



Waldoboro Community Visioning

ReThink, ReImagine ReVitalize Waldoboro



October 26, 2010
Final

The Town of Waldoboro, Maine
and
The Community Visioning Steering Committee

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Introduction

This document represents the aspirations of the over two hundred citizens of Waldoboro that participated in a community visioning process over the course of several months – April, May and June of 2010. The visioning process focused on creating a consensus among those that participated in answering the question, “***What do you want Waldoboro to be like in twenty years?***”

The purpose of creating a consensus community vision is to move local governance from reactive to proactive. There is a sense the community has become distanced from local government and vice-versa. Another purpose of Waldoboro’s visioning process has been to “re-set” the relationship so that future policies and initiatives will have a clear link to the community’s desires.

The Vision’s implementation will take many years and the participation of many on many levels. The Vision is intended to set the future context for and be a first step in the near-term update of the Town’s Comprehensive Plan and other economic development and community planning initiatives. There are also several higher-priority ‘catalytic projects’ that are seen as important to jump-starting the type of positive change envisioned by the process’ participants.

While many differences were revealed during the discussions, there was an even stronger sense of the similarities that make up the unique place that is Waldoboro:

A desire for economic opportunity – the ability for young and old to make a good living, raise a family, and retire in town.

A strong belief that the diversity of the town’s residents is among its greatest strengths – those that make their living from the land, the business owners, the artisans; the families that have built the town over many generations, the newcomers that have recently chosen to make Waldoboro home, and those in between.

A legacy of attachment to the land and to the water – the forests and farms; the Medomak River, its tidal flats and the many ponds; the Village center, the rural farmsteads dotted along the ridgelines, the many peninsulas with breathtaking vantagepoints of the Medomak River.



The Visioning Process

The Visioning Process was structured to gather a wide range of input into the Town's future. Over two hundred citizens participated in meetings that were held with town organizations and at facilitated meetings in small and large group discussions. The process was also structured to be the first step in an evolving vision and a series of larger community conversations about Waldoboro's future. There will be numerous more opportunities for citizens to remain involved.

The Steering Committee

A Steering Committee was formed in April 2010. The committee is comprised of individuals representing diverse Waldoboro community groups and organizations. It was formed to ensure that a wide range of perspectives was heard throughout the process. Steering Committee members also served as small group facilitators at the Focus Area Meetings and helped shape this vision document.

Focus Area Meetings

Three 'Focus Area' meetings were held in May 2010 in different areas of town. The meetings were an opportunity to discuss the specifics on one area of town but also discussed town-wide issues.

The meetings were held on the following dates and concentrated on these geographic areas:

- May 18th, VFW Hall, the two Peninsulas
- May 20th, Sproul Block Community Room, Waldoboro Village and Route One
- May 24th, Church of the Nazarene, North Waldoboro.

Town-wide Visioning Session

The town-wide vision was held on June 15th at the Middle School. The session organized participants around six major themes that emerged during the process. These themes are:

- Economic Opportunity/Jobs/Business Attraction
- The Social and Cultural Fabric of Town
- Route 1 Town Gateway
- Village as a Destination
- Working Landscapes and Traditional Uses
- Conservation/Open Space/Recreation.

Participants focused on priority actions for the Town to take over the next 20 years to achieve their Vision for Waldoboro.

Vision Survey

A total of 280 surveys were submitted to the Town: 130 were mailed to Town Office; 89 were completed in person during the June 8, 2010 election and referendum; and 61 were submitted online.

