

# Gray Village Master Plan



**Presented to:**

**Gray Village Master Plan Advisory Committee  
Town of Gray  
Maine Department of Economic & Community Development**

**Produced by:**

**Greater Portland Council of Governments**

**November 2006**

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**November 2006**

## **Table of Contents**

	<b><u>Page</u></b>
<b>Executive Summary w/Recommendations</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>I. Introduction</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>II. Planning Process</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>III. Public Outreach</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>IV. Traffic &amp; Parking</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>V. Pedestrian &amp; Bicycle Circulation</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>VI. Business Development Opportunities</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>VII. Investment Challenges</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>VIII. Village Design</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>IX. Tourist &amp; Recreation Opportunities</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	
A. Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes	67
B. Scope of Work	78
C. Building Survey Instrument	84

## **Executive Summary**

### **Background**

Since the early 1800's, Gray Corner has served as an important crossroads for commerce and civic life. Two hundred years ago, weary travelers might find food and lodging on Main Street, while farmers could buy grain and feed. On December 20, 1921, a fire gutted the fine homes and businesses lining Main Street. Over time, the Village has yielded to a variety of convenience retail stores and services that cater to the auto-oriented consumer.

Today, Gray functions primarily as a bedroom community of the Portland Labor Market. Located at the confluence of six major roadways, the Village has seen its traffic volumes double over the last 10 years. Although thousands of commuters drive through the Village each day, Gray faces stiff competition in vying for the retail dollars of even its own residents. The completion of the Gray Connector in 2007 will herald the most significant opportunity to change the downtown in over 50 years.

### **Process**

In 2005, Gray was awarded a \$10,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to develop a downtown plan. Upon completion of a competitive bid process, the Town of Gray contracted with the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) in January 2006 to develop the Gray Village Master Plan. Later that month, the Council appointed a Village Master Plan Advisory Committee, which met on a monthly basis with GPCOG to guide and coordinate the following data gathering activities:

- Hosted two public forums on March 8, 2006 and September 21, 2006
- Analyzed data from various sources, including U.S. Census Bureau, Maine Department of Labor, and Maine State Planning Office
- Reviewed relevant planning documents, including the Gray Comprehensive Plan (2003), Gray's Community Economic Growth Strategy (2001), and Gray Zoning Ordinance
- Conducted site visit to Pineland Farms
- Interviewed business owners located in Gray Village
- Compiled an inventory of properties vacant anytime from July 1, 2005-July 1, 2006
- Conducted a Visual Preference Survey with over 130 residents, workers, students, and property owners to identify desirable features of village design
- Interviewed guest speakers at monthly meetings representing the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, Maine Department of Transportation, and Maine Downtown Center
- Conducted a site walk with the Maine Department of Transportation to identify circulation improvements



Over the course of eight months, the Committee developed an action plan aligned with the Main Street© principles of downtown revitalization. By investing in good design and public infrastructure, the Town of Gray can continue to support retail and service businesses and emerging clusters in the areas of environmental technology, arts and antiques, and agriculture.

### **Village Master Plan Goals**

#### **Organization:**

Sustain leadership and momentum focused on public and private investment.

#### **Promotion:**

Position Gray Village as an essential gateway to Western Maine and the Sebago Lakes Region.

#### **Design:**

Reclaim the village as a lively hub for residents, visitors, workers, and shoppers who can safely get around by foot, bicycle, and vehicle.

#### **Economic:**

Re-establish Gray Village as the marketplace in the region for commerce and creativity.

## Gray Village Master Plan Recommendations

### Organization

<b>Challenges</b>	Changing leadership, competing priorities, and limited funding make it difficult to sustain a focus on Gray Village. But the opening of the Gray Connector in 2007 will herald, ready or not, the most significant change to downtown Gray in over 50 years.	
<b>Goal</b>	<i>Sustain leadership and momentum focused on public and private investment in Gray Village.</i>	
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	
<i>Establish leadership and authority for the Plan</i>	Adopt Gray Village Master Plan and review for consistency with Gray's Comprehensive Plan.	Short
	Designate a Village Master Plan Implementation Committee to provide stewardship and monitoring.	Short
	Appoint a position dedicated to downtown revitalization, possibly shared with New Gloucester.	Short
	Present the Master Plan to the town's committees, community organizations, and business associations.	Short
<i>Provide seed funding for capital projects</i>	Appropriate funds from Gray's existing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District to implement priority Design recommendations and to serve as a match for a future CDBG grant.	Short
	Position Gray Village for a share of Cumberland County's CDBG Entitlement funds in FY 2007.	Short
	Appoint a representative to the County's CDBG Implementation Committee.	Short
	Encourage the County to allocate funding to downtown revitalization activities.	Short
	Designate the Village area as "slum/blighted" in accordance with federal and state regulations.	Short

### Promotion

<b>Challenges</b>	Despite its prime location at the crossroads of Cumberland County, Gray lies at the fringe of Greater Portland with few "destinations" for either shoppers or tourists.	
<b>Goal</b>	<i>Position Gray Village as an essential gateway to Western Maine and the Sebago Lakes Region.</i>	
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	
<i>Establish a unique identity for Gray Village</i>	Develop a common theme and logo specific to Gray Village.	Short
	Establish gateway signs at the village's boundaries along each of its numbered routes.	Medium
	Develop a clear and consistent wayfinding system to direct visitors from the new Connector to the Village	Medium
<i>Market Gray to residents and visitors.</i>	Establish an information kiosk of community organizations and businesses at Gray Plaza and the Gray municipal complex.	Medium
	Meet with New Gloucester to identify ways to cooperate to implement area economic development plans.	Short
	Maintain an active presence in the Sebago Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce.	Short

## Design

Challenges	Over the last 50 years, the design of Gray Village has radically changed to maximize the mobility of the automobile. Exacerbated by excessive turning conflicts, every intersection in the village qualifies as a high crash location.	
Goal	<i>Reclaim the village as a lively hub for residents, visitors, workers, and shoppers who can safely get around by foot, bicycle, and vehicle.</i>	
Objectives	Strategies	Timeframe
<i>Ensure that modern construction is compatible with the historic character of Gray Village.</i>	Adopt a historic preservation ordinance to regulate demolition, alterations and conversions of existing historic buildings for commercial use.	Medium
	Adopt design guidelines to regulate the style, massing and scale of new construction to ensure its compatibility with the architectural character of the village district.	Medium
	Obtain funding to implement a façade improvement program, particularly for the two mini-malls located on Route 100.	Medium
<i>Eliminate strip and auto-oriented development.</i>	Acquire the Shell property on the West side of Main Street adjacent to Town Hall. Eliminate the access road and redevelop both in to a town park.	Long
	Obtain a pool of Brownfields funding to address perceived contamination on the Copp Motors Property and/or any gas stations acquired for redevelopment.	Medium
	Rezone the area around the new Westerly Connector to Village Aquifer Protection District or the proposed Village Overlay District.	Short
	Maintain strict adherence to regulations in the Village Aquifer Protection District that prohibit drive throughs and auto service and repair stations.	Short
	Amend the list of Prohibited Activities in the Village Aquifer Protection District to include gas stations.	Short
<i>Promote access management at key intersections</i>	Install medians on Routes 100 N, 115, 26, 202 and 100 S long enough to prevent left hand turns into corner businesses.	Short
	Negotiate with Shell Station property owner to investigate elimination of SB access, shared entrance with mini-mall, and one-way traffic flow using rear of station.	Short
	Investigate reconfiguration of parking area around Subway with defined entrances, diagonal parking, one-way traffic flow, and shared parking with businesses further north on Main Street.	Medium
	Investigate opportunity for shared access road and parking behind Dunkin Donuts on W side of Main Street.	Medium
	Work with MaineDOT and property owners to relocate Center Street further south of Route 202 off Turnpike Acres Road.	Long
<i>Create a safe environment for walking and bicycling</i>	Address gaps in the sidewalk network, including missing or substandard segments:	
	On Southbound side of Route 100 to Post Office	Short
	On Northbound side of Route 100 from Dairy Barn to Interurban ROW	Short
	Both sides of Route 115 to Apple Tree Village	Medium
	On Southbound side of Route 100 from Subway to Monument	Short
	Eastbound side of Route 202 from Exit 63 to the Village.	Medium
	Replace sidewalks in the more urban section of downtown with a Pedestrian District treatment, including brick pavers, street lighting, and benches:	
	On Route 100 through Gray Plaza	Long

	<b>Design - continued</b>	
	Over the last 50 years, the design of Gray Village has radically changed to maximize the mobility of the automobile. Exacerbated by excessive turning conflicts, every intersection in the village qualifies as a high crash location.	
	<i>Reclaim the village as a lively hub for residents, visitors, workers, and shoppers who can safely get around by foot, bicycle, and vehicle.</i>	
	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
	On both sides of Route 100 to Pennell Institute	Long
	On both sides of Route 26 to Gray Park	Long
	Place crosswalks in proper locations accompanied by “bump-outs” or aprons to the sidewalk:	
	Move stop lines (including loop detectors) on Route 26; relocate crosswalk.	Short
	Realign crosswalk across Route 100 N to 90°; extend loop detectors.	Short
	Move mid-block crosswalk in front of Pennell to a location in front of Beck property; install aprons.	Short
	Install a mid-block crosswalk on Route 100 to the Post Office	Short
	Improve pedestrian signals at key intersections	
	Delay right turn green arrow for Southbound traffic (or install a dedicated pedestrian walk phase) to allow pedestrians to advance first	Short
	Add pedestrian signal on Southbound side of Main Street in front of Village Fire Station	Short
	Inventory off-road trails and informal ROW's throughout the Village and connect to sidewalk network.	Short
	Stripe bike lanes on both sides of all the village roadways, particularly to the stop line at every intersection:	Short
	Where necessary, narrow travel lanes from 12 to 11 feet.	
	At intersections, stripe bike lanes alongside the through-lane to allow for right turns	
	Eliminate on-street parking on Main Street	
	Add bike lanes to Brown Street and Route 115 when roadway is brought up to standard	
	Add Shared Roadway signs along Route 100 between village intersections	Short

<b>Economic Restructuring</b>		
<b>Challenges</b>	Gray Village serves a limited economic role as a provider of convenience goods and services for residents and commuters. Even among residents, Gray businesses capture less than half the retail sales that would be expected for a town of its size.	
<b>Goal</b>	<i>Re-establish Gray Village as the marketplace in the region for commerce and creativity.</i>	
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	
<i>Create new development capacity in Gray Village</i>	Issue a Request for Proposals to encourage redevelopment of a prominent corner parcel and/or vacant town-owned buildings, such as the old Post Office.	Medium
	Develop a master plan for Gray Plaza to include infill development and structured landscaped parking.	Long
	Work with the Maine Department of Transportation and the Maine Turnpike Authority to relocate the Route 100 storage facility to a location on the Westerly Connector.	Long
<i>Enhance Gray's role as a center for convenience goods and services</i>	Streamline permitting process for new businesses seeking to move into existing vacant properties.	Short
	Work with commercial brokers to identify barriers to leasing existing vacant building space in Gray Village, particularly the Hall Block.	Short
	Partner with the USM Small Business Development Center to host educational opportunities for entrepreneurs in the Central Corridor area; include a tour of existing space as well as market research on desired goods and services, i.e., bookstore, sporting goods, etc.	Short
<i>Support the growth of agri-tourism/outdoor recreation opportunities</i>	Support the establishment of a farmer's market at a suitable location, such as Russell School, Pennell, or Gray Plaza.	Medium
	Establish a partnership with Pineland Farms for a "Maine made" craft outlet or a restaurant featuring local meat and produce.	Medium
	Investigate the potential for a boardwalk in the Gray Bog to facilitate nature walks and birdwatching.	Medium
	Seek funds to improve the Interurban ROW and connect to the sidewalk network, including grading and signage.	Medium
<i>Support the growth of the Arts &amp; Antiques sector</i>	Develop an inventory of the area's Creative Economy encompassing all of the towns in the Central Corridor.	Short
	Allow and promote educational offerings and events in Gray Village in cooperation with the Fiddlehead Arts Center.	Short
	Market Route 26 from Gray to Bethel as an "Antiques Alley".	Medium
<i>Support the growth of the Environmental Technology (ET) sector</i>	Convene a Central Corridors roundtable with ET firms to solicit needs, ideas, and opportunities in cooperation with the Center for Environmental Enterprise.	Short
	Develop an internship program between SMCC, USM, St. Joseph's College, and/or MSAD 15 to place students with ET firms located in Gray.	Medium
	Advise commercial brokers of properties suitable for the location or expansion of ET firms.	Medium

*Short = Less than 1 year; Medium = 1-5 years; Long = over 5 years*

## Proposed Infrastructure Improvements

### Overview

The following summary details proposed infrastructure improvements based on a field survey with GPCOG, MaineDOT engineering staff and Gray Officials on August 23, 2006. These improvements are in priority order and include new sidewalks, bike lanes and traffic medians to improve safety, encourage predictable turning movements, promote access management, improve walkability and promote bicycling in Gray Village. The five areas of focus include Route 100 (north), Route 100 (south), Gray Plaza, Route 115 (east), and Route 202/4 (west).

### Route 100 North

Move stop line north to allow for a new crosswalk, install center median, install a five-foot sidewalk from the Shell Station to the existing sidewalk (560 feet), stripe bike lanes on both sides of the roadway, narrow travel lanes to 11'-0," improve access management to the Plaza and re-design the Plaza parking circulation and access.

North Village Route 100 Both Sides	Description	Budget
New Sidewalk	Intersection to Plaza	\$ 41,900
Stripe bike lanes	2800 X \$0.50/LF	\$ 1,400
Install center median	100' X \$90/LF	\$ 9,000
Stripe 11' travel lanes	2800' X \$2.00/LF	\$ 5,600
<b>Total North Village 100</b>		<b>\$ 57,900</b>

### Route 100 South

Move stop line south to allow for a new crosswalk, install center median, install a five-foot sidewalk from the Mobil Station to the Post Office (2,350 feet), improve access management in selected locations.

South Village Route 100 West Side		
New Sidewalk	Intersection to P.O.	\$ 140,800
Install center median	80' X \$90/LF	\$ 7,200
<b>Total South Village 100</b>		<b>\$ 148,000</b>

### Gray Plaza

Install a sidewalk from one end of Gray Plaza to the other. The solution may require ROW sharing with existing businesses or acquisition (not included in this estimate).

South Village Gray Plaza East Side		
New Sidewalk	Through Gray Plaza	\$ 54,000

### Route 115 East

Install sidewalks both sides of Route 115 from the Route 100/202 intersection to Brown Street, stripe bike lanes on both sides of the roadway. *Note: Route 115 is part of the MaineDOT backlog roadway list and must be brought up to standards, including paved shoulders and improved drainage. This upgrade must be done before bike lanes and sidewalks are considered.*

<b>Route 115 East*, Both Sides</b>		
New Sidewalk	Intersection to Brown St	\$ 118,900
Stripe bike lanes	1800 X \$0.50/LF	\$ 1,400
Install center median	60' X \$90/LF	\$ 5,400
Stripe 11' travel lanes	1800' X \$2.00/LF	\$ 5,600
<b>Total Route 115 East*</b>		<b>\$ 131,300</b>

### **Route 202/4 West**

Install sidewalk on south side of Route 202/4 from the Route 100/202 intersection to Maine Turnpike Exit 63, stripe bike lanes on both sides of the roadway. Close off Center Street and consider routing egress to Post Office or MaineDOT Maintenance Facility ROW (cost estimate not included).

<b>Route 202/4 West, South Side</b>		
New Sidewalk	Intersection to Exit 63	\$ 73,800
Stripe bike lanes	1800 X \$0.50/LF	\$ 1,400
<b>Route 202/4 West total</b>		<b>\$ 75,200</b>

<b>Infrastructure Summary</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Sidewalks	\$429,400
Center medians	\$21,600
Stripe bike lanes	\$3,200
Narrow travel lanes	\$11,200
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$465,400</b>

### **Sources:**

City of Portland, Traffic Department Staff

MaineDOT Region One and OPT Staff

Gray Municipal Officials

PACTS Bike/Ped Proposals for 08-09 Capital Work Plan, PACTS & GPCOG Staff

MaineDOT Standard Specifications, revised December, 2002

# **I. Introduction**

## **Introduction**

In January, 2006, the Town of Gray contracted with the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) to develop a *Gray Village Master Plan*. The purpose of the plan was to build on the extensive work already completed as part of the town's Comprehensive Plan and Community Economic Growth Strategy.

The impetus for this plan was a successful Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application for the Town of Gray and the proposed Gray Connector Road under construction by the MaineDOT and the Maine Turnpike Authority. The proposed Gray Connector will have a profound and lasting impact on the future of the downtown. This Gray Village Master Plan will help Gray Officials to plan for future development and balance the mix of residential, commercial, institutional and civic uses. The plan will also serve to facilitate and guide future public policy decisions. The Study Area and location of the proposed Gray Connector can be viewed on pp 14 & 15.

## **Gray Village**

As the crossroads of central Cumberland County, Gray Village has served as the commercial and civic hub for the Town of Gray since its incorporation in 1778. Located at the intersection of the Maine Turnpike and Routes 26, 100, 115 and 202, the village provides access to Portland, Yarmouth, Windham, Lewiston/Auburn and Pineland in the New Gloucester while serving as the gateway to the Sebago Lakes region and Western Maine ski area. Home to over 1,000 residents, the village serves as the center for civic activities, including the Gray town Offices, Stimson Hall, Gray Public Library, Russell Elementary School, Gray Historical Society, U.S. Post Office, and town recreation facilities. With 185,000 square feet of space, Gray Village also serves as a center for goods and services, offering groceries, sundries, auto parts, hardware, gas, flowers and services. The 11,600 residents of Gray and New Gloucester comprise the village's primary trade area, which extends into Poland, Raymond, and North Yarmouth. Residents of Gray Manor, a local nursing home, and Apple Tree Village, a low-income housing development, also call the village home.

