City of Biddeford
Planning Board
February 01, 2023 6:00 PM City Hall
Council Chambers, & Zoom
https://biddeford.zoom.us/j/96914827504?pwd=WFlmV2JrTDBPbjZ3UlNYNGNlMlR6dz09
Webinar ID #969 1482 7504 Passcode #918339

STATUS: Planning Board Workshop for discussion and direction with no Board action, February 1, 2023, 6:00PM, City Council Chambers & Zoom

1. **DECLARATION OF QUORUM/VOTING MEMBERS**
2. **ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA**
3. **PLANNER'S BUSINESS**
4. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
5. **NEW BUSINESS**

5.A. Presentation by Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) on the Draft Biddeford Saco Transit Oriented Development Concept Plan for discussion and direction.
Memo to Biddeford Planning Board.pdf
Biddeford_Saco_TOD_DRAFT_4_1_22_20220412103223912 7.pdf

5.B. Presentation by Eric Freeman on Draft Comp Plan for discussion and direction.
Public Engagement
Population & Demographics
Transportation
Historic, Cultural & Archaeological Resources
Marine Resources
Recreation & Open Space

COMP PLAN PB Memo_Revised_01.26.2023.pdf
02_DEMOGRAPHICS_Jan_2023 Comprehensive Plan Draft.pdf
03_COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT_Jan_2023 Comprehensive Plan Draft.pdf
8_TRANSPORTATION_JAN 2023 Comprehensive Plan Draft.pdf
09_HISTORIC&CULTURAL RESOURCES_Jan_2023 Comprehensive Plan Draft.pdf
10_RECREATION & OPEN SPACE_Jan_2023 Comprehensive Plan Draft.pdf
14_MARINE RESOURCES_January 2023 Comprehensive Plan Draft.pdf

6. **OTHER BUSINESS**
7. **ADJOURN**

The Board reserves the right to halt official business at 9:30 p.m. Items not heard at tonight's meeting shall be rescheduled to the next meeting of the Board. All materials pertaining to items on the agenda are available for public review at the Biddeford Planning Department, second floor, Biddeford City Hall during normal business hours.

Agenda Item: "PACTS Plans and Projects"

Rick Harbison, a planner at the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS), the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization, will discuss recent PACTS plans and projects relevant to the City of Biddeford. The presentation will focus on the Biddeford-Saco Transit-Oriented Development Concept Plan, but to provide context Rick will provide a brief overview of PACTS and Connect 2045, the organization's newly adopted long-range transportation plan.

Connect 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan

In December 2022, the PACTS Policy Board adopted Connect 2045, the federally required long-range transportation plan for the region. Connect 2045 is the overarching plan that guides all policies, programs, and investments at PACTS. The plan is updated every five years, considers all modes, and has a 20+ year time horizon.

Biddeford-Saco Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Concept Plan

In 2018, PACTS issued a Call for Nominations to identify sites within the region to develop Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Concept Plans. The Call for Nominations specified that selected projects would be led by PACTS staff in collaboration with transit agencies and municipal staff and would not require any local match (aside from in-kind staff assistance).

The Cities of Saco and Biddeford submitted a joint application to nominate Saco Island and the Biddeford Mill District as a site location for developing a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Concept Plan. The Biddeford/Saco site was selected, and the project began in early 2020.

PACTS assembled a steering committee with representatives from both municipalities, SMPDC, BSOOB Transit, NNEPRA, MaineDOT, Richardson & Associates (a local landscape architecture firm and consultant for the project), and a local developer. Focus areas within the study area were identified by the steering committee and illustrations and renderings were developed by Richardson & Associates. The plan was also informed by two public surveys (garnering over 1,000 responses) and numerous stakeholder meetings with local groups and organizations.

The project was delayed by the pandemic, but a final draft is now complete. The plan is advisory only. The primary intent is for the cities to use it as a resource to help inform future transportation, economic development, and land use decisions. With the recent influx of federal funding (the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act), the plan can also be used to strengthen project proposals for competitive funding opportunities.

BIDDEFORD SACO

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN

Elm Street (Route 1) looking north in Biddeford


Main Street (Route 9) looking north in Saco


Main Street (Route 9) looking south in Saco

DRAFT

APRIL 2022

Acknowledgments

This concept plan was prepared with funding from the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS).

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GPCOG
GREATER PORTLAND COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

PACTS
PORTLAND AREA COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

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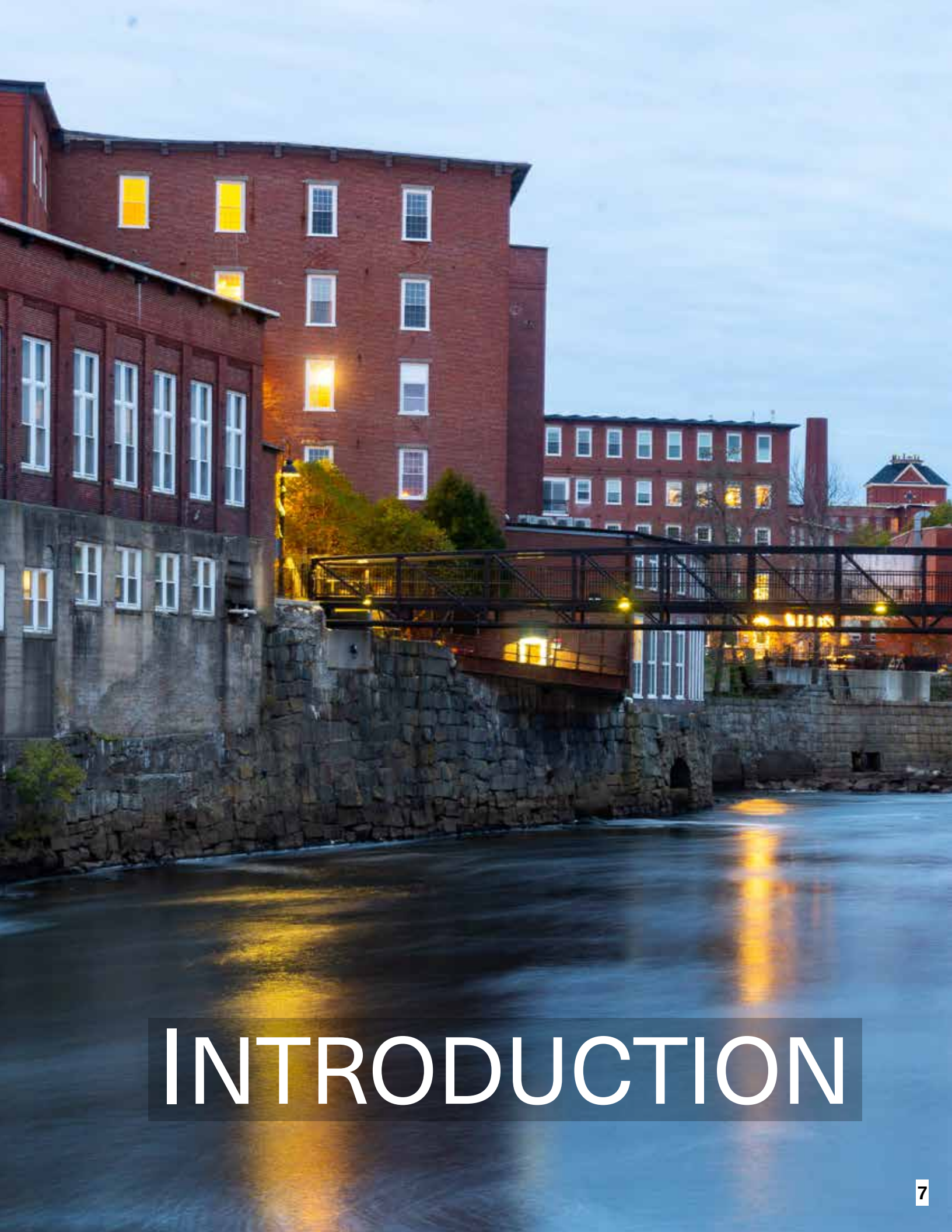
Additional appendices and documentation available on the project website:
https://www.gpcog.org/388/Biddeford-Saco-TOD



INTRODUCTION

The RiverWalk bridge connecting Biddeford and Saco
Photo: Corey Templeton

SET AMONGST THE BACKDROP of the Saco River, the Mill District in Biddeford and Saco Island is a dynamic place with a long history of transformation. Although the area is defined by its iconic 19th-century brick mill buildings, for nearly three centuries prior to the construction of the mills lumber production was the major industry and water-powered sawmills dotted the landscape. From the 1800s to the early 1980s, the area evolved to suit the needs of the major industry of the time -- from ironworks to cotton mills to large-scale leather and shoe businesses.

