appendix A Maps

Downtown Study

Parcel Land Use

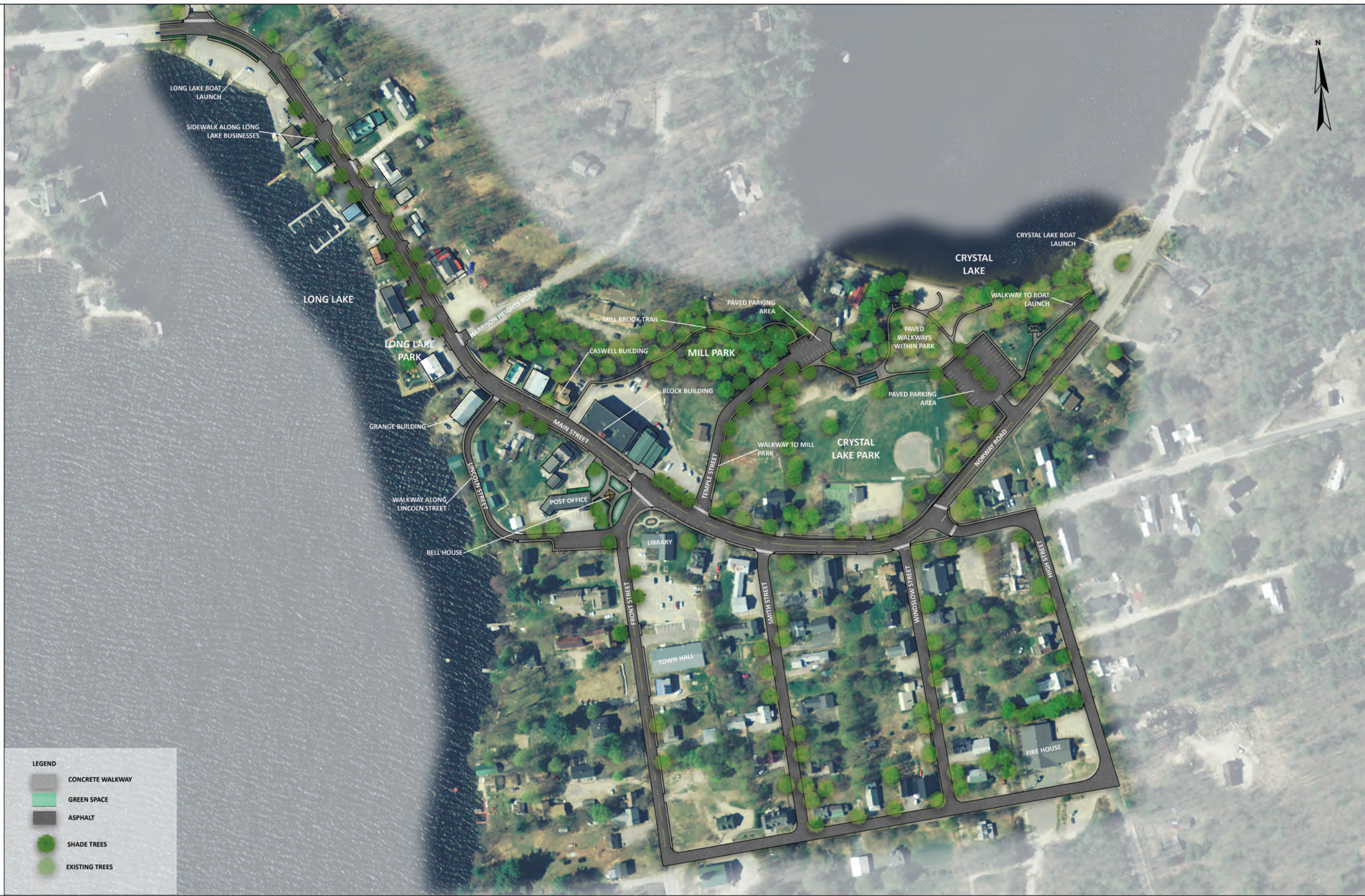
Transportation / Parking

Recreation

Utilities

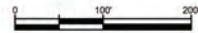


C:\A\W\GIS\Development\Projects\GIS\Harrison\2022\Download\gis\government\GIS\Map\Harrison\Download\Project\Map\Harrison\_Download\_24056