## **Opportunity for Change**

One of Gray's top priorities is to preserve the village as the center for community and commercial activities and future growth. In 2001, Planning Decisions completed Gray's Community Economic Growth Strategy, which outlines priority actions to support economic development. In 2003, Gray adopted its latest Comprehensive Plan. Both planning processes identified the village's problems and opportunities:

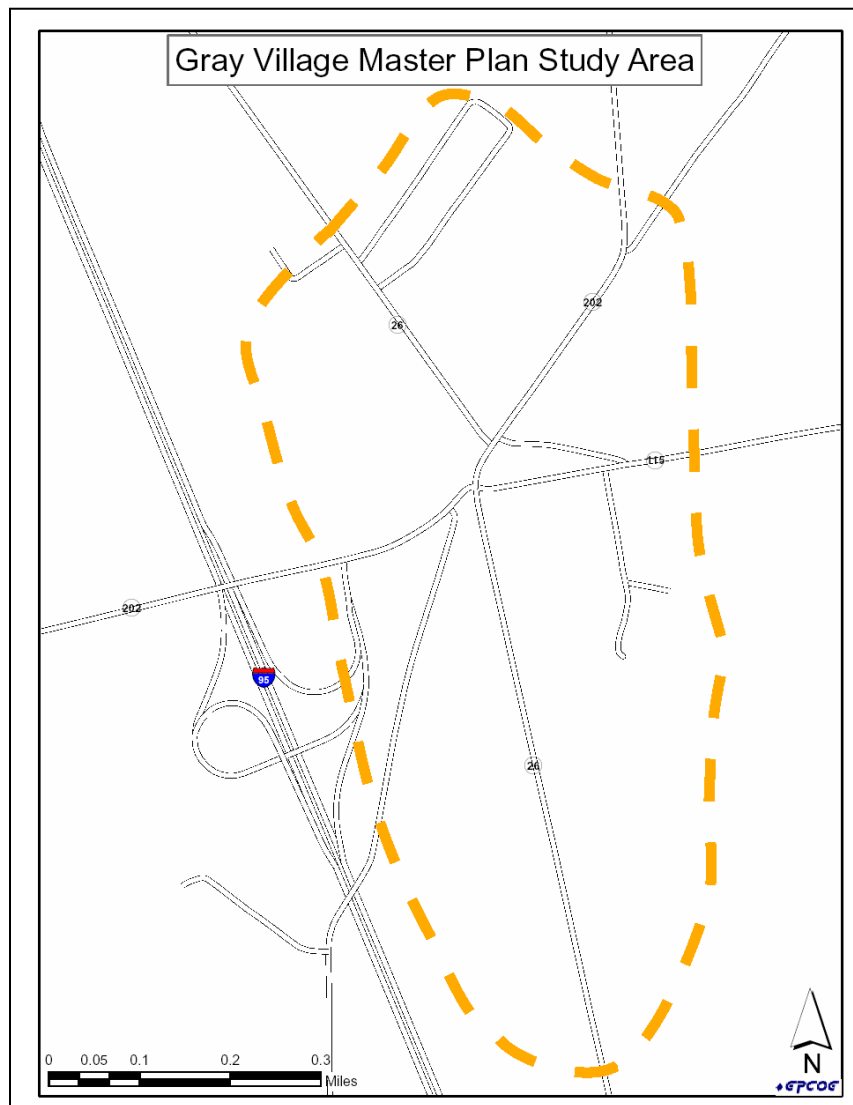
- Deterioration of historic buildings in the village
- Unattractive appearance of the town's gateways
- Street layout and traffic flow dangerous to pedestrians and motorists
- Lack of land and public infrastructure to support economic development

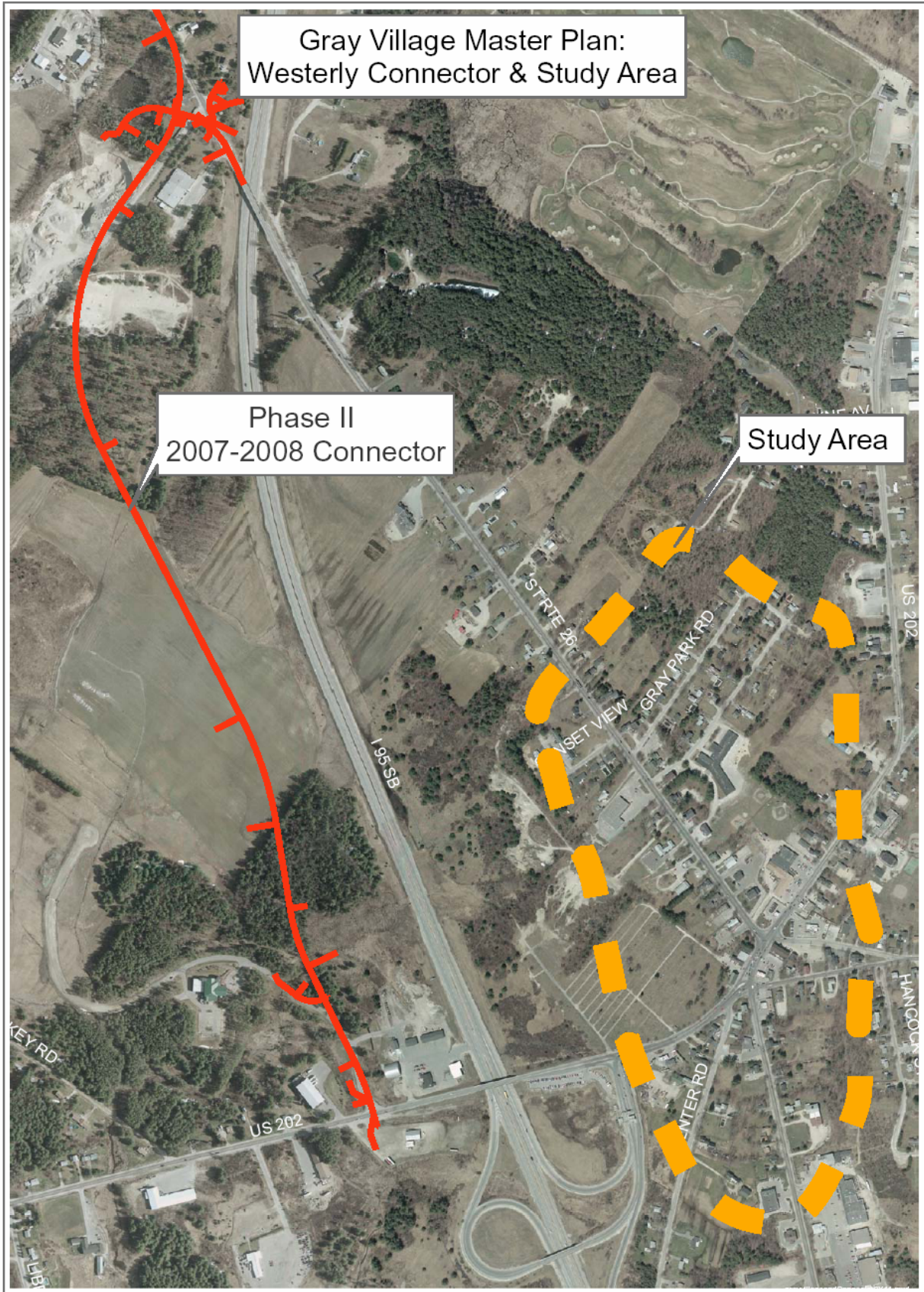


## The Issues and Problems

While the Comprehensive Plan addressed community-wide planning and the Community Economic Growth Strategy addressed retail and business marketability issues, there are problem areas and infrastructure needs of the downtown that were not addressed in the two previous studies. Some of the problem areas listed in the grant application to the State Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) included deterioration of village historic buildings, unattractive appearance of gateways, inadequate and dangerous street layout, and a lack of land and infrastructure to support economic development.

Past efforts alone were not sufficient in addressing problem areas; more needs to be done. Consequently, this plan contains findings and recommendations that can be implemented to improve the viability of Gray's downtown center and village. The plan addresses these critical issues, including traffic, parking, sidewalks, blight, landscaping, parks, historic structures and public infrastructure.





## **II. Planning Process**

### **A. Advisory Committee**

The Study was guided by an advisory committee comprised of business owners, town councilors and town staff. The committee met on the second Wednesday of each month between February and September, 2006. Members of the committee included the following:

#### **Committee Members**

Jeanne Adam, Chair  
Robert Avaunt  
Liz Beck  
Mary Colangelo  
Skip Crane  
Leo Credit  
Lawrence Leeman  
Ron Lydick  
Fran Monroe  
James Pound  
Andrew Upham

#### **Staff**

Dick Cahill, Gray Town Planner  
Caroline Paras, Economic and Community Planner, GPCOG  
David Willauer, Planning Director, GPCOG

### **B. Chronology**

Jan 2006	Gray Officials and GPCOG staff developed the Scope of Work and appointed the Gray Village Master Plan Advisory Committee.
Feb 2006	Advisory Committee reviewed the Scope of Work and plan Public Forum.
Mar 2006	GPCOG staff worked with the Advisory Committee to conduct the Public Forum.
Apr 2006	Staff presented methodology for the Village Buildings Survey and business development opportunities.
May 2006	Staff presented traffic and pedestrian issues; the committee heard presentations from other downtown planning efforts; Pineland field trip and school renovations.
Jun 2006	Staff presented an outline of the final report and discussed report details.
Jul 2006	Staff presented draft report with preliminary findings.
Aug 2006	Committee met to review report.
Sep 2006	Staff and the Committee completed the final report, presented the report to the Gray Town Council and conducted the second Public Forum.
Nov 2006	Staff completes final report.

### **III. Public Outreach**

The public outreach process included two public forums, both of which were held at the Spring Meadows Banquet Center. The first forum was held on March 8, 2006, and the second forum was held on September 21, 2006.

**Public Forum Summary**  
Gray Village Master Plan  
March 8, 2006  
Spring Meadow Banquet Center  
Revised with "Report Out" Notes 4/4/06

#### **Attendance**

A total of 75 people attended the first Public Forum for the Gray Village Master Plan. This included six committee members, two Legislators, three Town Councilors, and staff.

#### **Welcome**

Committee Chair Jeanne Adams welcomed people to the forum and Committee member Leo Credit gave a brief power-point presentation on the purpose of the Village Plan.

#### **Overview of Gray Village**

Caroline Paras from GPCOG presented an overview, including village history, demographic and transportation trends and the study purpose. A copy of the presentation can be found on the Town of Gray and GPCOG Websites.

#### **Visual Preference Survey**

A total of 65 people, including residents and business owners, participated in a 20 minute visual preference survey prepared by GPCOG staff. Participants were given 20 seconds to rank images displayed on a large screen organized into five different categories from "least to most desirable." The categories included signage, building facades, streetscapes, parking, and examples of residential density.

#### **Small Group Sessions**

Participants divided into small groups to design the following village improvement strategies:

1. Streetscape Improvements. After viewing examples of existing street profiles in Gray Village, participants expressed interest in developing wider sidewalks, street trees and small scale lighting similar to Raymond Village. One participant described the need for a central green or gazebo in the Village Center that could be done if one of the service stations were re-located. Amenities could include gardens, benches and safe places to walk. Small improvements could be made with a combination of business and public investment. Parking issues were also discussed. The old Fire Station should be restored. Delivery truck parking is another issue. Traffic is a problem.
  - Major points
  - Curbing – granite v. cement
  - Brick Sidewalks

- Underground utilities
- Raymond
- Trees
- Lighting
- Flags
- Focal point-develop on gas station site
- Small village greens
- Public funding – start somewhere!

2. Investment Opportunities.

- Fewer & nicer gas stations
- Empty storefronts, DOT maintenance facility, old post office, old fire station
- New traffic patterns
- Intersections
- Pedestrian mall, green space
- Truck traffic – work with N-G to eliminate toll
- Toll plaza by Mayall

3. Gateways. Proposed signage included an arched gateway sign with shrubs, commercial and information signs, business directory signs and interstate signs describing different services. Other ideas included directional street lights and small banners on poles. Suggested slogans included Gateway to Maine, Crossroads of Maine, Village of Gray – a Growing Community and Gray Matters.

- Archway - symbol
- Landscaping
- Make commercial signs more informative with pictures & words – Yarmouth, Falmouth
- General signs off the interstate
- Directional street lights with arrows
- Small banners on poles
- Gateway to Maine
- Crossroads to Maine
- Village of Gray
- Gray Matters
- Gateway to Vacationland
- Gray Village...a growing community

4. Business Opportunities.

Farming -- although agricultural land may be too valuable for purely agricultural uses. Surplus farm produce could be sold to institutions (Windham Incubator example). Zoning may need to be changed to allow for more businesses. A large percentage of residents live and work in Gray. Encourage people to "live where they work," and support businesses with "people who makes things." Home occupations should be allowed, including hobby shops, small specialty plumbing, and book stores. Need more music and

arts venues. The Gray Connector is expected to reduce traffic flow through the Village – encourage more places to stay, including B&Bs and more restaurants.

- No big boxes
- Promoting what we have – agri-tourism, wildlife park
- Need more hospitality – lodging, restaurants
- Zoning to support business development
- More goods & services for our residents

**Public Forum Summary**  
Gray Village Master Plan  
September 21, 2006  
Spring Meadow Banquet Center

**Attendance**

A total of 42 people attended the second Public Forum for the Gray Village Master Plan. This included seven committee members, two Legislators, three Town Councilors, and staff.

**Welcome**

Committee Chair Jeanne Adams welcomed people to the forum and described the committee's work. She thanked committee members for their perseverance and energy. Committee member Leo Credit gave a brief power-point presentation on the implementation of the Village Plan. He echoed Jeanne's praise for the committee work and particularly for the council leadership. He further described four aspects of revitalization as necessary concepts for success.

**Report Overview and Summary**

Caroline Paras from GPCOG presented an overview of the final report, including findings and recommendations. She said Gray has many opportunities to explore niche markets, including Environmental Technology, Arts & Antiques and Agri-Tourism. David Willauer described infrastructure improvements and proposed cost estimates. The final report was available for viewing and comments.

**Discussion**

There were questions about opportunities for more and better signage. Gray residents and businesses would like it both ways: welcome tourists and visitors but don't drive through the village. Gray is the "downtown" for New Gloucester. We need more places to stay and dine. There are few hotels and restaurants. Several Gray councilors praised the planning process and spoke in positive terms about the need to use this plan to move Gray forward. One councilor said "Don't make this yesterday's plan." There was more discussion about how towns around Gray are growing rapidly. We need places for businesses. One suggestion was for an internet café. Several town councilors said they would be looking at the available town-owned land in the village for development opportunities.



## IV. Traffic & Parking

### A. Introduction and History

Two significant factors have led to the increased traffic congestion in Gray Corner: (1) the construction of the Maine Turnpike (with an interchange in Gray) and (2) the increased dependence on the private automobile and trucks for transportation. The Turnpike Interchange had a profound impact on Gray Corner because of the location of so many important roads to Maine destinations. Gray is positioned at the confluence of roadways provided access to the Lakes Region, Yarmouth, Lewiston/Auburn, Bethel and the City of Portland. Gray Corners served as a crossroads even before the Maine Turnpike extension from Portland to Augusta was completed in 1955.

### B. Suburban Expansion

A significant trend over the past 50 years has been the suburbanization of American cities. This trend has resulted in increased traffic levels outside metropolitan areas. In Greater Portland, this has led to more pressure on roads in rural areas, including Gray and towns surrounding the Portland area.

### C. Traffic Volume

Over the past 15 years, traffic volumes exiting the Maine Turnpike at Exit 63 have increased by an average of 5.4% per year. Today, traffic volumes in Gray Village are equivalent to the same traffic volumes on Brighton Avenue in Portland. Highlights from a report prepared by HNTB Engineers include the following:

- Since 1990, traffic at Exit 63 has grown at an average rate of 5.4% per year. This is faster than the overall growth rate on the Maine Turnpike (3.5%)
- Growth on the ramps to and from the south (6.1%) has outpaced growth to and from the north (3.4%).
- Overall traffic at the interchange has nearly doubled since 1990.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> HNTB Traffic Report, June 2006.



**Table IV-1  
Maine Turnpike Traffic Volume Exit 63  
1990-2005**

Year	#	nb-on	nb-off	sb-on	sb-off	to/from N	to/from S	total
1990	1	1,100	2,815	2,857	1,111	2,210	5,672	7,882
1991	2	1,046	2,772	2,799	1,068	2,114	5,571	7,685
1992	3	936	2,820	2,844	945	1,881	5,664	7,545
1993	4	986	2,914	2,942	997	1,983	5,856	7,839
1994	5	1,040	3,147	3,181	1,048	2,088	6,328	8,416
1995	6	1,066	3,245	3,272	1,072	2,138	6,517	8,656
1996	7	1,098	3,343	3,379	1,101	2,200	6,721	8,921
2000	11	1,379	5,267	5,305	1,565	2,944	10,572	13,516
2001	12	1,420	5,406	5,421	1,497	2,917	10,827	13,744
2002	13	1,493	5,176	5,281	1,504	2,997	10,457	13,454
2003	14	1,536	5,455	5,607	1,539	3,075	11,062	14,138
2004	15	1,532	5,782	5,888	1,554	3,086	11,669	14,756
2005	16	1,467	5,774	5,927	1,503	2,970	11,701	14,671

annual % growth	3.4%	6.0%	6.1%	3.5%	3.4%	6.1%	5.4%
annual growth in AADT	41	239	246	44	85	485	570

Source: Maine Turnpike Authority, June 2005

Clearly, Turnpike traffic volume has a direct impact on traffic in Gray Village. This is particularly significant since travelers must pass through Gray to reach their final destination. Exit 63 is also the primary exit for the Lakes Region and northern ski resorts.

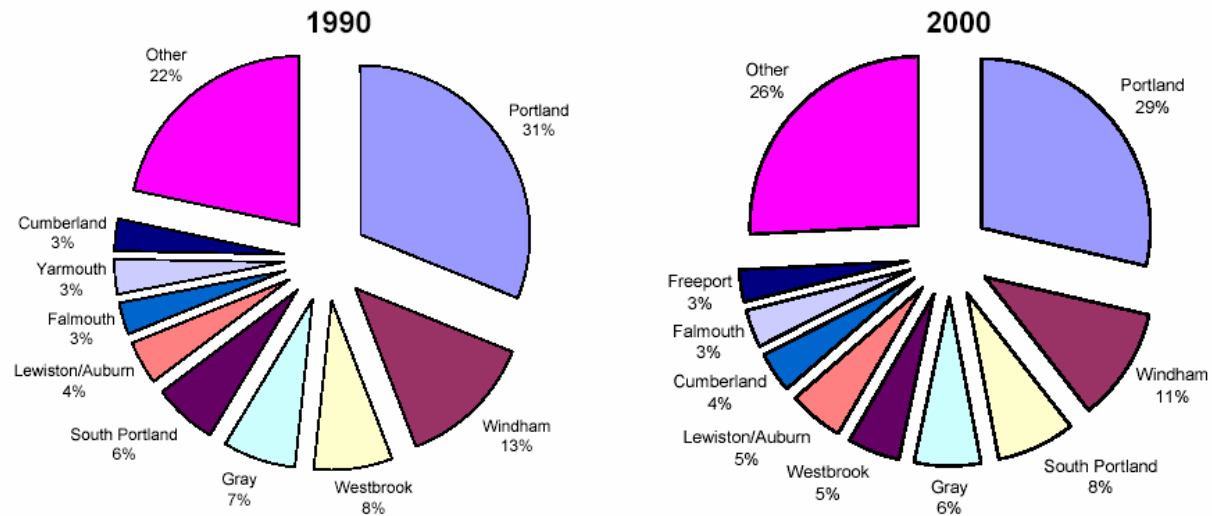
#### **D. Commuter Traffic**

Commuter traffic information is measured by the U.S. Census and is called “Journey to Work Data.” Figure IV-1 below shows where most residents from the seven towns in Central Cumberland County work each day. Most of the residents in the towns surrounding Gray commute south to the cities of Portland, South Portland and Westbrook. Similarly, most Gray residents commute to Portland each day to work. This trend has remained largely unchanged between 1990 and 2000. Of all the surrounding towns, Gray has the highest number of people who live and work in Gray (over 700). About 200 Gray residents travel to Lewiston or Auburn to work.

See Figure IV-1 below to view these trends.