After a period of decline, when economic activity shifted away from downtowns and into the suburbs all over Maine, the area began another transformation. In the early 2000s, one by one, developers began to renovate and re-envision the historic mill buildings as unique and creative spaces for offices, restaurants, hotels, residences, and educational facilities, among other uses. The area is now on the rise again as artists, entrepreneurs, millennials, and baby boomers alike are drawn to the area for its character and affordability (relative to other cities).

But just as the mill buildings are being repurposed for a modern economy, the area's public spaces (roads, intersections, sidewalks, and parks) and transit system also need to adapt to keep up with changing lifestyles and preferences. This plan explores how the Cities of Biddeford and Saco, working alongside other stakeholders such as private developers, community groups, transit agencies, and MaineDOT, can remake the area to align with the new vision for the Mill District and Saco Island as a vibrant, mixed-use, urban community where people can live, work, and play. Most importantly, following the principles of transit-oriented development, the plan creates a vision for how the area can continue to grow and thrive in a safe, sustainable, and equitable way.

Background

Unlike other areas in Maine, southern Maine continues to gain population. Where and how this growth occurs — in the region and in the Cities of Biddeford and Saco — has major implications for quality of life and the environment.

In the last several decades, much of southern Maine's regional growth has occurred in suburban and rural areas, away from job centers and services. This sprawling development pattern, which is difficult to serve by public transit, has contributed to a reliance on vehicle travel, traffic congestion, longer commutes, increased air and water pollution, and the weakening of town and city centers.

Priority Centers and Corridors

To counteract this trend and encourage growth in more appropriate areas — where jobs, housing, and services are in close proximity — the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS) has identified over 50 "priority centers" in the region that provide the most promising opportunities for future population and job growth. Downtown Biddeford and Saco are two of the largest, and most well-established of these priority centers.

More recently, the newly adopted long-range public transportation plan, *Transit Tomorrow*, reaffirms Downtown Biddeford and Saco as priority centers for transit. The plan even goes a step further and identifies the corridor connecting Biddeford and Saco to Portland as a top priority for implementing high-frequency rapid transit opportunities, such as commuter rail, light rail, or bus rapid transit (Figure 1).

Transit Supportive Planning Initiatives

The Transit Supportive Planning Initiative is an example of how PACTS is directing its resources towards priority centers and corridors. In 2018, PACTS issued a "call for nominations" for pilot sites to develop transit-oriented development concept plans. The Cities of Biddeford and

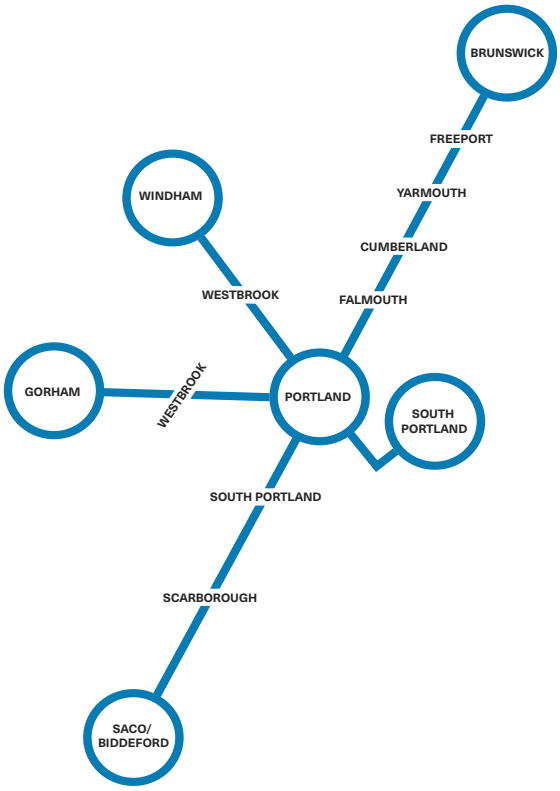


FIGURE 1:
Priority Corridors for Rapid Transit

In *Transit Tomorrow,* the newly adopted long-range public transportation plan, Downtown Biddeford and Saco are identified as priority transit centers and the corridor connecting Biddeford and Saco to Portland as a top priority for implementing high-frequency rapid transit opportunities, such as commuter rail, light rail, or bus rapid transit.

Saco submitted a joint proposal for the Mill District/Saco Island area, which was selected. Throughout 2020 and into 2021, PACTS staff have worked with municipal staff from both cities and a project steering committee to develop a transit-oriented development concept plan for the study area.

Project Goals

As the area continues to develop, the goal of the *Biddeford-Saco TOD Concept Plan* is to ensure safe, sustainable, and equitable growth, and to provide ideas and recommendations for how to create a more pedestrian-oriented environment that supports the increased use of public transit.

FIGURE 2:
General Study Area
The image above shows the general study area for this plan. The study area includes Saco Island and the Mill District in Biddeford (including the Pepperell Mill Campus, Lincoln Mill, the Pearl Street Riverfront District, and all of Spring Island).

Image: Google Earth

General Study Area

The general study area for the *Biddeford-Saco TOD Concept Plan* is the adjoining Mill Districts along the Saco River (Figure 2). Identified by both municipalities early in the planning process, the study area is primarily focused on the rapidly redeveloping mill buildings and undeveloped lands within walking distance of the Saco Transportation Center.

Key to the success of transit-oriented developments is a central transit stop (such as a train station) surrounded by compact, highly-walkable, mixed-use development. As the new hub for Biddeford, Saco, Old Orchard Beach (BSOOB) Transit's bus routes, and a station for the Amtrak Downeaster, the Saco Transportation Center is the natural focus of the study area. While the Transportation Center is not perfectly situated in the center of the study area, a major focus of the plan is to improve connections through the Biddeford Mill District and across the river to provide better access to it.

Key to the success of TOD's is a central transit stop (such as a train station) surrounded by compact, highly walkable, mixed-use development.

It is important to note, the study area shown within the dashed red line in Figure 2 is a general depiction of the area considered in this plan. The boundaries are shown for guidance, but not rigidly adhered to. In some cases, the plan may reference — or make recommendations for — locations outside the study area.

