Fort Kent, Maine

Downtown Revitalization Plan

Date: February, 2015
WP #12924A
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MaineDOT Traffic Counts

The following documents have not been included as appendices within this report as these documents are readily available to the public from the Town of Fort Kent’s website:
  • Town Ordinances and Comprehensive Plan
    http://www.fortkent.org/residents/index.php#revize_document_center_rz144
  • Acadian Heritage Sites and Fort Kent’s Trails and Greenways information
    http://www.fortkent.org/departments/recreation_and_parks_department/outdoor_recreation_opportunities_and_acadian_heritage_sites.php#revize_document_center_rz403
Acknowledgements

The Fort Kent Downtown Revitalization Plan was developed for the Town of Fort Kent by Wright-Pierce. The plan was financially supported through local capital funding.

Lead consultant team members from Wright-Pierce included:
   Travis Pryor, RLA – Project Manager
   Jonathan Edgerton, PE – Principal
   Christine Manderson – GIS Technician

Guidance and plan development assistance came from Town of Fort Kent Staff including:
   Don Guimond - Town Manager
   Steve Pelletier - Director of Planning and Economic Development
   Cindy Bouley - Office of Planning / Administrative Assistant

Additional support was provided by:
   America’s First Mile Committee
   Northern Maine Development Commission
   Fort Kent Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
   Pierce-Atwood (TIF Document Legal Counsel)

Special thanks goes to the general public and local business owners who provided input during the plan development process, along with all those who assisted in past recent development of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan – 2012 – Town Fort Kent, the Town of Fort Kent, Maine – Downtown Tax Increment Financing District and Development Program and the Fort Kent Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.
Project Goals

Early on in the planning process several “fact finding” steps were taken that established consensus goals to guide development of the Downtown Revitalization Plan. Relevant similar planning efforts within the community such as the recently adopted Downtown Tax Increment Financing District and Development Program (TIF) were examined by Wright-Pierce. Public input was gathered from a kick-off meeting with Town Staff and the Downtown Committee (Reorganized as the America’s First Mile Committee), an interactive workshop meeting with the general public, and at an initial draft plan presentation to the Town Council. Additional stakeholder input was also sought from specific groups such as the Fort Kent Chamber of Commerce. Based on this input, the following consensus goals were established.

PROJECT GOALS

- Develop a Downtown Revitalization Plan that is consistent and supportive of other relevant past, current and ongoing town-led planning initiatives.
- Take advantage of the wealth of community historical interests and the strong sense of community pride in the Downtown.
- Establish a theme for the Downtown that can be clearly branded in support of the local economy.
- Continue to support existing businesses, and identify and recruit “missing” commercial entities to meet a wider range of local residential needs.
- Main Street is the key component of the Downtown.
- Create a greater diversity of housing with a focus on attracting young families to live, work and play in the Downtown.
- Concentrate on in-fill of vacant parcels within the heart of the Downtown.
- Develop a prioritized Downtown Revitalization Plan that creates an actionable “roadmap” for strategic community investment.
SNAPSHOT OF FORT KENT’S DOWNTOWN

A list of the Downtown’s assets, weaknesses and opportunities (a “snapshot”, below) was generated to understand the needs and issues that the community felt most impacted the Downtown.

Assets: What’s working for the Downtown

- Strong sense of community pride
- New international bridge
- Marketing opportunities of America’s First Mile
- Recent Comp. Plan update and Downtown TIF in place
- University of Maine – Fort Kent
- Nearby hospital
- Diversity of year-round outdoor recreational opportunities
- Businesses that can reach markets beyond the immediate service area to New England and beyond (Car dealerships, outdoor sporting equipment…)
- State certification as a “Business Friendly Community”

Weaknesses: Where things are falling short

- Key business types are missing from the downtown (retail clothing / furniture, mid-level restaurants…)
- Lack of diversity of housing types
- While there are some night life opportunities in the downtown (movies, pizza and pubs) a greater diversity is needed
- Limited employment opportunities (most are tied to trucking and forestry)
- Lack of parking
- Lack of lodging (especially for large gathering events)
- Lack of informational / directional signage
- Recent fires and floods have created gaps in the historic Main Street character

Opportunities: Ideas to build from

- Establish a consistent theme for the downtown
- Infill of key vacant parcels within the heart of the downtown
- Promote reasons for visitors to park and experience the downtown
- Attract young families who can stay and raise kids in the area
- Downtown is a service center, not only for Fort Kent, but also regionally for Northern Maine and Canada (multiple car dealerships, outdoor sporting goods…)

See Appendix A-1 for full documentation of public input as recorded by Wright-Pierce
Executive Summary

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

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

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

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

Fort Kent has made great strides ahead of development of the Downtown Revitalization Plan to put some of these tools in place so that the community can begin implementing the plan in a timely fashion. As noted above, the Comprehensive Plan has been recently updated and a TIF program has been set in place, defining the downtown area and creating a potential funding mechanism for revitalization improvements. The Town has also recently created a Bicycle / Pedestrian plan in consideration of a variety of local and regional transportation. On the promotional side, the Town has recently been recognized by the State of Maine as a certified “Business Friendly Community”.

The next strategic step to utilize potential TIF funds and capitalize on the other recent supportive initiatives is to develop a downtown plan in conformance with the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development’s specific plan component criteria which serve as the organizational format of this planning initiative and include:

- Definition of the downtown area
- Information regarding zoning ordinance effects on the downtown area, and consistency of the Downtown Revitalization Plan with the Comprehensive Plan
- Building inventory conditions assessment
- Inventory of retail / commercial space
Assessment of the current condition of each of these plan components is expanded upon further in the following respective sections of the Downtown Revitalization Plan, culminating in specific findings and recommendations for implementing each component of the plan, and overall downtown revitalization implementation strategies for future phased improvements.
Downtown Area

Fort Kent’s Downtown area has been recently defined and is hereto referenced as the Downtown TIF District (Depicted in RED below). The Downtown’s geographic region generally lies between the Saint John River to the north, and Elm Street and the Fish River to the south, following Main Street (U.S. Route 1) from the intersection at Pearl Street to the west and Alfred Street to the east. The Downtown TIF District is further depicted in terms of designated parcels on Maps 15, 17, 18 and 20 of the Town of Fort Kent Tax Maps. (See Appendices)
DOWNTOWN COMMITTEE CONSUMER SURVEY

As part of the past recent planning studies focused on the Downtown area, Fort Kent conducted a public input survey focused on shopping and parking interests within the downtown shortly before developing the Downtown Revitalization Plan. This survey was supported by volunteer efforts from UMFK students and included participation from the general public during the Annual Fort Kent International Muskie Derby. The findings of this survey are as follows and it should be noted that the results are aligned with subsequent public input and Downtown Revitalization Goals as described in this plan (See Appendices):

- Out of 140 total participants, the majority identified a need for retail clothing stores (92)
- New businesses desired were in support of general department stores (52) and clothing (43)
- Parking availability was split 50/50 in terms of perception of adequacy recognizing the shortage of convenient parking close to certain downtown businesses was limited at such a large gathering event.

FORT KENT’S REGIONAL CONTEXT

As one of only 9 service center communities in Aroostook County, downtown Fort Kent serves as a regional hub where it is a job center, it serves as a retail center with sales exceeding the needs of the local population, and it offers an array of social, cultural, health and financial services to the surrounding region. The University of Maine at Fort Kent, Northern Maine Medical Center, and the 10th Mountain Biathlon Training Center are but a few examples of the diversity of its economy. Outdoor recreation and UMFK draw regional interests from throughout New England and across the U.S. Service center businesses, active forestry industry trucking and rail operations, scenic byways, eco-tourism and the international bridge draw interests from northern Aroostook County and neighboring Canada.
Zoning and Ordinances / Consistency with Comprehensive Plan

Findings
The following excerpts from the Town’s Comprehensive Plan and local zoning ordinances illustrate how these documents effect the Downtown. In general, Fort Kent’s local ordinance regulations and overarching Comprehensive Plan are well aligned with the community’s goals for downtown revitalization.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
The Comprehensive Land Use Plan – 2012 – Town of Fort Kent was recently adopted by the residents of Fort Kent on November 13, 2012. The Comprehensive Plan is in support of the community’s Downtown Redevelopment Strategy, certifying that:

“this Comprehensive Plan was prepared with the intent of complying with the Growth Management Act (30 M.S.R.A. §§ 4312-4350), that it includes all of the applicable required elements of the Maine Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule (07-105 CM R208) and it is true and accurate”

ZONING AND ORDINANCES
The Downtown includes Commercial and Residential zoning areas and is surrounded by Fort Kent’s Overall Growth Area. The following zoning ordinance districts are located within or immediately adjacent to the downtown area.

R - Residential District
The Residential District is established as a zoning District in which the principal use of the land will be for detached family dwellings at low density with educational, recreational and religious, fraternal and nonprofit organization of club facilities. The development of attractive neighborhood living will be encouraged. Areas where similar residential future growth appears possible are included in the Residential District.

C - Commercial District
The Commercial District is established as a general business and commercial District to which the public requires frequent and convenient access. It is intended to promote concentration of commercial development for the mutual advantage of the public and the merchant.

a. On West Main Street between the western boundary line of Tax Map 15, Lots 87, 86, and 1 and Tax Map 18 the western boundary line of Lot 21 and the eastern property line of Lot 34, (Town Office up to railroad tracks on East Main Street) residential uses are permitted only in
levels above the ground floor, provided that all federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and ordinances are met.

b. Plans for proposed construction shall be reviewed by the Town Council and Planning Board, and when appropriate by the municipal department heads.

(See Appendices for Urban Areas Zoning Map)

The full Comprehensive Plan, Zoning and Ordinance documents have not been included within this report. These documents are readily available to the public from the Town of Fort Kent’s website:

- Town Ordinances and Comprehensive Plan
  [http://www.fortkent.org/residents/index.php#revize_document_center_rz144](http://www.fortkent.org/residents/index.php#revize_document_center_rz144)

**Priorities**

- Maintain historic village character promoting a New England Village theme.

**Recommendations**

- Consider adopting design guidelines, an historic district or other protection to maintain Downtown character and historic architecture.

- Consider use of Form Based Codes to address architectural character for new, non-residential development and conversion from residential to non-residential uses within the downtown.

- Consider adopting parking standards / shared use parking for new development within the downtown.

- The Comprehensive Plan as a whole is currently aligned and supportive of the Downtown Revitalization Plan’s goals and does not need any immediate changes as a result of the Downtown Revitalization Plan findings. As a long term priority in support of the community’s Downtown Revitalization goals and in compliance with State Law, the Town should continue to update the Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Plan every 5 to 10 years at a minimum, in support of future community planning goals and to be responsive to changing economic and social climates.
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Buildings Inventory & Conditions Assessment

Findings

The downtown itself is currently composed of a variety of building types and uses that is consistent with a healthy, diversified downtown environment. All of the buildings are predominantly 1 to 2 stories in height and are accessible to both floors. The Town has recently completed a thorough inventory and assessment of the buildings within the downtown area during development of the Downtown TIF program, successfully leading to a declaration of slum and blight area. (See Downtown Area Map) This designation, as accepted by the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development positions the Town to apply for federal Community Development Block Grant program funds to make physical improvements to buildings themselves, and for the properties surrounding, including public right-of-ways.

While recent floods and fires have been a detriment to the fabric of the downtown building environment, the Town has been supportive of new growth opportunities, either encouraging new developers to come to Fort Kent, or through planned municipal infrastructure projects such as acquisition of vacant area(s) for expansion of parking facilities in the heart of the downtown. As a result of such efforts, the majority of the vacant and blighted parcels, which resulted from the recent environmentally destructive events, have been remediated and are anticipated to be redeveloped in the near future.
The Downtown historic building registry includes the Fort Kent Block House - a facility that is managed by the State of Maine. Several structures have survived fire and flood which provide architectural significant to the downtown area even though they are not included on the national registry including the U.S. Post Office and the Catholic Church.