- LEGEND**
- CONCRETE WALKWAY
  - GREEN SPACE
  - ASPHALT
  - SHADE TREES
  - EXISTING TREES

**PLAN**  
SCALE: 1"=100'



11 BOWDOIN MILL ISLAND  
TOPSHAM, ME 04086

**DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION ACTION PLAN**  
HARRISON, ME

**OVERALL CONCEPT PLAN**



- LEGEND**
- CONCRETE WALKWAY
  - GREEN SPACE
  - ASPHALT
  - SHADE TREES
  - EXISTING TREES

**PLAN**  
1"=20'



**WRIGHT-PIERCE**

**DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION ACTION PLAN  
HARRISON, ME**

**CORE DOWNTOWN AREA**

11 BOWDOIN MILL ISLAND  
TOPSHAM, ME 04086



- LEGEND**
- CONCRETE WALKWAY
  - GREEN SPACE
  - ASPHALT
  - SHADE TREES
  - EXISTING TREES

**PLAN**  
1"=20'

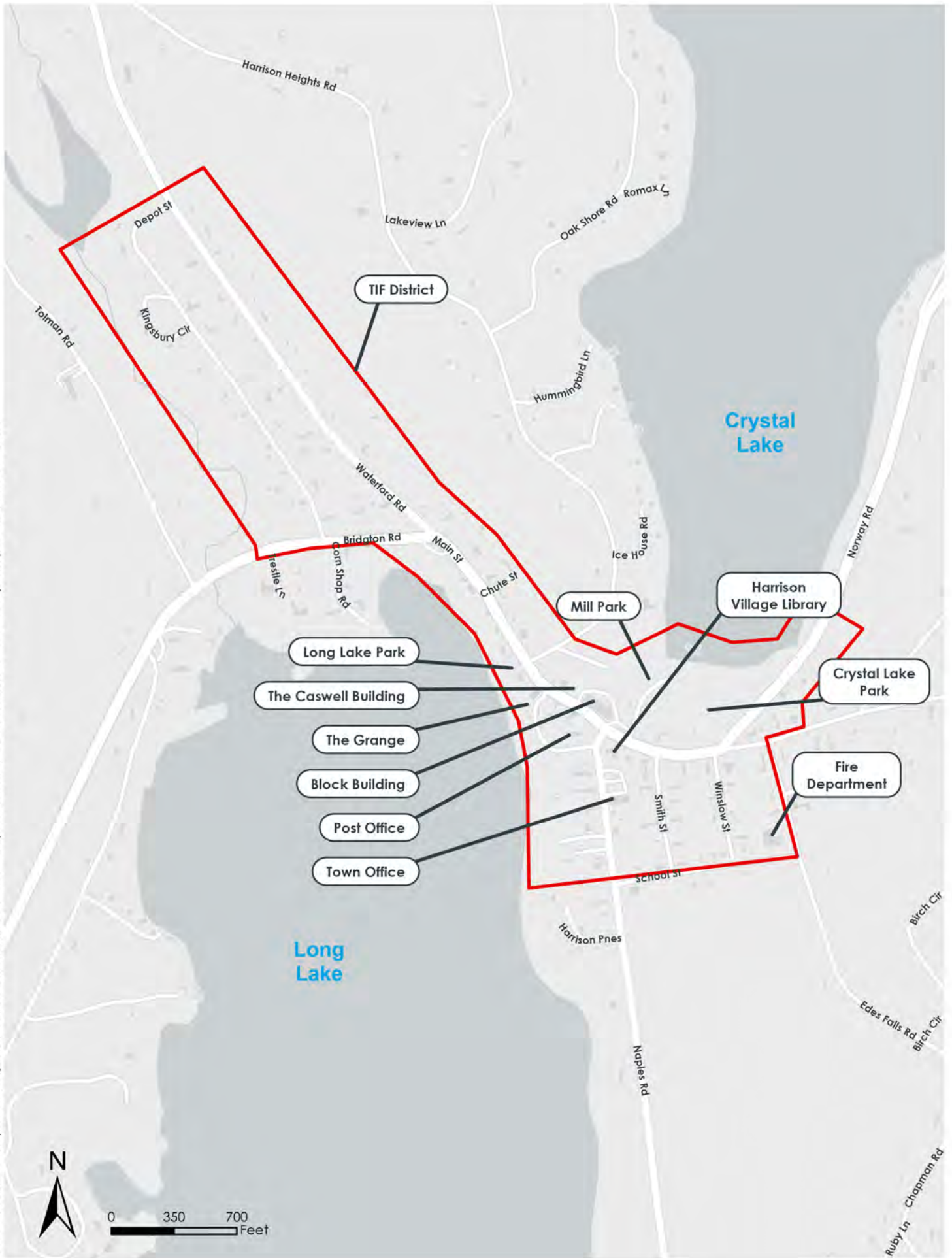


**WRIGHT-PIERCE**

**DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION ACTION PLAN  
HARRISON, ME**

**CRYSTAL LAKE PARK IMPROVEMENTS**

11 BOWDOIN MILL ISLAND  
TOPSHAM, ME 04086



## Appendix B Public Presentations

February 10, 2022 Front Street Update

9/29/22 Public Workshop Attendance List

9/29/22 Public Workshop Presentation

Questionnaire Results

3/9/23 Selectmen Meeting Update

6/6/23 Draft Plan Presentation Public Input Meeting

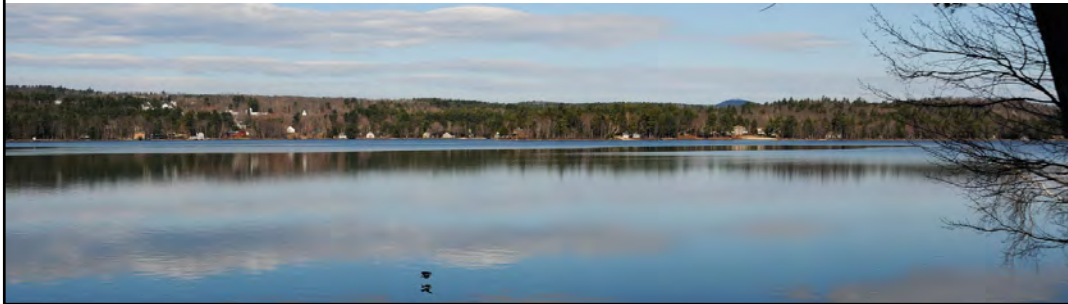
6/6/23 Public Workshop Attendance List

# Front Street Improvements & Downtown Beautification Plan

February 2022



Jeffrey Preble, PE  
Kalle Maggio, PLA

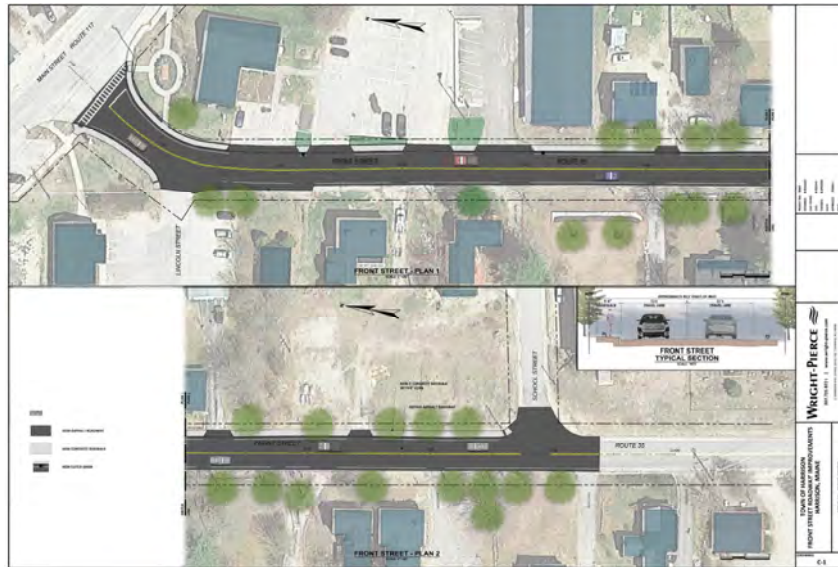


WRIGHT-PIERCE   
Engineering a Better Environment

## Presentation Overview

Front Street Sidewalk  
Downtown Plan Kick Off  
FY 2022-2023 Work  
Questions & Comments

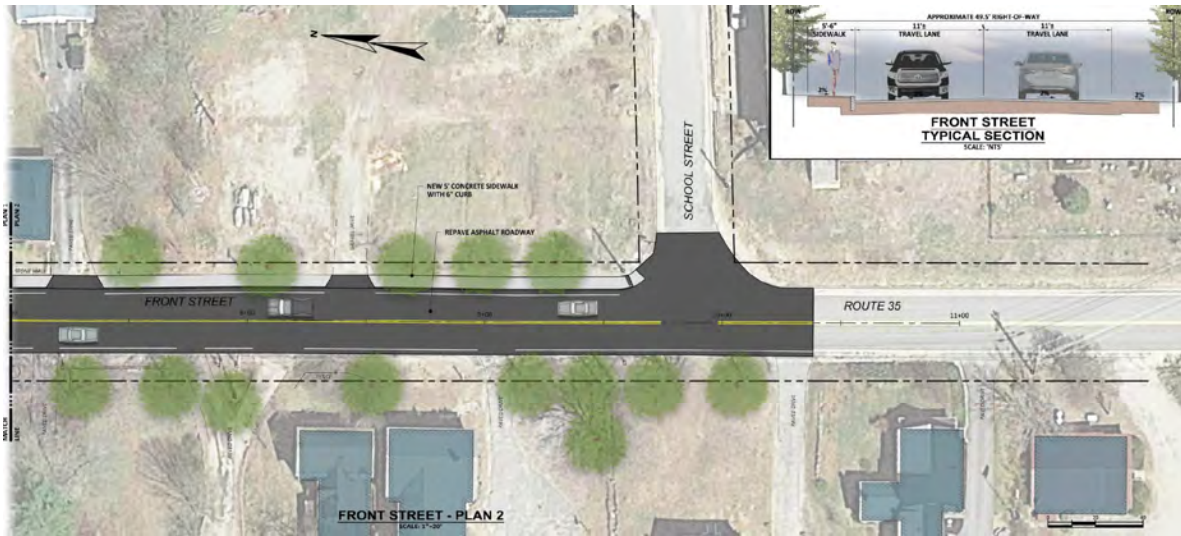
# Front Street Sidewalk



# Front Street Sidewalk



## Front Street Sidewalk



## Front Street Scope

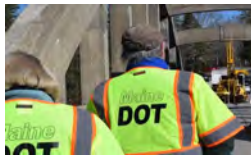


- Replace sidewalk to School Street
- Replace concrete sections to Library and Post Office
- New curbed islands
- Drainage modifications
- Mill/fill paving – full width

## Front Street – Cost Estimate

Item Description	Cost
Site Preparation	\$14,600
Curbing and Sidewalk	\$40,400
Drainage Improvements	\$52,700
Pavement/Markings	\$105,300
Restoration/Plantings	\$7,300
Mobilization/Traffic Controls	\$24,300
Subtotal	\$244,600
Contingency	\$55,100
Engineering	\$36,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$336,400</b>

## Front Street – Next Steps



### Coordination with MDOT

- Village Partnership Initiative
- Apply for funding assistance
- MDOT Review



### Site Planning

- Topographic Survey
- Design Development
- Utility Coordination
- Right-of-Way
- Regulatory Approvals
- Construction Documents



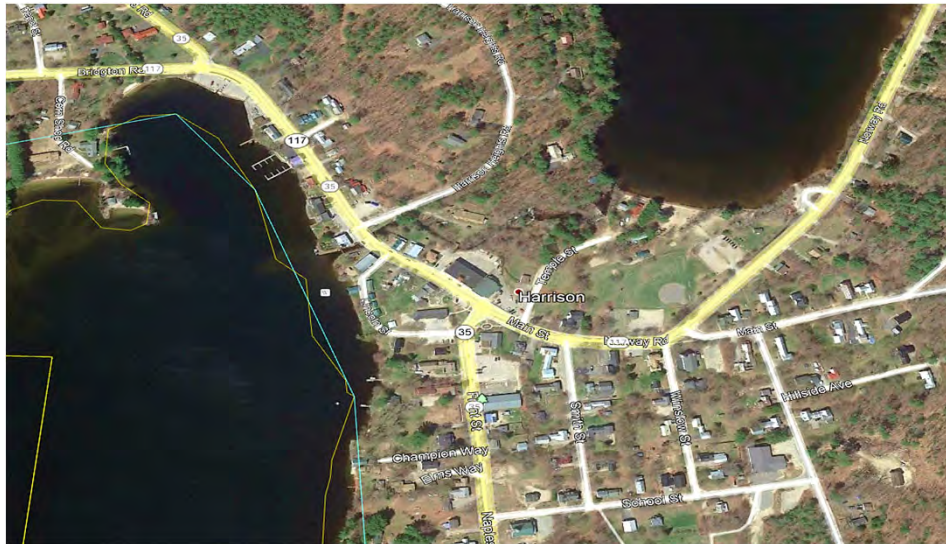
### Construction Services

- Public Bidding
- Executed Documents
- Construction Administration
- Resident Inspection
- Record Drawings

## Front Street – Schedule

Task	Completion Date
Topographic Survey	July 2022
Utility Coordination	August 2022
Design Documents	September 2022
MDOT Funding	October 2022
ROW complete	November 2022
Bidding	December 2022
Bid Award	January 2023
Start Construction	April 2023
Construction Complete	August 2023

