

A. INTRODUCTION

Pierce Atwood Consulting was retained in February 2004 to assist the Town of Livermore Falls in preparing an economic development and revitalization plan for the Downtown Development District. Pierce Atwood Consulting assembled a team of professionals with expertise in economic development, landscape and planning, and market research to prepare a comprehensive economic development action plan for the town to implement. Pierce Atwood Consulting brought in project partners ShiftCentral, a Canadian market research firm, and Richardson & Associates, a landscape architecture firm. The goal of the Pierce Atwood Consulting Team was to provide the Town with the best possible “big picture” view of what the Town needs to do in order to achieve its goals.

B. RECOMMENDED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The creation of a **Downtown Development Corporation** and a **Betterment Assessment District** in the “Downtown Center” area of the Town in order to create the capacity to manage improvements to the Downtown Center over time;

The creation of a **Tax Increment Financing District** in the Downtown Center area in order to capture investment dollars, encourage new development, rehabilitate existing buildings, and improve infrastructure;

The creation of a **marketing campaign**, including the production of marketing materials, development and creation of a logo, and a focused strategy to market the Town, based upon research and workshops held by Pierce Atwood Consulting;

Identification of strategically placed parcels for **development, redevelopment**, or infill;

Specific suggestions to improve the landscape and streetscape environments of the Town, with a focus on specific zones of the Town identified in this report as:

- The Gateways
- The Route 4 Business District
- The Downtown Zone
- The River Front
- The Bridge Street Arrival.

Finally, an **Action Plan** is included as part of the final Pierce Atwood Consulting Final Report.

First Public Meeting

Pierce Atwood Consulting held the first of two public meetings to discuss the economic development future of the Town on February 26, 2004. At that meeting, which was attended by representatives of our project partner, Richardson & Associates, Pierce Atwood Consulting distributed a market research survey, and conducted a S.W.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) “brainstorming” session with the citizens of the Town. Following is a summary of those findings.

Market Research Survey Overview

Prior to the meeting of February 26, 2004, Pierce Atwood Consulting's project partner, ShiftCentral, had already completed its comprehensive market research analysis of the Town – including analysis of the Town's position in the State and the surrounding region. This report projected a slowly declining population while the State is seeing population growth. It was shown that the population of the Town is younger, on average, than the State of Maine, but older than the average for the United States, and the Town's population has been aging. It was shown that the Town's workforce is more dependent on production-related jobs than the State of Maine workforce as a whole, and there is a lower percentage of management and professional workers in the Town as compared to the State of Maine as a whole.

The market research analysis discovered that the unemployment rate in the Town was near its decade low at the time the report was completed. In addition, it was shown that the Town has a higher median household income average compared to many of its surrounding communities, but is still 20% below the State of Maine average. And, income growth in the Town has been below the State of Maine average since 1990. As of 2000, the Town had a much lower rate of self-employment than the State of Maine average and many of its surrounding communities.

Educationally, it was shown that the Town has a lower rate of high school graduates than the State of Maine average, but is on par with many of its peer communities. However, it was shown that Livermore Falls has among the lowest rates of university graduates, below both the rate for the State and other local communities.

On an economic level, the market research survey gave us the data that the Town had a much lower rate of total retail sales and consumer retail sales per capita than other regional communities and the State of Maine average. Consumer retail sales in the Livermore Falls Economic Survey Area ("ESA"), which includes Livermore Falls, Canton, Chisholm, Fayette, Jay, and Livermore, increased by 12% from 1990 to 2003, which is a rate well below other regional communities and the State of Maine average. Total retail sales for the Livermore Falls ESA declined 44% from 1990 to 2003, while increasing strongly elsewhere. Data on retail sales trends showed that the Livermore Falls ESA's retail sector is more reliant on building supplies and food store sales in 2003 compared to 1990, and that general merchandise sales have plummeted in the Livermore Falls ESA over that time. While food store sales have increased significantly in the Livermore Falls ESA over the 1990 to 2003 period, general merchandise sales have collapsed in the Livermore Falls ESA compared to surrounding communities and the State of Maine average. And, while building supply sales are up strongly in the Livermore Falls ESA from 1990 to 2003, these sales were at a slower rate of increase than the State of Maine average. The data showed that restaurant and lodging sales, a key tourism benchmark, increased slightly from 1990 to 2003, while increasing significantly in other regional communities and at the State of Maine level. Other retail sales increased only slightly from 1990 to 2003 in the Livermore Falls ESA, while increased strongly in other regional communities (with the exception of Rumford).

The market research survey pointed to potential opportunities for the Town.

Market Research Survey Results Show Opportunities

The data shows that tourism activity continues to grow in Maine. Lodging sales, a key tourism benchmark, have doubled from 1990 to 2003. Nature based tourism, (winter based sports such as skiing, snowmobiling, and ice fishing; Fishing; Hunting; Geocaching), is growing strongly. Nature-based tourism is a natural fit for the State of Maine and the Livermore Falls region. Potential opportunities include:

- Specialty retail outlets catering to niche segments – skiing, hunting, fishing, geocaching.
- Accommodation and food opportunities located “on the way” to tourism-related activities.
- Specific tourism opportunities in and around the Livermore Falls region.
- The possibility for the Town to piggyback on the Sugarloaf USA ski center.