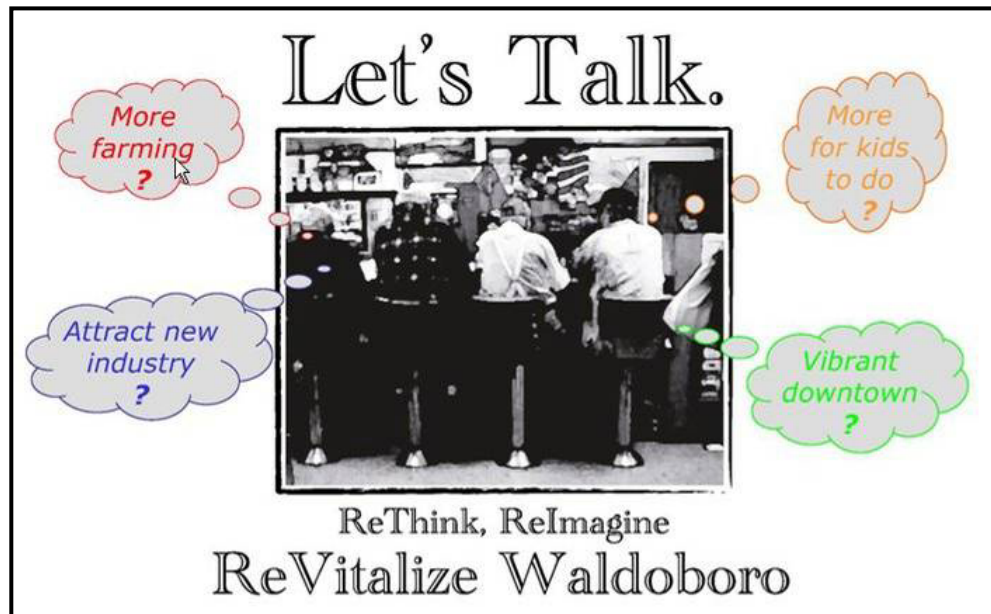
A full compilation of the results from the various meetings is provided in a separate appendix document.

Visions for Areas of Distinctive Character

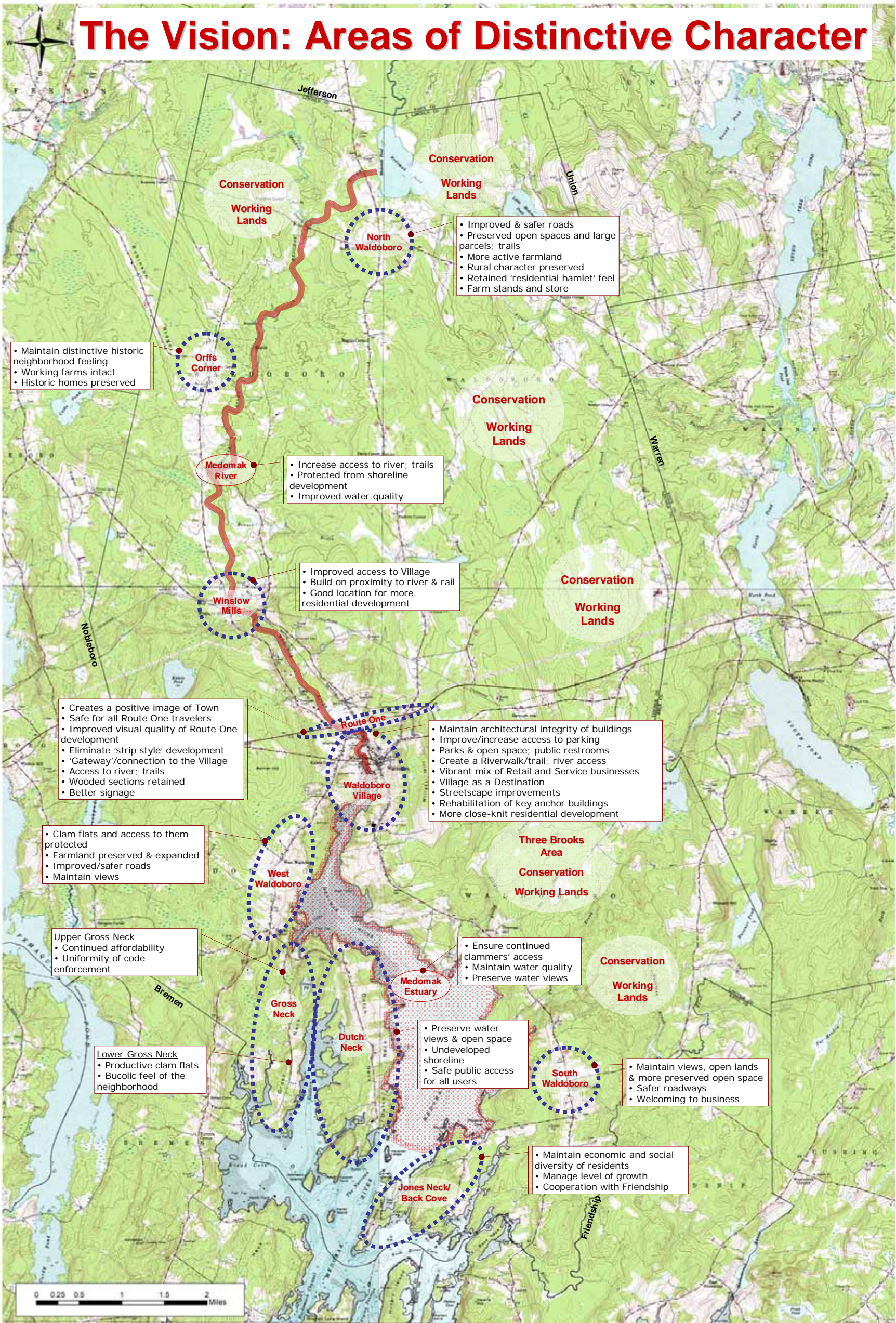
A number of areas within Town were identified as places with unique and distinctive character. For many areas, participants expressed a desire for these areas to remain generally as they are now, with any change that occurs to build upon positive characteristics. For other places, more dramatic change was desired. The distinctive places identified include:

