



Heart of
Gardiner
THE FUTURE OF DOWNTOWN



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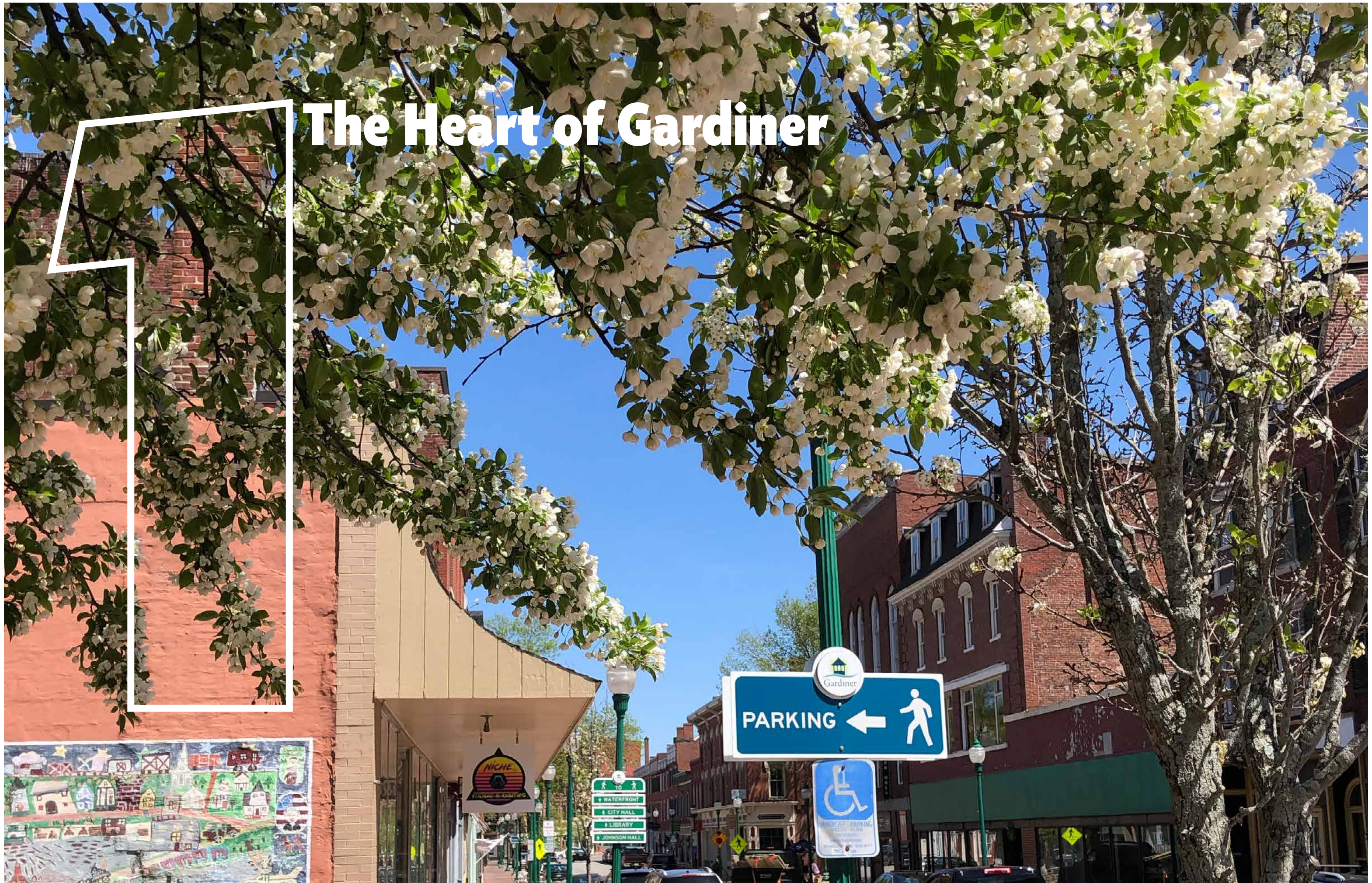
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The Heart of Gardiner



The Heart of Gardiner

Executive Summary

Springing from the Heart and Soul Process, this Plan has been spearheaded by the City of Gardiner, Gardiner Main Street, and a host of community advocates. This document compiles community input, economic and landscape analysis to provide a guide for Downtown Gardiner to progress towards a more resilient and vibrant future.

This project was made possible by a generous grant from the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry's Coastal Communities Grant Program. This grant program is designed to ensure sustainable and vibrant coastal communities, improve coastal public access, address effects of land use activity on water quality, restore coastal habitats, and prepare for future storms, erosion, flooding, and other coastal hazards. The Downtown Master Plan endeavors to provide a road map to implement the community's vision for the future of the historic downtown while addressing the grant program's priority goals.

This plan envisions a future for Downtown Gardiner that is more resilient in the face of future flooding events, with a stronger economic engine, and redevelopment that extends the unique and historical character of downtown to adjacent streets at the urban core of Downtown Gardiner.

Plan Goals

Support Downtown Placemaking



This plan provides recommendations that further strengthen Downtown Gardiner's sense of place by building upon and extending existing downtown character.

Placemaking recommendations build upon the physical materials and natural characteristics that make it unique from other Maine and New England Downtowns.

Build Economic Vibrancy



This plan identifies key redevelopment opportunities and reviews regional and local economic datasets to provide recommendations for future economic development and business attraction/retention efforts to strengthen Downtown

Gardiner's economic vibrancy and resiliency for years to come.

Develop Environmental Resilience



Downtown Gardiner is built on the confluence of the Cobbossee Stream and the Kennebec River. This natural junction exposes the historic downtown core to significant flood hazard. This plan provides recommendations that can improve

Downtown's resilience in the face of future storm events and floods.



Water Street during Swine & Stein 2021

Plan Recommendations

This plan recommends projects that support downtown placemaking, build economic vibrancy and build environmental resilience. These projects are discussed in greater detail within chapter 3 - Gardiner Tomorrow, as well as the implementation chapter. These recommendations include:

A: Support Downtown Access for All Abilities



B: Redevelop the Arcade



C: Enhance Downtown Gateways - Gardiner Common



C1: Enhance Downtown Gateways - Redevelopment



D: Trail to Waterfront Park Connections



E: Strengthen Downtown's Identity



F: Leverage Downtown's Existing Parking Supply



G: Build a Network of Green Stormwater Infrastructure

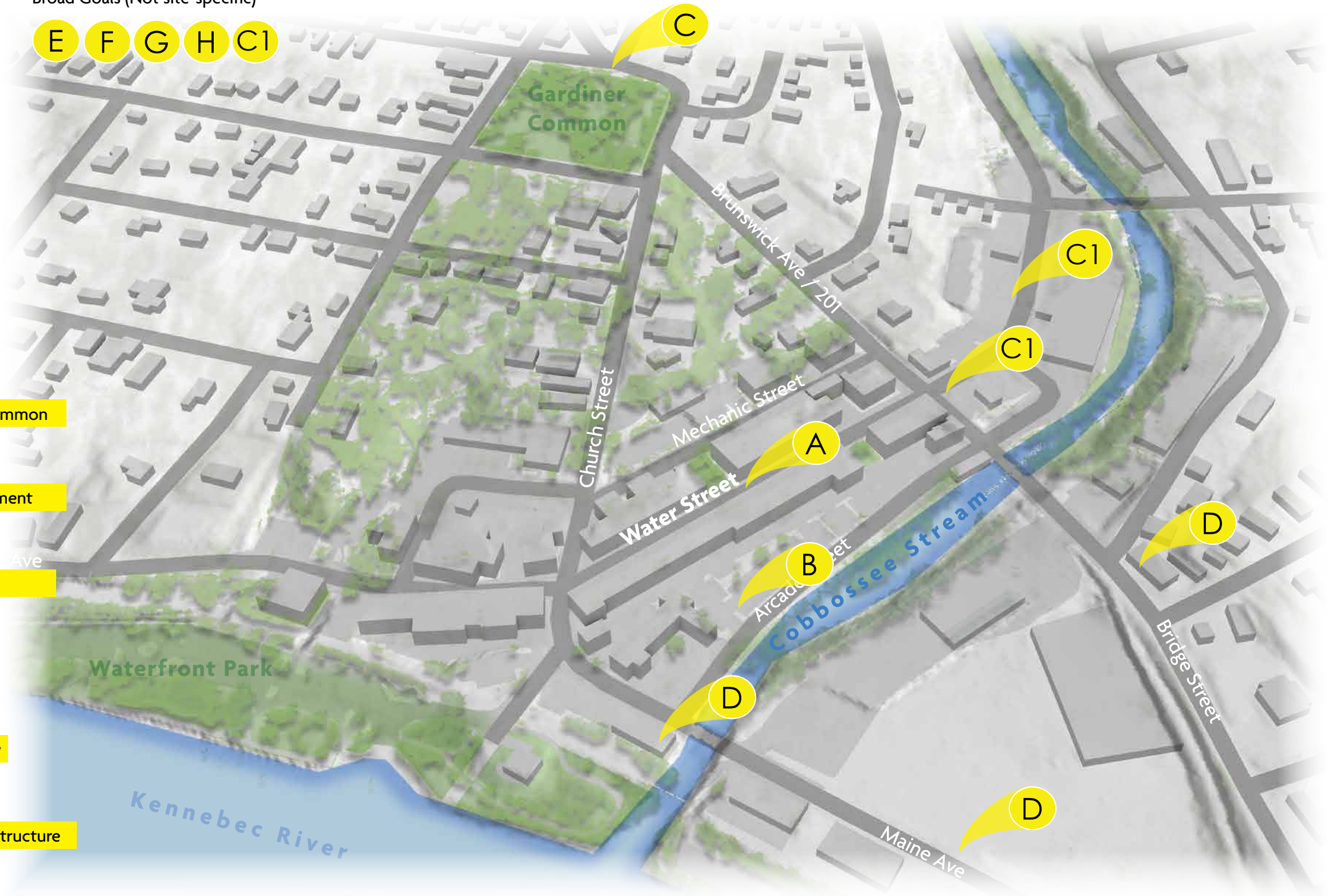


H: Partner in Regional Flood Resilience Studies



Broad Goals (Not site-specific)

E F G H C1



Economic Vibrancy Goals Supported



Downtown Placemaking Goals Supported



Environmental Resilience Goals Supported

History

Planning History

Community Heart and Soul - 2012

Led by the City of Gardiner, Gardiner Main Street and the Gardiner Board of Trade, this process engaged the community to directly invest in and engage with their City. Renewed interest in civic involvement resulted in waterfront concerts, volunteer beautification efforts and more.

The Heart and Soul process also resulted in updates to the City's Comprehensive Plan, and numerous economic development achievements.

Using the results of this intensive work, eleven (11) city values were developed and adopted by the city council by resolution on October 9, 2013 and help guide city-wide improvement efforts to this day. They include:

Family Friendliness: We value spaces and organizations that are available to residents of all ages and income levels.

Education: We value an education system that prepares students for a global environment.

Connection to Nature: We value outdoor recreation opportunities and preservation of open space.

History, Arts and Culture: We value history while continuing to develop diverse cultural activities for residents of all ages.

Strong Local Economy - We value a strong economy that welcomes businesses and entrepreneurs while maintaining the character of community including the historic downtown.

Sense of Community: We value a community where residents are helpful, caring, and respectful of each other.

Community Involvement and Volunteerism: We place high value on volunteering and civic involvement.

Livability: We value preserving the character of the city while ensuring that residents of all ages and incomes have access to family support systems, transportation, and arts and culture opportunities.

Infrastructure: We value safe, well maintained roads, sidewalks, schools and public spaces that are accessible and clean in all seasons.

Unique Physical Assets: We value the city's unique natural and built assets that are at the heart of the community's identity and believe they should be available to all residents.

Inclusive, Responsive Government: We value open, two way communication between residents and community decision makers.

City of Gardiner Comprehensive Plan - 2014

As part of the overall Heart and Soul Planning Process, a City Comprehensive Plan was developed and passed in 2014. The Comprehensive Plan includes downtown-specific objectives including:

- Increase the level of investment downtown.
- Enhance the pedestrian environment downtown.
- Facilitate potential redevelopment in the Cobbossee Corridor

Additional Plans Consulted

The 2019 Parking Study, Cobbossee Corridor Master Plan, Cobbossee Trail Plan, Downtown Signage Plan, McKay Park Designs, and numerous other studies have informed and guided this plan's development.


2021



Heart of
Gardiner
THE FUTURE OF DOWNTOWN

2014

**CITY OF GARDINER
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2014**
ACCEPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL ON AUGUST 27, 2014



CITY OF Gardiner
Along the River

2012



Community Heart & Soul
— Guided by what matters most —
GARDINER, MAINE

Project History

The City of Gardiner, Gardiner Main Street, and local businesses have a lot to be proud of within the last decade. Since 2012 numerous downtown improvement projects have been completed, including:

- Waterfront Park Project Completion (2012)
- Gardiner Heart & Soul Planning Process (2012)
- Gardiner Comprehensive Plan (2014)
- Waterfront Pump House Improvements (2017)
- Downtown Facade Improvement Grants (2017)
- Gardiner Dog Park (2017)
- Bridge Street and Maine Ave Bridge Replacements (2019/20)
- Cobbossee Trail Extension and Pedestrian Bridge (2020)
- Bailey Lot Brownfields Cleanup (2020)
- Downtown Water Street Intersection Improvements (2021)

Along with these recent improvements, many more improvements are planned, funded, and awaiting implementation in coming years:

- McKay Park Redevelopment (schematic plans approved 2021)
- Mechanic Street Improvements (anticipated 2022)
- Johnson Theatre Phase 1 Renovation (construction beginning April 2022)
- Cobbossee Trail Continuation (anticipated 2023)
- Water Street Brick Sidewalk Restoration (anticipated 2023)

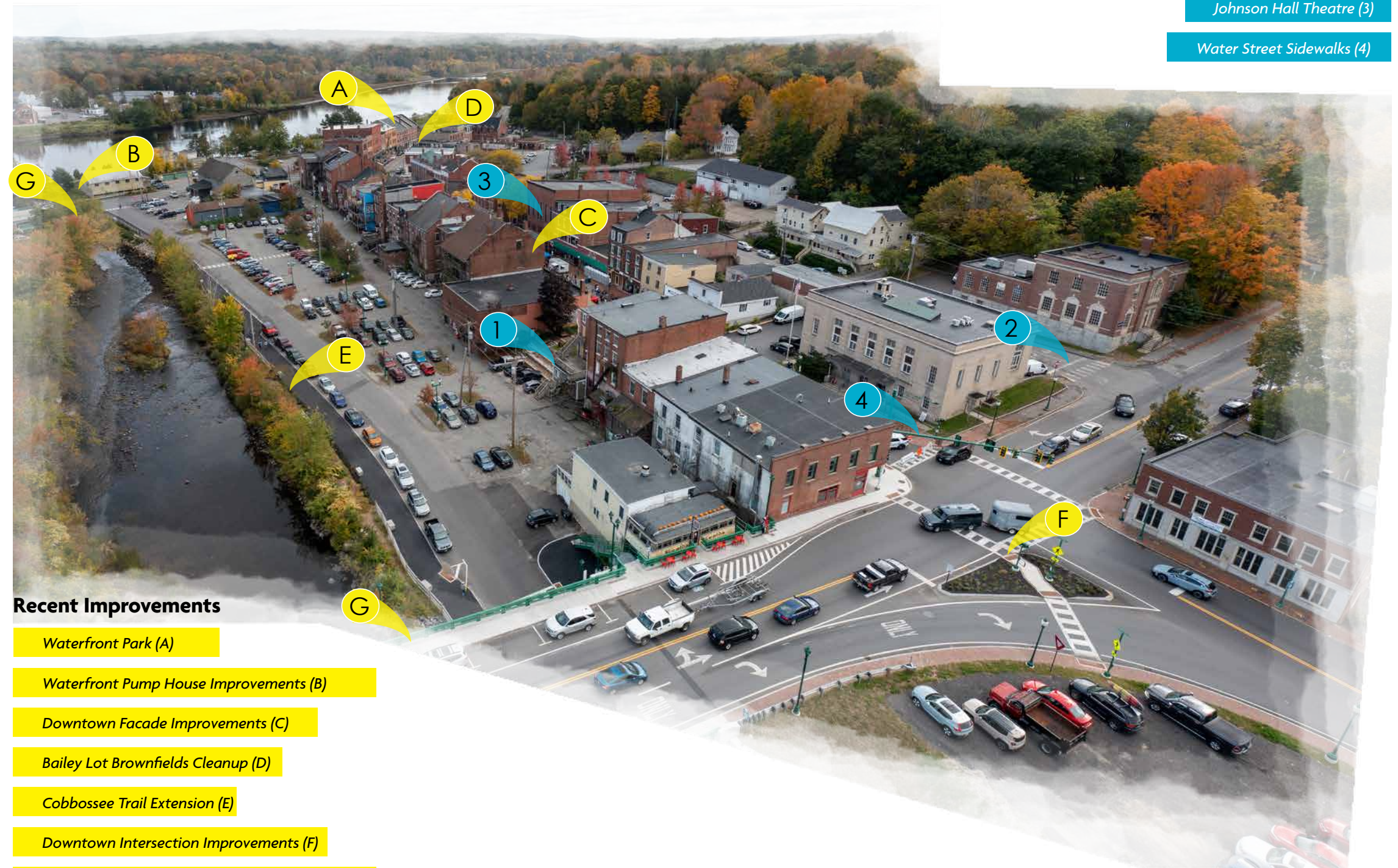
Planned Improvements

McKay Park (1)

Mechanic Street (2)

Johnson Hall Theatre (3)

Water Street Sidewalks (4)



Recent Improvements

Waterfront Park (A)

Waterfront Pump House Improvements (B)

Downtown Facade Improvements (C)

Bailey Lot Brownfields Cleanup (D)

Cobbossee Trail Extension (E)

Downtown Intersection Improvements (F)

Bridge St. and Maine Ave Bridge Replacements (G)

Downtown's Voice



Downtown's Voice

This planning effort began by asking questions of Gardiner Downtown and City residents and businesses.

Due to the ongoing and ever evolving COVID pandemic, various creative and socially distanced engagement measures were employed throughout this study.

At the study's onset (January 2021) Vaccines had just been rolled out to front-line workers, but were not available to the general public. As such, the first public engagement effort for this project relied on paper and electronic surveys combined with an engaging website.

By July 2021, over 50 percent of Maine had received at least one dose of the COVID vaccine, and in-person gatherings could resume. A Heart of Gardiner Downtown Visioning meeting was held at Johnson Hall and drew over 75 attendees to share their ideas to shape the future of Downtown.

The public review of this draft plan was held on November 4th, 2021, with a final draft presented at a public City Council Meeting on December 1st, 2021.

Public Engagement

A project website (<http://bit.ly/heartofgardiner>) was created to provide a base location for project information and updates. The project website was accessible for the life of this planning process.

This website provided an easily accessible project information page for the public, as well as an interactive exhibit of the plan elements.

Through development of interactive map layers, this website illustrated existing walkability, parking access, impervious surface and natural area cover, and other baseline conditions.

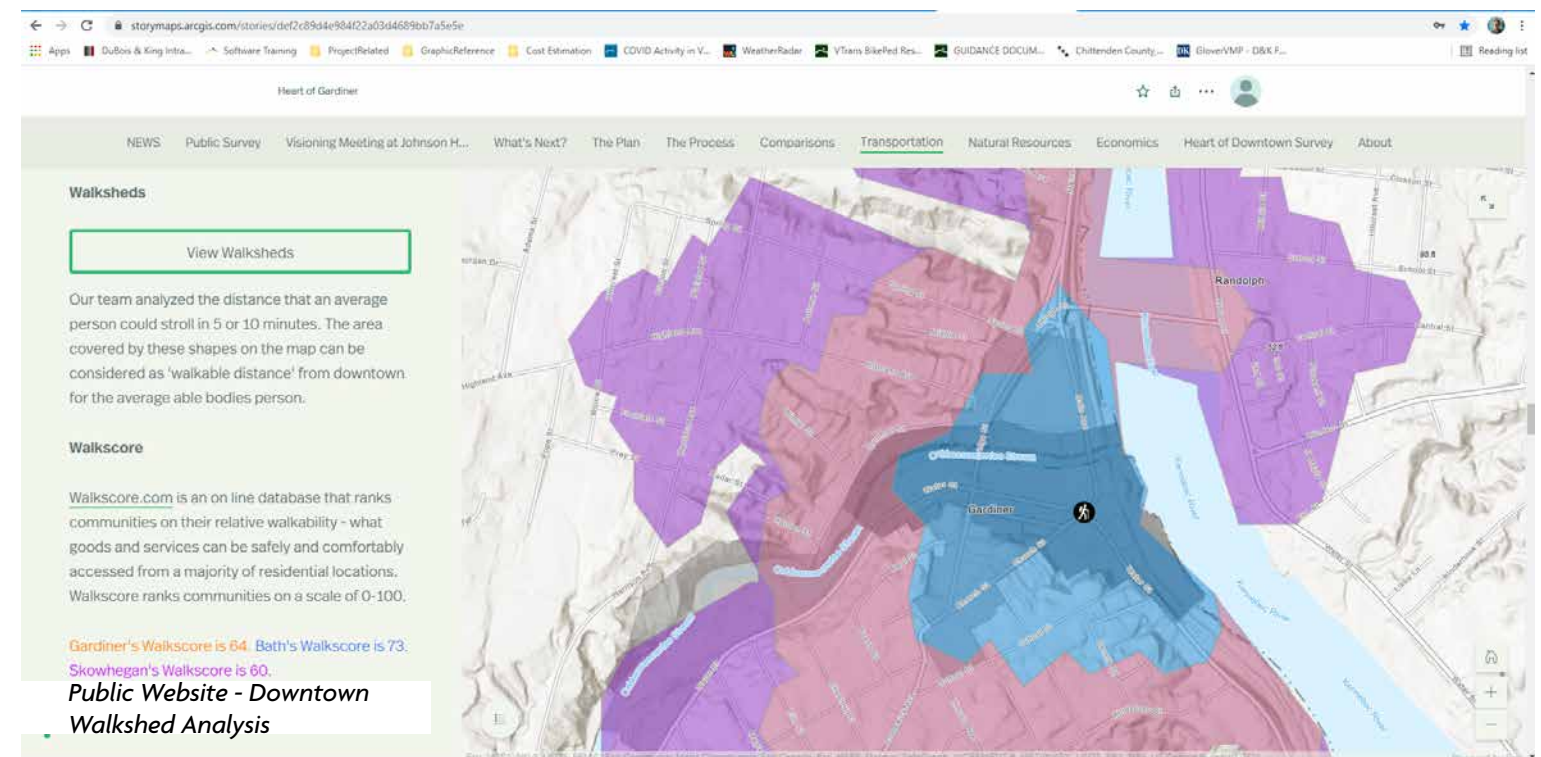
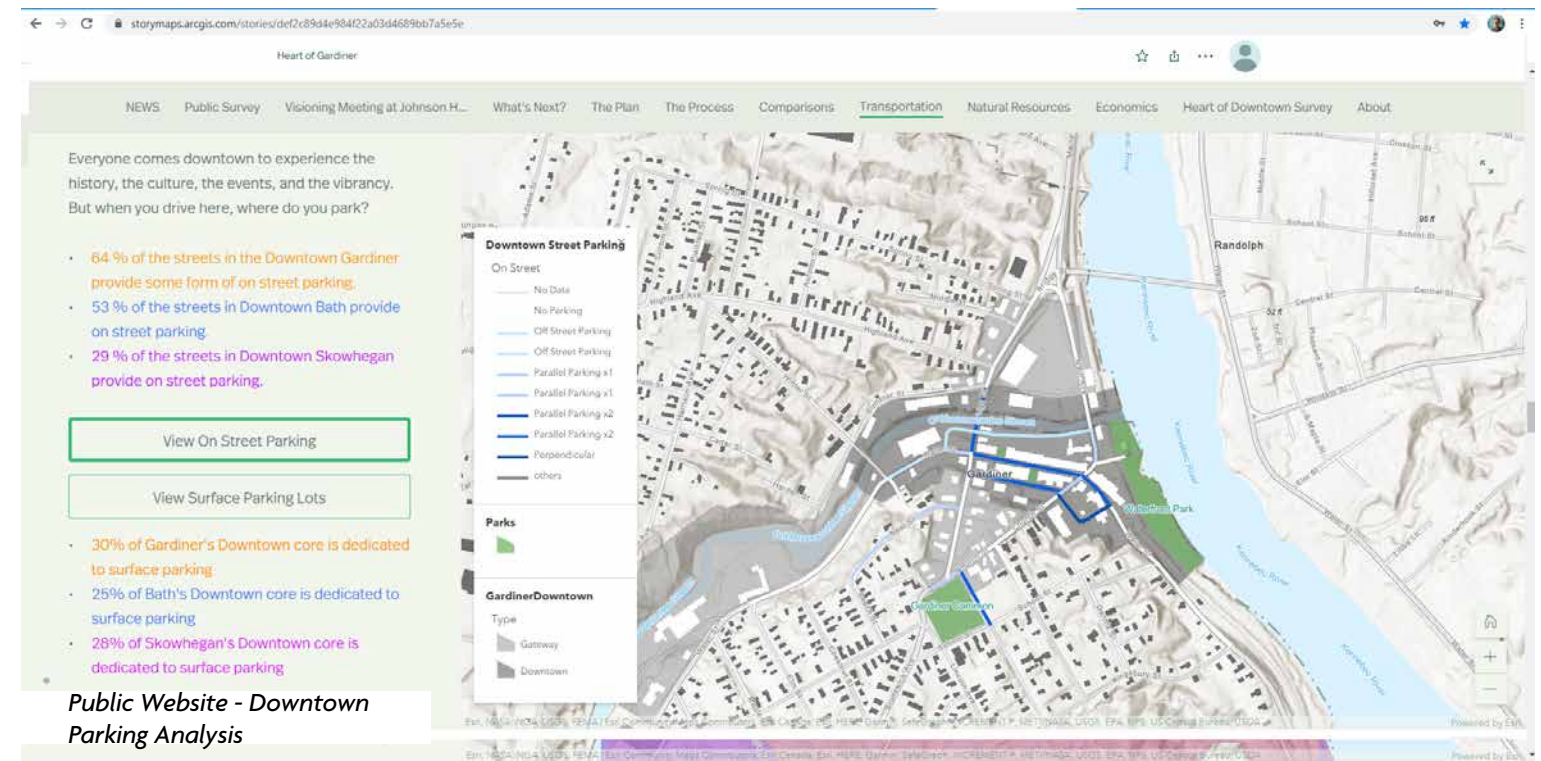
Many of Gardiner's characteristics were measured and compared to Bath and Skowhegan Maine, to better understand how Gardiner compares to relevant Downtowns elsewhere along the Kennebec River.

A public survey was launched April 2021, and collected public feedback through the following June. During this two month window, the survey was available physically at City Hall and the Gardiner Library as well as digitally.

The survey was advertised through physical posting of flyers in downtown shop merchant windows, on social media, email newsletters and the city's list-serve. Postcards were left at several locations downtown to share the survey and the visioning session information. In addition, the City of Gardiner and Gardiner Main Street organizations relied heavily on their combined social media and web presence to promote awareness of the planning process and the opportunities for direct community input. In addition, several articles in the Kennebec Journal documented these opportunities.

As an added incentive, all survey takers were entered into a drawing to win \$20 in "Gift of Gardiner" gift cards which directly support downtown merchants.

The survey was designed to gain a broad understanding of business owners, visitors, and residents perceptions of Downtown's physical, functional, and economic qualities.



Visioning Meeting

On July 14th, 2021, approximately 75 members of the Gardiner community attended a public meeting at Johnson Hall to contribute to the direction of this plan.