There are 41 commercial / retail buildings and supporting parcels, 21 vacant parcels (the majority of which are serving as parking areas), 20 mixed use buildings which predominantly include retail / commercial use on the 1st floor with housing on the second floor, and 39 standalone residential structures. (Approximately 155 are rental units and 19 are single family homes).

Priorities

- Establish a façade program.
- Adopt ordinance guidelines or standards to promote a quality of architectural character within the downtown that supports a New England village theme.
- Provide quality, affordable housing for families.
- Fill in voids in the Downtown created by recent flooding and fire events.

Recommendations

- Bring in professional design assistance to offer recommendations on building façade improvements
- Establish a façade program and fund (either revolving loan or grant) for downtown buildings (may include street front landscaping if desired)
Develop design guidelines or standards to be applied to exterior building renovations and new construction, to encourage appropriate architectural character for the downtown.

Continue to reach out to owners of downtown buildings and properties that negatively impact the Downtown image, and identify their needs and concerns.

Reach out to owners of vacant Downtown storefronts to encourage or assist with maintaining window displays.

Explore the development of a property maintenance ordinance for the Downtown to address properties that negatively impact the Downtown image.

Establish a program for housing rehabilitation for residential buildings on Main Street.

Continue to document / promote available buildings for redevelopment, occupancy.

Work with Maine State Housing Authority and private / non-profit housing agencies such as Coastal Enterprises Incorporated to develop a diversity of housing stock other than higher end single family homes or lower end, single family housing units.
Inventory of Retail / Commercial Space

Findings

The Town has completed a recent shopping consumer survey (See Appendices) and an inventory and assessment of all buildings within the downtown area during development of the Downtown TIF program and the Comprehensive Plan, and maintains annually updated records of available retail / commercial space within the Downtown area. The Town continues to record current vacant retail / commercial space within the Downtown for local accounting purposes and to assist in the attraction of new development to the Downtown. (See Building Inventory Map and Downtown TIF document.)

Priorities

- Focus on filling in the “gaps” in the downtown where recent floods and fires have left key lots along Main Street vacant.
- Attract key “missing” retail store types to meet community shopping needs.

Recommendations

- The Town should continue to update available retail data on an annual basis and work with the Chamber of Commerce to advertise availability of retail / commercial space for targeted recruitment purposes.
- The Town should consider adopting zoning guidelines / standards to ensure that new development is in keeping with a unified “New England Village” theme for the downtown.
- The Town should make infrastructure investments in terms of parking, streetscape and utility improvements in collaboration with new development proposals in the downtown on a case-by-case basis.
- Utilize TIF funding to assist business development in the downtown by providing an opportunity for business development through various avenues, such as a TIF revolving loan / grant program, and marketing and branding, for the recruitment of additional private investment, which will also add to the municipal tax base.
- Utilize branding tools, such as America’s First Mile, and marketing tools, such as demographic and retail data, brochures, and consultants to provide the best opportunities for new private investment.
- Use TIF funds / revolving loan fund and grant monies to help flood-proof existing downtown buildings.
Employment Opportunities

Findings

The Town has completed an assessment of employment data within the downtown area during development of the Downtown TIF program. One of the largest employers in the region is the forest industry. Northern Maine Medical Center and the University of Maine at Fort Kent are also large employers within close proximity to the downtown. The downtown itself provided a variety of employment opportunities, primarily in the banking, car sales, retail and restaurant service industries. Opportunities for increased employment within the downtown include additional tourism related work and support of businesses that market goods and services not only to meet the needs of the community and surrounding regional service area, but also throughout New England and the Canadian Provinces, largely via internet commerce. Fort Kent’s economy continues to diversify and has adapted to the demographic changes in the last 30 years. The Town has become a community that is centered on NMMC, UMFK, and the many professional and service locations. The following chart displays the breakdown of occupations within the community, in comparison with the rest of the state (*Source – 2012 Comprehensive Land Use Plan):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Sectors</th>
<th>Fort Kent Employment</th>
<th>Occupations</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management &amp; Professional</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>224966</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service occupations</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>115271</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales &amp; office occupations</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>160970</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming, fishing, forestry</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>10367</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction &amp; maintenance</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>66058</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production &amp; transportation</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>79924</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>2075</td>
<td></td>
<td>357556</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The highest number of occupations falls into the management and professional category, which is reflected in Fort Kent’s median household income of $39,345 in 2010, compared to the state average of $46,541. One of Fort Kent’s greatest economic strengths is its geographically well-defined downtown or central business district. This includes West and East Main Streets and Market Street. The downtown is the retail center for goods and services that serves several surrounding communities. The following chart displays the Town’s Retail Sales:

Fort Kent Taxable Retail Sales: ($1,000s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taxable Retail Sales</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Retail Sales</td>
<td>72516</td>
<td>70243</td>
<td>73706</td>
<td>77184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Retail Sales</td>
<td>55437</td>
<td>53099</td>
<td>56258</td>
<td>57220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Operation</td>
<td>17080</td>
<td>17144</td>
<td>17448</td>
<td>19964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Supplies</td>
<td>10776</td>
<td>9352</td>
<td>9182</td>
<td>9036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Stores</td>
<td>6506</td>
<td>7060</td>
<td>7114</td>
<td>6785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Merchandise</td>
<td>5374</td>
<td>5268</td>
<td>5728</td>
<td>5596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5674</td>
<td>4656</td>
<td>4548</td>
<td>5356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>18097</td>
<td>18041</td>
<td>20833</td>
<td>21036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>7621</td>
<td>7426</td>
<td>7500</td>
<td>8120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodging</td>
<td>1389</td>
<td>1296</td>
<td>1351</td>
<td>1290</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*Source – 2012 Comprehensive Land Use Plan)

The trend for the past three years clearly shows that sales are increasing. Consumer retail sales made up the largest part of total retail sales. These represent sales directly to consumers not, businesses, contractors or wholesalers. Business Operation sales showed the greatest increase of all sale types. (CLUP)
## Downtown Revitalization Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Employers</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Other Businesses</th>
<th># of Locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern Maine Medical Center</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>Financial Institutions</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crosswinds Residential Care</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Restaurants</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Maine at Fort Kent</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>Clothing/Footwear</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAD 27</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>Auto Dealers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TNT Road Co.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Snowmobile/ATV Dealers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irving Woodlands</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Service Stations</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Timber Trucking</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Grocery Stores</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Martin &amp; Sons</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Pharmacies/Wellness</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paradis Shop &amp; Save</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Truck/Logging Equipment</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John's Shurfine</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Accounting/Financial</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daigle Oil Co.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Salons/Tanning</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley Auto</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Outdoor Retail</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Maine DHHS</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Building Supplies</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acadia Federal Credit Union</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pelletier Ford</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Florist</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daigle and Houghton</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Gift Shops</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Regional Employers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kitchen/Home/Appliances</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twin Rivers Paper Co. (Madawaska)</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>Lawn and Garden</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RF Chamberland (St. Agatha)</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>Realtors</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine Woods Company (Portage)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Department/Discount Stores</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ameridial</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Insurance Agencies</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Convenience Stores</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Northern Maine Medical Center is the largest employer followed by the school department and UMFK. The remaining employers and business locations are a comprehensive mix of retailers and services that make up the uniqueness of the Fort Kent business community. According to the CLUP, 84% of residents that are employed work in Fort Kent. The remainder of employed persons works outside the community and within an hour and a half travel time from Fort Kent.

**Priorities**

- Expand employment opportunities for young families in particular, in support of overall revitalization goals to promote a vibrant downtown where residents can raise live/raise families, work and play.

**Recommendations**

- Provide an opportunity for business development through various avenues, such as a TIF revolving loan / grant program, and marketing and branding, for the recruitment of additional private investment, which will also add to the municipal tax base.
- Utilization of branding tools, such as America's First Mile, and marketing tools, such as demographic and retail data, brochures, and consultants to provide the best opportunities for new private investment.
- Assist business development in the downtown by providing gap funding to private developers through a TIF revolving loan / grant program for the development of 2nd floor residential units in newly developed and existing businesses.
- Expand on opportunities to promote diversity of professional career development at the high school level and at UMFK for traditional industries such as forestry, and for emerging expanding business opportunities such as Maine Winter Sports center and other outdoor recreational opportunities.
- The Fort Kent Downtown Tax Increment Finance Program will provide an opportunity for business development through various avenues, such as a TIF revolving loan / grant program, and marketing and branding, for the recruitment of additional private investment, which will also add to the municipal tax base. The creation of the TIF District will make possible the utilization of branding tools, such as America's First Mile, and marketing tools, such as demographic and retail data, brochures, and consultants to provide the best opportunities for new private investment.
Inventory of Residential Units

Findings

The Town has completed an inventory of the residential units within the downtown area during development of the Downtown TIF program and the Comprehensive Plan and maintains records of available retail / commercial space within the Downtown area. In addition to single family residential neighborhoods, both within and immediately surrounding the Downtown, there are currently 155 housing units. The majority of the units are one bedroom (99) followed by (51) two bedroom units and (5) 3 bedroom units. Most of the housing units available within the downtown area and immediately surrounding the downtown are for low income families and elderly housing. Also within the downtown are 20 single family residential houses supporting middle-to upper class families. (See Building Inventory Map)

Priorities

- Support diversity of residential types within the downtown that are affordable and attractive to young families who can live, work and play within the center of the community.

Recommendations

- Assist mixed-use developments by providing gap funding to private developers through a TIF revolving loan / grant program for the development of 2nd floor residential units in new and existing retail / commercial buildings.
- Involve Maine State Housing Authority and private housing developers that have access to New Market Tax Credits and other capital funding sources in support of workforce housing.
Pedestrian / Bicycle Infrastructure and Accessibility

Findings

The Town of Fort Kent has completed a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan in place that identifies existing bike/ ped infrastructure within the downtown and surrounding community and sets prioritized improvements which are consistent with the goals of the Downtown revitalization plan. The Town of Fort Kent, Maine Department of Transportation, Power of Prevention, and the Northern Maine Development Commission began the planning exercise in December 2012 with the intention of defining projects and programs needed to make Fort Kent a bike and walk friendly community. The Committee, with the assistance of Town Officials and through the review of a resident survey identified no/ low cost projects that the community can accomplish while seeking to create biking and walking opportunities during all four seasons. The Plan also contains projects that are more expensive and longer term.

The list of projects, ranging from simple signs and markings, to improved sidewalks and crosswalks, to major trail development, including surfaces, lighting and benches were prioritized. For example, identification of safe walking/ bicycling routes between places where people live, work, go to school, and play, will be a first step. Safety improvements, sidewalks, signs, maps, and designated trails that connect existing facilities such as 10th Mountain ("Mills to Mountain") and the new Senior Center, may be suggested to encourage "active" (vs. motorized) transportation. The potential of a complete "Fish River Green Belt" trail along both sides of the river in town will be examined. The plan will offer action steps and suggest potential funding sources to enable the plan projects to become reality to improve the pedestrian and bicyclist environment in Fort Kent.
Priorities

- Improve bicycle and pedestrian safety.
- Promotion of outdoor bicycle and pedestrian related activities as economic tourism based attractions associated with the downtown revitalization efforts.
- Begin prioritized implementation of the Towns Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
- Improve existing sidewalks to comply with ADA guidelines
- Expanding sidewalks off Main Street

Recommendations

- Improve wayfinding signage within the downtown in support of outdoor recreational promotion and to link the downtown parking and businesses within each other.
- Begin implementation of bicycle and pedestrian improvements in a phased approach that is affordable within the Town’s capital improvement budget
- Continue to update and evaluate the plan in coordination with other downtown revitalization improvements including roadway, streetscape and utility infrastructure improvements, as well as private development projects so that bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure does not have to be reconstructed “after the fact” when these other initiatives often involve an underground infrastructure component.
- Continue to coordinate with MaineDOT and Bicycle Coalition of Maine on joint project efforts improving bicycle and pedestrian conditions.
• Continue to coordinate with MaineDOT to ensure that bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvement projects are consistent with MaineDOT policies and regulations.
• Continue to monitory and plan for capital improvements to maintain existing sidewalk and trail infrastructure.
• Improvements to sidewalks, trails and additional signage within and interconnected with the TIF district, which are of benefit to the downtown, will coincide with the local “Bike and Pedestrian Trails” initiative whose purpose it is to create a more active and accessible Town Center.
• Repair of existing sidewalks and pedestrian and bike trails, and construct new trail interconnections within and adjacent to the TIF district, which are of benefit to the downtown. (For example, the Fish River Greenway. The list of projects, ranging from simple signs and markings, to improved sidewalks and crosswalks, to major trail development are expanded on in the latest Fort Kent Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.)
• Add sidewalks off Main Street to improve pedestrian access from adjacent neighborhoods, schools and recreational facilities.
Infrastructure – Streetscape and Utilities

Findings

All roadways are two-way and the condition of the travelways are in fair condition. The Town is located on the Saint John Valley Cultural Byway (Route 1) and on the Fish River Scenic Byway (Route 11). Senator Collins’ office is exploring the possibility of opening up the national nomination process that would consider changing the designation of Maine Scenic Byways to National Scenic Byways status.