## Downtown Beautification Plan



## Downtown Plan – Next Steps



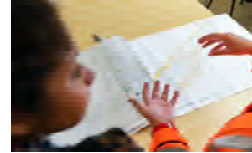
### Kick-off Meeting

- April Target Date
- Downtown committee
- Strengths/Weaknesses
- Key Stakeholders



### Public Workshops

- Initial Workshop – July
- Questionnaire
- Workshop Location
- Top 3 most important issues



### Concept Plans & Report

- Draft plan Presentation
- Final Plan Presentation
- Final Report
- Completion date of December 2022

## Pedestrian Improvements



## Questions/Comments

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# THANK YOU

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Date: 9-29-22

**TOWN OF HARRISON**

Right to Know and Freedom of Access for Public Information  
*Harrison Downtown Revitalization Public Meeting*  
Meeting Public Record



Meeting Attendance

Phil & Mary Jensen

Teresa Pattle

Andrea AskenDunn

JOE & ALICE VARDE

Julie Mannit

Bob Beach

Kathy Lyolants

Tracy Williams

Keith & Glenn Whittenfoster

Stacy & Freeman

Kathleen Kramer

Micole Carter

Walter Princi

Kathy Gynan

Steve & Christine Bingham

Joe & Jay Palacci

Bob & Rose Sykes

Margaret Strickland

Gail Bowen

Colleen Densmore

Raymond Reynolds

GAIL PHANEUF

Elizabeth Young

Ty Young

Julie Bryant

Tim Bryant

Date: 9-29-22

**TOWN OF HARRISON**

*Harrison Downtown Revitalization* Public Meeting  
Right to Know and Freedom of Access for Public Information

Select Board Meeting Public Record

Meeting Attendance

Fred Ross

Drew Stegeman

Ron Ward

Daryl Sterling

Pamela Farmer

KALLE MAGGIO - WP

Penny Bean

JEFF PREBLE - WP

Andy Fettle

Joe PALACCI

Peter Ulrickson

Wendy Gallant

Jacqui Gray

Chris NEWELL

Matthew H. Trunk

Thomas Stegeman

# Downtown Revitalization Action Plan

Harrison, Maine

September 29, 2022

Jeffrey Preble, PE  
Kalle Maggio, RLA



# Introductions



## Town Staff

Cass Newell

- Town Manager

Darryl Sterling

- Economic Development Consultant

Harrison Economic Committee

## Wright-Pierce

Kalle Maggio, RLA

- Lead Planner

Jeff Preble, PE

- Project Manager

# Public Workshop Agenda

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## Project Background (20 minutes)

- Downtown Revitalization Plan Process Overview
- Define Downtown Area
- Town Clock
- Walkable Downtown
- Open Space Improvements

## Group Breakout Sessions (1 hour +/-)

Next Steps (5 min)

Questions (15 min)

# Downtown Plan Process



## Kick-off Meeting

- Identify Downtown committee
- Key Stakeholders
- Confirm Study Area



## Public Workshops

- Initial Workshop – September
- Questionnaire
- Public Input & Vision
- Top 3 most important issues



## Concept Plans & Report

- Transportation Infrastructure
- Community Planning and Revitalization
- Site Planning

## Downtown Revitalization Action Plan Goals

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- Develop a Publicly Supported Consensus Vision for the Downtown
- Develop a Prioritized Action Plan to meet the Community needs through a planned approach
- Conformance with the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development's Downtown Plan Components

# Downtown Study Area



# Pedestrian Improvements



# Town Clock



# Hampton NH Clock



# Park Improvements



# Park Improvements

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Defined Walkways



Public Gathering Spots

# Crosswalks



Decorative Crosswalks



Prioritize Safe Pedestrian Routes

# Types of Plantings



## Street Trees

- Improves curb Appeal
- Reduces Heat Island Effect
- Traffic Calming



## Functional Green Spaces

- Green Infrastructure
- Stormwater Management



## Low Maintenance Plantings

- Trees & shrubs provide visual aesthetics that require less maintenance than herbaceous plantings



## Container Planters

- Improve curb appeal
- Public & Private Partnership
- "Adopt-a-Spot"

# Types of Lighting



## Street Lighting

- Improves curb appeal
- Reduces crime
- Extends business hours



## Fundamental

- Reputable Manufacturers
- Low-cost energy solutions



## Style Options

- Elevates town character
- Period lighting
- Modern lighting



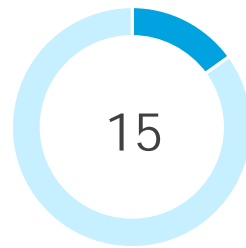
## Solar Options

- Reduces overall cost of construction
- Reduce Maintenance

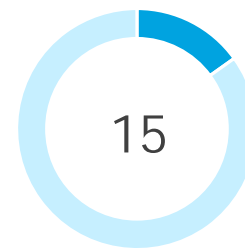
## Group Breakout Session

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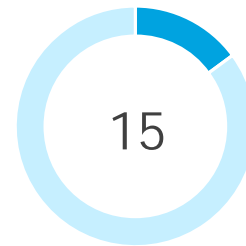
Downtown  
Improvements



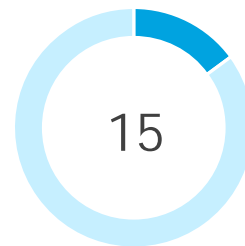
Sidewalks &  
Crosswalks



Economic  
Development



Housing &  
Regulations



# Next Steps

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Oct- 2022



Questionnaires  
Due

Feb- 2023



Draft Plan  
Available

Apr- 2023



Draft Plan  
Presentation

May-2023



Plan Comments  
Due

Jul-2023



Final Plan  
Presentation

Oct-2023



Priority List  
Finalized

## Contact Information

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Jeffrey Preble, PE

jeff.preble@wright-pierce.com  
207.798.3759



Kalle Maggio, RLA

kalle.maggio@wright-pierce.com  
603.570.7137

THANK YOU

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# HARRISON DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION ACTION PLAN Public Input Questionnaire

## SURVEY RESULTS

### 1. POTENTIAL DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENTS - GENERAL

<i>Please note these issues are to be expanded upon in greater detail in the following sections.</i>	<i>Check One</i>			
	Support	Neutral	Don't Support	Unsure/ More Info
Streetscape Improvements (benches, trash receptacles, bollards, banners, planters, etc.)	39	8	2	1
Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements (sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks)	36	10	3	
Building/façade improvements program	36	9	4	2
Promotion/Support for business development	27	13	5	4
Incentives/programs for private property owners to make improvements (building or site/lot)	25	11	8	3
Additional downtown parking (in general)	19	22	4	1
Off-Street parking lots	15	19	6	4
On-Street parking	13	23	8	3
Addition / Alteration / Expansion of public utilities (water, sewer, OHE, OHT, data, etc.)	16	16	7	8
Vehicular traffic calming measures	22	15	6	4
Additional gateway signs welcoming travelers to the Downtown	16	21	10	1
Wayfinding signage, historic signage, and/or a unified Downtown (public) signage design	28	14	3	4
Additional employment opportunities	21	15	6	4
Additional residential housing opportunities	17	15	8	5
Additional park and recreational spaces	23	14	8	2
Public Transit (Indicate destination below)	13	13	12	7

Other:

Perhaps a bus that stops in Windham, Portland, Lewiston, so people can shop or visit family. Not sure how it would work.

The intersection at Main Street and Harrison Heights Road needs far better cautionary measures than the inadequate "Hidden Drive" sign. Beyond the extreme difficulty for vehicles entering onto Main Street with limited visibility, this area is a busy crossing area for pedestrian and snowmobile traffic. There are poles and access for overhead caution lights which would be beneficial for the crosswalk area.

The benchmark of town is the building/condo association that houses the Harrison General. The Ballroom is in need of renovation. It needs exterior cosmetic work and I understand it has structural issues. This needs attention.

Must clean up the main building in town. It is the principal piece of architecture that you see and it is a mess, both on the top floor with peeling paint and on the bottom floor with horrible windows/facade and too much advertising and frankly trash.

1. When considering lighting, please emphasize the delight of the Maine night sky and being able to see the stars. Any new lights need to be specifically directed, not just lighting general areas, and be shielded so as not to cast light upward.
2. Is there any discussion about providing free guest internet access in the downtown area? (Keeping in mind the responsibility to prevent illegal activity.)
3. I didn't hear any discussion in the video about utilities, other than the occasional mention of sewage, and I couldn't find, by searching online, what OHE or OHT might mean.

to me it seems unusual for a downtown revitalization plan to be considering employment opportunities, residential housing opportunities and expansion of public utilities. Those things are important but would seem out of scope of a downtown plan.

I think we need to define what we want our "downtown" to be. Harrison is much different than Fryeburg/Bridgton/Naples because we are much smaller.

Personally, I would like it cleaned up add some park areas if possible and that is it. Trying to draw consumer oriented businesses may not be worth the effort or successful. I would not want the incremental traffic and parking needs.