There is a potential opportunity for the Town to use technology to stimulate economic development. Using the Internet, international retail markets can be opened up. This idea would require adequate broadband capability or the equivalent. The Town could attempt to locate a “Rural Call Center” assuming the technological capability could support “Telework,” people working a full time job from their home offices.

There could be regional retail opportunities for the Town. Data showed that a key trend in the 1990’s was consolidation, with primary examples being Wal-Mart and Home Depot. This trend is expected to continue in 2004 and beyond. While larger urban centers in Maine out-performed smaller centers for overall retail sales growth from 1990 to 2003, there were some notable exceptions, including the Pittsfield ESA, the Sebago ESA, and the Fryeburg ESA – all of which more than doubled their retail sales activity during that time frame. In addition, factory outlet growth from 1990 to 2003 led to strong retail sales in a number of other communities. Perhaps the Town could attract some new retail that could service the broader region as well as develop a unique brand, building on its access to Maine’s mountains and lakes and other outdoor recreational opportunities.

The S.W.O.T. Analysis

At the first public meeting On February 26, 2004 the citizens of the Town who attended were divided into groups and were challenged to list the Town’s Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Below are their findings:

Strengths of the Town

- Route 4 North and the proximity to resorts
- Central location – one hour to the ocean and to Augusta
- The River
- Access to year-round recreation – local ski area, fishing, etc.
- Great real estate value and availability of commercial structures
- Strong sense of history

Weaknesses of the Town

- The River is not accessible
- Vacant buildings and empty retail space
- Truck route through town
- Lack of access to recreational areas
- Pedestrian crossing is dangerous, other safety issues
- Poor lighting
- Unappealing storefronts
- People do not shop in town, no department store
- Traffic driven to Jay and North
- Parking too spread out, poor signage

Opportunities for the Town

- More extensive use of the River, e.g. an event that is a race
- Better visual sightlines to the River and the falls
- More motels and other accommodations
- Capitalizing on regional events
- Advertising regionally
- Potential to be a commuter town for Lewiston and Augusta
- Tax incentives for development, redevelopment, and improvements
- Creating a theme for the town – coordinating signs, lighting and streetscape

Threats to the Town

- Uncertain future of the mill
- Loss of manufacturing jobs and lack of job opportunities
- Courthouse closing
- No well-articulated plan for change – no benchmarks
- Lack of economic growth in the State
- While cleaner than it once was, the continued pollution in the River
- Resistance to change

Second Public Meeting

On April 27, 2004 Pierce Atwood Consulting held its second public meeting in the Town. The purpose of the meeting was to share our preliminary recommendations to the Town citizens, and to then solicit feedback. Our final report reflects comments and suggestions received at the second public meeting.

Building Capacity

1. Creation of a Downtown Development Corporation

In this report, we make a number of recommendations including infrastructure changes, development strategies, and the creation of a marketing strategy. The question arises, then, as to who will organize and implement those recommendations. To accommodate these recommendations Pierce Atwood Consulting suggests the establishment of a non-profit “Downtown Development Corporation.”

What is a Downtown Development Corporation? A Downtown Development Corporation is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation, the sole mission of which is to promote and help revitalize the Downtown Center area of Livermore Falls. It will be a primary driver in implementing the recommendations suggested here.

Why use a Downtown Development Corporation? In order for any economic development initiative to succeed, there needs to be strong public/private leadership. The private sector must be involved, as well as the local government. A Downtown Development Corporation provides the mechanism to bring both public and private partners to the table, and gives these stakeholders a voice in the direction of the Downtown Area.

For an economic development initiative to be successful, there needs to be a focused and sustained effort. A non-profit Downtown Development Corporation, whose sole goal is to promote and improve the Downtown Center Area, can be the mechanism by which a focused and sustained effort can take place. The creation of a Downtown Development Corporation also takes politics (and all the uncertainty, turnover, and changing agendas that go along with politics, out of the equation. This greatly increases the likelihood that the economic development goals can be achieved over time. A non-profit Downtown Development Corporation can raise money from a variety of sources – private as well as public. A sample of the By-Laws for the Orono Economic Development Corporation are attached (Exhibit A) as well as Chapter 206 of the Maine Revised Statutes Annotated, Development Districts (Exhibit B).

Finally, a Downtown Development Corporation can be more responsive and proactive in dealing with development opportunities. The corporation and the Town Council could potentially work together to achieve these goals.

2. Establishment of a Downtown Betterment Assessment District

In conjunction with the creation of a new non-profit development corporation Pierce Atwood Consulting recommends the establishment of a downtown Betterment Assessment District that allows communities to designate targeted redevelopment areas for Betterment Assessment Districts.

A Betterment Assessment District is an area of the Downtown Center where a small assessment is levied upon the property tax of every property in the District. Under law, those monies are allowed to be collected so that they can then be spent to improve and upgrade the Downtown Center Area for all citizens.