The downtown area is supported by public water, sewer, electric and CATV / DATA throughout the entire area. Where feasible, all overhead utilities have been located off Main Street. The Town’s Water and Sewer Treatment Facilities are located outside the downtown area and all mains within the downtown are in good condition and at capacity to meet current and future expansion needs. The latest water distribution inventory mapping is up to date as of 2012 and the latest sewer main distribution inventory is up to date as of 1995 mapping. All necessary upgrades have been completed as of 2009 as required due to impacts from downtown flooding and fires.

The Town provides streetscape lighting, banners street trees, benches and trash receptacles along Main Street throughout the downtown area. The street lights are in need of relocation out of existing sidewalk segments to facilitate ease of sidewalk clearing maintenance during winter seasons.

The levee along the Saint John River has been improved and the Fish River embankment has been targeted for additional improvements. The Town intends to purchase remaining flood prone areas for use as municipal parking facilities and outdoor recreation / green space.
Priorities

- Improvements to lighting infrastructure on Main Street.
- Redevelopment of Elm Street to improve vehicular traffic flow off Main Street

Recommendations

- Utility improvements along Main Street include upgrades to LED street lighting for more cost efficiency and improved, safer lighting.
- Coordinate with MaineDOT for improvements at the intersection of Hall Street and Route 1 to improve vehicular and pedestrian safety.
- Coordinate the proposed use of Elm Street as a “bypass” with the MaineDOT.
- Incorporate a portion of Pinkham Avenue and reshape a section of road where Page Avenue intersects Main Street to improve vehicular traffic off Main Street.
- Make levee improvements along the Fish River adjacent to the Block House.
- Purchase flood-prone lands for use as parking or greenspace.
- Explore opportunities to expand the reach of its Byways to potential visitors from more distant locations.
- Continue to explore opportunities to cost share on transportation related projects with MaineDOT.
- Continue to coordinate with MaineDOT to ensure that roadway infrastructure improvement projects are consistent with MaineDOT policies and regulations.
Signage

Findings
Signage in a downtown serves several purposes. Functionally, signage provides a source of information for visitors in terms of wayfinding, for businesses in terms of advertisement, for safety in terms of vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian directions, and for promotion of the community’s sense of pride, historic character and civic interests.

While no current signage ordinance is place in Fort Kent, the Town, civic entities and the local business community have developed a consistent village scale signage theme that is generally compatible with each entities objectives within the downtown. The two areas that the Town and citizen’s recognized as needing improvement included wayfinding signage for vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle traffic and expansion of promotional signage in an organized and New England Village style. These panels can provide insight into the history of the French Acadian culture.

Priorities

- Improve bicycle and pedestrian safety.
- Improve wayfinding signage for pedestrian and vehicular visitor’s to downtown amenities, adjacent neighborhoods and cultural resources and downtown parking.
- Develop a consistent and coordinated signage system along the times of a “New England Village” theme that is consistent for all of the Town’s signage needs.
Recommendations

- In addition to the signs that promote the Town at the municipal boundaries, additional gateway signage at the entrances to the downtown district should be considered.

- Coordinate with MaineDOT and Bicycle Coalition of Maine to implement the pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements as recommended in the Town's recently adopted Fort Kent Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. This signage should meet the objectives of AASHTO and ADA federal safety objects and be consistently applied throughout the downtown.

- Consider historic signage programs such as the “The Museum in the Streets®” and coordinate with the Fort Kent Historical Society.

- With respect to signage (particularly the “The Museum in the Streets®” program), the Town should explore opportunities to build on existing interpretive panels funded through the Scenic Byways program and use the existing signs as a starting point for future interpretive signs, and in terms of maintaining consistency with the state-wide scenic byway signage palette style.

- The America’s First Mile Committee, the Chamber of Commerce and the Town of Fort Kent should continue to periodically examine the Town’s already successful promotional signage banners and signs to expand upon the current signage resources and adapt to new community events. Such initiatives could include a support of a unified linear pedestrian corridor through the downtown to improve vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle connections between community cultural assets, public parking and downtown businesses that extend along the St. John River and Main Street.

- Consider design guidelines or standards for sign ordinance creation within the downtown.

- Consider creating private business directory signage for the downtown to be located at key focal gathering points such as municipal parking lots, the Town Office and the America’s First Mile monument. This signage typically takes the form of a kiosk that can provide promotional handout materials and is in keeping with gateway signage aesthetics.
Findings

As is the case in most downtown district’s availability of parking in Fort Kent may be more of a perceived problem in terms of capacity, given a lack of directional signage and periodic large scale gathering events that exceed parking capacity within close proximity of the center of the downtown. The Town has zoning ordinances in place that regulate provision of off-street parking for both residential and commercial development within the downtown that appear to be adequate for new development going forward. These ordinances do not affect most of the current downtown establishments that have been in place since before the ordinances were enacted. While most of the these businesses cannot meet parking levels as determined by state, regional and national level planning standards, the parking in the downtown seems to be adequate to meeting the majority of the community’s day to day needs.

There is a lack of convenient, publicly available off-street parking within the downtown area from a pedestrian standpoint. An equal amount of town municipally controlled parking facilities are located along Main Street (144 spaces for off street parking and 144 spaces for on-street parking – See Transportation and Parking map for location of public parking facilities). Given the lack of public transit from parking areas outside of the downtown readily available municipally controlled parking in close proximity of the downtown, there is an opportunity for improved parking management to support such periodic, large scale public gathering events that tax the current parking capacity.

Priorities

- Improve directional wayfinding signage to parking areas within walking distance of the downtown area.
- Examine opportunities to improve parking management / partnerships during large scale public gathering events with entities adjacent to the downtown that have ample parking available during off peak and weekend hours including local and state school departments. This will likely include shuttle services between parking lots outside the downtown area and various downtown and adjacent public gathering locations like Riverside Park or 10th Mountain.
- Prioritize opportunities for Town acquisition of off-street parking in the downtown. Such facilities may be made publicly available and or leased to downtown interests.

Recommendations

- Develop a Downtown Parking Master Plan (building off the inventory work performed by UMFK students for the Town)
Provide clear, consistent directional signage on Main Street to guide visitors to off-street parking areas.

- Coordinate shared and/or satellite parking during large scale public gathering events with stakeholder organizations just outside the downtown such as the public schools and UMFK.
- Utilize a portion of the TIF proceeds to purchase/lease and develop vacant lots as public parking areas.
- Examine town ordinances in terms of parking requirements.
- Consider adjustments / new provisions for parking requirements within the downtown as part of local ordinance development standards, including provisions for purchase / lease of parking spaces within the downtown district.

Private, Off-Street Parking

Municipal Parking Adjacent to the Downtown

On Street Municipal Parking

Limited Off Street Municipal Parking
Recreation

Findings

There is a wealth of outdoor recreational opportunities both within the downtown and in terms of connection to regional outdoor recreational interests. These facilities meet the community’s needs and draw regional interest from Canada and New England on a year round basis. The Fort Kent Recreation Department strives to compliment other public and private programs and facilities and is there to fill gaps in community recreation needs. Local recreation organizations include Fort Kent Recreation and Parks, No. 95 SJVAOS, UMFK, Maine Winter Sports-10th Mountain Ski club, Lonesome Pine Ski Club, Fort Kent Golf Club, local ATV, snowmobile and x-country ski clubs, Elder Social Action Council, County Physical Therapy, Power of Prevention, many Registered Maine Guides, Outfitters, and many others. The following table indicates recreational and other town attractions (*Source – 2012 Comprehensive Land Use Plan):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recreation/Leisure</th>
<th># of Locations</th>
<th>Town Attractions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Golf Course</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fort Kent Block House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10th Mountain Ski Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lonesome Pine Ski Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movie Theater</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fort Kent Golf Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ski Clubs/ Lodges</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Interna. CAN-AM Sled Dog Race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowmobile Clubs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Muskie/ Ployes Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATV Club</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>UMFK Homecoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Swimming Pool</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Scarecrow/ Mardi Gras Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Multi-Use Trail</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Riverside/ Jalbert Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Centers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fort Kent Historical Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boat Landings</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fish River Falls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice Skating Rink</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis Court</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Country Ski Trails</td>
<td>18 miles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RV Park/ Tenting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Priorities

- Promote existing wealth of recreational assets as a reason to stay in the downtown.
- Improve information and directional signage to and from recreational assets and the downtown.
- Explore opportunities shared use lodging and parking in support of large public gathering events focused on recreational activities including the Muskie Derby and the U.S. Olympic Biathlon trials within and adjacent to the downtown.

Recommendations

- Coordinate shuttle transit services and lodging to and from adjacent school facilities and the downtown.
- Promote resources beyond local means by internet marketing which has been demonstrated to be successful for local business expansion of car and retail sales ventures. This effort should be coordinated between the Town, recreational businesses and the Chamber of Commerce from a consistent source.

![Logos of Fort Kent Outdoor Center, Fort Kent International, and UMFK Bengals]

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**Discover Fort Kent’s Trails & Greenways**

The Fort Kent Fish River Greenway is your pathway to fitness and fun. We are known as the “Little Town That Could,” and we know that YOU can too! Let any of our greenways lead you down the path to a long and healthy life. There may be many different ways in life, but we are confident our greenways are among the most scenic and tranquil you will encounter. It’s the best way—Fort Kent’s greenways!
Capital Improvements Program

Findings
The Town has two capital improvement plans in place which provide both near term and long term guidance for prioritized investment of funds within the downtown. One is the recently adopted Downtown TIF program and the other is the municipal Fiscal Capacity and Capital Improvement Plan.

Both of these plans are have been recently updated within the past 1-2 years and provide prioritized cost estimates for near term downtown revitalization projects. The latest TIF development plan project cost estimates in support of the Downtown Revitalization Plan goals are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Project Subtotal Cost Estimate</th>
<th>TIF Payment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elm Street Redevelopment</td>
<td>$400,000</td>
<td>$29,432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure Improvements</td>
<td>$100,000 (amenities, sidewalks &amp; utilities)</td>
<td>$7,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Parking Improvements</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>$7,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental Housing Rehabilitation</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>$7,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levee Improvements</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>$7,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Development / Recruitment</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>$7,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$900,000</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Priorities
- Adopt the Downtown Revitalization Plan to allow for the Town to utilize the Downtown TIF Program funds in support of implementing the Downtown Revitalization Plan goals.