**Figure IV-1**  
**Journey-to-Work Data 1990 & 2000**  
**Central Corridor Residents Place of Work**



Residence	Workplace	Work force 1990	% of Total Workforce	Workforce 2000	% of Total Workforce
Cumberland	Cumberland	330	12%	618	24%
Gray	Gray	718	25%	765	20%
New Gloucester	New Gloucester	255	15%	456	17%
North Yarmouth	North Yarmouth	96	8%	263	15%
Pownal	Pownal	65	11%	125	16%
Raymond	Raymond	185	12%	373	16%
Windham	Windham	1648	26%	1820	24%

Source: U.S. Census

## **E. Gray Village Reconfiguration, 1997**

Traffic congestion in Gray Village was improved about the same time that Maine Turnpike and MaineDOT Officials began planning for what was called “the Westerly Bypass Roadway” in 1997. During the planning process for what would become the “Gray Connector,” MaineDOT engineers reconfigured the village center to accommodate more traffic. The Civil War Monument was moved from one end of the Village center to the other, and several turning lanes were added to increase turning movements. The resulting design allows for more vehicles to travel through the village. However, the design made it more difficult for pedestrians to cross a wider roadway with multiple turning lanes. Bike lanes were not part of this design, either.

## **F. Gray Connector and Planning Process 1997-1999**

In 1997, the Maine Turnpike Authority contracted with HNTB and other engineering firms to conduct the Gray/New Gloucester Access Study. This study was conducted to satisfy the requirements of the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). The NEPA Study Purpose of the study was “to relieve congestion for local and through traffic traveling through Gray Village and along Route 26 in Gray, while improving accessibility to and from the Maine Turnpike and increasing corridor capacity within the Maine Turnpike corridor between Exit 11 [63] Gray and Exit 12 [75] Auburn. Improvements will accommodate current and future traffic in a safe and efficient manner that is sensitive to the character of these areas.”<sup>2</sup>

A total of 27 alternatives (including the No-Build and System Upgrade Alternatives) were studied in the Maine Turnpike corridor between Exit 11, Gray and Exit 12, Auburn. Two levels of screening have been performed on these initial alternatives using such measures of effectiveness as improvements in traffic service, environmental consequences, socioeconomic and land use implications, and engineering criteria. The result of two years of study was a list of seven final alternatives (including the No-Build and System Upgrade Alternatives) mutually accepted by the towns, Public Advisory Committee (PAC), MTA and MDOT.



During the summer of 1998, the PAC and Town of Gray selected the Westerly Bypass with Southern Connector-2 Alternative as their locally-preferred alternative. The MTA and MDOT developed modifications to this locally-preferred alternative to reduce environmental impacts while maintaining a high level of transportation benefit. An eighth alternative, known as the Westerly Bypass Only Alternative, was developed as a result of these modifications. The results of the MTA Study are documented in the Maine Turnpike, Gray/New Gloucester Access Study, Final Location Study Report, January 1999.

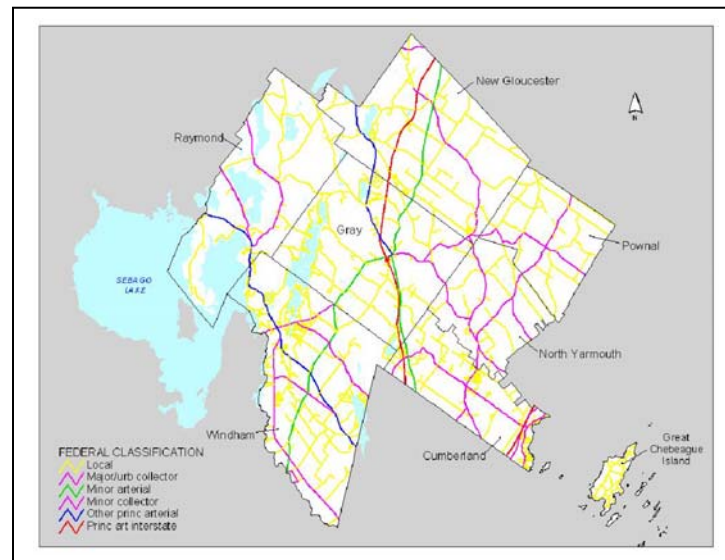
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<sup>2</sup> *Gray/New Gloucester Access Study, Final Location Report*, January 1999 (HNTB).

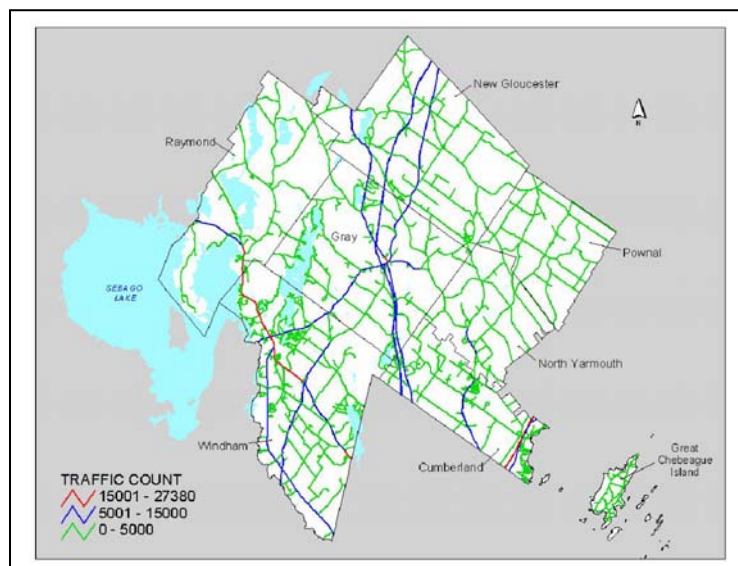
## G. Regional Trends

Over the past five years, the seven towns of Gray, New Gloucester, North Yarmouth, Pownal, Cumberland, Raymond and Windham collaborated with GPCOG through the efforts of the Central Corridor Coalition. In 2003, GPCOG published a report describing transportation, land use and economic development trends in the region. The charts below describe regional transportation trends from the seven participating towns.

**Figure IV-2: Functional Classification of Roadways  
Central Corridor Coalition**



**Figure IV-3: Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)  
Central Corridor Coalition**



## **H. Truck Traffic**

Truck traffic has historically been a part of every traffic discussion in Gray Village. Because of the location of Exit 63 in relation to the Lakes Region and access to Route 26, truck drivers must exit in Gray to reach many Maine destinations. The issue was further complicated when the Maine Turnpike Authority installed a barrier toll plaza in New Gloucester. Trucks represent approximately 7% of traffic.

## **I. Findings**

- Most Gray residents work in Greater Portland
- A high number of Gray residents live and work in Gray
- Gray Village is located at the confluence of five major roadways in addition to the Maine Turnpike Exit 63
- Traffic volumes at Exit 63 have increased 5.4% over the past 15 years.
- Traffic congestion in Gray is expected to DECREASE 50% when the Gray Connector is completed. This trend may only last 10 years before village congestion reoccurs
- The Gray Village reconfiguration by MaineDOT in 1997 limits bike and pedestrian use in the village
- Truck traffic will always exist in Gray due to the proximity of Exit 63 to the village.
- Traffic diversions to avoid the New Gloucester Toll Barrier continue to plague Gray Officials.

## **V. Pedestrian & Bicycle Circulation**

### **A. Introduction & History**

For many years, Gray residents relied on walking and riding horses and bicycles to get where they needed to go. Portland's extensive trolley system combined with the Interurban railroad provided an efficient transportation system for longer distances. What was once a pedestrian-friendly village changed with the introduction of the private automobile. The construction of residences and businesses designed for automobile traffic circulation had a detrimental impact on walking and bicycling. Children mostly walked to and from schools in Gray until traffic pressures changed this behavior. Today, no children walk to school even though Russell Elementary School is still located in the heart of the village.



### **B. Bicycle & Pedestrian Recommendations, 1999**

In 1999, GPCOG assisted Gray with a successful application for federal funds to improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the village. With these funds, the sidewalk on the west side of Route 100 was extended from the Village Center out to the Veteran's Home.

### **C. Pedestrian Facilities**

Pedestrian facilities include sidewalks, trails, crosswalks and off-road pathways. Gray Village contains sidewalks throughout most of the downtown area. However, there are gaps in the sidewalk network, including the east side of Route 100 to the north and the west side of Route 100 to the south to Gray Plaza. There are no sidewalks in Gray Plaza, where pedestrians are forced to compete with cars and trucks in an open, sprawling parking lot. For detailed recommendations and cost estimates, refer to the Executive Summary on pp. 10-11 and see the map on p. 28. Some sections of Gray Village have off-road trails, such as between Gray Plaza and Hanover Street and along the ROW of the Interurban Railroad. More of these trail linkages in the village would improve pedestrian connections to activity centers.

Activity centers in Gray include the Russell Elementary School, Gray Plaza, the Post Office, Library, Town Hall and various businesses. Except for the Post Office, these activity centers are clustered within a quarter mile, or a 5-minute walk, of the Village's main intersection. This density of uses is ideal for the creation of a "pedestrian district", where "people" traffic is both to be expected and encouraged. This more urban core merits an enhanced design treatment for the entire streetscape. Such elements might include the following:

- Wider sidewalks constructed in brick on both sides of the street with esplanades, curbing, lighting, and street trees
- Enhanced treatment at crossings, such as touch free pedestrian signals, bump-outs, landscaped medians, and textured crosswalks

- Amenities such as benches, trashcans, newsstands, kiosks, public phones, and artwork
- Open space, such as plazas or courtyards
- Zero lot line setback for all new construction
- Orientation of building entrances, signs, awnings, and facades to the street rather the parking lot



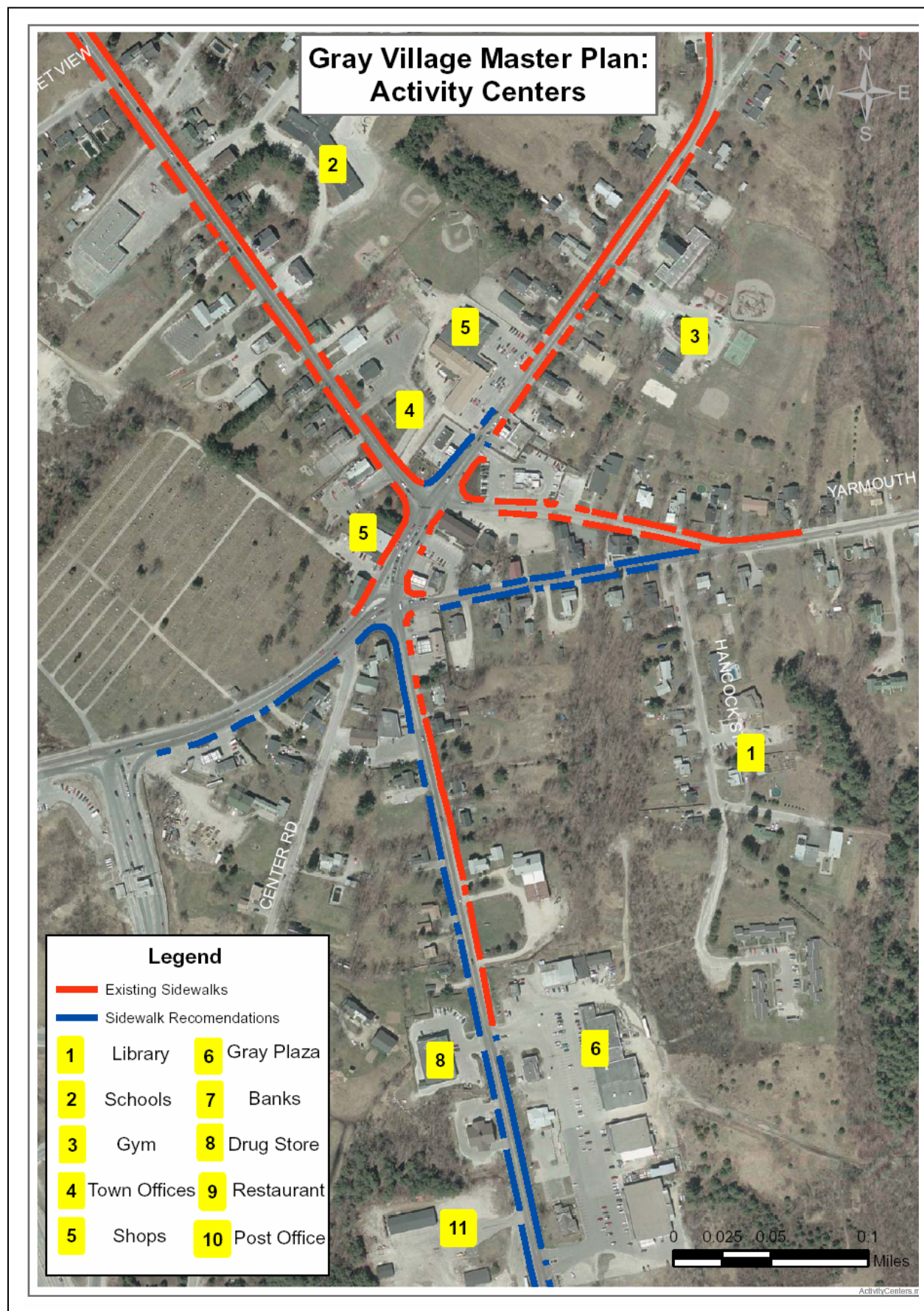
*Wide sidewalks provide room for an entire orchestra in Bath*



*Yarmouth recently added embossed crosswalks to over 20 downtown locations*

Pedestrian crossings in Gray Village are difficult because of the widened roadways in the Village Center. The result is long crossing distances with few “islands of refuge.” Stop lines are designed in some areas, such as Route 100 & Route 26, where no crosswalk exists due to the design of the intersection. The existing sidewalk network connecting Gray activity centers and gaps in this network can be viewed in Figure VI-1.





**Figure VI-2: Bicycle Facility Standards**

## **D. Bicycle Facilities**

On-road bicycle facilities consist of shared roadways, wide curb lanes and bike lanes. Some combination of these facilities should be constructed throughout Gray Village to promote bicycling. Bicycles are required to travel on the right side of the road and must follow the same rules of the road as motor vehicles. Only children 10 years old or younger should be allowed to ride bicycles on sidewalks.

### **1. Shared Roadway**

The shared roadway simply means bicycles share the road with motor vehicles. This is common in urban areas where there is limited room for bike lanes. This type of facility is usually identified with signage only.

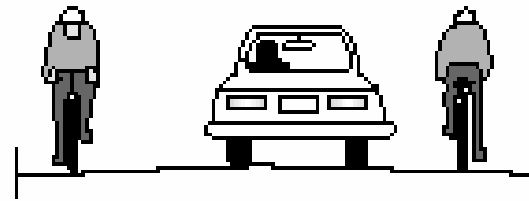
### **2. Wide Curb Lane**

These wide lanes are designed to accommodate bicycles and sometimes bus traffic. Wide curb lanes are often used when there are two lanes for traffic. There may be too many drainage basins, bump outs, or other impediments to stripe a bike lane.

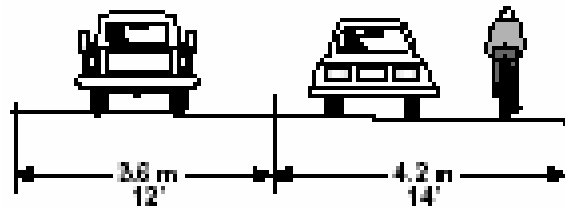
### **3. Bike Lane**

A dedicated bike lane is the preferred facility for bicycle traffic. These lanes should be designed with a four foot minimum width and located on both sides of the roadway. In some areas where speeds are reduced, travel lanes are narrowed to accommodate bicycle lanes. This may be necessary in some sections of Gray Village. In urban areas, bike lanes often compete with on-street parking. At intersections, bike lanes are usually striped alongside the through lane to ensure bicyclists are not forced to turn with right-turning traffic. Figure VI-2 depicts typical bicycle facilities.

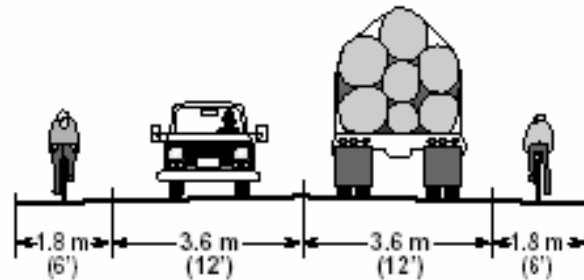
#### **Typical Bicycle Facilities**



**Shared Roadway**



**Wide Curb Lane**



**Bike Lane**



## **E. Findings**

- What was once a pedestrian-friendly village changed with the introduction of the private automobile.
- Gray Village has sidewalks throughout most of the village. However, there are gaps in the sidewalk network, including the east side of Route 100 to the north and the west side of Route 100 to the south to Gray Plaza
- Pedestrian crossings in Gray Village are difficult because of the widened roadways in the Village Center.

## VI. Business Development Opportunities

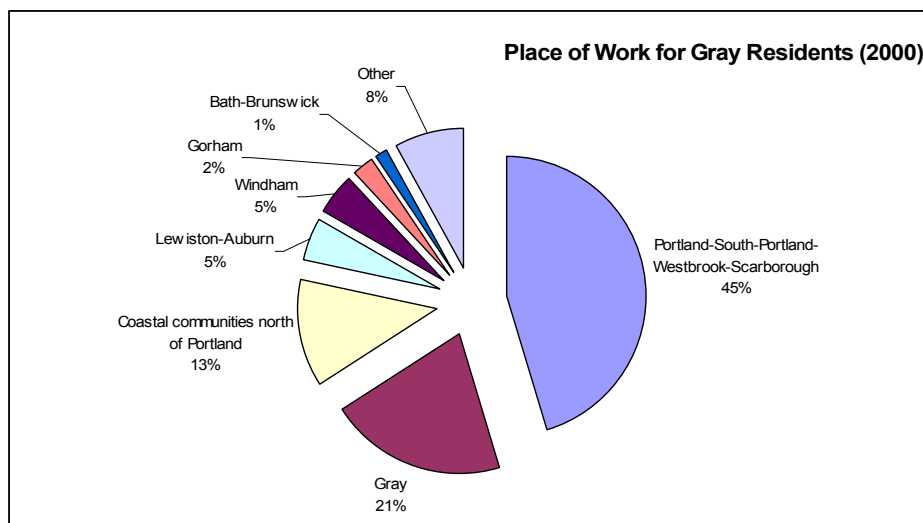
Constrained by the absence of public sewer and the lack of developable land, the physical capacity for business development in Gray Village is limited. But a recent glut of vacancies, coupled with Gray's location as a crossroads in the county, create the opportunity to remake the downtown. Future business development might build on one or more of the following themes:

- Retain and expand Gray's existing role as a center for convenience goods and services for Gray residents and commuters
- Retain, expand, and attract businesses that build on Gray's strength as an emerging niche for environmental technology, arts and antiques, and/or agriculture
- Encourage people who currently operate cottage industries out of their homes to establish a business in Gray Village
- Attract businesses that enhance Gray's role as a gateway to recreational opportunities in Western Maine's lakes and mountains

These themes will be discussed throughout this section as well as the section on Outdoor Recreation/Tourism.