Public Transit – Portland

These things cost money. Please stay in a budget. Be kind to locals.

Landscaping around public properties emphasizing classic New England features

Public Utilities - Do not support sewer

Destinations: Bridgton/Norway

Bike path from downtown to RADR (not on the road)

Include deer trees in the downtown area (like VFW and RADR being included)

I support "Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements (sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks)" to the extent noted in other questions/answers. Some but not all. Can't lump all utilities together either. I support the town trying to expand broadband access. Parking: If we could do something for boat trailers so they aren't lined up on 35 toward waterford it would be nice but not sure what possibilities are. Other than that appropriate plentiful signage for town parking lots might be helpful.

Public Transit – Looping Naples, Bridgton, Norway for students and seniors would be nice.

Support sewer. What are OHT & OHE???

Support residential housing – affordable (truly)

Public Transit – Bridgton-Oxford (through Norway)

Don't let us get crowded with Air B&Bs, etc.

Covered bus stops

Destinations: Portland/N. Conway

Destinations: Windham, Bridgton, Naples, Norway, Oxford. Maybe a split schedule.

What are bollards?

Building/façade improvements – Who decides? The owners? Town?

Incentives – Who decides?

Addition/Alteration/Expansion of public utilities – What is the extent now?

Additional residential housing – How? Where? What?

Provide more info to the public. Who instigated this? What town representatives are on the committee – select people? Public works? Rec Director? Business owners? Who is making what decisions?

Tell Archie to clean his yard.

Public Transit – Bridgton, Naples, Windham, Oxford, Portland

## 2. SIDEWALKS & CROSSWALKS

	<i>Check One</i>			
	Support	Neutral	Don't Support	Unsure/ More Info
Improve existing sidewalks on Main Street only	34	8	2	1
Add/improve sidewalks on streets adjacent and or connecting to Main Street	26	11	7	1
Connection sidewalks within the Downtown	31	9	5	2
Connections from Downtown to regional trails/destinations	24	13	7	3
Add pedestrian "bump-outs" or median islands at key intersections for crosswalk safety improvements	16	17	13	1
Consider new crosswalk design / materials that are more visible year-round	28	12	5	3
Additional crosswalks across Main Street	15	24	4	2
Add crosswalk warning lights	12	16	15	2

Other:

The sidewalks on Smith Street are cracked and damaged with tree stumps uprooting them. Either upkeep them or pave over to assist with plowing.

More trees are needed as part of the sidewalk considerations. I think a lot about the historic images with the elm trees. A return to that aesthetic would be a major positive for the feel of the downtown area. Simply redoing the sidewalks is not enough. Additionally they could be wider than they are now and the roadway narrowed.

I walk Main street a lot. I think the sidewalks are fine. If I were to change anything it would be to make sidewalks on both sides from Crystal Lake Park to Long Lake Park. I have no idea what is meant by "connections from downtown to regional trails/destinations"

\$

Within scope of downtown development. Plan Ahead.

Connections to RADR – a bike/walking trail off the road.

Please add deer trees into the downtown plan – sidewalks around to deer trees

Speed reduction from Dawes Hill into town!

Adding sidewalks on Smith, Winslow, High and School would cause more problems than it would solve as it would reduce any possible parking when/if town is busy.

I like the idea of additional lighting on walking paths – park, etc.

Sidewalks on Main Street – Concrete slabs need to be leveled. Where curbs were lowered to make street crossings safer/more accessible, huge puddles develop for lack of drainage in the street...makes crossings LESS usable. Same problem exists in Bridgton and Norway! Make sure improvements can and will be properly maintained.

Extend sideway from corner of Rt. 35 to Long Lake boat launch on Grange side of street.  
Extend sidewalk from Smith St. to church on right side. Extend sidewalk to farmers market.

Improve sidewalks – Only where existing is crumbling.

### 3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

	Check One			
	Support	Neutral	Don't Support	Unsure/ More Info
Business assistance/municipal programs to attract new businesses	22	7	8	6
Promotion & marketing program / materials specifically for the Downtown	21	10	8	4
Promote/expand economic development opportunities associated with <u>outdoor recreation</u>	28	10	5	3
Promote/expand economic development opportunities associated with <u>arts &amp; culture</u>	29	12	4	1
Expand diversity of commercial business types	24	7	5	6
Incorporate <u>local history</u> into the revitalization / promotion of the Downtown	35	9	2	1
Promote diversity of employment opportunities	21	12	6	4
<p>Other:</p> <p>I would see what smaller towns around us have done to be more successful and use that as a starting point for the plan.</p> <p>I think this may be the a foundational problem that can't be fixed. I.e. the Town isn't big enough to support a couple of new restaurants or stores (in my opinion). With Bridgton Center and the Causeway right down the street it is hard to see what we cold add that would survive as it would need to draw people from Bridgton and Naples.</p> <p>Promote businesses which take advantage of access/views of waterfront (example: waterfront dining; rental concession at Crystal Lake Park for kayaks, etc)</p> <p>Let's promote what we already have. We have Deertrees, a restaurant, 2 public beaches, a park, a gathering place (gazebo), a boat launch, a convenience store, a market, a library, a post office and a rec center! All these things can be promoted as things there for all to enjoy!</p> <p>Rental equipment at Crystal Lake Local history – both indigenous and settler history</p> <p>Hoping the reference I am supporting is for things like the music festival at RADR.</p> <p>Keep marijuana shops OUT! Make it nicer/better without turning it into North Conway! We occupy a small piece of land where waterways converge – protect them!</p> <p>Expand diversity of commercial business types – Depends on what it is. Need a separate committee for this.</p>				

#### 4. LOCAL REGULATIONS (ORDINANCES)

	<i>Check One</i>			
	Support	Neutral	Don't Support	Unsure/ More Info
Design guidelines to encourage new development / redevelopment to be in character with historic Downtown area architecture	33	6	4	2
Improve regulatory standards (ordinances) to ensure new development is in character with historic Downtown area architecture	29	7	3	4
Improve enforcement of regulatory standards for non-residential uses in the Downtown	24	7	5	5
Simplify zoning regulations, or consider "innovative" alternatives (e.g. Form-based Codes)	24	6	5	7

Other:

The 40,000 square foot per residence should be voided for housing units within the downtown area. It does not make sense when there is a housing shortage and moreover, it's not equitable with a number of old buildings grandfathered. There are at least ten or more buildings that have multiple apartments but other historic buildings on larger lots would need to go to the appeals board for approval for a second unit despite the current housing shortage.

Design guidelines are important but they can't force a developer/resident into a box. Developers or residents that meet with the building department should not be told "no" without telling them that there is a process to provide relief from the bylaw and that it is not written in stone. There must be some flexibility from the planning and zoning boards and the code should be malleable in the correct circumstances.

Do we think our ordinances are prohibiting downtown development? It would be the first I have heard of that. I don't know if there is a historical commission or some other commission that could require some minimum level of upkeep of property in Town Center regardless of whether it is commercial or residential. I would support something like that.

Please don't over- govern!

Support all but not expensive "regulations & permits"!

Would need more information to form a valid opinion. Are there regulatory standards for non-residential uses that are NOT being enforced currently? I would support enforcing what already exists.

No more storage structures!! Very ugly!

"History" is good but stewarding the natural and human environments is more important.

Improve regulatory standards (ordinances) to ensure new development is in character with historic Downtown area architecture – Who decides?

Improve enforcement of regulatory standards for non-residential uses in the Downtown – Such as?

## 5. HOUSING

	<i>Check One</i>			
	Support	Neutral	Don't Support	Unsure/ More Info
Improve housing opportunities for senior citizens	28	11	2	4
Improve housing opportunities for low income families	24	12	5	4
Improve housing opportunities for moderate level / first time home buyers?	24	14	4	3
Provide funding assistance to improve existing housing units in the Downtown.	18	12	9	5
<p>Other:</p> <p>Please see my comment above about the 40K sq ft per residence ordinance within certain confines of downtown. Does not make sense and is not equitable.</p> <p>I don't think Harrison's downtown is big enough for this. Perhaps this question is a carry over from Fryeburg? I support supporting housing but that would seem out of the scope any project about Harrison's "downtown".</p> <p>Increase live/work opportunities in the Downtown (ex. upper floor residential units in commercial-zoned properties)</p> <p>Only if affordable. Remember, this town comes together when you get the neighbors involved. There was a man who needed a home, and the neighbors all contributed to build him a new home.</p> <p>The devil is in the details, particularly funding</p> <p>I'm not opposed to existing buildings being used as opportunities for seniors or low income families but I don't see a lot of opportunity. I think if there is a way we can incentivize more building of small homes that would be wonderful. Having 17 million dollar homes in birch circle might do wonders for our tax revenue but there down sides as well. If it is really needed perhaps there is some opportunity on the large lots in Ridgeview for senior housing, low income housing? At least the lots are large enough to allow for parking.</p> <p>Improve housing opportunities for moderate level/first time buyers for year round residents only.</p> <p>Housing that is affordable to seniors is not available.</p> <p>Possible temporary shelters for burnt out homeless families/women's shelter</p> <p>Tell Archie to clean his yard.</p>				

## 6. TOP 3 MOST IMPORTANT

*What are the top 3 most important ideas or issues, as identified in the questions above?*

Façade of the block (vinyl?)  
Trashed house across from Marina  
Fix road from Town to Church on 35

Keeping Harrison, Harrison  
No speed bumps  
Don't try to make everything for tourists

The intersection at Main Street and Harrison Heights Road needs far better cautionary measures than the inadequate "Hidden Drive" sign. Beyond the extreme difficulty for vehicles entering onto Main Street with limited visibility, this area is a busy crossing area for pedestrian and snowmobile traffic. There are poles and access for overhead caution lights which would be beneficial for the crosswalk area.