Attendees were able to review informative posters illustrating:

- Planning history and this downtown plan's goals.
- Quantifiable comparisons between Gardiner, Bath and Skowhegan
- Historic flood records
- "The Arcade" Parking Lot opportunities and constraints
- Gardiner's Downtown Identity

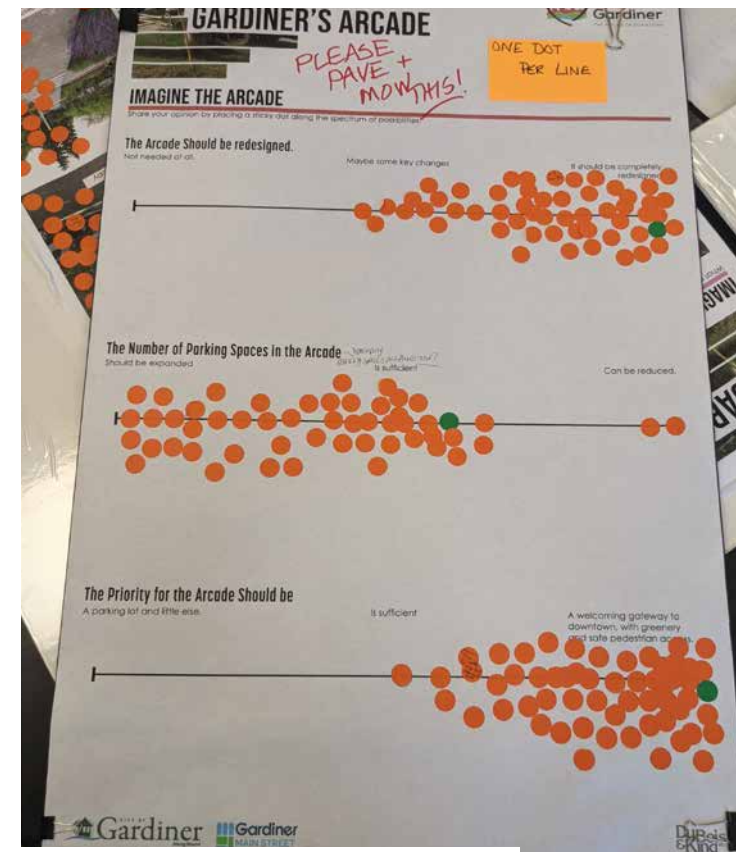
From these informative posters, members were then invited to watch a six minute video describing the plan process, and ways in which the planning team was looking for community feedback. Following the video review, community members were presented interactive exhibits such as dot voting exercises and storyboards to elicit feedback on downtown challenges such as identity, parking access, and gateways.

This meeting created a vibrant interactive atmosphere that encouraged discussion and idea generation from the community that could be recorded and further developed as part of this planning process. These results shaped the direction and focus of final plan recommendations.

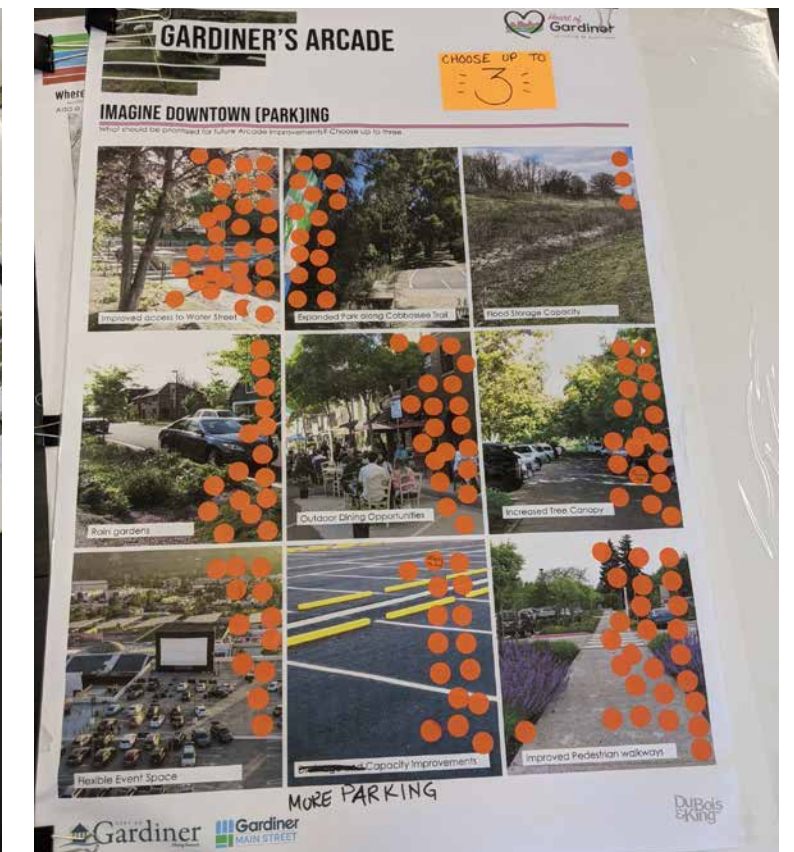
Plan Presentation

This plan's recommendations were presented to the public on the evening of November 4th, 2021. The meeting concluded with a link to the public website where this draft plan was provided for review along with a feedback form.

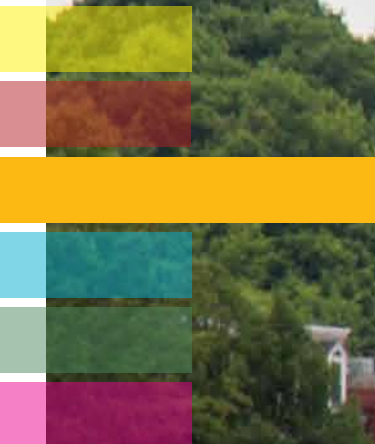
Following a public feedback and plan revision period, a final draft of this plan was presented to Gardiner City Council on December 1st, 2021.



Images from July 14th Visioning Meeting



Downtown Today



Downtown Today

Defining “Downtown”

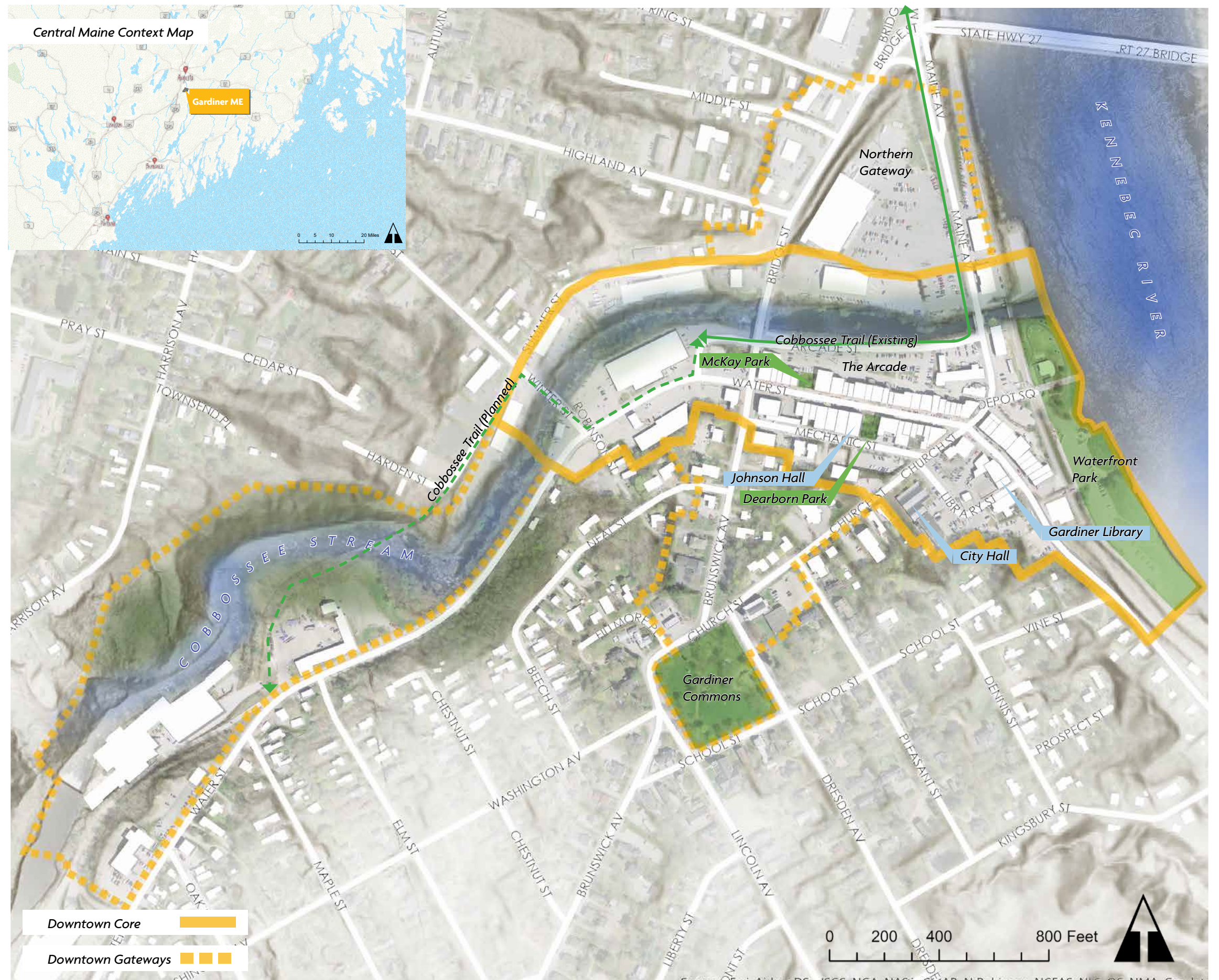
This plan is focused on the core downtown area, surrounding Water Street and the Cobbossee Stream, from approximately Winter Street to the west to the Kennebec waterfront to the east.

Downtown gateways are considered as part of this plan, as their form and function directly affects and influences downtown Gardiner. These gateways extend to the Bridge Street / Main Ave intersection to the north, just past the Oak Street / Water Street intersection to the west, and Gardiner Commons to the south.

Downtown’s Context

Gardiner is located in Central Maine, nestled among the string of communities lining the coast and Kennebec River. Located less than an hour from the economic hub of Portland, and only minutes south of the State Capitol in Augusta, Gardiner is one of many distinct Maine cities accessible from the Interstate 95/295 corridors stretching across the state.

The city is part of the Augusta-Waterville ME Micropolitan Statistical area (comprised of all Kennebec County communities). Gardiner is one of several key economic engines within this micropolitan area, along with Hallowell, Augusta, and Waterville.



Downtown Comparables

Comparing Downtown Gardiner to other cities in Maine helps gain a sense of where Downtown falls among peer communities.

Downtown Bath and Downtown Skowhegan were selected as similar scale downtowns in similar contexts to Gardiner - all three cities were built in a similar era along the shores of the Kennebec River. The following pages illustrate these Downtown's relative walkability, parking access, open space, impervious coverage, road volumes and flood risk zones.

Downtown Gardiner, ME

The Downtown area identified for Gardiner is bounded by the Kennebec River to the east, the northern banks of the Cobbossee to the North, and the plateau of residential homes to the south southwest, above Mechanic Street. This downtown area encompasses 36 acres

Downtown Bath, ME

The Downtown area for Bath was developed through reference to multiple downtown promotional brochures, and is bounded by the Kennebec River to the East, Washington and Water Street to the West, Summer Street to the north, and Route 1 to the South. This downtown area encompasses 26 acres.

Downtown Skowhegan, ME

This Downtown area was developed through reference to multiple downtown parking and promotional brochures available online. It is Bounded by the Kennebec River to the South, Pleasant and High Street to the North, North Ave to the east and Bennett Ave to the West. This downtown area encompasses 28 acres.



Walkability

Measuring the amount of dedicated pedestrian infrastructure in a compact town is one way to walkability.

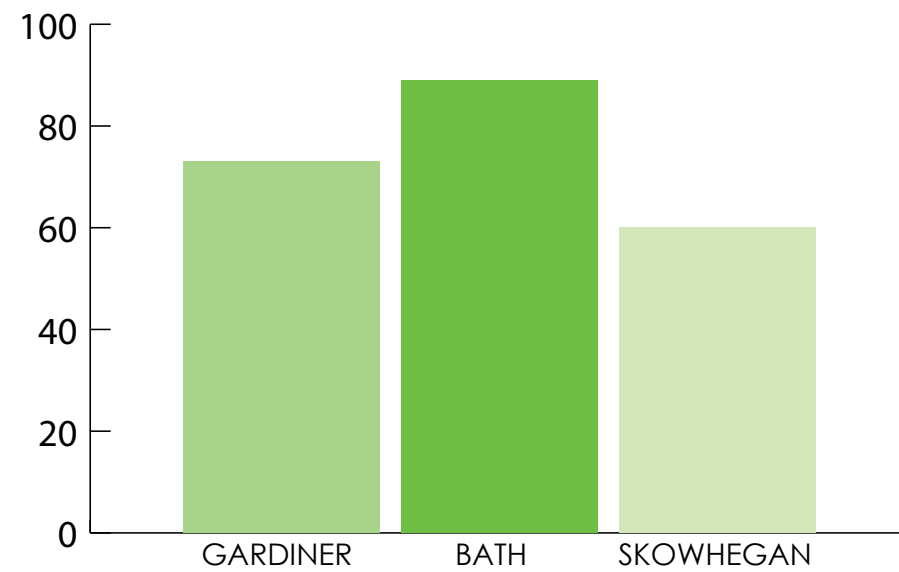
73 percent of Gardiner's downtown streets have sidewalk along one side or another. This coverage places Downtown in the middle of the pack for overall sidewalk coverage. Linking the walkable downtown core of Water Street with the 'gateways' to downtown would be one way to improve upon these existing conditions.

Another metric to consider when comparing walkability between communities is walkscore. Walkscore.com is an online database that ranks communities on their relative walkability. These figures are developed based on what goods and services can be safely and comfortably accessed from a majority of residential locations. Walkscore ranks communities on a scale of 0-100.

Gardiner's Walkscore is 64. Bath's Walkscore is 73. Skowhegan's Walkscore is 60.

Parking Access

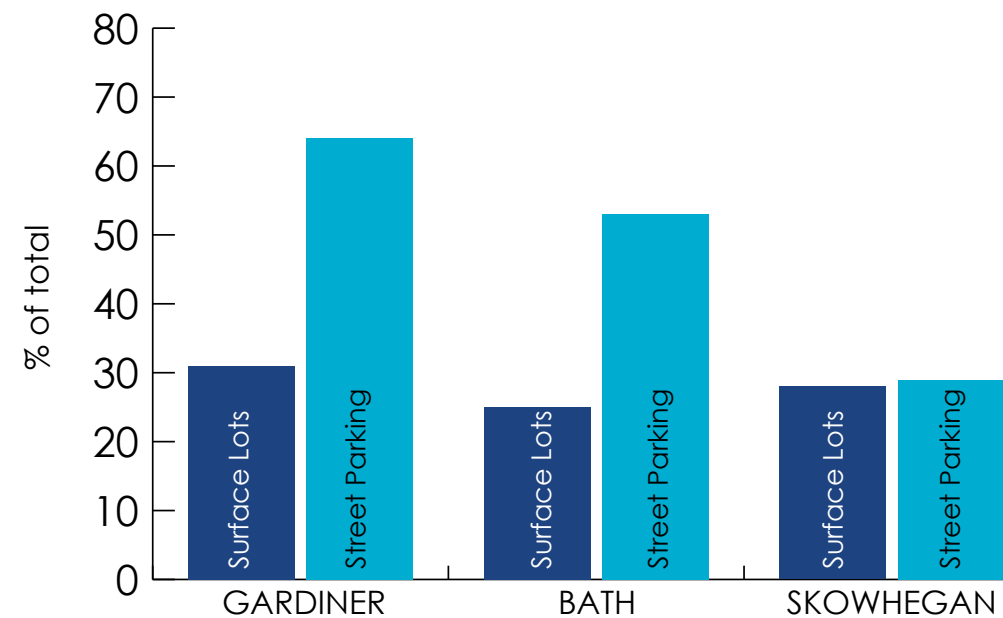
Gardiner's downtown has ample parking supply when compared with Bath or Skowhegan. Nearly a third (31 percent) of Gardiner's downtown area is dedicated to surface parking. This is slightly more than Bath or Skowhegan's allotments. Another significant resource for downtown parking in Gardiner is the amount of on-street parking available. 64 percent of Gardiner's public streets have parking available, which is much more than Bath (53 percent) and Skowhegan (28 percent).



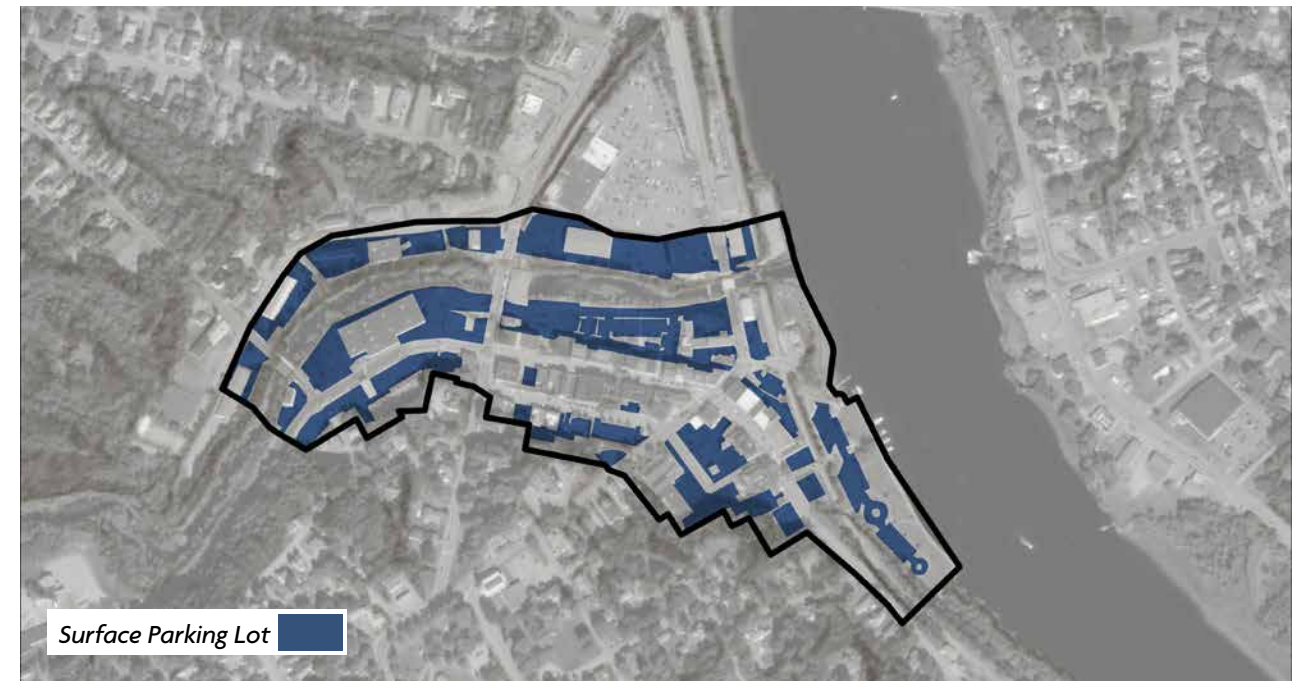
Percent of Downtown Streets with Sidewalk



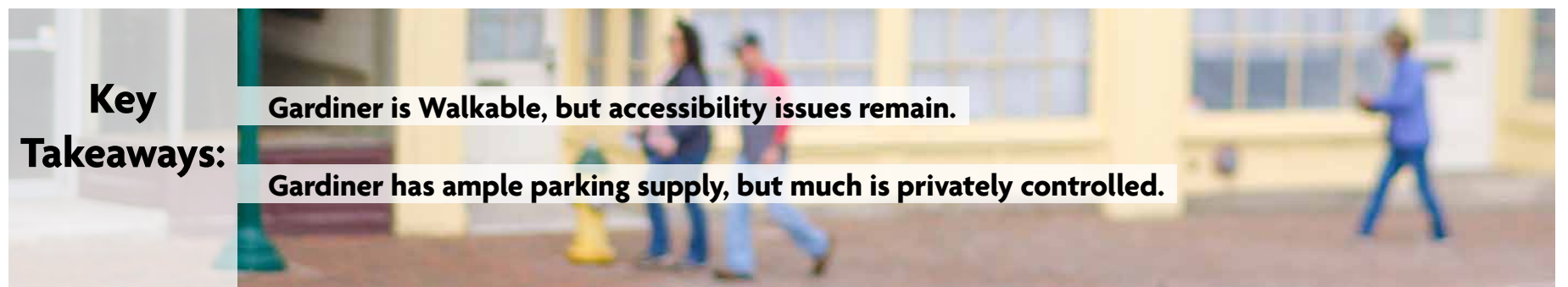
Gardiner Downtown Sidewalk Coverage



Downtown surface parking percentages & on street parking percentages



Gardiner Downtown Surface Parking Opportunities



Key Takeaways:

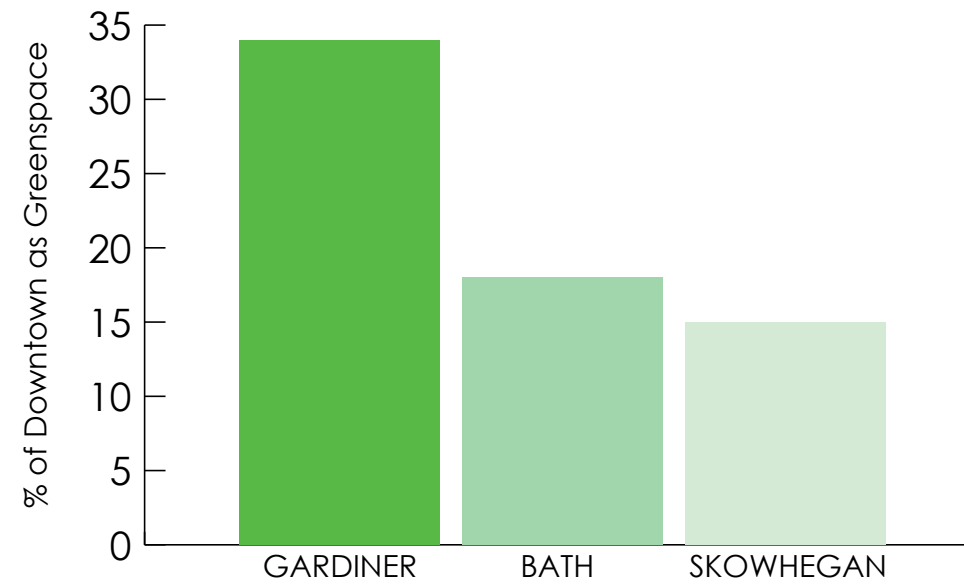
Gardiner is Walkable, but accessibility issues remain.

Gardiner has ample parking supply, but much is privately controlled.

Open Space

Gardiner is green. This simple statement rings true when comparing Gardiner to nearly any other small downtown in Maine or New England. With Waterfront Park and Cobbossee Stream anchoring the services of downtown, Gardiner is surrounded by beautiful, usable park space and waterfront.

Gardiner's downtown is 34 percent green space, which is far more than Bath's or Skowhegan's 16 and 15 percent values.



Downtown Green space Percentages

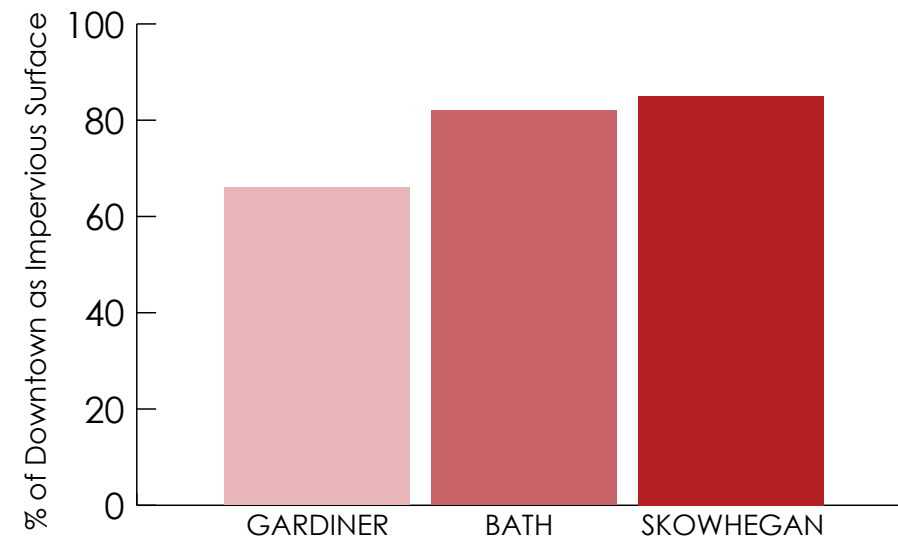


Gardiner Downtown Green and Open Spaces

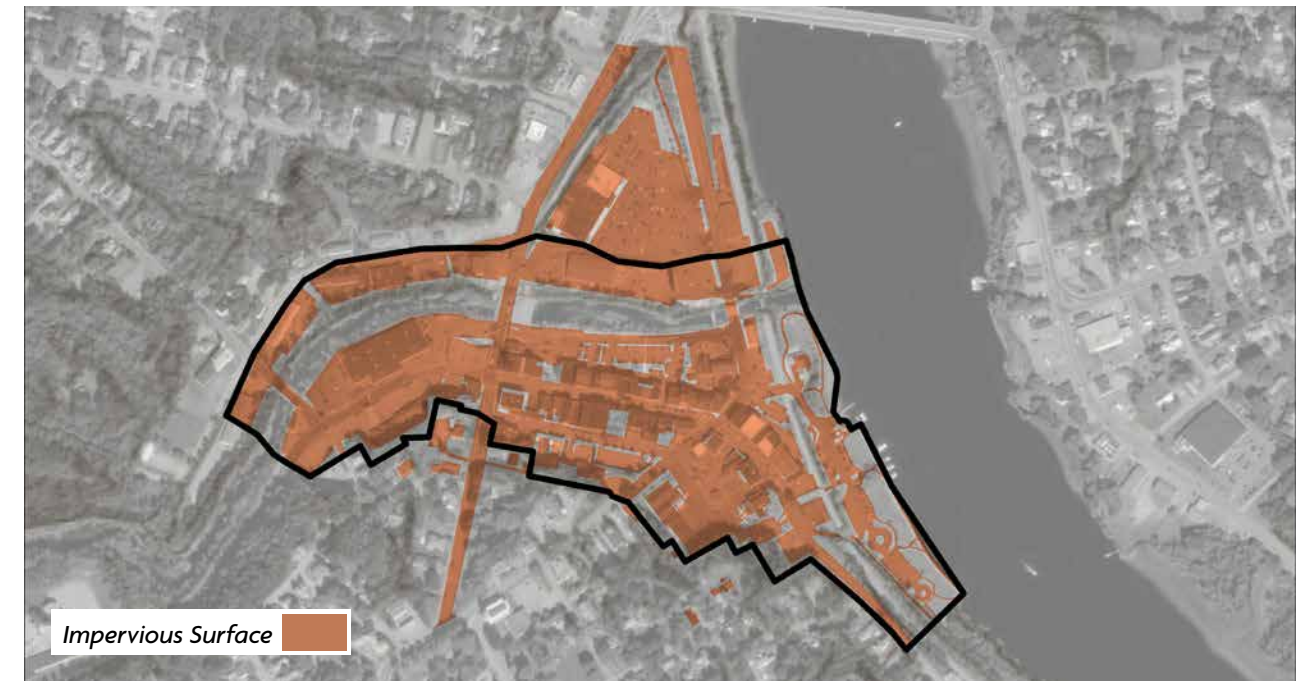
Impervious Coverage

Streets, sidewalks, parking lots, buildings. What all of these elements have in common is their ability to keep water running, rather than percolate into the ground. These surfaces increase stormwater runoff volumes, contributing to flood hazards during severe storm events.

Approximately 66 percent of Gardiner is covered in impervious surfaces. That's less than Bath (84 percent) or Skowhegan (85 percent). Thanks to the Cobbossee Corridor and Waterfront Park, Gardiner has less impervious coverage downtown than either Bath or Skowhegan, but still a significant amount.



Relative Percent of downtown core covered by impervious surfaces.



Gardiner's Impervious Surface Coverage

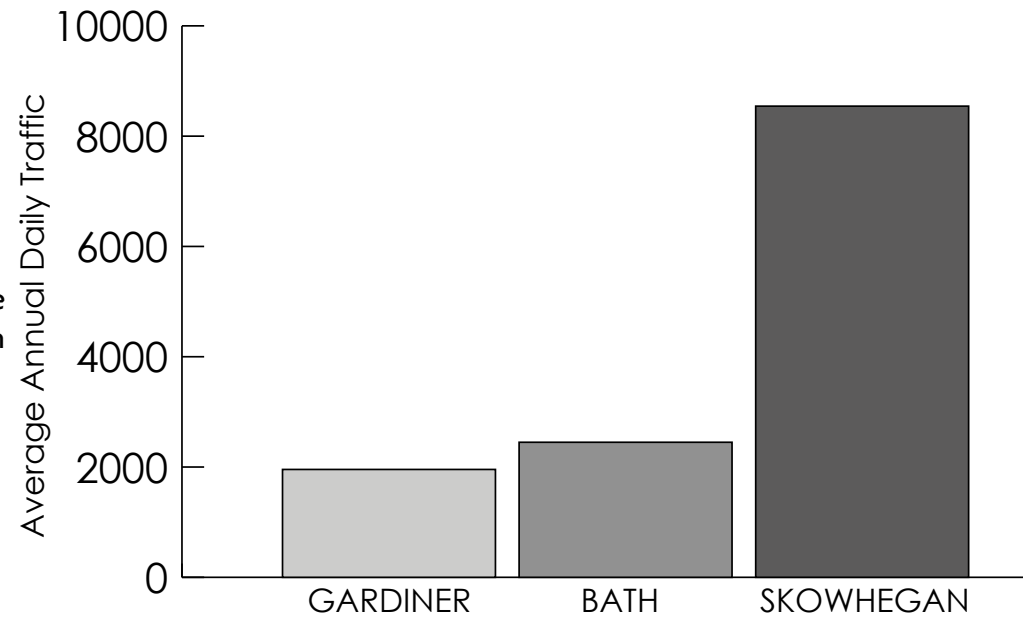
Key Takeaway:

Relative to any Maine Downtown, Gardiner is Green.