Recommendations
- Examine these capital plans on an annual basis and have the Town Council prioritize both short-term (1-3 years) and long term (5-10 years) goals for capital improvement expenditures.
- Look for opportunities to leverage local matching funds with private investment funds as well as state and federal grant programs.
Action Plan / Funding Opportunities

Findings
For downtown revitalization efforts, there are a number of proven approaches and funding mechanisms that many Maine communities have employed to see their plans through to implementation. Fort Kent has many active community stakeholder organizations, as well as responsive municipal staff and elected leaders who are well positioned to support the communities Downtown Revitalization goals. It has been noted through the public input process that these organizations are not always working together in a manner that might better promote the community as a whole (each is well focused on their own interests without seeing the “larger picture”)

Priorities
- Utilize Downtown TIF funds in support of physical downtown infrastructure and building improvements.

Recommendations
- After adoption of the downtown plan, the America’s First Mile committee should serve as the initial organization to promote the prioritized plan improvements.
- Consider adopting a unified organizational approach such as the “The Main Street Approach” described below to better unite all interests within the downtown.
- Continue to monitor and apply for additional state and federal funding sources as available (often on an annual basis), utilizing local matching funds such as the Downtown TIF. Some of the more typical downtown revitalization funding sources are described in further detail after “The Main Street Approach” section.
UTILIZING THE "MAIN STREET APPROACH"

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

**The Main Street Four-Point Approach®**
From Main Street Maine

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

**Organization** involves getting everyone working toward the same goal and assembling the appropriate human and financial resources to implement a Main Street revitalization program. A governing board and standing committees make up the fundamental organizational structure of the volunteer-driven program. Volunteers are coordinated and supported by a paid program director as well. This structure not only divides the workload and clearly delineates responsibilities, but also builds consensus and cooperation among the various stakeholders.

**Promotion** sells a positive image of the commercial district and encourages consumers and investors to live, work, shop, play and invest in the Main Street district. By marketing a district's unique characteristics to residents, investors, business owners, and visitors, an effective promotional strategy forges a positive image through advertising, retail promotional activity, special events, and marketing campaigns carried out by local volunteers. These activities improve consumer and investor confidence in the district and encourage commercial activity and investment in the area.

**Design** means getting Main Street into top physical shape. Capitalizing on its best assets — such as historic buildings and pedestrian-oriented streets — is just part of the story. An inviting atmosphere, created through attractive window displays, parking areas, building improvements, street furniture, signs, sidewalks, street lights, and landscaping, conveys a positive visual message about the commercial district and what it has to offer. Design activities also include instilling good maintenance practices in the commercial district, enhancing the physical appearance of the commercial district by rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging appropriate new construction, developing sensitive design management systems, and long-term planning.

**Economic Restructuring** strengthens a community's existing economic assets while expanding and diversifying its economic base. The Main Street program helps sharpen the competitiveness of existing business owners and recruits compatible new businesses and new economic uses to build a commercial district that responds to today's consumers' needs. Converting unused or underused commercial space into economically productive property also helps boost the profitability of the district.
Organization

- The America’s First Mile Committee should stay on after completing this planning process to champion the Plan and help guide and push for implementation; the Committee may wish to establish subcommittees or designate existing entities to address each of the four points, Economic Restructuring, Promotions, Design, and Organization.
- Part of the role of a committee or entity responsible for Organization is to facilitate good communication (between town committees, staff, Selectmen, downtown businesses/stakeholders, and the community at large) and ensure that all are supportive of activities and actions, and that no one is working at cross-purposes; coordination with the Fort Kent Chamber of Commerce, Northern Maine Development Corporation and the University of Maine at Fort Kent will be important organizational task.
- Another aspect of Organization is the need for volunteers to help carry out many downtown activities; the Maine Downtown Center can offer guidance on managing volunteers effectively.

Promotion

- Downtown Fort Kent promotional materials should help "sell" the Downtown and its assets, and increase awareness of Downtown Fort Kent as a destination and resource for visitors; materials such as maps, brochures, business directories, etc. should be available at a designated Visitors Center (both physically and via the internet).
- Focus efforts on building Outdoor Recreation as a niche for downtown growth.

Design

- The committee or entity responsible for Design must consider the impacts of downtown plans and activities on its character and image; the design/style of streetscape elements, an activity such as an annual downtown clean up, or the installation of public art are all design considerations.
- Invite residents or businesses with design backgrounds such as artists, gardeners, architects, landscape architects, or others to participate in Design considerations for the downtown.

Economic Restructuring

- The Fort Kent Chamber of Commerce should be closely aligned with, or directly involved with, the Downtown Revitalization Plan goals and continued work of the America’s First Mile committee.
- Continue to invite residents or businesses with economic or business development backgrounds to participate in Economic Restructuring considerations for the downtown.
FUNDING

Most of the funding programs traditionally used as a significant portion of downtown revitalization capital support originate from federal sources and are administered by various state agencies. In recent years, these funding programs have been subject to similar to fluctuation and budget constraints as has been seen at the state and local levels in Maine. The information provided here on various programs is the most current available, but program details such as availability, deadlines, and requirements may change, and communities should contact the appropriate agencies to ensure they have the best information about a funding program. Development of the Downtown Revitalization Plan and a well-defined local capital improvement program are critical steps to position the community to apply for these increasingly competitive funding sources and to be well positioned for less traditional and/or less frequent funding opportunities such as state bonds and private philanthropic groups.

CDBG PROGRAMS

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

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

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

For more information: [http://www.meocd.org](http://www.meocd.org)

Two of the most commonly used grants for downtown revitalization are highlighted below. The Town may wish to explore the other CDBG programs for applicability such as: Public Facilities; Business Assistance, Micro-Enterprise Assistance and Housing Assistance.

Downtown Revitalization Grant

The Downtown Revitalization Grant (DR) Program provides funds to communities to implement comprehensive, integrated, and innovative solutions to the problems facing their downtown
districts. These community revitalization projects must be part of a strategy that targets downtown service and business districts and will lead to future public and private investment. Qualified applicant communities must have a downtown district meeting the definition. Communities applying for funds must provide a direct cash match of at least 25% of the total CDBG grant award. This match may consist of non-CDBG loans, grants, endowments, etc. contributed to the project. The proposed DR activities must be in a downtown plan (completed or updated within 5 years of the application) as recommended actions necessary for downtown revitalization. Applicants will receive three bonus points if they have been designated as a Main Street Maine Community by the Maine Downtown Center or one bonus point if they have been designated as a Maine Downtown Network Community.

Eligible projects include:

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

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

**Public Infrastructure Grant**

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

Eligible projects include:

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

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

**TIF PROGRAM**

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a state and local financing mechanism in which economic development and downtown improvements are funded through the dedication of increased local property tax revenues resulting from private investment within a designated district. TIFs are further supported by sheltering new property valuation within the district from a community’s state valuation so that the community avoids losses in state aid to education and state municipal revenues sharing as well as increases in its county tax. Revenues captured within a designated TIF district can be used to fund both local costs for public infrastructure/improvements and economic development efforts, as well as private costs for building construction and improvements or site related costs. In addition, such tax moneys can be captured from one location and applied to another location (such as captured from a commercial strip and applied to a downtown). Special considerations and uses are available for TIF’s when used in a designated downtown as part of a downtown development plan.

Fort Kent has already successfully instituted two TIF programs and has adopted a Downtown TIF in support of the communities Downtown Revitalization Goals.

For more information:


**MAINE DOT PROGRAMS**

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

**Quality Communities Program**

MaineDOT has established a Quality Community Program, which encompasses both Transportation Enhancements and Safe Routes to School programs. The Department has consolidated the former individual applications into a “common” Quality Community Program application, typically given a July 1 deadline (preceded by a spring Letter of Intent).
This competitive program is intended to improve community transportation related facilities through bicycle and pedestrian improvements, safety improvements, environmental improvements, scenic, historic, and other quality community improvements. The program is intended to support new pedestrian and bicycle facilities, with an emphasis on the transportation value the proposed project has for the community.

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

For more information:

http://www.maine.gov/mdot/pca/qcp

OTHER FUNDING PROGRAMS & STRATEGIES

Leveraging Private Funds

In many communities, partnerships with private entities such as landowners/developers, banks, non-profits or other institutions can result in important funding or implementation opportunities. Communities should be strategic in identifying specific ways in which such entities could participate in revitalizing the downtown.

Maine Arts Commission

The MAC has several competitive grant programs to help promote arts & culture, several of which have been successfully used in downtowns across the state. One program in particular that Fort Kent should investigate is the Creative Communities = Economic Development Grant (http://mainearts.maine.gov/grant_creativecommunities.aspx). The Town may want to check with the Farmington Downtown Association to see if there are collaborative opportunities or if they have used MAC grants.

For more information: http://mainearts.maine.gov/grants.aspx

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

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

Efficiency Maine has a number of Business Programs, Energy Audit programs, and tools and resources for Renewable Energy and improving energy efficiency.
The MDF Maine Downtown Center Green Downtowns program is geared towards supporting sustainable green initiatives for Maine's downtowns. Although their emphasis is on member communities, the Town can contact MDF to see if aspects of the program might apply to Fort Kent.

Project Canopy Grant

Project Canopy funds could be used for tree plantings in the Downtown or at Bass Park or the lakefront. Funding and administration is through the Maine Forest Service and Growsmart Maine; the funding limit for 2011 applications was $8,000. This program has typically required attendance at a training workshop, contact program agencies for more information.


Historic Tax Credit Programs

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

Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit:

There are both federal and state tax credits that may be used towards the rehabilitation of historic buildings, but only applies to buildings that are on the National Register or eligible for listing. Contact the Maine Historic Preservation Commission for more information.


Low Income Housing Tax Credit:

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

For more information: [http://www.mainehousing.org/HOUSINGDEVProgramsDetail.aspx?ProgramID=51](http://www.mainehousing.org/HOUSINGDEVProgramsDetail.aspx?ProgramID=51)

New Markets Tax Credit:

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

For more information:

Also information is available at Coastal Enterprises, Inc: http://www.ceimaine.org/NMTC

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

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

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

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

Downtown Study Area

Building Inventory

Transportation / Parking

Recreation

Utility Infrastructure
Appendices

Parking Space Inventory and Survey Summary

Downtown Committee Meeting – 4/22/14

Public Workshop – 6/24/14


TIF District Maps

Town Zoning Map

Fort Kent Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

Slum and Blight Declaration

MaineDOT Traffic Counts

The following documents have not been included as appendices within this report as these documents are readily available to the public from the Town of Fort Kent’s website:

- Town Ordinances and Comprehensive Plan
  [http://www.fortkent.org/residents/index.php#revize_document_center_rz144](http://www.fortkent.org/residents/index.php#revize_document_center_rz144)
- Acadian Heritage Sites and Fort Kent’s Trails and Greenways information
  [http://www.fortkent.org/departments/recreation_and_parks_department/outdoor_recreation_opportunities_and_acadian_heritage_sites.php#revize_document_center_rz403](http://www.fortkent.org/departments/recreation_and_parks_department/outdoor_recreation_opportunities_and_acadian_heritage_sites.php#revize_document_center_rz403)
Parking Space Inventory and Survey Summary Report

When do you typically shop in Fort Kent?

The responses to this question are an indication that the majority of the people surveyed shop in FK on a weekly, sometimes daily basis, at all hours of the day and evening. Groceries, house items, and other essential needs are what they shop for. The majority of the people seem to buy larger ticket items outside of town.

What do you shop for outside of town that you cannot find in Fort Kent?

Overwhelmingly, the number one response was clothing. It appears that the type of clothing that is currently available is not appealing or cost too much. Other popular responses include footwear, less expensive food, and furniture. Some of the responses indicate that some of the products in need are found here, they are too expensive.

Name two types of businesses you would like to see in Fort Kent.

The top two responses go with the previous category. Department store was the number one response with clothing store second. Sporting goods and furniture was tied for 3rd and breakfast/coffee shop and more restaurants were mention quite often. The trend here is obviously personal attire. The community is becoming more active so it is not surprising that sporting goods is high on the list. Many people feel we could use more family type, sit-down restaurants and more breakfast/coffee shop type places which also indicate more people on the go.

