



# Downtown Revitalization Work Plan Skowhegan, Maine 2011

Prepared by

Town of Skowhegan  
Main Street Skowhegan  
June 2011

Approved by Selectmen  
June 28, 2011



## We are Skowhegan, Maine...

Our name is a Native American term for “a Place to Watch” as the Abenaki beckoned their people to come here for its abundant fish and wildlife.

*We are tied to our land-* we have always been a center of agriculture where people have gathered each year for nearly two centuries at the nation’s oldest State Fair. Today, we look to the land in innovative ways. Whether it is award-winning ice cream made from Maine’s own milk or a reinvented gristmill, our history of agriculture is not mere legacy, but a way to chart our future.

*We are tied to our river-* the Great Kennebec. It was the lifeline of our early industry and the source of power that made us one of the first electrified communities in America. Our industries continue to thrive, proudly making shoes and paper that travel the world. Today we turn to this great river with a bold vision to once again make the Kennebec a center of commerce and a place of pride for our citizens.

*We are tied to our community-* never content to rest; we are an industrious people in an authentic place where hard work reaps rewards. We elected the first female senator in the nation who stood up for common sense in a time of harsh rhetoric. We continue to strive to make this place, Skowhegan, Maine... a place to watch.



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### **Downtown Plan Development Committee**

The Joint Economic Restructuring and Design Committees of Main Street Skowhegan would like to thank the following for their time and effort in supporting the draft of the Downtown Revitalization Work Plan:



#### ***Main Street Economic Restructuring Committee***

Mark Bourgeois, CES, ER Chairman  
Chris Perkins, President, Skowhegan Economic Development Corp.  
Cory King, Executive Director, Skowhegan Area Chamber of Commerce  
Donna Russakoff, Russakoff Jewelers  
Jeff Hewett, Director, Economic and Community Development, Town of Skowhegan  
Jim Batey, Executive Director, Somerset EDC  
Kurt Maynard, Skowhegan Savings Bank  
Amber Lambke, Owner, Somerset Grist Mill  
Lew Ouilette, Town and Country Real Estate  
Bill Primmerman, Director, Somerset Heart Health  
Sally Dyer, Webber Fuels  
Karen Hart, AVP, Skowhegan Savings Bank

#### ***Main Street Skowhegan Design Committee***

Matt Dubois, Co-Owner, Bankery & Skowhegan Fleuriste  
Michael Hunt, Co-Owner, Bankery & Skowhegan Fleuriste  
Chuck Carpenter, Miles Carpenter Insurance  
Doreen Poulin, Key Appliance  
Greg Dore, Road Commissioner, Town of Skowhegan  
Mary Turbyne, MSAD 54 School Board  
Patricia Horine, Master Gardener & History House  
Stacy Gould, Bangor Savings Bank  
Steve Dionne, Dionne Construction  
Steve Govoni, President, Main Street Skowhegan, Member Skowhegan Planning Board

#### ***Town of Skowhegan & Support Organizations***

Skowhegan Board of Selectman  
John Doucette, Skowhegan Town Manager  
Denise LeBlanc, Director, Skowhegan Parks and Recreation  
Jeff McCabe, Skowhegan Planning Board Chairman, Maine State Rep District 85  
Chris Perkins, President, Skowhegan Economic Development Corporation  
Jeff M. McCabe, Skowhegan Planning Board  
Jennifer E. Olsen, Executive Director, Main Street Skowhegan  
Jim Batey, Executive Director, Somerset Economic Development Corporation

The Town of Skowhegan, Main Street Skowhegan Board of Directors and committee members, town departments, local business owners, and citizens of Skowhegan.

### **Statement of Consistency with Skowhegan Comprehensive Plan 2010 Update**

This plan has been developed in accordance with the goals and recommendations of the Skowhegan Comprehensive Plan 2010 Update (the “Comprehensive Plan 2010”) approved by the town and found to be consistent in accordance with the Maine Growth Management Act 30 -A M.R.S.A. §4312 et seq.

The vision, goals, and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan 2101 relating to the downtown are:

- The town wishes to preserve and enhance the economic vitality of its downtown area as the hub of Somerset County. Skowhegan Comprehensive Plan 2010 Update Volume 1, Summary and Recommendations, page 3
- Skowhegan’s economic health is tied to the vitality of its downtown. The historical commercial center also includes New Balance mill buildings and most of the government and service buildings. A lot of money and effort have been invested in revitalizing downtown, including establishment of a Main Street Community. Skowhegan Comprehensive Plan 2010 Update Volume 1, Summary and Recommendations, page 11, 12
- Continue to support investments in public infrastructure to generate economic development, including job training and business assistance. Skowhegan Comprehensive Plan 2010 Update Volume 1, Summary and Recommendations, page 12
- Improve the vitality and attractiveness in the downtown area, through infrastructure development, businesses support, marketing, beautification, and other strategies. Skowhegan Comprehensive Plan 2010 Update Volume 1, Summary and Recommendations, page 12
- Continue active downtown revitalization efforts, coordinating with the Chamber of Commerce and Main Street Skowhegan. Immediate objectives should be to fill upper story vacancies through improved handicapped access, attracting historic rehabilitation, improving the mix of downtown business, and building on the range of events and attractions to the downtown. Skowhegan Comprehensive Plan 2010 Update Volume 1, Summary and Recommendations, page 12, 13
- Work with Main Street to develop a downtown marketing plan, including a theme, promote materials, and signage. Skowhegan Comprehensive Plan 2010 Update Volume 1, Summary and Recommendations, page 13
- Parking lots are part of the transportation system. The Town regulates commercial lots so as to provide sufficient parking, and manages several municipal parking lots. The majority of municipal parking lots are in the downtown area, where densities preclude individual on-site parking. Parking in the downtown tends to be under-utilized; this could be due to the lack of downtown attractions, or the unattractiveness of the lots themselves. Skowhegan Comprehensive Plan 2010 Update Volume 1, Summary and Recommendations, page 25
- The transportation system consists of more than highways and roads. The town has an extensive sidewalk and trail system, but no public transportation options. A new plan will connect many of the sidewalks, walking trails, and bicycle trails. Public transportation is viewed as a need, both as an alternative mode of transportation and to alleviate downtown congestion, but a bus system is probably not viable at current development densities. Skowhegan Comprehensive Plan 2010 Update Volume 1, Summary and Recommendations, page 26

- Because of the demographic trends toward ageing and smaller households, and economic trends such as higher gas prices, the urban area of Skowhegan may soon regain its popularity for housing. This trend would benefit the town by allowing more efficient use of public services, such as fire protection, school bussing, sewer, and water. We should anticipate this trend and provide for it. *Skowhegan Comprehensive Plan 2010 Update Volume 1, Summary and Recommendations, page 28*
- Despite a decline in commodities, the overall number of farms and contribution to the economy is growing. This results from a shift to a new pattern of farming. The new pattern relies on more intensive use of land, value added production, and local markets more so than prime soils and commodity markets. For example, the prospective development of a grist mill promises an alternative market for farm products. The new pattern relies more heavily on local policies and community support. *Skowhegan Comprehensive Plan 2010 Update Volume 1, Summary and Recommendations, page 35*
- Encourage small scale agriculture and forestry operations, such as road side stands, sugarhouses, improvements to Skowhegan's Farmers Market and pick-your-own/cut-your -own operations, and incorporate value-added processing as an economic cluster in local and regional development plans. *Skowhegan Comprehensive Plan 2010 Update Volume 1, Summary and Recommendations, page 36*

## **Executive Summary**

Downtown Skowhegan is a unique and vibrant downtown center, established as a Main Street Community in 2005. The downtown is the commercial and community center of the town, and serves as the focal point for the town's and region's revitalization.

Through thoughtful and integrated planning, Skowhegan's Downtown will further serve to create jobs, facilitate adaptive reuse of buildings, provide for an increased tax base, foster investment in the community, and serve as a social, heritage, and cultural center for its citizens. Its geography as a gateway community to the rest of the state, via Routes 2, 201, and 150, and its service role as the county seat make it a key service and commercial center, leaving no doubt that Skowhegan's thriving downtown is an integral part of the region's economic future. Through the development of the sustainable revitalization strategies described here, we hope to create a viable, livable, and equitable downtown with social and cultural vibrancy, environmental integrity, and economic prosperity.

As with older downtown districts, Skowhegan has unique attributes, both attractive and challenging. This document hopes to identify the potential of the downtown and provide guidance for revitalization; incrementally, progressively, and with community involvement, using Main Street's Four-Point® approach, building on proven economic revitalization strategies and supportive infrastructure, and making public improvements that are necessary to create healthy, diverse, sustainable downtown development and a creative economy.

The Skowhegan Downtown Revitalization Plan 2011 (the "Downtown Plan" or the "Plan") has been developed with the goals of, and in concurrence with, the goals, objectives, and recommendations of the Skowhegan Comprehensive Plan 2010 update, with a finding of consistency with M.R.S.A 30-A §4312 by the Maine State Planning Office on April 1, 2010, and approved by the town voters.

During the Downtown Plan's development, it was agreed that Skowhegan's plan would be unique, as it will not only focus on physical improvements such as sidewalks, benches, and landscaping with those infrastructure and public improvements, but also address one of the major challenges to downtown revitalization: integrating economic recovery and viability, through inclusion of economic revitalization strategies.

The Economic Revitalization Strategies of this plan include description of incentives for new and existing downtown business; community visioning, branding, and marketing of the downtown; upper story professional and residential development; advocacy for downtown business and projects at the local, county, state, and federal government level; and identifying and facilitating funding and grant opportunities for downtown business incubation.

The identified Infrastructure and Public Improvement Projects in this Plan reflect ongoing private and public investment of close to \$1,000,000 in 2010. This includes the adaptive reuse and extensive private investment in the former Somerset County Jail, where development of a food hub for community supported agriculture, a Grist Mill for artisan grains, and Farmers Market is currently underway; the development of the Downtown riverfront with walkable pedestrian friendly trails, sidewalks, and greenspaces with connections to the town's new ADA trail system; the development of a white water park now in the modeling stage, the recent façade improvements of existing downtown buildings, and the addition and expansion of niche retailers and service

providers in the downtown and historic district, such as The Bankery, Skowhegan Fleuriste, and River Roads Artisans Gallery. This plan's vision and goal is to connect the downtown from the "Gorge to the Grist Mill" making a socially and economically vibrant community and cultural space called Downtown Skowhegan.

During the planning process, key infrastructure and public improvement projects emerged that will be the catalyst for continued revitalization:

- Greenspace, Walkway, and Municipal Lot Improvements, including Commercial, High, Court, and Water Streets: Fostering support, development, and investment in Community Agriculture, Regional Food Hub, Adaptive Re-use at the Grist Mill Complex, Farmers Market, Chamber of Commerce, Renovated Theater, adding "pocket parks", walkable from the "Gorge to the Grist Mill"
- Waterfront Gorge Infrastructure and Improvements: Supporting connection to the Trail System, Waterfront and River Access and Greenspace, Run-of-River Project, White Water Park development, Recreation
- Madison/Commercial Cluster: Supporting Traffic and Pedestrian Safety, Greenspace, Historic Preservation, Downtown Visual Impact
- Community and Public Amenities: Developing Cultural and Heritage Assets, connecting to the Downtown Greenspace and Walkways, Public Art Displays in Downtown buildings, Skowhegan Free Public Library, and unique resources such as the Margaret Chase Smith Library and Skowhegan History House.

## **Introduction**

Since 1995, Skowhegan has had downtown revitalization on its agenda. Initial plans sought the establishment of a nationally-certified Main Street program, rehabilitation of the lighting and sidewalks, reconnecting downtown to the municipal parking lot on one side and the Kennebec River and riverside walking trails on the other. Enhancements to pedestrian experience in and through downtown, and upper floor ADA accessibility for the Flatiron through the Renaissance building construction in 2007 are some of the more recent visible improvements in downtown Skowhegan. Sewer and water improvements have also occurred, historic preservation has begun to be addressed, and design of greenspace and streetscape projects for overall health and vibrancy of our town center are now emerging. Throughout all of this, national trends of changes to the traditional retail model, municipal and other services now accessible by computer, and challenges of two-parent working families have changed the way we interact with our downtowns. Thoughtful, sustainable clusters of development are the most prudent use of town spaces overall, and our downtowns deliver this.

In January of 2011, members of Main Street's Economic Restructuring and Design Committees, working in collaboration with the Town of Skowhegan's Highway, and Economic and Community Development Departments sought to inventory all of the past reports and recommendations, list accomplishments to date, and discuss key areas of concern for the newest and most relevant Downtown Revitalization Plan.