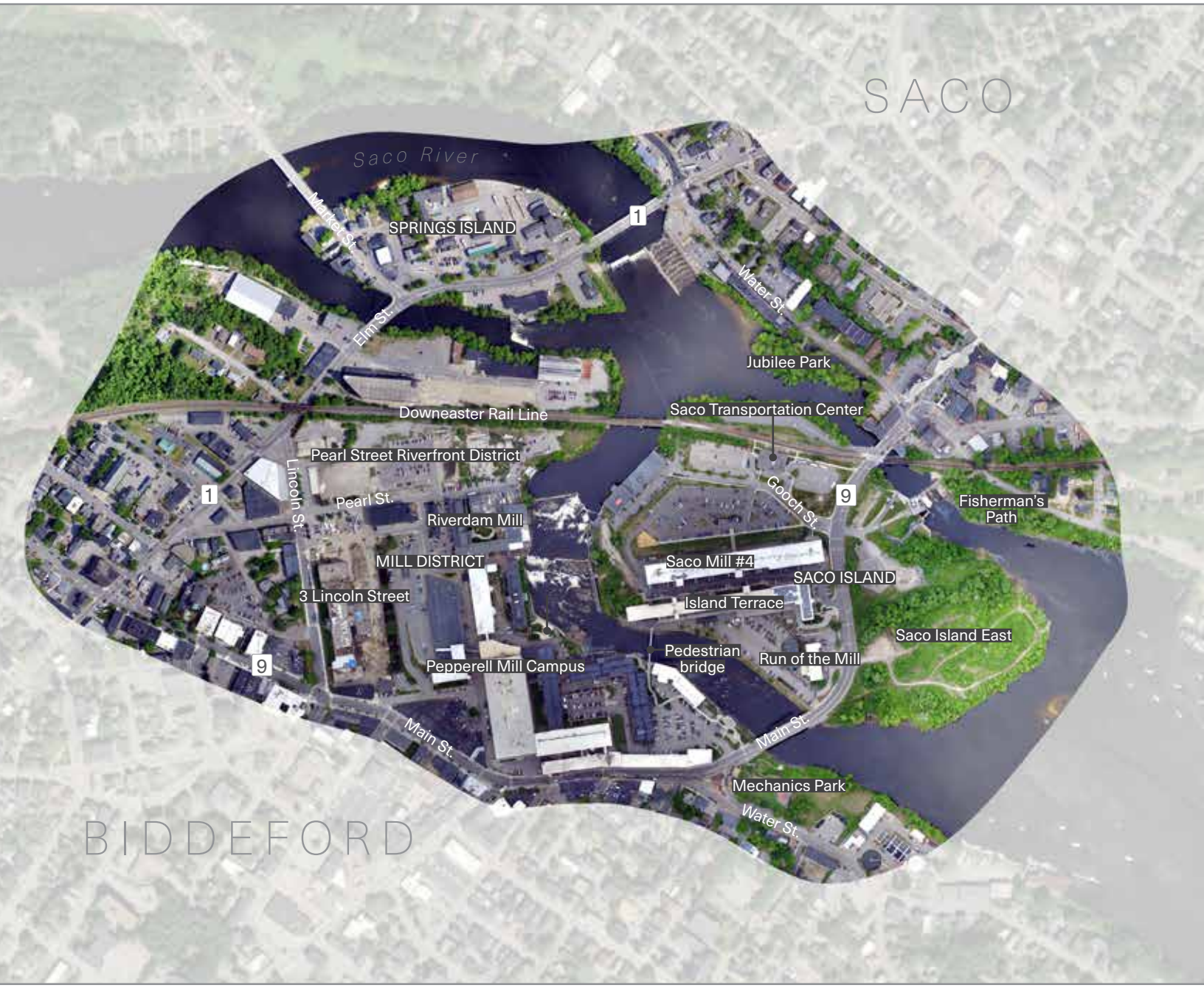


FIGURE 3:

General Study Area

The image above shows the general study area for this plan. The study area includes Saco Island and the Mill District in Biddeford (including the Pepperell Mill Campus, Lincoln Mill, the Pearl Street Riverfront District, and all of Spring Island).

Image: GPCOG

Planning Process

Gathering feedback that truly represents the people who live and work in an area is always challenging. When the plan initially kicked-off in early 2020, the project team envisioned a robust, ground-level public engagement process with site walks, in-person meetings, forums, and interactive public displays. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the project team to suspend in-person engagement activities in favor of a virtual, socially distanced approach. Accordingly, this plan was primarily guided by input from a project steering committee, stakeholder meetings, and public surveys. Figure 4 provides a basic timeline of the major tasks undertaken during the course of the project.

Project Steering Committee

The plan's steering committee consisted of the following members:

- **Municipal staff** from the Cities of Biddeford and Saco specializing in planning and economic development.
- **Transit agencies** serving the area, including representatives from Biddeford Saco Old Orchard Beach (BSOOB) Transit and the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA), which manages the Amtrak Downeaster.
- Planning staff from the **Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT)**.
- Planning staff from the **Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC)**, the regional planning organization for York County.
- A representative of the **local development community** from Fathom Companies.
- The Saco-based **landscape architect** firm Richardson & Associates.

After kicking off the project in January 2020, the steering committee met regularly over the course of a year, including a site walk in the summer of 2020. The committee provided local input on issues and opportunities, helped develop the renderings and recommendations, and weighed in on draft versions of the plan.

FIGURE 4:
Project Timeline

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the project team to suspend in-person engagement activities in favor of a virtual, socially-distanced approach.

Stakeholder Meetings

Throughout the course of the planning effort, the project team provided virtual presentations — or coordinated closely with — many key stakeholders and stakeholder groups, including local non-profit groups, the business community, local developers and property owners, and municipal committees.

These meetings and communications were critical for raising awareness of the plan, learning about local issues and concerns, and exploring the feasibility of various ideas and recommendations for the area.

Public Surveys

With guidance from the steering committee, the project team developed two online public surveys. The questions in the first survey allowed the project team to gain a better understanding of people's experiences living, working, or visiting the area; an interactive map also helped identify specific locations where people find it difficult (or unsafe) to walk, bike, or take public transit. The second survey asked respondents to rate (and provide feedback on) a number of place-based design ideas intended to address the issues gleaned from the first survey (such as adding parks, sidewalks, or bike lanes in specific areas). The results of both surveys are referenced throughout the plan and more detailed summary reports for each can be found on the project website.

SURVEY 1

Duration: July 31, 2020 - Nov. 30, 2020
Respondents: 456

The first survey was launched in the summer of 2020. Over 450 people responded to the survey, which sought to gain a better understanding of people's experiences living, working, or visiting the study area, and to identify specific locations where people find it difficult (or unsafe) to walk, bike, or take public transit.

Key findings:

- Roughly half the respondents noted they live or work in the study area; the other half visit.
- Top reasons why people live/work in the area were: proximity to downtown amenities (restaurants/ breweries, shopping, etc.), affordability, and convenience of walking to get around.
- Respondents indicated it is easier/safer to walk in the area than to bike.
- The majority of respondents were infrequent users of the bus or train.
- Top ideas to ride the bus more were: increased frequency, changes to routes, additional stops, and easier public information.
- Top ideas to ride the train more were: lower prices, increased frequency, and better access to Portland.
- Over a third of respondents found parking in the area difficult.
- Top ideas to improve the area were to make it more bike and pedestrian friendly, more parking where you need it, and better signage and wayfinding.

SURVEY 2

Duration: Dec. 28, 2020 - Feb. 1, 2021
Respondents: 493

The second survey was launched in the winter of 2020/'21 and received close to 500 responses. The intent of the second survey was to get feedback on a number of place-based design ideas to address issues gleaned from the first survey.

Key findings:

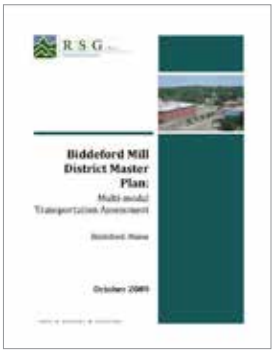
- Similar to the first survey, approximately half the respondents indicated they live or work in the study area; the other half visit.
- Most respondents would likely take advantage of a downtown circulator bus making short trips between Downtown Biddeford and Saco.
- More frequent southbound Downeaster trips to Boston were preferred over northbound.
- Respondents were more likely to participate in a bike share program than a car share program.
- Extending the RiverWalk Trail to connect to Elm Street and improving sidewalks and crossings on Elm Street received the highest ratings of all ideas.
- Adding a new sidewalk on the east side of Main Street received a high rating as well as an idea to narrow and reduce travel lanes to add a bike lane.
- In the area by the Saco Transportation Center a gateway park received strong support as well as a covered bicycle storage facility.
- In considering a pedestrian bridge connecting the Saco Transportation Center to Biddeford's Pearl Street Riverfront District, respondents preferred the girder bridge concept over all other designs.

Review of Recent Plans and Studies

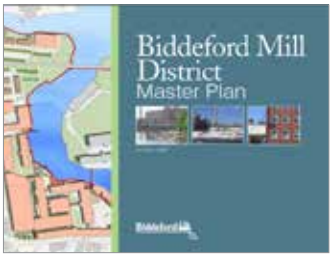
The project team also reviewed recent planning efforts and studies conducted locally. As noted below, many of these plans and studies discuss — or recommend — key principles of transit-oriented development, like encouraging more density and mixed-use development in the downtowns, and improving conditions for walking, biking, and the use of transit.