- Waldoboro Village
- Route One
- The hamlets of North Waldoboro, Orff's Corner, Winslow Mills, West Waldoboro and South Waldoboro
- Areas along the peninsulas – Gross Neck (Upper and Lower), Dutch Neck and Jones Neck/Back Cove
- The Medomak River and the Medomak Estuary.

Many areas of Town were identified for additional Conservation and preservation of Working Lands for traditional uses.



The following graphic locates these distinctive areas and describes participants' aspirations for each.



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The 'Big Ideas' – Focus Area Meetings

The following items summarize the 'Big Ideas' that emerged from the small group discussions at the focus area meetings held in different areas of Town in May.

- Revitalize of the downtown, enhancing its role as the civic and economic hub of the community, building upon its cultural and historic identity, transforming it into a diverse place to live and work and as a destination for residents and visitors alike.
- Create a vibrant economy that provides well paying jobs in clean industry.

"Business, business, business!"

"Maintain the hidden gems of the community"

- Preserve the open spaces and enhance the agriculture and aquaculture on the peninsulas.

- Outside of the villages, maintain the rural atmosphere of the town and the working landscapes of farms, fields, forests and tidal flats to keep the traditional uses of the land intact and viable.

"Help make agriculture productive and profitable"

- Route 1 should be redesigned to present a positive image of the town and to create an attractive gateway entrance to the downtown village.

"The river belongs to everyone"

- Create a Riverwalk that provides access to the river and links the various areas of Town from Route 1 through the village, connecting a series of small parks and open spaces.

- Celebrate the history of Waldoboro through educational and historical kiosks and walking tours and exhibits, possibly to include a replica of a schooner to celebrate the town's rich history of shipbuilding and its maritime past.



"Maintain the beauty, the rural lifestyle and diversity of the people"

"Honor the beauty of the town's natural setting"

Meeting participants identified 'Big Ideas' to bring about positive change in the community.

Our Waldoboro: 2030

During the course of the Visioning process six major themes emerged, consistently voiced by participants. This section – organized around these six themes - is written as a *reflective narrative* as if the year is 2030. It describes how the desires brought forth in the 2010 **ReThink, ReImagine, ReVitalize Waldoboro** process have come to fruition.

The Social & Cultural Fabric of Town

Waldoboro takes pride in its cultural, economic and social diversity. The Town celebrates this diversity, history and rural lifestyle through year-round activities and a renowned festival.

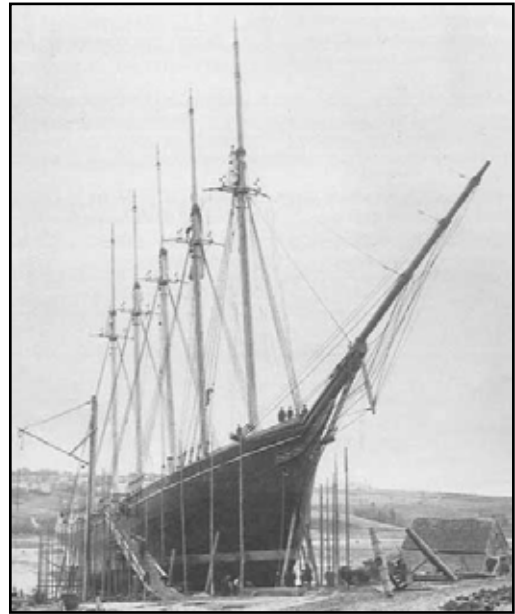
Waldoboro is a welcoming community for those that choose it as their new home and honors the families that have built the town over many generations, with each group contributing to what makes Waldoboro unique.