Advantages of a Betterment Assessment District

A Betterment Assessment District, by attaching a small assessment to every property owner in the District, creates strong interest in the economic development initiative and provides a mechanism to bring the stakeholders of the community together. A minimal tax assessment is imposed on the property owners of the District. This minimal assessment provides funds for the Downtown Development Corporation and can be used to leverage other local, private, and federal and state funds. The money can be used for marketing materials, landscape improvement, even street cleaning – whatever the Downtown Development Corporation (and its stakeholders) think is most important to do.

3. Creation of a Strategic Marketing Plan

Pierce Atwood Consulting recommends that the Town undertake a comprehensive and strategic marketing plan. That plan should include the following:

a. A New Logo

Using the “Strengths” list developed in the S.W.O.T. session, a logo and a theme for the Town can be developed. That logo and theme, like a brand, can then be used by the Town, Downtown Development Corporation, retailers and other businesses to market and promote the downtown.

b. Marketing Materials

The Town should develop marketing materials such as brochures, pamphlets, letters, posters, cards, etc. These collateral materials should be strategically geared toward specific sectors. For example, lodging,

restaurants, outdoor recreation are prime candidates for the Town to target, given the market research analysis. The Town needs to highlight its many benefits, as were outlined during the S.W.O.T. session. Eventually, these materials can be distributed and maintained by the Downtown Development Corporation.

c. Inventory of Available Space

All available existing retail and office space should be catalogued and inventoried including information on size, amenities, and lease/purchase terms. Cooperation and involvement with local realtors and property owners is critical.

d. Targeted List of Business Prospects

The plan should provide a list of local, regional and national chain firms with specific emphasis on those types of businesses identified in the Pierce Atwood Consulting research.

e. Implementation Plan

The corporation should play the lead role in direct mail and telephone solicitation to prospective businesses. Pierce Atwood Consulting recommends the following:

- Database maintained for all business prospects with names, addresses, phone numbers and email.
- Development of a web page focused on downtown.
- Active sustained telephone marketing campaign.

4. Development/Redevelopment Opportunities

Depot Street Vacant Lot Site



Pierce Atwood Consulting recommends that this site be targeted for new residential development strategy which is as follows:

- 1) Survey lot
- 2) Consider a Request for Proposal “RFP” process to prospective housing developments.
- 3) Consider an incentive package
 - Land Discount
 - Tax Increment Financing
 - Community Development Block Grant
 - Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) tax credit

Gendron Block



These properties represent significant opportunities for rehabilitation, locating new businesses and providing access to the waterfront. Development options include:

- 1) Working with existing property-owners to:
 - Offer TIF incentive for rehabilitation
 - Apply for MSHA tax credit for possible residential development
- 2) Option property and undertake an RFP process (as noted above) to perspective developers.

Gateway – Route 4 Site

Pierce Atwood Consulting recommends that the site on the opposite corner, be used for a community information booth. The new development corporation can play a lead role in organizing and financing the project. The costs associate with land purchase, or easement, and design and construction of the booth can be raised through public and private sources including:

- Town
- Betterment Assessment District
- Major employers, banks, insurance companies
- Community Development Block Grants



5. *Funding the Program*

Revitalization of Maine’s downtowns remains a top priority for this state. The legislature and the Governor have promoted legislation designed to:

- i) Encourage State facilities to locate in the central business district.
- ii) Remove limits and caps on the use of tax incremental financing for downtowns.
- iii) Authorize Betterment Assessment Districts (as noted above).
- iv) Provide funds for outdoor trails and waterfront access.

Tax Incremental Financing (“TIF”) represents the most significant tool available for local community and economic development (attached with the TIF statute). The TIF District is authorized by the local Town Council. A public hearing is required and the District can encompass the same geographic boundaries of the Betterment Assessment District and/or target specific sites in the Downtown. Pierce Atwood Consulting recommends that a TIF District mirror the same boundaries in the Betterment Assessment District.

Tax Increment Financing can “shelter” up to 100% of any new investment in this area from any adverse impact the new valuation will receive from county tax, school subsidy and revenue sharing. This so called “tax shift” of property taxes a community receives can result in 30-50% of reduced revenue from the general fund. The TIF allows the community to retain these dollars to assist the developer pay for public improvements and provide funds for the local downtown development corporation. In addition to the downtown TIF, Pierce Atwood Consulting recommends that the town consider using TIF for any significant new development that may occur outside the downtown area and that TIF revenue from the project be used to pay for downtown projects and programs.

Development and redevelopment opportunities need to be financed. One way to do this is through the creation of a TIF. A TIF alone will not attract businesses or developers, but when used in conjunction with our other suggestions, TIF’s can be very powerful tools to help make development and redevelopment

possible. A TIF is also a very flexible tool: it can assist a new development, a redevelopment, or even in making improvements to an area. Pierce Atwood Consulting and Pierce Atwood are some of the most experienced people in Maine with regard to creating and implementing TIF's and would be more than willing to provide the necessary technical assistance to the Town in creating a TIF district.