### A. Regional Economy

Within the regional context, Gray functions primarily as a bedroom community of the Portland Labor Market. By definition, a labor market is an economically integrated geographic area in which workers can change jobs without having to change their place of residence. The Portland Labor Market Area consists of 41 towns in Androscoggin, York, Cumberland, and Oxford counties boasting a population of 355,319 people representing more than 25% of the state's residents. Almost half of all adult workers who live in Gray commute south to jobs in the service center communities of Portland, South Portland, Westbrook and Scarborough. Another 13% travel east to the coastal towns of Falmouth, Freeport, Cumberland, and Yarmouth, and 5%, north, to jobs in Lewiston and Auburn. One of every 5 Gray residents works in Gray.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

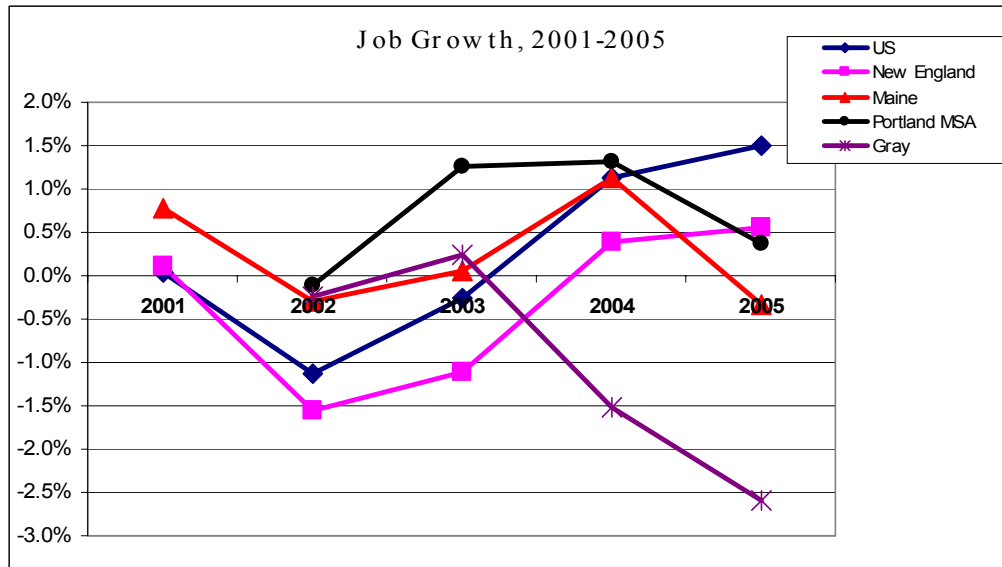
The Portland Labor Market consists of 189,376 jobs representing almost one third of all the jobs in the state. Anchored by three large hospitals, Education and Health Services comprises the largest employment sector, 24%. Transportation, Trade and Utilities, embodied by retail giant L.L. Bean, is the second largest sector, also at 24%. Manufacturing, topped by Idexx Laboratories in Westbrook, comprises 8% of the region's employment. There are 12 employers in Greater Portland with over 1,000 employees. None are located in Gray.

#### **Largest Employers in Greater Portland, 2005**

<b>Company Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>
Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield	Gannett Dr # 4E130	South Portland	ME
Hannaford	Pleasant Hill Rd	Scarborough	ME
Idexx Distribution Inc	Idexx Dr	Westbrook	ME
L L Bean Inc	Casco St	Freeport	ME
Maine Medical Center	Bramhall St	Portland	ME
Mercy Health System of Maine	State St	Portland	ME
Mercy Hospital	State St	Portland	ME
S & D Coffee Inc	Warren Ave	Portland	ME
Southern Maine Medical Ctr	Medical Center Dr	Biddeford	ME
TD Banknorth Inc	Portland Sq	Portland	ME
Unum Life Insurance CO-America	Congress St	Portland	ME
US Post Office	Forest Ave	Portland	ME

*Source: Maine Department of Labor*

Over the last five years, the economy in Greater Portland has mirrored state and national trends. The robust job growth of the late 1990's was halted by the recession of 2001. Since that time, Greater Portland has lost over 5,000 jobs, primarily in the manufacturing of durable goods such as shoes, textiles, electronics and wood products. Portland, however, has fared better than New England, which posted net job losses in 2002 and 2003. Compared to the rest of the region, the economy in Gray has performed rather poorly. With the departure of Dunlap Insurance and the closure of the Thriftway, the town has almost 100 jobs which have not been replaced. Both of these businesses were located in Gray Village.



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce; Maine Department of Labor

## B. Local Economy

The structure of the economy in Gray mirrors that of the Portland Labor Market. Overall, the town hosts 258 businesses employing 1,958 people. Anchored by Gray Plaza, the largest employment sector is Trade, Transportation and Utilities, which boasts one of every four jobs in the town. The second largest sector, led by School Administrative District #15, is Education and Health Services, with one of every five jobs. There are a total of 15 manufacturers in Gray, the largest of which is Eri Passive Power Products. Just 6.3% of Gray residents, or 244 people, reported being self-employed in the last Census, compared to 7.8% across the labor market area.

### Payroll Employment and Wages in Gray compared to Greater Portland, 2005

Industry	Businesses		Employment				Weekly Wages	
	Gray	Portland MSA	Gray	% of Local Employment	Portland MSA	% of Region Employment	Gray	Portland MSA
<b>Total, all industries</b>	258	13,745	1,958		189,376		\$535	\$698
<b>Goods-Producing Domain</b>	77	2,500	434	22%	26,321	14%	\$699	\$838
Natural Resources and Mining	3	114	3	0%	462	0%	\$542	\$508
Construction	59	1,854	274	14%	10,790	6%	\$683	\$758
Manufacturing	15	532	157	8%	15,068	8%	\$732	\$905
<b>Service-Providing Domain</b>	181	11,245	1,524	78%	163,055	86%	\$488	\$676
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	68	2,917	492	25%	44,627	24%	\$480	\$598
Information	6	245	15	1%	4,885	3%	\$360	\$906
Financial Activities	15	1,369	46	2%	15,736	8%	\$772	\$1,014
Professional & Business Services	28	2,552	169	9%	21,720	11%	\$838	\$882
Education and Health Services	23	1,518	390	20%	45,407	24%	\$516	\$692
Leisure and Hospitality	16	1,346	328	17%	20,117	11%	\$256	\$302
Other Services	20	1,067	70	4%	5,396	3%	\$417	\$474
Public Administration	***	231	***		5,166	3%	***	\$759

Source: Maine Department of Labor

With an average weekly wage of \$838, or \$43,576 per year, professional and business services pay the best wages in town, followed by financial institutions and manufacturing companies. Overall, wages in virtually every sector pay less than those in the Portland labor market as a whole. The greatest pay differential is in the information sector, which includes publishing and telecommunications, where workers in Gray earn just 40% compared to similar jobs in the region.

The largest employers in Gray, with over 50 workers, include two manufacturers, one service business, and a number of public agencies. None of these are located downtown. The largest employers in Gray Village, all with over 20 employees, include the Town of Gray, Russell School, Gorrill-Palmer Consulting Engineers, Cook's Hardware, McDonald's, and the Gray Marketplace.

### **Largest Employers in Gray, 2005 (over 50 employees)**

<b>Company Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>
Eri Passive Power Products	Route 26	Gray	Maine
Gray New Gloucester High School	Libby Hill Road	Gray	Maine
Gray-New Gloucester Middle School	Libby Hill Road	Gray	Maine
Maine State Police	Game Farm Road	Gray	Maine
Enercon	24 Northbrook Drive	Gray	Maine
Cole Farms	64 Lewiston Road	Gray	Maine

*Source: Maine Department of Labor, Community Economic Development Committee*

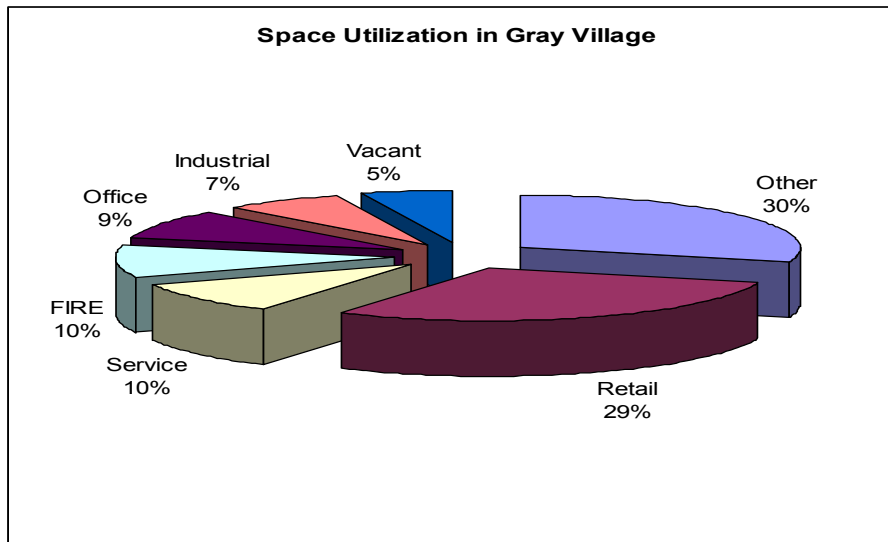
Of all the people who work in Gray, one third also live in the town. More residents of New Gloucester commute to Gray for work than from any other neighboring community.

### **C. Gray's status as a center for convenience goods and services**



As a bedroom community in the Portland Labor Market, Gray Village serves as a center for residents and commuters to run routine errands and to pick up convenience goods. According to a space utilization inventory conducted by Planning Decisions for the Town's 2001 Community Economy Growth Strategy, Gray Village contains a total of 323,104 square feet devoted to non-residential uses. Almost a third is "other", which includes public uses, followed by retail, 29%, service, 10%, and finance, insurance and real estate, 10%. At the time of the survey, 5% of the village's buildings totaling 17,109 square feet were vacant. This village core serves as the primary trade area for the 11,600 residents of Gray and New Gloucester, and to a lesser, extent, passing residents of Poland, Raymond & North

Yarmouth. According to a shopper's survey conducted by Planning Decisions for the 2001 study, the majority of consumers stop in Gray Village to shop for everyday items, including groceries, sundries, and hardware as well as to visit the bank and the post office.



Source: *Community Economy Growth Strategy for the Town of Gray, Maine (2001)*

Businesses in Gray Village face stiff competition in vying for the dollars of its residents. The pull factor measures the relative strength of the community's retail sector in serving local and regional markets. The pull factor is calculated by dividing a town's per capita sales by a region's per capita sales. If the pull factor is greater than "1.0", then the community is attracting consumers from outside the town. If the pull factor is less than "1.0", then the community is "leaking" sales to other areas. As a trade area, Gray is leaking sales to other communities. With a pull factor of 0.5, Gray businesses capture only half the sales that would be expected for a town of its size. Windham, on the other hand, is attracting sales from outside the town, while smaller towns such as Bridgton and Cornish are underperforming relative to their population base, but still outperforming Gray. The Sebago Lakes Economic Summary Area (ESA), which includes all businesses in the nine towns of Bridgton, Casco, Gray, Harrison, Naples, Raymond, Sebago, Standish, and Windham, has a pull factor of 0.7, meaning that it, too, does not capture all of the retail sales that would be expected for its population base of over 50,000 people.

### Retail Sales - Pull Factor

	2000 Retail Sales	2000 Population	Per Capita Sales	Pull Factor
<b>South Portland</b>	654,145,000	23,324	\$28,046.00	2.9
<b>Windham</b>	155,928,000	14,904	\$10,462.16	1.1
<b>Cornish</b>	9,964,000	1,269	\$7,851.85	0.8
<b>Sebago Lake ESA</b>	321,239,000	50,682	\$6,338.33	0.7
<b>Bridgton</b>	31,383,000	4,883	\$6,426.99	0.7
<b>Gray</b>	33,567,000	6,820	\$4,921.85	0.5
<b>Raymond</b>	20,188,000	4,299	\$4,695.98	0.5
<b>Standish</b>	23,684,000	9,285	\$2,550.78	0.3
<b>Maine</b>	12,165,700,000	1,274,923	\$9,542.30	

*Source: Maine State Planning Office; U.S. Census Bureau*

In order to capture a greater share of retail dollars, Gray Village faces a number of well-documented challenges. Although thousands of residents and commuters drive through the village each day, there is no primary draw, such as a major grocery store, to attract consumers. In 2001, Planning Decisions asked 164 shoppers what businesses they came to Gray to patronize. Shoppers listed 266 responses, with the Gray Marketplace attracting over 25% of the consumers, followed by Cook's ACE Hardware, 12%. Despite shopping at the Gray Marketplace, two thirds of these consumers still admitted that they primarily shopped for groceries elsewhere, namely in North Windham. Such answers suggest that Gray Village might be the second choice of residents when it comes to meeting their everyday shopping needs.

### Strengths and Weaknesses of Gray Village as a Retail and Service Center

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent highway access</li> <li>• High traffic volumes</li> <li>• Healthy mix of goods &amp; services</li> <li>• Growing trade area</li> <li>• Availability of low cost space</li> <li>• Availability of public water</li> <li>• Relatively high income levels of shoppers</li> <li>• Two local papers</li> <li>• Crossroads for tourists &amp; commuters</li> <li>• Small town atmosphere</li> <li>• Good labor pool</li> <li>• Gateway to ski areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic congestion</li> <li>• Lack of major grocery store</li> <li>• Little potential for expansion of trade area</li> <li>• Competition from nearby towns</li> <li>• Limits imposed by aquifer</li> <li>• Auto-oriented environment</li> <li>• Not walkable</li> <li>• Limited land for development</li> <li>• Lack of public sewer</li> <li>• Limited water supply</li> <li>• Lack of destination draw</li> <li>• Bedroom community</li> </ul>

*Source: Community Economy Growth Strategy for the Town of Gray, Maine (2001)*

Opportunities for Gray businesses to capture additional market share must be examined in a regional context. The chart below calculates the pull factor by category for the Sebago Lakes Area. With a pull factor of less than 1.00 in every category, it is clear that the region as whole does not capture its fair share of dollars for its market of over 50,000 people. Portland, South Portland and Lewiston-Auburn all compete against North Windham, the largest shopping district in the Sebago Lakes Area, for the region's retail dollars. But these gaps also pinpoint opportunities for the marketplace.

### Pull Factor by Category

	Sebago Lake Area			State of Maine			2005
Category	2005 Sales	2005 Pop	Per Capita	2005 Sales	2005 Pop	Per Capita	Pull Factor
Building Supplies	\$91,818,500	54,516	\$1,684	\$2,464,742,500	1,321,505	\$1,865	0.9
Food Stores	\$51,956,200	54,516	\$953	\$1,343,349,900	1,321,505	\$1,017	0.9
Restaurant	\$58,823,800	54,516	\$1,079	\$1,762,067,900	1,321,505	\$1,333	0.8
General Merchandise	\$84,891,900	54,516	\$1,557	\$2,987,810,300	1,321,505	\$2,261	0.7
Automotive	\$73,968,600	54,516	\$1,357	\$3,695,518,300	1,321,505	\$2,796	0.5
Other	\$40,360,300	54,516	\$740	\$1,824,474,300	1,321,505	\$1,381	0.5

Source: State Planning Office; U.S. Census Bureau

**Building Supplies:** The largest category of retail expenditures is Building Supplies, which includes hardware stores and lumber yards. With Lowes and Home Depot under construction in North Windham for most of 2005, it is expected that this category will grow in sales. As Gray residents already travel to North Windham to shop for groceries, they may also be tempted to make routine hardware purchases that they now make at the two stores located in Gray Village. By delivering excellent customer service or specializing in certain areas, research shows that sometimes local stores are able to survive and even grow their market share.

**Food Stores:** Food Stores, which includes everything from large supermarkets to small corner stores, is a source of strength in the Sebago Lakes Region. The area's five major grocery stores in North Windham, Standish Village, and now Bridgton, attract almost as much in sales as would be expected for its population base. Since only snacks and non-food items are taxed, however, sales vastly underrepresent the total value of food intended for home consumption. Research shows that smaller stores can again compete by offering specialized goods, such as local produce or meat, which is perceived by consumers as being fresher and safer to eat.

**Restaurant:** Restaurants include all establishments selling prepared food for immediate consumption whether by residents or visitors of the area. Although the Sebago Lakes region is a well-known tourist destination, restaurants in the area do not capture their fair share of dollars spent on eating out. Indeed, "adding more upscale restaurants" in Gray Village was suggested by consumers who participated in the 2001 Shoppers Survey and is the type of business compatible with the compact nature of a downtown environment.

**General Merchandise:** The second largest category in terms of total sales is General Merchandise, which includes stores carrying product lines generally offered in large department stores, such as clothing, furniture, shoes, electronics, and other household durable goods. Such goods used to be found in most Maine downtowns until the arrival of the malls, and now, the big box stores. Sandwiched between the Maine Mall and the Auburn Mall, the Sebago Lakes region does not compete well in this category. Stiff competition, at least





in the area of clothing and shoes, is also offered by the outlets of North Conway.

*Automotive:* This group includes all transportation related retail, such as dealers of automobiles, motorboats and aircraft plus rental outlets and parts stores. Although the Lakes Region does include a number of boat dealers, this category is an area of weakness. It does not represent an opportunity for Gray Village, however, as the space required to display vehicles would be fundamentally incompatible with the compact nature of a downtown.

*Other:* This group includes a wide selection of taxable sales not covered elsewhere, including stores selling dry goods, jewelry, sporting goods, antiques, books, photo supplies, and gifts. These types of establishments whether antique shops or hobby stores, represent an area of opportunity for Gray Village for a number of reasons: with a pull factor of just 0.5 in the Sebago Lakes region, there is ample room to attract sales from both inside and outside the region; such goods are compatible with the compact nature of a downtown location; and they are among the goods suggested by Gray residents in the 2001 Shopper's Survey as well as the 2006 Gray Village Public Forum.

#### **D. Gray's emerging industry clusters**

An economic cluster can be defined as a group of business in a related industry sector that benefit from their geographic proximity to one another. In 2002, the Maine Science and Technology Foundation released a study assessing the competitive of seven technology clusters:

- Forestry and Agriculture
- Marine Resources
- Composites
- Environmental technology
- Information technology
- Precision manufacturing
- Biotechnology

Since then, Governor Baldacci has recognized the creative economy, comprised primarily of the applied arts, as another dynamic cluster targeted for growth. Clusters are anchored by businesses that grow, process, or manufacture the primary products that define the sector. But they grow based on the concentration and diversity of actors, such as suppliers, trade associations, universities, and banks, that perform functions essential to their productivity. In a rural state like Maine, these connections are at least regional in scale.

Clustering can serve as an organizing framework for business development in Southern Maine, and to a lesser degree, in the Gray-New Gloucester area. Gray hosts a number of businesses in sectors identified by the State for growth and investment, most notably in environmental technology, arts and antiques, and agriculture. While a comprehensive assessment ought necessarily to be regional in scope, this brief summary serves merely to identify those sectors with enough activity worthy of further investigation.