Road Volumes

Gardiner's Downtown Water Street is a great place to walk. Unlike the State Highway running through Skowhegan, Gardiner's downtown is low traffic and family friendly, creating an ideal walking and shopping environment. But how do we make sure more people see this ideal environment if they are not driving through?

Bath's downtown roadway structure is similar to Gardiner's in many respects, with an only marginally higher downtown road volume, also relying on a one-way street to convey visitors through the downtown core.



Major Downtown Road Volumes (AADT)



Skowhegan, ME



Bath, ME



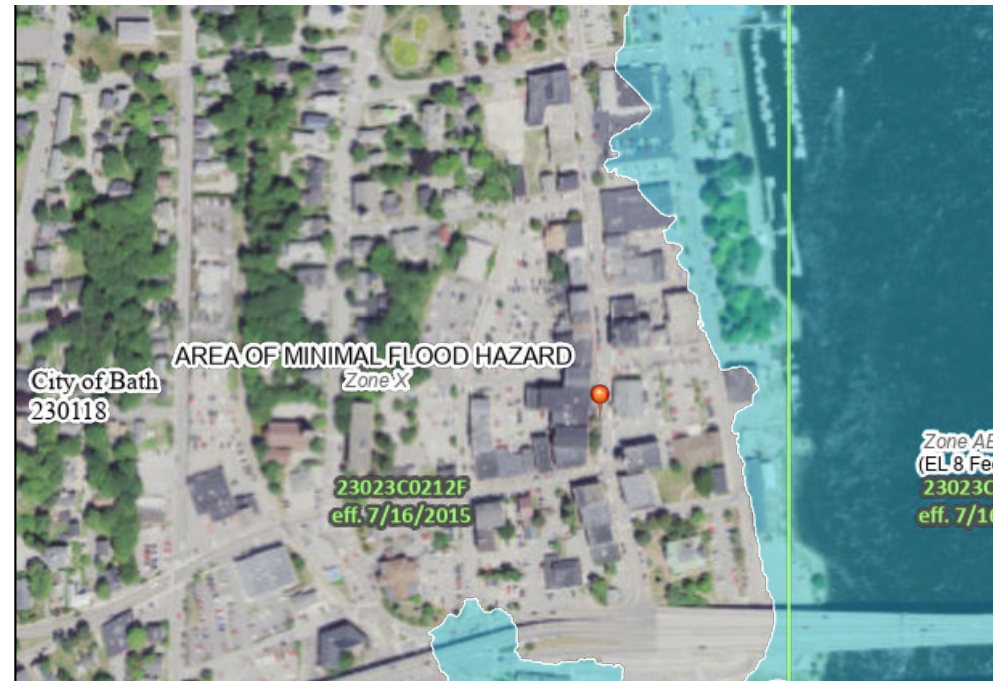
Gardiner, ME

Downtown Roadway Volumes

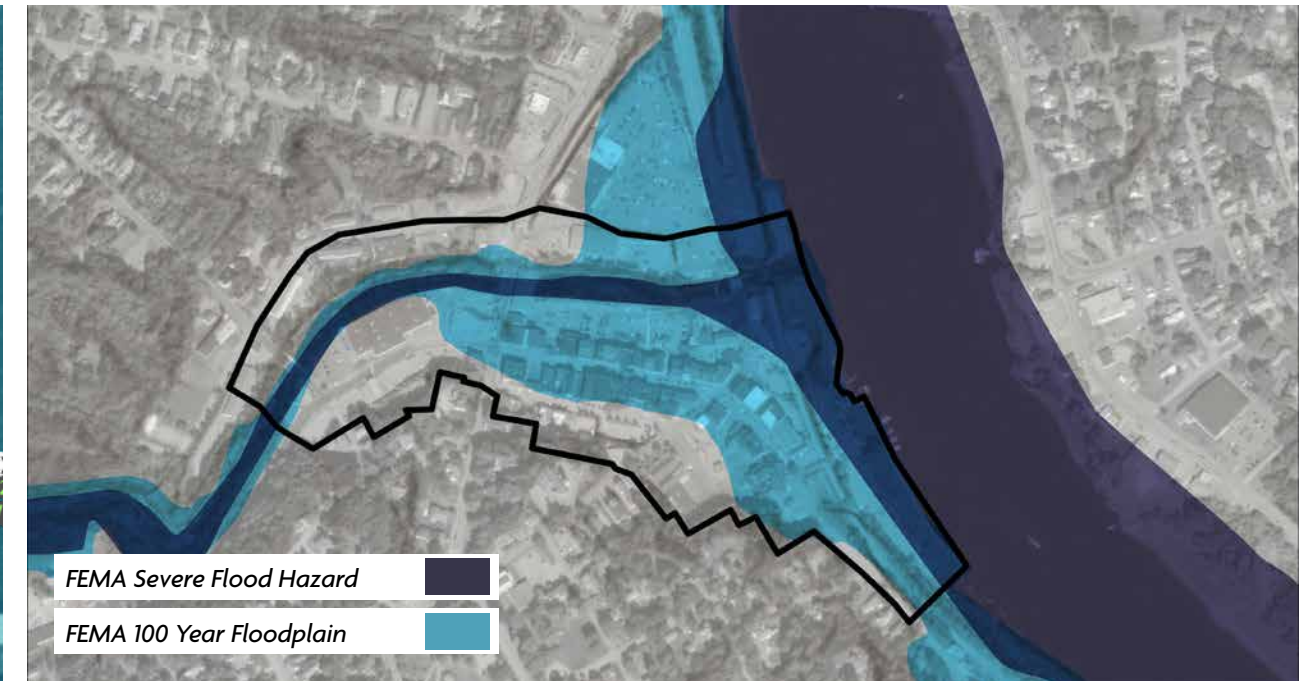
Flood Risk Zones

According to national FEMA datasets, 58 percent of Gardiner's downtown is located within the 100 year floodplain. Only 14% of Bath's downtown is at risk for flooding. Official flood data for Skowhegan was unavailable at the time of this printing.

All communities built alongside significant bodies of water are at risk for flood, and the current era of climate change only exacerbates that concern.



Bath's Flood Risk Zone



Downtown Gardiner's Flood Risk Zones



Key Takeaways:

Downtown's Main Street is a great place for families, but how do more people get to see it?

Flooding has been, and will continue to be a significant challenge for downtown.

Downtown Resiliency

As environmental conditions change, significant weather events are becoming more common and more severe. Downtown Gardiner has been impacted by repeated and significant flooding over the past 200 years. While there has not been a significant flood of the Downtown since April of 2005, it is important to recognize that as the potential for severe weather increases, so too, does the risk of flooding in Downtown Gardiner.

For Gardiner, the risk of disruption to its local economy due to severe flooding is substantial. In a 2021 report from the First Street Foundation ([3rd National Risk Assessment: Infrastructure on the Brink](#)), Gardiner was identified as having the greatest proportion of risk to commercial properties and infrastructure in the state of Maine. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of Gardiner's historic downtown is located within the mapped FEMA floodplain. This puts the businesses at the heart of this Downtown Master Plan at risk.

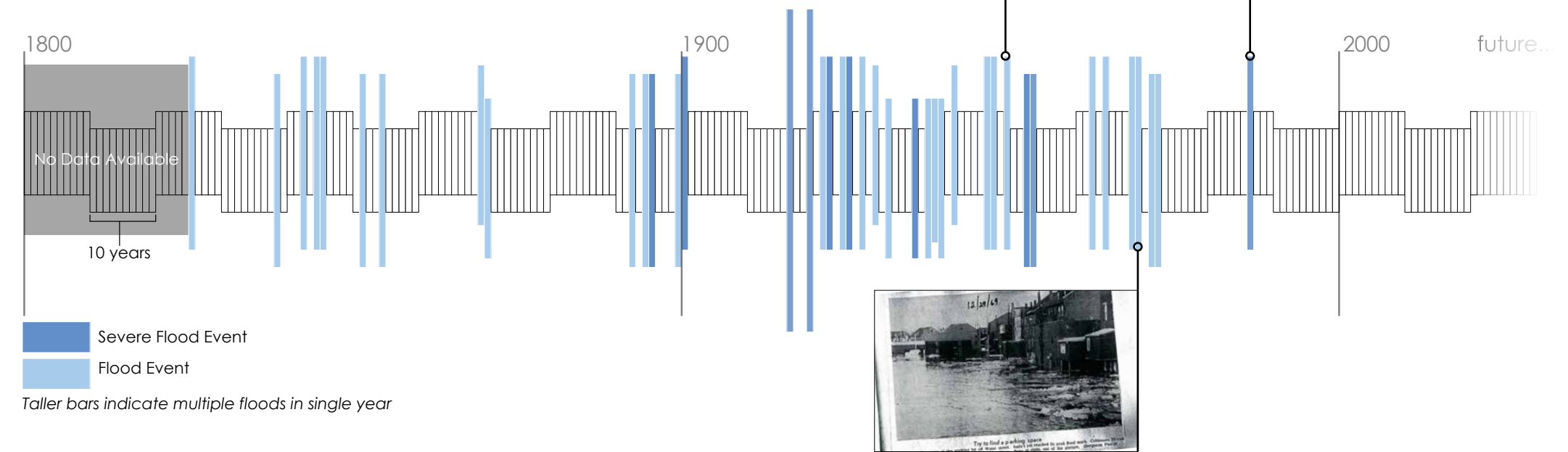
Why Does it Flood Downtown?

Gardiner's location and relative elevation create the opportunity for flooding. Located at the confluence of the Cobbosseecontee and Kennebec Rivers, the sheer volume of water that flows from upstream watersheds is significant. The Cobbosseecontee river watershed alone covers more than 200 square miles of land area. During a significant weather event, rain and snowmelt in the watershed will ultimately find their way to the river and flow downstream to the Kennebec and Gardiner.

Gardiner's downtown is relatively low in elevation, and slopes gently downhill towards the Kennebec and Cobbosseecontee rivers. While this creates a beautiful and inviting connection between the downtown and rivers, the low elevation provides floodwater the ability to reach downtown when rivers rise. The Base Flood Elevation (the estimated height of flooding)

Gardiner's Floods

Gardiner Library archives revealed a history of flooding that peaked in frequency during the first half of the 20th century. Though recent years have resulted in improved flood control measures, the certainty of severe storm events in the future mean that flood mitigation and response measures must be part of planning for downtown's future.



identified by FEMA within the Downtown is 24 feet between northern side of Water St and the Cobbosseecontee River. Much of this area is roughly 20 feet in elevation, which means that during a 100-year flooding event, water could be as high as 4 feet within the floodplain north of Water Street. On the northern side of the Cobbosseecontee, elevation is similar. Within the mapped FEMA Flood Hazard Area in Gardiner's Downtown, there are more than 71 unique addresses, mostly businesses, that are at risk of significant flooding.

Flood Mitigation Approaches

Approaches to flood mitigation vary significantly depending on location, geography, geology, hydrology and community vision.

Developing a Flood Mitigation Approach

There are a wide range of approaches to mitigating flood risk, but the first step to identifying the best approaches is understanding exactly how and why the flooding occurs.

A Hydraulic and Hydrological (H&H) study should be performed to quantify the volume flow rate of water draining from a watershed (i.e., drainage area), and determine the depth and velocity of flow and forces from flowing water on a surface or at hydraulic structures. H&H studies are essential to develop an approach to mitigate against flood loss in the future.

With a completed H&H analysis, Gardiner can better identify what approaches may be most effective at reducing the potential for flooding. Implementation of an H&H study is described further in the implementation chapter of this document. Such studies may recommend some of the following mitigation measures.

Physical Structure Development

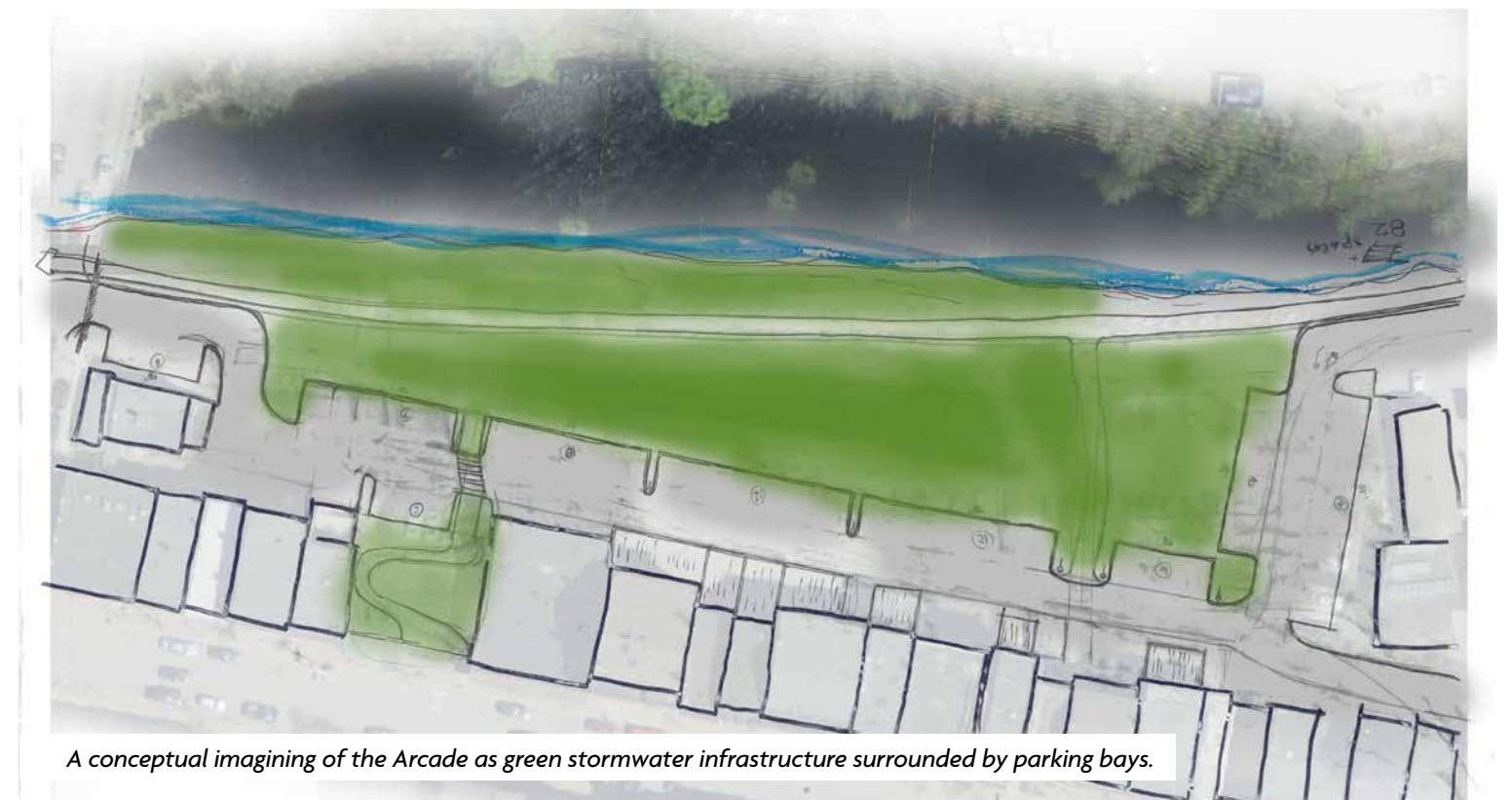
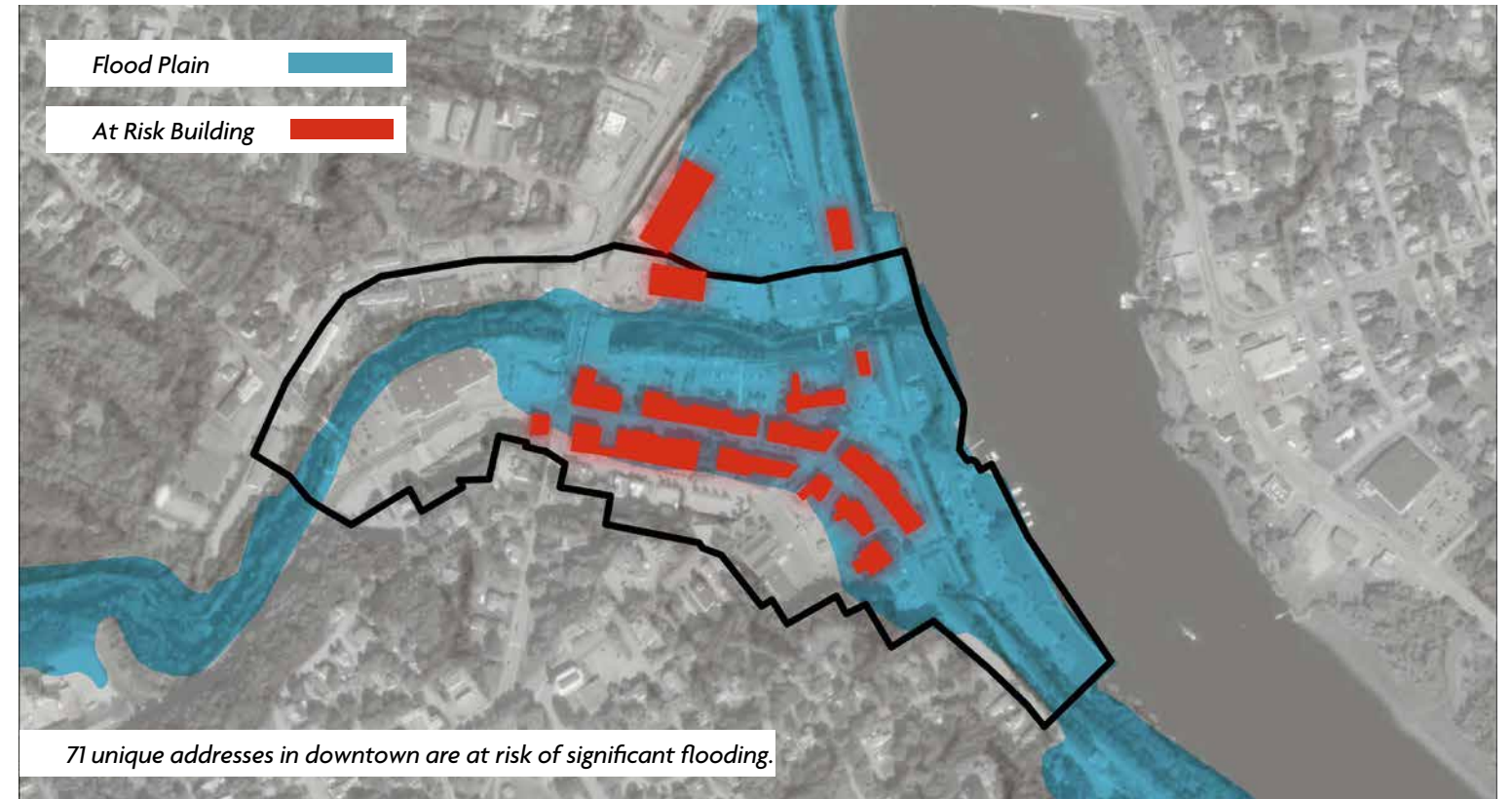
There are many examples where physical structures are used to reduce flooding. These approaches can include levees, dams, weirs and floodwalls that are designed to restrict or redirect the flow of flooding away from buildings and infrastructure.

There are three dam structures on the Cobbosseecontee River just upstream of the Downtown, New Mills Dam, American Tissue Dam and the Gardiner Paperboard dam. While it is possible to improve an existing dam structure in order to increase flood storage, only the New Mills Dam, operated by the Gardiner Water District has flood storage capacity, and its age and construction do not make it suitable for improvement. Additionally, the impacts to adjacent homes on the lake would be significant if flood storage was raised.

Floodwalls could, in theory, be designed so as to limit flooding within the Downtown, but given the area of the Cobbosseecontee watershed, floodwalls could be in the order of 15-20 feet in height, which would have a significant aesthetic impact on the Downtown.

Green Infrastructure

Water can be managed in urban environments through vegetation, soils and natural processes. Infiltration and storage of floodwater occurs in these areas and these landscapes can be engineered to provide significant flood reduction benefits while adding natural beauty to the area. An early concept that was considered as part of this report recognized that the Arcade could be re-imagined park space and green infrastructure, potentially reducing flood impacts downtown.



Flooding and Historic District Regulatory Issues

Gardiner's historic downtown is subject to both the Floodplain Management regulations as well as Historic Preservation Regulations. While the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) provides exemption for flood improvements to buildings that are defined and designated as Historic Structures, Gardiner's Historic District overlay does not specifically address floodproofing approaches within the Floodplain.

Because the current historic district overlay does not address directly acknowledge flooding, building owners must struggle between floodplain requirements and historic regulation requirements that may be at odds.

Section 15 (Floodplain Management) of Gardiner's Land Use Ordinance includes requirements that all new construction or substantial improvements to existing buildings in the Floodplain (Zone AE) must be brought into conformance with regulations which include:

- 15.6.7.1 Zone AE shall have the lowest floor (including basement) elevated to at least one foot above the base flood elevation
- 15.6.7.1.1 Be flood-proofed to at least one foot above the base flood elevation so that below that elevation the structure is watertight with walls substantially impermeable to the passage of water
- 15.6.7.1.2 Have structural components capable of resisting hydrostatic and hydrodynamic loads and the effects of buoyancy; and

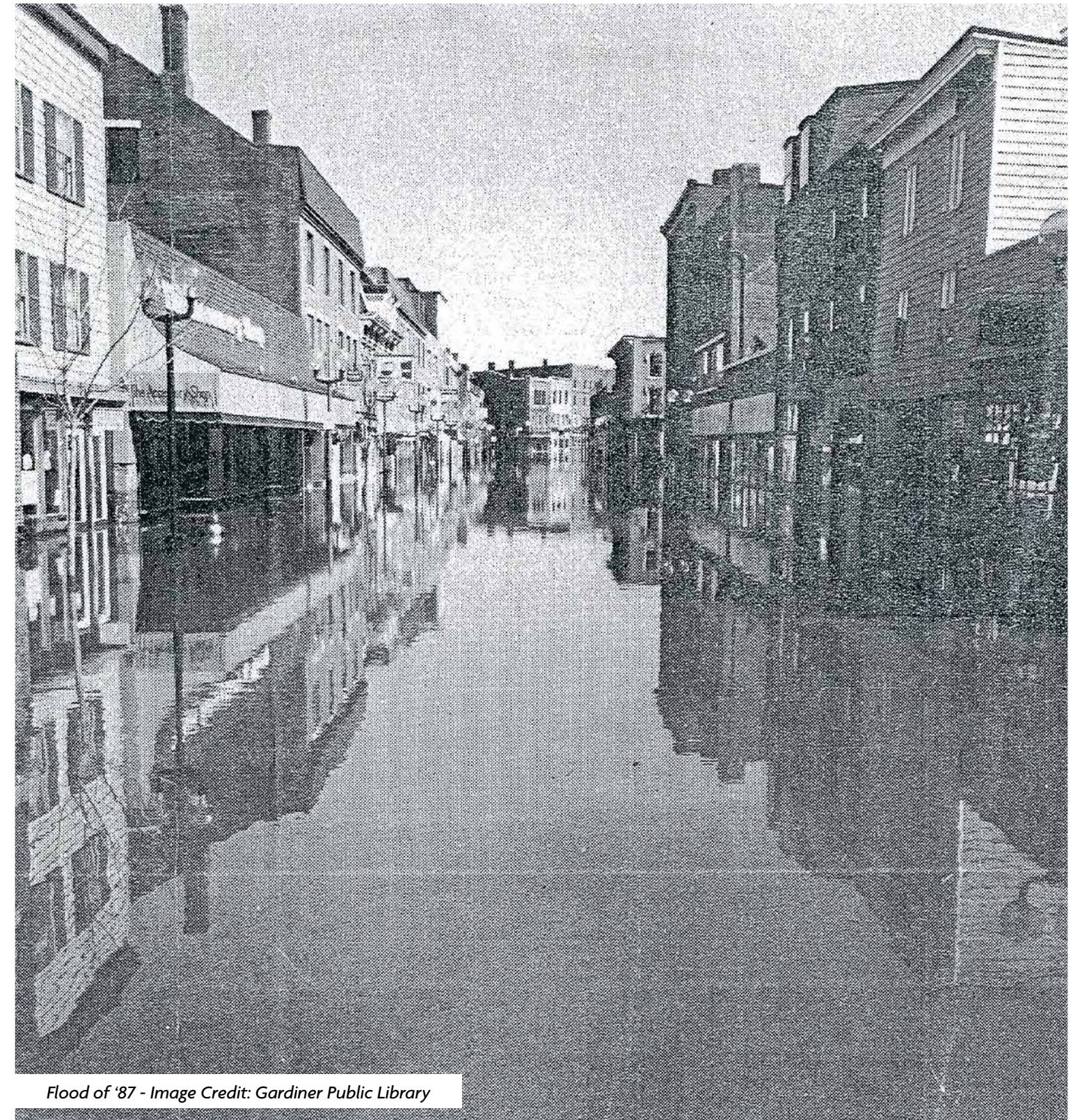
- 15.6.7.1.3 Be certified by a registered professional engineer or architect that the floodproofing design and methods of construction are in accordance with accepted standards of practice for meeting the provisions of this Section. Such certification shall be provided with the application for a flood hazard development permit, as required by section 15.3.11 and shall include a record of the elevation above mean sea level to which the structure is floodproofed.

These types of improvements to historic structures are extremely challenging and costly to implement. They require an engineering study to determine whether the structure is physically capable of accommodating the influences of flooding once flood proofing has been installed.

In contrast, section 12 of Gardiner's Land Use Ordinance (Historic Preservation) does not mention flooding within its regulations. This section establishes that as part of the permitting process for new construction and alteration, within the Historic District, developers must receive a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Gardiner Historic Commission. One of the key standards upon which the Commission must base its decision is the "U.S. Department of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, (1995)."

In recent years, updated guidance has been published by the Department of the Interior regarding historic structure flood mitigation and management: The Secretary of Interior's [Guidelines on Flood Adaptation for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings \(2019\)](#).

The Historic Preservation chapter of Gardiner's Land Use Ordinance should be amended to require the Commission to utilize these updated guidelines for any substantial improvements to historic structures in the floodplain. Such a regulatory change can provide the owners of historic commercial properties in the floodplain an avenue to implement flood mitigation approaches that protect their property as well as its historic value.



Flood of '87 - Image Credit: Gardiner Public Library

Downtown Tomorrow



This chapter explores the ways in which Gardiner's downtown can continue to grow, improve, and capitalize on its assets. This chapter compares elements of Downtown in 2021 with visions of improvements that can improve Gardiner's sense of place, transportation systems, and local economy.

Gardiner in Motion

This segment explores transportation improvements that can leverage recent investments in the Cobbossee Trail, improve parking access downtown, and enhance the gateways and universal access to Downtown Gardiner.

Gardiner is Green

This segment explores ways to make downtown an inviting place, through redesign of the Arcade to accommodate more parking access and less asphalt coverage, expansion of the Cobbossee trail to the northern side of the river, and the addition of green stormwater infrastructure throughout downtown.