6. *Infrastructure Study Objectives*

As part of the project team, Richardson & Associates conducted quantitative and qualitative analyses and assessments of the natural, physical, historical, visual and cultural resources and uses of the study area. This analysis included information gathered from a kick-off meeting and site walk with Town officials, as well as a public workshop held on February 26, 2004. This information provided the basis of the planning and design recommendations for improving the visual and functional qualities of the downtown.

Study Area

The project study area focused on the immediate downtown area and the Route 4 corridor from Bridge Street to Jay. Please refer to Plan 1, which indicates the approximate study area. The study also included the riverfront area east of Bridge Street and the recreation areas along Foundry Road.

Existing Conditions

A healthy downtown is an active and vibrant place composed of an intricate network of overlapping elements. Street layout, street-level shops, the scale, character and placement of buildings, parking lots, vacant lots, sidewalks and paving materials, street furniture and lighting, street trees, open spaces, residents and visitors combine to create a signature that differentiates one town center from another. How one perceives or experiences a downtown is influenced by its distinct qualities and characteristics.

The development of a downtown environment is crucial in many ways to the success of the town as defined by its citizens. Downtown streetscapes need to function on many levels: convenience, safety, economy, beauty, and adaptability – to name a few. If we can improve the quality of the downtown environment and make it meaningful at many different levels, we are improving the quality of the entire town.

Analysis of the Structure of the Livermore Falls Downtown

Livermore Falls' downtown structure can be divided into several zones, each with unique characteristics and qualities. Plan 2 illustrates these different zones. Identification of these zones allowed us to better discern opportunities and constraints throughout the study area and to develop recommendations that specifically address the needs of each area while achieving the overall goals for downtown revitalization.

Gateways/Nodes

Gateways or nodes are areas of intense concentration of activity within a town or part of a town. They may be the focus of a larger area or district for which they stand as a symbol and over which their influence radiates. They can be almost any size, but are always places into which one can physically enter. Often gateways occur where major transportation junctions are located. Gateways are defined in Webster's Dictionary as "an opening, as in a fence." Points of arrival or access and key intersections often function in much the same way. Visitors often form their first impression of a town from the qualities and tone introduced at these key locations. The simple act of pausing to make a decision causes many people to notice their surroundings with increased clarity. The study identified four distinct areas that function as gateways, which are discussed in greater detail below.

Western Gateway

Located at the intersection of Route 4 and Church Street, the Western Gateway announces the arrival from Jay into Livermore Falls with a cluster of small signs and an industrial setting. This gateway provides an opportunity to set the tone for the town, particularly the Route 4 businesses.



Town Line from Jay

Eastern Gateway

Located at the corner of Park and Depot Streets, the Eastern Gateway serves as the symbolic entrance to the downtown center from Route 133 and the Wayne area. Views from the Park Street turn provide opportunities for stronger visual connection to the riverfront, the downtown streetscape, and store fronts.



View west down Depot Street into Downtown Center

Southern Gateway

The Southern Gateway, located south of Bridge Street in Livermore, is a major entrance point into Livermore Falls from Route 4 and points south, including Lewiston-Auburn. Views across the river and falls to the town gazebo provide unique opportunities for creating an exciting first impression that tie the town to its rich heritage.



View across the Androscoggin from the Southern Gateway

Downtown Gateway

The Downtown Gateway, located at the intersection of Route 4/Bridge Street and Main Street is a key opportunity to direct visitors to the downtown center and Route 4 businesses and to establish a more enticing streetscape to slow and redirect through traffic.



View of the Downtown Gateway from Bridge Street

Downtown Center

Located in the heart of the Downtown Zone, the Downtown Center is identifiable as the very heart of the central business district. Residents noted a lack of parking, poor aesthetics, heavy truck traffic and lack of a safe pedestrian crossing as area weaknesses. A breathtaking view marks the corner of Depot and Main Streets and provides significant opportunities for connections to the Foundry Road recreation areas and the riverfront.



View of the river from the Downtown Center

Route 4 Business District

The Route 4 corridor businesses are distinct from the Downtown Center in both use and character. Activities within the Route 4 Business District are vehicle-oriented. The district is characterized by wide streets with frequent curb cuts, which discourage pedestrian activity and potentially compromise safety. Breakdown lanes further widen the corridor through the existing right-of-way. There are few existing trees adjacent to the curb, which would help to establish scale and enclosure along the street. Our study identified two identifiable zones that differ slightly in context and business type.

Lower Business Zone

The Lower Business Zone, roughly located from the Western Gateway up to Monroe Street, is characterized by small, service-oriented businesses on both sides of Route 4. This portion of the corridor is also identified by the industrial character of the proximate Otis Mill.



View east along Lower Business Zone

Upper Business Zone

The Upper Business Zone, located from Monroe Street east to the Downtown Gateway, is characterized by businesses catering to convenience and necessities, such as Food City and Rite Aid. A majority of the businesses sit back from the street and are fronted by parking lots. The zone is distinctly at the top of a knoll, with its western arrival at the top of a steep slope.



