

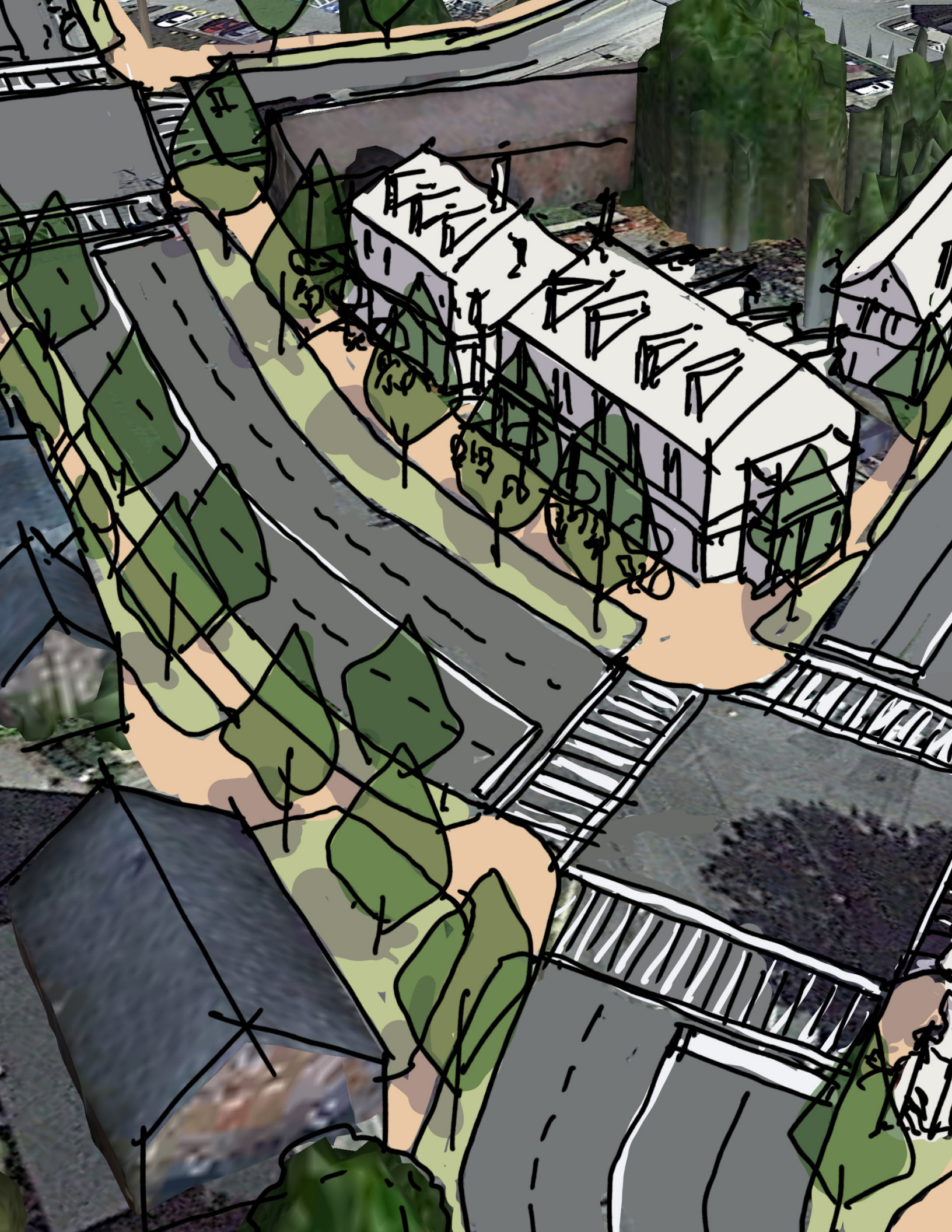
An aerial photograph of a neighborhood in Gray Corner, North Carolina, with architectural sketches overlaid. The sketches show a proposed parkway with a green median, sidewalks, and trees. Buildings are sketched in various colors (purple, green, white) with black outlines. Pedestrians and cyclists are indicated with small figures. A road with crosswalks is visible in the lower right. The text 'A VISION FOR GRAY CORNER' is overlaid in large green letters at the bottom.

A VISION FOR GRAY CORNER

GRAY, MAINE

A VISION FOR GRAY CORNER

DECEMBER 2022
GRAY, MAINE





*People create great places.
We are grateful to the 200+
residents, business owners,
elected officials, board and
committee members, and staff
for contributing to this effort.*

LETTER

Greetings to Gray Residents,

The Town Council engaged Principle Group to continue a conversation which began with the new Comprehensive Plan. Gray Village will be transformed in the next 3-5 years by two major infrastructure projects: (1) the Maine Department of Transportation led Main Street/Route 100 project which runs from the New Gloucester town line south through the Village and on towards the Maine Turnpike interchange; and, (2) the Town led Yarmouth Rd/Route 115 project which runs from about 62 Yarmouth Rd to Main Street in the Village. In both cases, the Town is partnering with the MDOT to define the scope of the projects and ensure the end results provide the increased safety and enhanced approaches which will facilitate the revitalization of the Village.

The Comprehensive Plan provides a framework identifying the Values and Vision the residents have for Gray. The Village Visioning process completed by Principle provided opportunities for residents to translate those Values and Vision into specific features, design standards, safety approaches and reconfigurations which will convert the Village from an extension of the highway system into the small-town New England Village from our beginnings.

Gray has always been known for the convergence of major roadways. Our location provides an opportunity to invite others here. With your support, we can transition from a place to drive through to a place to stop and enjoy. We can create a Village where residents want to live, where older people can age in place, where businesses have the support to flourish, and recreation and community events are a daily part of life.

This report provides more details about options for reaching these goals. Some may work out, others may not, and it will not happen overnight, but over years. It represents a big step forward in laying out “what Gray wants” and will be used to provide more leverage and concrete requirements to our state level partners giving the residents more control over our Town.

We thank you so much for your participation thus far and ask that you continue to come out to share your thoughts, ideas and to show your support for this important work.

Respectfully,

Sandy Carder,
Town Council Chair

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

A New Framework for Gray Village

Gray wants to reclaim its roads from cars and give them back to the people. This plan lays out a strategy to do just that.

In November of 2020, Gray voted to approve a new Comprehensive Plan. That Plan calls for focused growth and development in Gray Village, with a denser and more walkable pattern focused on human comfort and quality of life. Gray's streets are not and should not continue to be treated like highway on-ramps. Today's cars and trucks move through the Village at speeds often in excess of the posted speed of 30 miles per hour. Gray should become a stopping place rather than a place you drive through - with slow, safe streets that demand civilized behavior from drivers.

There will be a short transitional period - but Gray is fortunate that funding has already been allocated by the Maine Department of Transportation to fix key intersections and streets. And Gray, knowing infrastructure investments are coming, has been actively engaging in capital improvement planning. The Town Council committed to hosting a public engagement effort and hiring Principle Group and its project partners to draw plans and renderings to articulate what Gray's vision is for Gray Corner. This plan is a culmination of years of planning, passion, and dedication on the part of many people.

With infrastructure improvements on the horizon, this is Gray's generational

opportunity to establish a new identity and framework for daily life - one in which walking, bicycling, strolling, supporting and growing businesses, age-unlimited independence and housing choice could be transformed. This will leave behind a different legacy to Gray's children while making an indelible mark on older people who wish to age in place rather than be forced to leave their community for lack of safe streets and available housing in the Village.

For landowners and business owners, this work deeply considers how the project will impact business. Where in the plan you may see existing parking lots replaced by buildings, parking shifts to the street. Street parking is one of Gray's untapped assets. With slower, safer and more inviting streets outside the doors of businesses and residences, more people will want to be in Gray Village. A 30 second delay might force drivers (particularly trucks) to seek alternatives. The tradeoff: the people of Gray get to have beautiful, safe streets, outdoor cafes and restaurants and thriving shop fronts. Gray, in a short few years, could become a destination, a 1 - 2 hour resting stop before continuing to the mountains or lakes, and an even better place to live.