What are some community assets or services you would like to see in Fort Kent that currently do not exist?

In keeping with a community that is growing more active, the top response to this was some type of additional recreation, including a rec. center, outside activities, guiding services, bowling alley, etc. Second on the list are some additional activities for kids, teenagers, and young adults. 3rd and 4th on the list were health clinics and taxi/public transportation. We do have an aging population and the these responses indicate a need for more available, affordable routine healthcare and in addition to access to affordable transportation for those individuals who may not own vehicles or not able to drive.

Do you feel there is adequate public parking in Fort Kent?

62 responded yes while 67 responded no. Even some who responded yes included “for now” indicating that when we get more businesses there will not be enough. The parking space inventory results is a clear indication that there is no where near enough parking, public or private, according to the town’s parking space zoning ordinance.

What is your zip code?

Fort Kent - 94
Outside - 35

Although the majority of the people surveyed were from town, their responses were in line with the responses from people from outside of town.
In attendance:

Steve Pelletier, Director of Community Development  
Don Guimond, Town Manager  
Jim Roy, Healthcare (Frenchville resident)  
Jim Thibodeau, Retired Insurance  
Alan Soucy, Sears  
Dan Vallencourt, Insurance  
Ryan Lambert, Northern Timber Trucking  
Ryan Pelletier, NMDC  
Justin Dubois, Quigley’s  
TJP / JCE Wright-Pierce

Items Discussed

- Downtown TIF conditionally adopted
- Clothing store & furniture store at burned down Nadeau building – desired
- Pubs, pizza places
- Resort – investment; destination
- Questionnaire: when and to whom?
- More local visitors
- Revitalize Main Street
- ME Winter Sports & Libra Foundation backing out
- Merging of America’s 1st Mile committee
- Branding component
- Tax exempt IRS status
• Proud of community
• UMFK & hospital
• Local Ski Hill – 1965 local business dept. free
• 9 hole golf course – local support
• Main Street needs help
• Recovery from fire
• 10k population
• Include Canada as a state recognized primary service area
• What brings people here?
• 2 car dealerships bring financial boost & 3rd coming
• Internet marketing & some Canadian marketing
• Only community in county with 3 dealerships
• Work related to heavy truck/forestry dealer (trucks/skidders)
• Irving - $1M donation to UMFK
• 3-4 businesses started here, spreaded south
• Retail needs destination visitor support
• Sears: Attracting people is good for my business: Visitor is to transition Main Street to Park & Walk – Make it inviting
• Lincoln has real estate to attract Walmart... to serve as retail hub
• Maintain village character. Lots lost to recent fires.
• Rebuild at back of SW versus parking out front
• America’s 1st Mile merging of 2 other groups
• Commerce/business group to sell Ft. Kent (Chamber?) that promotes lodging, skiing, guided tours, hunting
• Desire for Ft. Kent to grow & kids to stay. New things to do.
• Canoe/kayak/snowmobile/hunting
• Night life (pubs/pizza)
• 2nd floor, quality, affordable housing. Currently looking for housing for hospital &
graduating students
• 5 financial institutions in town of 4,500 (& hair salons)
• Forestry investment primarily
• All vacant lots sold (vacant from fire, purchased by same person - outsider)
• Façade grants? Application submitted.
• $15k Betterment Fund for trail
• RTP/NPS for signage
• Northern Border Grant?
• Bridge (Asset) America’s 1st Mile support
• Bridge traffic counts
• Current low interest rates
• Outbound migration
• Since Reny’s has left, retail has struggled
• Elderly housing OK & have waiting lists
• Micro Enterprise loan
• Interested in downtown revitalization
• March 2013 questionnaire at Can/Am and e-mailed. (Sense more local participation: most from e-mail). College kids helpful – passed out survey.
• New development with better housing
• Reach out to CEI
• Demographics of forestry industry
• County-wide interest in re-branding
• Teach kids (Tech/Charter School - like job shadowing)
• No northern ME charter schools/efforts
• No. MCC has a forestry program
• Irving has a program – mostly in Canada
• Elderly housing XXX has second floor housing XXX fire station
- Town has a current Economic Development Corporation but not S013C. NMDC can act in that capacity.
- Historic Society and Can/Am are S013CS.
- FEMA proposed flood zone mapping changes downtown in wake of recent flooding events.
- Recent plan setbacks but recent momentum
- Aerial image date?
- June - initial public forum.
The meeting convened at 6:45 p.m. In attendance:

Ryan Malmborg, Steve Pelletier, Jim Roy, Justin Dubois, Don Guimond, Jim Thibodeau, Ryan Pelletier, Alan Susee, Dan Vaillancourt, Jon Edgerton, Travis Pryor

I. TIF Downtown Revitalization Plan:

- Jon Edgerton and Travis Pryor of Wright Pierce presented on the Downtown Revitalization Plan kick off.
  - Jon explained how the plan is a requirement for a Downtown TIF. He has been in contact with Jim Saffien of Pierce Atwood, the TIF attorney who will be submitting the application to the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD).
  - The next steps of the process include gathering information from the Planning Office, meeting with the downtown committee and other various committee representatives in the community, the municipality, business owners, and the public to determine what the town and community would like to see in the plan.
  - The public outreach portion of the plan process will include two public meetings. The first initial meeting is a public workshop to discuss action items, goals, and possibly a questionnaire would be distributed. After the plan is drafted, a follow-up meeting would be held to finalize the plan.
  - Jon indicated the timeline for various meetings and plan development would run through most of the summer and once the TIF application is submitted the expectation is to receive full approval by this fall.
  - He said that Wright Pierce brings great value in their experience in developing many downtown revitalization plans in the past, their many contacts and connections, and their relationship with the DECD.
  - Jon inquired about survey results, Canadian traffic counts coming across the bridge, and the Slum and Bight Designation. Steve will provide all the information that Wright Pierce requests.

- Travis Pryor, who is the project manager for the plan, did a map presentation of the TIF district and asked the committee what areas the revitalization plan should include.
  - Some suggestions were brought forth to include all of AFM area, UMFK, the Historical Society buildings, and the Food Co-op. Jon indicated that the DECD will make the final decision as to what area the plan includes in regards to the TIF district.
  - He asked the committee what the downtown meant to us and what we wanted the downtown to look like. Each member expressed their thoughts which included:
    - More retail opportunities, restart investment in multiple areas to make Fort Kent destination spot, provide excellent customer service, merge with AFM for promoting and branding purposes, pride in the community, successful relationship
with UMFK, NMMC, golf course, 10th Mountain, Lonesome Pine, the need to redevelop main street for service center town, market main street, develop a recreation center and tourism, attract and keep business here, keep village approach with any development, desire to see Fort Kent grow, utilize the outside traffic form across the border and off the rivers, increase the night life atmosphere, more 2nd level affordable housing for younger professionals, façade improvements, stop outward migration, and tie all of our assets together.

- Some of the successes spoken of included, Valley Motors, forestry is still the backbone of the economy, businesses that started here and expanded to other parts of the state, such as Daigle & Houghton, Thibodeau Insurance, Frank Martin’s, Sears, and Mike & Sons.
- It was also mentioned that there are 5 financial institutions in town that are supported by a multitude of businesses and residents.

II. America’s 1st Mile:

- Members attending from both committees agreed that the new merged committee would stay with the AFM name to take advantage of the logo, brand, and tax status.
- Steve surveyed the members in attendance to gage their interest in being active members in the new committee. All agreed to remain active members. Steve will survey the remaining downtown committee members who were not in attendance to gage their interest and will ask Peter Sirois to do the same with AFM committee members. Once we have a finalized member list, we will have a new election of officers at our May meeting.

III. Grant Report:

- Steve provided a CDBG grant application status
  
  - Public Infrastructure – the Town has been contacted by the DECD to begin the development phase of the project for a public water line extension to assist Rosewood Estates in connecting to the public water supply. Basically, pending distribution of funding from HUB, the Town has been awarded the grant.
  
  - Micro-Enterprise – the Town has been invited to apply and has submitted the application to the DECD for scoring. This is a $150,000 grant that could be utilized by multiple businesses for façade or exterior improvements to their buildings. Participating businesses will be determined by a committee using a scoring method.
  
  - Economic Development
    
    - A $390,000 grant application has been submitted for scoring to assist in the expansion of Pelletier Ford.
    
    - The Town has been invited to apply for a $50,000 grant to assist Charette Primary Healthcare Clinic in expanding to Fort Kent.

- Steve reported on the Capacity Building Grant through Maine Community Foundation:

  - The grant is a $10,000 grant for support of the Downtown Committee’s development of a strategic marketing plan. The application has been submitted and we are waiting for a decision.
IV. Old Business:

- **Business-Friendly Community Certification Application**
  - Most of the required documentation has been collected and will be submitted for the May 2\textsuperscript{nd} deadline

- **Available Retail/Commercial Space Inventory**
  - Steve reported that the planning office has put together an available retail and commercial space inventory with pictures of the lots, copies of the tax cards, and lease/sale amounts. Ryan P. inquired about receiving this information for NMDC and Steve will make it available for them.

- **Investment movement**
  - Ryan M. reported that Scott Mulkern, who purchased the former hotel lot, is still very interested in developing something on the lot and is willing to sit down at a lunch/breakfast meeting with some of the members.

- At the meeting with Joe Sleeper, Alain Ouellette was to provide some information and follow-up with Joe. Ryan P. will check with Alain on this.

V. New Business:

- **Working budget**
  - Ryan P. suggested to wait until after the merger of the two committees has been completed to develop a working budget with the sponsor funds. The committee agreed.

Next Meeting – Steve will send out a Doodle poll for May

Minutes complied by:

Steve Pelletier
# FORT KENT DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PLAN

## Public Workshop Questionnaire

### 1. POTENTIAL DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Don't Support</th>
<th>Unsure/More Info</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Streetscape Improvements (benches, trash receptacles, bollards, banners, planters, etc.)</td>
<td>111111</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvements (Sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building/ façade Improvements Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promotion/ Support for Business Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incentives/ programs for private property owners to make improvements (building or site/lot)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional Downtown Parking (In general)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Off-Street Parking Lots</td>
<td>111111</td>
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<tr>
<td>On-Street Parking</td>
<td>111</td>
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<tr>
<td>Addition / Expansion of Public Utilities (Water, Sewer, Data, etc.)</td>
<td>111111</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vehicular Traffic Calming Measures</td>
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<td>Additional gateway signs welcoming travelers to the Downtown (vs. town line)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wayfinding signage, historic signage, and/or a unified Town (public) signage design</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional Employment Opportunities</td>
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<td>Additional Residential Housing Opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional Park and Recreational Spaces</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Other: Added signage and walking path
- Suggested ideas / theme or suggested guidelines for private property owners to follow in making building or site/lot improvements
- Need to address off-street parking
- Not much can be done to fix on-street parking
- Upgraded utilities
- Vehicular traffic calming measures at Hall Street and West Main Street
- Directional signage
- New England downtown theme
- Parking garage
- Streetscape improvements need to consider snow removal
- Recent bike/ped plan approved
- A façade program is being developed
- NMDC revolving loan fund
- Parking is generally adequate now but Downtown Revitalization needs to make it a problem (create a need for more)
- Improve park and recreational spaces that we already have
- Public Works and the Chamber of Commerce take care of streetscape elements
- Currently adequate, important to change periodically
- May be losing parking where former hotel was.
- Need more off-street parking than on-street.
- Wayfinding signage needed for tourists

2. SIDEWALKS, CROSSWALKS & TRAILS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Check One</strong></th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Don't Support</th>
<th>Unsure/ More Info</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve existing sidewalks on Main Street only</td>
<td>1111</td>
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<tr>
<td>Add/improve sidewalks on streets adjacent and or connecting to Main Street</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expansion of Trails along the Riverfront</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional Connections from Downtown to Regional Trails</td>
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<tr>
<td>Add pedestrian &quot;bump-outs&quot; or median islands at key intersections for crosswalks</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider new crosswalk design/materials and/or crosswalk warning lights</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional crosswalks across Main Street</td>
<td>111111</td>
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</table>

Other: Concerns with snow removal around bump-outs and medians
- Need more and better crosswalks
- Riverside Park has a digital display.
- Post trail maps around town.
- Create a centralized walking path (like Edmonton) with a theme that is eye catching.
- Cross walks at Family Dollar / Post Office and Swamp Buck. Other Main Street crossings?
- Sidewalks needed on Market Street just south of the Heritage Trail
### 3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Check One</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Don't Support</th>
<th>Unsure/More Info</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business assistance/municipal programs to attract new businesses</td>
<td>11111</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promotion &amp; marketing program/materials specifically for Downtown Fort Kent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote/expand economic development opportunities associated with outdoor recreation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote/expand economic development opportunities associated with arts &amp; culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expand Diversity of Commercial Business Types</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incorporate local history into the revitalization/promotion of the Downtown</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote Diversity of Employment Opportunities</td>
<td>11111</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Other promotion or economic development ideas:
- Fiscal limitations for business assistance/municipal programs?
- Promotion by the Chamber of Commerce
- Lacking opportunities for arts & culture
- Need men’s clothing store
- Could market to Allagash users more. Get them to stop in Fort Kent first.