View east along Upper Business Zone

Downtown Zone



View west to Chuck Wagon corner

Located between the Eastern and Downtown Gateways, the Downtown Center is identifiable as the central business district, a section of the town defined by recognizable, common and identifiable characteristics, such as street level store fronts, walk ability, ease of access and cultural amenities. Recognizable landmarks within the Downtown

Center include the historic bank building, the Chuck Wagon Restaurant, and the Town municipal offices. While the density, scale and variety of architecture set the framework for a wonderful pedestrian experience in this district, the high number of vacant shops, heavy truck traffic, and lack of a unified streetscape structure detract from this experience. Proximity to the riverfront and breath-taking views to the falls provide exciting opportunities for future development.



View of pedestrian path and benches along River Front

River Front

The River Front lies adjacent to and just south of the Downtown Zone. Existing points of arrival into this area are understated and the area as a whole lacks a strong identity. Access from Water Street is not distinct from the parking lots for the bank and municipal buildings. Access from Chuck Wagon corner, as it exists, is dangerous and lacks a defined sense of arrival. Perhaps the Town’s greatest potential asset, the River Front, with its gazebo, walks, and green space adjacent to the river, marks the uniqueness of Livermore Falls and its place on the river. It is a feature that deserves greater acknowledgment than its current back yard status.

Bridge Street Arrival



View east from bridge to River Front and Downtown Center

The Bridge Street Arrival zone lies between the Southern Gateway and the Downtown Gateway. The majority of the zone centers upon the crossing of the Androscoggin River, affording views across the River to the downtown center and the falls. These qualities provide an excellent opportunity to establish an immediate visual identity for the town’s cultural and industrial heritage. The Bridge Street zone currently lacks the distinct qualities of an arrival zone that serve to slow traffic, direct and inform visitors, beautify, and establish town identity.

Public Forum

The planning team held the first of its public workshops on February 26, 2004, to gather public input and support during

the early phases of the planning process. The forum invited community participation to establish a deeper understanding of the study area’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and constraints as well as the project’s direction. This input provided the basis for subsequent recommendations for downtown revitalization.



Summary

Deconstruction of the six downtown zones provides a better understanding of the overall study area and the patterns that are occurring at a larger scale. Understanding the unique characteristics and qualities of these different zones provides an understanding of opportunities and constraints of the distinct textures making the fabric of the study area. This more comprehensive approach to and understanding of the downtown supports subsequent recommendations that are better tailored to the distinct zones and better achieve the overall goals and objectives for downtown revitalization.

C. OVERALL GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Following the research and assessment of the physical characteristics within the study area, the team established overall goals and strategies to guide specific recommendations for downtown revitalization. The recommendations portion of this report is intended as a general guide for improving the vitality of the downtown. As with any large-scale planning project, additional studies will be necessary to further develop conceptual ideas and establish reliable cost estimates for implementation.

The team established the following goals and objectives for Downtown Revitalization related to the physical environment:

- Enhance the distinct qualities of Livermore Falls
- Strengthen the Town's relationship to the Androscoggin River by enhancing existing and creating new visual and physical ties
- Integrate existing civic, natural and recreational resources into long term revitalization efforts
- Establish a unique identity for the Town
- Organize downtown areas and elements into a unified downtown

Specific Recommendations

The following section outlines specific recommendations and the zones under which they fall. Plan 3, Recommendations, shows the approximate locations for the recommendations on an aerial view of the study area.

Gateways/Nodes

Southern Gateway

- Install an identification sign welcoming people to Livermore Falls. The sign should be of exceptional quality to set a tone indicative of the qualities and characteristics of Livermore Falls. Include a slogan and a logo that uniquely identifies the Town. Locate the sign in front of the river to create a visual composition that includes a view across the Androscoggin to the Town and to the qualities that define it: the historic brick buildings, the waterfalls and the industry. Accentuate the sign with ornamental plantings and night lighting.



Illustrative drawing showing a typical gateway sign and plantings, as proposed for the Southern Gateway

Downtown Gateway

- Install a directional sign at the Route 4 and Main Street intersection that highlights the cultural, historical and natural features of the downtown center and the business zone.
- Plan and construct a new information center on the east side of Bridge Street to accommodate visitors and generate more activity downtown and regionally. Provide a great first impression with high quality architecture, plantings and convenient parking.
- Plan for infill development west of Bridge Street to establish a greater sense of arrival at the Gateway and to extend the downtown zone past Bridge Street to encompass the Post Office and Library. Since

the location has high visibility, the new structure should be high quality architecture and be service-oriented.

- Plant a buffer at the intersection to mitigate the view into Mobil station lot.
- Provide new, permanent-material crosswalks at intersection to create a safe pedestrian environment.

Eastern Gateway

- Install a high-quality gateway entry sign that signifies entering/leaving the downtown center. The sign should include the Town logo and slogan and be in keeping with an overall design standard for all town signage.