Condition of main building in town (w/ Harrison General, Ballroom, etc.)  
Outdated 40,000 sq ft per residence ordinance  
Maintaining all sidewalks in town, including side streets (Smith St)

Promote new business

business growth  
clean up run down/messy houses  
waterfront activity center

More trees.  
Clean up and renovate existing buildings  
More lake related commerce.

Traffic  
sidewalks and crosswalks  
guest internet downtown

Make downtown 'walkable'  
More recreation space  
More parking

Revitalizing downtown  
Upkeep of existing buildings on Main Street  
Sidewalks

Decide what we want, business or quiet recreation.  
Ordinances with minimum requirements residential or commercial.  
Keep it simple

public sewer in Downtown area  
re-purpose Grange Hall  
streamline zoning regulations

Fill existing closed businesses with new options-Caswell House example  
Make Lincoln Street one way for safety purposes  
Marketing and historical programs to promote town and businesses

Give reason for people to visit downtown  
Generate some additional tax revenue from business

Paint downtown  
Paint old mill building  
Paint

Incentive for Main St. Property owners to fix up their buildings  
Economic incentives to bring new businesses in i.e. brewery like Bridgton.  
Pave Rt. 35 in front of town hall. Its full of potholes! Remove a lot of the signage that takes away from the quaintness of the downtown.

Aesthetic improvements  
Outdoor uses  
Connecting various features

Keep the small town character  
Cherish and promote our history  
Stay in budget w/o raising taxes

Affordable housing for seniors  
Beautification of our downtown  
Help homeowners having issues keeping up their property

Traffic calming  
Façade standards  
Updating/expansion of public utilities

Good sidewalks  
Fixing stones in cemeteries of founding fathers of Harrison  
Fix parking across from Harrison General – can not see down the road.

Building façade improvements  
Sidewalks, crosswalks, parking  
Business development/high speed internet!

Traffic speed reduction  
Increase access for walkability and bikes

Historic aspect

Sidewalk improvement  
Senior and low-income housing  
Incentives for private property owners to make improvements to their building or lots

Traffic calming  
Keeping it a small town  
Pedestrian safety

Downtown improvements  
Economic Development  
Housing

Improve façade of "The Block"  
Additional Parking

Run down – tired appearance  
Nothing to do

Sidewalk condition/safety  
Ensure continuing water/air cleanliness (lakes, streams, aquifer)  
Youth employment program (Creamery good example)

Sidewalks/crosswalks  
Enforce speed limits on Main Street  
Repair Rt. 35 in front of Town Office to Main Street

Sidewalks/crosswalks  
Economic development  
Housing

Facelifts – Ball Room restoration/cohesive façade for all businesses  
Speed control for traffic  
More sidewalks

Expand outdoor rec opp  
Incorporate local history  
New development in character with historic downtown

Sidewalks  
Crosswalks/speed  
Building improvements

Road infrastructure  
More businesses

Fix current sidewalks downtown

Maintain town character  
Parking  
Develop existing structures

Historic protection  
Parking  
Job/housing opportunities

Economic development/Business assistance  
Incorporate local history  
Improve housing for families

Public transit  
Housing – senior & other  
Regulatory standards Re: Buildings downtown

Public safety  
Who regulates?  
Who defines standards?

Building improvements  
Diverse businesses  
Additional parking

Offering financial incentives to improve downtown area  
More parking in downtown area  
Promoting support for new business development

## 7. OTHER COMMENTS

*What is your overall vision for the Downtown?*

General appearance of downtown block – looks too depressing to out of towners and me. Trashed home should be cleaned out.

Harrison is just as beautiful now as when I moved here except Crystal Lake is not Crystal clear anymore. Beautification is a good idea but I don't think it needs major changes except trying to get a bus or something to make it easier for people to get here or go shopping/visiting - especially seniors.

Revitalization of existing structures

Re-energize and beautify

Downtown needs a bit more density and activity. Take the best of Bridgton (which has character but no lake access) and the best of Naples which is a bit to kitschy but has lake access. Harrison could capitalize on the best of both and minimize the downsides. Again, see what has been successful on other lakes, I think some of the nicer New Hampshire lakes have successfully done this. Sunapee and Squam come to mind.

Keeping our town a small town. People move here for that reason, it's a small town. Keep what we have in good shape, no need to add unnecessary things.

A nice area where people can walk from one end to the other on the sidewalk. They can cross to the PO, Library, ice cream, or either park safely. And there's a reason to be there other than those 4 things plus the gas station & store.

A place to spend time

I would love to see downtown cleaned up and new business open.  
A fresh coat of paint and cleaning windows would help immensely.  
Maybe fine business owners that don't take care of their property.

Quiet and comfortable recreation.

Improvement and better utilization of existing commercial properties; additional housing in Downtown; sewer system to allow more business uses

Clean up downtown overall-business owners must comply (incentives) for a fresh, clean look. More robust/diverse business options.

A place for people in town to meet and enjoy each other's company while offering dining and entertainment options for friends and families.

The downtown buildings look old and dilapidated. They need improvements to their facades. Some of the older buildings need to be torn down and new structures built that will bring the downtown into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Planners need to be creative and not just try to rehab some of the old buildings. Expand the downtown business district.

Any thoughtful, significant upgrade and refresh would be wonderful!

Cleanup what we already have and bring neighbors together. Keep the town small. Surrounding towns can cater to seasonal visitors but our town doesn't need to expand. People will love it for its charm and friendly people. We don't need to be fancy. We can promote our small simple gatherings.

It is beautiful as - is with a few exceptions - if we could come up with guidelines to keep the charm of the area and buildings and assistance to those financially having trouble keeping up - that would be my suggestion.

The downtown becomes more visitor friendly and pedestrian oriented

People come here for quiet simple life style to relax and chill. If they want big town life style to go Portland or Freeport.

Keep it small!

Walkability – some green – flowers – new coat of paint for the block building community gathering spaces

The Block has become an eyesore (sadly). The wine bar has painted their façade – making the remainder of the Block look even shabbier. There are a couple of homes coming into the village which really need a cleanup.

Maintain the character and the small town feel. Bridgton is close by, we do not need to grow our business district by leaps and bounds. I don't think we need to try to grow our waterfront or mimic Naples. We are a vacation area. We have year round and summer vacation rentals, summer camps, marinas. Although I understand if the population continues to grow we may need a larger school or PO or full time FD. I don't think we intentionally need to enlarge the business district. I see a lot of the ideas as people who moved here from other areas trying to make Harrison like what they left behind; or perhaps expecting people to have more money than they do. I actually heard a lot of statements that substantiate that when facilitating a group at the open meeting recently.

Improve façade of Building i.e. Harrison Market building

Maintain historic design

Improve what we have. We will never be Bridgton or Norway but the buildings we have could be improved. The Grange is a rummage/junk yard – it needs to be utilized. The Caswell House Restaurant is needed! The block building needs help. Stores not living space in town.

Balance any development without natural beauty and serenity. Think of Harrison as both a treasured RESOURCE and a REFUGE.

Small hometown feel. I'd like to see Harrison remain the same with a facelift of the block building, sidewalks/crosswalks upgraded and added economic development, while keeping downtown Harrison the small friendly village. Healthy competition but keep it as a hometown feel.

The buildings look tired and not maintained with the exception of a few. Too many vacant – not appealing.

Derelict unsightly properties in downtown are condemned and cleaned up

Cleaner, updated but keeping historical original look – more “walker” friendly

Brought up to date to be more welcoming

Leave it alone!!!

To remain the same, as much as possible.

I’d love the downtown to be more of a destination rather than a pass through. Places to walk around and take in scenery, places to meet & have a drink, more access to the waterfront.

To be a place of access for all individuals, including expanded arts, music, activities for seniors and locals. Not just aimed to the money from summer residents.

A trolley? We are not Kennebunkport!

Make 14 Main St. clean up that mess.

Clean/Safe

Maintain historical aspects. Combine meeting the needs of year round residents while continuing to address the seasonal needs of tourists and summer residents.

*What types of new businesses would you like to see in the Downtown?*

I would love to see an internet cafe where people can go for internet use and a coffee, tea and a light fare. Politically neutral. We don't need another late night bar, but maybe a small brew pub. Perhaps a couple shops that sell crafts, not junk shops with stuff people can get any other place.