In addition, ***Economic Revitalization Strategies*** to attract new investment need to be in place. Specifically:

- Development of Incentives for New and Existing Businesses
- Visioning and Branding
- Downtown Marketing: Putting Skowhegan on the Map
- Upper Story Professional and Residential Development
- Advocacy for downtown businesses and projects at the local, county, state and Federal government levels
- Development of grant and funding opportunities for business incubation
- Main Street Skowhegan's role in facilitating comprehensive, incremental change using the 4-point Approach© for downtown revitalization

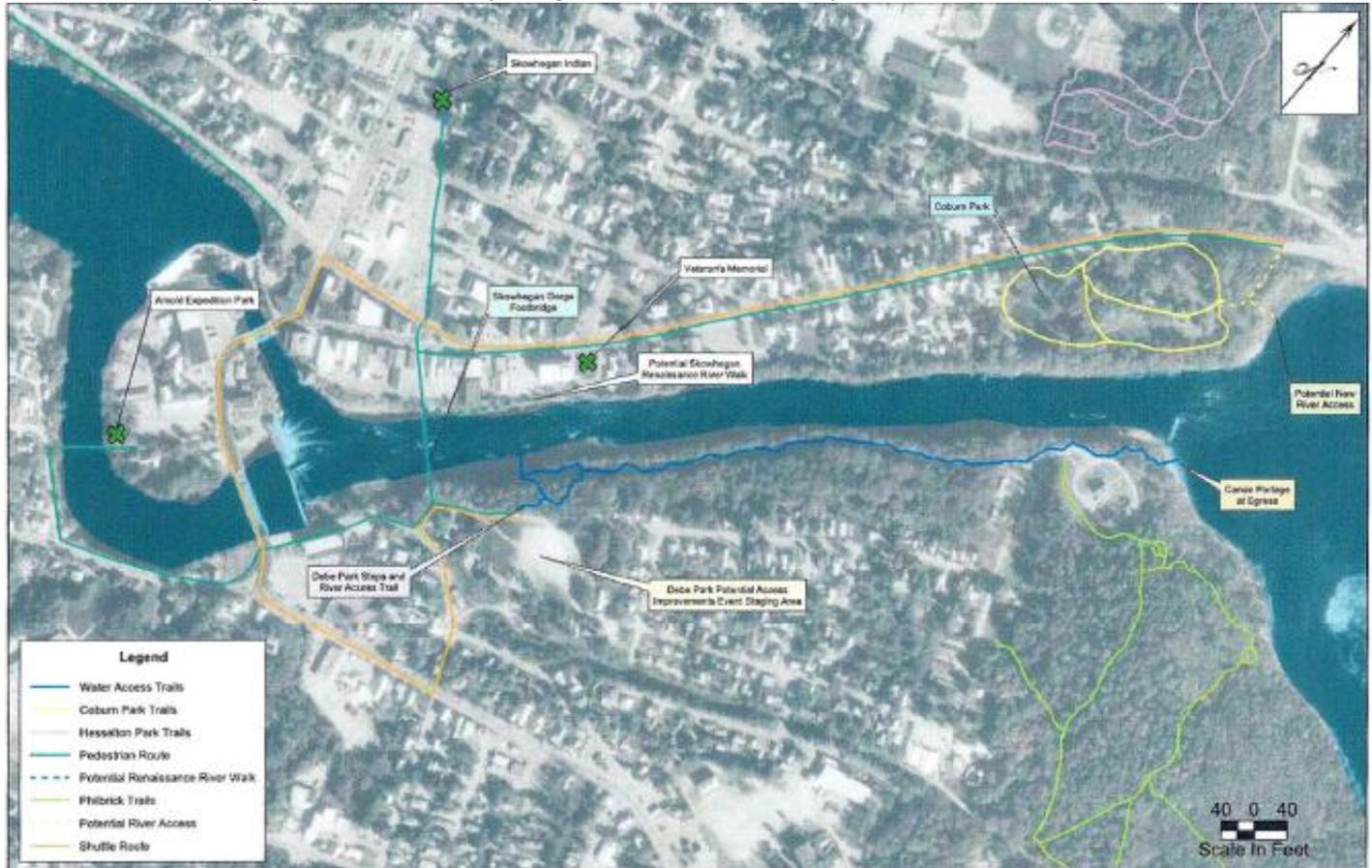
As we move forward, several ***Capital Investment Projects for Infrastructure and Public Improvements*** have been identified as cornerstones to attract new investment, improve the district overall, support the creative economy, and provide a base for downtown revitalization. They are:

- Riverfront Renaissance
- Municipal Parking Lot's Pedestrian Connector
- Madison-Commercial Cluster
- Historic and Cultural Assets

We hope that this document will provide a comprehensive road map for Downtown Skowhegan's sustainability for the next 10 years. It bears noting that as we meet Skowhegan's challenges as County Seat, which include poverty, access to the court system and health and human service needs, we create a Downtown that is economically viable, has social/cultural vibrancy, pursues environmental integrity, and incorporates socially equitable initiatives.

## STUDY AREA

The Study Area for this Downtown Revitalization Plan, as depicted below, is bounded on the south by the Kennebec River, the north by High Street, the west by Dodge Court, and the east by Notre Dame de Lourdes Hall on Water Street.



### **Current Downtown Initiatives and Projects**

1. Façade Grants underway: In 2008, Community Development Block Grant monies were awarded eleven (11) buildings matching funds to improve exteriors for a total of \$125,000 . In 2010, seventeen (17) properties were improved, resulting in over \$360,000 of both private and public investment. In addition, a portion of these funds allowed for expansion of banner bracket hardware for the historic light poles throughout downtown.
2. Infrastructure Improvements of Grist Mill: The adaptive reuse of the former Somerset County jail to present grist mill capacity has come from numerous sources, allowing for milling equipment to be housed inside, production flow to be maximized, and multi-use compatibility to be reached. A pottery studio, fiber arts business, Skowhegan Farmer's Market space, food aggregating warehouse, community garden and commercial kitchen are complete. Upgrades to the energy systems will provide more efficiency for the structure, with a total public and private investment in excess of over \$500,000.
3. ADA Trail Development: Downtown Skowhegan is fortunate to have the Kennebec River Running through its downtown, and the past several years' trail development has recently yielded a \$200,000 DOT grant for an ADA-accessible trail spanning from the railroad trestle footbridge in Downtown to the Eddy, off Route 2, across the river from the public boat launch. Skowhegan also received an \$110,000 Riverfront Community Grant. With the town matching \$50,000, and New Balance Foundation funding the development of mountain biking trails, a beautiful trail system will be in place by summer 2011, accessible from the downtown.
4. DOT bridge/bypass/reconstruct: It bears noting that several ideas for a new bridge, a downtown bypass, and reconstruction of the Margaret Chase Bridge into downtown have been discussed at great length, with no immediate solution pending. Skowhegan's Comprehensive Plan does not advocate for any of these measures, and therefore discussion of altering traffic flow for the near future is not a viable option for this document at present.
5. Wayfinding and Branding: As a major thoroughfare for both north-south (via Routes 201, 104 and 150) and east-west (Route 2) proper signage and appropriate branding are needed to convey unity, cohesiveness, and an hospitable traffic flow for vehicles, pedestrians, as well as ensure healthy commerce for the district. In November, 2011, Main Street Skowhegan held a community branding initiative to highlight the essential message of Skowhegan's unique character and assets. Implementation strategies completed to date are a new visitor's guide for the town, new street banners, a comprehensive media campaign, and wayfinding and signage that reflects this new brand.
6. Green Space/streetscape: Sidewalks, period lighting, strategic plantings and street trees all contribute to the overall walkability and attractiveness of downtown. Enhancing the trailhead over the gorge is slated for summer 2011, linking trails to amenities. The 2007 Renaissance building construction with first-floor public restrooms, a thoroughfare to Water Street from the Municipal Parking lot, and elevator service to all flatiron buildings will have long-lasting impact that is just beginning. 2011's addition of a whitewater kayak outfitter in the retail space of this building has already resulted in new employment and young families returning to downtown.
7. Downtown Art Initiatives: Long held as a standard for artistic excellence through the world-famous Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Skowhegan has a quiet but emerging reputation for fine art of all kinds. The recent resurgence of the Wesserunsett Arts Council will hold its first-ever public art display in downtown in the summer of 2011. Their second Studio Tour throughout the region happens August 2011, and Artwalks are scheduled to begin summer, 2011 and continue to 2012.

8. Adaptive Reuse discussions for vacant/blighted properties: Certain properties have been identified as “at risk” for their long vacancy and neglected maintenance. As Skowhegan’s demand for quality increases, Main Street Skowhegan hopes to advocate for their historic preservation through structural and aesthetic upgrades whenever possible.
9. Revolving Loan Programs: Skowhegan Economic and Community Development Corporation currently operates a revolving loan fund to help entrepreneurs with low interest financing and forgivable loans with the promise of job creation.
10. Community Marketing through Maine Tourism and area visitor guide: as Downtown Skowhegan looks to invite more tourism to the area, marketing tools need to reflect a professional, positive message as well as convey the broad range of its offerings, particularly in the areas of recreation and heritage tourism. Special focus on the Kennebec River and Margaret Chase Smith, Skowhegan State Fair, and other community amenities will serve to attract visitors and help Skowhegan identify itself proudly through its assets.
11. Analysis of Food Shed Potential using downtown infrastructure: Skowhegan’s unique density of population services amid the surrounding rural landscape positions it well for the burgeoning local foods movement. Increasing gas prices and mass-production food safety issues will further emphasize the trend toward more local production and aggregation of small farm and the desirability of shorter distances food travels to consumers.
12. Worksite Wellness and Public Health Initiatives: Somerset Heart Health Public Health Collaborative, long a pioneer for innovative models in public health pilot projects, now has made worksite wellness best practice accessible to micro-business. Using the same tools larger companies do, small employers in our region can offer meaningful health measures to their employees for low-cost or no cost, using disease prevention and self-directed incremental change for a healthier workforce overall.
13. Waterfront development initiatives of Water Park modeling: Current town commitment of \$250,000 of the SAPPI TIF for the construction of a whitewater park in downtown will ensure that proper construction feasibility will occur. If successful, Run of River Whitewater Park will mark Downtown Skowhegan as a whitewater destination.
14. Additional Pedestrian Crosswalks: The corner of Madison Avenue and Commercial Streets require increased motorist attention, and Maine DOT will be installing a lighted pedestrian crosswalk from the Municipal Parking lot during the summer of 2011. Also, textured surfacing on the Madison/Water Street intersection will serve to slow vehicular traffic to a speed more in keeping with the walkable nature of our downtown.
15. Second floor residential space development: Skowhegan currently has a largely untapped second floor in buildings, and development efforts should include special incentives for upper story housing or light office use. This reflects a trend of younger people seeking downtown living with amenities close by.
16. Local Cultural Assets Development: The Library, Opera House, History House, Fairgrounds, Coburn Park, Arnold Monument, and Museum in the Streets all play an important role in Skowhegan’s attractiveness and livability. Signage, maintenance, and collaborative marketing strategies will ensure these resources are preserved as well as poised for growth. Recent designation as a Preserve America Community in 2011 will further these aims.

17. Ongoing coordination of collaborative community programming: using technology and shared marketing, more programming can occur with limited resources if the pool of volunteers in Skowhegan continues to move toward more collaboration in presentation of community events.

### **Update and Status of Recommendations from the Town of Skowhegan Redevelopment Plan 2005**

During the planning process, the Economic Restructuring Team identified strategies that continue to have impact as well as expand the overall revitalization strategy for downtown. The strategies identified in the 2005 Plan fall into the following categories:

1. Organizational;
2. Promotion and Marketing;
3. Design; and
4. Economic Revitalization.

In 2005 Skowhegan became a Main Street Community, and these strategies morphed into the Main Street Four Point Approach®. Using this approach, the stakeholders in Downtown Skowhegan:

#### ***Met Organizational Objectives:***

- Established a separate 501 (C) (3) organization, Main Street Skowhegan, (2005) to address downtown development
- Continued to implement comprehensive, incremental work in all areas, earning Main Street Skowhegan Outstanding Program of the Year from the Maine Downtown Center, its governing entity, and the Governor's Award for Community Spirit from the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development (2010)
- Established collaborative relationships with other entities, namely Skowhegan and Somerset Economic Development, Kennebec and Moose River Valley Tourism, Skowhegan Chamber of Commerce, Main Street, Maine Downtown Center, Civic Clubs and Organizations, Faith Communities, Legislators, Farmer's Market, and Large Manufacturers such as SAPPI and New Balance

#### ***Met Promotional Objectives:***

- Special Events: Established culturally-relevant events and activities to foster community identity and improve Skowhegan's draw as a leisure destination. Recent events include Tent Days, establishing a link between the Skowhegan State Fair and New Balance Annual Tent Sale, Maple Week in acknowledgment of Somerset County's largest cash crop, and Riverfest in celebration of the River Heritage. Additionally, Main Street collaborated with other local entities for such favorites as Holiday Stroll, Moonlight Madness, Skowpendous, Coburn Park Concert Series, Farmer's Market, Kneading Conference and Bread Fair
- Marketing of Skowhegan: Through regional and statewide initiatives, the community now enjoys presence in Maine Tourism, visibility through local media presence, and, as a result of community-wide branding activities (fall 2010), has a marketing position statement and collateral material to deliver a unified community message to promote Skowhegan

***Met Economic Restructuring Objectives:***

- Maintained existing core of business and enhanced economic performance by establishing a business roundtable for owners to talk about their concerns, address legislative issues, and share strategies for success
- Expanded range of merchandise available in downtown and identified leakage through: 2007's Market Analysis for Main Street from Clue Group, Thomas College Consumer Survey, 2007, and subsequent amended market strategy from Todd Ward, 2007
- Inventoried downtown businesses and buildings, for suitability and opportunities (2010)
- Led joint Design/ER team for Downtown Revitalization Plan development
- Enhanced downtown image as a place to do business, promoting the successes of the downtown businesses and Main Street with ongoing press updates, business news, and electronic correspondence with the public
- Established through Skowhegan Economic Development Corporation a revolving loan fund for business development
- Established through Skowhegan Economic Development Corporation a Downtown TIF district for reinvestment into downtown
- Offered through Skowhegan Economic Development business technical assistance and CDBG grant administration

***Met Design Objectives***

- Improved traffic flow
- Improved public perception of safety through bump outs at crosswalks, pedestrian crossing signals, and street tree plantings for overhead canopy
- Improved the management of on and off-street parking with designated two-hour and all day parking, and encouraged business owners and employees to use alternate all-day spaces
- Established a parking officer to enforce downtown parking ordinances
- Upgraded physical condition of buildings through 2 rounds of CDBG Community Enterprise Grant façade improvements
- Created a distinctive visual environment through branding, banners, street trees, and public plantings on the east and west ends of Water Street and the Municipal Parking lot, picnic tables and benches
- Worked to ensure that historical aspects of the downtown are preserved through adaptive reuse of the former county jail to the Somerset Grist Mill, Bankery and Fleuriste businesses established and expanded

- The Renaissance building was constructed for upper floor development, pedestrian thruway, and public restrooms. Current new business developed for a whitewater rafting outfitter is now a tenant on the first floor retail space of the Renaissance building, and upper floor office space is now occupied
- Worked with DOT toward the establishment of a Madison-Commercial pedestrian crossing with a signal light, as well as explored the feasibility of a traffic calming strip on Water Street. This is ongoing
- Worked with DOT on various options to alleviate bridge congestion including a bypass, new bridge construction, and current bridge redesign. No definitive solution has yet been established
- Installed new streetlights that are in keeping with the historic period of downtown (2007)
- Installed new sewer and water systems in downtown (2006)
- Installed new sidewalks of scored asphalt throughout downtown

### **Planning Process and Implementation**

Main Street Skowhegan's Process for preplanning of this document began with the community branding and visioning initiative presented with urban planners Arnett Muldrow in November of 2010. In January, members of Main Street Skowhegan's Design and Economic Restructuring Teams began meeting with Town departments and community volunteers for the purpose of recreating the Downtown Plan, last revised in 2005. Since January, the group has met monthly to define projects, then weekly to research formatting designs, collect data, comply with state a downtown plan, and prepare and conduct community meetings to garner feedback. Data and progress has been posted on Main Street Skowhegan's website, and source material is available through the Town of Skowhegan Economic and Community Development Department web page. Regular updates to the board of Selectmen, televised on public access cable Channel 11, also served to disseminate information. Regular media announcements through local daily and weekly newspapers, as well as notice in Main Street Skowhegan's electronic newsletter brought this information to the community. In addition to the community visioning and branding meetings were held with stakeholders on April 11, 2011 and with the Board of Selectman on April 12, 2011. This document reflects over 200 hours of volunteer time in its preparation. For more information on the process, please contact Main Street Skowhegan.