Western Gateway

- Install a high-quality gateway entry sign that signifies entering/leaving Livermore Falls. The sign should identify the downtown business zone and list particular attractions and amenities. The sign should include the Town logo and slogan and be in keeping with an overall design standard for all town signage.
- Provide landscape improvements to reduce the industrial character of the river views and to enhance its overall aesthetic quality.

Bridge Arrival Zone

Bridge

- Install ornamental, pedestrian-scaled lighting along both sides of the bridge. Provide outlets on the poles to provide opportunities for seasonal and specialty lighting.
- Paint the bridge a distinctive color so that people will make associations with town and their remembrance of the unique aesthetic of the bridge.

Bridge and Water Street

- Provide a directional sign adjacent to Water Street that identifies civic, historical, and community highlights.

Bridge Street

- Plant trees and install ornamental lighting along both sides of the street to shift the scale from a big, vehicle-oriented landscape into smaller, pedestrian-oriented landscape.
- Screen the parking area behind the bank building so it is less visible from Bridge Street and the intersection.

Downtown Zone

Overall

- Provide the highest level treatment of streetscape elements: street trees, ornamental lighting, permanent material crosswalks, banners, planters, and amenities. Design improvements should emphasize a pedestrian scale-scaled environment and level of detail.
- Install an identification sign at Union Park and increase park programming to solicit more activity and community interest in the site.
- Establish a unique, identifying name for the downtown center, such as “Central Business District,” to begin to establish an identity for the area.



A section-elevation illustrating typical downtown streetscape elements

Main and Depot Streets

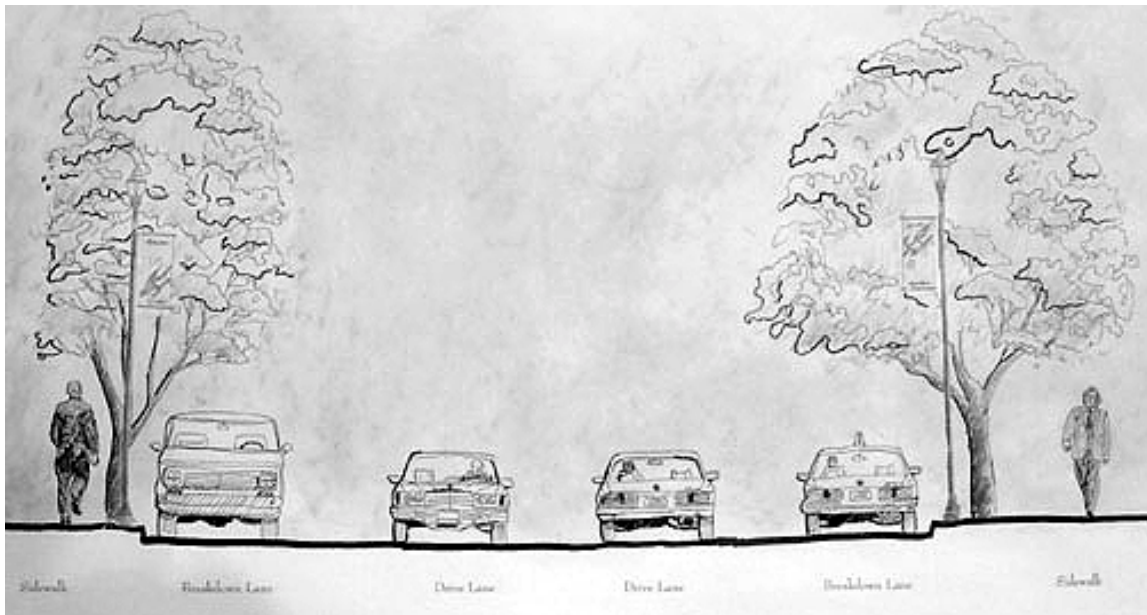
- Establish a secondary pedestrian link connecting Main Street to Depot Street behind Chuck Wagon. Install a permanent material crosswalk across Main Street west of Chuck Wagon corner.
- Establish a new pedestrian connection down Water Street to the proposed linear riverfront park.
- Develop a significant pedestrian connection from Depot and Main Streets back to river, developing a linear park through the existing parking lot.
- Reorganize the parking and circulation behind Main Street businesses to create a pedestrian sensitive environment and more park space. Provide a physical as well as visual link to the riverfront park.
- Install stop signs and a permanent material crosswalk at Chuck Wagon corner.
- Create a strong pedestrian link from behind Main Street and municipal buildings down Mill Street to Foundry Road. Establish a pedestrian node at the bottom of the hill south of Chuck Wagon corner.
- Provide a strong pedestrian link from Depot Street to the recreation path along Foundry Road.
- Infill the existing vacant lot east of the Gendron building with new retail/commercial buildings and associated parking.
- Provide buffering, screening and landscaping around the municipal parking area.
- Redevelop the area in front of town offices to establish a strong entrance from Main Street. Consider architectural modifications, if necessary.