Another restaurant/diner

A less overpriced place for groceries/gas/sandwiches

Breakfast place

Coffee Shop, Breakfast, Wine Bar

restaurants

marina/waterfront activity center

\*More restaurant opportunities. More boat parking similar to Naples so people can park and access the town (and spend money) via the lake. A restaurant and/or bar on the lake would be ideal. A general store that has a little hardware and little boating and a little sports/fishing gear would be great. I love the Tie Up. It would be that but for goods and not food/beverage.

None.

breakfast spot/bakery

bank

pharmacy

Breakfast place

A bakery was mentioned at some point. That would be nice.

I would support anything but I would stay away from consumer and go more for dr's and other services. Ones that don't have much night or weekend traffic.

More dining options; artist co-op; coffee shop/bakery; bank or credit union; professional services (ex. legal, real estate, healthcare)

Bakery, gift shop, more dining options.

Keep it simple. We travel to Naples or Bridgton for dining and entertainment. Would be good to have reason to stay in Harrison. Two general stores is repetitive. A cafe would be nice...or someplace where you can meet with friends and have a coffee/drink. Compliment the existing businesses with a few more different offerings

Breweries and restaurants with outdoor dining on the water. Look what Naples has done.

Eateries, cafes

Anything

Maybe a sit down breakfast restaurant?

Perhaps more fresh food in the market? More than you can get at the tie up. (Sorry Brian if this is more on you) BUT KEEP IT THE SMALL MARKET.

We have a pretty good mix right now for a small town. Would LOVE to see something done with the Grange building! It is a wonderful space going to waste in my opinion.

Professional offices

A bank.

Bank/pharmacy

Bakery/Breakfast place

Another restaurant and a place that offers breakfast and lunch.

I believe this town did a good job of supporting three restaurants/eateries when they were here. Would love to see another back at the Caswell House site. I'd like to see another bank or perhaps a credit union open a branch. Other than that a gift shop or Maine made/local made shop would be nice. I also think our local law practice is missed. Making sure those who do boat to Harrison as a destination have sidewalks to take them to businesses, and know what is available would be nice.

Coffee shop

Art shops

Bank

Antiques

Family restaurant

Community Center – Clean up Grange, make handicap accessible. Would love a YMCA type facility with indoor pool and recreation center.

Attract another bank branch. No fast food joints.

Harrison has some great small businesses. I'd like to see them featured more while adding some others like a breakfast café, a community center.

Coffee & bakery shop. Antiques (that are open).

Café/coffee shop/breakfast spot

Outdoor seating restaurants

Indoor farmers market

None. Too close to lakes.

Art/antique shops, music conservatory

I'd love to see local shops selling local goods, a café, a late night spot with live music, more spaces for kids/families, bike rentals.

Expanded library w/ more resources/activities. Another restaurant. Place for gathering.

Bakery/Another restaurant/Gift shop

Grocery store/market

Diner

Book store

Coffee shop/bakery

Breakfast place

*Do you have any suggestions for new promotional "themes" for the Downtown? ("What does the Downtown mean to you? What might attract others to visit the Downtown?..")*

Seasonal functions, Christmas in Harrison draws a lot of people, perhaps ice skating. A lot of people used to love going to town dances at the Legion, maybe that. We don't need a lot, just a few special things. I know we do most of these things but they are good and should be kept.

In order to have a theme, more businesses would be needed to draw focus to the downtown.

I like the "friendly village" theme

Marina at entrance to town from Bridgton is rundown with broken walkways, disappointing look. A cleaned up marina with a more accessible waterfront activity center would attract people to town.

\* Make Harrison the best of Bridgton and Naples without the honky-tonk. Also if there is an empty space it could be a rotating artist studio where you invite better artists to work there for a couple of weeks at a time. If they sell anything a portion would go to offset the free studio space. This would be an active studio and not strictly for sale of previously made goods.

feature lakes and recreational facilities

clean it up! So many business do not take pride in their surroundings.

My preference would be for it to be centered around walking and recreation not commerce.

Downtown sits between two beautiful lakes and could better leverage these assets with more waterfront access/views

The Friendly Downtown

Harrison The Friendly Village is fine. You need to provide local and summertime residents grocery stores, restaurants and breweries so that they stay local and don't drive to Naples, Bridgton or Norway. It's a narrow corridor, so you would have to be very creative. Expand towards Bridgton or up 117 or down 35.

Emphasis on historical and recreational aspects

Neighbor to neighbor- keep it simple. Bring back things that are not costly but get people involved: winter festival w/snow coloring, sled rides, and ice cutting; Christmas in Harrison; Halloween parade/party; etc... Tell people "if your last name begins with A-F, bring or do this..." Basically neighborhood parties in town. Start with that.

Theme - old-fashioned charm - we can discuss what that means! Warm and friendly, active. Really LOVED the outside space the Olde Mill had! that was so nice!

Harrison is still a Village – come visit us

Life in the slow lane – the way it should be.

Love our sign at the intersection – maybe spruce it up?

Some historical signs about both the indigenous and colonizing settler history

We need to fix and update the veterans memorial

Harrison has always had that small town feel and the feel of a friendly village. A few retail shops would be very nice.

Quintessential small town.

Haunted Harrison parade or weekend in October

Coffee shop – small businesses – museum – restaurant – recreation - seasonal – winter activities

Having (almost!) everything one needs for daily life within the village/walking distance. Keep the scale of any future development within that scale.

Thank you for creating and promoting this well-designed survey!

The downtown for me is a place I can join friends for small local events while living nearby and a safe place to raise my boys. Keeping current local events happening to attract residents to the downtown area.

Main Street is currently a mixture of residential & business. Parking can be tight. Add a few benches, pretty streetlights and planters. Enforce clean up of one or two homes on Main St.

A nod to the gristmill or railroad

Friendly Village, it's a village, less a town. Keep that appeal.

Dog park

Bring back Old Home Days. Promotion and understanding of local history. Bring back the railroad and steamboats!!!

If we are known as the Friendly Village, we all have to act that way! Including town officials.

Questionnaire due date not enough notice or time.

Expand on the "Friendly Village" theme. "Drop in, we'd like to get to know you." "Step back in time to the way things used to be." "A place where everyone knows your name." "A town where visitors turn into residents."

Date & Time: 3/9/2023 6:00 PM

Location: Harrison Town Office

Project: 20882B Downtown Revitalization Plan

Objective: Selectmen's Meeting

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## Agenda Items

### 1. Front Street Update

- *Agreement with MDOT Status*
- *Project Reviews Complete*
- *Authorization to bid*
- *Schedule*
  - *Advertisements – March 14<sup>th</sup>*
  - *Bid Opening – April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 PM Town Office*
  - *Award – April 13<sup>th</sup>*

### 2. Downtown Plan Update

- *Findings and Recommendations drafted*
- *Next Public Presentation scheduled for May 4<sup>th</sup>*
- *Final report due in late summer or early fall*
- *MDOT positioning for future funding*
  - *Develop concepts from Downtown plan*
  - *PDR phase*

# Downtown Revitalization Action Plan

## Harrison, Maine

June 6, 2023

Jeffrey Preble, PE  
Kalle Maggio, RLA



# Introductions

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## Town Staff

Cass Newell

- Town Manager

Darryl Sterling

- Economic Development Consultant

Harrison Downtown Committee

- Matthew Frank
- Brian Williams
- Wendy Gallant
- Patrick Bracken
- Traci Williams
- Jacqui Gray

## Wright-Pierce

Kalle Maggio, RLA

- Lead Planner

Jeff Preble, PE

- Project Manager

# Public Workshop Agenda

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## Project Recap (15 minutes)

- Downtown Revitalization Plan Process Overview
- Public Input Process
- Draft Downtown Report (12 Sections)
- Belgrade Example
- Findings and Recommendations
- Priorities

## Four Group Breakout Sessions (45 minutes +/-)

## Group Priorities (40 min)

## Next Steps/Questions (15 min)

# Downtown Plan Process



## Kick-off Meeting

- Identify Downtown committee
- Key Stakeholders
- Confirm Study Area



## Public Workshops

- Initial Workshop – September
- Questionnaire
- Public Input & Vision
- Top 3 to 5 most important issues



## Concept Plans & Report

- Transportation Infrastructure
- Community Planning and Revitalization
- Site Planning

## Downtown Revitalization Action Plan Goals



- Develop a publicly supported consensus vision for the downtown
- Develop a prioritized action item list to meet the community needs through a planned approach
- Conformance with the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development's Downtown Plan Components
- Position Harrison for future MDOT funding opportunities

# Downtown Revitalization Action Plan

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[Draft-HarrisonDowntownPlan-2023-05-19.pdf](#)

- Village Snapshot
- Downtown Study Area
- Zoning/Ordinances/Comp Plan
- Building Inventory
- Retail/Commercial Space Inventory
- Employment Opportunities
- Residential Unit Inventory
- Pedestrian/Bicycle Movements
- Infrastructure – Streetscape/utilities
- Signage
- Parking
- Recreation