## 1. *Environmental Technology*

The environmental technology sector is comprised of firms that harness the power of natural resources, analyze their health, and manufacture the instruments to do so. Because these firms are spread across so many professions, including manufacturing and engineering, the 2002 study by the Maine Science and Technology Foundation did not assess the

employment strength of this cluster. The newly formed Environmental & Energy Technology

Council of Maine, however, reports membership from over 20 companies and non-profit organizations employing approximately 4,000 workers. Nationally, the environment is big business. According to the Environmental Business Journal, the industry supports over one million jobs. The greatest source of revenue – 70% - is in the more mundane area of solid waste, recycling and water/wastewater treatment rather than in emerging “green” technologies. Future growth is expected primarily in developing countries. Of the anchors comprising the cluster, Gray’s businesses are concentrated in the category of environmental services and environmental equipment providers:

- *Environmental Services:* Includes firms that test soil, water and air; collect and treat wastewater; collect and dispose of solid and hazardous wastes; clean-up contaminated sites; and perform engineering, design and permitting. Gray is home to a number of engineering firms, including S.W. Cole, Air Quality Management, and Environmental Projects, that perform air, water, and/or soil tests. The National Weather Service’s office in Gray, one of only two in the state, issues forecasts for Maine and New Hampshire, including Southern, Midcoast, and Western Maine.
- *Environmental Equipment Providers:* Includes firms that manufacture equipment to collect, treat and dispose of waste, supply water, and control air pollution. Gray was also home to Septi-Tech, a company that manufactures innovative septic systems, and Enercon, which has the capability to design environmental testing equipment. Septi-Tech, however, has recently expanded and relocated to Auburn.
- *Environmental Resources Management:* Includes water utilities, recycling facilities, and “green” power producers, including hydropower, wind and solar. Gray has its own water district and transfer station, but there are no known energy producers.

Manufacturers and consulting firms in the Environmental Technology sector could choose to locate at Gray’s only business park. Located just off Exit 63 of the Maine Turnpike, the Northbrook Business and Industry Campus is comprised of 11 lots on 90 acres. Boasting high architectural standards and a high speed telecommunications and fiber optics network, Northbrook offers “distinct pre-permitted business site locations within an upscale campus

environment” that would be attractive to firms engaged in research and development, consulting services, and light manufacturing.

## **2. Arts and Antiques**



The creative economy includes the applied arts – or what we think of as “artists” - as well as people who use creativity to produce products, such as software.

According to a 2004 study by the University of Southern Maine’s Center for Business and Economic Research, the Creative Economy in Maine accounted for 63,342 jobs representing 10% of employment in Maine, including over 7,500 people directly engaged in arts and culture. Over 40% of the state’s employment in arts and culture is located in Cumberland County and centered in Portland.

An assessment of the creative economy in Gray, or more appropriately in the Sebago Lakes region, would include an inventory of artists, public and private facilities, including museums, historic sites, galleries and performance spaces, special events such as festivals, and retail outlets for the purchase or pursuit of craft. Regionally, a number of groups are working to advance the creative economy in the Lakes Region, including the Western Oxford Cultural Council and the Bridgton Recreation Advancement Group. Others, such as the Fiddlehead Arts Center and Pineland Farms, have worked to expand arts programming and arts education for children and adults. Employment in the arts is difficult to count, since artists by their nature are entrepreneurs, working out of their barn with no payroll employment, the traditional method used to “count” jobs. While there is no exact count on the number of artists in Gray or in the region nor those who use “creativity” to design products, there are a number of indicators in Gray alone to show that there is a creative culture:



*Retail outlets:* There are 15 antique shops, auction houses, and craft supply stores in Gray. Only a handful of these are located in Gray Village. Joint marketing of businesses within the town as well as shops lining what might be called antiques alley on Route 26 in Oxford could bring additional synergy to the retail sector.

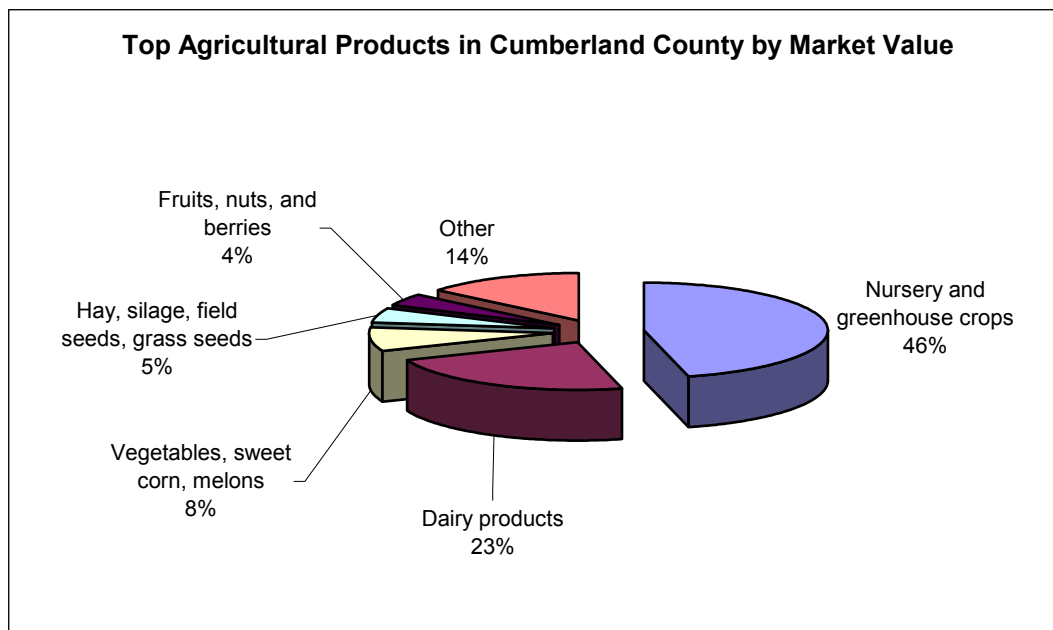
*Historic places:* Gray Village contains the town’s largest concentration of historic buildings and sites, including two on the National Register of Historic Places as well as the last resting place of an unknown Confederate soldier. Gray Village also houses the Gray Historical Society and the Gray Public Library, select places to conduct historical research.

*Events:* Over 100 years ago, the fairgrounds and racetrack at Gray Park drew hundreds of visitors. Today, special events still celebrate the region’s agricultural heritage, although most are held outside the village. During the summer, an annual bluegrass festival and country fest are

hosted by Stonehedge in West Gray. Over off Route 115 in North Yarmouth, Harmony Hall attracts a country crowd with music and dancing. Down the road, the Cumberland Fair draws thousands of visitors and plenty of animals the last week of September.

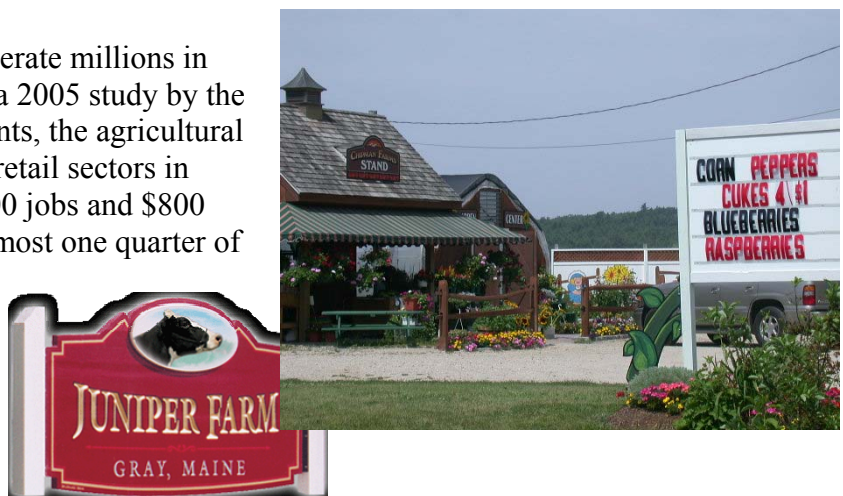
### 3. Agriculture

Agriculture plays an important role in Cumberland County as a defining element of its open space and rural character. According to the 2002 Census of Agriculture, the county's 596 farms covered roughly 50,000 acres and generated over \$17.5 million dollars in sales, two thirds in crops and one third in livestock. This figure ranks Cumberland 9<sup>th</sup> among all counties in the state in terms of agricultural sales, with no single commodity accounting for more than 50% in sales. Cumberland County is the state's number one producer of nursery and greenhouse crops, which accounted for \$7,981,000, or 46%, of all market sales. Dairy, which generated almost \$3,964,000, accounted for almost one quarter of sales.



Source: 1997 Census of Agriculture

The County's raw products in turn, generate millions in value added processing. According to a 2005 study by the Greater Portland Council of Governments, the agricultural production, processing, wholesale and retail sectors in Cumberland County generate over 9,000 jobs and \$800 million dollars in value representing almost one quarter of Maine's \$3.3 billion dollar food system. Most of the processing jobs are based in Portland, which is home to over 30% of the state's payroll employment in food and beverage manufacturing.



Gray is still home to at least 13 farms spread throughout the town. The Juniper Farm on the Mayall Road, which provides embryo collection and transfer services, hosts an auction of high-quality, genetic cows that bills itself as “Super Bowl” of the dairy industry. Nearby in New Gloucester is Pineland Farms and the Shaker Farm, which have attracted national interest in agriculture. The town also hosts a number of related manufacturers, including Bruns Brothers, which specializes in the design and installation of equipment for the food, dairy, and beverage industry, and Pemberton’s Gourmet Foods, which produces gourmet and specialty foods. Although virtually none of these are located in the Village itself, the Village could once, again, serve as the focal point for the marketing, distribution, and sale of fresh produce, meat, and specialty foods through an outlet or shelf space at the Gray Marketplace.

## **E. Findings**

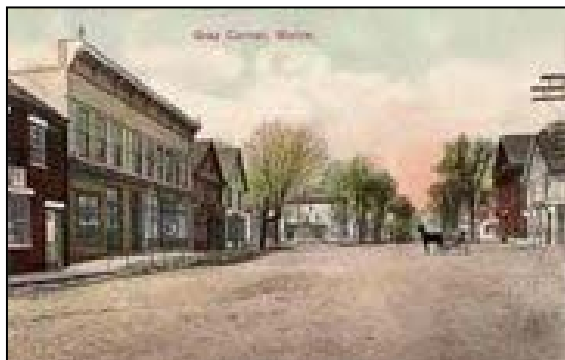
- Gray functions primarily as a bedroom community of the Portland Labor Market.
- Almost half of all adult workers who live in Gray commute south to jobs in the service center communities of Portland, South Portland, Westbrook and Scarborough.
- One of every 5 Gray residents works in Gray.
- Gray is part of the the Portland Labor Market, consisting of 189,376 jobs representing almost one third of all the jobs in the state.
- There are 12 employers in Greater Portland with over 1,000 employees. None is located in Gray.
- Compared to the rest of the region, the economy in Gray has performed rather poorly.
- The structure of the economy in Gray mirrors that of the Portland Labor Market.
- There are a total of 15 manufacturers in Gray, the largest of which is Eri Passive Power Products.
- The largest employers in Gray, with over 50 workers, include one manufacturer and a number of public agencies. None of these are located downtown.
- Of all the people who work in Gray, one third also live in the town. More residents of New Gloucester commute to Gray for work than from any other neighboring community.
- Although thousands of residents and commuters drive through the village each day, there is no primary draw, such as a major grocery store, to attract consumers
- Gray hosts a number of businesses in sectors identified by the State for growth and investment, most notably in environmental technology, arts and antiques, and agriculture.
- As a bedroom community in the Portland Labor Market, Gray faces stiff competition in vying for the retail dollars of even its own residents.
- Businesses in the Sebago Lakes Region do not capture adequate market share in the area of restaurants and other retail, creating an opportunity for Gray Village to compete.
- Although Gray hosts a number of businesses in the areas of environmental technology, arts and antiques, and agriculture, they are neither geographically clustered nor economically integrated.



## VII. Investment Challenges

### A. Introduction

Since the early 1800's, Gray Village has served as an important crossroads for commerce and civic life. Two hundred years ago, weary travelers might find food and lodging on Main Street, while farmers could buy grain and feed. On December 20, 1921, a fire gutted the fine homes and businesses lining Main Street. Over time, the downtown has yielded to a variety of convenience retail stores and services that cater to the auto-oriented consumer. The following is a summary of existing conditions that pose challenges to the continued growth and vitality of Gray Village.



### B. Traffic circulation and Layout

Gray Village lies at the intersection of the Maine Turnpike and Routes 4, 26, 100, 115, and 202. While two hundred years ago horses tied up on the village green, today, over 15,000 cars per day stream through town on their way to the cities of Portland, Lewiston, and Auburn as well as the Western Maine lakes and mountains and Maine's Midcoast.

**1. Volume:** Depending on the road segment, traffic on the village's arterials and collectors ranges from 10,000-20,000 vehicles per day. This volume is comparable to traffic counts on Broadway in South Portland or Route 114 in suburban Gorham. By 2025, volumes are expected to increase by 65%. This would be comparable to volumes on Portland's in-town arterials, such as Washington Avenue, Forest Avenue, and Brighton Avenue. The heaviest traffic in Gray, at over 20,000 vehicles per day, occurs on Route 202 between the Maine Turnpike and the Center Road intersection.



to 3-6 minutes.

**2. Level of service:** Every intersection in the village functions at a Level of Service of E or F, meaning there is a vehicle delay of 53-102 seconds. By 2025, levels of service are expected to worsen

**3. High Crash Locations:** From 1998 to 2000, there were 633 crashes in Gray causing over \$17 million dollars in personal and property damage. The Maine Department of Transportation has classified five sites in Gray Village as High Crash Locations.

- Intersection of Routes 202/115/4/26/100
- Route 26 from Gray Park Road to Route 4
- Route 202/115/4 just west of I-495 ramp
- Route 100/26 just south of Route 4 intersection
- Intersection of I-495 ramp and Routes 202/4/115

**4. Wayfinding:** With access to the Maine Turnpike and five major roads leading into and out of the village, Gray's roads are crowded with dozens of roadway signs vying for driver attention. While important, the sheer volume is confusing to drivers who must often switch lanes at the last minute when they are finally able to interpret the arrows as they apply to the roadway layout.



**5. Access management:** Conventional safety standards dictate that there should be no driveway entrance within 200 feet of an intersection. Virtually every intersection in Gray Village violates these standards. There are six gas stations/repair shops and four drive thru's all within a half mile of the village. Indeed, four of these gas stations occupy prominent corners at the village's intersections. This has led to a proliferation of curb cuts which enables excessive turning movements in areas with the highest traffic counts. With rear end/sideswipes, which are often associated with turning movements, accounting for the largest number of crashes in Gray Village, access management remains a pressing need for the village. Access management provisions include reducing the number of curb cuts, reducing left hand turning movements, and introducing center medians to channel traffic and prevent left-hand turns next to major intersections.

**6. Truck traffic:** Trucks require at least a 90 degree turning radius. The geometry of many of the village's intersections falls short of this standard, forcing turning trucks into adjacent lanes of oncoming traffic. In addition, the configuration of Exit 63, coupled with the New Gloucester toll, compels trucks to travel into Gray Village to go west and north.

**7. Parking:** Gray's oldest buildings on the west side of Main Street are served by limited on-street parking. Because this parking runs parallel to the street, cars must back in and out of Main Street to access stores, blocking cars turning onto Route 202, which leads directly to the Maine Turnpike. This in turn blocks traffic on Route 26.



**8. Gateway:** Ideally, gateways welcoming visitors to the downtown should be positioned on each of the town's major roads. At one of these junctures

lies Copp Motors, which operates a junkyard and service station on Portland Road. Efforts should be made to contain, this operation, assess its environmental impact, and buffer it from the road. A portion of this property is currently for sale.

**9. Pedestrian safety:** Beyond the sheer volume of cars and trucks, other conditions pose unique barriers to people on foot.

*Facilities:* Ideally, every major street should have accessible sidewalks on both sides radiating out a distance of ¼ to ¾ mile from the village. This would necessitate a sidewalk system totaling 5 miles. The village has a deficiency of about 2.5 miles of sidewalks, with major gaps on the south side of Portland Road and both sides of Yarmouth Road and Brown Street.



*Density:* Because the village lies on an important aquifer, construction of new businesses and facilities is occurring at increasingly further distances from the core village area. The departure of the Post Office from a location next to Town Hall to a distance of more than one half mile from the village is a recent example.

*Crossing:* Not all intersections in Gray have signalized pedestrian signals, and none of these have dedicated signals, which would allow pedestrians to cross while traffic is completely stopped in all directions. This, coupled with the width of the roadway, which varies from 50-100 feet depending on the road segment, poses the most significant safety issue.

### C. Non-residential building vacancy

According to Gray's Community Economic Growth Strategy (2001), Gray Village contains over 300,000 square feet of buildings devoted to non-residential uses, including retail, service, public, and educational uses. A snapshot of occupancy conducted during the summer of 2005 shows that there is approximately 43,000 square feet of non-residential space in the Village that is vacant or used for storage, representing a vacancy rate of 13.3%. Less than half of this square footage is comprised of public buildings, including Pennell Institute, the village Fire Station, and the old Post Office, with the balance from commercial vacancies in stand alone and multi-unit buildings. Overall, this is more than double the 5.3% vacancy rate reported in 2001 for the Town's Community Economic Growth Strategy.







## D. Building conditions

Gray Village contains the town's largest concentration of remaining historically significant buildings, which were primarily constructed during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some of the most prominent include the following:

**Historic Buildings in Gray Village**

<b>Building</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Current use</b>
Old Town Hall/Fire Station	1835	Storage
Old Daniel Hall Brick Store	1836	Retail and residential
Clark Block	1906	Retail and residential
R.G. Hall Pharmacy	c. 1800's	Service and residential
Stimson Memorial Hall	1900	Town of Gray
Old primary school	1902	SAD 15 administrative offices
Pennell Institute	1876	1 <sup>st</sup> floor, vacant. 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor, Gray Historical Society
Newbegin Gym	1937	Gray Parks and Recreation
The Laboratory on Pennell Campus	1876	Commercial
Hancock Store	1876	One Gray Center commercial space

*Source: 2003 Gray Comprehensive Plan*

Many of these historic buildings are primarily vacant or used for storage. Overall, these buildings face a number of investment challenges for conversion to public or commercial use.

- Lack of insulation
- System upgrades, including electrical, plumbing, HVAC, septic, and fire alarm
- Roof and window replacement
- Masonry
- Elimination of radon and lead paint
- ADA access, including installation of accessible doorways, elevators, and 1<sup>st</sup> floor bathrooms
- Parking and traffic circulation

Estimates for rehabilitation of the Pennell Institute alone, which was constructed in 1876 and is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places, have been estimated by the Sewall Company at over \$1.5 million dollars.

The only elementary school in Gray Village, the James W. Russell School occupies a distinguished spot near the Gray Town Hall. Maintaining a school in the village keeps Gray's future consumers, business and community leaders grounded in the downtown. Like Pennell, the school, which was built during the 1950's, has been slated for extensive rehabilitation.

## E. Facades

A façade is literally "the face" of a building. Elements of a façade include its height, mass and scale in relation to neighboring properties, its setback from the street and adjacent buildings, the type of building materials used in its construction, the symmetry of the roofline, windows and doorways, and other features such as landscaping, lighting, and signage. Over time, a mix of historic buildings and new construction has developed in Gray Village. Older buildings include

multi-story, multi-use buildings, such as One Gray Center, and single family homes that have been converted to commercial use. Over time, new construction has filled in the gaps left by the great fire of 1921. The quality of new construction varies widely, from one story buildings clad in vinyl siding to brick buildings with multiple gables.