**Parking**

According to the Brookings Institution in their Research Brief, Turning Around Downtown: Twelve Steps to Revitalization, by Christopher B Leinberger, humans only want to walk about 1,500 feet until they begin looking for alternative means of transportation. And in that 1,500 feet there must be something interesting and wanted, and it must be in a safe environment, with streetscapes and people to watch along the way.

Skowhegan’s Downtown has had the perception of inadequate and poorly placed parking, however with over 475 estimated municipal and street parking spaces and approximately 300 private and shared use private parking spaces, for a total of 775 parking spaces, within 1,500 feet of destination locations in the downtown this perception is incorrect. This also does not take into consideration the dedicated parking at the Grist Mill (former Somerset County jail) that supports Court Street parking for area business, the Public Court Parking Lot located adjacent to the Court House, just outside the downtown district as well as the parking available adjacent to the Municipal Parking Lot formerly known as Rumors. Making the parking “pedestrian friendly” with pleasant streetscapes, connecting the urban trail system to the ADA Trail, and providing safe pedestrian corridors to destination places within the downtown is key to downtown revitalization and enhancing the creative economy.

Location Private	Spaces
Bankery	5
Belanger	4
Bloom & Bloom	6
Dodge Court	12
Eagles Club	30
Former Key Bank	8
Grist Mill LLC/Farmers Mkt	36
Grondens	7
Jordan	2
Kennebec Gorge RE	4
Key Appliance	12
LC Dill	10
Leakos	4
Lerness Shoe	14
M F Carpenter	12
Nana's	3
Paper Clip	3
Prudential	2
Rumors	10
Skowhegan Free Library	20
Skowhegan Savings	25
Skowhegan Training Center	55
USPS	9
Youney	10
<b>Total Private</b>	<b>307</b>

Location Public	Spaces
Riverfront	50
Muni Parking Lot	150
Court Street	25
Water Street	36
Madison	17
Island Church	100
Vet Park	29
USDA	15
Town Hall	33
<b>Total Public</b>	<b>475</b>

### **Economic Revitalization Strategies**

This Plan is unique as it will not only be focused on physical improvements such as sidewalks, benches, and landscaping-it includes those infrastructure and public improvements, but attempt to address one of the major challenges to downtown revitalization-economic recovery and viability.

The Economic Revitalization Strategies of this Plan includes facilitating incentives for new and existing downtown business, vision, branding of the downtown, and marketing, facilitation of upper story professional and residential development in downtown, advocacy for downtown business and projects at the local, county, state, and federal government level, identifying and facilitating funding and grant opportunities for downtown business incubation.

### ***Development of Incentives for New and Existing Businesses***

Whether a business is interested in expanding, needs financing options, or even needs a transition plan as owners near retirement, entrepreneurs need professional services they can trust, and very clearly outlined steps to meet their needs. Getting lenders together with businesses, sharing the market data and how to interpret it, and giving clear steps of best practices can all be very helpful to small business, which is the most resilient type of business, and makes up the critical mass of Skowhegan's downtown business mix.

As we encourage businesses to locate in the Downtown, they are able to share amenity costs of parking, restrooms, second floor access, and road maintenance while saving taxpayer money. Agencies such as Main Street Skowhegan, Skowhegan and Somerset Economic Development Corporations, Kennebec Valley Council of Governments, and others can offer low-cost and no-cost options for technical assistance and can help with marketing, interpreting market data, not to mention networking and advocacy.

### ***Small business services such as micro-loans, grants, façade incentives***

Main Street Skowhegan working with Skowhegan Economic Development Corp., Somerset Economic Development Corp., Maine Downtown Center, Maine Community Development Foundation, private investors and organizations will develop and facilitate incentives and initiatives for micro-loans and grants. Recently Somerset Economic Development Corp., approved a program to fund farm and agricultural related programs in the creative economy such as food distribution and marketing, value-added processing, aggregation, and farmers directly. Main Street will work with all potential funders, governmental, non-profit, and private to develop these much needed loans, grants, and façade incentives.

### ***Visioning and Branding***

Recent community-wide branding initiatives completed in the fall of 2011 illustrate market position, community identity and essential themes that make Skowhegan unique and provide focus for marketing efforts. The authentic personality of Skowhegan reflects a strong agriculture heritage, a tradition of work of the hand in artisan pursuits, shoe and papermaking, and the arts, and connection to the river for commercial and recreational pursuits.

### ***Downtown Marketing: Putting Skowhegan on the Map***

In 2010, Skowhegan joined statewide tourism efforts through the Maine Office of Tourism ([visitmaine.com](http://visitmaine.com)), and Kennebec and Moose River Valleys Tourism Council. Special events, member businesses, and cooperative advertising in community newspapers and tourism publications have also occurred. A new visitor guide, produced in spring 2011,

distributes local information throughout the rest areas along I-95, at area businesses and through the Skowhegan Area Chamber of Commerce visitor center.

### ***Upper Story Professional and Residential Development***

We are currently experiencing 92% first floor occupancy, but now have 5 buildings that are not fit for occupancy. And yet, great potential exists for upper story development which is largely untapped. The Hope VI Main Street program for upper story development is a federal program that Skowhegan is eligible for, and quality living space in upper floors of Downtown Skowhegan is something we want to actively pursue.

### ***Advocacy for downtown businesses and projects at the local, county, state and Federal government levels***

Issues affecting village centers and Downtown Skowhegan's Quality of Life must have Skowhegan's representation in all levels of government. Main Street Skowhegan will serve as an informational conduit and represent the interests of the Downtown as legislative decisions are made. Recent examples include the Wal-Mart study.

### ***Development of grant and funding opportunities for business incubation***

Various funding sources exist for communities that want to improve their downtowns, and although competition for these funds is ever-increasing, communities like Skowhegan can choose to allocate incentives based on job creation, market needs, and local output-import substitution.

### ***Main Street Skowhegan's role in facilitating comprehensive, incremental change using the Four Point Approach® for downtown revitalization***

Since 2005, Main Street Skowhegan has used the method that involves 8 basic principles that guide its work.

**Comprehensive:** No single focus — lavish public improvements, name-brand business recruitment, or endless promotional events — can revitalize Downtown. For successful, sustainable, long-term revitalization, a comprehensive approach, including activity in each of Main Street's Four Points, is essential.

**Incremental:** Baby steps come before walking. Successful revitalization programs begin with basic, simple activities that demonstrate that "new things are happening" in the commercial district. As public confidence in the Downtown district grows and participants' understanding of the revitalization process becomes more sophisticated, Main Street is able to tackle increasingly complex problems and more ambitious projects. This incremental change leads to much longer-lasting and dramatic positive change in the Downtown area.

**Self-help:** No one else will save your Downtown. Local leaders must have the will and desire to mobilize local resources and talent. That means convincing residents and business owners of the rewards they'll reap by investing time and money in Main Street — the heart of their community. Only local leadership can produce long-term success by fostering and demonstrating community involvement and commitment to the revitalization effort.

**Partnerships:** Both the public and private sectors have a vital interest in the district and must work together to achieve common goals of Downtown's revitalization. Each sector has a role to play and each must understand the other's strengths and limitations in order to forge an effective partnership.

**Identifying and capitalizing on existing assets:** Business districts must capitalize on the assets that make them unique. Every district has unique qualities like distinctive buildings and human scale that give people a sense of belonging. These local assets must serve as the foundation for all aspects of the revitalization program.

**Quality:** Emphasize quality in every aspect of the revitalization program. This applies to all elements of the process — from storefront designs to promotional campaigns to educational programs. Shoestring budgets and "cut and paste" efforts reinforce a negative image of the commercial district. Instead, concentrate on quality projects over quantity.

**Change:** Skeptics turn into believers and attitudes on Main Street will turn around. At first, almost no one believes Downtown can really turn around. Changes in attitude and practice are slow but definite — public support for change will build as the Main Street program grows and consistently meets its goals. Change also means engaging in better business practices, altering ways of thinking, and improving the physical appearance of the commercial district. A carefully planned Main Street program will help shift public perceptions and practices to support and sustain the revitalization process.

**Implementation:** To succeed, Main Street must show visible results that can only come from completing projects. Frequent, visible changes are a reminder that the revitalization effort is under way and succeeding. Small projects at the beginning of the program pave the way for larger ones as the revitalization effort matures, and that constant revitalization activity creates confidence in the Main Street program and ever-greater levels of participation.

### **Infrastructure and Public Improvements**

During the planning process the team identified six (6) interrelated Infrastructure & Public Improvement Projects that would support the Economic Revitalization Strategies of the Plan.

They are:

1. Dodge Court Parking Lot & Riverfront Access;
2. Riverview Parking Lot-Renaissance Plan;
3. Run of River;
4. Somerset Grist Mill Theater Area Pedestrian Connector;
5. Madison Commercial Cluster; and
6. Skowhegan Free Public Library.

Dodge Court Parking Lot & Riverfront Access project is the development of alternate access to the Madison Avenue area of the Riverfront as well as continuation of the Riverview Renaissance Walkway. This will promote waterfront development, Public Health, Pedestrian and Traffic Safety, Tourism, and Historic Preservation. Surveys conducted show multiple owners and access issues, as well as limited parking for downtown users and residents.

Riverview Parking Lot-Renaissance project is the development of a Riverview Walkway from Coburn Park to the Dodge Court Walkway. This will support not only the Run-of-River Water Park Project, but also connect Coburn Park to the Skowhegan Gorge Trail Head, to the ADA Trail System, as well as the Grist Mill Theater Area Pedestrian Connector, Greenspace and Farmers Market, making Skowhegan a walkable healthy Downtown from the “Gorge to the Gristmill”.

Run of River project was initiated by the town in 2003 in an effort to mobilize community support to study the feasibility of developing the Kennebec River Gorge area of the downtown as a destination location to attract visitors to Skowhegan. Projects envisioned included trails development, the development of a white water park and viewing areas for tourism enjoyment and for visitors to view white water kayak events. This project will provide entertainment and activity within the downtown footprint, preserve historic character with non-motorized watercraft use, through this innovative new attraction, and the melding of recreation and leisure activities in the downtown of Skowhegan. Skowhegan will be the first whitewater rafting destination in the Northeast and to provide a unique recreational opportunity for out-of-state tourists who can experience a “wilderness” activity within a fairly developed area.

Somerset Grist Mill Theater Area Pedestrian Connector will provide a walkable pedestrian friendly corridor bringing locals and visitors from “Gorge to the Gristmill”. Connecting to the Skowhegan Gorge Trail Head and to the ADA Trail System, this will connect the river to our theater/entertainment, the Farmers Market, Gristmill, and Food Hub. This project has numerous upsides including the addition of greenspace, energy conservation by reduction in storm/sheetwater runoff by employing permeable surfaces.

Madison Commercial Cluster project will assist the property owners with incentives and technical assistance for renovation and restoration of the property. These buildings have a major visual impact in the downtown. Skowhegan Free Public Library was established in 1889 and is part of the infrastructure for our cultural and heritage amenities in the downtown. The dedicated staff, volunteers, and supporters have work to provide an educational asset to the downtown and the community as a whole. It provides a place for social interaction and an asset to the downtown.

Downtown Revitalization Work Plan for Skowhegan, Maine June 2011

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<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
Riverfront Renaissance & Riverview Parking Area	Public Infrastructure Riverfront Walking Trail, overlooking the gorge.	\$725,000
Dodge Court Riverfront Walkway & Parking	Public Infrastructure Riverfront Walking Trail, overlooking the gorge.	\$125,000
Pedestrian Connector	Public Infrastructure Farmers Market Greenway, Pocket Parks	\$400,000
Madison Commercial Cluster (3 Buildings)	Incentive for Renovation/Restoration evaluation and visual impact	\$300,000
Skowhegan Free Library	Historic Preservation, Cultural Heritage Development	\$875,000
Run of River Park Development	Economic Development, Environmental, Waterfront Use, Tourism	\$1,500,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$3,925,000</b>

**Action Plan**

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility/Teaming</b>	<b>Estimated Funding</b>	<b>Source</b>
<b><i>Economic Revitalization Strategies</i></b>				
Development of Incentives for New and Existing Business	Facilitate public health-worksite wellness business initiatives, act as intermediary between funding agencies and businesses, publish packages for business and investors on incentives, advocate with public and private funders for grants and loans, identify priority business and assess gaps and leakage and promote downtown with special incentives	Skowhegan Economic & Community Development, Main Street Skowhegan, Skowhegan Economic Development Corp., Somerset Economic Development Corp.	\$15,000	Downtown TIF, Skowhegan Economic Development Corp., Somerset Economic Development Corp., Private funding, grants, Banks & Investors
Visioning & Branding	Maintain consistent brand image through media relations and visual presentation, provide inventory of visual media for widespread use, enable access to downtown business, training for implementation	Main Street Skowhegan	\$35,000	Downtown TIF, Co-op with Downtown Businesses, Sponsorships, grants, dedicated project funds
Downtown Marketing: Putting Skowhegan on the Map	Launch Branding, Develop Signage, Share Format, Produce and Publish Visitors Guide, Co-produce events, Interact with Regional Tourism, Attend trade events, Maintain leadership presence with tourism organizations, Active participation for wider initiatives,	Main Street Skowhegan	\$35,000	Downtown TIF, Co-op with Downtown Businesses, Sponsorships, grants, dedicated project funds