## Downtown Belgrade Before



## Downtown Belgrade After



# Downtown Belgrade



# Group Breakout Session

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## Group 1

Section 1  
Village Snapshot  
Section 6  
Retail/Commercial Space  
Section 10  
Infrastructure/Utilities

## Group 2

Section 3  
Study Area  
Section 7  
Employment  
Section 11  
Signage

## Group 3

Section 4  
Zoning/Ordinances  
Section 8  
Residential Units  
Section 12  
Parking

## Group 4

Section 5  
Buildings  
Section 9  
Pedestrian/Bicycle  
Section 13  
Recreation/Public Spaces

*Note: Section 2 is the Executive Summary*

# Findings/Recommendations/Priorities

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Findings & Recommendations



Action Items



Priorities

# Next Steps

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Oct- 2022



Questionnaires  
Due

Feb- 2023



Draft Plan  
Available

June- 2023



Draft Plan  
Presentation

July-2023



Plan Comments  
Due

Sept-2023



Final Plan  
Presentation

Oct-2023



Priority List  
Finalized

## Contact Information

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Kalle Maggio, RLA

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603.570.7137

# Group 1 Priorities

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## Section 1 Village Snapshot

- Safety & traffic calming
- Comprehensive plan for utility updates
- Library community asset
- Traffic Calming
- Truck noise through downtown (Engine brake signage)
- Visual cues for entering downtown

## Section 6 Retail/Commercial

- Sewer and water management

## Section 10 Utilities

- Better lighting
- Trash pick up
- Streetscapes
- Assessing underground utilities

# Group 2 Priorities

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## Section 3 Study Area

- Walkability – launch to launch
- Improve existing sidewalks
- Waterford Road/Depot
- RADR & Deertrees – Community Assets

## Section 7 Employment

- Technology improvements
- Shared storefronts
- Wifi in downtown
- Technical school coordination

## Section 11 Signage

- Ordinance update
- Wayfinding
- Sign post in town center

# Group 3 Priorities

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## Section 4 Zone/Ordinance

- Update comprehensive plan
- Utilities in downtown
- Manage zoning to guide growth to suit downtown

## Section 8 Residential Units

- Mixed use development – alternative levels of housing
- Zoning Ordinance updates to allow lower SF requirements
- Database of unoccupied housing

## Section 12 Parking

- Main streetscape
- Parking Study Master Plan
- Wayfinding to off street parking

# Group 4 Priorities

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## Section 5 Buildings

- Block Bldg – façade improvements and clock preservation
- Grange Bldg –join!!!

## Section 9 Ped/Bicycle

- Bike connections
- Sidewalk extension to farmers market
- Crystal Lake parking lot – permeable pavement option

## Section 13 Rec/Public Space

- Changing rooms rec program
- Dog park needs to consider pet waste and impact on lakes
- Playground for older kids
- Walkway to connect parks/boat launches
- Close Mill St for farmers market/events
- Public restrooms

THANK YOU

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Date: 6-6-23

**TOWN OF HARRISON**

Right to Know and Freedom of Access for Public Information

Downtown Revitalization Public Record

NAME	PHONE	EMAIL	Meeting Attendance
<u>Colleen Densmore</u>			<u>Mike Garey regarey@mead.r</u>
<u>Wendy Gallant</u>			<u>Kathleen Kramer</u>
<u>David Lissy</u>			
<u>Brian SPAULDING</u>	<u>583-4931</u>	<u>b.spaulding1@twe.com</u>	
<u>Matthew Frank</u>			
<u>Joseph Palacci</u>			<u>Pierress G YAHOO.COM</u>
<u>Andrea Askendunn for Resident Hanson ME.</u>			<u>Janet MAHONEY</u>
<u>Margy L. Jenier</u>			<u>Maurice and Laurie Porter</u>
<u>Phil Berlin</u>			<u>DOT KESCE</u>
<u>Matthew Audra Carter</u>			<u>Renee Joyce</u>
<u>Sue Meuse</u>			<u>Darryl Sterling</u>
<u>Martha Merrill</u>			<u>Andrew Ward</u>

Date: 6-6-23

**TOWN OF HARRISON**

Right to Know and Freedom of Access for Public Information

Downtown Revitalization <sup>Public Record</sup> <sub>Section</sub>

Meeting Attendance

Joseph Vander  
Wessicus  
Paula Kaye Tyle  
Louise Dewlin  
Ren Ward  
Barbara Ward  
Ellen Simms  
Peter Blown Jr  
Kelly Piper  
Tara Ruanaals  
Ray Rynkowski  
Linda Goss

Dwan Dalberg  
Eric Ahlberg  
Steve Bingham  
Crystal Mandler  
Scott Ramsdell  
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BY \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

CHCKD. BY \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SHEET NO. \_\_\_\_\_ OF \_\_\_\_\_

PROJECT NO. \_\_\_\_\_

PROJECT \_\_\_\_\_

BOOK NO. \_\_\_\_\_

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**Appendix C**  
**Long-Term Needs (Years 5+)**

## Harrison Downtown Plan – Appendix C: Long Term Action Items

Long Term (Years 5+)			
Strategy	Level of Effort	Notes	
Year 5+	Focus on branding initiative(s) that promote the village as starting points.	▶▶ ⌚ \$	Medium: Time and effort by downtown staff person / organization to coordinate with other regional partners. Potential costs for advertisements and promotions.  This effort should focus on the village as destinations within the greater region and coordinate with regional interests to promote the village as key introduction centers to regional outdoor recreation opportunities.
Year 5+	Initiate Village Wayfinding Signage while maintaining historic sign post in the town center.	▶▶ ⌚ \$	High: Time and effort developing master plan, project cost estimates, MaineDOT approvals, funding strategies and potential funding source applications. Selection of consultants to assist as needed.  Wayfinding Signage Master Plan with consultant assistance typically takes 6-12 months.  Funding and implementation typically take an additional 12-18 months.
Year 5+	Continued identification of infrastructure action items in need of capital investment and establish a funding / implementation strategy. Evaluate potential for Bike Lanes in key areas.	⌚ \$	High: Time and effort development project cost estimates, funding strategies, and potential funding source applications. Selection of consultants to assist as needed.  Funding source availability and application schedules. Leveraging resources (local capital and in-kind assets) with other funding program resources.
Year 5+	Downtown Plan 5-year update(s).	⌚ \$	Medium: Time and effort by volunteer committee with possible consultant assistance needed.  Budget for public planning process (advertising, meeting facilitation, staff time and possible consultant assistance.)
Year 5+	Review potential options for improvements and uses of the Grange Building along the waterfront area.	⌚	Low: Downtown Committee / Coordinator meeting time with the National Grange.  Identify key stakeholders for this effort.

⌚ = Significant Time/Personal Effort    \$ = Capital Funding    ▶▶ = Initiation of an On-Going Action Item

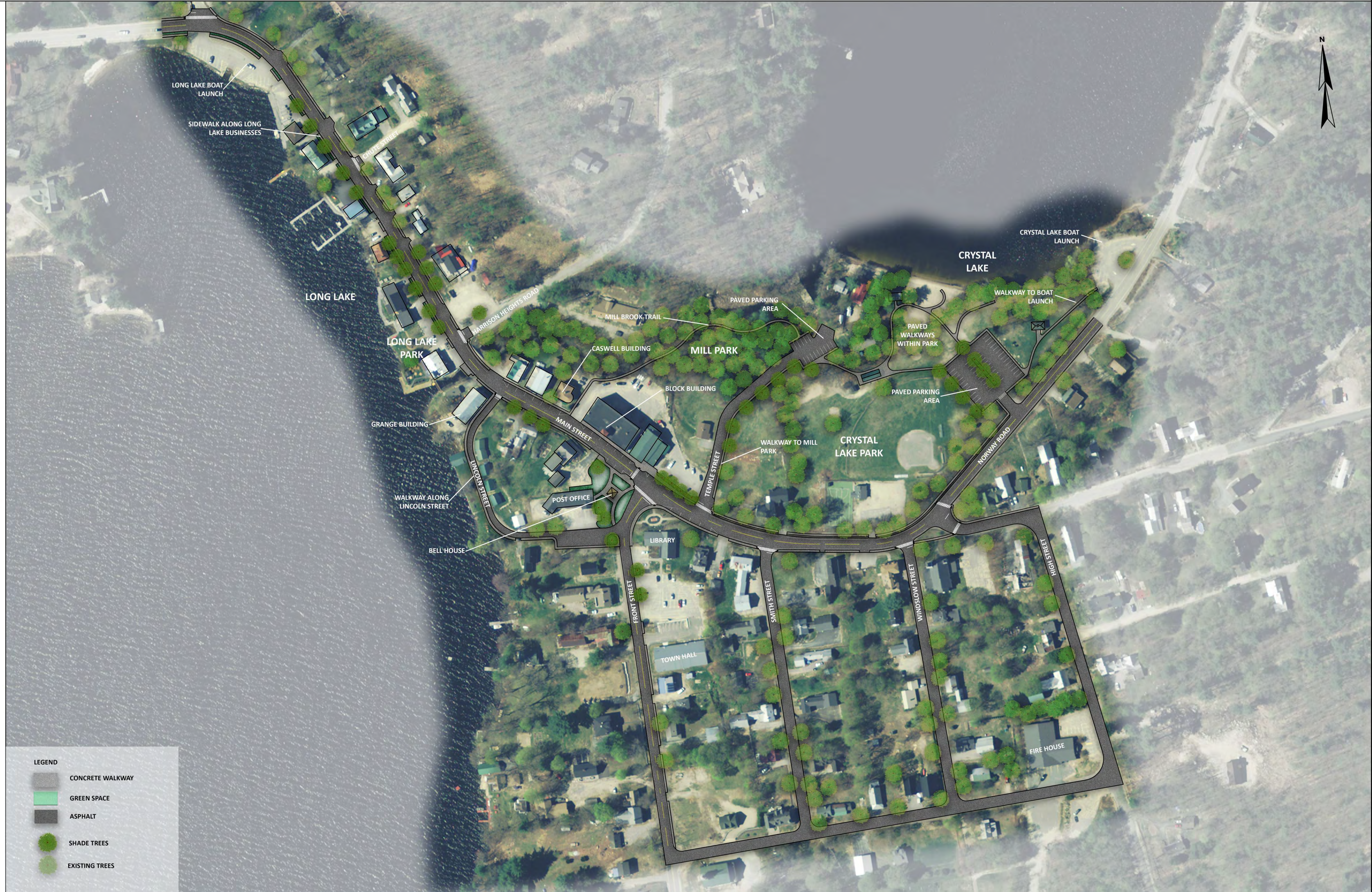
## Harrison Downtown Plan – Appendix C: Long Term Action Items