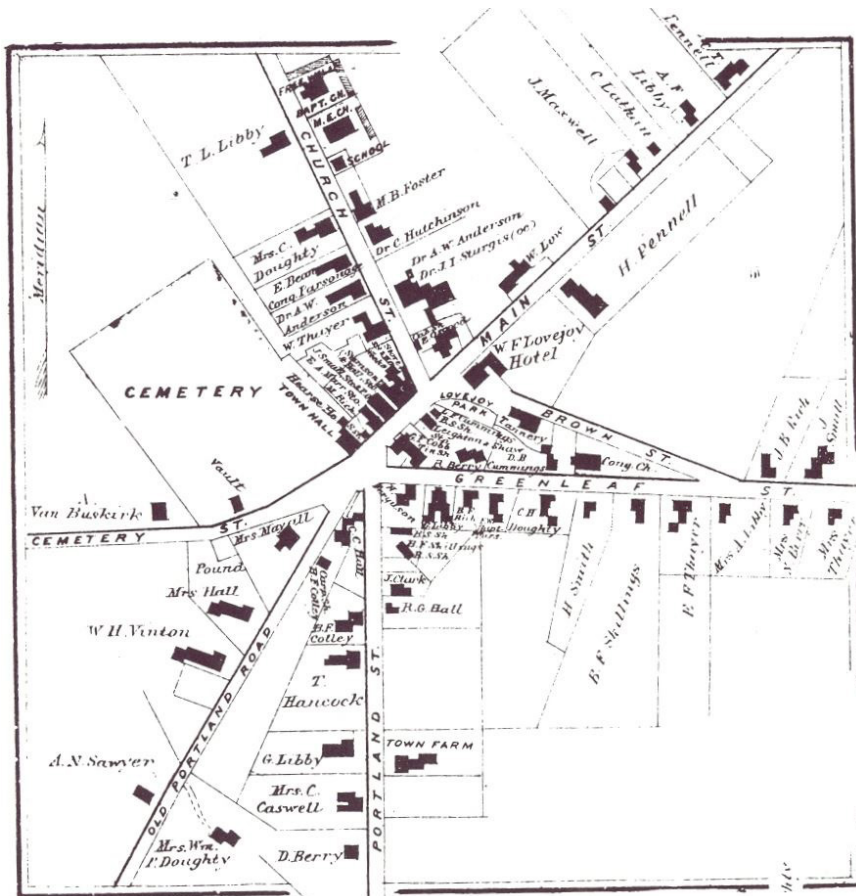
As the Town and MeDOT move through engineering and design, the preferred design scenario selected by the Town Council and the people of Gray should be the basis for all design decision-making.



This is a Conceptual drawing created during the public design week.

All plans and drawings shown in this report are conceptual only, and are subject to change.

This report provides a preferred design scenario as well as alternatives, giving the Town Council, residents, and stakeholders a number of options to consider. The plans have been drawn to scale, using data provided by the Town, MeDOT, and through the state's GIS data portal. Principle recommends that, should there be any notable deviation from the Council's selected design scenario, our design team is called upon to provide assistance. Plan annotations offer critical information to guide engineering decisions and fiscal investments.



(Top) This image is of Main Street looking south towards the original location of the monument at the intersection of what are today known as Yarmouth Road (formerly Greenleaf) and Main Street. In the foreground (right), Shaker Road (formerly Church Street) meets Main Street.

(Left) Five roads converge in this historic map of Gray Village.

Photo Credit: Gray Historical Society



*Gray Village Aerial Image,
2018.*

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & PERSPECTIVES



Walking tour with the Gray community during the Design Week.



On June 27th, and from July 27 to July 30th, 2022, residents of Gray and local stakeholders were invited to participate in “Un-pave Paradise,” an intensive, multi-day Village design event to develop a vision for the Gray Village Center. The combination of marketing, events, and personal invitations to social networks successfully brought over 200 people to the table, lending their passion, local knowledge, and keen ideas for how Gray’s village evolves.



Throughout the course of countless conversations with Gray’s residents, stakeholders and leadership, it was universally agreed upon that the primary concern for Gray Village is slowing the vehicles down and reprioritizing who Gray’s streets are for: people, not cars. People expressed a desire to enhance the

already good lifestyles they feel they have in Gray, by making the Village an attractive destination for all, and a welcome place for new business investment, multi-unit housing, connected streets, trails and public spaces to move about the Village.



Conceptual Drawing, Subject
to Change







BIG IDEAS

Common
spaces

Benches
on
Sidewalks

Historic
+ Buildings

DO
PAR

BIG IDEAS

for. Gray Village

ALL
PEDE
Light
Red
Corner to

E
NING
options

100%
energy
sustainability

Brick
is too
Slippery!

One -

Bro

This set of five Big Ideas touches on social, emotional, physical and structural needs and desires sourced from you, the people of Gray - about and for Gray Village.

- Reclaim the Village Center for People
- Foster a Multi-Generational Community
- Strengthen and Connect Neighborhoods
- Build up the Local Economy
- Create an Overlapping Network of paths, streets, and trails

All ideas appear as they were submitted to the Big Ideas Wall during the design week.

Many ideas sourced from the community have been incorporated into the plans and drawings within this report, but not all have been stitched in. As part of annual goal setting, the Town Council, Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee and other boards and committees should consider how to integrate the big ideas into municipal efforts. Through open and collaborative goal-setting, different boards and committees can work together with staff to advance priorities.

Some big ideas suggest action by/from the private sector - such as attraction of new businesses and investment in comforts and amenities to private property. The big ideas communicate a desire for change, not a mandate. All ideas are just that - ideas - until people take action to implement.

Finally, in the design week studio many precedent photos were displayed to illustrate ideas and concepts both raised by the team and participants. Each big idea has been presented with a handful of precedents, annotated to describe how an idea can be implemented.



1

Reclaim the Village Center for People

Today, Gray's roads are operating as an extension of the highway. During this process, residents have affirmed the vision for the Village Center expressed in the Town's newly adopted Comprehensive Plan - that roads become streets, safe and slow, belonging to the people who live here and own businesses here. And that by prioritizing people, not cars, the Village becomes a place to stop and stay rather than simply a pass through to somewhere else.

- “
- Slow traffic down to make it safer
 - Explore traffic calming measures (i.e. bumpouts, narrow lanes, signs that say “slow down”, safety islands)
 - Make Brown Street one-way
 - Keep Brown Street as a two-way street
 - Close Center at Main Street
 - Widen Route 115 to have two lanes at the light coming from Yarmouth
 - Improve clarity of navigating intersection of Rt 115 and Portland Road
 - Simplify intersections
 - Improve timing of lights
 - Consider a roundabout at Main Street-Route 100-Yarmouth Road
 - Speed monitor on Rt 115 Yarmouth Road to keep people to 30 mph
 - Create safer pedestrian crossings
 - Create all pedestrian lights to allow for corner to corner or diagonal crossing
 - Make crosswalk at Historical Society raised and a brighter color to improve safety
 - Add streetlights
 - Bus stop to Portland
 - Lower turnpike toll to prevent traffic diverting off I-95
 - Don't allow 18-wheelers through town
- ”

2

Foster a Multi-Generational Community

Residents expressed a strong desire for a greater sense of community. There is broad interest for more gathering places and programming to engage with each other and foster social interactions. Whether they are recreational activities, parks, or community events, both older people and young families want more opportunities to connect with the Village Center.