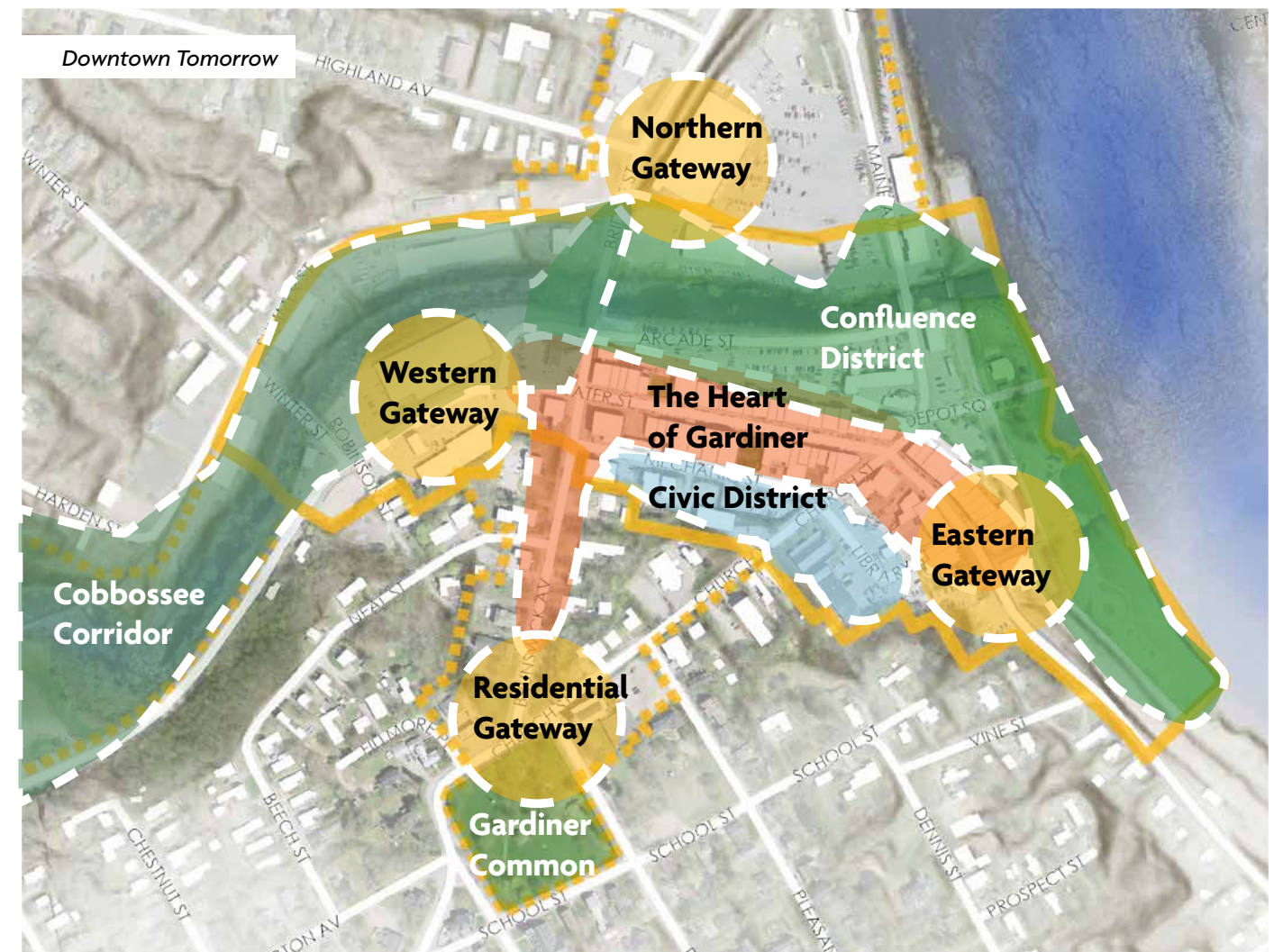
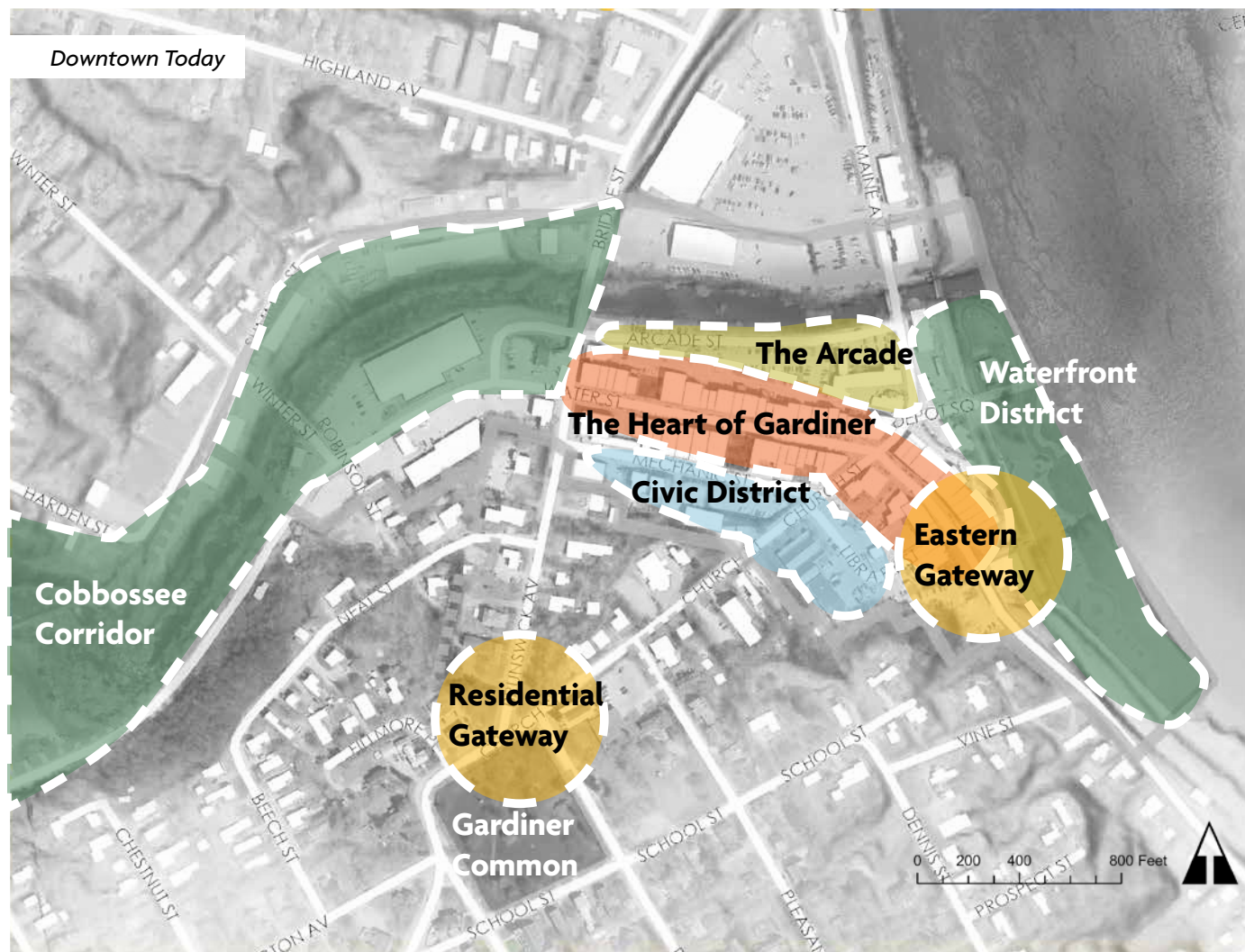
Gardiner's Identity, Gardiner's Economy

Gardiner is a beautiful and historic Maine downtown, with incredible assets and character. Building an identity and story out of these elements should be a next step to grow Gardiner's Downtown Economy and promote the City center as a great place to live, work and invest.



Downtown Districts

Water Street's historic buildings and streetscape are the Heart of Gardiner. This plan proposes that other districts surrounding the Water Street core should be looked to as assets that can be linked together to create a contiguous set of Downtown Districts which are instantly recognizable from any point of entrance, and which expand the economic development potential and Historic Character of the Heart of Gardiner



Downtown Details

Downtown Gardiner has a unique character that is formed of distinctive colors, materials, and objects. These elements work together to create a sense of place specific to Downtown Gardiner. It is important to note that no single component changes the feel of a downtown street or park, but rather the components interact to illustrate a specific identity. Incorporating these elements into gateway corridors and other improvements connected to downtown will make the surrounding areas feel like a more connected and cohesive place.



Granite Blocks act as seats, bollards, or decoration



Wood benches with Gardiner Green accents



Brick and granite are key paver elements throughout downtown



Street Trees provide shade and traffic calming.



Brick pavers highlight Gardiner's New England charm and visually separate pedestrian areas from the road



Recent outdoor dining improvements leverage these elements and add vegetation and fencing



The Gardiner Green lampposts are distinctive and regular presence throughout downtown



Gardiner Green bike racks contrast with red bricks and invite multi modal access downtown.

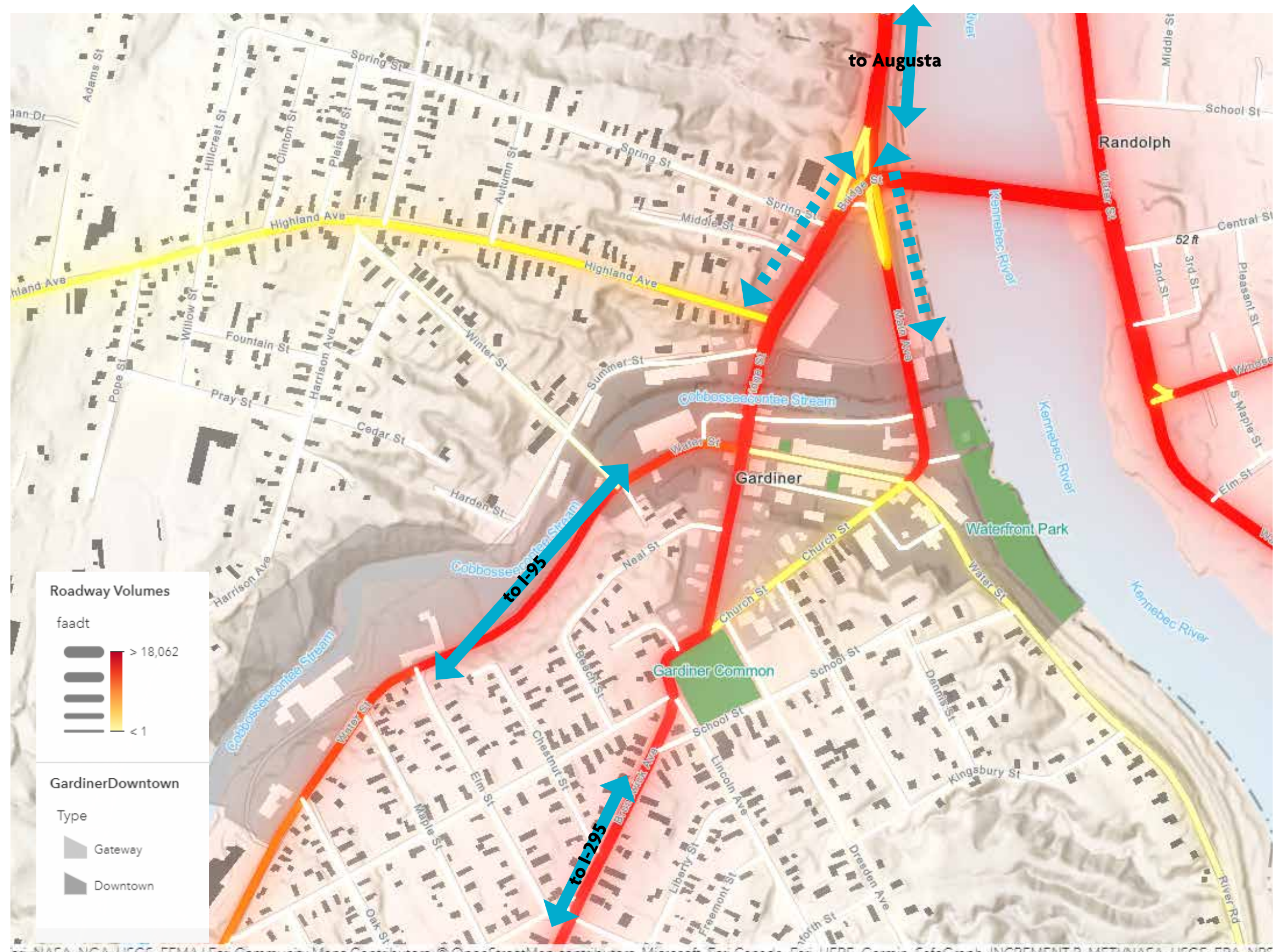
Gardiner in Motion

Traffic Volumes

The main routes for motor vehicles to access Gardiner include Water Street (Route 126), Brunswick Ave (Route 201) and Maine Ave (Route 201 and Route 24) and Bridge Street (Route 9, Route 126, and Route 27).

Bridge Street has some of the highest traffic volumes, between 10,000 and 18,000 vehicles per day. Water Street, Brunswick Ave, and Maine Ave all bring between 5,500-9,500 vehicles per day in and out of downtown Gardiner.

Local streets and neighborhood streets have lower traffic volumes since there is less through traffic. Most of the other streets in Gardiner have traffic volumes below 2,000 vehicles per day.

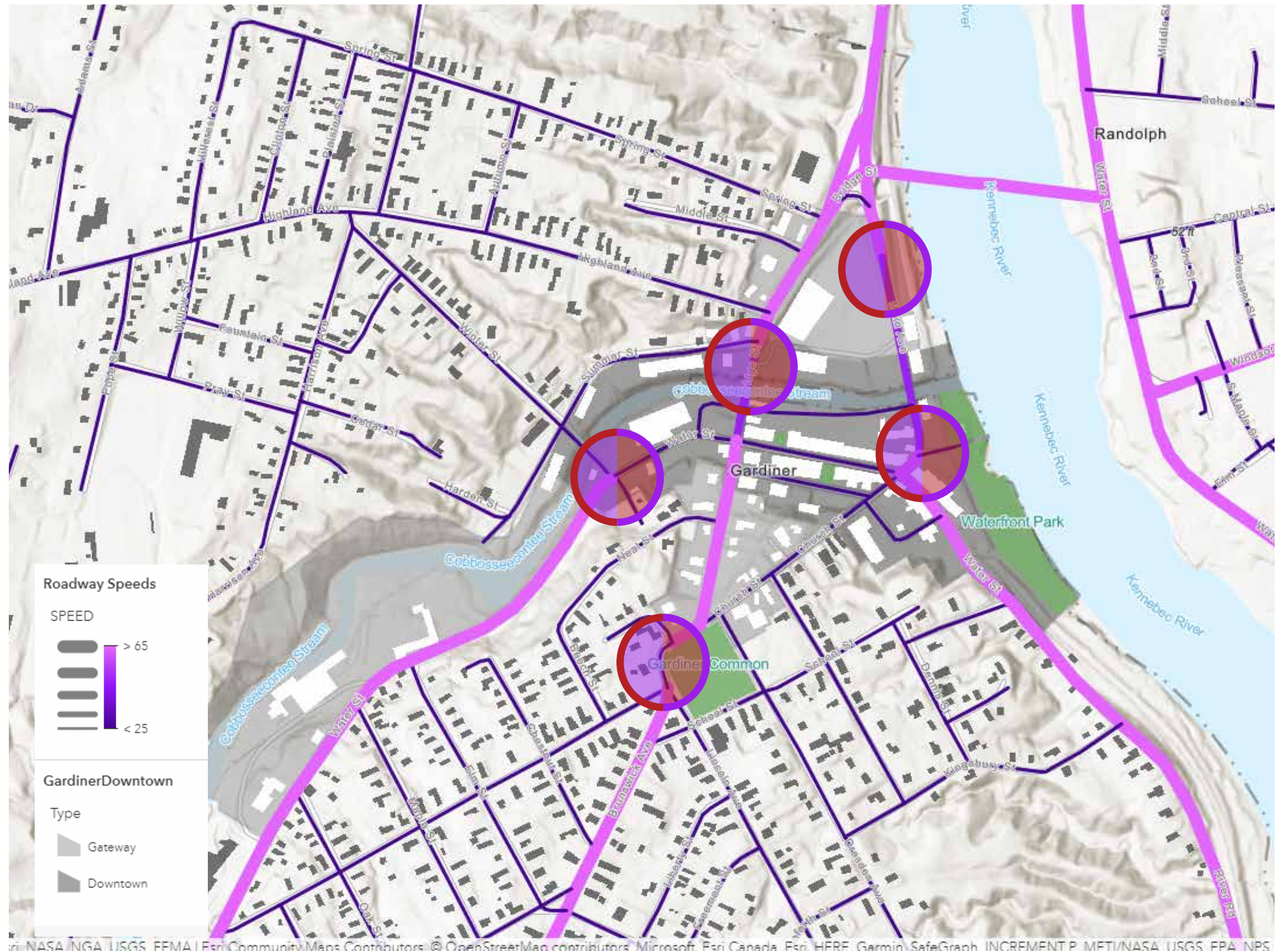


Speed Limits & Changes

In Gardiner, the speed limits tend to be highest on roads that also have the highest traffic volumes. These corridors have higher levels of vehicle mobility than other downtown or neighborhood streets. The interface of these high mobility corridors with downtown and neighborhood streets should provide safe transitions from a high speed to low speed roadways. These transitions should also provide access to more businesses and be safe for people walking. The locations of these transition areas are identified at right.

These high-to-low speed transition areas highlight where property redevelopment and redesign of streetscapes can create gateways into the Heart of Gardiner. Research shows that simply reducing the speed limit does not slow traffic, but changes to the built environment does.

Changes to the streetscape to promote traffic calming and beautification in these areas are key to creating an environment that supports a walkable, vibrant downtown Gardiner.



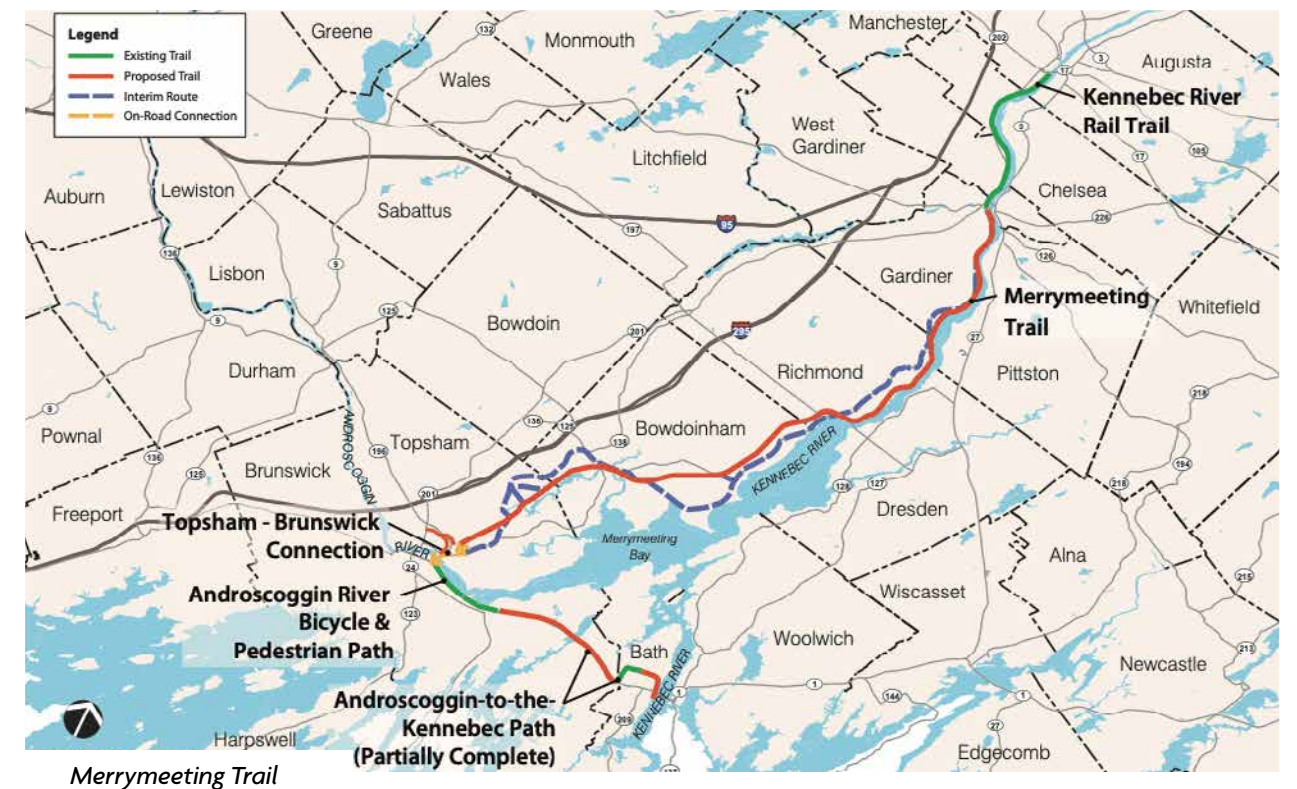
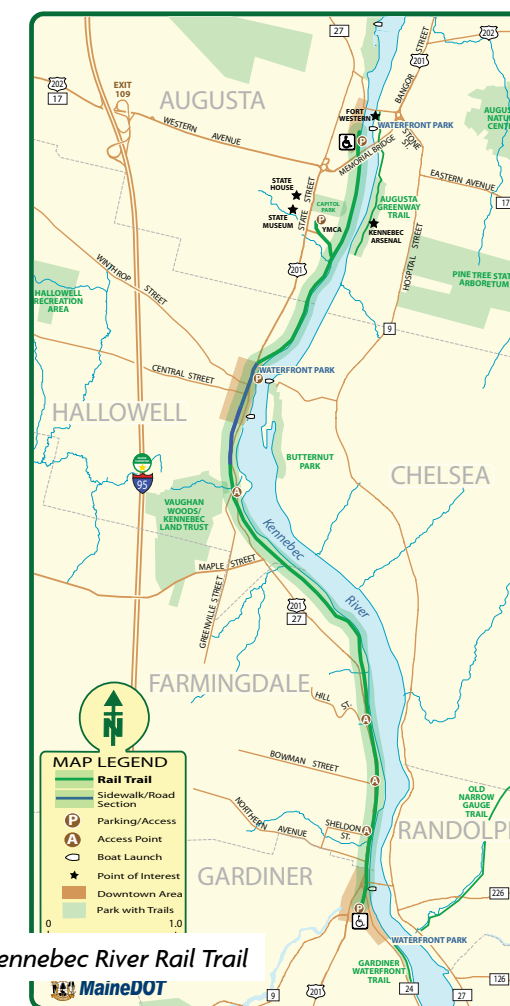
Trail Network

Downtown Gardiner sits at the confluence not only of two rivers, but of three trail networks. The Merrymeeting trail (and Kennebec River Rail Trail (KRRT)) have recently been connected to the Cobbossee Trail, which in itself is now part of the larger East Coast Greenway.

The completion of these trail networks holds significant placemaking and economic activity potential for Downtown Gardiner, and future improvements to trail access in downtown should seek to bring them together in Gardiner's existing asset of Waterfront Park.

In recent years, Gardiner and Maine DOT have recognized this potential, and have recently improved the Cobbossee River Trail to include a pedestrian bridge crossing over the Cobbossee, and improved connectivity west. These improvements should continue to further extend the Cobbossee Trail as part of the broader East Coast Greenway, and a hub within an expanded Kennebec River Rail Trail connecting south to Brunswick.

The East Coast Greenway is a 3000 mile rail trail that links all major cities of the Atlantic Coast, from Calais Maine to Key West Florida. As such, it is a network of dedicated trails, dirt paths, and shared roadways. The more that Gardiner can extend its network of trails to service this corridor, the more it will become a destination, drawing recreation based economic value from its strategic position in this national resource.



Gateways

Downtown Gardiner's sense of place should have well defined gateways which make clear the entrance to the Heart of Gardiner.

Currently, the most well defined gateway is the eastern gateway, located at the intersection of Water Street and Church Street. Surrounded by historic buildings, brick sidewalks, and a four way stop, it makes clear to any traveler that they have arrived.

However, other gateways are less clearly defined. Development patterns, traffic volumes and speed limit changes point to several opportunities to establish additional gateways to the downtown area.

Western Gateway

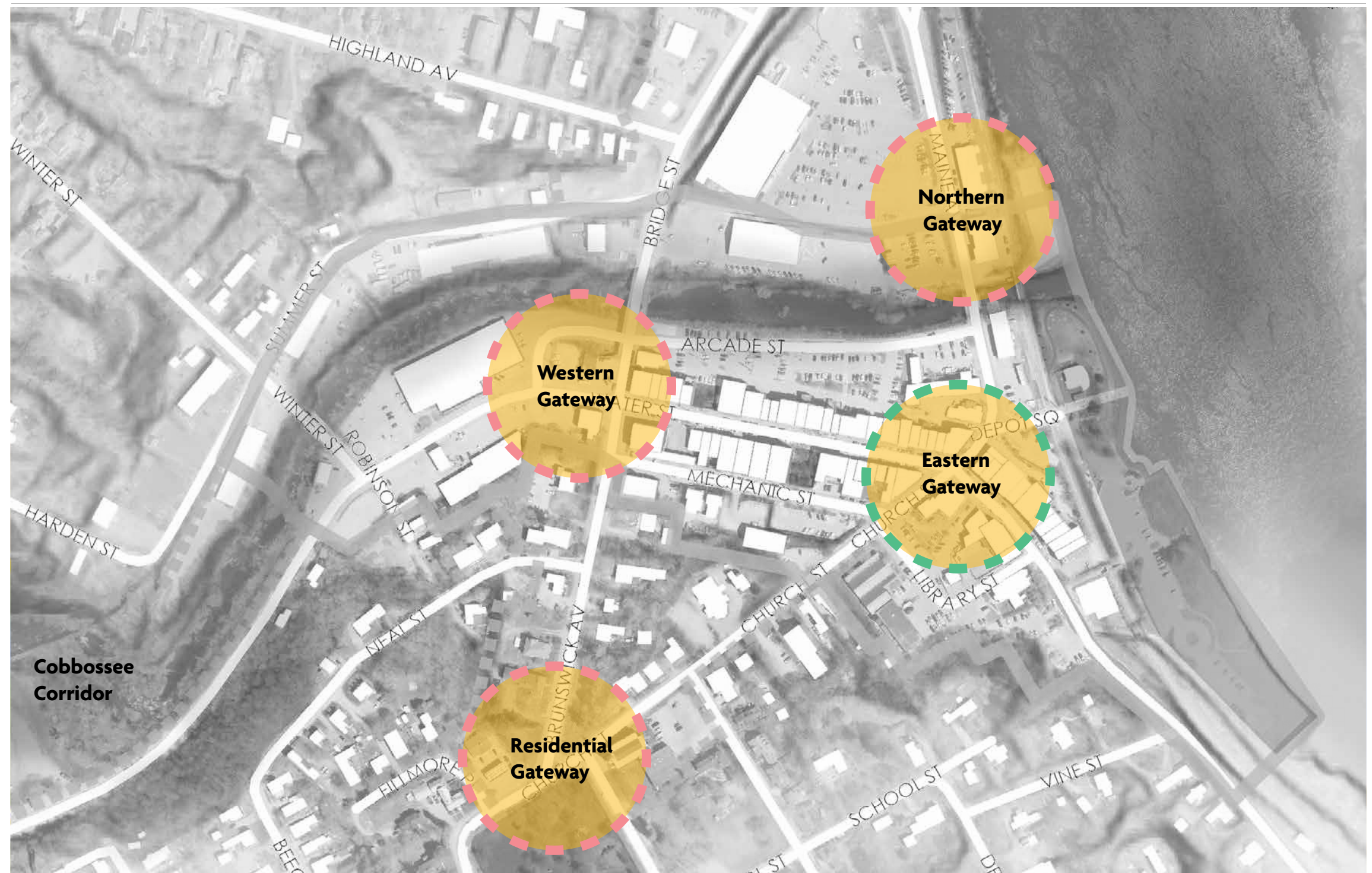
The western edge of Water Street lacks a clearly defined transition, and though the intersection improvements at Water and Bridge Street provide a more polished aesthetic to this intersection, the use of the corner lot as parking lacks the sense of enclosure and potential for commercial development that a building site could bring. In addition, the intersection design does not encourage pedestrian traffic downtown.

Northern Gateway

This gateway is defined by the large Hannaford's lot and related commercial development and large parking areas. Despite being only 30 feet across the Cobbossee from the Historic Downtown, it lacks built environment characteristics that tie it to downtown. This gateway also holds a key connection to link the existing Cobbossee Trail alignment with Waterfront Park.

Residential Gateway

Gardiner Commons welcomes travelers to Gardiner from its hilltop location. The intersections surrounding this park form a natural traffic calming element, and subtle improvements to this intersection could improve safety and



Gateway Redevelopment

Future redevelopment opportunities at key gateways can extend Gardiner's downtown district along Water Street into the Cobbossee Corridor, and north towards Augusta. Some key potential redevelopment opportunities include:

1. TW Dick Lot

This empty lot sits just north of the Bridge Street entrance to Downtown. Redevelopment on this parcel could improve the enclosure of this street space and provide a development opportunity outside of the floodplain. [See the Cobbossee Corridor Master Plan for more details.](#)

2. Northern Gateway Redevelopment

The scale of Hannaford's parking lot creates opportunity for future subdivision and development to create a unique gateway experience. This site is discussed further in this chapter.