Long Term (Years 5+)			
Strategy	Level of Effort	Notes	
Year 5+	Develop available housing units database.	▶▶ ⊕ \$	Medium: Time and effort establishing and updating database. Coordinate with housing developers  Important to identify housing stock availability and the needs associated with workforce interests.
Year 5+	Develop available commercial / retail space database.	▶▶ ⊕ \$	Medium: Time and effort establishing and updating database. Coordination with others to utilize data for business recruitment.  Town maintained database, updated annually. Share with local entities (Chamber of Commerce, realtors, appointed plan coordinator, etc.)
Year 5+	Consider new ordinances that promote the DTR Plan.	⊕ \$	High: Time and effort by volunteer committee or planning board to research and prioritize new ordinance tools. Potential need for consultant assistance with update of Ordinance(s).  Ordinances should reflect the Comprehensive Plan in keeping with state statute.
Year 5+	Update the Comprehensive Plan to recognize the Downtown Revitalization Plan.	⊕ \$	Low: Minimal time and effort by volunteer committee given recent Comprehensive Plan update.  In house effort with town committee
Year 5+	Assess the effectiveness of the organization or staff leadership position responsible for coordination of the Downtown Revitalization Plan and decide to sustain this position or administer the plan in a different direction.	\$	Low: Time and effort on deciding if this support position should be sustained or replaced with another leadership mechanism.
Year 5+	Accrue capital investment to relocate utilities off Main Street or underground.	▶▶ ⊕ \$	High: Time and effort for utility coordination, developing project cost estimates, funding strategies, and potential funding source applications.  Project costs are estimated in the millions and it is estimated that a significant amount of time will be necessary to accrue funds for future (phased?) implementation.

⊕ = Significant Time/Personal Effort    \$ = Capital Funding    ▶▶ = Initiation of an On-Going Action Item



**Appendix D**  
**Concept Plans**



PLAN  
SCALE: 1"=100'

**WRIGHT-PIERCE**

11 BOWDOIN MILL ISLAND  
TOPSHAM, ME 04086

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION ACTION PLAN  
HARRISON, ME

OVERALL CONCEPT PLAN

DRAWING

CP-1



**LEGEND**

- CONCRETE WALKWAY
- GREEN SPACE
- ASPHALT
- SHADE TREES
- EXISTING TREES

**PLAN**  
1"=20'



**WRIGHT-PIERCE**

**DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION ACTION PLAN  
HARRISON, ME**

**CORE DOWNTOWN AREA**

11 BOWDOIN MILL ISLAND  
TOPSHAM, ME 04086

DRAWING  
**CP-2**



**LEGEND**

-  CONCRETE WALKWAY
-  GREEN SPACE
-  ASPHALT
-  SHADE TREES
-  EXISTING TREES

**PLAN**  
1"=20'

**WRIGHT-PIERCE**

11 BOWDOIN MILL ISLAND  
TOPSHAM, ME 04086

**DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION ACTION PLAN**  
HARRISON, ME

**CRYSTAL LAKE PARK IMPROVEMENTS**

DRAWING  
**CP-3**





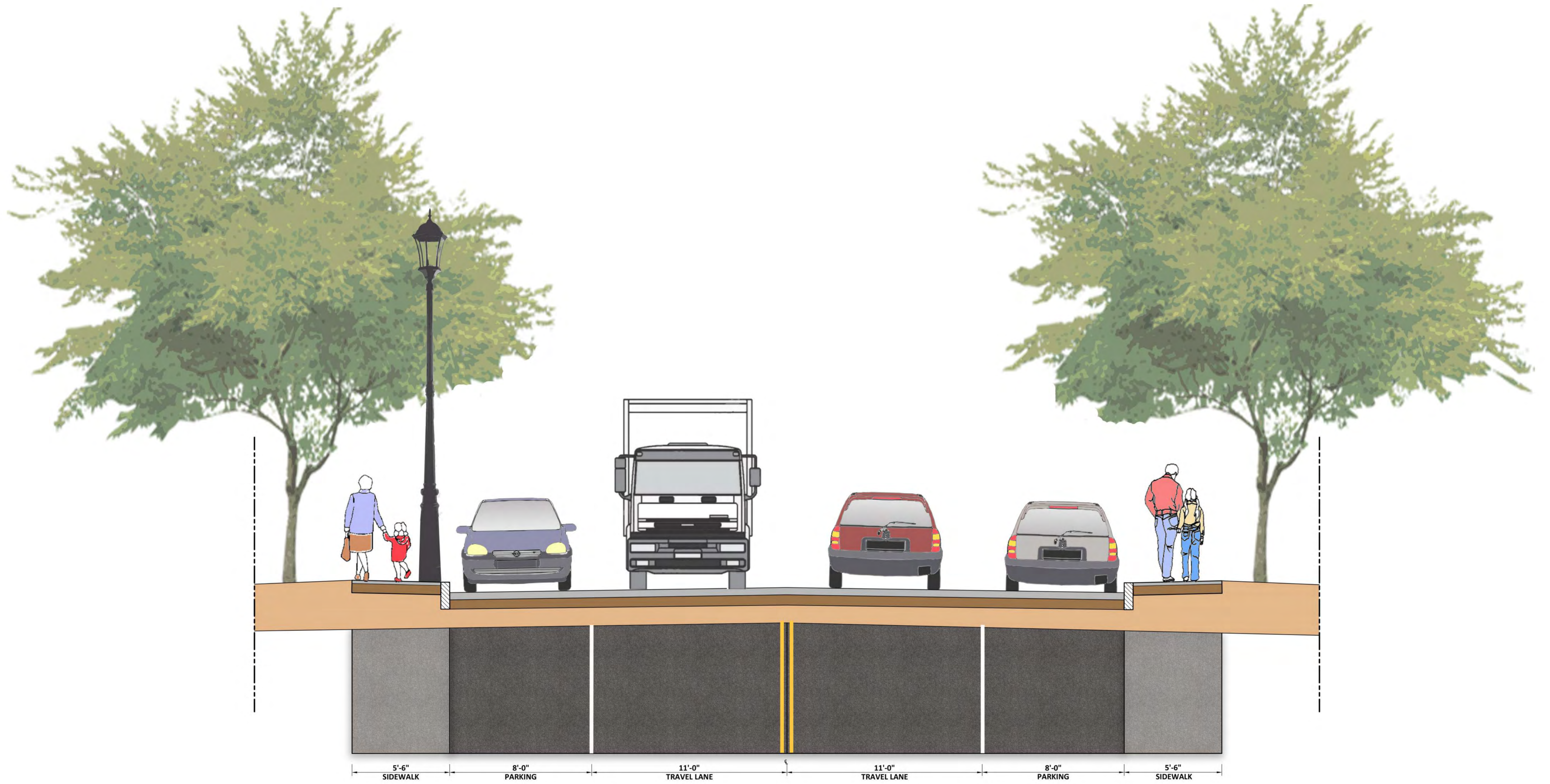












**DOWNTOWN MAIN STREET TYPICAL SECTION  
HARRISON, ME**



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