Downtown Revitalization Work Plan for Skowhegan, Maine June 2011

Upper Story Professional & Residential Development	Conduct feasibility study on potential uses, meet with USDA regarding HOPE VI funding options, act as intermediary with building owners and developers to incentivize projects in the Downtown	Main Street Skowhegan, Skowhegan Economic & Community Development, Skowhegan Economic Development Corp., Somerset Economic Development Corp., USDA, consultants, real estate and development professionals	\$30,000	Downtown TIF, Skowhegan Economic Development Corp., Somerset Economic Development Corp., Private funding, grants, Banks & Investors
Advocacy for downtown business and projects at the local, county, state, and Federal government levels	Maintain network of legislative contacts and issues, educate stakeholders and representatives on Downtown value, provide for a ongoing presence and support before governmental groups	Main Street Skowhegan, Skowhegan Economic & Community Development, Skowhegan Economic Development Corp., Somerset Economic Development Corp.	\$10,000	Downtown TIF, Skowhegan Economic Development Corp., Somerset Economic Development Corp., Private funding, grants
Development of grant and funding opportunities for business incubation	Develop relationships with new creative economy business, assist in preparation of grant and funding information, advocate for funding from grantors, facilitate use of Skowhegan Downtown TIF funding for incubation	Main Street Skowhegan, ,Skowhegan Economic & Community Development, Skowhegan Economic Development Corp., Somerset Economic Development Corp., private funders, Main Downtown Center, Maine Office of Community Development	\$15,000	Downtown TIF, Skowhegan Economic Development Corp., Somerset Economic Development Corp., Private funding, grants, Banks & Investors

Downtown Revitalization Work Plan for Skowhegan, Maine June 2011

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Facilitate comprehensive, incremental change, using the Four Point Approach <sup>®</sup> for downtown revitalization	Maintain professional qualifications and state and national credentials, attend professional development, prepare compliance reporting and use as metrics for development	Main Street Skowhegan	\$100,000	Downtown TIF, Town & Community support, Private funding, Grants
<b><i>Economic Revitalization Strategies Total</i></b>			<b><i>\$240,000</i></b>	

Downtown Revitalization Work Plan for Skowhegan, Maine June 2011

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility/Teaming	Estimated Funding	Source
<b><i>Infrastructure and Public Improvements</i></b>				
Riverfront Renaissance & Riverview Parking Area	See project descriptions		\$725,000	Downtown TIF, Skowhegan Economic Development Corp., Somerset Economic Development Corp., Private funding, grants
Dodge Court Riverfront Walkway & Parking	See project descriptions		\$125,000	Downtown TIF, Skowhegan Economic Development Corp., Somerset Economic Development Corp., Private funding, grants
Pedestrian Connector	See project descriptions		\$400,000	Downtown TIF, Skowhegan Economic Development Corp., Somerset Economic Development Corp., Private funding, grants

Downtown Revitalization Work Plan for Skowhegan, Maine June 2011

Madison Commercial Cluster (3 Buildings)	See project descriptions		\$300,000	Downtown TIF, Skowhegan Economic Development Corp., Somerset Economic Development Corp., Private funding, grants
Skowhegan Free Library	See project descriptions		\$875,000	Downtown TIF, Skowhegan Economic Development Corp., Somerset Economic Development Corp., Private funding, grants
Run of River Park Development	See project descriptions		\$1,500,000	
<b>Infrastructure &amp; Public Improvements Total</b>			<b>\$3,925,000</b>	

**Project Description-Dodge Court**



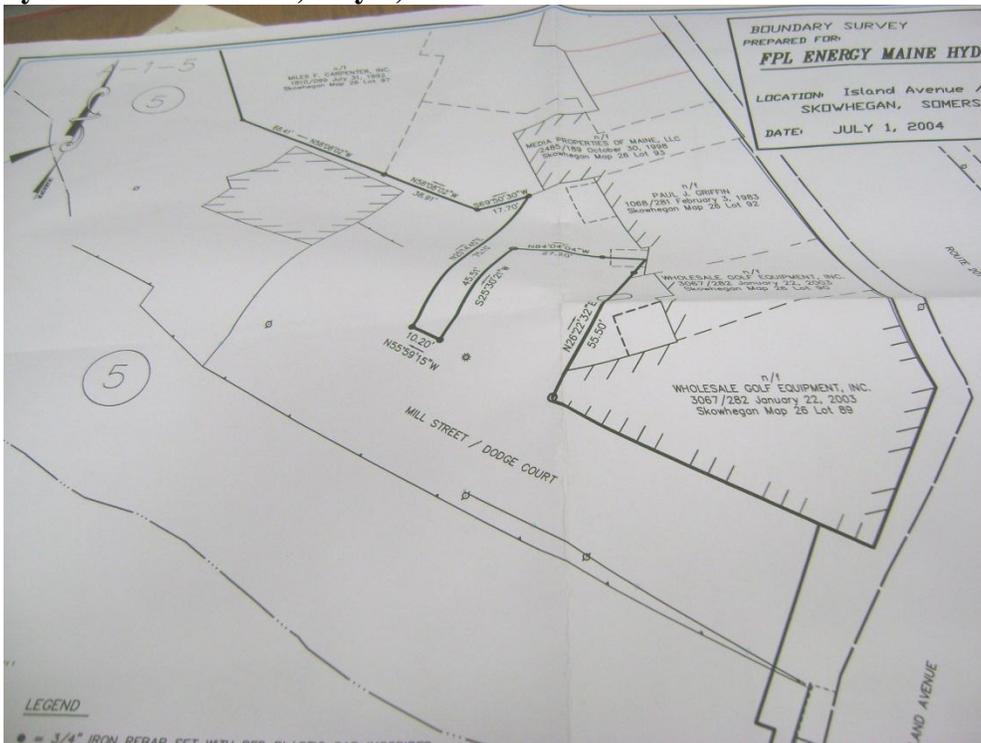
Main Street Skowhegan January 2011  
Economic Restructuring/ Downtown Planning

Project Name: **Dodge Court Parking Lot**

Project Type: **Infrastructure, Transportation and Traffic, public safety**

Summary: History, Progress to Date, Timeline for next phase, collaboration partners and lead agency/individual, existing plans, specs and data

**Dodge Court has been under dispute for many years, as the town may have some rights along Dodge Court. The area at the end of Dodge Court has multiple owners as shown on the Boundary Survey done by Sackett and Brake, July 1, 2004.**



**The challenges of this area include minimum parking, high hazard entrance and exit, and visual impact on the downtown. The existing parking is extremely rough and hazardous to vehicles.**

**FPL has express interest in working to make changes in the area.**

Scope of Work by phase

- **Total Survey and Elevation of area**
- **To make the existing entrance to Dodge court one way, no exits**
- **To Regrade the parking area to allow more and better parking**
- **To establish a new Exit/Entrance to Elm st.**
- **To landscape the area as a entrance to downtown.**

**Sample done by Terry DeWan in 1999 ( Part of the Riverfront Renaissance Project)**

**This is not the final design**



Cost (total and breakdown, if possible)

Renaissance Project

Dodge Court to Elm Street			Cost Estimate
Roadway	500	18	\$30,000.00
Parking	150	32	\$17,500.00
easements			\$15,000.00
Surveying			\$4,000.00
Misc20%			\$13,300.00
<b>Total Estimate</b>			<b>\$79,800.00</b>

Jobs created

**With increase safe parking, business would have increased income, which in the long run cause increase employment.**

Public health, education, quality of life benefit

**Public safety would be a major plus for this project. At this time all vehicles enter and exit off the Water St. entrance, which is a extremely hazardous location. The large trucks of FPL have many times come very close to having accidents because of the line of sight.**

Historic significance

**Dodge Court had many different mills over the years and you can still see the foundations along the river banks.**

Public Participation and sponsors (historically and/or potentially)

- **Possible DOT safety funds**
- **Possible State Bond (Downtown)**
- **Some Town funds**
- **Grants**

**Potential Funders**

- **FPL**
- **Susan Blaisdall, Personal Representative M26 Lot 89**
- **Eugene Behn M 26 L 90**
- **Paul Griffin M 26 Lot92**
- **Media Properties of Maine M26 L93**
- **Dave Ellis M26 L94**
- **Chuck Carpenter M26 Lot 97**
- **Town of Skowhegan**

**These are all of the owners of the sites.**

Public and Municipal impact

**This project would improve safety, attractiveness of the downtown, and increase parking.**

**Project Description-Riverview Parking Lot Riverfront Renaissance**



**Main Street Skowhegan January 2011**

**Economic Restructuring/ Downtown Planning Project**

*Project Name:* Riverview Parking Lot Riverfront Renaissance

***Project Type:***

Infrastructure, Transportation and Traffic, public safety, Water front development, Tourism,

Environmental

***Summary***

The riverside parking lot has been looked at many times since the 1979 Town Pride plan was done, then again in 1999 by Terry DeWan.

In 2010 new picnic tables and benches were installed.

This time it was looked at from the Old Key Bank building to Coburn Park. From the municipal parking lot to the park it would be using the existing sidewalk.

***Scope of Work by phase***

Install the walking path from Old Mill Pub to Dill Center

Install the walk way on the south side of the Dill Center building

To connect the path from the east side of the dill center to Coburn park

Installation of signs tying the new walk way to ADA trail on the southside of river

***Cost***

**Sidewalk**

**Old Mill Pub to Notre Dame De Lourdes Church**

**2000 10 \$210,000.00**

**Deck and Boardwalk from Dill Center to**

**Veteran's Memorial**

**112 24 \$330,000.00**

**180 10 \$18,000.00**

***Jobs created***

**By enticing people out of their vehicles and giving them the view of the river, as well as access to major walking trails, we believe that we will increase shopping time for the stores. In the long run we believe the increase walking traffic will attract new shoppers as well as new stores.**

***Public health, education, quality of life benefit***

**Tying the new walk way to the new ADA walking trail will increase the health of the public using the new system.**

***Historic significance***

**Looking over the river banks, you can see the Western Dam, Dexter Shoe and the rubble of many old factories on the river banks. The walking bridge is the site of the old railroad bridge.**

***Public Participation and sponsors (historically and/or potentially)***

- DOT
- Main Street Skowhegan
- Downtown Merchants
- Heritage Council
- Conservation commission

***Potential Funders***

**Town of Skowhegan**

**Possible DOT funds**

**Possible State Bond (Downtown)**

***Public and Municipal impact***

**This project would improve the attractiveness of the downtown and help link the ADA trail to the Downtown.**

***Presented by: Jeff Hewett***

**Project Description-Somerset Grist Mill Theater Area Pedestrian Connector**



Main Street Skowhegan January 2011  
Economic Restructuring/ Downtown Planning

Project Name: Somerset Grist Mill Theater Area Pedestrian Connector

Project Type: Infrastructure, Economic Development, Waterfront Development, Public Health, Tourism, Historic Preservation, Agriculture food hub development.

**Summary:**

**History:**

The Somerset Grist Mill LLC owners purchased the former Somerset County Jail building in 2008 with plans to develop the site as a grist mill processing locally grown grains. In addition to the grist mill the project envisions the development of a bakery, local foods mill store, and arts complex in the center of downtown to create jobs and add vitality to the downtown, placing the building back on the tax rolls, and supporting local businesses and farmers.

**Progress to Date:**

To date the building has been purchased and some renovations have been accomplished including newly renovated access to the building on two sides. Rental space has been mostly renovated for occupancy by a tenant on a portion of the main floor of the building. Milling equipment has been purchased with the assistance of a CDBG grant from the State of Maine Department of Economic and Community Development.

**Timeline for next phase:**

The next phase of the project is to build water and electric infrastructure to accommodate the grist mill and other potential stand alone renters. The building will need some extensive restructuring to facilitate the moving and placement of the milling equipment.

**Collaboration partners and lead agency/individual:**

Partners include Somerset Economic Development Corp, The Town of Skowhegan and various foundations and government agencies associated with the agriculture industry.

**Existing plans, specs and data:**

**Scope of Work by phase**

**Cost (total and breakdown, if possible)**

Estimated costs of renovating the building is \$400,000. In addition there are estimated costs to establish various programs and projects within the building that are not related directly to the grist mill, e.g. commercial kitchen upgrades, canopy for the farmers market to allow year round operation, wholesale distribution and CSA program.

**Jobs created:**

**Public health, education, quality of life benefit:**

The establishment and strengthening of a local foods industry cluster in Skowhegan will create an opportunity for more people to participate in the benefits of eating local foods that will generally be free of chemicals used in the growing and processing of large scale farming and processing systems.

Part of the project envisions the design and implementation of food hub education programs which would utilize community garden space, local kitchen and on site wood fired ovens.

**Historic significance:**

**Public Participation and sponsors (historically and/or potentially)**

State of Maine DECD, USDA Rural Development, Town of Skowhegan, Somerset Economic Development Corp.

**Public and Municipal impact**

**Project Description-Run of River**

Main Street Skowhegan January 2011  
Economic Restructuring/ Downtown Planning



Project Name: Run of River

Project Type:

Infrastructure, Economic Development, Environmental, Waterfront Development, Tourism.

Summary:

History:

The ROR Committee was formed in 2003 in an effort to mobilize community support to study the feasibility of developing the Kennebec River Gorge area of the downtown as a destination location to attract visitors to Skowhegan. Projects envisioned included trails development, the development of a white water park and viewing areas for tourism enjoyment and for visitors to view white water kayak events.

Progress to Date:

A feasibility study was completed in 2004 by Kleinschmidt Associates of Pittsfield. The study concluded that that “Incorporating the whitewater course and recreation facilities improvements into the plan for revitalization of downtown Skowhegan provides the opportunity to market and promote complimentary services, amenities and activities. The potential increase in visitors to the Skowhegan area, and greater lengths of stay for these visitors, could contribute to small business, industry and overall economy of the Town.”

The study recommended that a “physical model of the proposed system be done... While it has been preliminarily determined that whitewater features within the gorge could be constructed without affecting tail water elevations at the Weston Dam and that with proper design and construction, these features should be able to be placed within the gorge, a physical model would test the stability of the proposed features and the whitewater characteristics that the project is trying to achieve.”

We are now at the point where we are seeking funds to pay for the physical model of the riverbed and shoreline to determine the feasibility of moving forward with the construction of the white water park.

The Town of Skowhegan has received 3 Maine Community Foundation grants to help fund the feasibility study by Kleinschmidt Consultants. In keeping with this plan a grant from the Conservation Dept Recreational Trails Program for \$20,000 was received along with matching dollars to fund the revamping of the Philbrick Trail. The Middle School Hemlock team students and the Maine Conservation Corps helped with the planning and construction.

In 2008 the town received a grant from New Balance Shoe “Move More Kids” Initiative to fund 48 mountain bikes and helmets, along with training. This was in direct relationship to the Run of River project looking to help get the kids out on the trails and moving. The move more kids funding will continue into the future.

Also in 2008 the Somerset Woods Trustees purchased a piece of land that lies between the Philbrick Trail and the downtown. This was funded by a grant from Land for Maine’s Future of \$34,000 and another \$34,000 donated by Somerset Woods Trust. The land is being turned over to the Town of Skowhegan as soon as the paper work is done.