Waldoboro is a great place to grow up, start and raise a family, grow a business, and to retire.

The many areas of town maintain their individual character but all together make Waldoboro distinct from other neighboring communities.



Though still present, the social and cultural gap between newcomers and natives has continued to shrink as the community has created more inclusive processes and planning initiatives. Waldoboro citizens' sense of volunteerism and participation has led its citizens of diverse background to understand that their desires for the future are more alike than different.



Growth & Economic Opportunity

Waldoboro has a dynamic, entrepreneurial business environment that provides a wide range of quality job opportunities for residents of all ages. It is a great place to start a business or to get your first job. The Town works collaboratively with local businesses and groups to attract new business as well as retain and grow existing businesses.

Part of Waldoboro is known as a destination for lovers of local foods - recognized for its growers, harvesters, restaurants and specialty food producers, creating a large economic engine within the community. Several existing and new initiatives within the private, non-profit and public sectors helped to develop a local food system in which local and regional farm and sea products became a priority in restaurants, schools, and at home on the plates of Waldoboro citizens. This is due in large part to the farmers' and crafters' market that was developed in 2011 in Downtown Waldoboro.

Recent housing and commercial development has been the product of a thoughtful and open dialogue concerning growth. New development contributes to the overall economic vitality of the community while supporting broader conservation and social goals.

Because of pro-active planning, the Town has successfully won grant funding to develop many of the community enhancements that have emerged over the last 20 years.

The Village as a Destination

Waldoboro Village is the vibrant heart of civic and commercial life within the Town. It



has a quality mix of civic uses such as the library and Waldo Theater, tight-knit neighborhoods and small and mid-size businesses that cater to the everyday and eclectic needs of local residents and visitors alike.

Old and new buildings alike strongly reinforce the small-scale architectural heritage of the village. Businesses

have developed along the back-side of buildings along Friendship Road, helping create a much stronger orientation of the downtown to the river.



Among the village attractions that draw town residents and visitors are a Riverwalk, historic walking tours, and parks. Signs direct visitors and residents alike to convenient and attractive downtown parking

In 2010, the town began a Downtown Master Plan which attracted regional attention and paved the way for significant federal grants. The investments led to privately funded redevelopment of almost all of the vacant buildings in Downtown Waldoboro.

Working Landscapes & Traditional Uses

Waldoboro and its residents have retained their strong attachment to the land and sea. Working farms and forests provide a quality livelihood and contribute to the rural character and lifestyle cherished by residents.

The town has worked hard to maintain access to the fisheries of the Medomak Estuary so valued by the harvesters and seafood lovers alike.



Through voluntary support of surrounding landowners, cooperation of the Maine Department of Marine Resources, and diligent work by volunteer stream monitors and the town staff, nearly all of the Medomak River's mud flats have remained open to clamming. In addition, conditional rainfall closures have been reduced in duration.



Route 1 Town Gateway

Route 1 through Town is a welcoming Gateway to the Town and creates a favorable impression upon first time and returning visitors. The community worked with private businesses to create a Route 1 that is safe, attractive, and gave businesses the exposure they needed to thrive. A consistent signage and landscaping theme was developed that makes the area more inviting. Along much of Route 1 outside the central business area, views and forests are preserved.

The development that occurs is attractive, maintains safe travel for all Route 1 users, and is focused in the central area, providing goods and services to local residents and travelers along Route 1.



The intersection at Jefferson Street creates an attractive entrance and route to the village center.

Conservation, Open Space & Recreation

Waldoboro has retained its unique natural and scenic resources by actively implementing conservation measures based upon its Conservation and Open Space Plan.

Residents and visitors of all ages enjoy a wide range of recreational activities from walking on an extensive trail network, snowmobiling, and fishing. Young residents especially find a wide range of activities to engage their minds and bodies.