“ Build More Community Gathering Places

- Design a multi-generational community center (and pool)
- Build more recreation facilities such as a basketball court, tennis court(s), pickleball court(s), skate park, small playground (nature playground?), bocce, tetherball, shuffleboard, arcade, trampoline park
 - Build a concrete pump track for skateboard, roller skate, roller blade, bike, and scooter
- Create public spaces
 - Firepits
 - Pretty ice skating “places”
 - Create a music or performance space
 - Sledding hill
- Add pocket parks or a gateway park
 - Make a park on some fringe area at the cemetery
- Create a dog park
- Place colorful benches in walking/ park areas

- Designate picnic areas
- Develop space for food trucks
- Provide more spaces for kids of all ages
- Establish community garden(s)
- Install public art
- Expand Activities for All
- Expand multi-generational recreational opportunities (softball, cornhole tournament) through coordination with the rec department
- Organize Creating Community Events
- Outdoor movie nights
- Concerts in the park
- Public holiday events (ex. Christmas parade)
- Start a seniors and kids walk together program (have seniors volunteer to walk children to after school activities)
- Formalize and expand the historic walking tour with placards at historic locations
- Multilingual books in the library ”

3

Strengthen and Connect Neighborhoods

Residents want to accommodate people at every stage of life. People expressed concern for lack of affordable housing, an inability to age in place or buy homes that are affordable to live near jobs. Residents also identified a need to maintain beautiful neighborhoods through design and aesthetic improvements.

- “
- Affordable senior housing
 - Create a 5-Story height ordinance
 - Affordable rental units - both business and residential
 - Use the former mill housing Farmhouse on Mayall Road as model for future multi-unit housing
 - Develop vegetative storm systems (i.e. rain gardens, canopy trees)
- Preserve and showcase historic places and buildings
 - Promote neighbors to keep their yard clean. Landlords and business owners do a better job with keeping property neat, clean, and maintained (i.e. repair unsafe and unsightly falling shutters, gutters, parking lot signs, etc.)
- ”

4

Build up the Local Economy

People love Gray and want to make it a destination, not just an exit or pass-through off the highway. During the Design Week residents said they want to attract local businesses to provide opportunities to increase the tax revenues while reducing property taxes. This means fixing up rehabilitating existing buildings, offering more dining options, and bringing in commercial businesses.

- “
- Attract more small, independent businesses in village
 - Clothing shop
 - Candy store
 - Movie theater
 - Pet store
 - Keep larger businesses and gas stations stay outside of village area
 - Clark's Block needs to be fixed up
 - Create municipal parking lot with space for food truck court
 - Rehabilitate or remove Manny's
 - 100% energy sustainability
 - Bring localized medical services (primary care providers or an urgent care) to the plaza
 - More dining options
 - Bakery/cafe/breakfast place
 - More Lunch spots
 - Edible Main Street
- ”

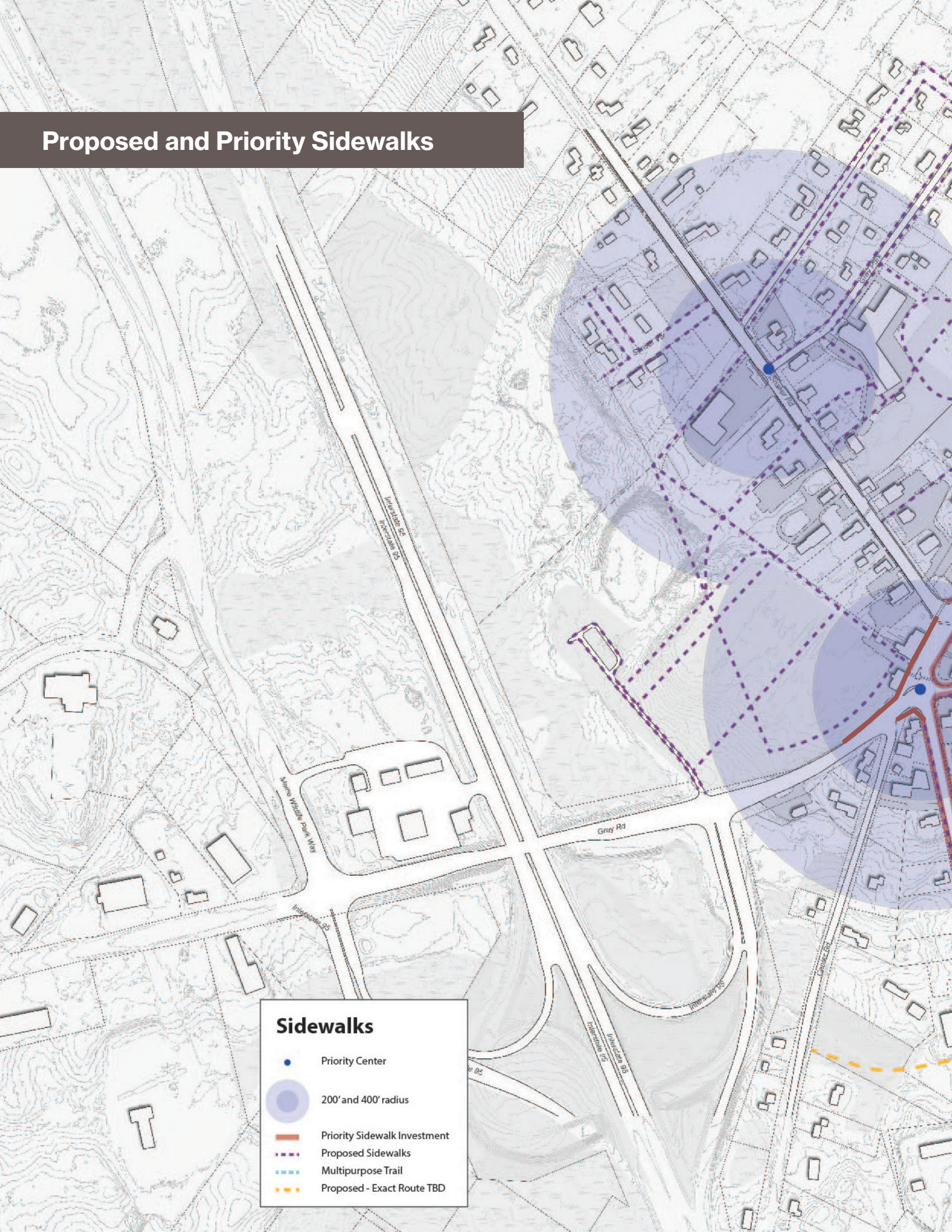
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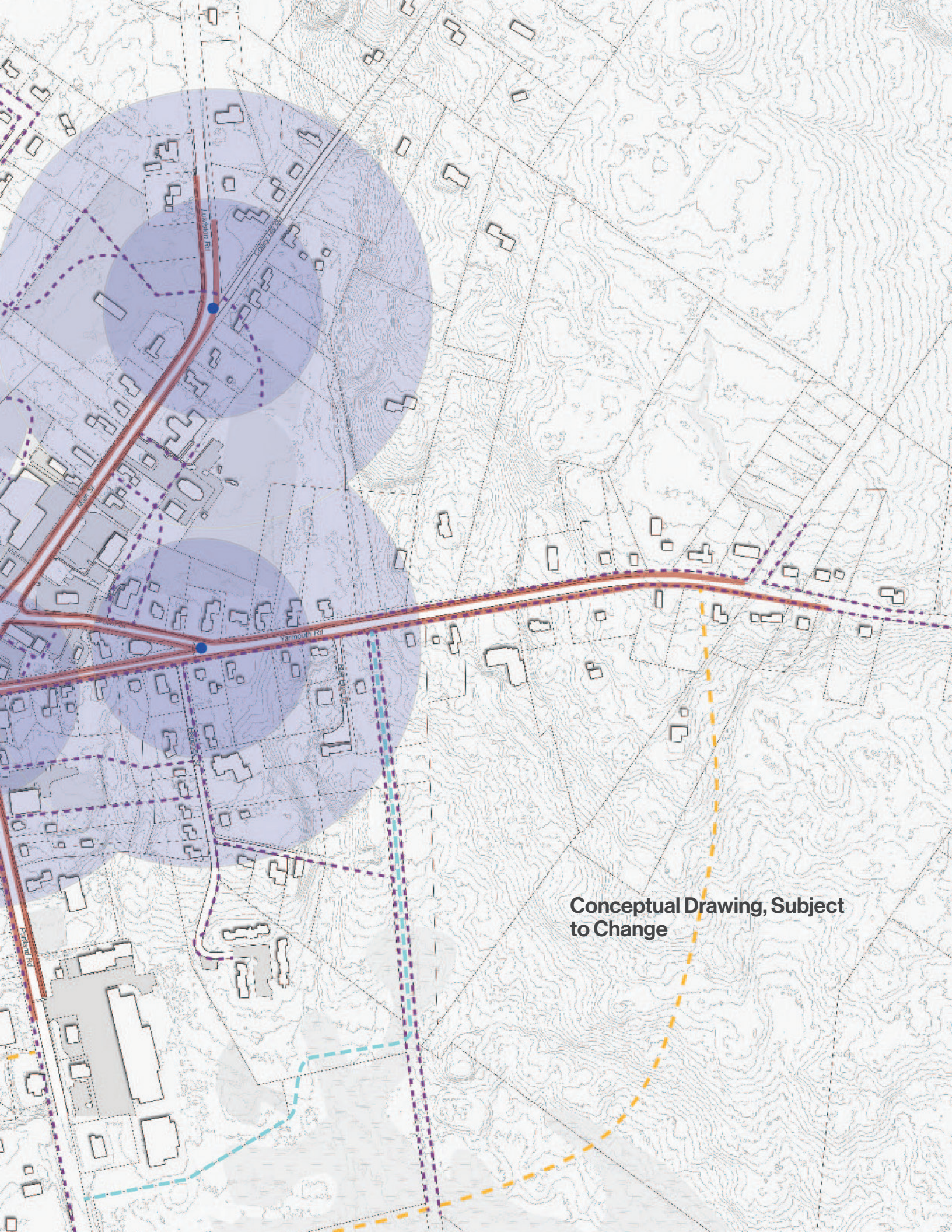
**Create an
Overlapping
Network of
Paths, Streets,
and Trails**