Timeline for next phase, collaboration partners and lead agency/individual, existing plans, specs and data

We are in the process of writing a USDA Rural Development Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RGOG) for \$40,000 to match \$40,000 that the Town and the ROR Committee have accumulated. The grant award date is likely in the early fall of 2011. If successful the Town would be required to put out an RFP for quotes and by the time that process is completed the best guess is that work on the modeling could go forward in the winter/spring of 2012 (weather and water flows allowing).

Partners are the Town of Skowhegan Economic and Community Development office, the ROR Committee, Somerset Economic Development Corp and Main Street Skowhegan.

Scope of Work by phase:

McLaughlin Whitewater Design Group indicated that they would require one and a half days to do site reconnaissance and project scoping at a cost of \$17,000 plus travel expenses.

They then need five months of preliminary engineering design work at an estimated cost of 6% of the construction costs.

Based on the construction costs from the 2004 feasibility study this could be between \$36,000 and \$90,000. After these steps are completed would come final design and permitting and bid solicitation and construction. We do not have estimates for these portions of the project.

Cost (total and breakdown, if possible)

The quote we have to do the modeling is \$80,000. Construction cost was estimated in 2004 at between \$600,000 and \$1,500,000.

Jobs created:

This is difficult to determine. There would be some job creation likely from any vendors that served the events held at the park, there may need to be additional staff at the Town’s recreation department and depending on the success of the project there would likely be increased employment at existing retail businesses in the area as well as at new start up businesses that would provide kayak, canoe, and other white water related service businesses.

Public health, education, quality of life benefit:

Public health benefits would seem to include additional recreational activities on the river for kayaking and canoeing as well as the existing and planned trails for hiking/walking.

Education benefits include the opportunity to teach young and old people kayaking and canoeing skills through programs that could be designed by the Skowhegan Recreation Department. There could also be classes on river ecosystems along the trails by the river.

Historic significance

None we are aware of.

Public Participation and sponsors (historically and/or potentially)

Town of Skowhegan Recreation Department and Economic and Community Development Dept.  
USDA Rural Development  
Somerset Economic Development Corp.  
Maine Department of Conservation Recreational Trails program  
Federal Government through Federal Appropriations

Public and Municipal impact:

We see the development of this modeling and its subsequent construction as a way to provide entertainment and activity within the downtown footprint, preserve historic character with non-motorized watercraft use, through this innovative new attraction, and the melding of recreation and leisure activities in the downtown of Skowhegan.

Skowhegan is in a position to provide the first whitewater rafting destination in the Northeast and to provide a unique recreational opportunity for out-of-state tourists who can experience a “wilderness” activity within a fairly developed area.

In addition to the impact the ROR Project will have on the Town of Skowhegan, this project provides an additional attraction to market to visitors to the region from within Maine and indeed around the country.

The ROR Project will enable use of the Kennebec River Gorge for a variety of land and water based public recreation activities. This project will serve the needs of local residents and seeks to provide a regional attraction that will draw recreational users and tourists to the greater Skowhegan area.

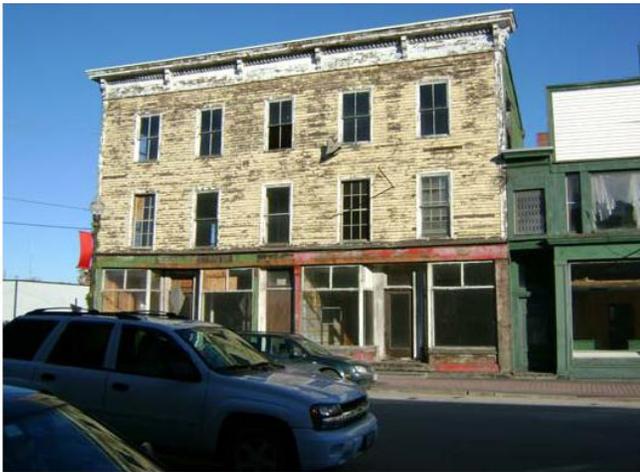
**Project Description-Madison Commercial Cluster**



Main Street Skowhegan January 2011  
Economic Restructuring/ Downtown Planning Projects

Project Name: **Madison Commercial Cluster**

Project Type: Infrastructure, Transportation and Traffic, Economic Development, Public Safety, Environmental, Tourism, Historic Preservation, Streetscape



Summary: History, Progress to Date, Timeline for next phase, collaboration partners and lead agency/individual, existing plans, specs and data

This corner of downtown represents 3 properties:

**The former Sweet Memories of Maine on Commercial Street owned by Lois Miller**

**11 Madison, The Green Building, owned by Lois Miller**

**15 Madison, (Electronics Building), owned by Ed Dillingham**

**Miller property on Commercial Street:** in early 2000, Skowhegan Code Enforcement was called in to look at the brick work on the property. There were concerns about the brick work separating and fears of pedestrians

being hit with falling debris. At that time it was determined that the brick work needed maintenance but that no immediate danger was found.

In March of 2008, because of concerns with the parapet of the structure, an engineer from Plymouth Engineering was brought in by Skowhegan Code Enforcement. He determined that the snow and ice needed to be removed from the building as an immediate concern, and that there was also concern with the continued settling of the building. Once the snow and ice was removed, the town was able to open the sidewalks to the public. Plymouth Engineering recommended at that time that in the event of fire, the fire department should not enter the building because of the snow and ice in the interior.

**Miller Property at 11 Madison:** In 2010(?) workers on an adjacent building started a small fire on the face of the property.

**15 Madison (Dillingham Property)** In October 2000, the Chamber of Commerce hired Barba Architecture and Preservation to do a report on the building. At that time, the building had been vacant for 2-3 years. They felt it was repairable at that time. The building has been uninhabited for 13 years. IN 2008+/- the building was purchased by the present owner, who installed a new roof, removed a satellite dish and gutted the building. Presently (lead-based?) paint is peeling from the building, and the section where the addition was removed is open to the weather.

**Scope of Work by phase:** 3 options

**Option 1:** Provide low interest funds to encourage owner investment in each of the buildings. This may be existing owners or someone looking to purchase the buildings. This process could encourage someone to buy one or more of the buildings as an office/retail space on first floor and living quarters on the 2nd floor.

**Sweet Memories of Maine building** 3800 sq. ft. X \$111 per foot=\$421,800

**15 Madison** (Electronic Building) 3840 sq.ft.X\$111 per foot= \$426,240 (in 2000 the estimate cost was approximately \$200,000 estimated by Barba Architecture and Preservation)

***Jobs created***

- 2 people per building either office or retail personnel (4 full time jobs in total)

***Public health, education, quality of life benefit***

- Removal of safety risk

***Public Participation and sponsors (historically and/or potentially)***

- SEDC/Town Revolving loan Funds
- Matching loan interest loans from Area bank, through the community reinvestment act
- Potential new façade funding from CDBG
- Public and Municipal impact
- Historic district remains intact
- Major investment of owner/operator to the long term growth of the downtown
- Improve Visual Impact at the gateway to the downtown
- Increase tax revenues

**Option 2:**

- Removal of all three buildings and creating a new park area with information about the history of Skowhegan.
  - Cost of purchase of buildings - \$70,000
  - Cost of removal of 3 buildings - \$25,000
  - Disposal cost - \$10,000
  - Cost of filling the old foundations - \$ 6,000
  - Cost of landscaping - \$18,000
  - Cost of fixtures – \$20,000
- Remodeling the wall of the next building, as this wall hasn't seen the light of day since the building was built. Minimum installation of new siding. \$ 1,500
  - Rebuilding the corner, to allow for ease of turn at Commercial and Madison Ave. \$30,000
- Misc Cost 20% \$36,100  
Total Cost \$216,600

***Public health, education, quality of life benefit***

- Removal of lead paint chipping problem
- Removal of mold problem
- Removal of safety problem
- Providing open space for downtown shoppers and workers
- Improving the looks of the downtown
- Promotion of history of the area

***Public Participation and sponsors (historically and/or potentially)***

- SEDC/Town Revolving loan Funds
- Matching loan interest loans from Area bank, through their community reinvestment act.
- the Communities for Maine's Future bond program

***Public and Municipal impact***

- Elimination of blighted view at the gateway to the downtown
- Increase attraction of downtown visitors
- Negative impact to tax revenues

**Option 3:**

Removal of all three buildings and rebuilding a new building on site

- Cost of purchase of buildings \$70,000
  - Cost of removal of 3 buildings \$25,000
  - Disposal Coat \$10,000
  - Cost of filling of old foundations \$ 6,000
  - Cost of new Building approximate size 2000 sq.ft on two floors (4000sq.ft)
  - Cost (total and breakdown, if possible)X \$135 \$540,000
  - Rebuilding the corner, to allow for ease of turn at Commercial and Madison Ave. \$ 30,000
- Misc Cost 20% \$136,200  
Total Cost \$817,200

***Jobs created***

- 3 people either office or retail personnel

***Public health, education, quality of life benefit***

- Removal of lead paint chipping problem
- Removal of mold risk
- Removal of safety risk
- Providing open space for downtown shoppers and workers
- Improving the visual appeal of the downtown

***Public Participation and sponsors (historically and/or potentially)***

- SEDC/Town Revolving loan Funds
- Matching loan interest loans from Area bank, through their community reinvestment act.
- New owners
- Potential new façade funding from CDBG

***Public and Municipal impact***

- Major investment of owner/operator to the long term growth of the downtown
- Improve visual impact at the gateway to the downtown
- Increase tax revenues

**Project Description-Skowhegan Free Public Library**

Main Street Skowhegan January 2011  
Projects for Economic Restructuring/ Downtown Planning



Project Name:

Skowhegan Free Public Library Project 2012



Project Type Infrastructure, Transportation and Traffic, Economic Development, Public Safety, Environmental, Waterfront Development, Public Health, Tourism, Historic Preservation, etc. (Pick as many as apply, or add others)

Historic Preservation

Downtown Foot traffic

Economic Engine

Education and Cultural Activities Center

Community Resource

Meeting Place

Summary: History, Progress to Date, Timeline for next phase, collaboration partners and lead agency/individual, existing plans, specs and data

Since 1889 the library has served as a positive influence for education and diversity, helping people move forward with their lives. Currently, Project 2012 goals are ADA compliance, and the meeting of fire and safety

code guidelines. Construction has begun. Plans include elevator, new fireproof staircase and exit, handicapped bathrooms, enlarged genealogy and computer rooms, small meeting room, electrical and plumbing upgrades.

#### Scope of Work by phase

##### Phase 1: Development of useful space in basement

Funding has been secured to complete phase 1 and 2. This includes the genealogy room, a computer work room, a small meeting room, a unisex ADA toilet room, and a staff kitchen area. A mechanical room has been completed previously.

Phase 2: Construction of fireproof staircase and second egress in an approx. 21 x 10 foot addition on the north side of the building. Install sprinkler system on basement level to allow for public access.

Phase 3: Stack wing update and access; interior work on first and second stories. This work will be done as funding is obtained.

Phase 4: Five-stop elevator and ADA entrance.

We intend to complete phase 1 and 2 within 2011 and 2012, allowing for public use of the additional much-needed space. Phases 3 and 4 will be undertaken as funding is secured.

#### Cost (total and breakdown, if possible)

\$875,000

#### Jobs created

Local contractor, Steve Dionne is working with local subcontractors.

#### Public health, education, quality of life benefit

The library brings value to the downtown area by 1. bringing foot traffic walking to and from the library, 2. acting as an economic engine with people looking for jobs online, creating resumes, starting businesses, etc., 3. serving as a center for education and cultural activities for both children and adults and promoting understanding and freedom of thought, 4. serving as a community resource in providing tax forms, information, maps, books, community bulletin board and a place to meet, 5. providing computer access for both residents and visitors.

### Historic significance

Presently assessed by the town at \$1,260,000, the library has been cherished by its citizens since 1889. The building contains a Memorial Room given by the town to honor Civil War soldiers. Included are stained glass windows and a commemorative plaque listing local men who served in the war. On the exterior of the building, are terra-cotta blocks containing badges and shields of the Grand Army of the Republic.

### Public Participation and sponsors (historically and/or potentially)

Town residents have always loved the library. Often, adult patrons relate their memories of coming to the building as young children. Currently, local individuals and businesses are showing their support by generously donating time and/or funds to Project 2012. Completion of this project will benefit all residents, and be a definite asset to downtown Skowhegan.

### Public and Municipal impact

Located in town center, the library is used by both citizens and visiting tourists. Acting as a measure of cultural and educational opportunities to potential residents and businesses, it helps to attract newcomers to town.