On March 7, approximately 70 Gray residents, workers, and property owners participated in a Visual Preference Survey to rate the character of development in the village. Participants assigned a value from -10 (least desirable) to +10 (most desirable) to a series of 50 images organized into five categories: signage, façade, streetscape, parking, and density.

Rated as “most desirable” were stand alone buildings with unique character. Gray Village boasts a variety of residential buildings converted to commercial use that match the preferences stated.



*This collection of residential conversions on Main Street in Yarmouth received a favorable rating of 4.*



*Gray Village boasts a number of similar conversions, this one on Shaker Road.*





The colorful façade of Town Landing Market in Falmouth received a favorable rating of 3.



The BBQ Barn in Gray Village also boasts a colorful and unique character.

Rated as least desirable were flat roofed, one story, multi-unit buildings. Gray has, in fact, at least three such “mini-malls” located at Gray Plaza, Main Street, and Portland Road. While the quality of construction at Gray Plaza ranges from fair to very good, the building condition of the other two have been rated by the Town Assessor as low to fair.



Forest Avenue Plaza in Portland was rated a -6, the lowest of any façade images shown.



Gray Plaza has a similar flat-roofed façade.



*The Raymond Shopping Center on Route 302 received a rating of -3.*



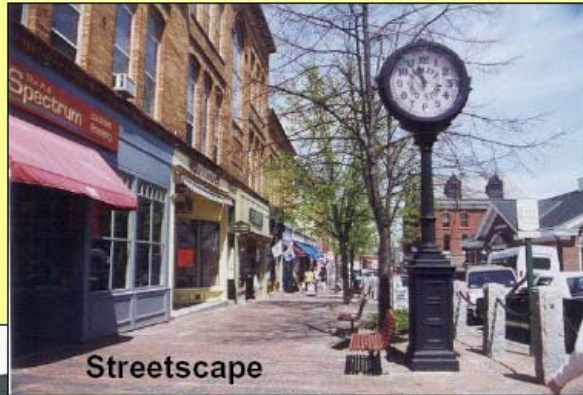
*Gray has three similar mini-malls in the Village, including this one on Main Street*

The “most desirable” and “least desirable” design features for signage, parking, streetscape and facades can be found on pages 52 and 53. The complete *Visual Preference Survey Instrument* is available at the Gray Town Office or at GPCOG on a Compact Disc.

## Most Desirable Design Features



Signage



Streetscape



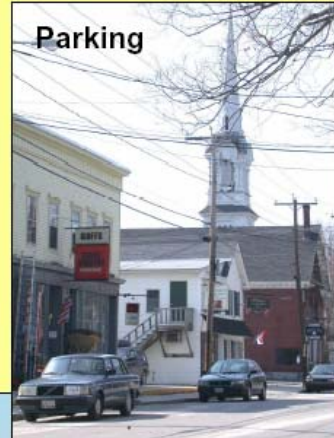
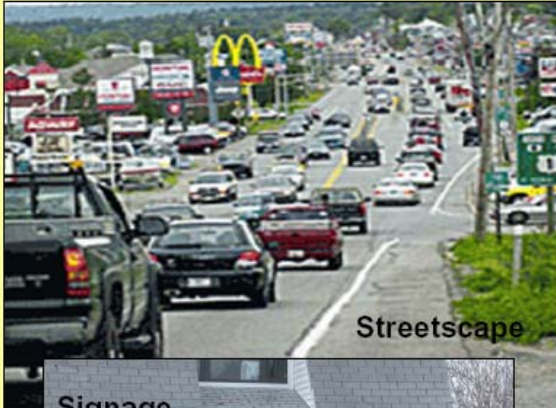
Facade



Parking



## Least Desirable Design Features





## **F. Findings**

- Over time, the downtown has yielded to a variety of convenience retail stores and services that cater to the auto-oriented consumer.
- Gray Village lies at the intersection of the Maine Turnpike and Routes 4, 26, 100, 115, and 202.
- The heaviest traffic in Gray, at over 20,000 vehicles per day, occurs on Route 202 between the Maine Turnpike and the Center Road intersection.
- Gray Village contains the town's largest concentration of remaining historically significant buildings, which were primarily constructed during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Although Gray can not directly regulate the volume of traffic in the village, there are plenty of traffic problems that it can do something about, including access management, gateway and pedestrian infrastructure.
- With the departure of Dunlap Insurance and the Thriftway, the vacancy rate for non-residential buildings in Gray Village appears to have doubled in the last five years.
- The scale, massing, and style of newer construction in Gray Village are largely incompatible with the character of its historic buildings and the stated preferences of residents and property owners.

## VIII. Village Design

### A. Introduction

The character of a downtown is defined by good design. Fundamentally, buildings make up the cornerstone of a downtown. Their architectural style, their siting relative to the street and their proximity to each other makes the difference between a downtown that appeals to people and one that is convenient for cars. A downtown is also more than the sum of its buildings.

According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, good downtown design is “an inviting atmosphere, created through attractive window displays, parking areas, building improvements, street furniture, signs, sidewalks, street lights, and landscaping,” which “conveys a positive visual message about the commercial district and what it has to offer.” The results of the Visual Preference Survey suggest that residents and property owners in Gray want downtown Gray to look more like a village than a traditional downtown. While the image below of downtown Bath was the most highly rated streetscape image, other traditional downtowns, such as Farmington and Brunswick, did not rate highly. Rather, stand alone buildings with a residential character and/or unique façade rated were rated more highly.



*Downtown Bath was the most highly rated streetscape image from the Visual Preference Survey, earning a 5.*



*This highly despised image of sprawl from the Visual Preference Survey rated a -10.*

### B. Gateways

A gateway establishes the first visual impression of a visitor to the downtown. In its simplest form, a gateway is a nice sign with landscaping. But taken as a system, the gateway is an expression of the pride of its residents, business and community leaders that provides:

- a common image, theme and/or logo capturing the essence of the town
- a sense that visitors have arrived at a special place (and they slow down!)
- Wayfinding to the shopping district and important public facilities





### ***Maine's Prettiest Village***



The other essential element to a gateway is land use. What image greets the visitor at the gateway is as important as what the sign says. In Gray, current uses at the village's points of entry are predominantly auto-oriented, including a junkyard and numerous gas stations. To establish a gateway system, the town should consider the following actions:

- Develop a common theme and logo specific to Gray Village
- Establish gateway signs at the village's boundaries along each of its numbered routes
- Establish an information kiosk of community organizations and businesses at Gray Plaza and the Gray municipal complex
- Rezone the area around the new Westerly Connector to Village Aquifer Protection District or the proposed Village Overlay District.
- Maintain strict adherence to regulations in the Village Aquifer Protection District that prohibit drive throughs and auto service and repair stations
- Amend the list of Prohibited Activities in the Village Aquifer Protection District to include gas stations



#### **Suggested Slogans**

*WILD ABOUT GRAY*

*GRAY MATTERS*

*GRAY...THE CROSSROADS OF OPPORTUNITY*

*GRAY...SMALL TOWN FEEL WITH BIG TIME OPPORTUNITIES*

*GRAY...WHERE YOU CAN GET THERE FROM HERE*

*ALL ROADS LEAD TO GRAY*

*ALL THE COLORS OF THE RAINBOW BECOME GRAY*

*GRAY...THE BEDROOM COMMUNITY THAT NEVER SLEEPS*

*GRAY...YOUR GREENER GRASS NEIGHBORS*

### **C. New development capacity**

The lack of developable land in Gray Village is a primary constraint to growth. According to Gray's 2001 Community Economy Growth Strategy, there are just 3 undeveloped lots in Gray Village. There are, however, numerous opportunities available for redevelopment. In 2005, over 43,000 square feet of non-residential space in the Village could be classified as vacant, available for lease, and/or used for storage. These properties include the Village Fire Station and the old Post Office.

One technique to promote redevelopment is to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) and see what is proposed. The municipalities of Cape Elizabeth, Westbrook, and Portland have all in recent years issued RFP's to solicit proposals for the redevelopment of town owned land. During the 1990's, the town of Cape Elizabeth acquired a gas station next to its municipal building. Over time, mitigation was conducted, and the building, demolished. Then, the Town issued an RFP which attracted four bids, all from local business people. The winning proposal, currently under construction, is for a 3-story, 15,000 square foot building with office, residential, and retail components. The developer offered \$233,000 for the purchase of the lot. The building footprint maximizes lot coverage and was designed in an architectural style with wood clapboard siding to complement the Town Hall. Under an agreement with the Town, the new building also features a shared driveway and parking with the municipal building.

Another opportunity for redevelopment lies at the village gateway on Portland Road. At this time, 27 acres of the Copp Motors property is being offered for sale. This site is undoubtedly a "brownfield" whose transfer of ownership will be plagued by fears, real or perceived, of contamination by petroleum and other hazardous substances.

To create new parcels for development in Gray Village, the town should consider the following actions:

- Acquire a prominent corner parcel at the intersection of Routes 26, 100, 202, and 115.
- Issue a Request for Proposals to encourage redevelopment of a prominent corner parcel and/or vacant town-owned buildings, such as the old Post Office.
- Work with the owners of Gray Plaza to promote continued infill development and structured landscaped parking.
- Work with the Maine Department of Transportation and the Maine Turnpike Authority to relocate the Route 100 storage facility to a location on the Westerly Connector.
- Obtain funding to implement a façade improvement program, particularly for the two mini-malls located on Route 100.
- Obtain a pool of Brownfields funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency or the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to address perceived contamination on the Copp Motors Property and/or any gas stations acquired for redevelopment.



*This prominent corner parcel on the West side of Main Street greets residents and visitors to Town Hall*



*The Transportation Maintenance Facility occupies a prime spot across from Gray Plaza*

## **D. Historic Character and Architecture**

One of the distinguishing features of Gray Village is the architecture of its 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings. According to an inventory constructed by the Gray Historical Society, there are 23 historic buildings in Gray Village, including 3 churches and 14 fine homes and farmhouses. Two structures, Stimson Memorial Hall and the Pennell Institute, are on the National Register of Historic Places. A number of the residential structures have now been converted to office and retail use, offering consumers a unique shopping experience. As the town grows, demand for these buildings and the land they occupy will grow. At this time, there is no permanent protection afforded to the majority of these historic buildings. The 2003 Comprehensive Plan does, however, recommend as an implementation strategy, the definition of a historic district, including an inventory of historic structures and the preparation of associated regulations and design guidelines that could be used to support revisions to the town's regulations.



Historic preservation is not strictly the realm of cities and states. Back in 2002, Standish Village was faced with a proposal to demolish its old town hall. The Town acted quickly to pass a historic preservation ordinance that designated the intersection of Routes 25 and 35 as a historic district. The ordinance also established a commission to regulate the demolition and alteration of historic buildings as well as the character of new construction proposed within the village. Today, the old Town Hall in Standish still stands and flourishes as a retail business selling local



crafts. Gray should move with similar expediency to implement its own recommendations before it is faced with a proposal to alter or demolish one of its beloved fine homes. The purpose would be two fold:

- To regulate demolition, alterations and conversions of existing historic buildings for commercial use.
- To regulate the style, massing and scale of new construction to ensure its compatibility with the architectural character of the village district.



*Twin faces of new construction on opposing sides of Route 100 at Gray Plaza illustrate the vast difference good design and landscaping can make.*

## **E. Findings**

- The results of the Visual Preference Survey suggest that residents and property owners in Gray want downtown Gray to look more like a village than a traditional downtown.
- In Gray, current uses at the village's points of entry are predominantly auto-oriented, including a junkyard and numerous gas stations.
- The lack of developable land in Gray Village is a primary constraint to growth.
- In 2005, over 43,000 square feet of non-residential space in the Village could be classified as vacant, available for lease, and/or used for storage, including the Village Fire Station and the old Post Office.
- According to an inventory constructed by the Gray Historical Society, there are 23 historic buildings in Gray Village, including 3 churches and 14 fine homes and farmhouses.
- Infill and redevelopment in Gray Village can provide for the business development needs of the future in the face of limited opportunities for new construction on vacant parcels.
- Although the village's concentration of historic buildings are among its most valued and distinguished assets, the town has not yet developed regulations to protect them.

## IX. Tourist & Recreation Opportunities

### A. Introduction

Although thousands of people pass through the Village every day, Gray faces marketing challenges in attracting visitors to stop and spend money in the town. On the one hand, Gray is part of Greater Portland. With its location at the fringe of the county, however, the town has to work hard to attract visitors from the coast. On the other hand, Gray is the gateway to lakes and mountains of Western Maine. This section will look at Gray's natural assets as well as its role in the regional tourism market.

### B. Outdoor Recreation

With its gentle hills and pristine lakes, Gray boasts a plethora of opportunities to enjoy the outdoors in every season. Popular activities include swimming, boating, fishing, golfing, camping, hiking, snowmobiling, ice fishing, cross-country skiing, and wildlife watching.

#### Outdoor Recreation Facilities in Gray and nearby areas

**Wilkie's Beach**, which is owned and managed by the Town of Gray, is located on Crystal Lake at the intersection of North Raymond Road and Mayberry Road. Activities include swimming, boating, and ice skating.

**Libby Hill Forest** is a 70-acre parcel owned by the Town of Gray behind the Gray-New Gloucester school complex on Shaker Road. This tract contains five miles of trails for hiking and cross country skiing, plus two miles of logging roads for motorized use.

**Spring Meadows Country Club** is a privately-owned 18 hole golf course on the Lewiston Road that is open to the public. In addition to golf, the facility offers fishing in stocked ponds, cross-country skiing, and other winter activities. With its generous banquet facility, the country club is also a popular site for wedding receptions.

**Maine Wildlife Park** is a 250-acre parcel of land located on the Shaker Road and operated by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. From Spring through Fall, the park provides the public with access to an everchanging variety of special events and interpretive displays featuring rehabilitated wildlife.

**Pineland Public Reserved Land** off the Depot Road contains 1,200 acres of land managed by the State Bureau of Parks and Lands. About a quarter is located in Gray, and the balance, in New Gloucester, Pownal, and North Yarmouth. The Gray portion has been proposed as the terminus of a trail that would link Bradbury Mountain State Park with the Pineland Reserve.

**Pineland Farms** is a 3,400 acre agricultural complex located in New Gloucester, adjacent to the Gray town line. Over the last decade, this former State facility has been converted to an office park with an expected build-out of over 1,000 employees. The facility offers public access to an eight mile trail network for hiking and cross country skiing.



### Outdoor Recreation Facilities in Gray and nearby areas - continued

**Broad Park Equestrian Center** in Gray offers year round lessons for children and adults on its indoor and outdoor riding arenas. Instructors are trained in Dressage, Jumping, English and Western.

**Twin Brooks** is a private campground at the north end of Little Sebago Lake featuring a beach and boat launch.

**Little Sebago Boat Launch**, located in Windham, provides the only public access point onto Gray's largest lake.

**Snowmobile Trails** totaling 46 miles cross through the town of Gray.

**Bradbury Mountain State Park** is a 590-acre tract of land located in Pownal and managed by the Bureau of Parks and Lands. Throughout the year, the Gray Department of Parks and Recreation Gray makes use of this facility, which features a picnic area, playground, ballfield, and campsite as well as trails suitable for biking, hiking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling.

**Morgan Meadow Wildlife Management Area (WMA)** is a 1,072 acre tract of land in Raymond along North Raymond Road. Managed by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, the area offers opportunities for hunting, canoeing, hiking, and wildlife viewing.

*Source: 2003 Gray Comprehensive Plan*

### C. Agri-tourism

With a proud heritage of farming, Gray has taken a special interest in agri-tourism. Agri-tourism is a commercial enterprise at a working farm that provides enjoyment for visitors and income for farmers. Such enterprises might include the following:

- Outdoor recreation: fishing, horseback riding, cross country skiing, wagon rides
- Educational: tours, cooking classes, wine tasting, petting zoo
- Entertainment: harvest festivals or barn dances
- Hospitality: bed and breakfast, outfitter services, ranch hand
- Direct sales: pick-your-own, farm stands, crafts

The town need not look far for examples of successful agri-tourism. Cumberland County boasts 15 farms, double the number in any other county in the state that generated a collective total of \$250,000 in recreational income from diversified activities. In Westbrook, Smiling Hill Farm attracts over 100,000 people a year to its numerous attractions, which include homemade ice cream, a petting zoo, a conference retreat center, special holiday events, and cross-country skiing. Pineland Farms in New Gloucester offers world class conference facilities as well as hiking, cross country skiing, ice skating, horseback riding, and educational tours. While Gray still has at least 12 active farms,



offerings are limited. For example, the State has recently produced a tour and map to promote the fiber arts. Of the 100+ farms and studios listed, which include over 30 in Cumberland County alone, none are in Gray. The new Maine Farm Vacation Bed and Breakfast Association has no Gray farms among its members. No Gray farms participate in Maine Maple Sunday. And only one farm in Gray offers direct sales to the public.

Virtually no outdoor recreation or agri-tourism opportunities are physically located in Gray Village. However, downtown Gray can still play a role in helping visitors maximize these opportunities:

- Marketing venue for visitor information
- Retail outlet to purchase local meat and produce
- Accommodations
- Outfitters for sporting goods and equipment, such as bait and tackle
- Educational classes in bird watching, cross-country skiing, or fishing

#### **D. Regional Marketing**

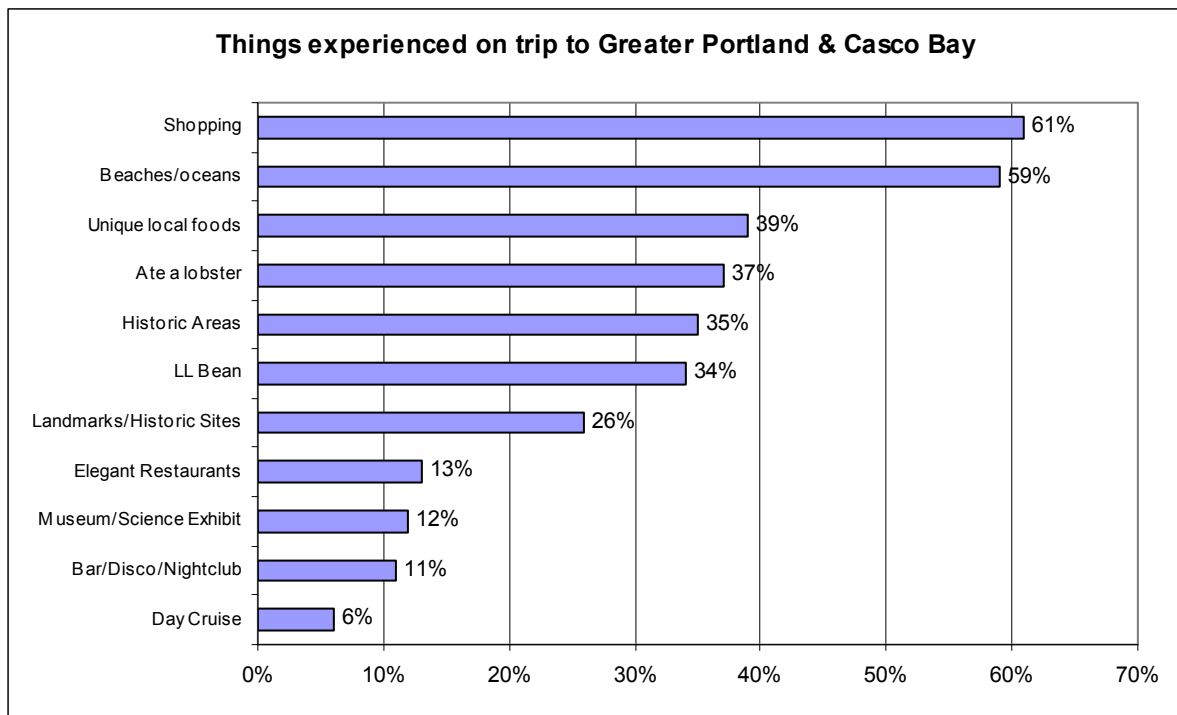
Tourism is considered to be Maine's primary industry. According to the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, tourism across the state supports over 120,000 jobs and \$2.7 billion in payroll as well as the sale of \$9.5 billion in goods and services. For purposes of tourism marketing and promotion, the Maine Office of Tourism has divided the state into eight regions. Gray lies on the periphery of two: Greater Portland and Casco Bay, which stretches along the Maine Coast from Scarborough to Freeport and includes Maine's largest city and number one destination; and Maine's Lakes and Mountains, which includes the Sebago Lakes area plus Lewiston-Auburn and the outdoor meccas of Bethel, Farmington, and Rangeley. The eight regions are represented by organizations which prepare marketing plans, entitling them to access a modest pool of marketing funds for the production of maps, brochures, advertising, and other materials. As a town, Gray receives virtually no mention in the publications of either region. The only Gray attraction to consistently receive a listing is the Maine Wildlife Park on Shaker Road.