Gray residents want more opportunities to walk and bike around town. However, these paths are relatively disconnected. Weaving together thoroughfares within the Village and radiating outward will boost mobility, increase sociability, foster independence (especially amongst young people and elders), create safer vehicle movements, and connect town assets.

- “
- Extend sidewalks from the Village along Main Street/Lewiston Road and Shaker Road
 - Add sidewalks on major streets (Yarmouth and Brown)
 - Add bike lanes along major roads within the Village and extended beyond Village on Main Street/ Lewiston Road
 - Expand walking and biking trails around village
 - Add trails through the cemetery
 - Turn interurban railroad bed into walking or multi-use path with nature viewing (coordinate with ATV club)
 - Extend path to the back side of Russell School
 - Add bike lane in front of and sidewalks all the way to the Middle School
 - Create directional signage for pedestrians (i.e. 5 minutes from here to library)
 - Put benches on sidewalks
 - Improve, and maintain, street landscaping (trees, perennials and annuals, grass, etc.)
 - Spread out bird houses along Village Trail
 - Brick on some sidewalks is too slippery
 - Connect the village to schools, Libby Hill, and Wilkies Beach at all mobility levels
- ”

Proposed and Priority Sidewalks





Conceptual Drawing, Subject
to Change





DESIGN

SITE PLAN

The site plan is centered around the goal of creating a “Complete Neighborhood” within the village. This design approach explores how to integrate Main Street with the land surrounding it through a network of complete streets that prioritize people first and cars second.

Within all village blocks, a mix of uses, activities and building types are provided, ensuring that the people who live here and come to the village on a daily basis can lead full, independent and dignified lives. In the preferred plan, commercial neighborhood amenities like coffee shops and markets can (and should) sit next to small, multi-family apartments. Blocks of slow neighborhood streets can provide children and older people alike with safe connections between home, school, social and recreational amenities.

KEY DESIGN MOVES:

- Reduce the size of the two major intersections, and prohibit free-flowing right turn movements
- Accommodate multiple uses and activities in every village block located within a 15 minute walk of the center of the village
- Reclaim portions of Main Street to expand sidewalks and designate space for bicycles
- Let buildings, new and existing, be parked on the street, in municipal parking lots, or share parking
- Fill in the gaps between buildings with new housing, businesses, and civic spaces



What is a Complete Neighborhood?

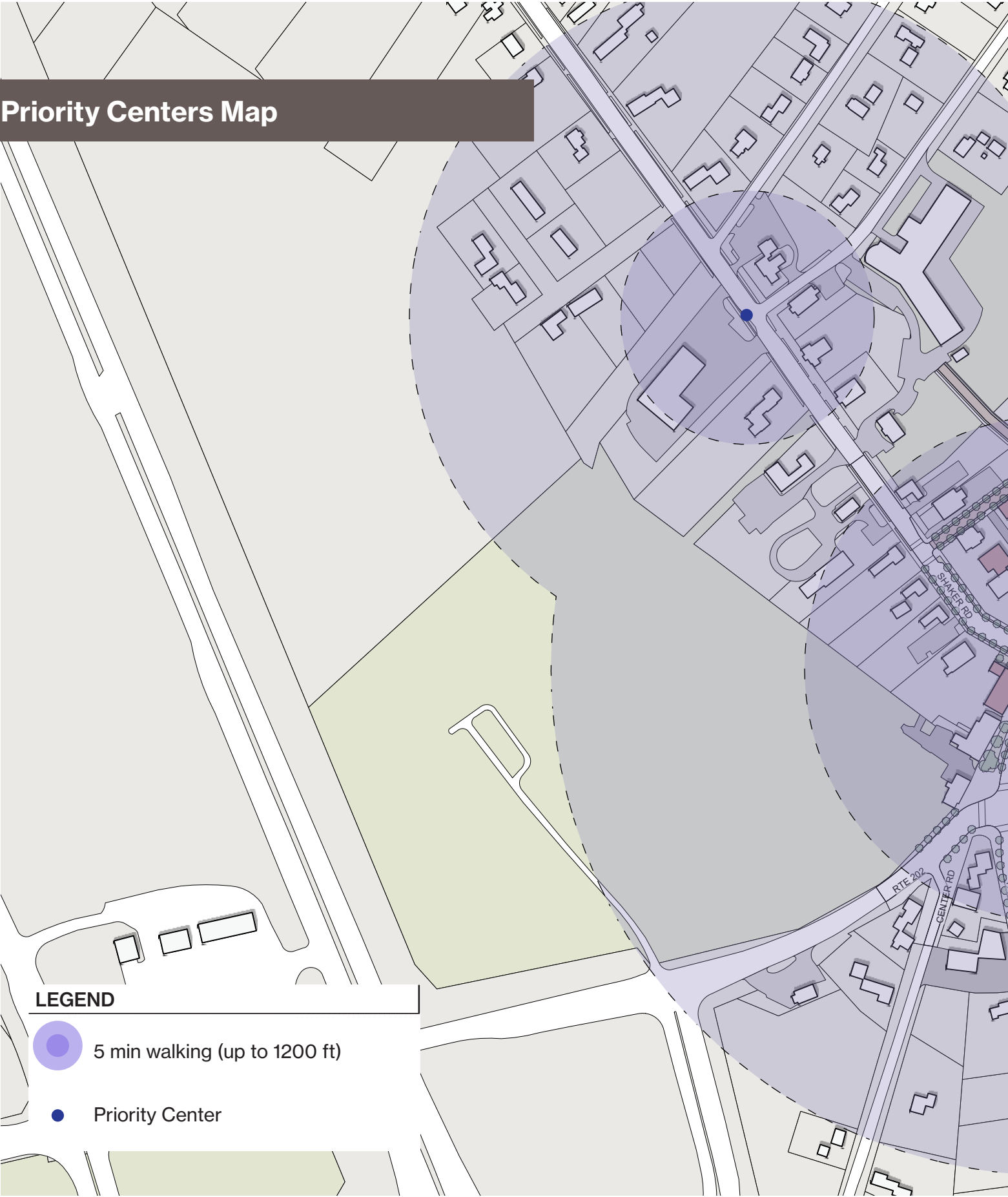
A “Complete Neighborhood” is a neighborhood where people have safe and convenient access to the goods and services needed in daily life. A fundamental design principle of a Complete Neighborhood is scale: human scale is paramount, allowing for easy and convenient walking and biking. Thriving neighborhoods have enough people living and working near local shops and services to create a vibrant local economy that can meet the needs of people of all ages and abilities.