3. City Hall

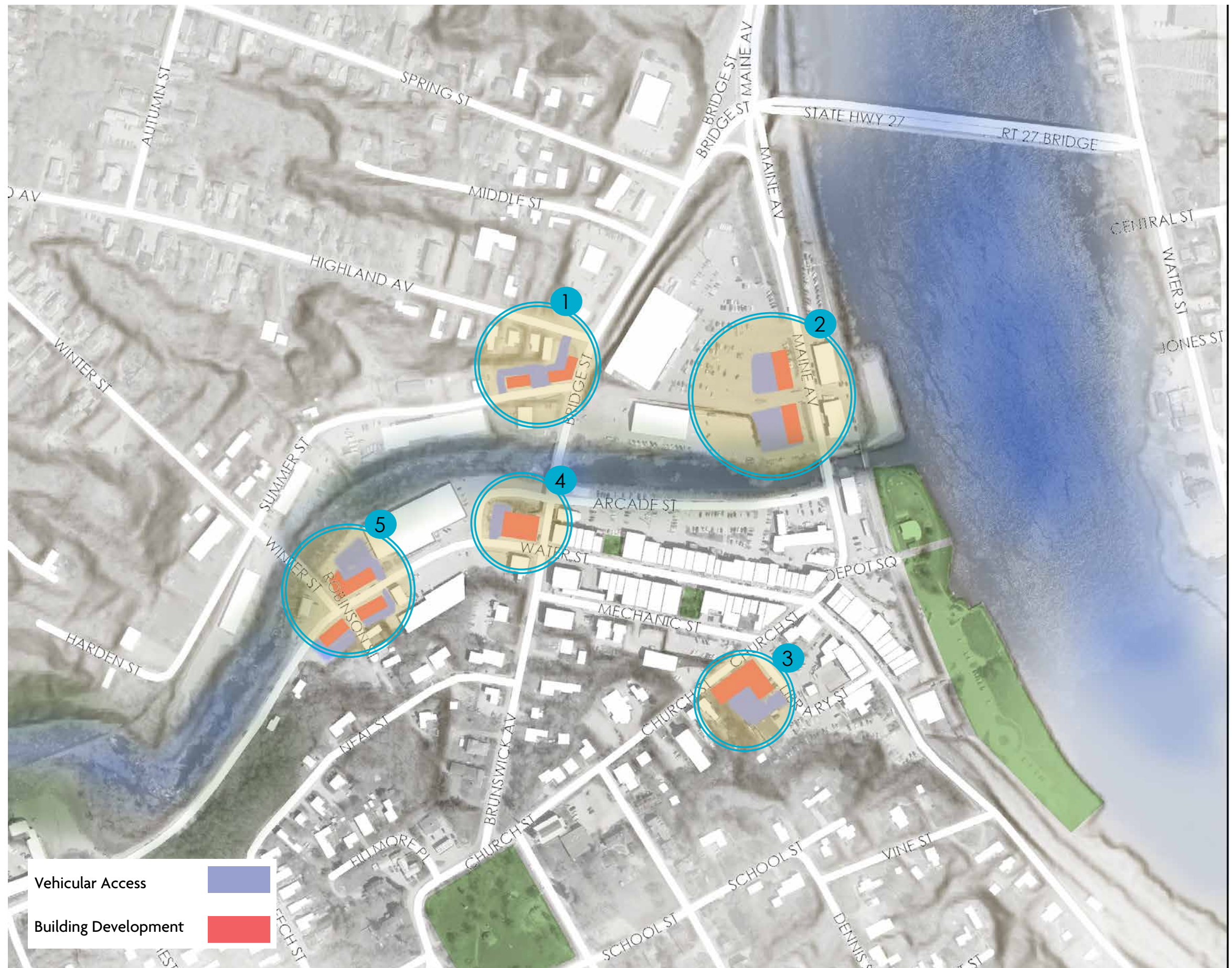
A reimagined City Hall could be developed as a three story mixed use civic project, potentially including housing to increase available housing downtown and access federal housing credits.

4. Bridge & Water Street

This site is crucial to creating a gateway to downtown. The city should work with MDOT to support redevelopment at this site. This site is discussed in greater detail in this chapter.

5. Winter & Water Street

Large open parking areas and proximity to downtown present unique options for redevelopment that could link the Cobbossee Corridor with Downtown Gardiner.



Western Gateway Redevelopment

The 2021 improvements to the Bridge Street Corridor by Maine DOT have improved curbing and brick sidewalks, improved road paving quality and updated crucial infrastructure.

However, the addition of the slip lane (right hand turn only lane) southbound on Bridge Street towards Water Street has negatively impacted the economic potential and walkability of this important cross street and downtown gateway. The sole purpose of this intersection design is to move vehicles through the intersection more quickly. Gardiner Downtown's economy and public safety would benefit from slower traffic moving through this intersection, not faster.

This portion of a parcel lost to the intersection expansion is critical to the viability of the Main Street and increasing the foot traffic downtown. Though the timing may be poor immediately after the recent changes to the intersection, the town should look towards the future and engage with the DOT to remove the slip lane and work with the private sector to develop this corner lot.

With a fourth building on the corner, this gateway to Historic Downtown Gardiner can increase value and tax revenue of all area, much more so than can a unimproved parking area.

In addition, such a project could open up additional development opportunities along outer water street, extending the downtown district along Western Water Street.

This privately owned parcel at 2 Bridge street was a former gas station, and now is an open lot. Though access management requirements and environmental permitting will impact any development on site the potential of this site should not be ignored.

The .27 acre site is compact, accesses Water and Arcade Street, and is located outside of the historic overlay zone, but within the traditional downtown district. Built to compliment the existing character of the downtown, a future development here could be commercial, residential, governmental, or institutional in nature. The former use as a gas station is no longer permitted according to current zoning regulations. The community should set the vision for the building and make sure their objectives are feasible from an economic perspective.



Northern Gateway Redevelopment

1. New Buildings with Road Frontage

As you drive into Gardiner on Maine Avenue from the north, the road begins to feel enclosed by the historic rail building, but Hannaford's parking lot to the west offers a sea of pavement. New building development along Maine Ave would enclose and beautify the road and create a gateway along Bridge Street.

2. Maine Ave Streetscape Improvements

Streetscape improvements along this corridor could narrow the road and provide downtown appropriate traffic calming effects. Such improvements could be installed as part of future redevelopment or roadway projects to extend the Downtown's character to this gateway.

3. Access Improvement

There are currently four curb cuts to access the Hannaford parking area, and one is almost 80 feet wide. Reconfigure this access to have only one lane in each direction to reduce the crosswalk width and amount of pavement in this area. This is particularly relevant considering the sidewalk here is the current crossing of the rail trail.

4. Two-way Road connecting Bridge St and Maine Ave

Maintain this corridor through the parking lot as a more formalized road.

5. Reconfigure and Define Parking Areas

Through the addition of an internal street through this commercial area comes the opportunity to reimagine the parking lots as three distinct units. This would help break up the unbroken asphalt pavement aesthetic, and provide opportunities for Green Stormwater Infrastructure to better define parking lot areas while reducing stormwater runoff.



Residential Gateway

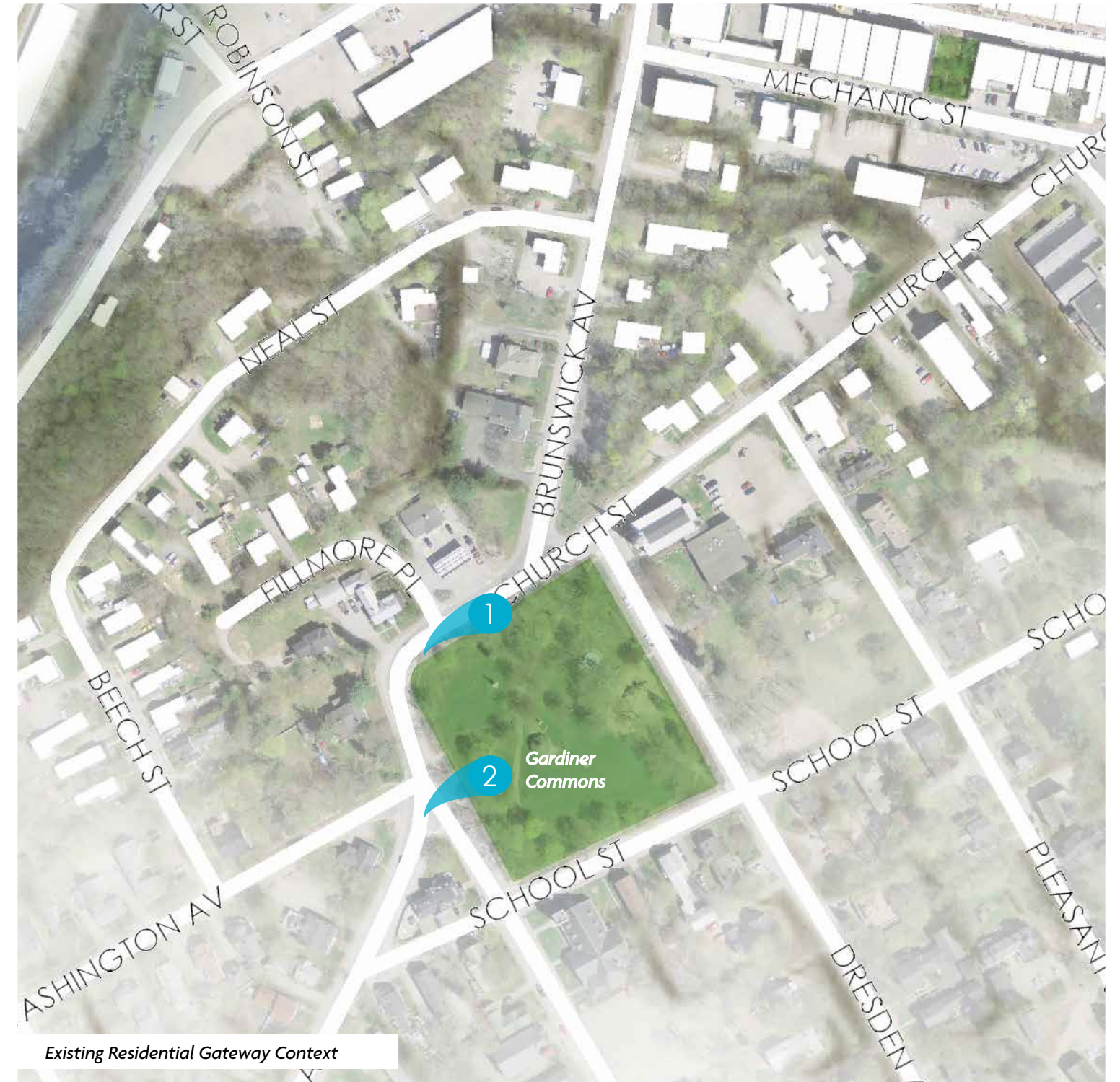
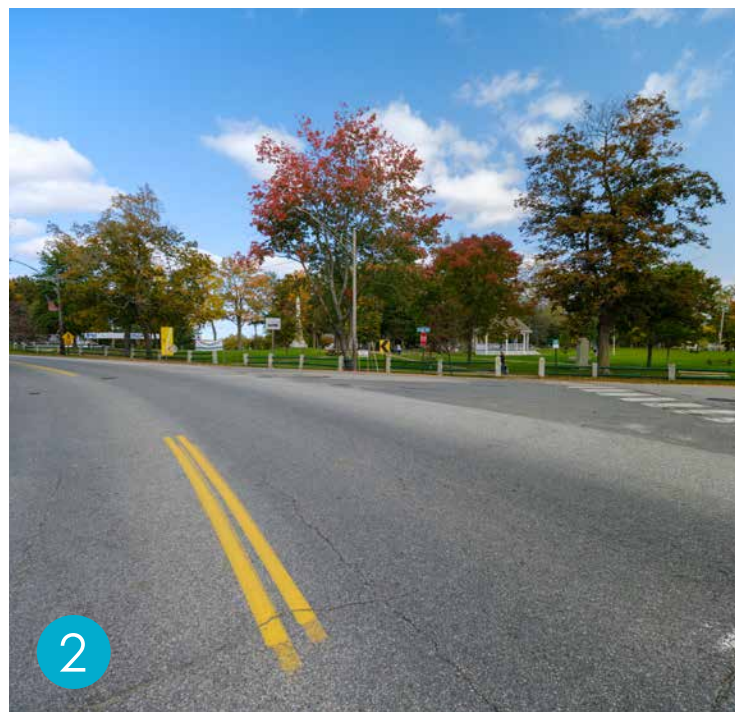
There are a handful of elements along Brunswick Avenue already beginning to contribute to a gateway corridor. These include:

- Trees lining Gardiner Commons
- Curve in the road at Gardiner Commons
- Sidewalk on side streets

These components help reduce vehicle speeds. Other changes and improvements to this area elements can have a compounding effect.

On Brunswick Avenue adjacent to Gardiner Common, add streetscape elements that reflect downtown's character using components like granite curbing, green metal bike racks and benches. Next time there is maintenance on this road, sidewalk reconstruction should create 6" curbs and is separate the sidewalk from the road.

Lincoln Ave/Washington Ave intersection improvements can reduce the amount of pavement and shorten pedestrian crossing distances. Such improvements could also make room for wayfinding or gateway signs in front of the park.



Residential Gateway Design

The Gardiner Common is a community destination, and a common sight for travelers along Route 201 / Brunswick Avenue. Streetscape improvements at the Washington and Lincoln Avenue intersection could create an improved 'Gateway' to Downtown as well as improve community safety while crossing into the Park.

1. Gateway Signage

Facing traffic bound for Downtown, Gateway signage would announce arrival to the Heart of Gardiner well in advance of Water Street, giving travelers more time to plan their arrival Downtown.

2. Bulb Outs

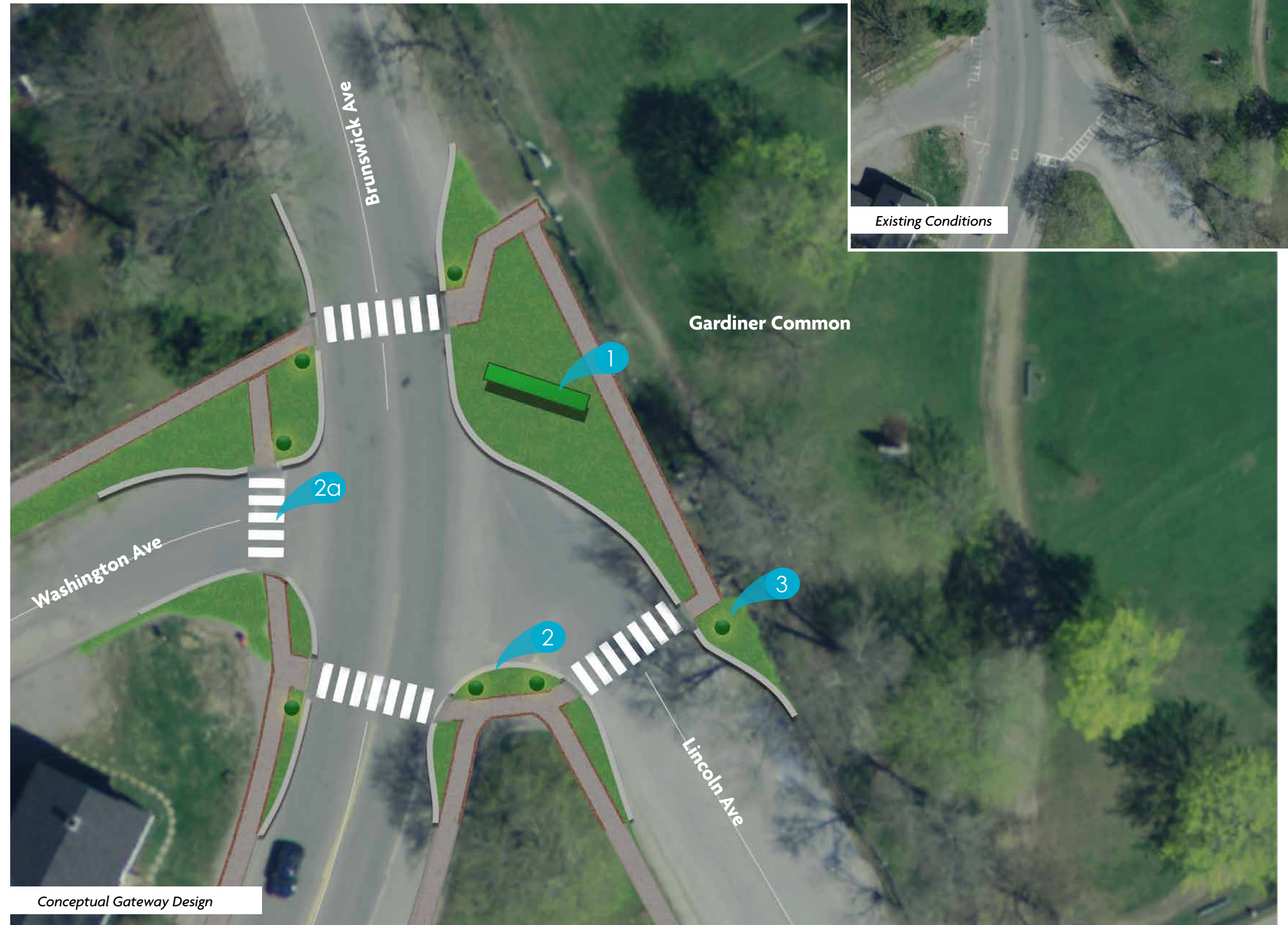
These curb lines create a traffic calming measure, physically narrowing the roadway to compliment the posted change in speed limit. Such physical changes have been shown to be more effective in controlling speeds than speed limit signs alone. The bulb outs are envisioned as smooth arcs that will not impede snow plowing operations. Sidewalk improvements could incorporate brick paver edging or similar to echo the Downtown character at this Gateway.

2a. Reduced Pedestrian Crossing Distance

The same bulb out construction will reduce pedestrian crossing distances into the park on average 50 percent. Less pedestrian time in the roadway means a more fluid automotive traffic flow, but more importantly, improved public safety for anyone walking between residences and Gardiner Common.

3. Gateway Lighting

The same green ornamental lighting posts found throughout Downtown could be used to better illuminate these pedestrian crossings in low light hours and contribute to the Downtown Gateway effect at this location.



Parking Access

The [2019 Parking Study](#) conducted by KVCOG concluded that “It appears as though Gardiner has sufficient parking to meet current demand.” However, during the public engagement process, City stakeholders, staff, and business owners indicated that there is widespread concern that the findings of the 2019 study relied on artificially low parking times. Nonetheless, these findings which do not include Downtown private parking lots point towards an excess of parking in Downtown Gardiner.

Excess parking areas can negatively impact the city. The unnecessary impervious area and maintenance costs to keep the spaces clean and clear of snow all add costs, and do not generate taxable income like a commercial or residential site could in their place.

Another aspect of surface parking is the environmental cost that impervious surfaces have. Impervious surfaces for parking make up 31 percent of downtown Gardiner. When rain falls on these surfaces, it goes directly into the Kennebec River or Cobbossee Stream at a high velocity, and picks up oils leaked from parked cars, sediment from the road, and other debris on the way. This process erodes soil from streambanks, pollutes the water, and increases the flood risk of downtown Gardiner.

However, with the future impact of the 400 seat renovated Johnson Hall Theater, there is real concern about future parking in Downtown Gardiner. Addressing these concerns requires creative partnerships and reuse of existing private parking lots, so that the need for parking access is balanced with the monetary and environmental cost of parking lots. In addition, impervious surfaces can exacerbate flooding, which is a significant concern in the Downtown.

A starting point may be to revisit and expand the 2019 parking study to include a study of private lots to understand where excess parking exists and how it might be utilized to support downtown access.



Private Camden Bank Parking Lot



Peak downtown parking demand, Swine and Stein Festival, Fall 2021

Shared Parking

Commercial properties highlighted here whose parking demands are highest during the workdays should be approached to develop an after hours shared parking arrangement.

In other communities, these arrangements have been facilitated by shared maintenance agreements where plowing and/or enforcement responsibilities are provided by the City in exchange for after hours public parking access to support downtown economic development efforts. These agreements could provide expanded access to downtown cultural events when it is needed most, on nights and weekends, at minimal cost to businesses who need parking for employees and visitors during the workday.

Camden National Bank may be worth furthering dialog with as this Maine business has in the past supported Gardiner Main Street through donation of building space downtown, and maintains control of several key parking areas in and adjacent to the historic district.

An example of a public private shared parking arrangement is illustrated through a sample lease agreement included as Appendix D.

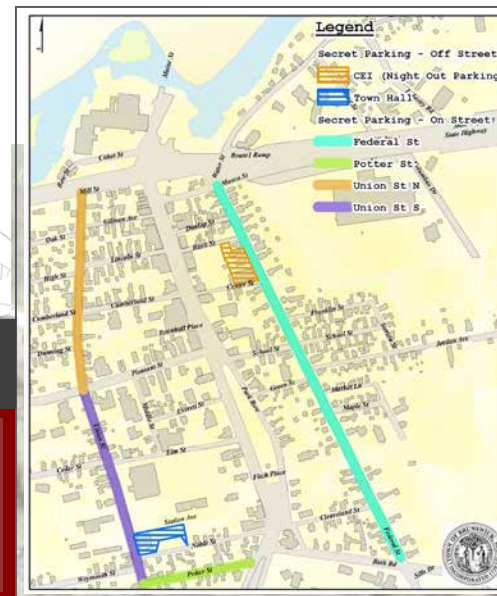
Downtown Parking Guide

A complimentary effort to developing shared public private parking agreements could be to develop an informative guide to Parking in Gardiner. A guide could be published online and physically, illustrating available public parking resources and routes connecting parking spaces with downtown destinations.

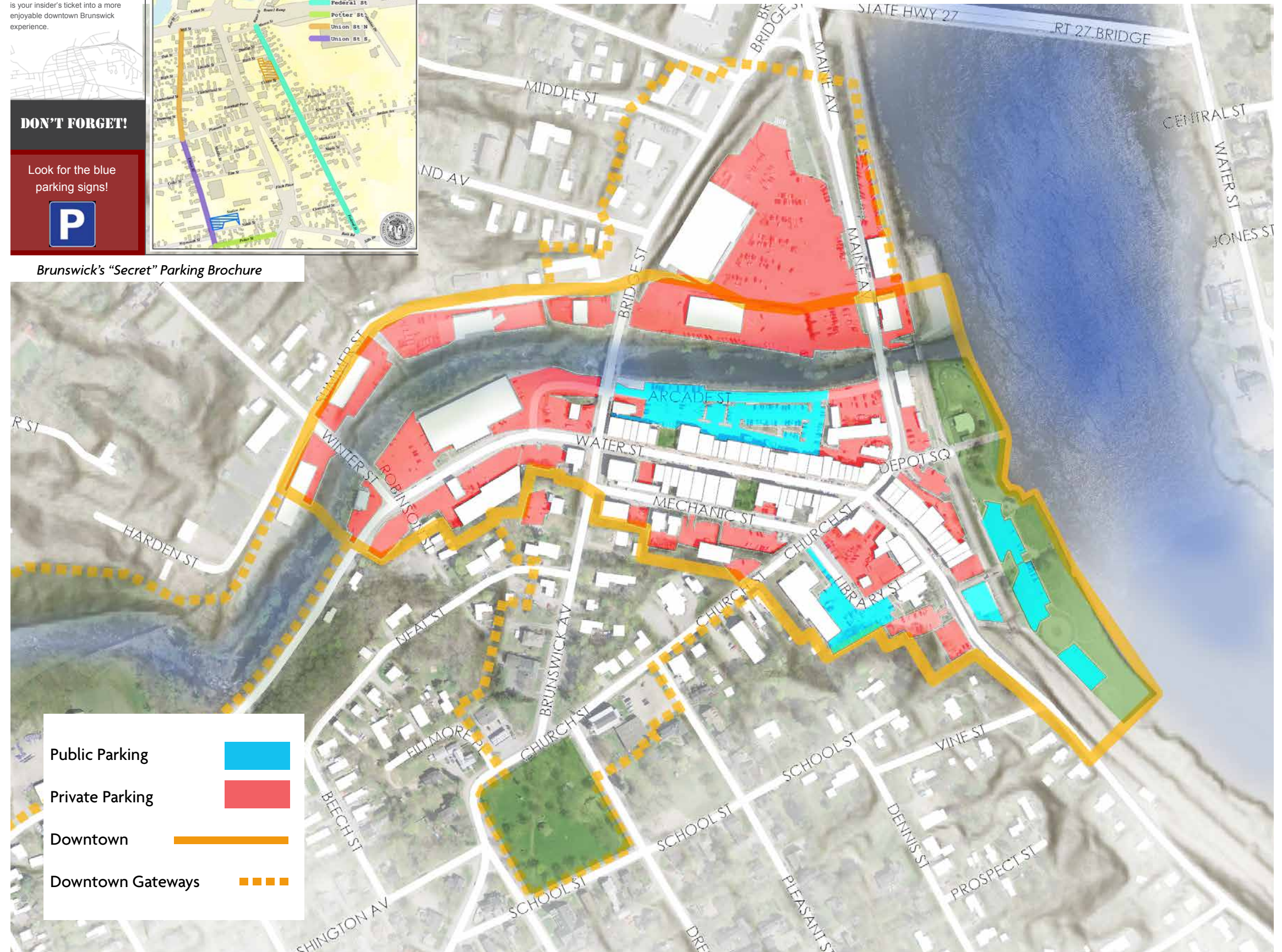
Parking in downtown Brunswick can be frustrating for businesses, employees, and visitors alike when everyone wants to park right on Maine Street where there are limited spaces. This guide is your insider's ticket into a more enjoyable downtown Brunswick experience.

DON'T FORGET!

Look for the blue parking signs!



Brunswick's "Secret" Parking Brochure



Public Parking	
Private Parking	
Downtown	
Downtown Gateways	

Universal Access

Gardiner's downtown boasts a beautiful, historic aesthetic. Unfortunately, elements of this historic aesthetic and the natural landscape make access for all ages and abilities difficult. The historic brick pavers in downtown create uneven surfaces that create challenges for anyone who needs to move a wheelchair, stroller, or even high-heeled shoes.

In addition to the surfacing challenge, there is a challenge to link the Arcade Parking Lot with downtown in an accessible fashion. Due to natural grades separating these two areas, the southern sidewalk of Water Street is approximately 10 feet higher than the Arcade Parking lot. Existing direct connections between the Arcade parking lot and Water street require users to navigate stairways through privately owned property or McKay Park, neither of which is handicapped accessible.

Paving Solutions

As of the writing of this report, the City of Gardiner is working towards a grant-funded project to replace half of the historic downtown sidewalk along Water Street. Though the exact historic paver utilized on Water Street sidewalks may not be compatible with universal designs or American Disability Act (ADA) standards, there exist numerous interlocking paver designs that can be substituted to provide Gardiner's historic brick sidewalk aesthetic while allowing universal access for all ages and abilities.

Another solution to maintain Gardiner's historic brick sidewalks without impeding universal access may be the design of a downtown streetscape paving pattern that uses the same bricks to define the pedestrian zone without requiring pure brick work throughout. This approach can be seen as part of recent projects associated with Bridge Street intersection improvements.

Arcade Route Improvements

Due to existing grades, the most accessible and most direct route between the Arcade and Water Street is to the east of Water Street, through the alley behind Water Street businesses, and south on Church Street / Main Ave.

This corridor should be prioritized as an accessible route, with universally accessible sidewalk and sidewalk ramps designed to create a universally accessible route between Downtown businesses and the majority of existing public parking supply.

Parking Space Priorities

In designating accessible parking spaces, the City should take care to allot key handicapped access parking spaces along Water Street, as existing routes from the Arcade are not accessible for those with strollers, wheelchairs or physical impairments. Some spaces should be considered on Water Street in front of or nearby McKay Park access, as the currently approved schematic designs for this plaza space only allow for universal access from Water Street - stairs are currently maintained as the Arcade connection due to cost impacts and space constraints.