RECENT PLANS AND STUDIES

Biddeford Comprehensive Plan (1999)
In the area of Economic Well-Being, the city's 1999 comprehensive plan established a policy to encourage the rehabilitation and increased utilization of the city's downtown mill complex. The city is currently updating its comprehensive plan. The working draft includes a policy to "promote and support the Mill District and Downtown Biddeford as the historic, cultural, commercial, and mixed-use core of the City," and to adopt a complete streets policy, among other goals and strategies.

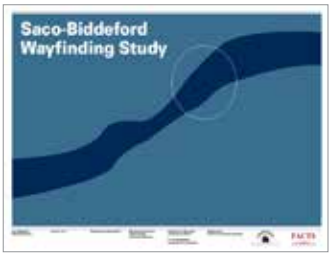


Multi-Modal Transportation Assessment (2008)
Conducted by the Resource Systems Group, the assessment noted studies of mixed-use developments have shown "a combination of land uses typically produces fewer vehicle trips than independent land uses on independent parcels." The report suggested implementing a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program and investing in pedestrian infrastructure improvements.



Biddeford Mill District Master Plan (2009)
The Master Plan made recommendations in land use, economic development and transportation, many of which have come to fruition. The plan's supplemental reports offered recommendations that have informed policy changes and investments, such as: adopting new zoning for to increase residential and commercial uses; an infrastructure improvement plan; and the introduction of an economic incentive plan.

Tri-Community Transportation Study (2010)
This study was a regional collaboration with PACTS, the Maine Turnpike Authority, MaineDOT, local transit providers, and municipal reps from Biddeford, Saco and Old Orchard Beach. It developed recommendations for regional cooperation, land use, and regional and local transportation strategies.

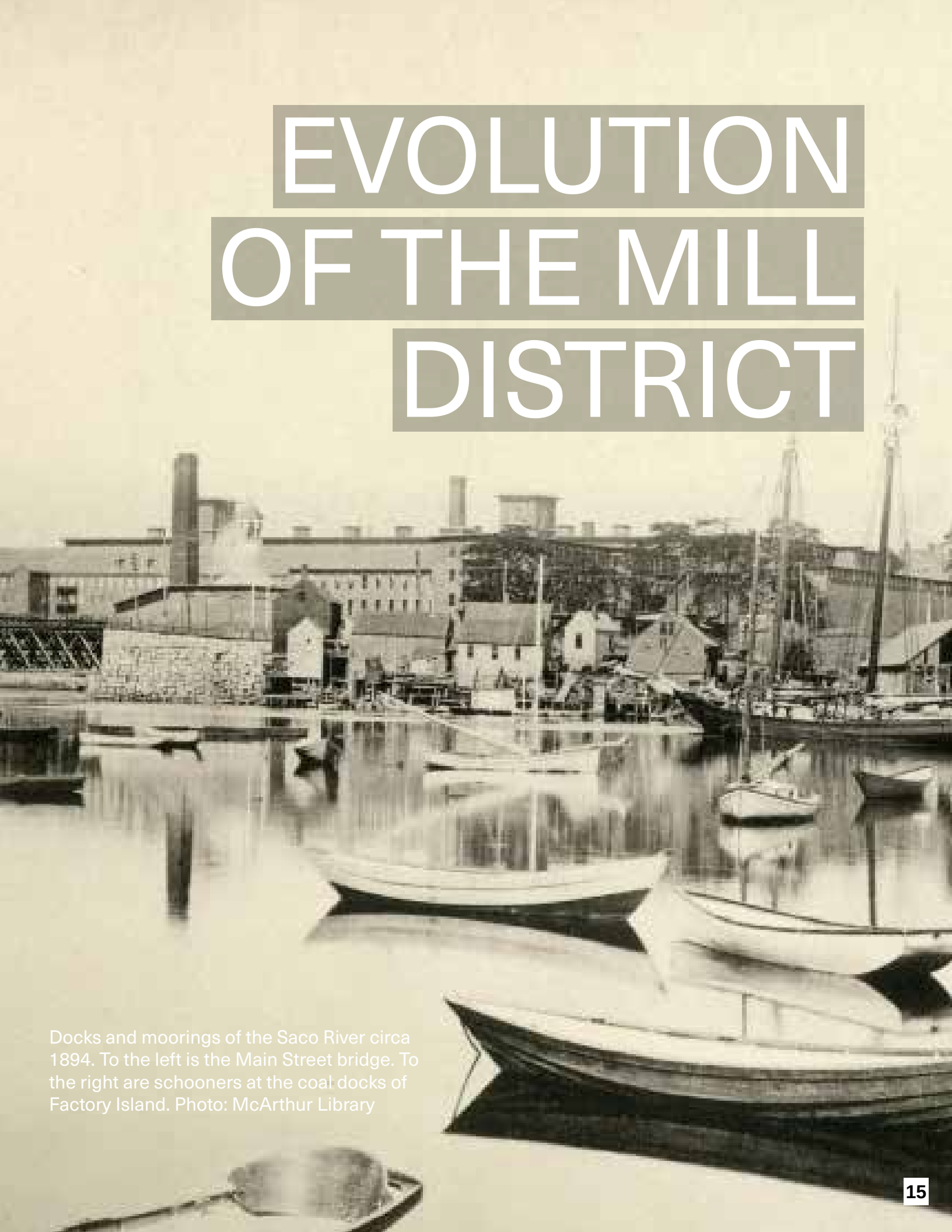


Saco-Biddeford Wayfinding Study (2013)
This study provides detailed recommendations for how to create a "clear and cohesive" wayfinding and signage plan for Downtown Biddeford and Saco. Many of the recommended signs have since been installed.

Biddeford Parking Management Study (2018)
This study, conducted by municipal staff, developed a Parking Management Program (PMP) and addressed the inequities of free parking. In addition to recommending parking policies, the study explored building a downtown parking garage, which is currently underway.

Saco Comprehensive Plan Update (2018)
Saco's comprehensive plan update set goals and policies to address density in housing and land use, specifically focusing on solutions that "discourage sprawl by encouraging residential development at greater densities in the downtown and adjacent neighborhoods." At the time of this writing, Saco is now in the final stages of adopting a new comprehensive plan.

EVOLUTION OF THE MILL DISTRICT



Docks and moorings of the Saco River circa 1894. To the left is the Main Street bridge. To the right are schooners at the coal docks of Factory Island. Photo: McArthur Library

THE POWER AND RESOURCES of the great falls sustained the early indigenous people long before the advent of white-European explorers in the early 1600s, and their subsequent English colony at the mouth of the Saco River in 1616-1617. The indigenous people of the Saco River Valley were part of the Wabanaki Confederacy (specifically the Abenaki, Sokoki/Saco and Pequawket nations).[1] They were based all along the Saco River, from the river's headwaters near today's Fryeburg all the way downriver to what is now Biddeford and Saco. According to early literature, the Sokokis/Saco main village, "Sowocatuck," may have been near the Mill District in the area around the great falls.[2]

Like the indigenous peoples, the settlers and speculators recognized the tremendous power of the river. Saco Island became Maine's first major industrial area, dubbed at the time as "Factory Island." By 1762, the population on the east side of the Saco River became so large it split from Biddeford to form the town of Pepperrellborough, which later changed to Saco.[3]

Industrial Boom

The growth of the mills on Factory Island and across the river in Biddeford had a large impact on population growth. The first factory on Factory Island began operations in 1811. The mills followed and ever since they've dominated the landscape and the lives of residents. With numerous employees living in adjacent company housing, the industrial area became a center of social and economic life and the driving force for rapid growth in the lower Saco Valley.

In 1820, before the first mill was constructed, the combined population of Saco and Biddeford was 4,200. By 1860 the population had climbed to 15,000. By 1900, one-third of the population lived in Saco's three downtown wards, within a half-mile of York Square. By 1950, these three wards only accounted for one-fifth of the

Above: Wabanaki encampment at Deering Oaks Park in Portland during the Maine Centennial celebration (1920). Photo: Maine Memory Network

Below: A crowd waits for the arrival of the steamer to Biddeford Pool on the Factory Island Wharf (1912) Photo: Maine Memory Network

1 *Native Land interactive web map*

2 *"Headwaters of a Community: Sowacatuck, Chouacoet, and the Sea."* Maine Memory Network.