### 4. LOCAL REGULATIONS (ORDINANCES)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Check One</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
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<th>Unsure/More Info</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design guidelines to encourage new development/redevelopment to be in character</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improved regulatory standards (ordinances) to ensure new development is in character</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve enforcement of regulatory standards for non-residential uses in the Downtown</td>
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<tr>
<td>Simplify village zoning, or consider &quot;innovative&quot; alternatives (e.g. Form-based Codes)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Other:
- Concerned about zoning restrictions but want to maintain a certain quality. Guidelines first.
- Can the TIF be amended? Include activities just outside the current boundaries.
- Support a theme for the downtown.
5. TOP 3 MOST IMPORTANT

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

1. Encourage new Parking options, especially off-street
   Promotion of our town activities
   Mid-level housing
   Promote outdoor recreation / tourism (a reason to stop)
   Area marketing and promotion
   Promote outdoor recreation
2. Crosswalks – painted and well identified
   Downtown entry-level housing (young families)
   Marketing to our customers (outdoors, recreation...)
   Housing
   Mid-level housing
   Workforce housing. Live and stay.
3. Building façade improvements
   Economic development
   Retail economic development
   Market downtown (fill empty lots first)
   Economic development
   Better signage and marketing of what downtown already has
   Fill in the “blanks” (vacant parcels) downtown

6. OTHER COMMENTS

What are your ideas for the Downtown?

Encourage and maintain (retain) existing businesses.
Encourage and support existing businesses
Branding and marketing our assets to increase traffic, potential businesses, and giving a reason for people to return. Make Fort Kent a destination.
“Village” theme
Housing
Streetlight locations need adjustment on Main Street
Hall Street and Pearl Street need sidewalk improvements
One additional trail is proposed along the riverfront in the bike/ped plan
Additional downtown connections to regional trails on Hall St and Pearl St
Package historic resources together for tourism interest. Involve historic society.
Re-routing of Elm Street causes traffic flow issues on Hall Street. Left turn is difficult
Hall St / West Main St intersection is the next busiest.
Re-configure traffic pattern at Paradis / Daigle Oil.
Parking garage?
As the town sprawls, downtown utilities lose customers
Mobile housing for large gathering events
Hard to support housing / lodging for periodic events like a biathlon every 3 years.
Certain business / tourist clientele will only stay in national brand hotels/motels.

What Types of New Businesses would you like to see in the Downtown?

Mid-range price-wise restaurant
Clothing options other than work clothes
Retail, restaurant, pub/bar (upscale)
Retail, restaurants, upscale pubs, lodging
Retail, restaurants, pubs

Do you have any suggestions for promotional "themes" for the Downtown?

“Fort Kent - The Little Town that Could” (redundant?)
New England Village
New England / Ski Lodge
New England Village theme
“New England Village”
## SIGN-IN-SHEET
**FORT KENT, MAINE**
**DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PLAN**
**(PUBLIC INPUT MEETING)**

**DATE:** Tuesday, June 24, 2014 at 7:00 PM  
**LOCATION:** Fort Kent Town Office

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Contact Info (E-Mail if Available)</th>
<th>Interest in Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Justin Dubois</td>
<td><a href="mailto:justin.dubois1983@gmail.com">justin.dubois1983@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>President of America’s First Mile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Pelletier</td>
<td><a href="mailto:steve.pelletier@bittert.org">steve.pelletier@bittert.org</a></td>
<td>Director, Planning Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priscilla C. Staples</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tasmanian@roadrunner.com">tasmanian@roadrunner.com</a></td>
<td>Fort Kent Town Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryan Malmborg</td>
<td><a href="mailto:plutu@hotmail.com">plutu@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td>Downtown Committee/AFM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donald Gaime [redacted]</td>
<td><a href="mailto:donald.gaime@fortkent.org">donald.gaime@fortkent.org</a></td>
<td>Town Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cindy Bouley</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cindy.bouley@fortkent.org">cindy.bouley@fortkent.org</a></td>
<td>OPED</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jon Edgerton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Normand Albert</td>
<td><a href="mailto:albert@roadrunner.com">albert@roadrunner.com</a></td>
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</tr>
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<td>FT Town Committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Downtown Revitalization Plan – Fort Kent, ME
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Contact Info (E-Mail if Available)</th>
<th>Interest in Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travis Prior</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SIGN-IN-SHEET
FORT KENT, MAINE
DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PLAN

(DRAFT PLAN PRESENTATION – TOWN COUNCIL MEETING)

DATE: Monday, October 27, 2014 at 7:00 PM
LOCATION: Fort Kent Town Office

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Contact Info (E-Mail if Available)</th>
<th>Interest in Project</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
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<td>Jake Robichaud</td>
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<td>Public</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Public</td>
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<td>FKFD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony Thriault</td>
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<td>FKFW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Contact Info (E-Mail if Available)</td>
<td>Interest in Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Soucy</td>
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<td>AFM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Danny Nicola</td>
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<td>Jon Edgerien</td>
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<td>Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie Edgar</td>
<td><a href="mailto:julied@powerofprevention.com">julied@powerofprevention.com</a></td>
<td>Community Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alain Ouellette</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ouellette@nmcd.org">ouellette@nmcd.org</a></td>
<td>Community Economy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
H.

A physical description of the district, including:

(1) A municipal map clearly showing the site location of the proposed district relative to the municipal boundaries
# Table of Contents

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Introduction

The Town of Fort Kent, Maine Department of Transportation, Power of Prevention, and the Northern Maine Development Commission began a bicycle and pedestrian planning exercise in December 2012 with the intention of defining projects and programs needed to make Fort Kent a bike and walk friendly community. A Bicycle and Pedestrian Steering Committee, made up of residents with a wide range of interests, was formed to assist with the development of the plan. The Committee, with the assistance of Town Officials and through the review of a resident survey identified no/low cost projects that the community can accomplish while seeking to create biking and walking opportunities during all four seasons. The Plan also contains projects that are more expensive and longer term. These projects will be considered as funding become available.

Readers of the Fort Kent Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan are encouraged to get involved with local leaders, schools, bike clubs, exercise groups and neighbors to encourage policies, programs and projects that will allow everyone to move about safely on foot, bike and wheelchair.

The time frame envisioned for implementation of this plan is ten-years. The Planning Department will work with the Recreation and Roads Committees as well as other interested parties toward successful implementation and on periodic review of the goals and objectives.

The list of projects, ranging from simple signs and markings, to improved sidewalks and crosswalks, to major trail development, including surfaces, lighting and benches were prioritized. For example, identification of safe walking/bicycling routes between places where people live, work, go to school, and play, will be a first step. Safety improvements, sidewalks, signs, maps, and designated trails that connect existing facilities such as 10th Mountain ("Mills to Mountain") and the new Senior Center, may be suggested to encourage "active" (vs. motorized) transportation. The potential of a complete "Fish River Green Belt" trail along both sides of the river in town will be examined. The plan will offer action steps and suggest potential funding sources to enable the plan projects to become reality to improve the pedestrian and bicyclist environment in Fort Kent.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee was formed for the purpose of creating this plan.

Convening Members of the Advisory Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donald Audibert</td>
<td>Bicyclist/Jogger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony Theriault</td>
<td>Public Works Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie Daigle</td>
<td>Power of Prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raymond Phinney</td>
<td>University of Maine at Fort Kent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew Michaud</td>
<td>Bicyclist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The committee began by agreeing to a statement describing their mission.

**Mission:**  To identify no/low cost projects that the community can accomplish while seeking to create biking and walking opportunities during all four seasons.

The Fort Kent Bicycle Pedestrian Plan is a dynamic document that will be evaluated and updated continually to meet changing conditions and priorities. In order for this plan to be implemented and updated, the Town of Fort Kent empowers the Planning Department to work with Municipal Committees to provide advice, logistical support and coordination with other public works and planning initiatives.

The Planning Process

The following summarizes the steps that were taken during the planning process. The planning process included committee meetings where ideas were discussed, priorities stated, hand drawn maps were created and decisions made, and back office analyses where staff planners assembled data, created maps and summarized committee proposals.

1. **Bike Pedestrian Committee Support**
   1: Recruit committee members
   2: Prepare agenda and minutes
   3: Facilitate meetings
   4: Respond to information requests

2. **Summary of Maine Programs**
   1: Gather information
   2: Create summary report
3: Report findings to committee

3. Update Infrastructure Maps
   1: Create baseline GIS Maps
   2: Conduct field survey with GPS
   3: Prepare updated GIS Maps

4. Integrate Policies
   1: Review existing documents
   2: Prepare draft synthesis
   3: Present draft for comments
   4: Prepare final policy synthesis

5. Create Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
   1: Public Involvement
   2: Goals-Objectives-Strategies
   3: Draft Document
   4: Revise Document
   5: Final Draft

Fort Kent-The Community

Fort Kent is a picturesque service center town located in Northern Maine on the Canadian Border. The town has a rich heritage in French Canadian background that is instilled in the community. The area is a tourist attraction with some of the best snowmobiling in the state, excellent ATV trails, 10th Mountain and Lonesome Pine Ski Clubs, and excellent hunting and fishing. Fort Kent is known as the “Little Town That Could” with a reputation for thriving under circumstances that are challenging to say the least, and the community’s ability to be involved in many events that require a multitude of volunteers. The education process is unique in that students can complete pre-k through college with ¼ mile on the same street. The economy is driven by forestry, agriculture and tourism, with the majority of occupations in sales, management/professional services, health services, farming/forestry, construction, production, and transportation.

Geography:

Fort Kent is a Northern Maine border town and is economically and culturally linked to the Canadian towns of Clair and St. Francois New Brunswick across the St. John River. Sixty-two percent of Fort Kent’s
residents are habitual speakers of French. The variety of French spoken in Fort Kent and most of the St. John River Valley closely resembles the French spoken in Quebec and New Brunswick Canada. Fort Kent is the beginning of U.S. Route 1, which is also known as America’s First Mile. America’s First Mile has been registered as a marketing brand, which is utilized to promote Fort Kent’s many resources and market the downtown for to entice new business. According to the United States Census Bureau, the town has a total area of 55.51 square miles. Its nearest major cities are Presque Isle, Maine, 56 miles away, and Edmundston, New Brunswick, 20 miles away. Other major highways coming in to town are U. S. Rt. 11 and Rt. 161.