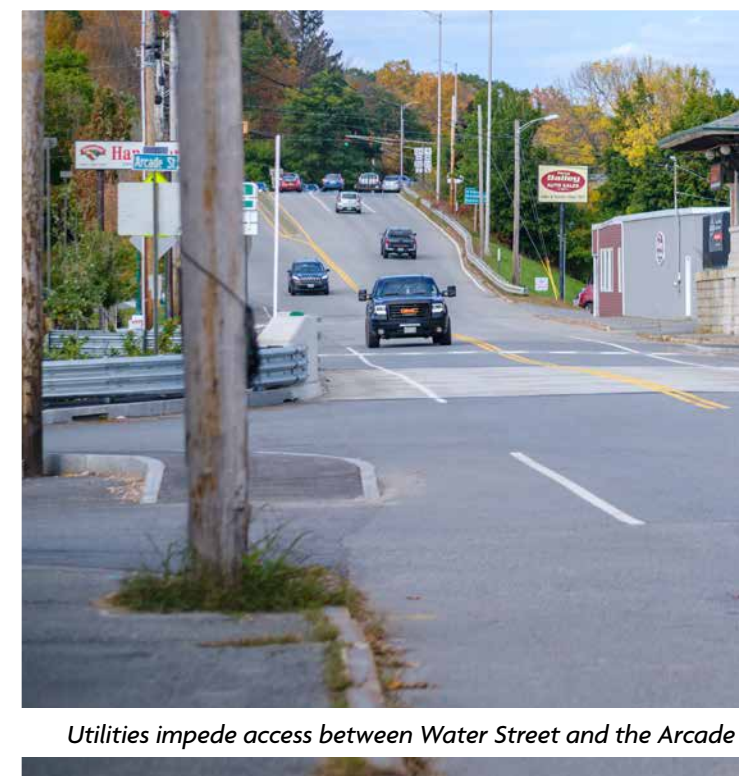
Historic pavers can pose access issues.



Recent Water Street Sidewalk Improvements



Holland Stone Interlocking Pavers (img via belgardcommercial.com)



Utilities impede access between Water Street and the Arcade



The Proposed McKay Park design does not include handicapped access from the Arcade

Gardiner is Green

Gardiner's Trails & Parks

Providing clear and inviting connections that link Gardiner's trails, parks, and riverfront can create a "Green Network" that can be enjoyed by locals and visitors alike.

1. Arcade Improvements

Redesigns to the arcade can add additional green space, reduce stormwater load on the Cobbossee and Kennebec Rivers, and add more parking spaces.

2. Waterfront Park to Cobbossee Trail

Building accessible connections between the Cobbossee Trail, Arcade Parking lot and Waterfront Park tie the downtown pedestrian network together.






3. Riverside Improvements

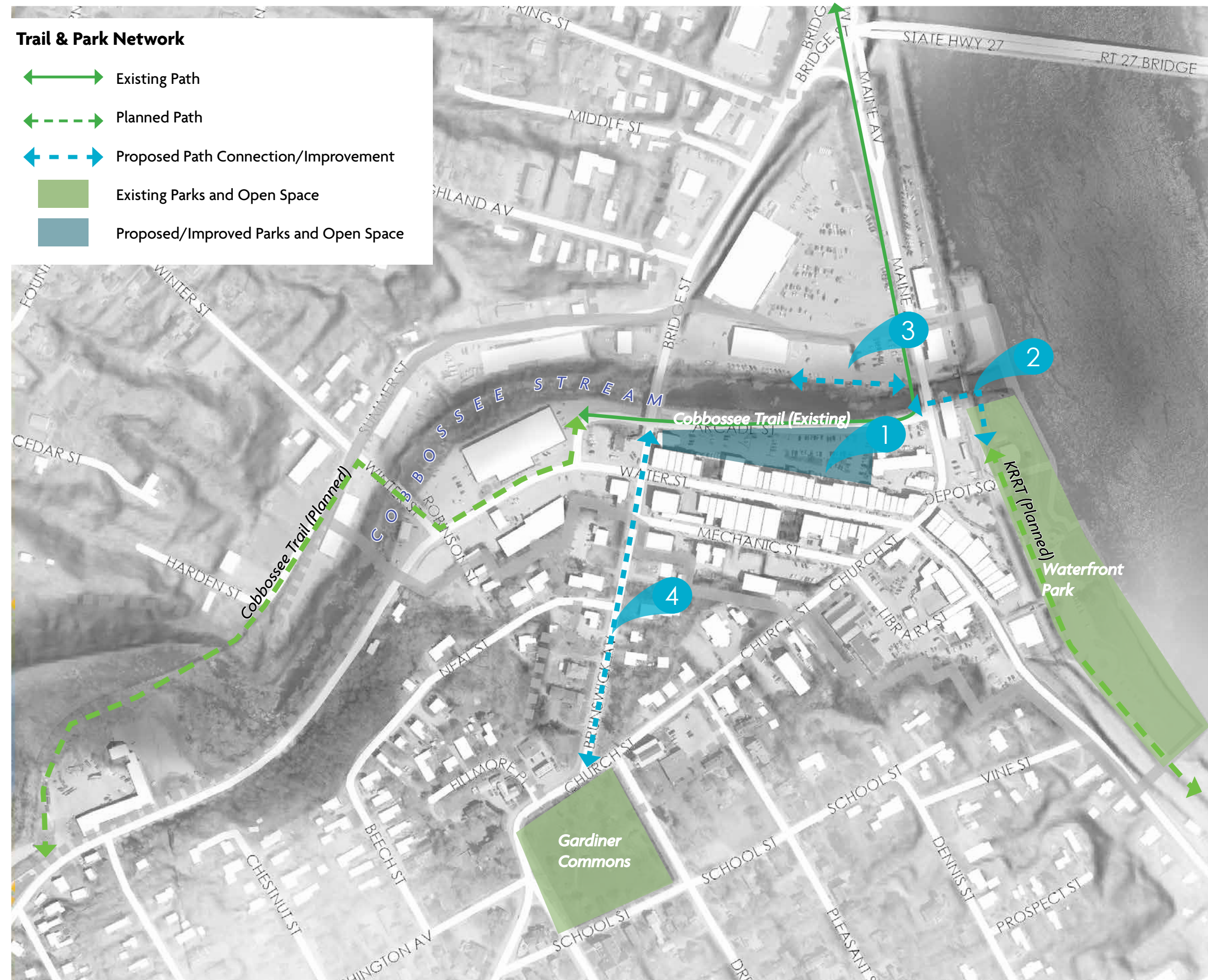
Small improvements in a public private partnership can improve the value of these gateway properties and link them to the Downtown amenities on the far side of the stream.

4. Brunswick Avenue Access

Active transportation improvements along Brunswick avenue can link Gardiner Commons with Downtown

Trail & Park Network

-  Existing Path
-  Planned Path
-  Proposed Path Connection/Improvement
-  Existing Parks and Open Space
-  Proposed/Improved Parks and Open Space



Arcade Today

Currently, the municipally owned parking lot between the Cobbossee Trail and Water Street must serve multiple uses. It offers convenient parking to Downtown, but lacks convenient pedestrian routes.

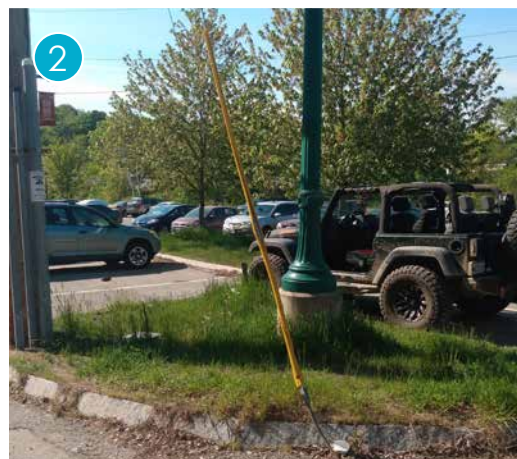
The Arcade must also function as a utility area for downtown businesses, providing fuel storage, trash receptacle pickup, and delivery services.

In addition, the current design suffers from poor drainage resulting in conditions that can be difficult to navigate by foot or wheel.

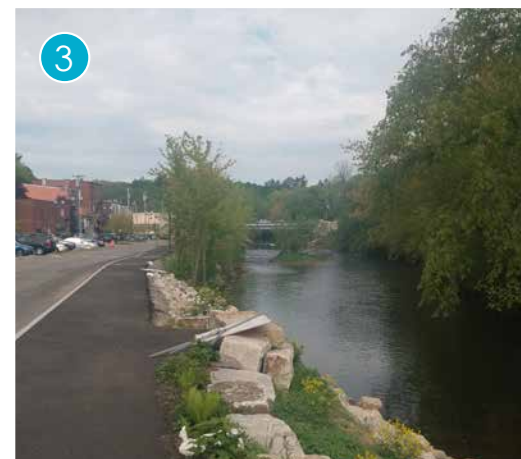
This resource currently offers 96 parking spaces (as measured in the 2019 Gardiner Downtown Parking Study) and could provide significantly more, due to all parking access provided via two-way stalls.



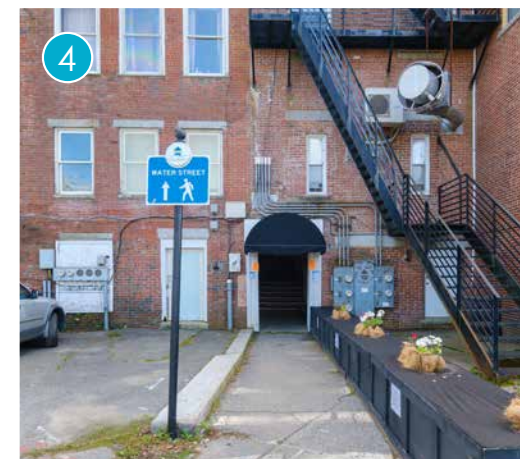
1 The Arcade parking faces irregular and industrial building access.



2 Existing planters are difficult to maintain and are deteriorating



3 The new Cobbossee Trail Addition has brought new energy to this side of Downtown



4 Pedestrian Access from this parking resource is limited and not ADA accessible.

P 96

96 parking spaces *

*maximum - may be less due to recent DOT bridge improvements.

Arcade Tomorrow

This proposal re-imagines the Arcade through four key changes:

1. Downtown through McKay Park

With McKay park's ongoing redevelopment, future arcade improvements could extend the park and plaza space into the Arcade, creating opportunities for an accessible and memorable entry into Downtown through trails and green space. In addition, secondary pedestrian circulation could be added through improved sidewalk access at the southern edge of the Arcade, north of the utility access drive.

2. One way parking circulation

Through conversion of the 2 way 90° parking stalls to a series of alternating one way 60° parking stalls, public parking access could be significantly expanded, with the addition of nearly 20 spaces from the current condition.

3. Rain Gardens

The green parking islands illustrated in this plan are envisioned to be designed as sunken rain gardens, storing and cleaning stormwater runoff from Water Street and surrounding buildings before it flows into the Cobbossee.

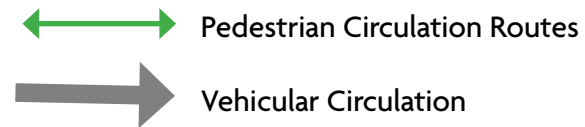
4. Snow Storage

Illustrated in lighter green, the edges of parking bays are intended to act as snow storage points to ease plowing. Envisioned as recessed green spaces surrounded by blade-mountable curbing, or even simply painted delineation, these spaces could serve as snow storage and expanded green space separate from the rain gardens.

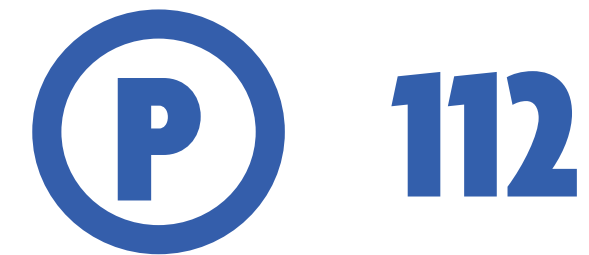
5. Patio Zone.

Public private partnerships could convert the utilitarian backside of waterstreet into attractive patio spaces, with storage for utilities and covered parking below.

Arcade Concept



The construction and extension of these patios would require a public/private partnership, as many building owners property extends little farther than the building footprint. This concept is also envisioned to create designated dumpster / fuel / utility areas that could condense the unattractive but required utilities for these buildings.

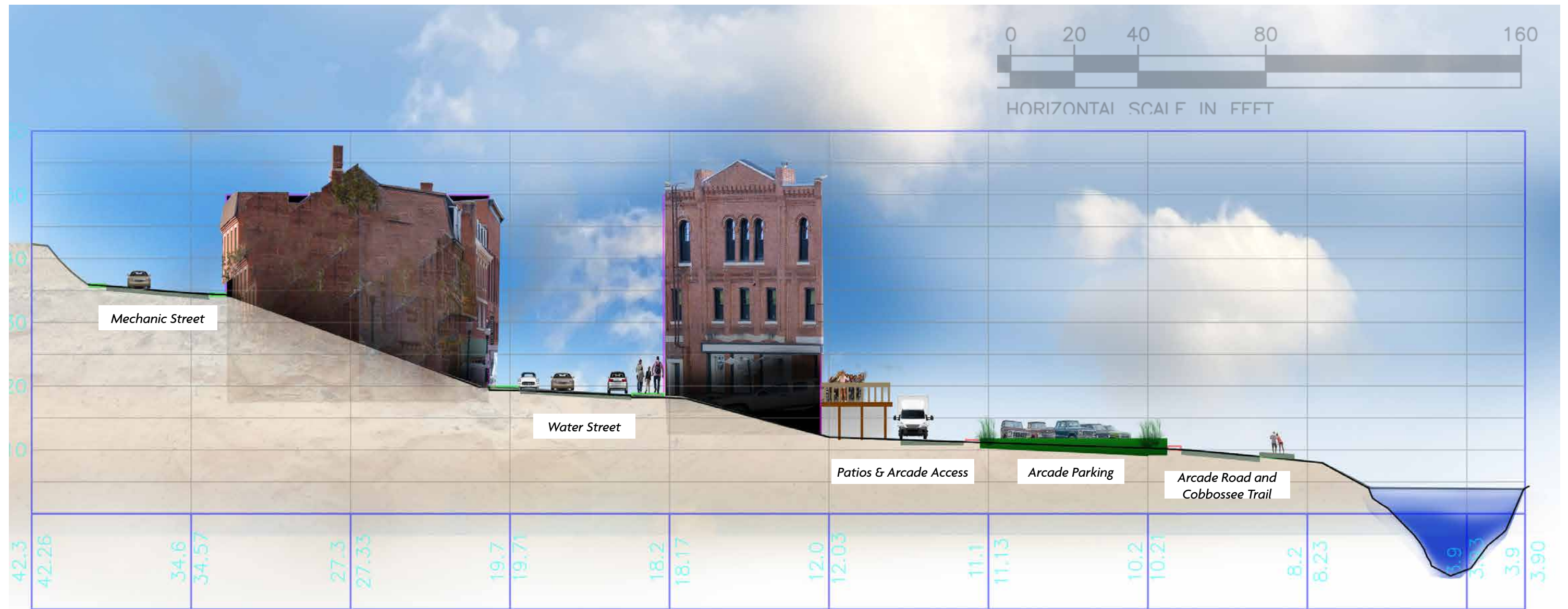


112 parking spaces

Arcade Access Improvements

This section illustrates how improvements to the Arcade could both create a more inviting entrance and access point to Downtown, as well as support expanded outdoor retail and dining opportunities on the Arcade adjacent water street buildings.

The vertical scale of this section is exaggerated 2x in order to illustrate the natural topography challenges that are present downtown. Because these grades will not change in Gardiner's future, all efforts should be made to prioritize the access routes to the east of the arcade as key pedestrian linkages, as well as at-grade access between Water Street and commerce spaces and Water Street public outdoor spaces.



Waterfront Park to Cobbossee Trail

With or without any redesign of the Arcade, connecting the existing Cobbossee Trail to the Kennebec River Rail Trail (KRRT) and Merrymeeting Trail should be a top priority for the future of Downtown Gardiner.

Two access options are illustrated at right. Both involve coordination with the railroad and landowner.

Option A uses railroad right-of-way to connect to an existing railroad crossing into Waterfront Park.

Option B would create a new railroad crossing and more direct connection to the Waterfront Park and KRRT.



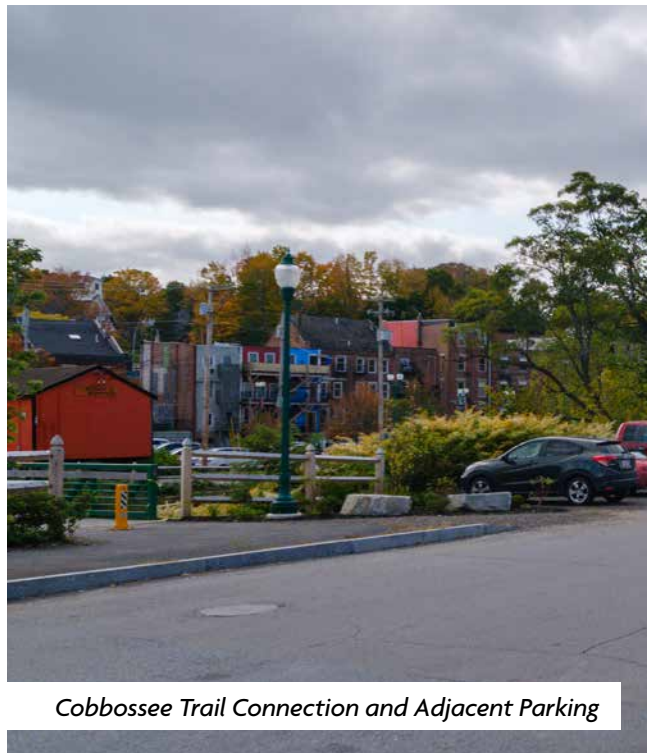
Either path option on the right avoids the constrained sidewalk and utility corridor along Maine Ave



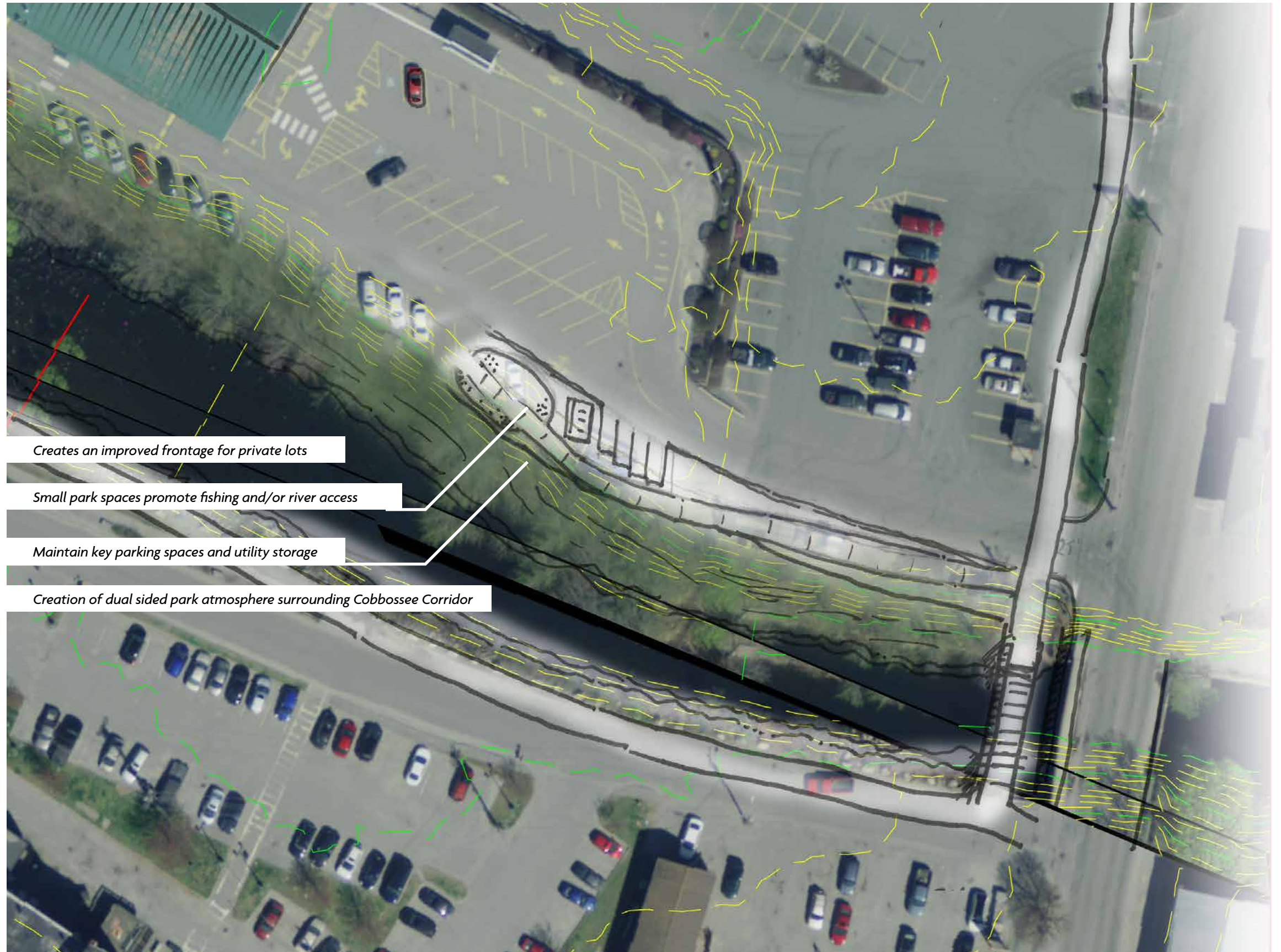
Riverside Parking Access Improvements

Another access improvement for downtown could be to directly link downtown to the nearby private parking on the north side of the Cobbossee Stream. Although some businesses in this commercial development can be quite busy, parking in the lower southeastern corner, surrounding a KeyBank ATM teller could be utilized during after-hours as a shared public/private resource.

Additional public investment to link this commercial 'gateway' to the historic downtown could create a Cobbossee trail extension that would provide clear and direct pedestrian access from the parking area to Downtown resources. This trail stub could be designed to provide a clearly designated (and screened) location for dumpsters and other utilities with minimal disruption to the current parking supply.



Cobbossee Trail Connection and Adjacent Parking



Creates an improved frontage for private lots

Small park spaces promote fishing and/or river access

Maintain key parking spaces and utility storage

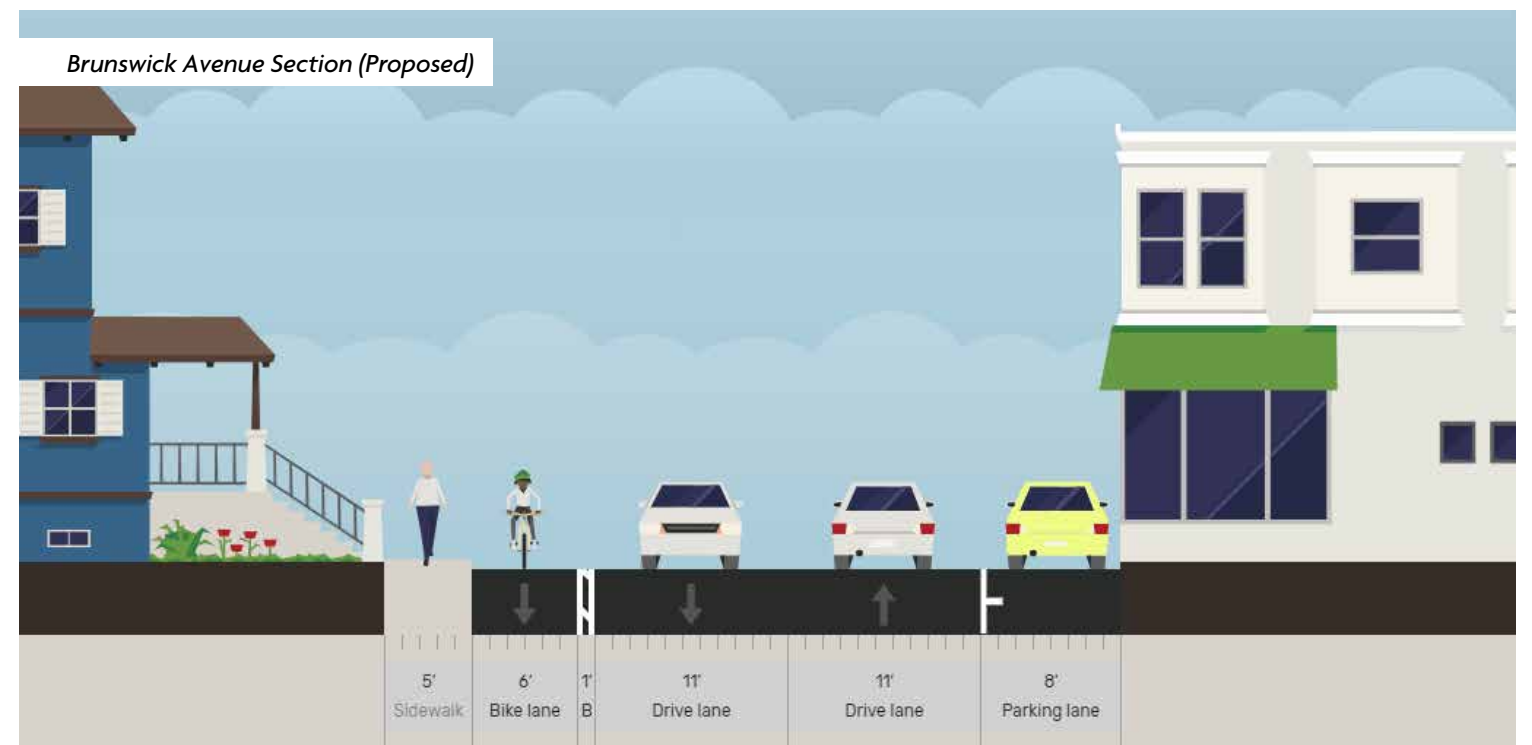
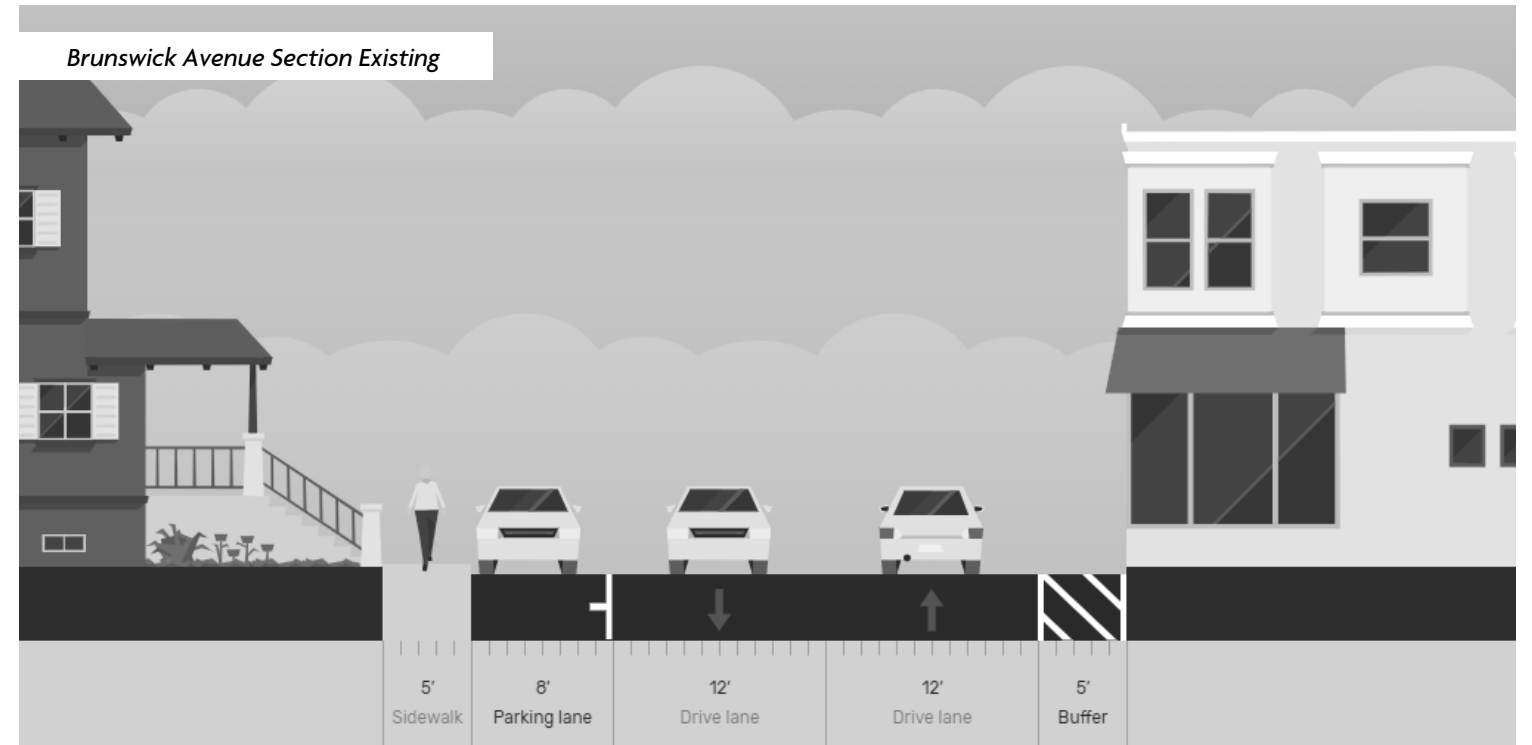
Creation of dual sided park atmosphere surrounding Cobbossee Corridor

Brunswick Avenue

Bicycle and pedestrian access from Gardiner Commons to downtown is functional, but could be improved. Despite the barrier that the steep hill creates for cycling, or perhaps because of it, improved bicycling facilities could improve active transportation opportunities to downtown and reduce parking demands.