3 *"A Cascade of Booms & Busts (1790-1865)."* Maine Memory Network.

A view of the Mill District and the Main Street bridge looking west on the Saco River circa 1890. To the left is Biddeford, the Pepperell Mills, and White's Wharf. To the right is Saco's Factory Island, the coal sheds, and the York Mills. Photo: McArthur Library

population as development pushed beyond the downtowns into the new suburbs.[4]

Downtown Decline

Following the post-WWII boom, factory owners sold off the Biddeford and Saco "divisions" or moved them down South where textile production was cheaper. In the 1960s, the textile mills were replaced by large-scale leather and shoe businesses, which continued to affect the local economy until the 1980s.

Much of southern Maine was shaped by the suburban growth patterns that occurred after the 1950s. Economic activity shifted away from the downtowns and towards new regional shopping corridors and commercial strips, such as Route 111, Route 1, and the Maine Mall in South Portland. To counteract the resulting negative economic impacts to their downtowns, Biddeford and Saco embarked on the creation of historic districts and revitalization plans in the late 1980s.

Revitalization

During the 1990s, efforts by Biddeford and Saco to restore and preserve the historic mills and downtown buildings began to come to fruition in the Pepperell Mill Campus and on Saco Island. Thanks to the pioneering work of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the 1990s, former mill cities like Biddeford and Saco could finally secure federal funding for the cleanup and rehabilitation of numerous brownfield sites at the nexus of their communities.

As the Biddeford Mill District and Saco Island have numerous property owners, development has occurred in stages and varying paces. Over the last twenty years, the buildings — and spaces between them — have been creatively repurposed.

[4] *"Downtown Saco History."* Thomas Hardiman. City of Saco website.

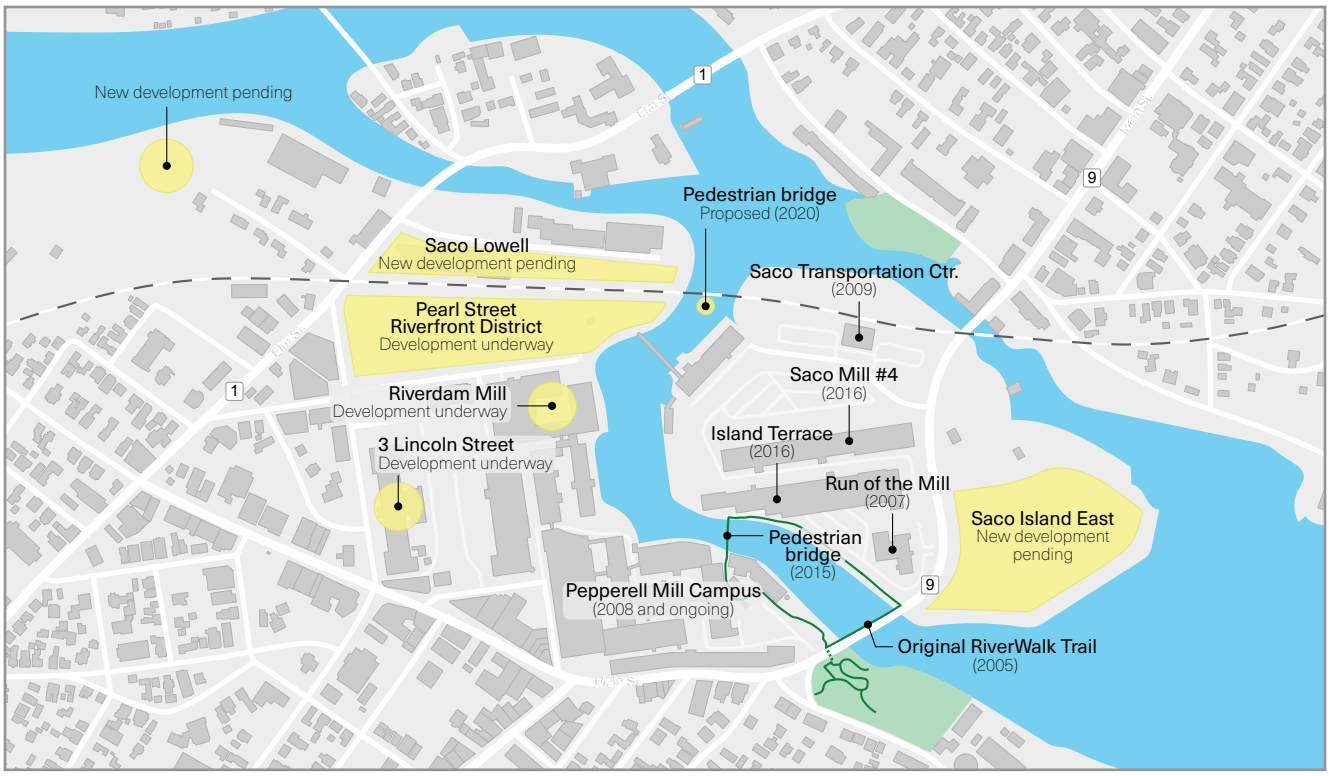


FIGURE 5:

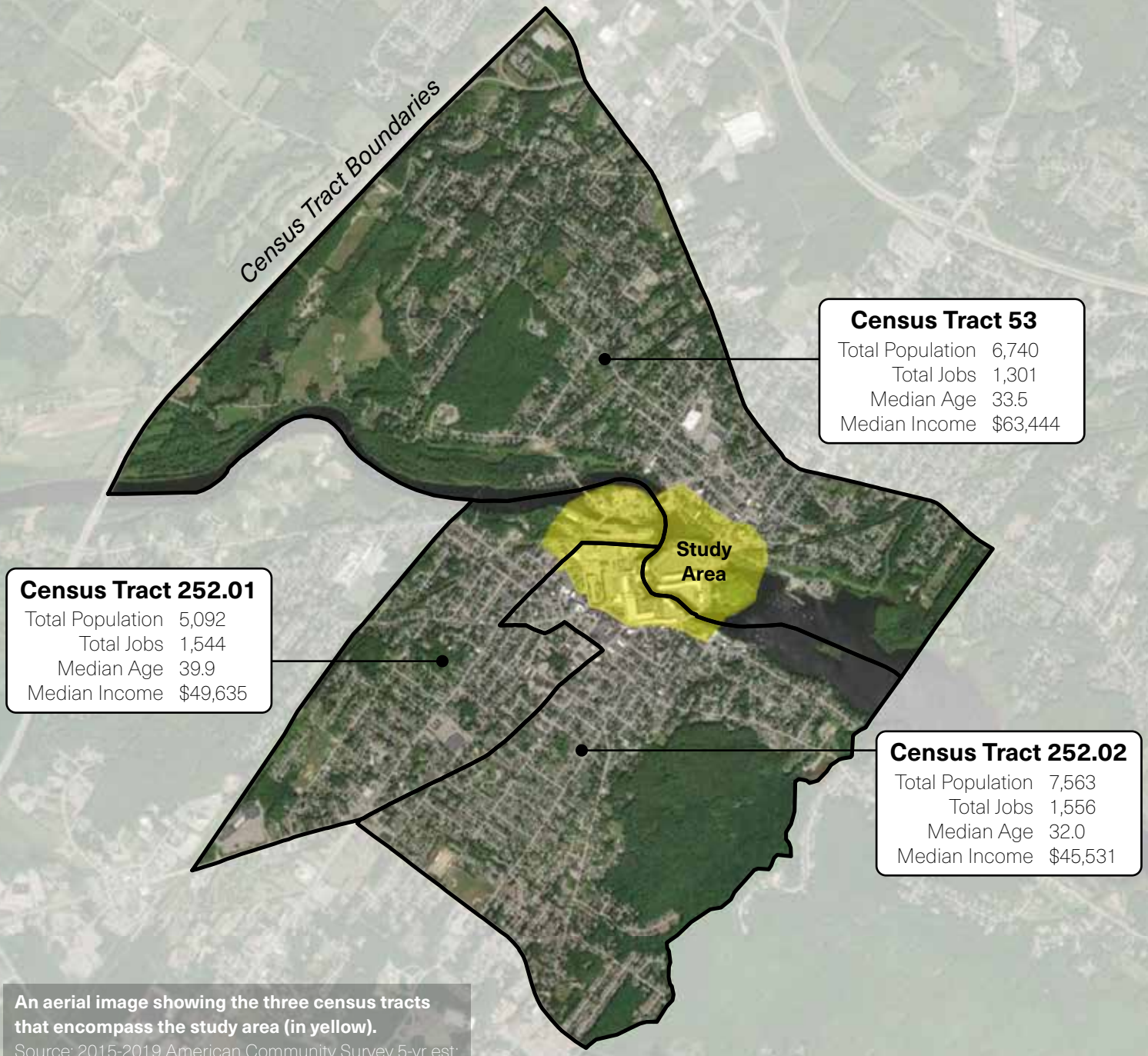
Current and Pending Major Redevelopment Projects