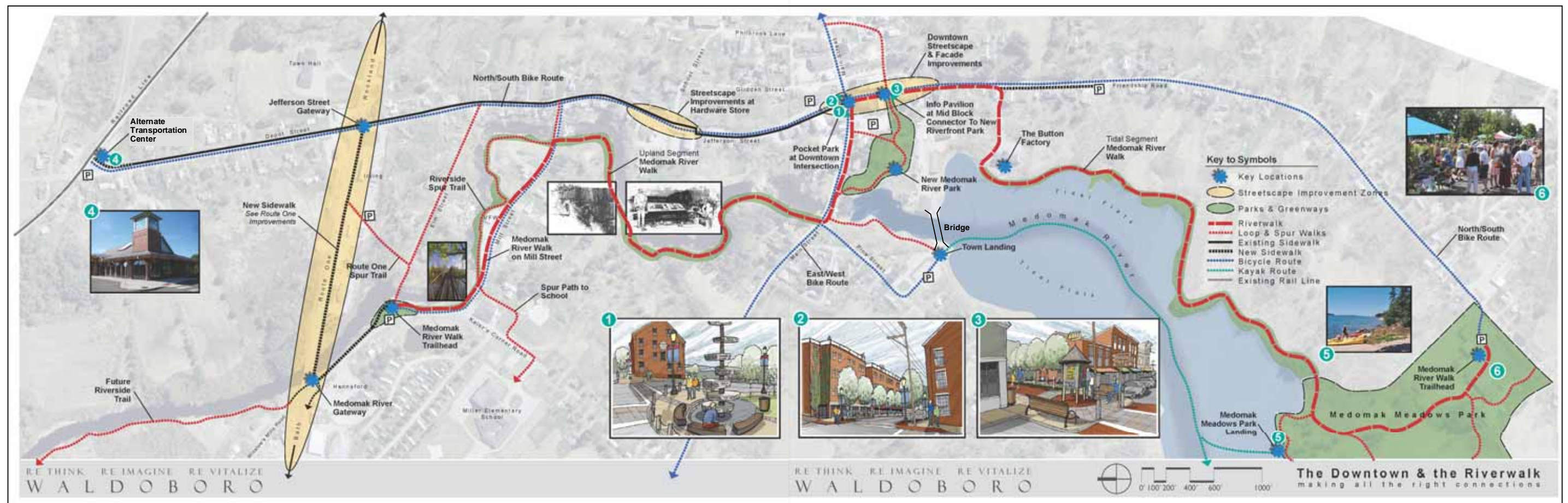


Vision Graphics

The following pages present Visions for two areas of Town identified for high priority action: The Downtown Village and Route One. Each is conceptual and does not represent site-specific recommendations but representations of *the types of positive change* favored by community visioning participants.



Creating a Village Destination



Existing

NOTE: These images are conceptual in nature only and represent planning and design concepts. They are not recommendations but illustrate a palette of potential ideas for change for future consideration.



Existing



Conceptual

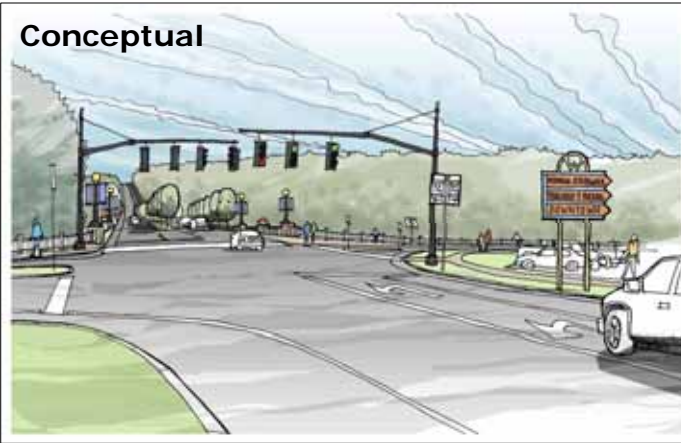


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Envisioning a Distinctive Route One Corridor