##### ***1. Greater Portland and Casco Bay***



According to research commissioned by the Maine Office of Tourism, approximately one third of all trips to Maine, or 13.5 million per year, include time spent in Greater Portland. About half of its visitors travel a great distance to visit the region, coming from outside one of the six New England states. Virtually all spend time in the city of Portland, while almost 40% visit Freeport. Visitors to Greater Portland are more likely to shop and tour the region than other visitors to Maine but less likely to participate in outdoor activities, such

as camping, hunting, or hiking, or to attend a special event, such as a fair or festival. Long term challenges identified by the Maine Office of Tourism include inducing more visitors to stay overnight in the region and to stay longer rather than just pass through.



*Source: Longwoods International*

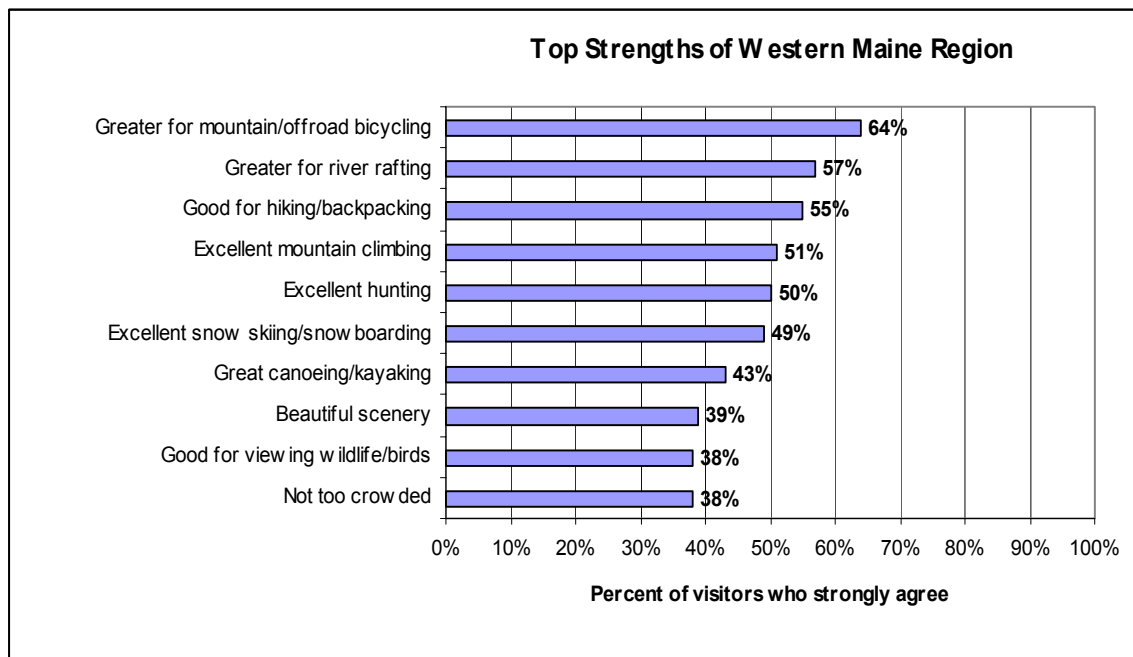
For marketing purposes, the region is represented by the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) of Greater Portland. Established in 1982, the CVB is a non-profit organization whose mission is to stimulate the economic vitality of the region by soliciting and servicing conventions, meetings, groups, and visitors and by promoting Greater Portland as a preferred visitor destination. Altogether, the Bureau represents 500 member businesses and operates two full service visitor information centers at the Portland International Jetport and on Commercial Street in downtown Portland. Visitor information is also provided at the Deering Oaks Park castle, the Portland Transportation Terminal, home of Concord Trailways and the Downeaster, and the Maine State Pier. Publications include a Visitor Guide with a comprehensive listing of area hotels, restaurants, attractions, a calendar of events and pull out maps, a Cultural Guide and touring map with suggested itineraries, and a Destination Planners Guide for people looking to bring a meeting into the region. Only one business in Gray belongs to the Convention and Visitors Bureau.

## 2. Maine's Lakes and Mountains Tourism



According to research commissioned by the Maine Office of Tourism, one in five Maine trips, approximately 8 million per year, include time spent in Western Maine. Over half of the region's visitors come to enjoy the "outdoors" in general and one quarter, the Sebago Lakes region in particular. Top activities include enjoying lakes and rivers, small towns and villages, and wilderness areas as well as shopping.

According to a visitor survey conducted by the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments in 1999, most visitors to Western Maine are repeat visitors. On average, they spend \$688 per trip for a party size of 2 people, including food, lodging, recreation, shopping, and gas. While half of visitors stay for 1-3 days, the other half stays for as many as 120 days. The region's most important marketing challenge is to increase the number of Maine visitors who spend at least some time in the region.



*Source: Longwoods International*

For marketing purposes, the region is represented by the Maine Lakes and Mountains Tourism Council. Coordinated by the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments, the Council is comprised of 10 chambers which pay dues to claim a seat at the table. Unlike the CVB, most chambers maintain their own "bricks and mortar" information centers. However, the Council does maintain a toll-free number for visitor information staffed by AVCOG as well as a website that acts as a portal to the chambers representing each region. Publications include a Visitor's Guide and map as well as brochures for thematic tours, including antiques, walking trails,

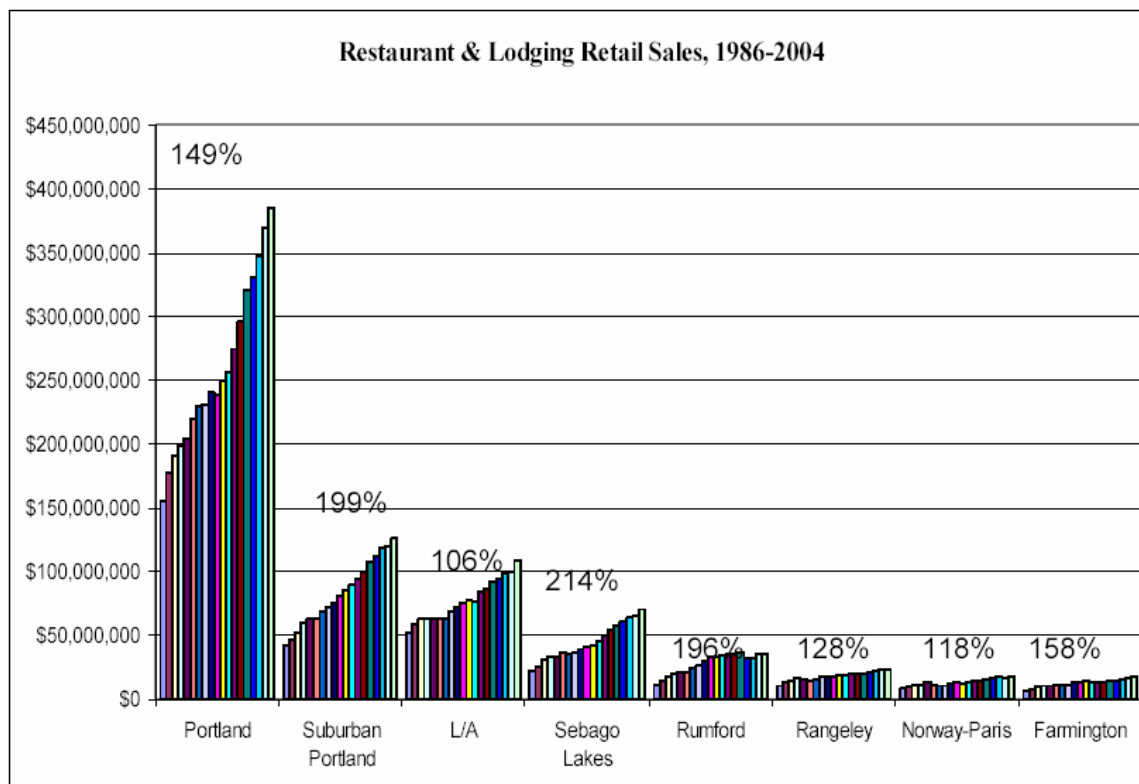
bicycling, and gardens. In the past, the Council has undertaken joint advertising, radio and television campaigns. Gray is entitled to representation in the Council's marketing efforts by virtue of its membership in the Sebago Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce.

### 3. Sebago Lakes



The Sebago Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce, formerly the Greater Windham Chamber, represents the towns of Casco, Gray, Naples, Raymond, and Windham. Other towns in the Lakes Region are represented by the Greater Bridgton Chamber of Commerce. The Sebago Lakes Chamber maintains two Information Centers, in Windham and in Naples, plus a website and Visitor's Guide. Although the Chamber's membership includes businesses from as far away as Portland and Newfield, just five Gray businesses have joined.

Dollars spent on restaurants and accommodations constitute one indicator of tourism in the region. From a regional perspective, the urban core of Portland, South Portland, and Westbrook claim the lion's share of tourism dollars. Second is the suburban coast of Portland, which includes Freeport, home of retail giant, L.L. Bean. Third is the Lewiston-Auburn area. A surprising fourth is the Sebago Lakes region, which includes Gray. Visitors spend more money on restaurant and lodging in the Sebago Lakes region than in Rangeley, Bethel or the Sugarloaf area. Indeed, of all the tourism districts in Southern and Western Maine, spending in the Sebago Lakes region has increased the most, 214% from 1986 to 2004 in dollars unadjusted for inflation.



Source: Maine State Planning Office

#### ***4. Gray-New-New Gloucester***

In order to attract, enhance, and promote the business community environment in the area, the Gray Business Association joined forces with businesses in New Gloucester to create the Gray-New Gloucester Business Association. At least 60 Gray businesses and organizations are counted as members. The association sponsors a website, an annual auction, various networking opportunities, and several active committees. Recent projects include the production of the area's first map for visitors. In addition, the association was instrumental in securing funds for the development of the Gray Village Master Plan.

Within its proximity to Maine's largest city, Gray has the opportunity to be part of the marketing arsenal of the state's number one tourist destination. With a coveted turnpike exit, the town can also market itself as the gateway to four season recreation fun in Sebago Lake as well as the mountains of Western Maine. But with virtually no business representation in any of the region's chambers or publications, the town is literally off the map. While many Gray businesses belong to the Gray-New Gloucester Business Association, the organization lacks the marketing resources to either draw in visitors from the coast or encourage people passing through to stop.





## **E. Findings**

- The results of the Visual Preference Survey suggest that residents and property owners in Gray want downtown Gray to look more like a village than a traditional downtown.
- Gray's lakes, hills, and farms create four season opportunities for outdoor recreation that can be marketed to residents and visitors of Greater Portland.
- Although Gray is positioned to serve as the gateway to the lakes and mountains of Western Maine, it does not actively participate in any regional marketing efforts to ensure such visibility.



# **Appendices**

**A. Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

**B. Scope of Work**

**C. Investment Matrix**

# **Appendix A**

## **Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

## Gray Village Master Plan

Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes February 1, 2006, Stimson Hall

Attendance: Jeanne Adams, Robert Avaunt, Liz Beck, Leo Credit, Ron Lydick, Lonnie Leeman, Fran Monroe, Jim Pound. Staff & Guests: Mitch Berkowitz, Dick Cahill, Deborah Johnson, Denise Duda, Skip Crane, Caroline Paras, Andrew Upham, David Willauer.

- I. **Call to Order:** Dick Cahill called the meeting to order with introductions.
- II. **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program.** Deb Johnson explained the program guidelines and context of this study. She said funds are available from the Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD) but many towns compete for these funds. Mitch also explained the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District in Gray.
- III. **Scope of Work.** Caroline Paras said much of the background work for this study has been done in previous studies, including the *Gray/New Gloucester Access Study* (1997), *Gray Community Economic Growth Study* (2001), and the *Gray Comprehensive Plan* (2003). She explained the 4-part approach to the Main Street Program, including: (1) Organization, (2) Promotion, (3) Design and (4) Economic Restructuring. She said that we will focus on design and economic restructuring. David Willauer explained the Scope of Work and budget. He said the impetus for this study is to determine how improvements can be made to the village after the proposed Westerly Bypass is completed. Caroline distributed an outline for the first Public Forum.  
  
Discussion. Committee members expressed interest in this study and many said it would be good timing for Gray to conduct this study at this time. They thanked the Town Councilors and Town Manager for attending the meeting. The Public Forum should be in a different location than Stimson Hall. Some members were concerned about the structure and the need for break-out sessions. Others supported the proposed format. There was support for the visual preference survey. Traffic needs to be included. Staff will help promote the event, revise the outline and distribute to committee members by February 8.
- IV. **Election of Officers.** Jeanne Adams was elected Chair, Liz Beck, Vice Chair. Andy Upham said he would help staff with notes as needed.
- V. **Meeting Times, Dates, Places.** The committee agreed to meet the first Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m., and aim for March 6, 8 or 9 for the Public Forum. Staff will set up the Middle School, Elementary School, Golf Club or Newbegin Community Center. David explained the need to meet once a month to keep on budget. The committee decided to meet without staff on February 15, 2006 at 6:30.
- VI. **Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

## **Gray Village Master Plan**

Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes March 1, 2006, Stimson Hall

Attendance: Jeanne Adams, Robert Avaunt, Liz Beck Mary Colangelo; Leo Credit, Ron Lydick, Lonnie Leeman, Fran Monroe, Jim Pound. Staff & Guests: Mark Bryant, Dick Cahill, Deborah Johnson, Denise Duda, Skip Crane, Caroline Paras, Andrew Upham, Guy Whittington, David Willauer.

**Call to Order:** Jeanne Adams called the meeting to order with introductions.

- I. Signage.** Guy Whittington, MaineDOT Project Development, gave an overview of the Gray Connector project to date. Work has begun on the Route 202 section with most of the construction occurring at night. Shaw Brothers is doing the work with Cianbro serving as bridge subcontractor. There will be some daytime work, but all traffic lanes will remain open. He then explained the sign package used for the Gray Connector and he distributed three sign schematics.

- a. Regulatory signs (stop signs, speed limit signs, other traffic control)
- b. Directional signs (route signs w/route names and numbers)
- c. Destination sign (towns and cities with arrows)
- d. Official Business Directory Signs (OBDS)
- e. Other signs (services, parks, ski areas, bike lanes, etc)

Some of these signs will be in the “sign package” bid for the Gray Connector and others are the responsibility of the MaineDOT on all routes. He said this would be a good time to hear what the committee would like to see for destination signage. Should it read “Gray” or “Gray Village?” Committee members agreed destination signs should read “Gray Village.” There was considerable discussion regarding the signs at either end of the proposed connector road and about sign regulations in general.

**II. Public Forum.**

**III. Meeting Times, Dates, Places.**

**IV. Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

**VILLAGE MASTER PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
3/1/06

Jeanne Adams opened the meeting at 6:33 PM. The minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

Guy Whittington from the Maine DOT provided the committee with an overview on the Gray connector project. MDOT presented a three page “signage package” which they are using for the connector project. Guy referenced the type of signs and their contents are flexible. The committee should feel free to make recommendations to Guy for sign changes, he will accommodate the town as best he can. Areas for sign changes or modifications beyond the scope of the connector project should be forwarded to the local MDOT engineering facility in Scarborough for their action.

Caroline of GPCOG offered recommendations for the meeting scheduled for March 8, 2006 at Spring Meadow Golf Club. GPCOG will provide maps of the Gray Village area under study for a visual reference to attendees as well as photographs and visual constructs from other communities to allow and focus discussion on the direction for Gray’s future view. The March 8 event will include 4 concurrent break-out activities:

- 1’st group facilitator David Willauer – streetscapes and urban arterioles
- 2.nd group facilitator Dick Cahill – Historic preservation and blight
- 3’rd facilitator Leo Credit – Community Gateway
- 4’t h facilitator Caroline – Goods and business services group – creative economy

The meeting will have a brief “kick-off” presentation from each of the VMPAC members, approximately 1 minute. A central theme for the meeting is to provide attendees a warm, inviting and non-threatening atmosphere of mutual participation and ultimately mutual benefit. While town officials are encouraged to attend, they should allow and facilitate a ground swell of citizen participation by remaining politely in the background.

Caroline presented the committee a white paper on “blight” along with Maine statute references under title 30-A Chapter 205: Community Development. Concern and discussion about the concept of identification of “blight” areas and the impact on home and/or business owners lead to a topical theme for the subject: People participating in the study will not be “blindsided” by the Blight issue. Leo Credit suggested leveraging “areas of investment opportunity” within the village area to stimulate and reinforce a positive approach to renewal for the Gray Village project. Crime is also a fundamental element of blight and will be included in the review. The crime aspect will require more discussion and information gathering from local law enforcement agencies.

**TO DO LIST**

VMPAC

Provide an official recommendation from committee to Gray Town Council that signage under the connector project reference “GRAY VILLAGE” as opposed to “GRAY”. The recommendation to council is designed to predicate an official resolution of council and a letter to MDOT – Guy Whittington for the signage change. The recommendation should be forwarded to council by the 3/8/06 meeting, council should forward the official letter to MDOT by 3/31/06.

#### GPCOG – CAROLINE

Develop a simple “road-map” of the success process for fulfillment of the VMPAC work to identify opportunity and need, successfully petition state entities for matching and other funds, get the work done through a combination of public and private initiatives. This is due to Leo Credit by 3/5/06

#### Council – Denise Duda

Review opportunities and potential for interactive response for Gray citizens to questions and visual survey preferences through the Gray website. The website option should be available by 3/15/06

#### A J Upham

Review with councilor Crane and others the town’s future options for county involvement in funding opportunities

Review with Donna Hill and council availability of specified funds and reserves that may be appropriately used to support VMPAC recommendations and achieve matching fund requests.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Andy



**Village Master Planning Advisory Committee**  
**Minutes – 4/5/06**

Call to Order: 6:31 PM

Attendees: M. Colangelo, F. Monroe, E. Beck, J. Adams, R. Avaunt, E. Prata, C. Paras, J. Pound, L. Credit, R. Cahill, L. Leeman, A. Upham

Jeanne Adams asked all committee members to review the Caribou downtown plan. On 4/13/06 Lori Allen of the Main Street program will be a key note speaker. Jeanne recommended that VMPAC members attend a 4/20/06 meeting of the Maine Downtown Center/Maine Development Foundations....