Illustrative Master Plan







Priority Centers Map



LEGEND

-  5 min walking (up to 1200 ft)
-  Priority Center



GRAY CORNER



Plan Notes

- A** New Intersection Design prioritizing pedestrian crossings at Main Street/ Yarmouth Road & Portland Road
- B** Public space in front of the Historic Society, designed to allow access to their driveway and the Cemetery
- C** Potential Infill development to contain the corners and create an urban environment
- D** Service Alley
- E** Turning lane to Portland Road

The big design move here returns the civic heart and life to Gray Corner. Wide slip lanes and the paved shoulder is replaced with civic space in front of the Historic Society and old fire station, and generously wide sidewalks on both sides of the street.

The intersection of Yarmouth and Portland Road with Main Street and Route 202 functions as a buffer between the highway road geometry and the Gray Village. With adjustments in intersection alignments, new buildings fill in to create a feeling of intimacy and shelter for people. Crossing distances are shorter, turning movements tighter and slower, and native plantings provide visual interest and shade to the street.



MAIN STREET



Plan Notes

- A** Realigned squared intersection design at Main Street & Shaker Road/Brown Street
- B** Town Square in the southeast corner with active uses
- C** Relocation of the monument into the new Town Square
- D** Stimson Hall with infill development
- E** Potential Infill development key to create a 100% corner, where all corners are built and active
- F** Infill development in surrounding parcels
- G** New Main Street Design with on-street parking

The site plan shows how Main Street could look 10, 20 years from now when the street is repaired and the property values increase to support the redevelopment of what are today auto-oriented commercial uses.

A right-angle corner fronted on all sides by buildings and civic space is created at Shaker and Main Street, creating a true village center with active uses. The intersection with Shaker Road is realigned and the monument moved into a Town Square.

Stimson Hall could accept additional buildings surrounding it, encouraging its historical rehabilitation. Surrounding parcels can be reconfigured with new infill development served by parking and lanes behind buildings.



BROWN STREET



Plan Notes

- A** Squared intersection design at Brown Street & Yarmouth Road
- B** Green space in front of the church
- C** Small new garden space resulting of the new intersection alignment
- D** Brown Street design with on-street parking
- E** New Yarmouth Rd street design with sidewalks and landscaped buffers

This section of the site plan shows the design solution widely supported by the community: realigning the intersection of Brown Street at Yarmouth Road to force drivers heading west on Yarmouth Road to make slow, right hand turns to continue on Brown Street.

The street includes on-street parking amenity for businesses and the church, and a new formal public space is created where currently asphalt exists. Sidewalks wrap from Brown Street onto Yarmouth Road, providing a looping connection back to the heart of the Village.



COLLEY HILL



Plan Notes

- A** Squared intersection design at Main Street & Colley Hill Road
- B** Small new garden space resulting of the new intersection alignment
- C** New Infill buildings fronting Main Street
- D** New Main Street design extending into Lewiston Rd with on-street parking
- E** New Baseball Field included in the proposed design for the Village Gateway Catalyst Site
- F** New Infill buildings flanking the proposed new Baseball Field

In this section of the site plan, alignment adjustments are recommended to remove the sharp angled intersection of Colley Hill entering Main Street. Vehicles will now slow down to make turns, and the road aligns with the new neighborhood streets of the Village Gateway Catalyst Site.

Some width is removed by tightening up the curve in the street. This, combined with a new, larger building fronting Main Street will create the friction and discomfort to force drivers to slow down sooner. On-street parking continues in this section of Main Street, helping to support new neighborhood development.



Growing inside the village is a stated goal of the new Comprehensive Plan, as is the call to amend zoning to accomplish this goal. To be most helpful, the approach this report takes is to match up the vision and plans contained herein with the urban regulations that would be needed to accomplish the kind of build out that Gray wants to see.

Note: this section is technical in nature, as it describes legal language found in zoning and land use law. Efforts to simplify language have been made while retaining its legal nature.

Key Village Urban Regulations:

DISTRICT WIDE

- Eliminate discretionary terms and areas of vagueness from the existing ordinance and permitting process. Discretionary terms describing buildings and architecture such as, “shall be compatible” should be avoided. Discretion should be reserved for explicitly stated reasons. Any place in the ordinance that allows for a waiver should provide corresponding performance standards to review the request and guide decision-making.
- Replace discretionary language with a pattern book that articulates architectural design standards such as: features, massing, materials, window placement, roof pitches and how to treat additions or expansions of existing structures.
- Adopt a definition of “Theoretical Lot Lines” to allow for the placement of multiple buildings on a site without requiring division of land.
- Allow buildings to derive frontage on a thoroughfare, civic space, right-of-way, or easement. Driveways do not count as thoroughfare types.
- Consider eliminating all permitting fees for projects that create multi-unit housing building types (3+ unit to 12 unit buildings) on a single, infill lot.



BUILDINGS

- Adopt a set of approved building types to control the size and scale of buildings. For larger building types, such as large apartments, inns, and mixed use buildings, allow up to 5 stories in height and up to 200' in width to allow buildings to fill out the frontage of a human-scaled, walkable village block.
- Establish a range of ground floor heights keyed to building types to allow for a variation in building heights along the street. Historic places have this pattern of height variation. Modern places controlled by maximum height (as expressed on total feet) read as inauthentic, fake, and sterile.
- Require commercial buildings in the village to create shop fronts, with door entries spaced no further than 25 feet apart.
- Adopt fenestration requirements to ensure that buildings relate to the street by providing a rhythm of door and window openings
- Eliminate the dwelling/lot area requirement to attract multi-family housing building types and encourage infill between existing buildings.
- Require residential buildings fronting on public streets to include stoops or porches to create connection to the street.
- Develop a set of pre-approved missing middle building types. Pre-approved building types that create less than 4 units on a lot could bypass site plan review.

SITES

- Increase the allowed maximum lot coverage (buildings plus all impervious surfaces) to 90%
- Reduce minimum lot widths to 16' to permit fee-simple row houses. For new lots, set a maximum lot width of 200'. This finer grain lot dimension results in a lot and block pattern that is tighter, more urban village and supportive of walking.
- Set a maximum perimeter block length of 1320', again to yield an urban village block pattern. Larger blocks are appropriate in other areas of town where more commercial industrial and warehouse buildings are located.
- Where a larger block exists today and the site is accepting infill development, or its creation cannot be avoided in future, require a mandatory pedestrian passageway every 180' and no narrower than 12' between buildings. (12' will require special fire rating; 40' will not). Both private developments and municipal streets projects should adhere to this standard.
- Blocks should be a minimum width so as to provide two rows of developable lots.
- Eliminate mandatory off-street parking for missing middle housing building types (triplex, and up to 12 unit small apartments or mixed use buildings).

- Expedite site plan review for any application that removes asphalt in exchange for creating sidewalks, shared streets or any hardscaped surfaces for use by pedestrians
- Implement a fast and simple one page permit application for "Site Activation" projects that turn parking or portions of a site into community gathering spaces and amenities, such as pop-up play spaces, cafes, outdoor markets and temporary retail or food and beverage kiosks. Allow permitting of temporary projects (six months or less) to happen at the staff level. Do not treat such temporary changes to sites as a change of use.