Final DRAFT – Conceptual Only

Conceptual



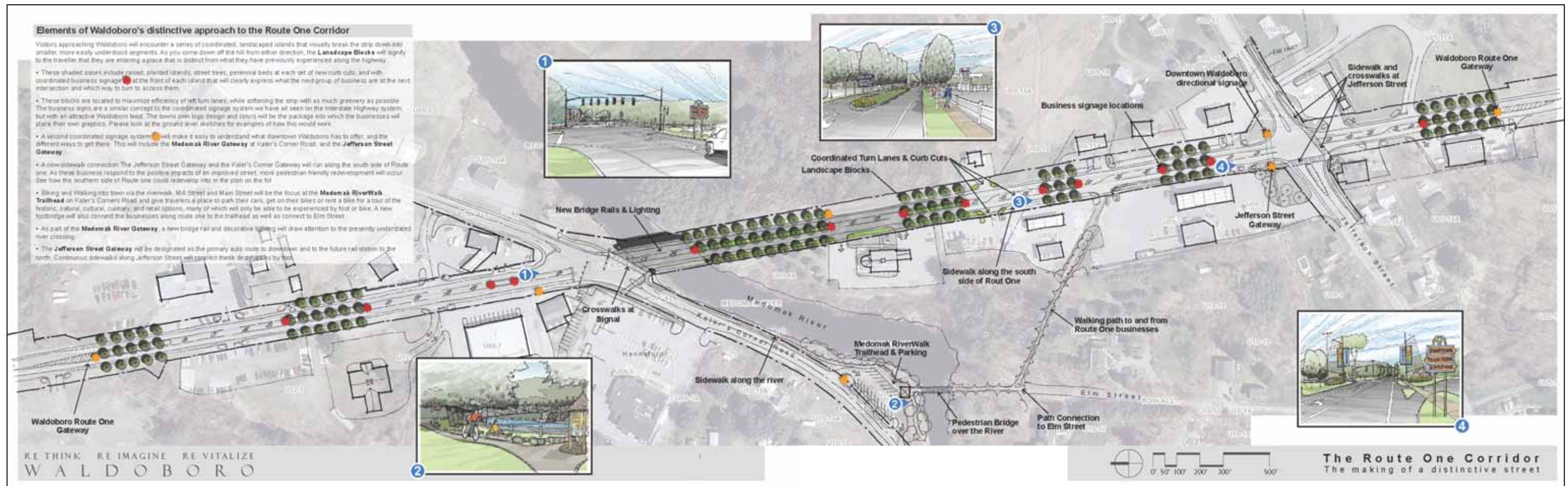
Existing



Existing



Conceptual



Conceptual



Existing



Existing



Conceptual



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Catalytic Projects – Jumpstarting Positive Change

Catalytic projects are initiatives that have the potential to set off a chain reaction of positive change within a community. Several such projects in Waldoboro have this potential. Each of these projects integrate many of the six major theme areas of the Vision.

Riverwalk Project. A trail initiative linking Route One to the Downtown and beyond was widely cited by participants for its potential to reinvigorate the Downtown by attracting town residents and visitors/tourists. A Riverwalk would bring strong economic development and social benefits to the community.

Integrating Themes: Village as a Destination; Growth & Economic Opportunity; Social and Cultural Fabric; Conservation, Open Space & Recreation; Route One Gateway.



Downtown Streetscape and Façade Improvements. Streetscape and façade improvements in the Downtown dovetail with a Riverwalk by significantly increasing the potential draw of residents and tourists to the Downtown to visit shops and cultural attractions such as the Waldo Theater.

Integrating Themes: Growth & Economic Opportunity; Village as a Destination; Social and Cultural Fabric.



A Farmers and Crafters Market. While potentially located in the downtown village within a new riverfront park, a central farmers and crafters market would be a town-wide asset benefiting growers, food producers and crafters. It would help keep rural lands in traditional uses by enhancing the economic return from working lands. Adding local crafts persons can contribute to the uniqueness and vibrancy of the market.

Integrating Themes: Growth & Economic Opportunity; Working Landscapes and Traditional Uses; Conservation, Open Space & Recreation; Social and Cultural Fabric.



Other Priority Community Initiatives

A number of other high profile initiatives will begin shortly within Waldoboro and have the potential to build upon the outcomes of this visioning process. These include:

- **Waldoboro Comprehensive Plan Update** – though periodically updated, the last comprehensive update of the Plan was in 1998. Much of the visioning work will directly feed into the growth and economic development aspects of this planning.
- **Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan** – enhancing the bicycle, sidewalk and trail network in town was one of the more frequently noted items during the visioning process.
- **Downtown Master Plan** – a master plan for downtown can take the next step toward the vision improvements identified in this plan in terms of architecture, development, streetscape, and the riverwalk/trail development.
- **Gateway 1 Start-up Grants** – these grants build upon the Route One corridor planning coordinated by the MaineDOT and consist of three elements: *streetscape planning; a Tax Increment Financing study to see how future growth can help pay for future public infrastructure and community development needs or reduce/offset the cost of private development; and, reconciling the Gateway 1 Plan with the town's Comprehensive Plan.*