Demographics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fort Kent</td>
<td>4,268</td>
<td>4,233</td>
<td>4,097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aroostook County</td>
<td>86,936</td>
<td>73,938</td>
<td>7,1870</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Local and Regional Trail Systems

Fort Kent has an extensive network of mapped trails and access points for land and water based recreation during all seasons. Snowmobile and ATV trail information and maps are readily available from the Association of Aroostook Chambers of Commerce, visitaroostook.com and at most Chamber of Commerce offices. The 2,200 mile snowmobile trail system is maintained by about 40 local clubs and the 1,200 mile ATV trail system is maintained by about 28 local clubs. Hiking, mountain biking and canoe/kayak trails are available throughout the region and include Aroostook State Park, the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, North Maine Woods, Maine Public Reserve Lands and others. There are 31 mapped water trails in the region that comprise about 250 miles for paddling. Trails and trail information is supported by many public and private entities. Detailed information is available on-line at several locations including GoAroostookOutdoors.com and the North Maine Woods and Maine DOC websites.

The Northern Forest Canoe Trail is a long-distance paddling trail connecting the major watersheds across the Adirondacks and Northern New England. The 740-mile water trail traverses across New York, Vermont, Quebec, New Hampshire, and Maine. The trail terminates in Fort Kent at the landing located at the confluence of the Fish and St. John Rivers.

The following table summarizes the local trail networks located in the Fort Kent area.

**Fort Kent Trails System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trail System</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10th Mountain Center</td>
<td>12 miles</td>
<td>Cross Country skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, mountain biking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Trail</td>
<td>5.75 miles</td>
<td>Multiuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverside North</td>
<td>1.2 miles</td>
<td>Bicycle and Pedestrian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverside South</td>
<td>.65 miles</td>
<td>Bicycle, pedestrian and snowmobile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowmobile (various)</td>
<td>33 miles</td>
<td>Snowmobiling (and dog sled)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mills Loop</td>
<td>2.7 miles</td>
<td>Bicycle and pedestrian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish River (Soldier Pond to Fort Kent)</td>
<td>10 miles</td>
<td>Canoeing and Kayaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. John River (Allagash to Fort Kent)</td>
<td>26 miles</td>
<td>Canoeing and Kayaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Forest Canoe Trail Terminus</td>
<td>5.5 miles</td>
<td>Canoeing and Kayaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish River Falls</td>
<td>.40 miles</td>
<td>Hiking, snowshoeing,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATV Trail System</td>
<td>24 miles</td>
<td>ATV Riding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Town of Fort Kent, Northern Maine Water Trail Map 7 Guide, Northern Forest Canoe Trail website, ATV/Snowmobile Clubs, 10th Mountain Center, 2012

**Coordination with Existing Plans**

A number of transportation related projects and plans are underway in Fort Kent. The committee recognized the importance of coordinating this document with these existing programs. The following plans are particularly significant with respect to planning for bicycle and pedestrian access:

- Fort Kent Comprehensive Plan
- International Bridge Improvements
- St. John Valley Scenic Byway Plan
- Fish River Scenic Byway Plan
- Downtown Plan

**Fort Kent Comprehensive Plan**

Fort Kent’s 2012 Comprehensive Plan is a unified document governing many other “plans” that follow in this report. The plan includes information identifying pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and issues, and sections outlining related transportation goals and objectives.

Highlights of the Plan include:

- The creation of a dedicated pedestrian/bike trail using the Fish River Green Belt concept or other suitable locations.
- Encourage the town and school to place bike racks in appropriate locations around town.
- Encourage complete bike and walkability studies of the Town.
- Provide safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian access to the downtown, neighborhoods, schools, and businesses.
Fish River Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan

The 2007 Fish River Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan works to identify, preserve, maintain and enhance scenic, cultural, historic, and recreations resources located along the Fish River Scenic Byway (Route 11) located between Fort Kent and Portage Lake. The plan’s strategies include:

- Encouraging safety programs for bicyclist and pedestrian.
- Encourage the creation of safe local bike and pedestrian routes.
- Maintain areas that are dangerous due to low shoulders and poor geometrics or other areas.

International Bridge Improvements

The Town of Fort Kent and MaineDOT have identified the replacement of the International Bridge between Fort Kent and Clair, New Brunswick as a high priority location for road and intersection improvements. The new four-span, steel-beam bridge will be 25 feet wider than the existing one and includes three in-river piers and two abutments. The multimillion-dollar contract is being shared evenly by Maine and New Brunswick.

The project will:

- Construct a new bridge across the St. John River
- Construct a new access road to the bridge
- Add sidewalk on north side of street Main Street
- Improve signage

St John Valley Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan

Much like the Fish River Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan, the recently completed St. John Valley Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan also identified scenic and recreational resources that should be preserved and enhanced in the St. John Valley. The St. John Valley Scenic byway begins in Allagash and ends in Hamlin and utilized Route 161, Route 1, and a portion of Route 162 and 1-A. In addition to identifying the dangerous areas due to low shoulders and poor geometrics, the CMP also identifies the importance of the
Tour D’ Valley bike race.

Fort Kent Downtown Plan

The Town of Fort Kent had two major fires in its downtown in a short period of time. Town Planners took this loss as an opportunity to plan in the downtown and began revitalization efforts. One of the outcomes of this planning activity was the development of a Tax Increment Financing District (TIF) where funds generated from the Downtown TIF District may be used for public improvements, private improvements or to set up a revolving loan fund. Town planners also hired a downtown specialist to redesign the downtown. Parts of this redesign effort includes making the area more bicycle and pedestrian friendly.

Existing Plans and Ordinances and Budgeting

Fort Kent does not currently have a bicycle and/or pedestrian plan. The 2012 Comprehensive Plan recommended applying for state and/or federal funds to construct a bike recreational trail called the Fish River Green Belt. The plan made the following recommendations for sidewalks:

- Create a capital improvement plan that includes maintenance of sidewalks, curbs and crosswalks.
- Provide crossing assistance for pedestrians on Main Street
- Create better signage near the School zones

Neither the Subdivision Ordinance nor the Site Plan Review ordinance require a developer to consider bicycle or pedestrian needs when planning projects. The Road Design and Construction Ordinance only indicates that a developer must provide for a continuation of pedestrian traffic.

Existing Conditions

With a population of 4,097 (2010 US Census) and a land area of approximately 55 square miles, Fort Kent is a small town with a relatively large expanse of undeveloped land. Fort Kent has large undeveloped areas, rural residential areas, suburban residential neighborhoods, commercial/industrial areas and a central business district. Recent commercial growth is occurring primarily in the downtown and along the major transportation routes. Most of the commercial development has been small scale. Residential growth is occurring throughout Fort Kent with several large subdivisions occurring along Route 161 west of the downtown and Route 1 east of the hospital.

No clear boundary exists that neatly divides Fort Kent into built-up areas and rural areas. The geography of Fort Kent is such that development has occurred in a spider like fashion along the relative lowlands of the community and along the river bottoms. More recently, residential development has spread to the higher elevations, such as Charette Hill and Violette Settlement. The 2012 Comprehensive Plan update, however, delineates future land use goals with well defined rural and built up areas. The plan suggests that areas defined as “mixed use”, “urban residential” and “downtown” would be the highest priority for sidewalks and other pedestrian
facilities. Areas outside of these land use categories, including commercial designations and residential growth areas would be likely areas for creating safe access for bicycles and pedestrians as possible.

Conditions-Sidewalks

Unfortunately, Fort Kent does not have a detailed, online inventory of sidewalk issues. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Committee has identified areas where sidewalks were in disrepair, interrupted, damaged or in other ways unsafe for persons walking, running or bicycling. The sidewalk inventory identifies several kinds of challenges that particularly affect persons using wheel chairs, but many that are impediments to all travelers including:

- Crosswalks that are inaccessible or poorly marked
- Cuts in paving - sudden drop-offs or step-ups
- Damaged paving
- Debris including sand, gravel, sand, snow and water
- Drainage grates
- Gaps where sidewalks end forcing people into the roadway
- Obstructions including utilities, vegetation, fences, walls, signage and parked cars
- Slope of sidewalk side to the other or in the direction of travel
- Substandard width

In many cases these kinds of problems overlap. For example, a poorly designed drainage grate accumulates debris, causes undermining of existing sidewalks and resulting sudden changes in the surface.

Fort Kent’s Public Works Department works annually to maintain sidewalks. Pedestrians are served by a 5.8 mile network of sidewalks located in the more densely developed parts of town and 7.6 miles of trails. Recent sidewalk maintenance costs were approximately $15,000. Continued maintenance is necessary and reconstruction should occur on up to 25 percent of the network. To encourage bicycle use the town and schools provide bike racks at several locations. The trail network available for bike use includes the 7.6 miles available for pedestrian use.

The biggest area of concern was located on Market Street and East Main Streets where the popular “Mills” walk is utilized by residents. Generally speaking sidewalks are in good condition however, there are areas where the sidewalks end abruptly or change sides of the street. The area near the Heritage Trail (Market Street) has a crossing marked along with electronic signage where the sidewalk ends on the west side of the road and crosses to the east. However further south, the sidewalks abruptly ends near Doris’s Café and there are no paved shoulders further south on Route 161. There is also no crossing located at the Fish River Bridge. The Maine D.O.T. did stripe the shoulders for the first time in 2013 and the marking has been useful in delineating walking areas and shoulders. And finally with the creation of the new Riverside Park entrance at River Street, a new pedestrian crossing will need to be delineated.

A second area of concern is Pleasant Street near the University of Maine at Fort Kent. Sidewalks are located on the east side of the road and crossings are marked at two locations near the
University and High School. However, the Committee noted that university students living in the Lodge or utilizing the gym on the west side of Pleasant Street tend to cross at random locations. This is particularly true at meal times when students are walking to the main campus from the dormitory.

One final area of concern was identified. As stated previously, traffic in the downtown is varied with shoppers, heavy haul trucking, bicycles and pedestrians. With the closure of Elm Street, town officials believe that Hall Street will see significant in traffic access residential neighborhoods. At the present time there is no crossing located at the intersection of Hall and Main Streets. Generally speaking pedestrians tend to cross West Main Street throughout the entire downtown area.
Safety Concerns

A review of the 2012 comprehensive plan identified several dangerous locations along local roads. These may include curves, blind hills or driveways, unprotected embankments, solar glare, shaded areas and other hazards. There are two designated “high crash locations” including the intersections of E. Main, Market and Soucy Streets and one location along the Frenchville Road (US Highway 1) where the road is shaded in winter by a steep slope along the South edge of the highway. Four local road segments were identified as lacking guardrails where the road shoulder drop off is severe and other design characteristics create a notable safety concern. The Klein Road bridge/culvert, two bridge/culvert locations on North Perley Brook Road including one East of the Blaine School Road intersection and one Northeast of the intersection and the curve West of the Klein Road on South Perley Brook Road all require guardrails to improve safety. Another safety concern is the site distance/visibility at the intersection of Armory Road and Pleasant Street near community high school where vegetation should be removed.

Pedestrian safety issues were also identified. Speeding in the school zone on Pleasant Street has been an issue. While enforcement has been stepped up, the zone lacks the proper signage to indicate the school zone limits. Pedestrians and bicyclists using the multi-use Heritage Trail may be at risk from motorized traffic depending on time of day (light conditions) and speed. The South Perley Brook Road biathlon training route poses are safety concern because of speed and lack of road shoulder and signage.

Traffic accident information was gathered from MaineDOT Traffic Engineering Accident Records to determine if there were any serious issues with traffic safety along the length of the corridor. During the study period of January 2006 to December 2012, there were a total of 502 accidents along the Route 161/Route 1/Route 11 corridor. Of those, there were two fatal accidents involving 2 fatalities. One fatal accident was recorded on US Route 1 and the other on Route 11. The Route 11 accident included a pedestrian. There were no reported accidents where pedestrians were identified on US Route 1 or 161 for the period. Three reported pedestrian accidents were recorded on Route 11.