Simple, paint-only improvements are envisioned to give the corridor between the Cobbossee Trail and Gardiner Common a more bicycle-friendly character. Current travel lanes could be reduced from 12 feet to 11 feet, and shoulder space reprogrammed to a dedicated on-street parking aisle adjacent to downhill (northbound) lanes, and a dedicated climbing bike lane could be installed adjacent to the existing sidewalk. This would provide a safe space for slower moving uphill bicycle traffic, and faster moving downhill bicycle traffic could share the motorized travel lane.

Although this recommendation is not the only reconfiguration of this roadway that could improve bike/ped connection downtown, the linkage between the Gardiner Commons and Downtown should be prioritized for improved bike/pedestrian facilities.



Sections via streetmix.net



Brunswick Ave Existing Conditions, facing northbound towards Downtown.

Green Streets and Stormwater Infrastructure

The Kennebec and Cobbossee are two of Gardiner's most treasured assets and a major aspect of Gardiner's identity. The water's importance cannot be overstated, and protecting these resources from human impacts will help make sure that these assets, along with Gardiner's infrastructure, can withstand the challenges of severe storms, pollution and flooding.

It should be noted that the addition of these stormwater management and water quality improvement facilities can not, by themselves eliminate the risks to property posed by future flood events. But through regular and broad implementation of these facilities, Downtown Gardiner and the broader City can help reduce overall impacts of future storm events to downtown infrastructure and private property.

Green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) is a way to clean water and mitigate flooding. Rain gardens, street trees and tree wells, pervious pavers, and bioswales can be employed to make Downtown more flood resilient. Some areas of existing pavement or infrastructure can be retrofitted to utilize GSI without significant changes to the streetscape or traffic patterns.

The following two pages include details of green stormwater infrastructure that could be employed throughout downtown Gardiner.

Additional information can be found in the [Maine Stormwater Management Design Manual](#), [Vermont Green Streets Guide](#) and the [US EPA Green Streets Handbook](#).

Green Stormwater Treatment Options

Pervious Pavers

Pervious pavers can be used in parking lots, parks, and residential driveways to reduce the amount of impervious surface while still providing a structural surface for parking or walking.

Note that pervious pavers in high traffic areas (like parking lots) often require significant maintenance to remove debris and allow water to drain appropriately.

Treewells

Treewells are a street tree typology that create large subterranean volumes of soil below trees and surrounding pavement. Coupled with or without a storm inlet, these designs create a compact street tree footprint on an urban street, but hold significant storage volume for stormwater runoff.

In addition, a well designed treewell provides ample root volume for the tree planted within, promoting long life and healthy growth for the life of the tree.

Rain Gardens

Rain gardens are small installations designed to capture large amounts of stormwater runoff from streets, parks, or parking lots. With the right mix of plantings, they create natural and beautiful borders to an area while retaining stormwater runoff.

Bioswales

Effectively a rain garden writ large, bioswales are simple stormwater retention tools that channel and hold rainwater instead of diverting it downstream. They can be designed curbed or uncurbed, and are distinct from a rain garden in their larger area and simplified planting schemes.

Pervious Pavers



Image Credit: Unilock

Treewells



Image Credit: Vermont Green Streets Manual

Bioswales



Rain Gardens



Gardiner's Identity, Gardiner's Economy

Market Definition and Introduction

The existing market conditions for Gardiner are complex. The city is part of the Augusta-Waterville ME Micropolitan Statistical area (which is comprised of all Kennebec County communities). Each of these individual economies act upon one another to create a complex and dynamic system.

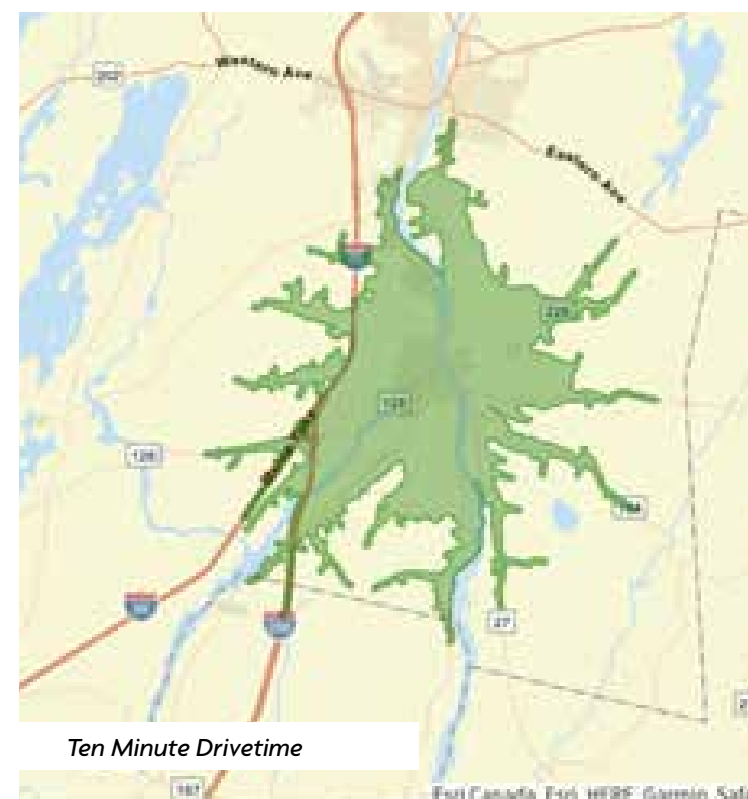
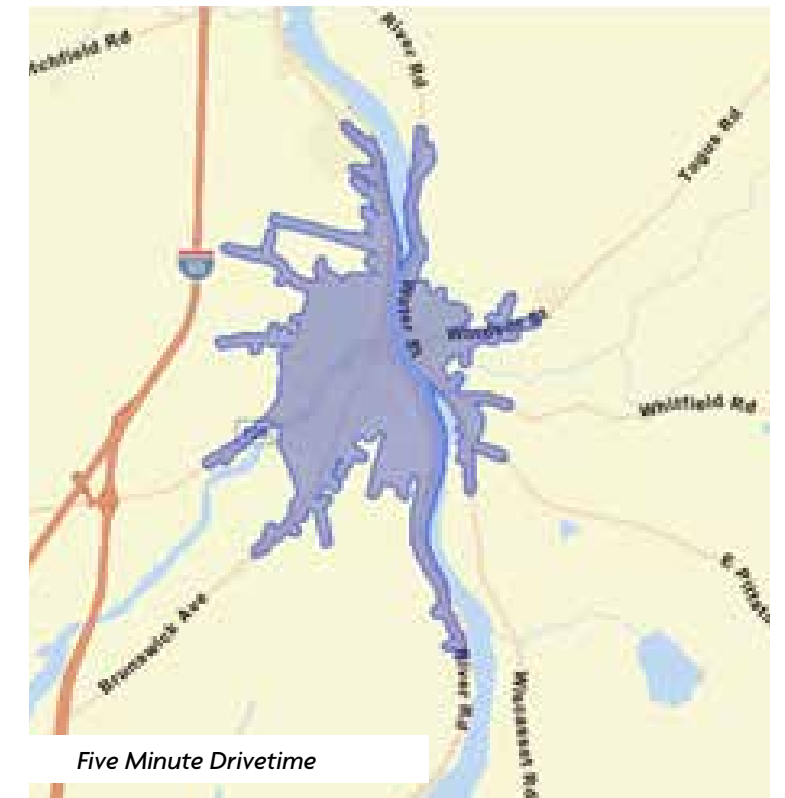
That system affects Gardiner most directly through its neighbors. Any examination of Gardiner's downtown that does not also reflect on its proximity to downtown Hallowell and Augusta and the suburban retail that exists within the area would not adequately portray the opportunities for downtown Gardiner.

This plan examines a drive time analysis from the intersection of Water Street and Maine Avenue in downtown Gardiner. Five, ten, and fifteen minute drive times are examined to explore the dynamics of the region. The maps on this page illustrate the areas surrounding Gardiner that can be reached in all directions when driving for those specified distances. Gardiner City limits is mapped for reference scale.

The five-minute drive time is a bit smaller than

the City limits, the ten-minute drive time incorporates all of the City and includes downtown Hallowell and the Route 126 / Lewiston Road intersection with the Main Turnpike (I-95) and Interstate 295, and the fifteen-minute drive time incorporates all of downtown Augusta and much of the commercial retail along Western Avenue in Augusta to its interchange with the Maine Turnpike (I-95).

These drive times give insight into local and more regional population trends, demographics, and shopping patterns. They do not account for the significant impact and potential impact of visitors to downtown Gardiner which makes the analysis a more conservative estimate of potential.



Demographics

Population

The updated US Census population data released in September 2021 reveals a critical shift in trends for the population of Gardiner. The 2019 American Community Survey data showed that Gardiner was continuing a trend of declining population going from a 2010 population of 5,790 to an estimated 2019 population of 5,653 (a 2.7% decline). Yet, the 2020 census data reveals that the population of Gardiner increased to 5,961 (a 2.9% increase).

This similar but less dramatic trend is shown in Kennebec County where the county population was anticipated to have increased by only .1% between 2010 and 2019 while the 2020 US Census data shows an increase of 1.32% to 123,624.

This new Census data comports to input from community members who indicated in interviews that Gardiner itself was indeed growing and that growth was accelerating as the COVID Pandemic accelerated an influx of residents from urban areas in the region.

The fact that Gardiner is growing, and growing faster than Maine or Kennebec County changes the outlook for every other analytic in this report.

Prior projections were showing continued population decline in Gardiner through 2026, and the newly released Census Data should be monitored as additional elements become available - the full availability of 2020 Census data was still pending as of this report's writing.

The fact that Gardiner is growing, and growing faster than Maine or Kennebec County changes the outlook for every other analytic in this report.

Income

Median household income levels in each of the geographies has not been released by the US Census for 2020. In lieu of this data, Claritas Inc. is used as the source of this data. According to this source, each of the geographies have similar income levels that lag the state and significantly lag the nation.

It is important to note that interviews with residents of the community note that many locate here because of the quality of life and relative affordability when compared with communities further south in Maine. It is worth noting that many residents in Gardiner are above retirement age which indicates that income levels may not relate directly to household wealth and spending capacity.

Income Data Comparison

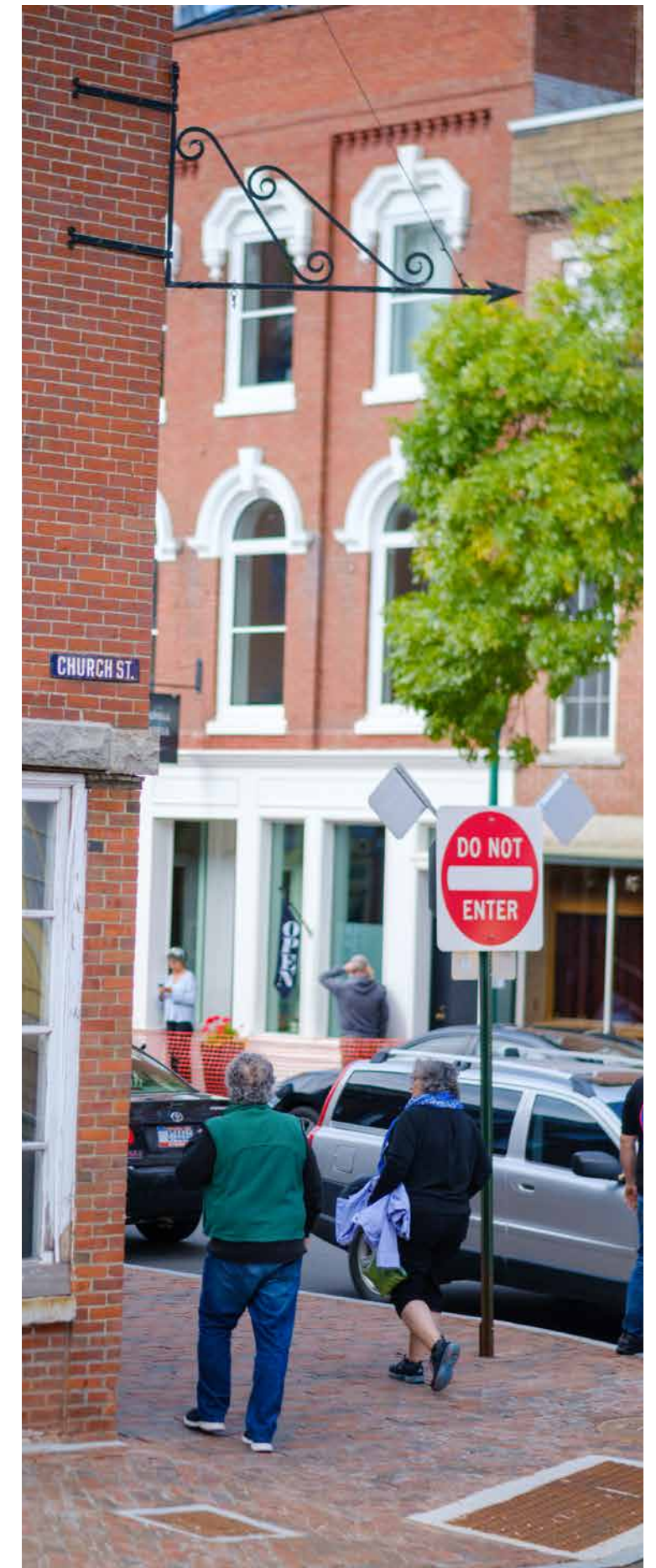
City of Gardiner	\$51,692
5-Min Drive Time	\$50,000
10-Min Drive Time	\$52,175
15-Min Drive Time	\$49,898
Maine	\$57,918
United States	\$68,703

Median Age

Median age makes Maine the oldest state in the country. Similar to the state, Gardiner and its surrounding geographies skew older. What is yet to be seen is whether this age will go down as new 2020 census data is released. It can be assumed that newcomers will be a combination of retirees from urban areas and families wishing to relocate from more urban centers.

Median Age Data Comparison

City of Gardiner	43.6
5-Min Drive Time	43.1
10-Min Drive Time	44.8
15-Min Drive Time	44.9
Maine	44.7
United States	38.1



Retail Market Analysis

The retail market analysis identifies potential opportunities for retail growth based on demand within the market areas defined above. “Retail Leakage” is a term that refers to the difference between the retail expenditures of residents living in a particular geography and the sales produced by stores located in the same geography. If residents are purchasing more than stores are selling, dollars are leaking outside the trade areas to other locations. Retail leakage translates directly to existing demand.

The data presented in this section comes from Claritas, a national marketing service used for market research by town planners, retail & restaurant site planners, and retail companies. Claritas Analytics gets its data from a number of sources including: Census of Retail Trade; Annual Survey of Retail Trade; Census of Employment and Wages, Sales Tax Reports, and various trade associations.

This data is a broad look at the market and should not supplement for more detailed market research. It does, however, provide an overall view of Gardiner’s market potential.

It is important to note the following that makes findings presented here conservative in nature:

- The market study areas are growing in population rather than shrinking
- This accounts for local spending, not spending from outside the region (tourism)
- Does not account for driving factors such as the Johnson Hall renovation

Trade Area Retail Leakage

Restaurants and retailers in the defined trade area combined all show a retail “gain” market meaning that the store/restaurant sales exceed demand. This “gain” market increases as the size of the geography increases. The table below illustrates this increasing gain. It is important to note several key points:

- This gain does not occur across all retail categories
- The dramatic increase at the 15-minute drive time acknowledges the strong retail pull of the chain and big box retail cluster along Western Avenue in Augusta that is a large regional destination for shopping.

Geography	Retail Sales (M)	Consumer Spending (M)	Market Gain (M)
City of Gardiner	\$119.7	\$ 84.3	\$ 35.4
5-Min Drive Time	\$120.7	\$ 73.2	\$ 47.5
10-Min Drive Time	\$258.9	\$183.4	\$ 75.5
15-Min Drive Time	\$767.9	\$442.2	\$325.7

Trade Area Retail Opportunities

Selecting the appropriate trade area to analyze in a market of this nature is a bit more art than science.

In some cases a 10-minute drive time is most appropriate while in others a larger geography is more telling. For example, daily consumer goods like groceries are unlikely to have a catchment area outside of a 10-minute drive time unless it is a very rural area. Yet destination shopping and dining may attract from a 15-20 minute drive time if not available elsewhere.

This assessment attempts to evaluate the “best opportunities” for downtown Gardiner based on a combination of interviews, experience in market research and examination of the data, and potential sales growth.



Specialty Food

Represents a key opportunity for downtown Gardiner. This may be combined with dining. The Gardiner Food Co-op and the Hannaford supermarket create a dynamic where specialty food such as baked goods, meat, fruit and vegetables, cheese and wine could be successful. The 10-minute leakage in this category is \$450,000 and increases to \$3.2 million at the Kennebec County level.

Image of Dedalus Wine Shop, Market, & Wine Bar in Burlington, VT



Full-Service Restaurants

Represent a potential opportunity. While the 5, 10, and 15 minute drive times all show a net gain in restaurant sales, full service dining is an opportunity in Kennebec County with \$6.5 million in leakage. At only a 10% capture rate this could augment existing restaurant sales or support another one to two dining establishments.

Image credit: Wikipedia.org



Clothing, Gifts, and Art

Could all be highly curated growth opportunities within downtown. There is leakage in these categories at every geography examined. These stores would need to either complement existing retailers or provide expansion opportunities of existing products. Interviewees expressed a strong desire to continue to focus on the arts and independent retail to augment traffic generated by anchor stores such as Reny’s and Hannaford.

Image Credit: Compass Rose in Olympia, WA from Compass Rose

Trade Area Creative Space Opportunities

Creative spaces have moved from what some might consider a fad into a full-blown national trend with astonishing growth over the last five years in coworking, accelerators, and makerspaces. While this growth was slowing in 2019 and upset by the COVID pandemic, many workers are still looking at how these spaces may reignite the opportunity for people to work closer to home. The concept of these spaces locating within or near the Downtown is a key opportunity for Gardiner.

It is important to understand how each of these creative spaces works, as semantics can sometimes get in the way of truly grasping the purpose of these new models. It is also important to note that, although their definitions are provided below, the fluidity within which they can function in a space is as creative as the very ideas themselves.



Coworking

CoWorking Spaces provide spaces for individuals or small companies to work in a shared environment. Companies can interact with one another in informal ways, form collaborations, or simply share in the creative atmosphere of the space. CoWorking spaces may host events and activities but rarely provide formal business coaching. In a post Covid environment these spaces can be tailor made to allow for social distancing and private spaces available on a flexible basis.

Image Credit: The Receptionist

Accelerator Space

Accelerator/Entrepreneurial Spaces provide a structured way to graduate companies, often within a specified period of time. These spaces may have a higher education partner that is helping to cultivate and coach a business toward success. In other examples, accelerator spaces receive significant support from venture capital, educational institutions, economic development partners to provide a framework of support. The goals of an accelerator is to “spin out” successful ventures.

Image Credit: The Receptionist

Makerspace

Makerspaces are physical locations where people gather to share resources and knowledge. Unlike the spaces described above, makerspaces focus on projects and fabrication. Consequently, makerspaces provide tools and facilities for the makers. While experts or university-affiliated advisors may be available, makers frequently get help from other users. These spaces are associated with fields such as engineering, fabrication, computer science, and graphic design. Many makerspaces have higher education partnerships that desire to create an informal combination of lab, shop, and conference room. Frequently, 3-D printers, manual tools, and classroom spaces are associated with makerspace. Even local libraries are offering makers spaces and camps for children.

Image Credit: Catalyst Makerspace

Retail Pop-Ups

Micro spaces for retailers are another key opportunity for downtown Gardiner. These spaces can take several forms including “pod” type spaces for small retailers, and “emporium” style spaces where local artisans can have a retail presence without a full commitment to a retail space.

Image Credit: Times Argus

Trade Area Housing Opportunities

The population growth represents a huge shift in the outlook for additional downtown housing in Gardiner. Rather than declining, an increase in population means more demand for housing. A quick look at market sources like Redfin and Zillow show that prices are increasing, supply is decreasing, and days on the market are at a five year low for the past several months. Downtown living is a growing trend and the supply in the region is nearly non-existent.

Given the lack of supply of downtown housing in the area, these findings illustrate the potential that refurbished historic second and third floor apartments may have for residential living and/or lodging.

Hospitality / Lodging Opportunities

Currently, there are few if any formal lodging opportunities in Gardiner. Augusta boasts the regional collection of hotels and motels, clustered at the Interstate 95 exit.

Despite impacts from COVID on this industry, there appears ample opportunity for a lodging business to revitalize portions of the downtown or create a redevelopment opportunity which could offer a unique Gardiner Downtown or Downtown adjacent experience to travelers.

Gardiner Housing Market Trends



Data Courtesy Redfin.com

How hot is the Gardiner housing market?

90 Most Competitive
Redfin Compete Score™



- Most homes get multiple offers, often with waived contingencies.
- The average homes sell for about **6%** above list price and go pending in around **7 days**.
- **Hot homes** can sell for about **11%** above list price and go pending in around **5 days**.

Compare to nearby cities

85 Brunswick is very competitive

- Many homes get multiple offers, some with waived contingencies.
- The average homes sell for about **7%** above list price and go pending in around **6 days**.
- **Hot homes** can sell for about **13%** above list price and go pending in around **4 days**.

90 Bath is most competitive

- Most homes get multiple offers, often with waived contingencies.
- The average homes sell for about **5%** above list price and go pending in around **6 days**.
- **Hot homes** can sell for about **11%** above list price and go pending in around **5 days**.

[See more nearby cities and neighborhoods](#)

Marketing & Identity

A community identity is a key component of how a community tells its story to itself and the outside world. Through the Community Heart & Soul process, Gardiner has cultivated a sense of self, identity and purpose. This has been developed through a rigorous process that involved the community, focused on what matters, and anticipated a long term process. This process has served Gardiner well since its inception in 2012.

Curating a community's sense of identity and place is a never-ending process. New residents move in, new amenities come to life, and new connections further knit a community together. This plan makes recommendations that will further the connections in Downtown and between downtown and other communities.

Residents have identified the unique relationship of downtown with the water, open space, trails, and the built environment.

Gardiner's family friendly character was another unique and valuable asset identified throughout the public input process.

It is now time to examine how Gardiner continues to tell its story. Currently, the community portrays a series of varied identities and graphic communications that could better connect

the place with people. The City, Gardiner Main Street, existing signs, wayfinding, and banners each show a variety of messages, colors, and varying degrees of consistency. The community has demonstrated its capacity to tell its story, that story should be reflected in consistent messaging across all platforms. Though a 2009 signage plan is in place at the City, an updated approach could be beneficial.

This should occur with well - coordinated environmental graphics, messaging to consumers about what downtown is, and positioning of Gardiner in the region.

Interviews with stakeholders suggest that the connection with the arts and the natural environment represent unique positions for Gardiner as well as its commitment to the Heart & Soul Model.

Examples on this page include graphic branding developed for Troutdale, Oregon where the community has united around an identity that positions it in relation to its outdoor and artistic amenities. This identity runs through every facet of the community from City Government to events and activities.

Community Identity and Marketing Strategy.

Gardiner has numerous assets in place that make it an iconic and incredible destination for new businesses, residents, and tourists alike, significantly increasing local economic vibrancy.

This plan sees the key to unlocking that vibrancy as further development of a Community Identity and Marketing Strategy, which will work with varied community members to identify physical projects and coordinated messaging that can be developed in coming years to ensure that Gardiner's story is told to the outside world.



Coordinated wayfinding and placemaking signage could be a first step towards achieving a unified Community Identity and Marketing Strategy

Implementation



Implementation Overview

This chapter provides implementation guidance for Gardiner City Staff, partners, and community advocates to do the hard work needed to realize this plan's vision.

This chapter is organized by the major plan recommendations and for each provides approximate costs, key implementation steps, and estimated timelines.

Leadership

A plan is only as good as the actors who lead it. Leaders should be identified within

- Gardiner's elected officials
- City staff
- Established City Committees
- Aligned Non Profit Partners (Johnson Hall Theatre, Gardiner Main Street)
- Public Advocates

When considering volunteer involvement, which is a requirement for any civic project to succeed, consider recruiting volunteers, rather than waiting to see who raises their hands. Volunteers should be selected who have time, talent, or treasure to contribute to any particular downtown advancement project.

Leaders should tackle no more than one or two projects at a time, and use this plan to identify those projects that have the most potential to benefit Downtown Gardiner.

Gardiner has a track record of successful projects through the Community Heart & Soul Process which can continue to inform the community on ways to focus on what really matters, involve many community members, and play the long game.

Funding Opportunities

Where possible, each of the implementation elements is paired with a table that provides an overview of relevant grant funding resources. Though a majority of the funding resources available to Gardiner come through the state's administration of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, additional resources are included where possible.

The American Rescue Plan (ARPA) continues to emerge as a resource for economic recovery funding throughout communities in the United States. These programs are evolving as federal and state agencies gain more clarity into eligible programs and projects. Gardiner should maintain regular contact with the [Maine Municipal Association](#) and other contacts to verify and explore fundable projects.

In addition to ARPA, Congress approved and President Biden has signed the 1 Trillion dollar Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which will begin the process of routing much needed funding towards qualified, well planned infrastructure projects across the United States over the next decade.

Many of these funds will be administered by state agencies. A key to funding many of the more ambitious projects identified in this plan will be to foster open communications and dialog with state agency leaders in Augusta, while continuing to refine, design, and advance projects identified in this plan.

Chapter Organization

Implementation of these major plan recommendations is discussed in the following pages:

A: Support Downtown Access for All Abilities

B: Redevelop the Arcade

C: Enhance Downtown Gateways - The Gardiner Common

CI: Enhance Downtown Gateways - Redevelopment

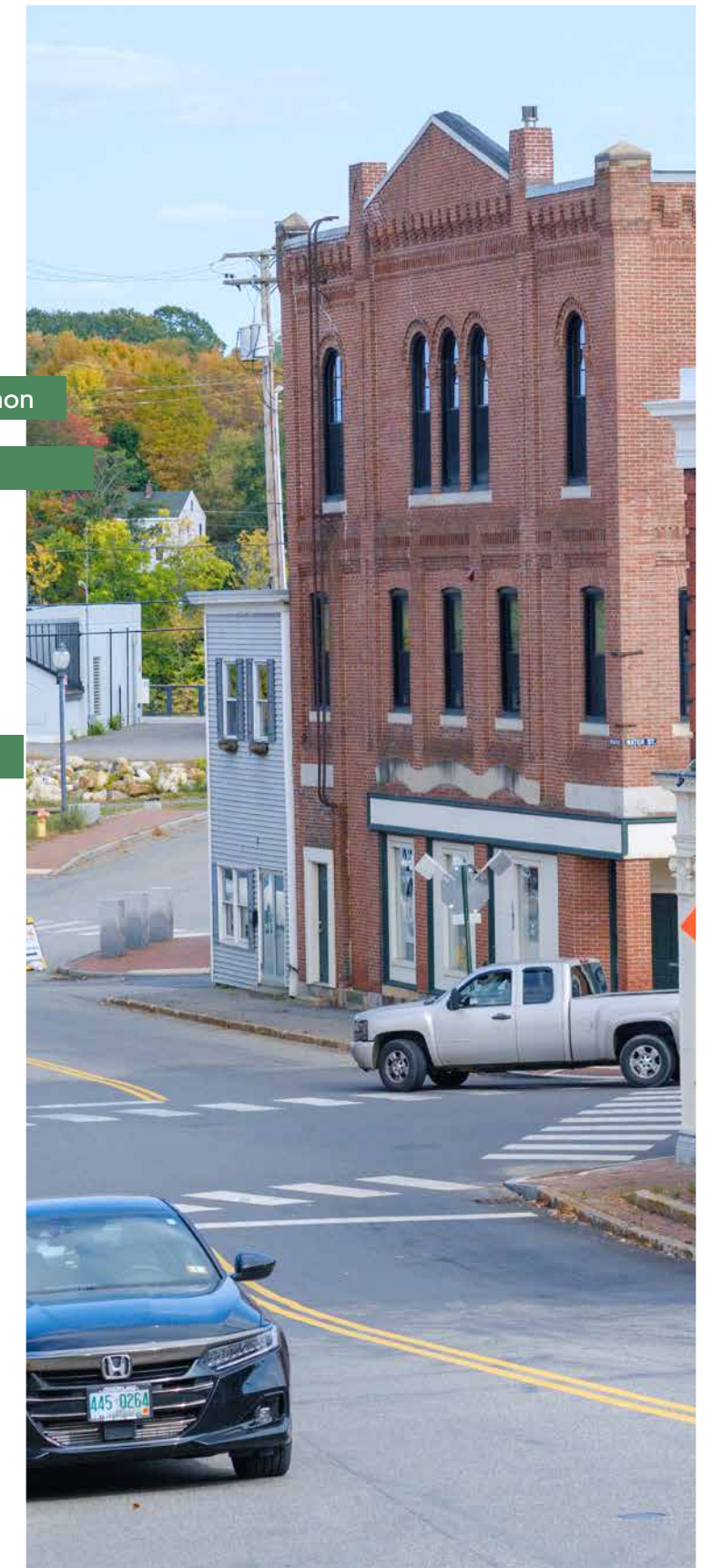
D: Trail to Waterfront Park

E: Strengthen Downtown's Identity

E: Leverage Downtown's Existing Parking Supply

F: Build a Network of Green Stormwater Infrastructure

G: Partner in Regional Flood Resilience Studies



Support Downtown Access for All Abilities

To make Downtown Gardiner a more accessible and attractive place for all ages and abilities, the City should dedicate resources to improving existing sidewalks and access corridors, while ensuring that handicapped accessible parking spaces are available throughout the historic downtown and adjacent resources such as Waterfront Park, McKay Park, and Gardiner Common.