SUBDIVISION

- Adopt the subdivision exemption allowing buildings with 4 units or more to be reviewed as a site plan. Decrease the permitting time-frame for smaller scale multi-family housing (12 units or less)) to be less than or equal to the timeframe for site plan review. Any move to reduce permitting times and hurdles creates incentive to the market to deliver missing middle housing.





THE STIMSON MEMORIAL HALL

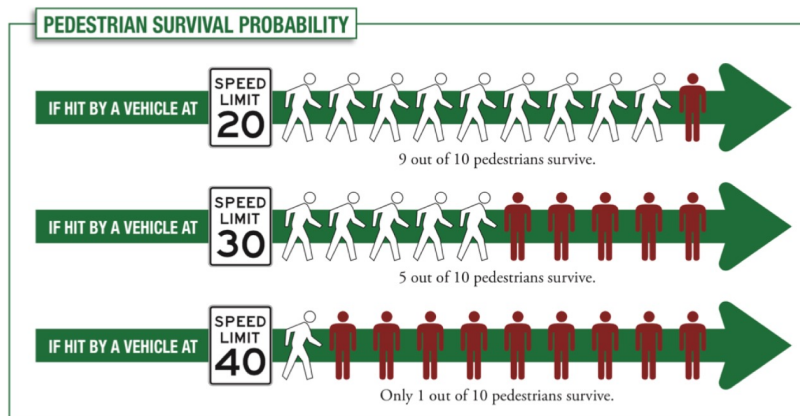
STREETS

Streets are the outdoor living rooms of neighborhoods. The best-designed streets consider the evolving needs of people who need them, supporting personal independence and fostering dignity, particularly for children and older people.

However, hostile streets that operate under the assumption of car-dependence and assume that all people are able-bodied and unburdened by mobility, sight or auditory challenges lead to division, exclusivity, isolation, and limitations on work and social activities. Gray is at a pivotal point to reclaim space from cars and give that space back to people for walking, strolling, gathering, dining, socializing and daily life. Strategic action on the part of the Town is necessary to put in place a connected, safe network of complete streets that sets up the infrastructure framework for coming growth.

KEY DESIGN MOVES:

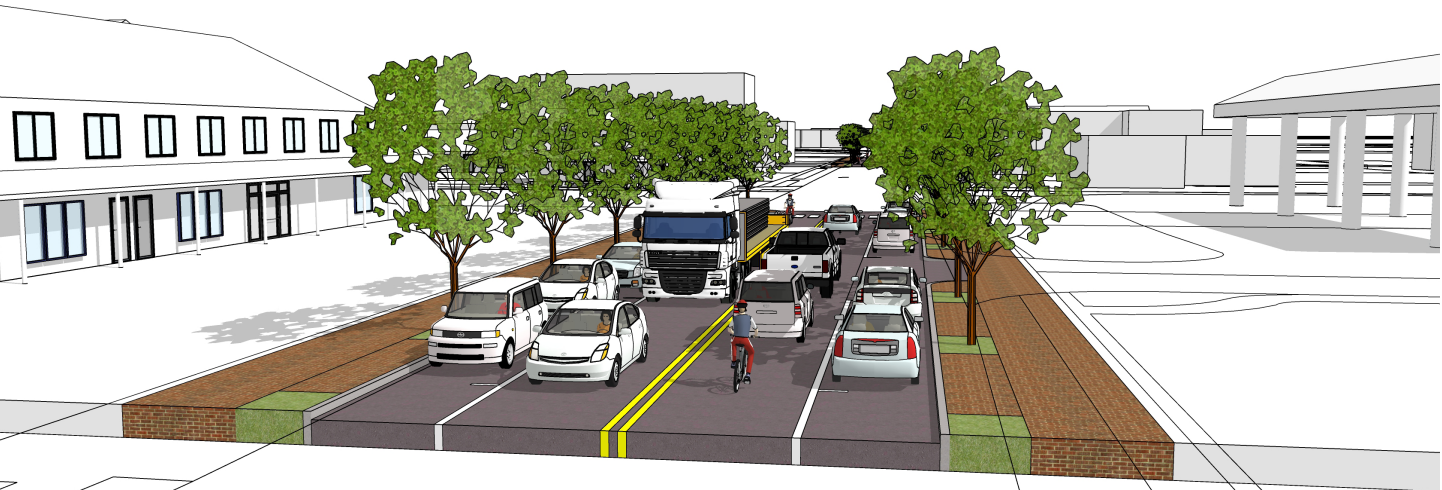
- Slow the movement of vehicles through the Village by eliminating free-flowing right turn lanes
- Reduce the size of intersections shortening crossing distances for pedestrians
- Narrow the travel lanes to reduce speed
- Add on-street parking to support business while creating further friction to the street and protection of pedestrians from moving vehicles
- Provide dedicated bicycle facilities to separate bicyclists from moving vehicles
- Beautify the street with landscaping and street trees
- Provide convenient and frequent cross walks and resting places for pedestrians to support mobility, particularly for children and older people

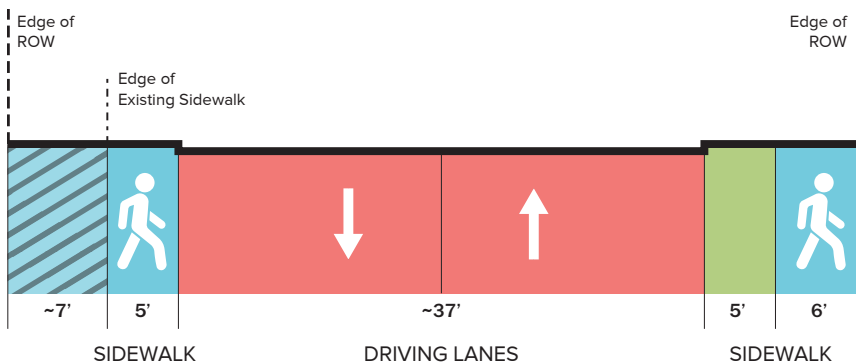


Source: FHWA Pedestrian Safety Strategic Plan: Background Report, 2010



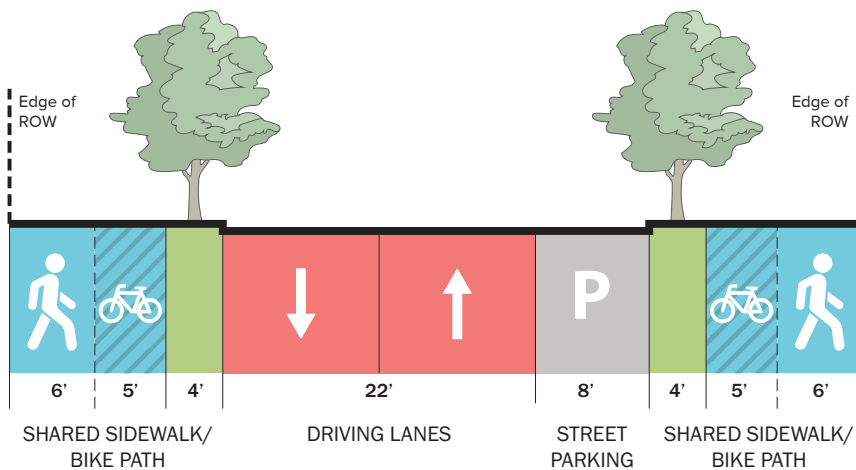
Main Street





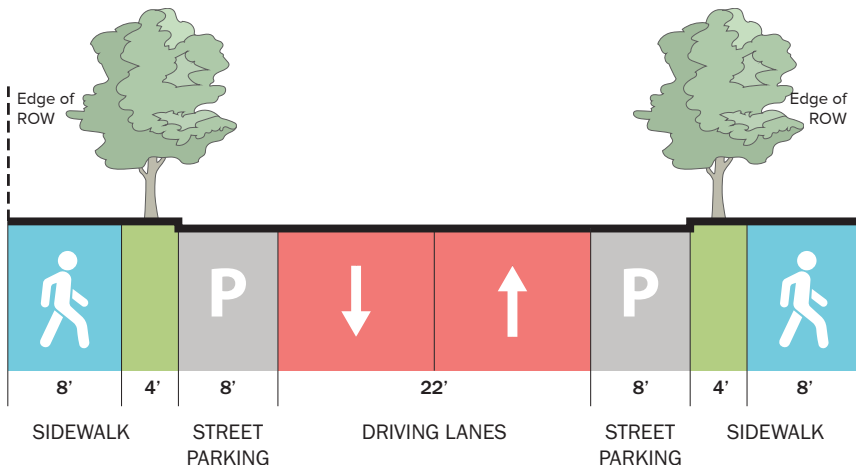
EXISTING CONDITIONS:

- Unnecessarily wide driving lanes and road shoulder
- Narrow sidewalks
- West ROW occupied by abutting parcels
- Lack of shade, furniture, and other pedestrian-oriented amenities
- Constant curbcuts



PREFERRED DESIGN:

- Driving lanes width limited to 11 ft.
- On-street parking on the east side of Main Street
- Wider sidewalk functioning as a shared sidewalk/bike path
- Planting strip on both sides of the street

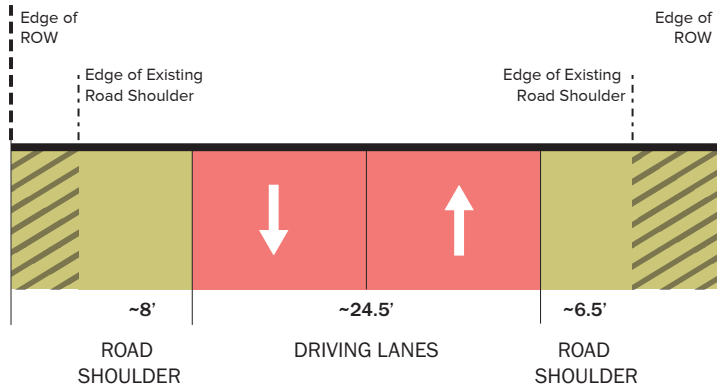


DESIGN ALTERNATIVE:

- Driving lanes width limited to 11 ft.
- On-street parking on the both sides of Main Street
- Wider sidewalk
- Planting strip on both sides of the street
- Cyclist share the street with the regular traffic

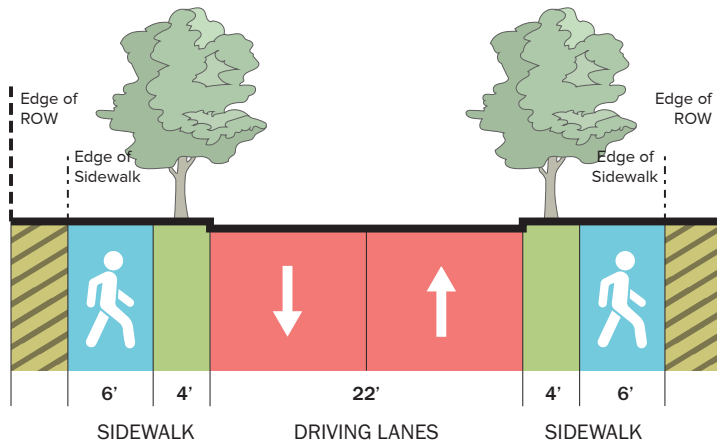
Yarmouth Road





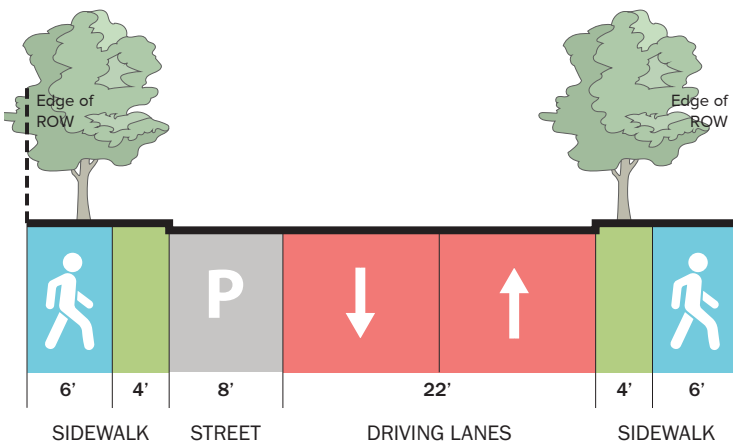
EXISTING CONDITIONS:

- Fast moving traffic and no pedestrian infrastructure
- Wide driving lanes
- Unsafe to walk. No sidewalks, just a dirt path along the road shoulder
- ROW unclear and potentially occupied by abutting properties



PREFERRED DESIGN:

- Driving lanes width limited to 11 ft.
- New sidewalks with a planting strip on both sides
- Not all the ROW is utilized, allowing to minimize conflict with abutting properties



DESIGN ALTERNATIVE:

- Driving lanes width limited to 11 ft.
- Potential on-street parking on the north side of the street.
- New sidewalks with a planting strip on both sides.
- Utilization of the entire ROW, potentially requiring the relocation of some fences and retaining walls.

VILLAGE GATEWAY CATALYST SITE

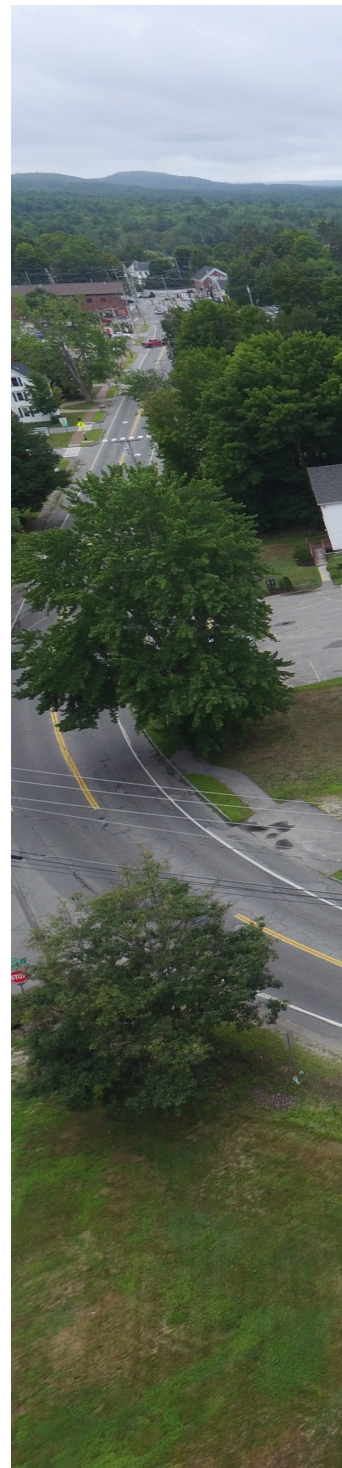
In 2021, Gray residents voted to acquire an approximately 6 acre site with the intention of guiding the kind of growth it wants to see in the village center. In recent years, the pressure to build housing has meant the loss of parcels in the village to single family housing. Leadership recognized that land within the village is scarce, and voters supported the idea of a master planned new neighborhood for what is today an open field.

As envisioned, this area will have a number of activities and building types to address what Gray wants to attract and see more of in the village. There will be spaces for active play, social living, and possibly senior and multigenerational housing with apartments. Trail connectivity is also a priority, especially between the schools and Pennell Campus where many programmatic activities happen.