River Front

- Invest in upgrades and improvements to establish a premier linear waterfront park. Provide a designed landscape of high quality materials, pedestrian scale lighting, signage, and amenities. Provide a diversity of spaces within the park, including places for walking, pausing, and gathering.
- Establish a vegetation management plan to manage invasive species and to open up river views.
- Establish a program for interpretive and informational signs that highlight historical, natural and cultural activities and attractions of the site and region.
- Install a kiosk with directional signs indicating locations of the skate park, gazebo, canoe launch, etc.
- Provide scenic overlooks for views across river.
- Provide safe access along Foundry Road to the recreation facilities. Assess the level of traffic to determine the necessary level of separation between vehicular and pedestrian activities.

Upper & Lower Business Zones

- Address the number, location, and width of curb cuts to provide a more continuous sidewalk for safety and ease of mobility.
- Install an identification sign and a set of stairs at Richardson Cemetery.
- Develop uniform sign standards for businesses along the Route 4 corridor.
- Provide incentives for businesses to install landscaping and street trees around their parking lots through public-private partnerships.
- Provide additional street trees along the corridor for increased shade, to establish a sense of scale, and for overall beautification of the streetscape.
- Provide sidewalks of continuous width and material along both sides of Route 4.
- Provide uniform standards for lighting along the Route 4 corridor.



A section-elevation showing typical streetscape improvements recommended along the Route 4 corridor

Implementation Strategies

This section outlines implementation strategies tied to the prioritization of the identified zones as well as of specific activities and projects within each of these zones. Such an approach allows the Town to move more quickly and cost effectively toward satisfying the goals for downtown improvement and allows the Town to focus its initial efforts and resources on “First Priority” activities that will yield the most significant results. “Second Priority” projects, also identified for each zone, typically supplement the framework established in the first level of implementation.

The plan also outlines several Immediate Action tasks for each zone. Most long-range planning efforts such as this benefit from immediate action tasks that, when implemented together, provide timely, noticeable and cost effective improvements tied to the overall objectives for the project. Immediate changes, however small, generally solicit great community support and serve to facilitate the advancement of the overall downtown revitalization goals as well as specific future projects. Establishment of an entity that assumes responsibility for coordination and oversight of all downtown revitalization efforts is perhaps the most urgent immediate action item.

Unlike the recommendations, which describe specific tasks, the implementation strategies described herein often incorporate many tasks that can be accomplished under one future project or that form a programmatic framework for further development efforts. Not every recommendation described in the report falls under a specific implementation strategy. While some strategies address actual physical improvements, other strategies outline next steps related to planning, design, and community action that will be necessary prior to physical improvements.

Zone Priorities

The prioritization of zones provides a general organizational structure under which the Town can focus future improvement efforts or allocate resources. This structure does not intend to suggest that improvement efforts should strictly follow the linear arrangement of zones and implementation strategies. Some improvements may require additional study, fundraising, or longer-range planning efforts, while others may be more immediate. A combination of long- and short-term activities will ensure the most comprehensive and consistent achievement of the goals for downtown revitalization.

The study establishes the following order of priority for zones:

1. Gateways/Nodes

Visitors often form their first impression of a town from the qualities and tone introduced at key areas, such as significant intersections or points of arrival. People notice their surroundings with increased clarity in these locations. Subsequently, gateways provide excellent opportunities to positively affect perceptions of a town's vitality and to provide information related to the town and the town's attractions. Concentrating first phase improvements to gateways provides potentially the greatest return related to the project goals for revitalization of the downtown, due to their high profile location and volume of traffic.

2. Downtown Zone

The Downtown Center, with its potential for a variety of street-level store fronts, walk ability, ease of access, and cultural amenities, is the heart and soul of the Town. Recognizable landmarks, including the historic bank building, the Chuck Wagon Restaurant, and the Town municipal offices, bring the community together and help to establish a positive Town identity and a sense of place for residents and visitors alike.

Improvements to the downtown center not only provide a more positive experience, but attract visitors and potential investors by showing that the Town is invested in ensuring its own vitality. Calculated changes to the Downtown Center that enhance its proximity to the river front will capitalize on the unique historical, cultural and natural characteristics that make Livermore Falls a unique place.

3. River Front Park

The River Front's proximity to the Downtown Center as well as its visual prominence from the south provides the greatest potential asset and best speaks to the uniqueness of Livermore Falls. A new linear riverfront park will require proper planning and investment, but the return may prove invaluable in terms of elevating the status of Livermore Falls as a great place to work, live and visit.

4. Upper and Lower Business Zones

Improvements to the spatial organization, unity, and scale of the streetscape within the Upper and Lower Business Zones will express the community's commitment to the Town as well as contribute to overall perceptions of Livermore Falls' identity. The Town has a wonderful opportunity to tie streetscape

improvements to the Upper and Lower Business Zones to future State Route 4 infrastructure improvements.

5. *Bridge Arrival Zone*

Improvements along the Bridge Street Arrival Zone provide an excellent opportunity to establish an immediate visual identity for the town's cultural and industrial heritage. Enhancing views across the River to the downtown center and to the streetscape along Bridge Street will go a long way toward creating a more experiential and inviting arrival into the downtown.

D. IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

Gateways/Nodes

Immediate Actions:

- Establish a Gateway Steering Sub-Committee to guide future planning and development efforts. One member would also represent the Gateway Committee on the Livermore Falls Development Corporation to ensure the proper coordination of projects.
- Research gateway grant opportunities available through the State as well as other potential funding for gateway improvements.
- Create a logo and slogan for Livermore Falls that can be implemented as part of a unified signage program for the Town.

First Priority Improvements:

- Make recommended improvements to the Downtown Gateway
- Make recommended improvements to the Southern Gateway

Second Priority Improvements:

- Make recommended improvements to the Eastern Gateway
- Make recommended improvements to the Western Gateway

Downtown Zone

Immediate Actions:

- Establish a Downtown Improvement Sub-Committee to solicit support for and to oversee changes in the district. The Livermore Falls Development Corporation would include a representative of this Committee to ensure the proper coordination of projects.
- Install permanent material crosswalks and stop signs at Chuck Wagon corner.
- Create an identifying logo and name for the Downtown Center that can be integrated into the Town's signage program.

First Priority Improvements:

- Undertake a more detailed streetscape study with particular focus on the following objectives:
 - Recommendations for visual improvements
 - Recommendations to enhance pedestrian scale and safety. These recommendations would include lighting, sidewalk materials, plantings and amenities.
 - Recommendations for creating physical and visual links to the proposed riverfront park.

River Front

Immediate Actions:

- Establish a River Front Park Steering Sub-Committee to guide future planning and development efforts. One member would also represent the Committee on the Livermore Falls Development Corporation to ensure the proper coordination of projects.
- Develop a name for the park to establish an identity for the resource that can be used as part of the marketing and planning process.
- Create a citizen action group or work with an existing entity to manage invasive plant growth along the riverfront.
- Create a map identifying current resources and connections related to the park, including the boat launch and recreation fields.

First Priority Improvements:

- Undertake a more detailed study with particular focus on the following objectives:
 - Recommendations for making connections to the revitalized downtown area, including provisions for a safe, green access across Main Street.
 - Recommendations for reorganizing existing vehicular circulation and parking so that it is better integrated into the aesthetics and uses of the River Front Park.
 - Recommendations for improving and establishing new path systems, seating spaces, overlooks, and other amenities within the linear park.

Second Priority Improvements:

- Establish sign standards and install signs in key locations of the park as determined in the design study.

Upper & Lower Business Zones

Immediate Actions:

- Establish a Business Zone Sub-Committee to enhance public-private partnership opportunities and to work with the Maine Department of Transportation on future planning and development efforts. One member would also represent the Business Zone Sub-Committee on the Livermore Falls Development Corporation to ensure the proper coordination of projects and interests.

First Priority Improvements:

- Undertake a more detailed study with particular focus on the following objectives:
 - Assess existing needs and conditions related to vehicular access, curb cuts and sidewalks off Route 4.
 - Recommendations for streetscape improvements and access management, including provisions for lighting, sidewalks, curb cuts, street trees and plantings.

Second Priority Improvements:

- Establish sign standards and install signs in key locations of the park as determined in the design study.

Bridge Arrival Zone

Immediate Actions:

- Plant street trees at regular intervals along both sides of the Bridge Street arrival corridor between Water Street and the intersection.
- Install a vegetative buffer to screen views from Bridge Street to the parking lot behind the bank.

First Priority Improvements:

- Install directional signs near the Water Street intersection to highlight cultural, historical and natural attractions, including the River Front Park and the Downtown Center.
- Provide ornamental, pedestrian-scale street lights along both sides of the Bridge Street arrival corridor between Water Street and the intersection. These lights will set the tone for an overall lighting standard for the downtown district.

Second Priority Improvements:

- Install ornamental lighting along both sides of the bridge. This lighting should be consistent with the lighting installed as part of the first priority improvements.
- Work with the Maine Department of Transportation to paint the bridge a more enticing and distinctive color.

E. SUMMARY

The revitalization and redevelopment of the Livermore Falls downtown is essential for preserving the commercial, civic and cultural core of the community. Livermore Falls has many significant historic, natural and cultural resources as well as contextual resources that make it a truly unique town. Improvements that capitalize upon these resources will ultimately improve the perceptions and overall vitality of the downtown. The Town has a wonderful opportunity to affect its own future success by planning for these changes over time.

As the Town moves forward with the recommended improvements, it will need to periodically reassess the implementation strategy to ensure that the priorities stated within this study still hold. Further planning and design studies will provide a more complex layer of recommendations to guide future development and long-term downtown revitalization efforts.

We look forward to working with you to make this vision a reality. A healthy downtown is a dynamic process as well as an active place, continually evolving and maturing over time. With the use of appropriate visions and tools for planning, the unique character of a community's downtown need not be compromised by change. Relevant spatial organization, facilities for comfort and ease of movement, as well as specific guidance for economic growth express a community's commitment to its downtown and contribute to the overall viability, experience and identity of the place.