Key Steps Towards Implementation

0-2 years

- Utilize this plan to support planning studies and/or accessibility audits that can identify key details such as wayfinding legibility, private business access, signal timing and/or other barriers that inhibit accessibility downtown.
- Work with Gardiner's Age Friendly Committee, Economic Development Committee, and Historic Preservation Committee to build an accessibility improvement approach.
- Research the potential costs and availability of accessible pavers to replace the historic brick pavement and similar improvements throughout Downtown Water Street.

2-4 years

- Adopt an accessibility implementation plan that identifies all access deficiencies throughout downtown.
- Track relevant grants that support reconstruction of the downtown pedestrian streetscapes and adjacent routes.

5+ years

- Fund construction of accessible streetscape improvements throughout downtown Gardiner.

Grant Funding Resource Table

Grant Title & Web Link	What does it fund?	Maximum Grant Amount	Match Requirement	Federal Funding	Recent Application Deadline	Grant Contact
AARP Community Challenge Grants	Infrastructure, programs, events, and organizations supporting livable communities and smart growth objectives	\$20,000.00	None Required	No	4.15.2021	Noel Bonam AARP Maine Director 207.776.6348 nbonam@aarp.org
Northern Border Regional Commission - Economic & Infrastructure Development Program	Infrastructure (roads, public infrastructure, telecommunications, renewable and alternative energy) Business & Workforce Development and Basic Health Care.	\$1,000,000.00	50 percent	Yes	Letter of Interest 3.26.21 App 5.14.21	Charlotte Mace, Maine NBRC Program Manager 207.624.7448 charlotte.mace@maine.gov
Maine Community Development Block Grant Program - Downtown Revitalization	Public facilities and infrastructure related to housing construction, rehabilitation, site clearance, streets, parking, utilities, wharfs and more.	\$300,000	25 percent	Yes	3.26.2021	Terry Ann Holden, Development Program Manager 207.624.9814 terryann.holden@maine.gov
Maine Community Development Block Grant Program - Community Enterprise	Exterior improvements for nonprofit or for profit businesses, streetscapes, pocket parks, traffic calming, and planning activities	\$100,000	25 percent	Yes	4.9.2021	Terry Ann Holden (see above)
Disabled Access Credit	Small business tax credit to support removal of barriers that prevent access	\$5,000	50 percent	Yes	Tax Day	Federal Tax Credit Internal Revenue Code, Section 44

Conceptual Costs

- Accessibility Audit \$15,000
- Design & Permitting \$100,000 - \$150,000
- Additional sidewalk and parking improvements \$750,000 - \$1M

Plan Goals Supported

-  Economic Vibrancy

Redevelop the Arcade

A new design for the Arcade should be approached to benefit the Downtown as a whole, and improve pedestrian and cyclist access from the Cobbossee Trail, the Arcade itself, and increase parking availability and stormwater storage in this public resource.

Near term steps to implement this ambitious project should be broad conversations regarding public services in the Arcade, private use of the utilities such as fuel delivery and waste retrieval, and exploration of public private partnerships that could improve the backend of Water Street businesses in the short-term, before improving the Arcade parking structure as a whole in the long term.

Key Steps towards Implementation

0-2 years

- Utilize this plan to facilitate conversations with Arcade-adjacent business owners/operators to discuss improvements to the Arcade and northern frontages of Water Street buildings.
- Work with Gardiner's Economic Development Committee, Parks and Recreation Committee, and others to develop an implementation approach to develop and approve a redesign for the Arcade.
- Ensure that ongoing plans to redevelop McKay Park take into account the possibility of a future Arcade redesign that extends McKay park to the Cobbossee Trail.
- Apply for funding to support additional design and landscape architecture work to develop design concepts for the Arcade.

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Coastal Community Planning Grants	Eligible Coastal Community Grant project categories include: Ensuring Sustainable, Vibrant Coastal Communities, Restoring Coastal Habitats	\$50,000	25 percent	Yes	4.15.2021	Ruta Dzenis, 207-287-2851, ruta.dzenis@maine.gov Tom Miragliuolo, 207-287-3860 tom.miragliuolo@maine.gov
Northern Border Regional Commission - Economic & Infrastructure Development Program	Infrastructure (roads, public infrastructure, telecommunications, renewable and alternative energy)Business & Workforce Development and Basic Health Care.	\$1,000,000.00	50 percent	Yes	Letter of Interest 3.26.2021 App 5.14.2021	Charlotte Mace, Maine NBRC Program Manager 207.624.7448 charlotte.mace@maine.gov
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2-4 years

- Design and implement improvements to rear facades of Water Street buildings, including but not limited to expanded deck areas in public domain.
- Secure funding to redesign the Arcade as a higher capacity, higher quality public resource.

5+ years

- With the same commitment to quality design as the streetscape in Downtown Gardiner

Conceptual Costs

- Public Private Patios for Water St Buildings - \$20,000-\$60,000 each
- Schematic Design and Public Engagement Process \$50,000-80,000
- Construction Documents and Permitting - \$200,000-\$300,000
- Full reconstruction of Arcade Lot - \$1.5-2.5M

Plan Goals Supported



Economic Vibrancy



Downtown Placemaking



Environmental Resilience

Enhance Downtown's Gateways - The Gardiner Common

The downtown gateway corridor identified at the westernmost edge of The Gardiner Common could be significantly improved as a physical gateway to the Downtown area, while improving pedestrian safety and comfort accessing this side of the park. These improvements are primarily related to streetscape and park refinements, and are not anticipated to directly impact private property. Coordination with MDOT will be crucial.

The recent designation of The Gardiner Common as a Historic Site may open up additional opportunities for engagement and design funding to implement changes that can compliment the area's historic character.

Next steps in this effort could focus on the design of these improvements themselves at this intersection, funded by transportation or recreation related grant resources, or a combination of these funding streams.

Key Steps towards Implementation

0-2 years

- Utilize this plan to identify funding resources that could support improvements to the State and City owned property surrounding the Gardiner Green.
- Build support with the Parks and Recreation Committee, Historic Preservation Committee, Maine DOT and others to develop an implementation approach that can build public consensus and refine the concepts presented in this plan.
- Apply for grants that can support the design of improved access for this and/or other entrances to The Gardiner Common.

2-4 years

- Facilitate a public design process that refines this plan's park and Downtown Gateway concepts and builds public consensus, detailed cost estimates, and clear design details.

Grant Funding Resource Table

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Maine Community Development Block Grant Program - Community Enterprise	Exterior improvements for nonprofit or for profit businesses, streetscapes, pocket parks, traffic calming, and planning activities	\$100,000	25 percent	Yes	4.9.2021	Terry Ann Holden (see above)
Land and Water Conservation Fund	Outdoor recreation facilities and related property acquisition	\$500,000	50 percent	Yes	7.1.2022	Douglas Beck 207.624.6090 doug.beck@maine.gov
USDA OneRD Loan Initiative	Various community infrastructure and economic investment opportunities	Varies	n/a	Yes	Ongoing	Tommy R. Higgins, Acting State Director (207) 990-9160

- Ensure that any changes are in line with the Common's recent designation on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Apply for grants that can support the construction of improved gateways to Downtown and The Gardiner Common.

5+ years

- Oversee construction of this park and downtown gateway.

Conceptual Costs

- Public engagement process & schematic design development - \$25,000 - \$60,000, depending on scale of project (gateway alone to full park)
- Permitting and Construction Documents (Gateway only) \$100,000
- Site Construction (Gateway only) \$500,000

Plan Goals Supported



Economic Vibrancy



Downtown Placemaking

Enhance Downtown's Gateways - Redevelopment

The historic core of Gardiner's Water Street is surrounded by key redevelopment sites that offer opportunities to expand the attractive, historic, and distinctive character of Downtown Gardiner beyond the bounds of Water Street.

These sites, and their zoning, subdivision and related development guidance should be reviewed to ensure that Gardiner and state regulations can support the type of redevelopment that expands and enhances Downtown Gardiner's attractiveness as a place to work, live and play.

In many cases, existing parking requirements, zoning restrictions, setbacks and other existing regulations may not be supporting the type of development that would strengthen downtown Gardiner. The city should work to identify and update any such regulations to ensure future development fits the vision of a vibrant, walkable, and green Downtown Gardiner.

Once redevelopment site regulations are updated and in place, the City and partners such as Gardiner Main Street should work together to attract developers and businesses that can support the economic mix of Downtown Gardiner and expand her unique character to these Downtown Gateways.

Key Steps Towards Implementation

0-2 years

- Review existing development regulations that affect downtown and downtown adjacent properties. Identify any deficiencies that do not allow downtown-style development, and instead require large parking lots and suburban style development
- Amend the Historic Preservation Chapter of Gardiner's Land Use Ordinance to require use of updated guidelines for improvements to structures in the floodplain.

Grant Funding Resource Table						
Grant Title	What does it fund?	Max. Grant Amount	Match Requirement	Federal Funding	Recent Deadline	Grant Contact
AARP Community Challenge Grants	Infrastructure, programs, events, and organizations supporting livable communities and smart growth objectives	\$20,000.00	None Required	No	4.15.2021	Noel Bonam 207.776.6348 nbonam@aarp.org
Coastal Community Planning Grants	Eligible Coastal Community Grant project categories include: Ensuring Sustainable, Vibrant Coastal Communities, Restoring Coastal Habitats	\$50,000	25 percent	Yes	4.15.21	Ruta Dzenis, 207-287-2851, ruta.dzenis@maine.gov Tom Miragliuolo, 207-287-3860 tom.miragliuolo@maine.gov
Northern Border Regional Commission - Economic & Infrastructure Development Program	Infrastructure (roads, public infrastructure, telecommunications, renewable and alternative energy) Business & Workforce Development and Basic Health Care.	\$1,000,000.00	50 percent	Yes	Letter of Interest 3.26.21 App 5.14.21	Charlotte Mace, Maine NBRC Program Manager 207.624.7448 charlotte.mace@maine.gov
Maine Community Development Block Grant Program - Downtown Revitalization	Public facilities and infrastructure related to housing construction, rehabilitation, site clearance, streets, parking, utilities, wharfs and more.	\$300,000	25 percent	Yes	3.26.2021	Terry Ann Holden, Development Program Manager 207.624.9814 terryann.holden@maine.gov
Maine Community Development Block Grant Program - Community Enterprise	Exterior improvements for nonprofit or for profit businesses, streetscapes, pocket parks, traffic calming, and planning activities	\$100,000	25 percent	Yes	4.9.2021	Terry Ann Holden (see above)
CDBG - Housing Assistance	Housing stock rehabilitation, relocation assistance, acquisition, housing conversion, demolition, historic preservation, new construction	\$1,000,000	20 percent	Yes	5.7.2021	Deborah Johnson 207.624.9817 deborah.johnson@maine.gov
RevitalizeME Gen 2	Support creation of architectural / engineering plans to support historic properties. Energy upgrades, housing projects are prioritized.	\$50,000 (Planning/ Design) \$200,000	20 percent	Yes	3.01.2022	Anne Ball, Program Director aball@mdf.org 207.512.4906
Maine Historic Commercial District Revolving Fund	0% Interest loans for facade improvements and COVID 19 response	\$10,000	n/a	No	9.30.2021	Lindsay Wallace lwallace@savingplaces.org

- Lead a public process to support regulatory changes where needed.

2-4 years

- Explore the value of additional planning and review of these sites as expansions of the downtown character. Where valuable, consider establishing planning / design competitions w/ local institutions to reimagine the potential of one or more of these sites.
- Work with economic development agencies to advertise the potential of these redevelopment sites.

Continue to track demographic details that likely will make the case that Gardiner is a growing community with burgeoning opportunity.

5+ years

- Work with the private sector to support redevelopment of these sites and their related public infrastructure

Conceptual Costs

- Regulatory Review - Staff led or \$20-40,000 consultant led project, depending on scope
- Additional planning / design studies and or competitions - \$20-80,000, depending on scope.

Plan Goals Supported



Economic Vibrancy



Downtown Placemaking

Trail to Waterfront Park

The recent investments in the Cobbossee Corridor Trail by MDOT and City of Gardiner are enormously valuable in putting Gardiner's Downtown at the heart Kennebec River Rail Trail, and East Coast Greenway regional trail systems.

Linking these resources directly with existing recreational assets such as Waterfront Park can make Downtown Gardiner much more than a point on a larger trail, but a destination into itself, attracting businesses and tourism to the local economy, while improving the quality of life for Gardiner Residents.

Though the distance is short between the Cobbossee Maine Ave pedestrian bridge and Waterfront Park, a connection should be made which prioritizes bicycle and pedestrian movement and links these resources to create a safe and idyllic downtown greenspace network.

Key Steps towards Implementation

0-2 years

- Use this plan to approach conversations with critical stakeholders along corridor, including Rail Owners/Operators, and Private Property Owners
- Identify constraints or concerns that would prohibit trail access from being developed through this corridor.
- Negotiate Easement, MOU or other terms with Rail and private landowners.

2-4 years

- Address road crossing safety, site constraints and/or property owner concerns through the development of additional design studies to better estimate potential cost and or permitting hurdles.
- Identify needed permitting to support construction grant applications

Grant Funding Resource Table

Grant Title & Web Link	What does it fund?	Maximum Grant Amount	Match Requirement	Federal Funding	Recent Application Deadline	Grant Contact
Recreational Trails Program	Trails, Trailheads, Trail Maintenance, Property Acquisition for Trails and other recreational trail amenities	\$120,000	20 percent	Yes	9.24.2021	Douglas Beck 207.624.6090 doug.beck@maine.gov
Land and Water Conservation Fund	Outdoor recreation facilities and related property acquisition	\$500,000	50 percent	Yes	7.1.2022	Douglas Beck 207.624.6090 doug.beck@maine.gov
AARP Community Challenge Grants	Infrastructure, programs, events, and organizations supporting livable communities and smart growth objectives	\$20,000.00	None Required	No	4.15.2021	Noel Bonam AARP Maine Director 207.776.6348 nbonam@aarp.org
Coastal Community Planning Grants	Eligible Coastal Community Grant project categories include: Ensuring Sustainable, Vibrant Coastal Communities, Restoring Coastal Habitats	\$50,000	25 percent	Yes	4.15.2021	Ruta Dzenis, 207-287-2851, ruta.dzenis@maine.gov Tom Miragliuolo, 207-287-3860 tom.miragliuolo@maine.gov
Northern Border Regional Commission - Economic & Infrastructure Development Program	Infrastructure (roads, public infrastructure, telecommunications, renewable and alternative energy)Business & Workforce Development and Basic Health Care.	\$1,000,000.00	50 percent	Yes	Letter of Interest 3.26.21 App 5.14.21	Charlotte Mace, Maine NBRC Program Manager 207.624.7448 charlotte.mace@maine.gov




5+ years

- Fund trail connection construction through grant programs and capital campaigns.

Conceptual Costs

- Additional design studies - \$30,000 - \$60,000 depending on scope.
- Site Permitting - \$30,000 - \$50,000 (highly variable)
- Construction - \$150,000 - \$300,000

Plan Goals Supported

-  Economic Vibrancy
-  Downtown Placemaking
-  Environmental Resilience



Strengthen Downtown's Identity

The City of Gardiner should work with key boards, committees, and non-profit partners to develop a unified approach to telling Gardiner's story.

Though this is not a 'bricks and mortar' type of project, a unified branding, promotion, and story telling approach could build Gardiner up as a key destination throughout central Maine, New England, and beyond.

This element of Downtown Plan implementation should be driven by the City of Gardiner, local business leaders, and non profit partners such as Johnson Hall Theatre, Gardiner Main Street, and Friends of the Cobscook Bay Watershed.

This process would likely begin with a series of informal conversation and meetings, the development of a committee focused on this task, and eventual contracting with a consultant who can lead community leaders and the broader public through a branding and identity process which can distill and communicate the elements and sense of place which make Downtown Gardiner and the City as a whole so great.

The intended effect of this process would be to improve downtown (and city wide) economic development, providing tools and approaches needed to deliver a campaign that can better market the City as a destination for businesses and tourism alike, by simply, clearly, and collectively stating what it is that makes Gardiner great.

Grant Funding Resource Table						
Grant Title & Web Link	What does it fund?	Maximum Grant Amount	Match Requirement	Federal Funding	Recent Application Deadline	Grant Contact
Our Town	Public Art, Art and Identity Planning, District Planning, Public Space Design, Creative Business Development	\$150,000	50 percent	Yes	8.05.2021	1.800.518.4726 OT@arts.gov
Coastal Community Planning Grants	Eligible Coastal Community Grant project categories include: Ensuring Sustainable, Vibrant Coastal Communities, Restoring Coastal Habitats	\$50,000	25 percent	Yes	4.15.2021	Ruta Dzenis, 207-287-2851, ruta.dzenis@maine.gov Tom Miragliuolo, 207-287-3860 tom.miragliuolo@maine.gov
AARP Community Challenge Grants	Infrastructure, programs, events, and organizations supporting livable communities and smart growth objectives	\$20,000.00	None Required	No	4.15.2021	Noel Bonam AARP Maine Director 207.776.6348 nbonam@aarp.org
Maine Office of Tourism Grants	Community marketing, tourism, and special event grant resources	\$2500 - \$60,000	Varies	No	11.18.2021	Maine Office of Tourism 207.624.7483

Key Next Steps

0-2 years

- Build a committee or working group, perhaps beginning through Gardiner's existing Comprehensive Plan Review & Implementation Committee that can identify key leaders that should take part in this process
- Seek out grant and funding resources that could support staff time or professional consultants to lead a City Identity process

2-4 years

- Go through a public process which builds up a succinct, clear, and distinctive concept of Gardiner's Identity. This would likely include branding and logo services that could be used on future City communication, wayfinding and economic development materials, as well as ongoing campaign direction to 'Tell Gardiner's Story'

5+ years

- Update wayfinding signage throughout Gardiner to align with Identity process outcomes.

- Conduct a concerted campaign to promote and reaffirm Gardiner's identity through business and tourism channels, locally, regionally, and nationally.

Conceptual Costs

- Coordination and leadership identification - Staff time.
- Consultant led branding and identity process - \$25,000

Plan Goals Supported



Economic Vibrancy



Downtown Placemaking

Leverage Downtown's Existing Parking Supply

As the restoration of the 400 seat Johnson Hall Theatre nears reality, demands on Downtown Parking are poised to surge - but are not likely to surge to these levels during the workweek.

Because of this dynamic, and the ample amount of off-street parking lots available throughout Downtown Gardiner, the City should lead a conversation with property and business owners to see where public/private arrangements could expand parking access throughout the Downtown, particularly on nights and weekends.

Public support of parking enforcement and lot maintenance in exchange for particular hours of operation as public facilities should be explored and leveraged anywhere possible within the downtown area.

Support for these efforts may come through updated, focused parking studies and/or temporary agreements that can allow exploration of shared parking arrangements without long term commitments.

Key Next Steps

0-2 Years

- Build a team led by City & KVCOG Staff that can work to facilitate dialog and negotiations with willing private land owners.
- Update 2019 parking study to focus on the potential of shared parking resources and relative utilization of existing private and public resources.
- Identify private parking areas and rank them in order of value to the public parking supply, considering such details such as: distance to Downtown, size, observed demand, ownership and other attributes.



- Approach and re-approach land and business owners who operate private surface parking to engage in dialog surrounding shared parking arrangements
- Research other Maine and New England public/private parking arrangements to pull opportunities and approaches for shared parking arrangements from precedent. One example parking arrangement is included in this document's appendix.
- Draft an MOU, lease, easement, or other approach that can support a shared public-private parking arrangement.
- Pilot a shared parking program with access easements for after hours parking, resident parking, and flexible options for existing parking resources.

2-4 Years

- Expand pilot shared parking program to additional sites.
- Incorporate public / private parking facilities into downtown promotion brochures and/or wayfinding installations to support awareness.

- If needed for additional agreements, utilize this plan to apply for funding to conduct additional, targeted parking studies. Study parking at times of peak impact to add validity to study results.

5+ Years

- Monitor established shared parking facilities and agreements to update and revise as needed.

Conceptual Costs

- Dialog with private parking lot owners - City Staff and Volunteer time
- Draft MOU, lease or easement - City Attorney time
- Parking Studies (as needed) \$8,000 - \$12,000
- Maintenance and Enforcement in new lots - City Staff time

Plan Goals Supported



Economic Vibrancy

Build a Network of Green Stormwater Infrastructure

Approach

66 percent of Downtown Gardiner is considered impervious, or unable to infiltrate water into the ground. While the riverfronts and parkland provide space to infiltrate water, this amount of impervious surface still contributes to stormwater runoff entering the waterways and contributing to compromised water quality and flooding in large storm events. With over 50 percent of the downtown located within the 100 year floodplain, any amount of on site infiltration contributes to reduction of flood risk.

Use of small scale green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) can be incorporated by retrofitting elements of existing streets, parking lots, and tree wells. Other stormwater infrastructure can be subsurface designs. There may be limitations on what types of stormwater practices can be utilized in specific locations, such as within the 100 year floodplain or adjacent to existing utilities.

A stormwater master plan can identify the locations of greatest need and highest feasibility for stormwater infrastructure.

Efficiency may be gained by considering stormwater infrastructure in tandem with flood resiliency.

The EPA's [Community Based Public-Private Partnerships \(CBP3s\) and Alternative Market-Based Tools for Integrated Green Stormwater Management: A Guide for Local Governments](#) is another useful resource for Gardiner to explore additional means for funding and implementation.

Grant Funding Resource Table						
Grant Title & Web Link	What does it fund?	Maximum Grant Amount	Match Requirement	Federal Funding	Recent Application Deadline	Grant Contact
Coastal Community Planning Grants	Eligible Coastal Community Grant project categories include: Ensuring Sustainable, Vibrant Coastal Communities, Restoring Coastal Habitats	\$50,000	25 percent	Yes	4.15.2021	Ruta Dzenis, 207-287-2851, ruta.dzenis@maine.gov Tom Miragliuolo, 207-287-3860 tom.miragliuolo@maine.gov
Maine Community Development Block Grant Program - Downtown Revitalization	Public facilities and infrastructure related to housing construction, rehabilitation, site clearance, streets, parking, utilities, wharfs and more.	\$300,000	25 percent	Yes	3.26.2021	Terry Ann Holden, Development Program Manager 207.624.9814 terryann.holden@maine.gov
Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program	Develops nation-wide community stewardship of natural resources including wetland and riparian restoration, stormwater runoff, and degraded shorelines. Includes education component.	\$20,000 - \$50,000	1:1 (can include staff and volunteer time, materials, etc.)	Yes	1.25.2022	Carrie Clingan, Program Director, Community Stewardship and Youth carrie.clingan@nfwf.org
Clean Water State Revolving Fund & Revolving Loan Fund	Low interest loans or federal appropriation for green and sustainable infrastructure	varies	loan forgiveness	Yes	none	John True, Engineering Services Manager, Division of Water Quality Management, State of Maine 207.287.7808 john.n.true@maine.gov

Key Next Steps

0-2 Years

- Identify funding sources for a Stormwater Master Plan (SWMP)
- Engage a consultant to complete a SWMP
- Build a regional working group of Municipal and State leader to work to plan for a more resilient Cobbossee Watershed (*in tandem with flood resiliency*)

2-4 Years

- Identify funding sources for construction of GSI projects
- Utilize SWMP and Hydraulic and Hydrologic Study (*in tandem with flood resiliency*) to develop engineering designs and construction of GSI projects

Conceptual Costs

- Stormwater Master Plan: \$20,000 - \$40,000

Stormwater Infrastructure Projects (includes design, materials and installation costs*)

- Infiltration trench (subsurface): \$38.46/cf
- Infiltration basin (rain garden, bioretention): \$19.23/cf
- Biofiltration (treewell, tree box filter): \$47.61/cf
- Porous pavement (pavers, pervious asphalt, pervious concrete): \$16.38/cf (asphalt) - \$55.66/cf (concrete)

*costs based on University of New Hampshire Stormwater Center estimates, January 2020

Plan Goals Supported



Downtown Placemaking



Environmental Resiliency

Partner in Regional Flood Resilience Studies

Approach

While the Downtown has not significantly flooded in a number of years, the percentage of downtown commercial properties that are at risk of flooding is concerning. There are a wide range of approaches to mitigating flood risk, but the first step to identifying the best approaches is to understand exactly how and why the flooding occurs.

A Hydraulic and Hydrologic (H&H) study should be performed to quantify the volume flow rate of water draining from the Cobbossee watershed (i.e., drainage area), and determine the depth and velocity of flow and forces from flowing water on downtown surfaces or at key hydraulic structures. H&H studies are essential to mitigate against flood loss in the future.

With a completed H&H analysis, Gardiner will have a clearer understanding of the nature of flooding in the Downtown and can better identify what approaches may be most effective at reducing the potential for flooding.

The Cobbossee Watershed and related watersheds do not only affect Gardiner. H&H studies should be seen as an effort to build regional collaboration to approach such a daunting project, and build a body of knowledge and build the political awareness and will needed to implement any significant changes.

Such studies may be well timed in coming years with the recently passed Infrastructure Investment and Jobs act promising to deliver \$50 billion in funding to protect against droughts and floods to reduce the impact of climate change, including \$3.5 billion in flood mitigation assistance grants alone.

Grant Funding Resource Table						
Grant Title & Web Link	What does it fund?	Maximum Grant Amount	Match Requirement	Federal Funding	Recent Application Deadline	Grant Contact
Coastal Community Planning Grants	Eligible Coastal Community Grant project categories include: Ensuring Sustainable, Vibrant Coastal Communities, Restoring Coastal Habitats	\$50,000	25 percent	Yes	4.15.2021	Ruta Dzenis, 207-287-2851, ruta.dzenis@maine.gov Tom Miragliuolo, 207-287-3860 tom.miragliuolo@maine.gov
FEMA - Building Resilient Infrastructure & Communities (BRIC)	Hazard mitigation projects that reduce the risks faced from disasters and natural hazards.	No cap - nationally competitive	25 percent	Yes	12.01.2021	Maria Hobbs 207-530-1446 maria.hobbs@maine.gov

Key Next Steps

0-2 Years

- Reach out to Maine Department of Emergency Management and KVCOG to discuss and coordinate approaches to H&H studies and other flood management strategies.
- Build a regional working group of Municipal and State leaders to work to plan for a more resilient Cobbossee Watershed.
- Identify funding sources among Gardiner and other neighboring communities that can fund H&H studies for the area.
- Apply for funding that can support a broad H&H study within the Cobbossee Watershed



2-4 years

- Complete Hydraulic and Hydrologic Study
- Identify and plan for large scale projects that could make downtown Gardiner more resilient to future flood impacts

Conceptual Costs

- \$50,000 - \$80,000 for H&H Study

Plan Goals Supported

-  Economic Vibrancy
-  Environmental Resilience



Appendices

- Appendix A - Downtown Gardiner Survey Results**
- Appendix B - Market Analysis Details**
- Appendix C - Town Official Interview Notes**
- Appendix D - Sample Public / Private Parking Agreement**