As the map above shows, there are many major redevelopment projects currently underway and several more on the horizon.

A few examples of these pivotal land use changes in the area include:

- ***Pepperell Mill Campus***: The first brownfield redevelopment was the reclamation of the North Dam Mill (2 Main Street) in Biddeford in 2008. Now the 17-acre Pepperell Mill Campus, the site continues to be rehabilitated with a diverse mix of commercial, light manufacturing, and residential uses.
- ***RiverWalk Trail and Bridge:*** A coalition of stakeholders from both cities acquired land and easements on both sides of the falls in order to create a full loop for the RiverWalk waterfront trail. The pedestrian bridge, constructed in 2015, completes the loop and provides a critical connection across the river to both communities. The trail has since expanded beyond the core loop.
- ***Pearl Street Riverfront District:*** The closure of the Maine Energy Recovery Company (MERC) in 2012, and removal of the trash incinerator was a crucial turning point for reinvestment in the area. A previously odorous source of pollution and truck traffic, the redevelopment of this 8.5-acre site is now the Pearl Street Riverfront District, a $90 million mixed-use development project currently underway that includes a parking garage, a riverfront park, and a reimagined Pearl Street.

SETTING THE SCENE



An aerial image showing the three census tracts that encompass the study area (in yellow).
Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-yr est; 2018 Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics

TO DEVELOP A SUCCESSFUL VISION for the future, it is necessary to understand how the Mill District in Biddeford and Saco functions today. Who lives there and how do they use the space? What are the strengths of the area and where are there opportunities for improvement?

Community Characteristics

As the image on the previous page shows, the study area is represented by three census tracts. Taken together, these tracts account for approximately 19,395 residents and 4,401 jobs.

Although the tracts are larger in size than the study area itself, they provide a good representation of the demographics of Downtown Biddeford and Saco and the broader community. The following section uses available census data to learn more about the people who live in, or near, the study area.

The Mill District is one of the youngest, most diverse areas in the State of Maine.

Population Characteristics

The Mill District is one of the youngest, most diverse areas in the state. As Table 1 shows, the area is characterized by higher rates of people of color and people born outside of the United States. Additionally, a growing number of people in their 20's and 30's are moving to the area, drawn by the unique character of the mill buildings, the urban feel, and more affordable housing. In the last decade, the area has seen its median age drop considerably.[5] The median age for the study area census tracts is currently 34.6 years, a full decade younger than the median age for York County and Maine.

Perhaps owing to the higher rates of young people and new Mainers establishing themselves, at $52,606 the median income of residents in the study area is lower than surrounding areas.

TABLE 1:
Selected Population Characteristics
Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-year Estimate; 2018 Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics

	Total Population	Total Jobs	Median Age	Median Income	People of Color	Foreign Born
Study Area Census Tracts	19,395	4,401	34.6	$52,606	10.4%	5.0%
Biddeford	21,462	10,980	38.1	$53,120	10.4%	5.8%
Saco	19,497	7,530	41.6	$70,517	5.2%	3.2%
York County	204,316	63,352	45.2	$67,830	5.8%	3.2%
Maine	1,335,492	595,111	44.7	$57,918	6.8%	3.6%

[5] *"Not Your Parents' City Anymore: Biddeford is Now Maine's Youngest."* Gillian Graham. Portland Press Herald.

	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied	Median Home Price	Median Rent Price	Excessive Housing Costs (Homeowner)	Excessive Housing Costs (Renter)
Study Area Census Tracts	35.2%	64.8%	$210,735	$988	16.5%	44.0%
Biddeford	48.3%	51.7%	$245,900	$929	13.5%	23.3%
Saco	65.5%	34.5%	$258,900	$1,173	16.9%	12.4%
York County	73.9%	26.1%	$252,300	$983	18.5%	11.5%
Maine	72.3%	27.7%	$190,400	$853	16.1%	11.8%

TABLE 2:
Selected Housing Characteristics
Excessive housing costs are defined as 30% or more of gross income.
Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

Housing Characteristics

Over the past decade, Biddeford and Saco have experienced significant changes in their housing stock. The number of owner-occupied units in the study area decreased by 15% while rental units increased by 11%. For example, since 2010, the census tract containing the Biddeford Mill District added over 350 renter occupied housing units alone. As a result, Downtown Biddeford and Saco have a much lower rate of homeownership than surrounding areas (Table 2). Nearly two-thirds of available housing in the study area is renter-occupied.

In terms of affordability, the median home price within the study area is lower than Biddeford, Saco, and York County, but higher than Maine. The median rent price within the study area is on par with surrounding areas (and considerably less than Saco). However, almost 44% of the renter population report excessive housing costs (spending greater than 30% of their income on rent); whereas only 16.5% of homeowners spend greater than 30% of their income on housing costs. The limited supply of housing stock in the lower-income range in the study area, combined with lower median incomes, creates more rent-burdened residents as compared to homeowners.

"Keep it affordable to live in and family-friendly. Much of the appeal of living downtown is in its diversity of community."

~ Survey respondent

The area is also constantly developing or redeveloping so it is hard to predict how housing will change over the next decade. Since the area is comprised largely of rental communities with a mix of affordability and housing types, there is an opportunity to construct housing units that are affordable to purchase for households with lower and medium levels of income.

How People Get Around

The recent surge in development in the Mill District has brought new residents, businesses, and visitors to the area. How people get around is a good indication of the quality of the options available and the area's overall design. Well designed urban places should have higher rates of people walking, biking, and taking public transit, since more people live in close proximity to jobs, goods, and services. The next few pages draw on available data, on-the-ground observations, and public input to discern how people move through the area, and highlight how it functions from the perspective of the various travel options.

Commute Characteristics

Commute to work data provides a glimpse at how people who live in the area typically get to work. As Table 3 and Figure 6 show, the predominant mode is driving alone, however, the census tracts that encompass the study area do show marginally higher rates of walking, biking, and taking transit to work, and correspondingly lower rates of driving alone to work. That said, even in Downtown Biddeford and Saco, the percent of people who walk, bike, or take transit to work is still quite low.