### Presented by:

Jim Hastings, Library volunteer

Downtown Revitalization Work Plan for Skowhegan, Maine June 2011

**Inventory of Buildings & Businesses (January 2011)**

Lot	Business Name	Business Owner	Building Owner	Occupant	Area 1st Floor	Area Upper
138	Municipal Parking			NA	1,000	
90	Max Taxi	Mary & Gene Behn		Occupied	1,608	1,668
92	Griffins	Paula Sansouci	Paul & Peggy Griffin	Occupied	2,909	2,944
93	Morning Sentential	Sheila Bacon	Media Properties of Maine	Occupied	1,736	480
94	Wish	David Ellis	David Ellis	Occupied	900	900
95	Miles F Carpenter, Insurance	Chuck Carpenter		Occupied	1,030	2,060
96	Miles F Carpenter, Insurance			Occupied	1,823	3,646
112	Skowhegan Savings Bank			Occupied	10,000	10,000
113	Skowhegan Public Liberty			Occupied	2,614	2,689
114	Skowhegan Savings Bank			Occupied	16,483	
124	Bloomfield's Pub	Brenda		Occupied	1,127	1,127
125	Lynnette's	Lynette Salisbury		Occupied	5,310	5,355
125	Sun Rays Tanning			Occupied		
125	Hilltop	Greg Salisbury		Occupied		
125	Lynnette's Holiday Shop			Occupied		
126	Renaissance Building	SEDC	SEDC	Occupied		
126	Sterns Building-Bluewave		Sterns & Sterns, LLC	Occupied	4,259	6,308
127	Skills		Kevin Holland	Occupied	9,884	9,995
127	Varity Drug Store	Kevin Holland	Kevin Holland	Occupied		
127	Karen's Closet	Karen Perkins	Kevin Holland	Occupied		
128	Kyes Insurance			Occupied	3,192	3,192
129	Russakoff	Andy & Donna Russakoff		Occupied	1,612	3,770
130	Maine Smoke Shop		Sidney Gellar	Occupied	1,309	2,646
131	Whittemore's			Occupied	1,933	1,933
132				Occupied	1,076	1,176
135	Susie's Nails	Sue Nyugen	Carl & Betty Hart	Occupied	1,368	1,368
136	Hight			Occupied	2,322	
137	Somerset Heart Health			Occupied	2,066	
139	Aubuchon Hardware			Occupied	6,873	
140	Rumors Café	Richard & Eunice Thorpe	Richard & Eunice Thorpe	Occupied	3,170	4,704
146	Hight			Occupied	4,512	4,512
148	Hight			Occupied	13,235	3,121
150	FOE			Occupied	4,011	4,011
152	Top Hat	Sally Joe Preble		Occupied	2,865	5,880
152	Koala-T	Jim Preble		Occupied		
155	Masons		Masons	Occupied	4,000	8,000
156	Skowhegan Driving School			Occupied	3,058	3,058
156	Bloom & Bloom Atty			Occupied		
158	USPS		Post Office	Occupied	9,320	

Downtown Revitalization Work Plan for Skowhegan, Maine June 2011

162	Strand/Skowhegan Theater	John Moore	John Moore	Occupied	8,669	2,982
162A	Alan's Cut Above	Alan Foxwell	Alan & Cliff Foxwell	Occupied	1,020	
163	Grondin's Dry Cleaners		KCIN Inc.	Occupied	1,620	
164	Private Residence	Mary & Ronald Hall	Same	Occupied	1,406	1,528
172	Irving Gas/DD			Occupied	8,712	
183	Town Hall		Town of Skowhegan	Occupied		
185A	LC Dills			Occupied	7,402	5,562
186	Lacasse Building			Occupied	4,062	4,161
188	Prudential Financial	Donna Brown		Occupied	1,180	1,180
189	John Jordan CPA	John Jordan	John & Rebecca Jordan	Occupied	1,502	810
190	Nana	Lisa Maynard	David Lawler	Occupied	1,288	1,752
192B	Computer Improvements	Mark Leblanc	Doreen & Lee Poulin	Occupied		
192B	Key Appliance	Doreen Poulin	Doreen & Lee Poulin	Occupied	3,762	
193	John Youney, Esq.			Occupied	1,896	1,950
194	Skowhegan Fleuriste			Occupied	1,561	1,612
194 X	Maine Street Skowhegan	Jennifer E. Olsen		Occupied		
195	Bankery			Occupied	1,500	1,500
197	River Road Gallery		Marc & Dustin Belanger	Occupied	4,950	4,200
198	Leakos Art Auction	Steven Leakos	Steven Leakos	Occupied	1,840	2,453
199	The Paper Clip		Warren Roberts	Occupied	3,416	3,492
201	Blueberry Cupboard		Rebecca Dionne	Occupied	8,710	
202	Old Mill Pub		William Perkins	Occupied	1,023	1,023
204	Old Bank-Residential		Bruce & Cynthia Simmons	Occupied	4,832	5,102
206	Driving School			Occupied	1,472	1,496
206	Main Street Mortgage			Occupied		
206	Detail Color & Tattoo			Occupied		
143	Grist Mill, LLC			Occupied	7,775	3,060
192	M. Thai		Patrick Keaney	Occupied	1,656	1,152
89	The Maine Meal		Sterns	Occupied	4,475	4,511
185	Lerness Shoe Manufacturing		Five County	Occupied	6,634	0
82	Solon Manufacturing			Vacant	0	43,200
133	Electronics Building		Ed Dillingham	Vacant	1,264	2,576
134	Miller Building		Lois Miller	Vacant	1,346	1,378
149	134 Water Street		Terry Mower	Vacant	1,600	1,272
187	Kennebec Gorge		Kennebec Gorge, LLC	Vacant	2,392	4,920
197	Former Peace Tree			Vacant		
200	Deck Building		David & Crystal Deck	Vacant	2,069	2,945
141						
167					8,690	9,936
181	Town Vacant Land		Town of Skowhegan			
182	Town Vacant Land		Town of Skowhegan			
186	Trendsetters					

Downtown Revitalization Work Plan for Skowhegan, Maine June 2011

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186	Crafty Creations			
189			0	
191	Town Access to Foot Bridge	walkway		
192A	Town/Poulin Parking	Doreen & Lee Poulin		
Total			236,329	210,296
Total Vacant			6,602	
Total Occupied			217,968	
% without Solon			92.23%	
% with Solon			87.17%	
Solon %			5.07%	

**Public Visioning & Branding Summary**

## Sign Ordinance

### *Downtown Skowhegan Sign Design Guidelines*

Signs play a critical role in the economic vitality and appearance of downtown Skowhegan. When properly designed and mounted, they can direct motorists and pedestrians to their proper destination and inform them of the goods and services provided within. Signs can have a significant effect on the visual quality of downtown in the way they relate to historic structures and delight the eye. Because signs provide initial information and impressions about Skowhegan's downtown commercial operations, they are very important design factors to consider. Design guidelines provide recommendations for signs that will compliment and enhance the historic character of downtown Skowhegan, while providing necessary information.

#### **1. Sign Design**

All buildings in downtown Skowhegan should be identified by attractive, legible signs that reflect the function and needs of the store or office. Each sign should be de-

signed to complement the façade of the individual building.

**1a. Designers:** Signs should be designed by professionals with experience in commercial signage.

**1b. Compatibility:** Signs should complement the building and its surroundings in terms of color, lighting, forms, and materials.



*This sign complements the color and style of the building without overpowering it.*

**1c. Shapes:** Signs should generally be simple geometric shapes that complement the architectural detailing of the building façade. The use of shapes that graphically reflect the specific commercial use of the property – e.g., a clock for a watchmaker's shop – are encouraged to create a visually appealing and effective form of advertising.



*An effective projecting sign that conveys its message with words and simple shape.*

**1d. Design:** The sign should relate to the architectural features on or near the property.



*A simple sign that reflects the stores' function and adds visual delight to the streetscape.*

**1e. Size:** Permanent signs should occupy no more than 10% of the total façade of the building.



*These business signs are well proportioned to the building's front façade.*

**1f. Colors:** Signs should be limited to two or three colors that compliment those found on the building.

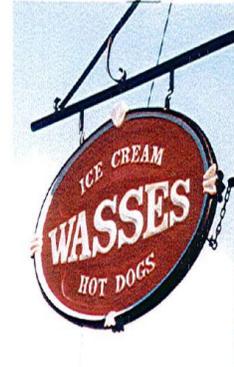
**1g. Materials:** Signs should be constructed of permanent, durable materials that complement those used on the architecture. The use of materials with matte finishes or carved wood is encouraged. The use of acrylic plastics and similar high gloss materials should be avoided.

**1h. Lettering Size:** The size of the lettering for identification signs should consider the distance from which they are being read and the type of audience (pedestrian or motorist) that they are aimed at. For most applications, the minimum letter size should be four inches in height.



*The use of raised gilded letters complements a classic building and produces a highly legible sign.*

**1i. Trim:** Flat signs should have a trimmed edge or frame that matches the details of the building in order to improve the finished appearance of the sign.



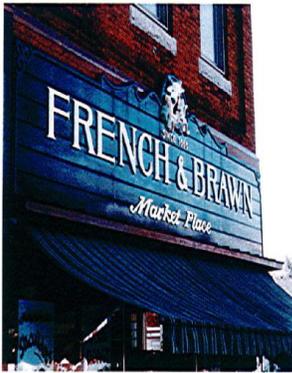
*The decorative trim and hardware on this sign give it an attractive, finished appearance. Attention to the smallest details has produced an exemplary sign.*

## 2. Sign Content

Signs should be simple and direct in message, content, and form in order to minimize visual clutter in the downtown area.

**2a. Information:** Signs should contain only the information that is essential to identify the establishment within the building, with a minimum of advertising. Repetitious signage, both on the building façade and the internal windows of the store, should be avoided.

Repetitious signage, both on the building façade and the internal windows of the store, should be avoided, regardless of the total sign area.



*This highly legible façade mounted sign contains seven 'bits' of information.*

**2b. Content:** The maximum content for any sign should be either 30 letters or 7 bits of information. A bit is one syllable or symbol.

**2c. Advertising:** The use of 'sponsor signs', either on or near the sign, to promote products, goods or services other than the primary tenant is discouraged. If a sponsor sign is used, it should only be 10% of the total sign surface.



*This sign contains too much information that clutters the sign and confuses the passing motorist.*

**2d. Readerboards:** Readerboards – places for changeable messages on signs – are highly discouraged.

### 3. Façade Mounted Signs

Signs should be designed as an extension of the building. Downtown buildings – with little or no setbacks – can have signs mounted flush with the façade or projecting out from the building. Façade mounted signs, which are primarily for motorists and people on the opposite side of the street, should

be relatively large. Projecting signs, on the other hand, are primarily for the pedestrian, and should be easily readable a few stores away.

**3a. Location:** Both projecting and façade-mounted signs should be incorporated into the façade of the building and should not obscure architectural details. Signage should be mounted on vertical surfaces without projecting above the fascia trim.



*This projecting sign is designed to attract the window shopper. The fine ironwork adds visual interest to the sign and the storefront.*

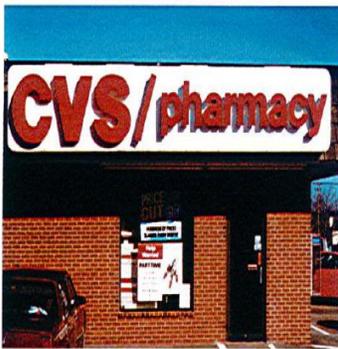
Signs projecting over the sidewalk should be mounted so their lowest component is at least seven feet above the sidewalk to prevent interference with pedestrian traffic.

### 5. Internally-Lit Signs

Where internally illuminated signs are used, they should not create glare or unduly illuminate the surrounding area.

**5a. Light Sources:** Internally-lit signs should not constitute light fixtures in their own right.

**5b. Appearance:** Where internally-lit signs are used, light lettering and symbols on dark backgrounds are strongly encouraged over dark lettering and symbols on light backgrounds. The graphic elements of the sign (letters and symbols) should not constitute more than 40% of the sign area.

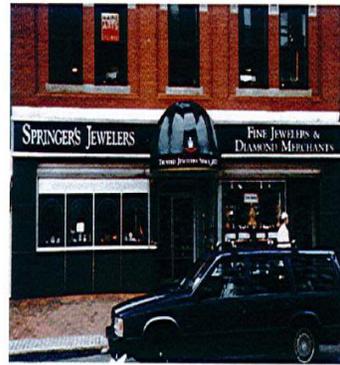


*This sign is not preferred, due to the excessive light it give off at night.*

**5c. Design:** Individual letters and symbols are preferred over whole panels that are internally lit.

### 6. Awnings & Canopies

Where they are used, awnings can complement the building through design, materials, and appearance. They should enhance the appearance and function of the building without becoming a dominant advertising feature.



*An awning used to emphasize the entrance of the building and provide some measure of shelter.*

**6a. Location:** Because fixed or retractable awnings are part of the architecture of a building, they should be located directly over windows or doors where they can protect the customer from the elements. Locations that disregard

the features of the building are strongly discouraged.



*An awning used as an advertising feature and sign, which would be inappropriate on most downtown buildings.*

**6b. Materials:** Awnings should not be made of reflective materials, such as metal or plastic. Their color should compliment those found on the façade.

**6c. Lighting:** Backlit awnings are strongly discouraged.

**6d. Advertising:** Graphics included on the awning should be considered part of the total signage area. Signage on awnings should not repeat the information included in the building's sign.

## **Zoning**

Skowhegan has three (3) ordinances that affect the downtown as summarized below. Floodplain Management, Shoreland, and Fire Protection.

### **FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT**

Adopted March 12, 2001, Annual Town Meeting

#### **ARTICLE I - PURPOSE AND ESTABLISHMENT**

Certain areas of the Town of Skowhegan, Maine are subject to periodic flooding, causing serious damages to properties within these areas. Relief is available in the form of flood insurance as authorized by the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968. Therefore, the Town of Skowhegan, Maine has chosen to become a participating community in the National Flood Insurance Program, and agrees to comply with the requirements of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (P.L. 90-488, as amended) as delineated in this Floodplain Management Ordinance.

It is the intent of the Town of Skowhegan, Maine to require the recognition and evaluation of flood hazards in all official actions relating to land use in the floodplain areas having special flood hazards.

The Town of Skowhegan has the legal authority to adopt land use and control measures to reduce future flood losses pursuant to Title 30-A MRSA, Sections 3001-3007, 4352 and 4401-4407.

The National Flood Insurance Program, established in the aforesaid Act, provides that areas of the Town of Skowhegan having a special flood hazard be identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and that floodplain management measures be applied in such flood hazard areas. This Ordinance establishes a Flood Hazard Development Permit system and review procedure for development activities in the designated flood hazard areas of the Town of Skowhegan, Maine. The areas of special flood hazard, Zones A and AE, are identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in a report entitled "Flood Insurance Study - Town of Skowhegan, Maine, Somerset County," dated September 20, 1995 with accompanying "Flood Insurance Rate Map" dated September 20, 1995, which are hereby adopted by reference and declared to be a part of this Ordinance.

#### **ARTICLE II - PERMIT REQUIRED**

Before any construction or other development (as defined in Article XIII), including the placement of manufactured homes, begins within any areas of special flood hazard established in Article I, a Flood Hazard Development Permit shall be obtained from the Planning Board. This permit shall be in addition to any other permits which may be required pursuant to the codes and ordinances of the Town of Skowhegan, Maine.

## **SHORELAND ZONING ORDINANCE**

### **SECTION 1. PURPOSES**

The purposes of this Ordinance are to further the maintenance of safe and healthful conditions; to prevent and control water pollution; to protect fish spawning grounds, aquatic life, bird and other wildlife habitat; to protect buildings and lands from flooding and accelerated erosion; to protect archaeological and historic resources; to protect commercial fishing and maritime industries; to protect freshwater wetlands; to control building sites, placement of structures and land uses; to conserve shore cover, and visual as well as actual points of access to inland waters; to conserve natural beauty and open space; and to anticipate and respond to the impacts of development in shoreland areas.

### **SECTION 2. AUTHORITY**

This Ordinance has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of Title 38, sections 435-449 of the Maine Revised Statutes Annotated (M.R.S.A.).