Jeanne requested approval of the 3/1/06 VMPAC meeting minutes – the vote was unanimous for approval.

R. Avaunt reported on a meeting with Debbie Johnson regarding a community block grant for the VMPAC proposed project(s). Debbie is looking for a comprehensive plan from the VMPAC as an integral part of the funding application. It is important that the plan make good sense regardless of Gray receiving a grant. In the past 2 of the 3 applications had received a grant. A fellow named Al Smith from Bath Maine was referenced as having prepared very impressive application work for their application. Debbie referenced that State Funding may be cut by as much as 20%. This means that Debbie may only fund 2 projects next year. The guidelines reference slum and blight as fundamental considerations to receive funding from Debbie. She recommended that Gray provide a fundamental rendering of the VMPAC “vision” for the Gray Village look and wants a “vision Statement” from the VMPAC.

L. Credit asked, What is a typical grant? Caroline Paras responded they are typically less than \$400,000 in the aggregate. An applicant for funding must meet the State Standard for a “downtown” to qualify. Downtown Program submittals can be grouped in a CDBG application.

F. Monroe spoke to a meeting with Tod Jepson to review the Pineland and VMPAC interface. The central theme of the meeting was how Pineland, VMPAC and Gray can work better together. L. Credit as GBA President indicated that Tod Jepson was excited that Gray /VMPAC is trying to improve the “Gateway” concept to the area. There was discussion on what GBA can do to help Pineland and that Pineland looks forward to the joint venture with GBA and the Gray VMPAC. F. Monroe indicated that “signage” is a great first step in developing synergies between Pineland and Gray by building trust and future value. J. Adams recommended the team focus on establishing linkage to the “land” when developing future vision and value statements and recommendations.

J. Adams indicated there will be a Pineland tour on Friday 4/28/06.

A Upham indicated that the signage letter from Gray Town Council to Guy Whittington had been sent by Council Chair Gary Foster.

Caroline Paras provided the team with a debrief from the Initial Public forum. Participants seemed to prefer the visuals of Yarmouth and Bridgton. She indicated that there was no data provided from Gray's Internet Survey opportunity. She indicated that approximately 70 surveys constitute the database and that at least 200 would be preferred. An observation that access to the web survey was not very easy for many participants especially those with "dial-up". J. Pound and L. Credit investigated utilizing the GCTV as an option for expediting and facilitating additional survey responses. M. Colangelo will investigate an E-mail blast to town folks. Caroline will make up a flyer for distribution. The GCTV application for airing the visual preference survey was submitted and a schedule will be developed. J. Pound agreed to donate funds for the local newspaper(s) to include the survey check sheets in a subsequent publication. The GCTV estimated the visual preference survey will take 7 minutes and will be placed on a loop for broadcasting.

Caroline indicated that Investment Opportunities (Blight) will be required in the application submittal. A key is to start with vacant public and private buildings determining the number of buildings and total square footage of space. She also indicated that traffic and layout may apply but that buildings are the primary consideration. She recommended the data be broken down by zoning district. ADA access issues are a good opportunity for consideration under the concept of "blighting".

R. Cahill and Caroline Paras will meet to review records and develop a data base for Investment Opportunity (blighting). Next steps may include a joint site walk and preliminary review between VMPAC team members and town representatives to applicable sites/buildings within the study area.

TO DO: A. Upham to get zoning information to VMPAC for their review. VMPAC should review existing zoning criteria and provide recommendations to ORC for subsequent inclusion in rezoning/ordinance modification initiatives.

Meeting Adjourned - 8:45Pm

Respectfully submitted,

Andy Upham

Scribes notation:

Immediately after the meeting, Leo Credit shared some of his insights with Jeanne Adams and me. I asked him to please capture them for all of us. They are as follows:

L. Credit

In the absence of ANY funding, our group will still strive to establish simple, visible, implementable goals that will enhance the safety, function and beauty of our downtown. I (we) see this as a beginning to a larger process with the purpose to bring people together to improve and capitalize on what we have. Whatever it takes to accomplish this is what we will do. We will try to utilize all of our local resources – sweat equity and local talent especially if there is no money, in order

to meet our goals. We plan to prioritize so that major goals that may need outside funding, do not bog us down and that minor and less expensive goals can be done without delay and be done internally and not reliant upon outside entities or forces. Some of these minor (short term goals) in my opinion need to be visible and practical so that we continue our positive momentum and that we have fringe participants willing to jump in and be a part of the process. “Priming the Pump”

Again, After the meeting Caroline Paras shared her insight. It follows:

Caroline Paras

It’s a planner’s dream...If only all the committees I work with were as fired up and empowered as yours! What impressed me last night was the research being done by various individuals and brought back to the group. Now I can use Gray as a fine example wherever I go.

You folks *are* great, and you are providing all of us in Gray a beacon, illuminating what we *can* do when we *want* to.

Thank you!

Andy

**Gray Village Master Plan Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
5/3/06

Attendance: Jeanne Adams, Liz Beck, Mary Colangelo; Leo Credit, Lonnie Leeman. Staff & Guests: Sues Austin, Dick Cahill, Chris Paszyc, Peter Pinkerton, Andrew Upham, David Willauer.

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 PM.

E. Beck provided a summary of the Pineland Facilities tour. Approximately 30,000 people visit Pineland facilities annually. Pineland is very careful to focus upon its image as a working farm with state-of-the-art facilities and programs such as the cow barns, Olivia Garden, the Cheeze Barn, Equestrian stables and Agritourism accommodations. There are 30 miles of horseback riding trails threading through the acreage.

Gray should develop upon the Pineland image while maintaining its unique philosophy.

Pineland is continuing to develop their presence in the region. They are concerned about their “fit” with Gray and New Gloucester. Pineland has a fundamental focus on preserving “open space”. Pineland views Gray as their “Gateway” and a very important strategic partner to their future success.

Gray needs to think “regionally” and respond to “local” opportunity.

Sue Austin offered that Pineland is not in competition with local farmers but rather helps them by demonstrating vertical and horizontal integration of farm assets; methods of sustaining farming through various venues such as Agritourism. Pineland is continuously reviewing best practices from a global perspective.

L Credit indicated that the GBA will sponsor handouts on local business and that Pineland will allow a Kiosk in their Tourist Center. Pineland derives a valued benefit from niche businesses such as Foley’s bakery.

J. Adams referenced that Gray has a growing senior population and that they are a significant resource for providing insight into Gray’s future in the region.

Jeanne introduced Mr. Chris Paszyk from CBRE/The Boulos Company. Chris was invited as a key note speaker because of his previous experience with downtown revitalization program implementation in Gardiner. He structured his comments around a review of his experience with a focus on success by development and implementation of an achievable finite program. Key topical elements as follows:

Planning and Visioning Process - What does Gray want to be, What pops into people’s heads. Certain of the obvious elements to reconcile include resolution of the traffic issues and alignment or affiliation with neighbors such as Pineland. He recommended a laser-like approach

utilizing a vision that people can rally around and it also should help focus the collective energy to implementation of tangible measurable objectives. Based on the physical position of the town of Gray, He referenced Gray as an excellent service area to the regional economy and a central hub for the growth of Agritourism.

Money and Resources - Leverage every asset you can, strive to get the most out of what you have. He highlighted the value of pursuing every opportunity to achieve a “win” that supports the long range plans and goals of the revitalization plan. Gray should include local business and financial institutions as potential resources for continued expansion of the revitalization program.

Market Analysis - Gray must consider its market place. Townships need a combination of housing and business to sustain growth. Gray should identify what business opportunities are not being served in the area and capitalize. In addition, a fundamental question/concern is do the fundamental success factors of the regional economy serve the vision of the town and vice-versa. He indicated that often a consultant is engaged to provide a study. J Adams indicated that Gray has a market analysis study that is approximately 4 years old. It can be used as a guideline. Chris also indicated that the VMPAC should identify new people in town and pursue them for their insights. Why did they choose Gray?

Chris highlighted the importance of action oriented thinking; Cities and towns can make things happen. It is often difficult for government to move through the creative process swiftly but government can establish enterprise opportunities such as a “Board of Trade” that gets things done better than the town governmental body. The Board of Trade is typically comprised of local and regional business people. In addition, town and cities have established local non-profit development corporations. He targeted two fundamental axioms for future success:

The town should solicit banks to get buy-in to help influence capital projects and grants

Leverage all resources – money, human resources and intellectual capital, and everything else we have.

He strongly recommended that Gray be ambitious in development of the scope of work and that it be aggressive in demonstrating achievable results.

Peter Pinkerton represented the MSAD-15 and provided an update on the Russell School renovation project. The first phase will be replacement of windows and exterior walls in the newer portions of the building. The second phase will be to demo and reconstruct the “48” wing. Phase 1 will begin the summer of 2006 and end before the 2006 school year begins, the second phase is scheduled for summer 2007 and summer 2008. The project involves approximately 25,000 square feet of building space and \$1,600,000 in total cost, 2/3 of which are paid by Gray citizens. He identified “safe-routes to school” and associated walking routes within the Gray village as a collaborative opportunity between the VMPAC and the MSAD.

D Willauer indicated that the renovation work on Russell school qualifies under blight considerations and would be included in the town’s submittal package. Excellent leveraging as prescribed by Mr. Pascyk.

Caroline was not available to present the committee with additional data on the slum and blight review with Mr. Cahill, Gray town Planner.

D. Willauer provided a the committee with a presentation of the history of the Gray connector project. Handouts were provided to accompany the visuals and Mr. Willauer indicated that he would provide the information to committee members in electronic format. There was reference to the "T-2000" study that dealt with traffic in Gray. The study should be provided to the committee for review and for leverage to future activities. Mr. Cahill indicated he would provide copies to the group.

D Willauer identified an opportunity for Transportation Enhancement Funds that may be available by this August. The funds follow the 80/20 rule and will be included in the VMPAC study.

Other considerations included a discussion of the adverse impact moving the Post Office had on local walking traffic. In essence in made the practice of walking to get mail impractical. That could be an opportunity to leverage a component of blight. In addition the traffic concerns are a major consideration. D. Willauer and R. Cahill will work to develop tactical options for Gray in dealing with DOT and others in reconciliation of village traffic calming.

TO DO ITEMS:

Caroline Paras/David Willauer to provide update on Blighting study

David Willauer to provide VMPAC with electronic version of Gray Connector presentation

David Willauer / Dick Cahill to provide VMPAC tactical solutions to Gray village traffic calming

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM

Respectfully submitted:

Andy Upham



# **Appendix B**

## **Scope of Work**

# **GRAY VILLAGE MASTER PLAN**

## **Scope of Work**

### **January 6, 2006**

The Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) proposes to work with the Town of Gray to develop a Gray Village Master Plan that builds on the extensive work already completed as part of the town's Comprehensive Plan and Community Economic Growth Strategy.

The impetus for this study is a successful Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application for the Town of Gray and the proposed Gray Connector Road being constructed by the Maine DOT and the Maine Turnpike Authority. The proposed Gray Connector will have a profound and lasting impact on the future of the downtown. The Gray Village Master Plan will help Gray Officials plan for future development and balance the mix of residential, commercial, institutional, and civic uses. The completed plan will serve to facilitate and guide future public policy decisions.

#### **The Issues and Problems:**

While the Comprehensive Plan addressed Community wide planning and the Community Economic Growth Strategy addressed retail and business marketability issues, the planning grant for downtown revitalization will concentrate on the problem areas and infrastructure needs of the downtown that were not addressed in the two previous studies. Some of the problem areas listed in the grant application to the State Department of Economic and Community Development included deterioration of village historic buildings, unattractive appearance of gateways, inadequate and dangerous street layout, and a lack of land and infrastructure to support economic development.

Past efforts alone were not sufficient in addressing problem areas; more needs to be done. Consequently, it is the intent of this planning grant to examine and make recommendations that can be implemented to improve the viability of Gray's downtown center and village. To that end, this study will look at some of the critical issues; traffic, parking, sidewalks, blight, landscaping, parks, historic structures, and public infrastructure. The study will culminate with a report that includes specific recommendations and an implementation strategy to address these issues. The report will be distributed to the advisory committee, the Town Council, and the citizenry.

#### **Proposed Scope of Work:**

##### **1. Study Area**

The study area will be focused on the Gray Village as defined by the boundaries including Main Street to the intersection of Colley Hill road; Brown Street and Yarmouth Road to the intersection of Brown Street and Yarmouth Road; Shaker Road to the intersection of the most northerly portion of the Gray Park Street; West Gray Road to the intersection of the Maine Turnpike Exit 63; Portland Road to and including Gray Meadows Trucking Vehicle, Trailer, and

Equipment Recycling and Retail Sales and Buildings at 71 Portland Road and all of the Village area in between.

## **2. Study Process**

The Village Master Plan will be carried out in the following manner:

- a) Appoint Village Master Plan Advisory Committee
- b) Public Forum
- c) Study traffic and parking facilities, pedestrian pathways, blighting influences, landscape and design standards, leisure time activities, historically significant structures, and infrastructure.
- d) Report with recommendations and an implementation strategy
- e) Public meeting to disseminate report.
- f) Council, stakeholders, Committees, and Boards to establish work plan and time frames per implementation of authorized recommendations.

### **A. Village Master Plan Advisory Committee**

The Village Master Plan Advisory Committee will be an ad hoc committee consisting of not more than seven people appointed by the Town Council. The Village Master Plan Advisory Committee will serve as a policy drafting committee, will help guide the study process, and provide input into the Village Master Plan. Upon approval by the Town Council, this Committee shall provide oversight and reporting during the implementation phase.

## **B. Study Elements**

### **1. Public Outreach**

- a. **Public Forum #1** The Village Master Plan Advisory Committee will plan and execute a public forum and invite members from the public including business and historical society representatives. The Village Master Plan Advisory Committee will be involved in the planning and timing of the forum to ensure broad participation and input for the Master Plan Study.

Prior to the public forum, GPCOG will conduct an assessment of the physical elements in the village, including landscaping, streets and sidewalks, parking, building facades including historical, significant structures, signage, lighting, and other elements of the streetscape. This will be supported by photographing and documenting the visual aspects of the downtown environment, using digital cameras and a base map. The images of the Gray Village will be combined with photographs from comparable communities and presented as part of the visual survey at the public forum to identify physical improvements for the Gray Village.

- b. **Public Forum #2** The Master Plan Advisory Committee will make available copies of the report for public review and schedule a public hearing to discuss the report recommendations and answer questions. GPCOG study staff and Town Officials will attend and participate in the meeting.
2. **Traffic & Parking.** Examine traffic and parking facilities and offer suggestions for improving traffic flow and parking (both on street and off street).
3. **Pedestrian Circulation.** Examine on-road and off-road pedestrian pathways including sidewalks and make recommendations for new pathways and improvements to existing pedestrian facilities to connect to key focal points.
4. **Business Development Opportunities.** Based on Gray's location, population and other assets, identify opportunities for business development.
5. **Blighting Influences.** Locate blighting influences in the downtown area and make recommendation to alleviate those influences, separate those into public and private categories. This would include dilapidated and unsafe structures.
6. **Building Facades, Street Furniture, Landscaping.** Identify areas. Make recommendations for landscape and design standards and list important places for flower, plant and tree plantings-adopt a spot. Suggest design standards for building facades and street furniture.
7. **Tourist & Recreation Opportunities.** Explore the role of leisure time activities and structures such as parks, green areas, and special recreation programming.
8. **Historic Buildings & Places.** List buildings, places, and items of historical significance with recommendations on how to preserve and protect.
9. **Public & Private Infrastructure.** Inventory and report with recommendation on public and private infrastructure including lighting, public water, sewage facilities or the lack thereof, government and civic institutions, and traffic, sidewalk, and parking addressed in preceding paragraphs. Establish the two categories for possible action: public and private.

#### **C. Report with Recommendations**

GPCOG will present a report with recommendations and a strategy for implementing the recommendations to the Village Master Plan Advisory Committee.

#### **D. Public Meeting to Disseminate Report**

## **E. Study Task Summary & Timeline**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Report Task Summary</b>
1	Public Forum #1 (March 2006)
2	Public Forum #2 (June 2006)
3	Traffic & Parking
4	Pedestrian Circulation
5	Business Development Opportunities
6	Blighting Influences
7	Buildings, Landscaping
8	Tourist & Recreation Opportunities
9	Historic Buildings & Places
10	Public & Private Infrastructure
11	Advisory Committee Meetings (6)
12	Report with Recommendations

Jan 2006	Appoint Village Master Plan Advisory Committee
Feb 2006	First Advisory Committee Meeting
Mar 2006	Public Forum and Village Assessment
Apr 2006	Tasks 6, 7, 8: Blighting, Buildings, Tourism
May 2006	Tasks 3, 4, 5: Traffic, Pedestrians, Business Development
Jun 2006	Tasks 9, 10: Historic Bldgs, Infrastructure & Draft Report
Jul 2006	Final Report, Public Meeting and Beginning of Implementation Process

## **F. Budget**

\$10,000 State CDBG Grant  
\$ 1,000 Town Cash Contribution  
\$ 11,000 Total

## **G. Study Products**

- a) Power-point presentations, Forums 1 & 2
- b) Final Report: 15 Color Copies of final report

## **H. Adoption of Report by Town Council**

Town Council, Boards and Committees to review recommendations and implementation strategy and establish priorities and allow any budget incorporation for the FY2007- 08 Budget.

## **I. AUTHORIZATION**

The Town of Gray, Maine and the Greater Portland Council of Government hereby agree to the full performance of their respective covenants contained herein. In witness thereof they have executed this agreement as of \_\_\_\_\_.

### **THE GREATER PORTLAND COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS AUTHORIZATION**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Neal W. Allen

Name Maddy Adams

Title: Executive Director

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **TOWN OF GRAY, MAINE AUTHORIZATION**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Mitchell A. Berkowitz

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Type or Print)

Title: Town Manager

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# **Appendix C**

## **Investment Opportunities Matrix**

**Investment Opportunities Matrix**  
Gray Village Master Plan, April 2006

<b>Status</b>	<b>Building</b>
Building name	
Address	
Map/Lot number	
Age of construction	
Building use	
Total square footage	
Number of units	
Number of vacant units	
Total square footage of vacant units	
Public safety issues	
<b>Structural condition</b>	
Septic	
Foundation	
Roofing	
Masonry	
Painting	
Siding	
Windows	
Fire safety	
Stairwell	
Other	
<b>Interior condition</b>	
Electrical	
Plumbing	
Walls/ceiling/flooring	
HVAC	
Insulation	
Fire safety	
Other	
<b>Façade</b>	
Architectural compatibility	
Building Setback	
Building scale	
Building materials	
ADA access	
Signage	
Lighting	
Landscaping	
Parking availability	
Pedestrian access	
Sidewalks	
Other	