	Walked	Biked	Public Transit	Drove Alone
Study Area Census Tracts	5.0%	0.8%	1.4%	75.7%
Biddeford	7.3%	0.5%	1.0%	76.3%
Saco	1.5%	0.4%	0.4%	82.8%
York County	2.3%	0.4%	0.9%	81.2%
Maine	3.9%	0.4%	0.6%	78.8%

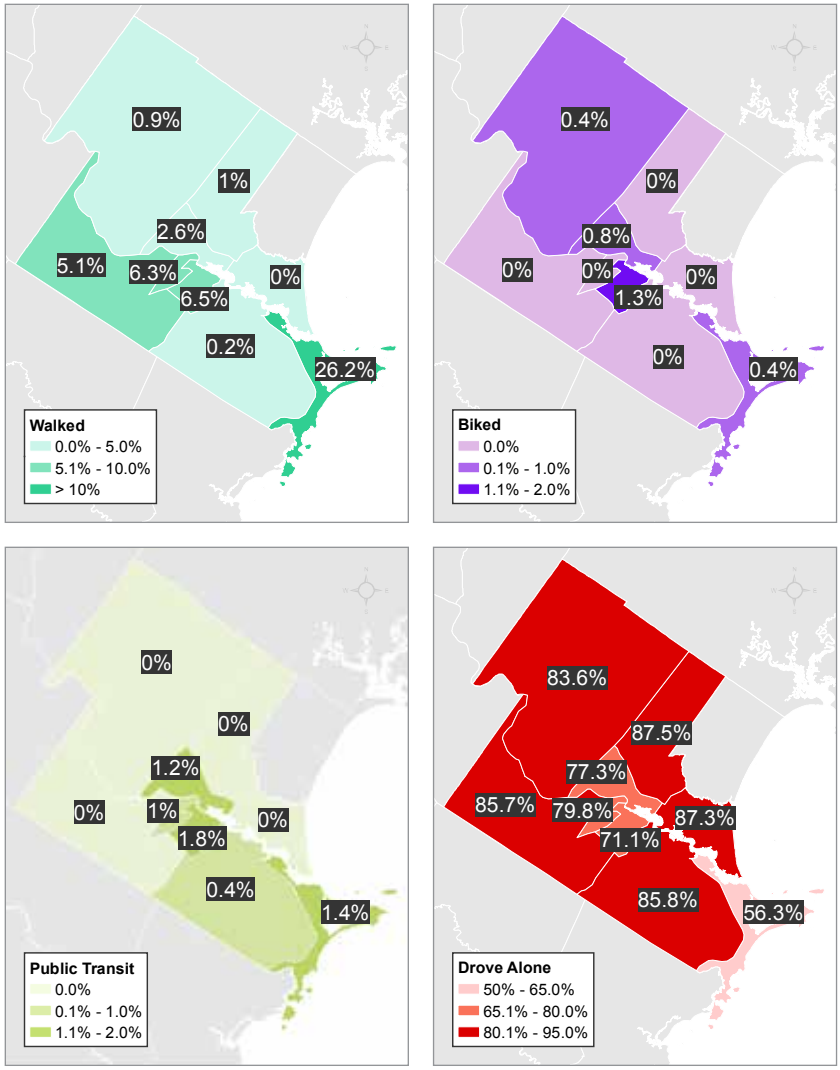


TABLE 3 / FIGURE 6:
Commute to Work

Table 3 shows means of transportation to work data for the study area, Biddeford, Saco, York County, and Maine. Figure 6 is a map sequence that shows the same data by census tract for the Cities of Biddeford and Saco.
Source: American Community Survey 5-yr Est.

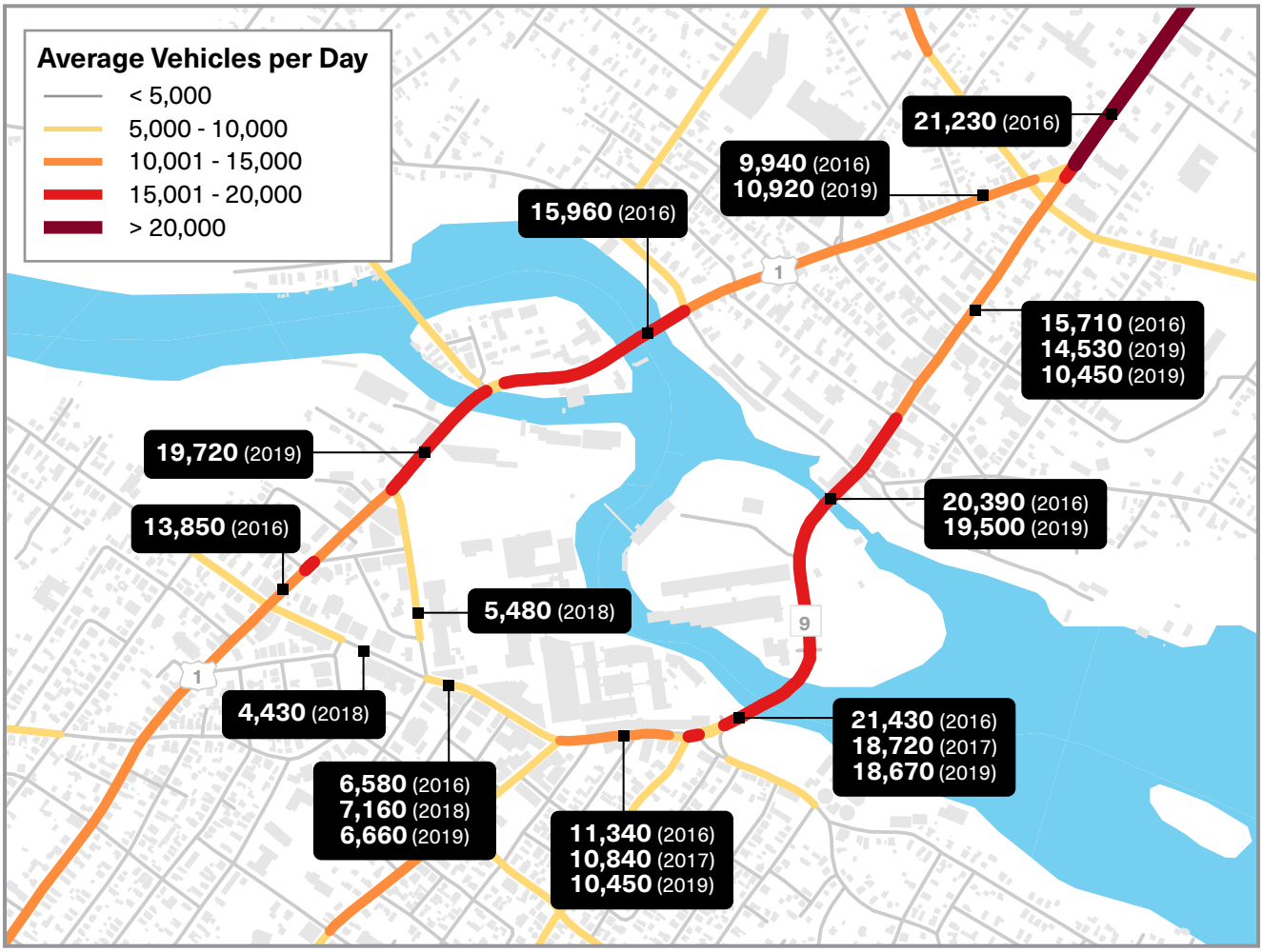


FIGURE 7:

Traffic Volume

Figure 7 shows traffic volumes in the study area. The labels show recorded counts at specific locations; road colors symbolize MaineDOT's Factored Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) data, which estimates traffic volumes for the entire road network based on the most recent recorded counts at specific locations. Source: MaineDOT

Driving

As mentioned previously, driving is still the primary travel mode for most people. Due to the constraints associated with crossing the Saco River, roadway access through the study area is restricted to Main Street (Route 9) and Elm Street (Route 1). This limited access creates a funneling effect which results in a steady flow of traffic throughout the day. Traffic is often backed up, intersections are congested, and multiple turning points create unsafe conditions for motorists and pedestrians.

Traffic Volumes

Figure 7 shows estimated traffic volumes in the study area and illustrates how vehicle traffic is funneled onto Main Street and Elm Street. Traffic along Main Street ranges from approximately 18,000-20,000 vehicles per day in the vicinity of Saco Island, while traffic along Elm Street ranges from 15,000-20,000 vehicles per day where it crosses the Saco River and Springs Island. The highest traffic volumes are recorded north of the study area where the two roads merge onto Main Street in Saco.