### **SECTION 3. APPLICABILITY**

This Ordinance applies to all land areas within two hundred and fifty ( 250') feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high water line of any great pond or river; within two hundred and fifty (250') feet, horizontal distance, of the upland edge of a freshwater wetland; and within seventyfive (75') feet, horizontal distance, of the normal high water line of a stream. This Ordinance also applies to any structure built on, over or abutting a dock, wharf or pier, or other structure extending below the normal high water line of a water body or within a wetland.

### **SECTION 4. A. EFFECTIVE DATE OF ORDINANCE AND ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS**

This Ordinance, which was adopted by the municipal Legislative Body on March 11, 1991, shall not be effective unless approved by the Commissioner of Environmental Protection. A certified copy of the Ordinance and Ordinance Amendment, attested and signed by the Municipal Clerk, shall be forwarded to the Commissioner of Environmental Protection for approval. If the Commissioner of Environmental Protection fails to act on this Ordinance or Ordinance Amendment within forty-five (45) days of his/her receipt of the Ordinance or Ordinance Amendment, it shall be deemed approved.

Any application for a permit submitted to the municipality within the forty-five (45) day period shall be governed by the terms of this Ordinance or Ordinance Amendment, if the Ordinance or Ordinance Amendment, is approved by the Commissioner of Environmental Protection.

Chapter 24

TOWN OF SKOWHEGAN

**FIRE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION**

Adopted : Annual Town Meeting March 11, 2000

Art. I. In General,

**ARTICLE I. IN GENERAL**

**SECTION 1. Fire limits described.**

The fire limits of the Town of Skowhegan is that area within the following described bounds:

Commencing on the southerly line of Water Street at its intersection with the westerly line of North Avenue; thence northerly along the westerly line of North Avenue to Cross Street, so-called; thence westerly along the southerly line of Cross Street to the easterly line of Court Street, so-called; thence northerly along the easterly line of Court Street to the southerly line of High Street; thence, westerly along the southerly line of High Street crossing Madison Avenue and continuing westerly one hundred and fifteen feet (115') to the westerly line of the Town of Skowhegan Assessor's map 26 lot #116; thence southerly three hundred and eighty feet (380') along the westerly line of the Town of Skowhegan Assessor's property map 26 lots #116, 115, 114; to Elm Street; thence, across Elm Street to a point eighty (80) feet westerly from the westerly line of Madison Avenue; thence continuing southerly the same distance of eighty (80) feet from said Madison Avenue and crossing Water Street to the Kennebec River; thence continuing southerly and easterly along said river to a point in line with the easterly boundary of the Municipal Building lot; thence northerly in a straight line to the south side of said Water Street; thence in a straight line to the point of beginning. (Town Meeting, 03-08-09; Town Meeting, 3-31-53)

**SECTION 2. Construction of wooden buildings in fire limits**

Within the fire limits of Skowhegan there shall not hereafter be erected any wooden buildings, except small additions to existing structures, and those only with and by the written consent of a majority of the Selectmen.

EXCEPTION: Non fire resistive construction would be permitted if an approved automatic sprinkler system is provided.

**SECTION 3. Single chimneys.**

No unlined single brick chimneys shall hereafter be built, but single brick chimneys which are properly lined with fire proof tile and acceptable to the fire chief may be allowed.

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**SECTION 4. Rubbish accumulation prohibited; penalty.**

(a) The accumulation of rubbish, which may more readily cause the spread of fire, either within or without any building, is prohibited. Any such accumulation shall at once be removed on request of the fire chief.

(b) Violators of this section shall be subject to the provisions of section 7-5.

(Town Meeting, 3-8-09, §12; Selectmen's meeting, 5-5-53)

**SECTION 5 Penalty for violating section 7-4.**

A person who violates any provisions of this section commits a civil violation for which a forfeiture not to exceed fifty dollars (\$50.00) may be adjudged

## **Land Use Planning**

### **Skowhegan Comprehensive Plan 2010 Update-Chapter 8: Land Use and Development**

#### **Overview and Summary:**

- Skowhegan's historic land use patterns have resulted in an active commercial center and a large rural area. The commercial center is located at the junction of the river and two major highways, offering access to both transportation and power. Downtown Skowhegan has historically provided industrial, commercial, service and governmental functions, while the neighborhoods immediately surrounding it have grown up over decades of expansion.
- This historic growth pattern is being altered by a trend towards suburban sprawl. In 1990, 80 percent of our population lived in the urban area. But in the past ten years, 60 percent of the new homes and 2/3 of subdivisions have been built in the rural area. This results in a lack of investment in urban neighborhoods, deterring both maintenance and new development.
- The average rural subdivision lot is about 3.3 acres, even though the minimum lot size is half an acre. Subdivision lots account for only about one-third of all the homes built in the rural area. Vacant lots or single-splits account for the remainder.
- Despite the national recession, Skowhegan's commercial base continues to grow. In just the past couple of years the Planning Board has permitted expansions to retail and medical facilities as well as development in both industrial parks. Downtown revitalization efforts have generated investment in downtown commercial and industrial buildings. To date, very little commercial development has occurred beyond the sewer system, although the most desirable tracts of undeveloped land are located on Route 201 south of the urban area.
- Development in Skowhegan is controlled by several land use ordinances, including Site Plan Review, Subdivision, and Building Safety Ordinances. These three apply townwide, although some of the provisions in each apply differently to lots on the sewer system or inside the urban area. Shoreland Zoning and Floodplain Management Ordinances apply only to

designated properties in Skowhegan.

- Because of demographic trends towards aging and smaller households, and economic trends such as higher gas prices, the urban area of Skowhegan may soon regain its popularity for housing. This trend would benefit the town by allowing more efficient use of public services, such as fire protection, school busing, sewer, and water. We should anticipate this trend and provide for it.

**The Land Use Plan:**

The land use plan is the portion of the town's business plan that anticipates where and when public services will be needed. As the town grows and develops, the growth will create a demand on services and resources. We need to anticipate that growth and, to the extent necessary, guide that growth, so that we can provide service needs in the most cost-effective manner.

In order to coordinate the land use plan with our overall vision, we need to establish a set of guidelines. These guidelines will be used to develop strategies for regulating or promoting growth. We propose the following four guidelines:

- 1) New growth should minimize the cost of town services in relation to revenues generated;
- 2) Development of land should not have an adverse effect on the value or enjoyment of neighboring properties;
- 3) New development should not degrade public natural resources, in particular water and air quality;
- 4) Within these boundaries, landowners should have the right to use their property as they see fit.

These guidelines are not far removed from the current path the Town has chosen, to regulate the development of land in proportion to its potential impacts. Rather than laying down rules for who can do what with their land, the town's rules provide protection for our priorities.

In essence, we do not regulate *what* people can do with their land, but *how well* they do it.

***Description of Growth Areas:***

The town has identified a portion of our geographic area as the focus of future growth and development efforts. Within this area, the strategies identified as encouraging growth will be implemented and most growth-related capital investments will be directed (as they already are).

The *Growth Area* for Skowhegan is the area served by the existing public sewer system, shown as “Existing” in the Land Use Plan Map (following page). This includes all future development within reach of the sewer and already required by ordinance to hook in.

The growth area designated by this plan will be altered over the course of the planning period, to include any land to which public sewer is extended, either at public or private expense.

The areas proposed for collector line extensions by the 2007 *Sewer System Master Plan* are shown on the Land Use Plan as “Future.” In the event that SAPPI consented to allow private waste lines to connect with its treatment plant, these areas should also be included.

Within the general growth area, a sub-growth area is identified to encourage high density commercial or mixed use development. This designation is based on the existing design characteristics, which include multi-story buildings and a high percentage of lot coverage. This area is a blend of existing designations: the “downtown” and the historic district (see Vol 2 Map Volume 1, page 30 Appendix). Within this area, certain requirements will be relaxed and other strategies will be employed to maintain existing densities.

Although the area designated as *Growth Area* is based on the availability of infrastructure, it consists primarily of areas where growth *has occurred*. At least 90 percent of the 2,557 acres encompassed in the sewered area has already been developed or otherwise locked up. We expect that future development of this area will consist primarily of 1) infill of the few vacant parcels, 2) redevelopment of commercial sites, or 3) redevelopment or replacement of existing housing at higher densities. Most of the strategies on pages 31-32 are meant to encourage these possibilities.

The eventual need to expand into undeveloped areas, particularly for commercial growth, is the justification for the *future growth area*. While a portion of these areas are already developed, the percentage is far lower than in the existing sewer area. The 750 or so acres available if all of these expansions were built greatly exceeds the 200 or less acres available in the existing sewer area. The proposed areas, as presented in the Master Plan include:

- 1) Route 201 South: 260 acres (30 percent developed)
- 2) Route 150 North: 280 acres (25 percent developed)
- 3) Route 201 North: 17 acres (10 percent developed)
- 4) Route 2 West: 68 acres (40 percent developed)
- 5) Route 104 South: 336 acres (10 percent developed)

The portion of Route 201 south (Waterville Road) beyond the existing sewer service area is the highest priority for expansion of the growth area. Development in this area will be accelerated if and when the new bridge is built. The sewer extension should be timed in conjunction with bridge construction, or at least within the 10 year planning horizon. Strategies to encourage development may be applied here. Impact fees should be considered as a mechanism to speed the installation of service infrastructure. Until then, standards should be applied which will make future sewer or water service cost-effective.

Remaining portions of town, consisting of about 91 percent of the total, are identified as *Rural Areas*. Within these areas, development which would have a negative impact on town services, environmental resources, or rural lifestyles will be discouraged. Examples of this type of development are mobile home parks, large conventional subdivisions, and businesses with more than 20 employees on site, unless they are resource-related. Ordinance standards and other strategies will be used to discourage these forms of development. In addition, an Open Space Plan will be developed and implemented to ensure protection for the highest priority rural areas.

It should be noted that existing policies in place for Skowhegan have served to direct

virtually 100 percent of commercial and institutional development and a majority of residential development into the growth area. It is only within the past 10-20 years that the trend towards new residential construction has moved to the rural areas, and if the sewer extension plans were implemented, much of the recent “sprawl” would be incorporated into the growth area.

**Strategies to Implement the Land Use Plan:**

***Recommended to Encourage Development in the Growth Area:***

1. Develop or facilitate the development of significant new senior housing opportunities within the growth area, preferably within walking distance of the downtown subdistrict.

This activity will be coordinated with Strategy 4-3 (Housing)

2. Identify additional residential neighborhood blocks for grant-funded housing rehabilitation or redevelopment, targeted at expanding workforce housing and promoting energy conservation. This activity will be coordinated with Strategy 4-4 (Housing)

3. Assist in revitalization of the downtown subdistrict, especially providing access to and marketing existing upper story building space. (high priority) This activity will be coordinated with Strategy 3-2 (Economic Development)

4. Waive permit fees or provide rebates for LEED-certified construction within the growth area. Identify other ways to encourage “green” development.

5. Within the CIP (chapter 5), prioritize and seek funding for infrastructure improvements that will increase development capacity in the growth area, e.g. sewer line and pump station expansion, sidewalks, public parking, and public open space. Consider the use of impact fees to finance sewer extensions.

6. Maintain the existing development densities, building coverage, parking requirements, and other standards that promote development in the growth area. Review requirements for the downtown subdistrict to permit/encourage greater densities.

7. Establish a public bus or trolley system in downtown and Madison Ave/North Ave. This activity will be coordinated with Strategy 7-11 (Transportation)

8. Provide a financial and regulatory incentive for mobile home parks to connect to the municipal sewer system.

***Recommended to Discourage New Development in Rural Areas:***

9. Amend the Site Review Ordinance to require a 50 foot sideline setback between new commercial development (except home occupations) and neighboring residences.

10. Amend the Site Review Ordinance to ensure that commercial development (over 20,000 square feet) not tied to resource development, four or more multi-family units, and mobile home parks are restricted or impose no negative impacts on rural neighborhoods, natural resources, or road systems.

11. Promote the use of conservation easements, land trusts and Tree Growth/Farm/Open Space tax programs to encourage rural landowners to voluntarily restrict development of their lands. Target areas identified by the open space plan and coordinate with Strategy 11-6 (Natural Resources)

12. Amend Site Review and Subdivision Ordinances where necessary to identify the Lake George Watershed, critical natural areas, and other areas identified in the Open Space Plan, and include appropriate measures to protect them, such as modification of proposed site designs, construction timing and/or extent of excavation. The regulatory process will incorporate maps and information provided by the Maine Beginning with Habitat program into their review process. This activity will be coordinated with Strategy 11-3 (Natural Resources)

13. Require subdivisions of more than 10 lots within areas designated by the open space plan to utilize open space design, with 50 percent of land committed to open space. Areas designated for open space should be significant farmland or contain essential wildlife

habitat or corridors. It is anticipated that in open space subdivisions, the ordinance required minimum lot size will be waived and that designated open space will be properly restricted against further development.

14. Enact a Road Standards Ordinance that will set a very high standard for town acceptance of new subdivision roads in the rural area. This activity will be coordinated with Strategy 7-3 (Transportation)

15. Provide regulatory and technical assistance to help establish and promote small scale local farms to alleviate the financial pressure to develop in rural areas. Review Site Review Ordinance to ensure that it does not inhibit local farm production and commerce. This activity will be coordinated with Strategy 9-6 (Farm/forest).

16. Public buildings and other growth-related capital investments shall not be located in the rural area, except in cases of operational necessity.

17. Following the decision concerning the route of the new bridge/bypass, the Planning Board will identify locations where it will provide access to land outside the growth area and establish targeted land use plans and standards for these locations. This activity will be coordinated with Strategy 7-4 (Transportation)

***General Development Strategies:***

18. Enforce state Uniform Building and Energy Code according to state-mandated deadline. Begin CEO training in 2011 for implementation by July 1, 2012.

19. Monitor and analyze trends in location of new development.

20. Establish a dialogue with neighboring towns over development strategies along regional arterials.

**Implementation:**

The Planning Board, over the coming 24 months, will evaluate the town's Subdivision and Site Review Ordinances, and will amend them to incorporate the recommendations of this and

other chapters.

Beginning in 2011, the Planning Board will meet jointly with the SEDC, board members of Main Street Skowhegan, and other interested parties to identify new mechanisms to encourage and promote downtown development. The Planning Board will also attempt to meet annually with neighboring planning boards to discuss joint planning issues.

The Town, through the Conservation Commission working cooperatively with public and private organizations, will identify special natural resource areas and standards or initiatives suitable to protect them. Following adoption of an Open Space Plan, they will also take the lead in setting up a mechanism for connecting landowners with land conservation and protection strategies, including new farming opportunities.