Route 161 had the highest number of accidents at 241 followed by US Route 1 (213), and Route 11 (48). A review of the data does not indicate any one location where there was a higher than expected number of accidents. Crash rates in Fort Kent are highest in the most heavily congested areas. However those accidents that are considered the most severe are higher where traffic speeds are at their maximum outside of the built up downtown area.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies

Pedestrian/Bicycle Vision for Fort Kent

Fort Kent’s downtown has an extensive sidewalk system but major transportation corridors such as Routes 1 east of Main Street, Route 161 west to St. John Plantation and south to New Canada, and Route 11 south to Wallagrass lack pedestrian and bicycle facilities. With the exception of limited areas of paved shoulders, bicycle facilities are absent, requiring bicyclists of all abilities to share most roads with motor vehicles. Even with these important safety considerations, roads
are still attractive to a growing number of bicyclists in the community and those visiting the Fort Kent area. This may become even more prevalent as the marketing for the St. John Valley and the Fish River Scenic byways increases and regional events attract additional visitors. For these reasons and others, improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities are important for Fort Kent’s future.

**Goals, Objectives and Strategies**

**Goal 1: Safety:** Provide safe routes for pedestrians.

**Objective:** Create and maintain pedestrian crosswalks in key locations.

**Strategies**

- Continue to work with Town Council, Planning Board, citizens and the business community to identify areas of critical needs as they emerge and as pedestrian traffic increases.
- Improve existing pedestrian crossing locations in the downtown and on Routes 1, 161, and 11 especially near schools, the University of Maine at Fort Kent, public facilities, Riverside Park, and in the downtown area.
- Create new pedestrian crossings wherever new sidewalks are developed.
- Create new pedestrian crossings at the following locations:
  - Intersection of Hall and Main Street
  - Intersection of Heritage Trail and Pleasant Street
  - Intersection of Market Street and Heritage Trail
  - Town Office across Main Street to international bridge
  - MacDonald’s and Main Street
- Improve sidewalks at the following locations:
  - Market Street
  - From railroad tracks on West Main Street to Northern Maine Medical Center.

**Objective:** Ensure safe routes between neighborhoods and along routes with significant bicycle and pedestrian usage.

**Strategies**

- Increased traffic enforcement (speed) on Elm Street.
- Increased traffic enforcement should traffic patterns change in the Elm, High, Hall, Pearl Street areas.
- Install paved shoulders on local roads where feasible when they are slated for reconstruction or major improvements.
- Request that MaineDOT install paved shoulders wherever feasible when it schedules state and state-aid roads for reconstruction or significant improvements. Especially as new home construction occurs on Route 161 west of the downtown and on Route 1 east of Northern Maine Medical Center.
• Sweep paved road shoulders at least annually and more frequently during high use periods between May and October.

**Objective:** Use signage and other traffic calming measures to enhance safety on key routes.

**Strategies**

• Install 'bike route' signs wherever paved shoulders satisfy state standards.
• Install “bike route” signs around the Fort Kent Mills area.
• Install pedestrian and bike signage indicating crosswalks and the presence of bicyclist and pedestrians at the following locations
  ➢ On Main Street near the Hall Street intersection.
  ➢ At UMFK
  ➢ At Pleasant Street/ Heritage Trail intersection.
  ➢ At Market Street/Heritage Trail Intersection
  ➢ Near the Fort Kent Mills Bridge on Market Street

• Consider installing traffic calming devices to allow safer pedestrian crossings on Route 161, 11, and 1, and elsewhere near the schools, public facilities and similar areas.
• Install Share the Road signage on US Route 1 eastbound towards Frenchville, Route 161 southbound toward New Canada, and Route 11 southbound toward Wallaggrass.

**Goal 2: Education and Awareness:** Educate the public about bicycle and pedestrian facilities and issues, the health benefits of walking and biking and facilitate easy access to information.

**Objectives** Build awareness of existing bicycle/pedestrian assets.

**Strategies**

• Continue to support the efforts of the bicycle and pedestrian committee.
• Create and maintain a publicly accessible website or link to the town website with local bicycle/pedestrian information and maps.
• Develop and install signage for trails and walking/biking routes including:
  ➢ Signage delineating trail systems at UMFK and 10th Mountain Division. Signage should also include a better delineation of walking trails at the 10th Mountain Division trail system.
  ➢ Signage delineating trail system at Riverside Park and along the St. John River near the Blockhouse.
  ➢ Delineating trail system around the Fish River including the area on Market Street between McDonalds and the Heritage Trail intersection.
  ➢ Marking along the “Mills Walk” on Market Street to Mills Bridge. Marking includes better delineation of shoulder and signs indicating that pedestrian/bicycles are present. Marking should also include the elimination of pedestrians having to cross Market Street near John’s Store and back at the Mills Bridge to remain on sidewalks.
Objective: Provide educational programs about bicycle/pedestrian safety.

Strategies

- Encourage elementary, middle and high schools to promote bicycling and walking to school and embrace Maine Safe Routes to School programs.
- Engage the Healthy Maine Partnerships, Power of Prevention, Bicycle Coalition of Maine and other organizations to assist with formation of bicycle clubs at the middle and high school levels.
- Engage the Healthy Maine Partnerships, Power of Prevention, Bicycle Coalition of Maine and other organizations to conduct bike and walking events at schools including but not limited to:
  - Bike rodeos
  - Bike safety classes
  - Bike to school week
  - “Biking School Bus” program
  - “Walking School Bus” program
  - Walk to Work events

Objective: Hold public events that encourage use of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

Strategies

- Develop and distribute a map of existing facilities within Fort Kent.
- Locate bike racks in destination areas in the downtown, schools and the recreation facilities.
- Partner with the recreation department, other local recreation organizations and other organizations to hold bicycle and pedestrian friendly events.

Goal 3: Connectivity & Infrastructure: Modify the transportation infrastructure to provide safe bicycle/pedestrian access to and between significant destinations and neighborhoods and enhance connections to the network of other bicycle/pedestrian facilities.

Objectives: Create routes to key destinations.

Strategies

- Complete trail system designated as the Fish River Greenway Loop which includes:
  - Completing trail development on southwest side of the Fish River near the High School.
  - Better delineation of the trail system behind UMFK at Crocker Beach to Pleasant Street.
Signage and delineation from Pleasant Street to West Main Street, across Fish River Bridge and along East Main Street.

Request MaineDOT review the design of the Fish River Bridge to make more bicycle and pedestrian friendly.

Install benches, lights, and signage on the portion of the trail located southwest of Market Street to the Heritage Trail.

- Develop a solution to allow walkers to safely stay on the river side of Market Street between the Heritage Trail and Bridge Street. Potential solutions include paint delineation on the roadway or narrowing or shifting lanes to allow a separated sidewalk to be constructed.

- Develop signage at Lonesome Pine detailing the trail system between Lonesome Pines, UMFK, and the 10th Mountain system.
- Upgrade the trail system along Dufour Street to Riverside Park.
- Upgrade the trail system along the Dike located behind West Main Street. Upgrades should include signage, benches, and lighting.
- Delineate trail system in the neighborhoods along Hall, High, Pinkham and Page Street, to UMFK and to the schools and recreational facilities.
- Develop an off-road connection between the subdivisions located along the St. John River (Route 161) and the Heritage Trail as well as the subdivisions on Route 1 and the downtown.
- Signage and marking from Town Office along Pearl Street to Lonesome Pines Trail system. Marking should include signage indication that pedestrians/bicyclist are present and directs pedestrian/bicycles to trail system located at Lonesome Pines.

Goal 4 Develop town wide policy for bicycle and pedestrian activities,

Objective: **Update plans/regulations/guidelines, as appropriate, to support and promote walking and biking.**

**Strategies**

- Encourage the development of a complete street policy.
- Develop a sidewalk usage policy that included the use of bicycle on sidewalks.
- Encourages the development of bike lanes.
- **Work with the Downtown Committee to ensure that bicycle and pedestrian facilities are part of the downtown design. (Moved from section above.)**
- Encourage consideration of pedestrian and bicycle access as new housing and commercial units are developed.
- Create a standing town bicycle and pedestrian committee to advise the Town Council.
Fort Kent Bicycle and Pedestrian Potential Projects
Proposed bicycle and pedestrian facilities and services

Turning goals, objectives and strategies into projects that can be implemented required one more step. Many potential projects are listed within this document, both in the coordinating section, the inventory of assets and issues and the goals, objectives and strategies. As the discussion progressed, the group determined that a high priority should be to improve bike and pedestrian trails and safety issues in the downtown. Many of the projects brainstormed were identified as connections to assets in the downtown including the Heritage Trail, Ski Tow, 10th Mountain, St. John and Fish Rivers, Riverside Park, and the Mills Greenway. The group felt that other projects should be listed in the plan and completed as funding is obtained.

Criteria for Selecting Projects

The committee considered the following criteria in evaluating the list of project and policy proposals.

1. Safety - The degree to which the existing condition poses a threat to public safety and the degree to which a proposed route or improvement will enhance public safety.
2. Access - The degree to which a proposed route or improvement will provide or enhance access to and between significant destinations (e.g. schools, recreation facilities, parks, natural areas, major employers).
3. Demand - The degree to which an existing route is used and degree to which a proposed improvement will result in increased use.
4. Connectivity - The degree to which a proposed route or improvement will enhance connections within the larger network of bicycle/pedestrian facilities.
5. Scenic/Cultural/Historic Values - The degree to which a proposed route or improvement will preserve, enhance or degrade the town's scenic, cultural and/or historic character.
6. Economic Value - The degree to which a proposed route or improvement will preserve and enhance the economic vitality of the Town.
7. Coordination with existing plans, programs and projects

Project Proposals

High Priority Investments

Phase I

1. Trail Connections
2. Current Safety Issues
3. Signage
4. Awareness
5. Sidewalks
6. Smoother trail surfaces
7. Trail Maintenance Equipment
Phase 2

1. New Trail Development for Greenway completion
2. Downtown Access
3. 10th Mountain Trails Links

Policies, Local Laws and Ordinances
Identify Central Walking Area
Require pedestrian infrastructure with new developments
Stop, look, listen warning signs at crosswalks

Next Steps:

- Town Council Adopts the Bicycle Pedestrian Plan
- Initiate process of drafting local bicycle and pedestrian policies
- Coordinate joint meetings between Bicycle Pedestrian Committee and Roads Committee to create a work plan and budget for priority projects
- Hold additional public informational forums on priority projects
- Identify funds and funding opportunities for construction of projects
  - State and Federal grants programs
  - Local matching funds
  - Private and voluntary contributions
- Apply for funding, when appropriate for projects
  - Safe Routes to Schools
  - Transportation Enhancement Grants
  - Multimodal funding – for bus stops and intermodal facilities
  - Municipal Project Request
- Preliminary Engineering
- Construction Engineering
- Marketing and Publicity
DECLARATION OF SLUM AND BLIGHT AREA
MAINE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

It is hereby found and declared:

That there exists in the Town/City of Fort Kent a deteriorating, dilapidated, slum and blighted area, dangerous buildings, deficient public improvements and incompatible uses of property, which constitute a serious and growing menace, injurious and inimical to the public health, safety, morals and welfare of the residents of the Town/City of Fort Kent.

That the existence of such an area, as shown on the attached map and identified as Downtown Area-Wide Slum and Blight Designation, and located in Census Tract Number: 9506, is found to be consistent with Maine State Statute 30-A, Chapter 205, Section 5202 and regulations set forth by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development in 24 CFR Part 570.

That the blighted area will be addressed with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and other funds through eligible activities, in accordance with all CDBG regulations and Maine State Statute 30-A, Chapter 205, Sections 5201 through 5205.

That the activities to be conducted are designed to eliminate the causes of slum and blight.

The Declaration with attendant documentation is hereby enacted on the 27th day of January, 2014 and is effective from this day forth until such conditions have been remedied through completion of the CDBG project.

DATE ENACTED: January 27, 2014

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Bouchard</td>
<td>January 27, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Priscilla Staples</td>
<td>January 27, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anthony Gauvin</td>
<td>January 27, 2014</td>
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<td>Jake Robichaud</td>
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<td>Peter Saunder</td>
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