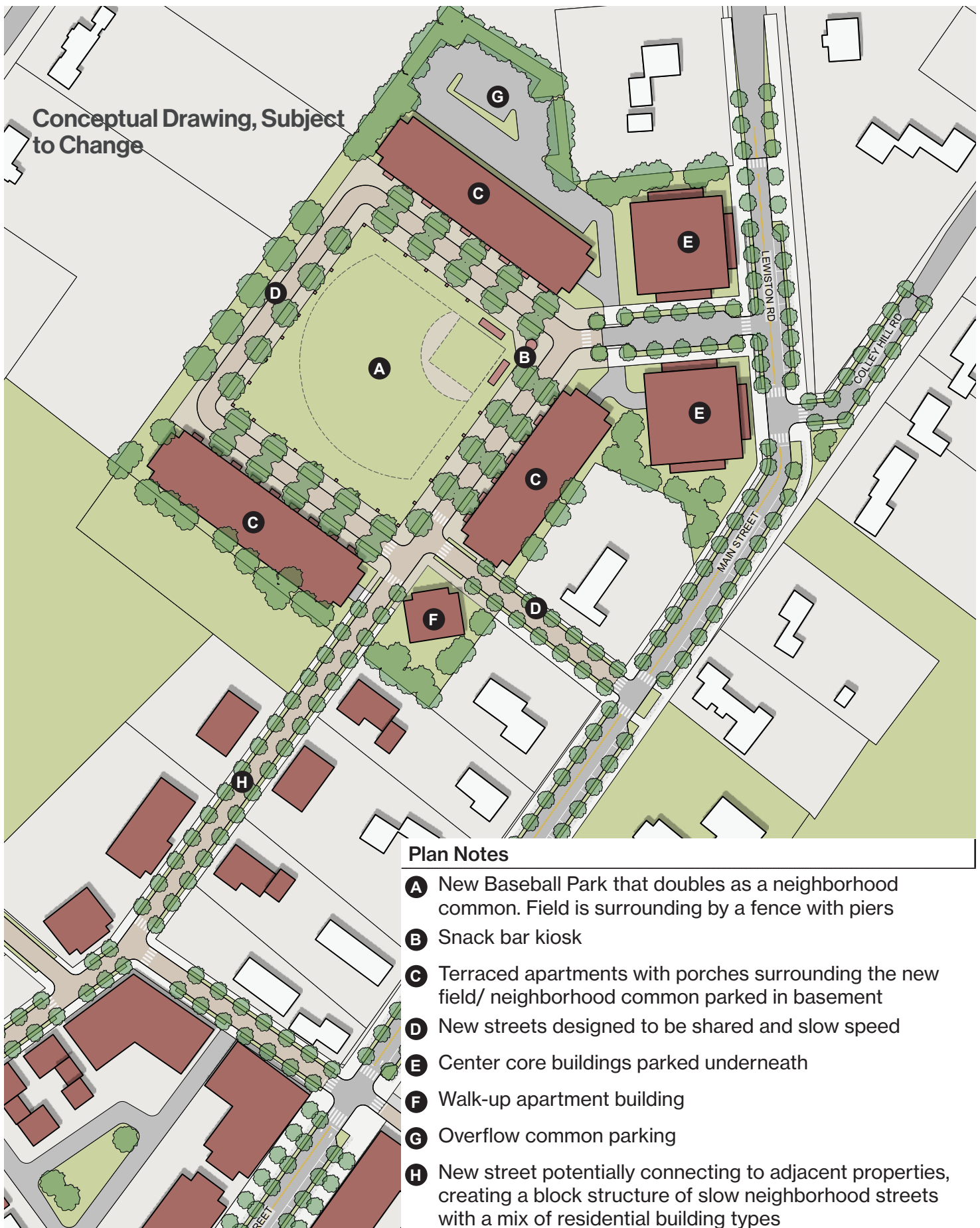
In its current form, Gray village is about one block deep. The spaces behind buildings on Main Street and (Short) Shaker Road - used for parking lots and circulation driveways - provides an opportunity to reorganize and repurpose how this space is used.

SITE BACKGROUND

- Site is a flat field, with frontage on Main Street near the intersection of Colley Hill Road
- Located almost directly across from Pennell Campus with the elementary school along its western boundary
- A trail grant was awarded to extend the VALT trail to connect Pennell Campus to the school; location of route not fixed per the grant award, but intended for location along the southern property line
- Zoning Map designation is “VC” and should be considered for rezoning to “VCP” or the most dense zoning district







The preferred site plan sees the village gateway site integrated with a new block structure of complete streets, providing frontage opportunities for many new buildings. New building sites could accommodate some taller, more dense multi-family buildings to attract the private market to build much desired senior and workforce housing.

New streets may be continued to connect to adjacent properties if/when further development occurs, creating a secondary street network parallel to Main Street. This will provide multiple opportunities for pedestrian connections within the site and to adjacent destinations such as the school and municipal buildings.

The build out of the village gateway site will require partnership with private developers to ensure it happens in alignment with Gray's desired vision for the site. Well-designed private spaces are provided between buildings, using a mix of native plants and trees, hardscaping, and pedestrian comforts (low key lighting, seating).



Examples of Apartment buildings that could surround the new field/neighborhood common.

(Top) Hotchkiss School Residence Halls, RAMSA Architects.

(Left) Capitol Square, Union Studio.





NEXT STEPS

NEXT STEPS

The hard work of the Town Council and community will continue, as many of the ideas described in this report will require further conversation, exploration, and decisions as the plans transition to engineering. The spirit of an “all hands on deck” process, and the invaluable energy built during the design week can continue to be leveraged. What follows is a recommended set of next steps the Council can take, in addition to working collaboratively with the MeDOT to advance engineering and design for the streets.

ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY AT KEY TOUCH POINTS

The making of this plan for Gray Corner benefited immensely from the involvement of community members and board and committee volunteers. Gray residents love their town, and the dedication they feel to show up and be part of decision-making is evident. The community conversations at the workshops and special topic meetings provided essential input to the process. And, residents expressed gratitude for leadership taking on this important work and investing in an engagement platform that allowed easy participation.

Council should continue to invite the public to engage at key touch points, and take moments to celebrate milestones as they are reached. Hosting special plan open houses and events will encourage continued participation.

ADVANCE ZONING DISCUSSIONS

This report also includes a number of zoning recommendations to allow for new development to take a desired

form in Gray. As the streets and infrastructure discussions advance, the Town can also begin to take next steps to create a Pattern Book for Gray Village and made modifications to parts of the zoning ordinance that might be holding back good development from happening - and timely decisions being made.

ADOPT A QUICK-BUILD SPIRIT

Entrepreneurs in Gray could be supported to take on some of the desired changes people would like to see to existing commercial properties if a fast staff review and sign-off process were in place. Ideas such as parking lots to gathering or play space, raised beds for pollinators and food growing, outdoor seating, cafes, and incubator retail market stalls could be tested if a simple one page application process was created. These kinds of quick-build projects invite the business community to easily participate in making Main Street more beautiful and more inviting to be here.

KEEP PARTNERING AND LEVERAGING RELATIONSHIPS

Gray's staff and leadership have done a remarkable job of connecting with supportive networks such as the Bicycle Coalition of Maine, Greater Portland Council of Governments, and Maine Council on Aging to tap resources and talents to move Gray Village forward towards the future it wants. Continue asking for assistance. All three organizations can prove helpful seeking funding and with public education around issues of equity, transportation, housing choice and being the most age-friendly multi-generational community Gray can be.

DISTRICT COMMITTEE

The Town Council may want to consider forming a special Village District Committee tasked with the sole responsibility of planning,

seeking grants, and working with the local business community to lift Gray Village up. This committee should be comprised of people who particularly feel passionate about the ideas expressed in this report, who are entrepreneurial-minded, and who have understanding of the development industry.

CELEBRATE!

Last, the implementation of plans the scale of this one will take many years to happen. Successes along the way should be celebrated. We recommend Gray considers hosting a celebratory 1 year community check in and family block party on the Pennell Campus in Summer 2023.

Bottom Left: Turn portions of under-used parking spaces into beautiful outdoor places to dine. Bottom Right: test street improvements with temporary materials.