The Town's planning and code enforcement offices will coordinate efforts to implement the new building code, monitor the type and location of new development, and promote energy efficiency in new (and rehab) development, beginning as soon as possible. The community development office will take the lead in promoting redevelopment of urban neighborhoods and high density development within the growth area.

The town's annual CIP process will include a mechanism for identification of investments that will increase development capacity within the growth area.

*Evaluation Measures:*

*Commercial Development:* Since virtually all new commercial development within the past has occurred either within the sewer service area or designated industrial parks/subdivisions, our objective is to continue this trend. Any significant new commercial development outside the growth area will require a report from the planning office specifying the circumstances and whether the town should change its policies in response.

*Residential Development:* Over the past ten years, approximately 40 % of the new housing units and 38 % of new subdivision lots have been established in Skowhegan's growth

area. Based on historic growth trends, we can expect 504 housing units over the next 15 years.

Our goal is to direct 75 percent of new growth to the growth area. That means 378 new housing units over 15 years, an average of 25 per year. However, in the past ten years, we have averaged only 27 units per year. Three-quarters of that figure would be 20. So our short-term goal should be to direct no fewer than 20 units per year in the growth area.

Beginning in 2011, the planning office will report annually to the Planning Board concerning progress towards these goals, together with recommendations for changes in policies and standards to address problem areas. Although the pace of subdivision development is too erratic to set an annual target for, the planning office will also track and report on the percentage of new subdivision lots created within the growth area.

In 2015 and again in 2020, the planning office will perform an overall analysis of the plan's implementation progress and success in achieving these goals, and report its findings to the Planning Board.

## **Parking**

### **Skowhegan Comprehensive Plan 2010 Update-Chapter 7: Skowhegan's Transportation System**

#### **Overview and Summary:**

- Skowhegan is at the crossroads of two major federal highways (US Routes 2 and 201). As a result, the town is a transportation hub. But this role brings with it challenges of freight movement and congestion. The conflict between commerce and mobility has been a topic of discussion and study in Skowhegan for decades, with little apparent resolution.
- A planning process is underway to determine the need for and location of a new highway bridge linking the federal highways and circling around the downtown. The planning process is outside of the recommendations of the comprehensive plan, though we will have to adjust to its results. Although a solution is unlikely to be completed during the scope of this plan, the outcome of the planning process will affect other recommendations.
- Downtown traffic congestion and pedestrian safety must be addressed. Several efforts have been made to study traffic patterns, failing to yield consensus on a solution. This plan, therefore, does not endorse any of those proposals. The outcome of the bridge study will also affect the urgency of addressing downtown congestion.
- The Town is responsible for managing new traffic onto the system from new development. Subdivision and Site Review Ordinances lay out construction standards for subdivision roads and traffic impact standards for commercial driveways, but do not set limits or direct the traffic to preferred locations.
- The State, through its Department of Transportation (DOT) has maintenance responsibility for bridges, numbered highways, and certain other major roads outside of the designated Urban Area. The remainder of the road system is the responsibility of the Town to maintain. The Town has a system for determining maintenance and improvement priorities, including capital improvement appropriations. The town road system is in satisfactory condition on average.

The roads budget is not keeping pace with maintenance needs, resulting in a forecast of declining overall quality.

- Parking lots are part of the transportation system. The Town regulates commercial parking lots so as to provide sufficient private parking, and manages several municipal parking lots.

The majority of municipal lots are in the downtown area, where development densities preclude individual on-site parking. Parking in the downtown tends to be under-utilized; this could be due to the lack of downtown attractions and retail businesses, or to the unattractiveness of the lots themselves.

- The transportation system consists of more than highways and roads. The town has an extensive sidewalk and trail system, but no general public transportation options. A new plan will connect many of the sidewalks, walking trails, and bicycle trails. Public transportation is viewed as a need, both as an alternative mode of transportation and to alleviate downtown congestion, but a bus system is probably not viable at current development densities.

Policies:

- Work closely with DOT and regional transportation groups and initiatives to prioritize needs and integrate future DOT plans and programs with local planning.
- Integrate proposed transportation improvements with planning for development, to enhance system efficiency, public safety, natural and cultural resource protection, and quality of life.
- Provide diversity in transportation opportunities to meet the transportation needs of all users.
- Identify and prioritize transportation system improvements and maintenance procedures that maximize the cost-effectiveness of the expenditures.

Strategies:

1. Utilize road analysis software to assist in prioritizing for the town roads component of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).
2. Participate in regional and state efforts to improve the transportation system, and link improvements to needs for economic development and overall growth.
3. Enact a Road Design Standards Ordinance for construction and acceptance of new town roads. In addition to engineering standards, the ordinance should contain specify practices for reducing erosion and runoff, and to maintain wildlife habitat by minimizing barriers to wildlife movement.
4. Review existing land use ordinances to ensure that developers identify and bear the cost of traffic impacts on the road system, reflect policies identified in regional transportation plans and studies, and are consistent with state law and DOT rules regarding access management and traffic movement.
5. Continue to work with the DOT on the study to address deficiencies in downtown traffic movement and river crossing options. Revise and implement land use strategies for the intersections and neighborhoods affected by the outcomes of the study.
6. Incorporate the recommendations of the sidewalk committee and Bike and Pedestrian Trail Plan into the CIP.

## **Recreation**

### **Skowhegan Comprehensive Plan 2010 Update-Chapter 6: Community Recreation**

#### **Overview and Summary:**

- Recreation facilities and services in Skowhegan are plentiful, and include both active (organized) and passive (individual) opportunities. The center of active recreation programs is the Skowhegan Community Center, also home to the full-time recreation department.
- Recreation programs range from childrens sports leagues to seasonal adult activities, and are open to all – non-residents (on a fee basis) as well as residents. Demand for recreation programs has triggered several planned expansions and improvements to recreation fields.
- Skowhegan has several community parks, trails, and open space areas. These are well maintained and offer opportunities ranging from cross-country skiing to biking. Several independent trail networks associated with these parks are proposed to be linked with the existing sidewalk system in the pedestrian and bicycle plan under development.
- Skowhegan residents enjoy access to the major water bodies in town. Boat launches and fishing spots are available on both the Kennebec River and Lake George. Lake George Park also provides an improved public beach. The proposed Run-of-River project would transform the Kennebec River’s recreation potential into a major draw and economic stimulus.
- Skowhegan is fortunate to host several non-municipal recreation facilities, including Lake George Regional Park, Eaton Mountain Ski Area, Somerset Woods, the Yankee Woodlot, and the Skowhegan State Fair.

#### **Policies:**

- Develop outdoor and indoor facilities for organized recreation to relieve the crowding and overuse that now occurs.
- Provide a variety of recreational programs suited to the full range of ages, abilities and interests of the Skowhegan population, with safe and convenient access to public facilities.
- Coordinate with town departments and other local and regional recreation providers to provide efficient development and management of facilities, avoid duplication of services

and collaborate on special program offerings where appropriate.

- Make renovations/repairs to existing parks, playgrounds, and other facilities to maximize their use and meet the needs of both immediate neighborhoods and the wider community.

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- Improve public awareness and utilize all possible opportunities for public participation in the acquisition, planning and management of facilities.
- Promote integrated greenbelts, walkways and recreational trails to link Town parks and recreation areas and open spaces.
- Develop a comprehensive funding strategy for recreation programs and facilities.
- Pursue additional water access and water-oriented recreation.

**Strategies:**

1. Aggressively pursue funding opportunities for completion of the planned ball field complex (high priority).
2. Continue to develop the Run of River Project in the Kennebec River Gorge area, by raising and allocating funds for the next phase in completing the project.
3. Work closely with Lake George Regional Park management and other regional recreation providers to enhance access to facilities.
4. Maintain the boat launch on the Kennebec River (Great Eddy) and improve facilities in collaboration with Somerset Woods Trustees or future owners.
5. Improve the availability and accessibility of outdoor ice skating facilities.
6. Involve public in evaluating demand for additional expansions to recreation offerings, such as a town pool, lighting for playing fields, or additional playgrounds/parks.
7. Establish priorities for renovations which will address the most deficient areas of the Town and provide the most benefit for the largest number of people
8. Integrate outdoor recreation needs into open space plan (Strategy 11-2). Target suitable land for future acquisition for parks and passive recreation. Include analysis of tax-acquired Town properties and/or sale of some property to fund purchase of

other quality recreation space. The plan will incorporate a landowner outreach program to encourage greater public access to privately-owned open space.

9. Evaluate programs for the elderly population by seeking input from representatives to address deficiencies and/or lack of participation.

10. Identify underserved segments of the population regarding their recreation needs, and provide suitable activities which meet these needs. In particular, identify reasons for youth non-participation in programs (e.g. fees, distance, lack of self esteem etc.) and develop ways to overcome these obstacles. Reach out to individuals, neighborhood

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groups, special interest groups, volunteer organizations, corporations, and larger institutions and involve them in the process where feasible.

11. Improve connections between recreation facilities and neighborhood population centers, utilizing public transit and pedestrian and bicycle routes. Bike/ped projects should be prioritized according to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Establish trails that interconnect with open space tracts, abutting towns, and to the larger natural systems in the area.

12. Keep facilities current with changes in mandates, guidelines, and research. Standardize common components used in individual parks and playgrounds (lighting standards, benches, fences, fountains, trash receptacles and other elements) to reduce repair, response time, and installation.

13. Continue to develop special events to focus attention and increase public use of recreational sites maintained by the Town. Encourage sponsorship of special events by local agencies, institutions or business.

14. Aggressively seek funding from state and federal sources, including matching grant programs such as Urban Trails, Land and Water, and trails development programs to acquire and develop recreational facilities. Monitor and take advantage of state bond issues for recreation development. Encourage local businesses, charitable foundations,

and private institutions to fund specific recreation activities or improvements and give appropriate public recognition to all donations.

15. Secure additional public access to local water bodies through purchase or long-term easements, to expand fishing opportunities.

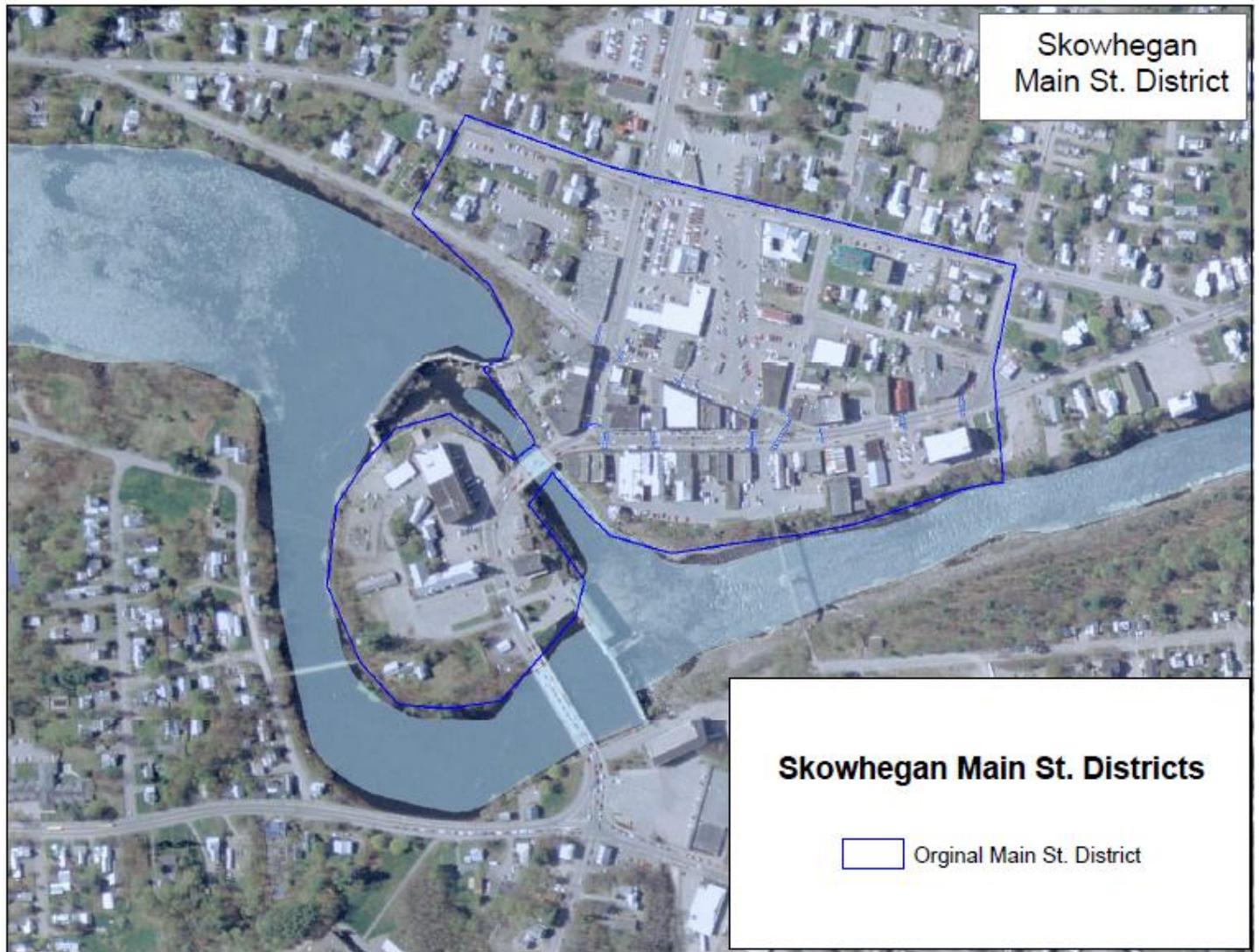
**Implementation:**

The recreation facilities and programs of the town are administered by the recreation department, with assistance of the Recreation Advisory Committee and Park Commission, and supported by public works, police, planning, and community development departments and the Board of Selectmen, where appropriate. The Department has established working relationships with the school district, Lake George Park, Somerset Woods Trustees and other recreation providers in the area. The Run of River Project is managed by a separate committee, chaired by the town's Road Commissioner. Most of the strategies listed above are ongoing programs of the Department.

Recommended capital investments should be incorporated and prioritized into the Town's CIP, although implementation should be primarily contingent on outside sources of funding. The Town should increase its efforts at seeking outside funding, with the goal of beginning the ballfield project in 2010 and the Run of River Project construction in 2012.

The Open Space Plan process will be initiated by the Conservation Commission according to the schedule established in the recommendations for natural resources.

**Maps: Transportation, Bike, and Pedestrian Paths**



Historic District



Shoreland Zoning



Trails



Flood Zone