What We Heard

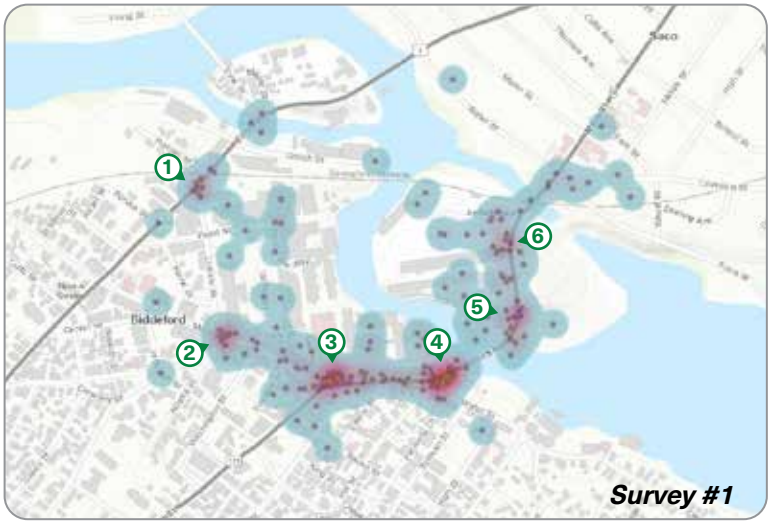
Perhaps not surprising, input received from the public surveys indicates the majority of vehicle-related issues and concerns are along these two major corridors. In the first survey, respondents were asked to drop a vehicle icon (within the study area) on an interactive map where they felt there is a "vehicle issue." The results, shown to the right, indicate the majority of concerns were located along Main Street (particularly at major intersections) as well as Elm Street (specifically the intersection with Lincoln Street).

Respondents were also able to add a comment describing the issue. The comments included at right are representative of the many comments received. Generally speaking, respondents advocated for more traffic controls (like signals or stop signs) at intersections, improved sight distances and visibility, and for reducing traffic congestion, among other suggestions. Respondents were also critical of how narrow Main Street is in Downtown Biddeford, and identified multiple locations where parking can be difficult to find.

While a primary goal of transit-oriented development is to reduce the reliance on driving, it is important to understand — and address — traffic issues where they exist to improve safety for both motorists and pedestrians alike.

WHAT WE HEARD...

"Vehicle Issue" Hotspots



Representative Comments

1. *"Intersection is dangerous... Drivers pull out. Congestion"*
2. *"For bikes and cars alike, you have to pull far into the crosswalk to see oncoming traffic from Main Street."*
3. *Alfred St. to Main St. should be a stop sign and not a yield. Even better, this should be a three-way stop."*
4. *"This intersection is absolutely horrendous for numerous reasons, but luckily a redesign is in place with work slated for next year."*
5. *"I park in this parking lot everyday for work and this is a very dangerous curve for people taking a left here. Cars driving up the hill are often speeding and the influx of traffic during the summer makes it difficult to get out of this intersection."*
6. *"Tough to make a left turn out of the Transportation Center to head toward downtown Saco."*

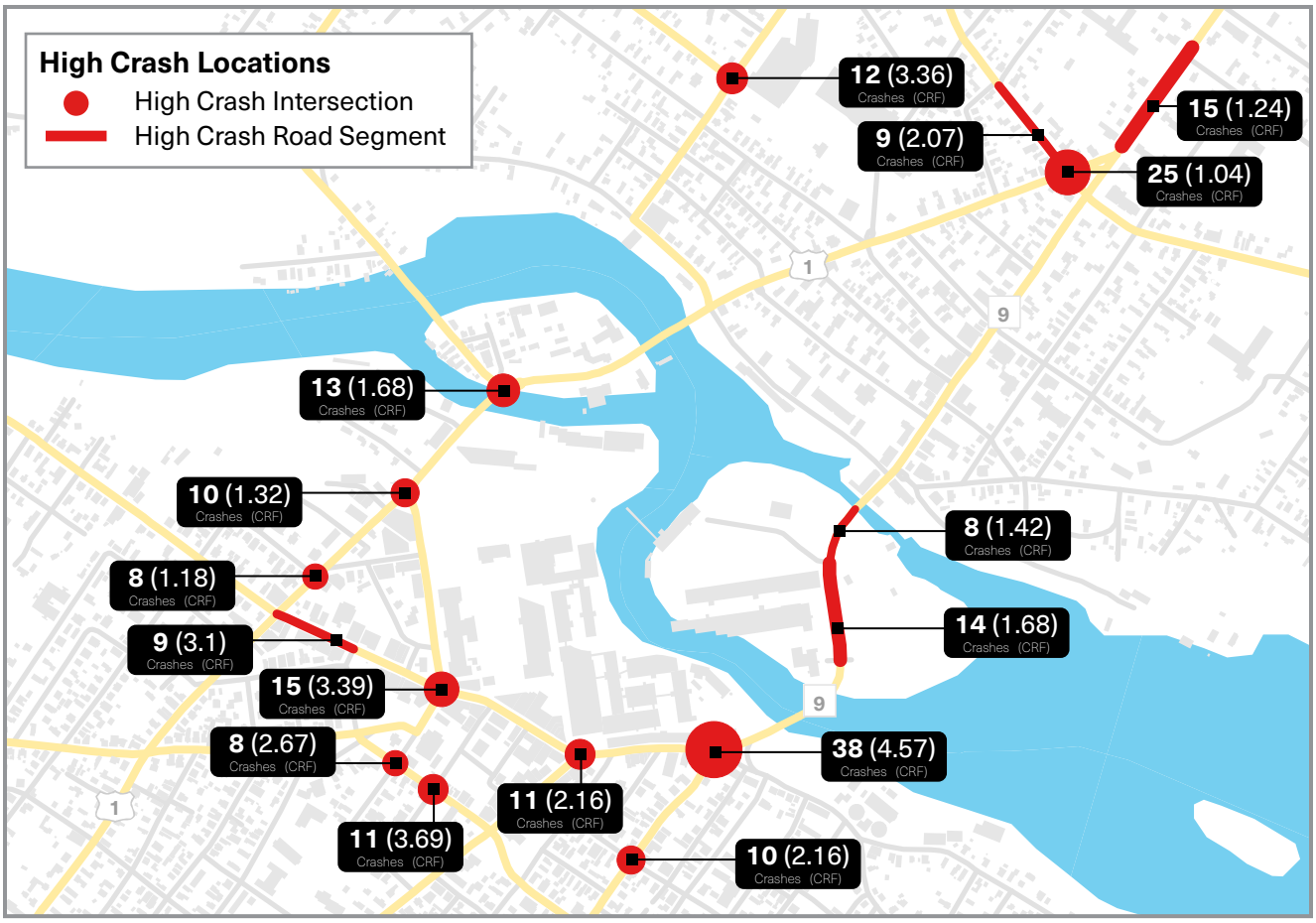


FIGURE 8:
High Crash Locations

Figure 8 shows MaineDOT's designated High Crash Locations (HCLs) in the study area for the three-year period between 2018-2020. An HCL must have eight or more crashes in a three-year period and a Critical Rate Factor (CRF) of 1.0 or higher. A location with a CRF greater than 1.0 has a frequency of crashes that is higher than the statewide average for locations with similar traffic volumes. Source: MaineDOT

Crash History

Interestingly, actual crash data aligns closely with the locations identified in the survey. Figure 8 shows MaineDOT's designated High Crash Locations (HCLs) — the caption provides a more detailed description of how these locations are determined. The majority of HCLs in the area are intersections where crashes are largely due to improper turning movements. (If drivers feel they are waiting too long at an intersection they are more inclined to make risky moves).

Additionally, in the three-year period between 2018-2020 there were 13 pedestrian crashes and seven that involved cyclists — all resulting in injury. The largest number of pedestrian crashes occurred at the intersection of Main Street and Water Street, while five of the seven bicycle crashes occurred along Main Street between Elm Street and Adams/Lincoln Street.

At the time of this writing, several HCLs are being addressed. For example, a redesign of the intersection of Main Street and Water Street/ Hill Street (the most severe HCL in the area) is currently underway; the intersections of Elm Street and Lincoln Street, and Elm Street and Pearl Street, are also slated for redesign.

Due to the constraints of crossing the Saco River, vehicle traffic is funneled onto Main Street and Elm Street. Freight and passenger rail crossings can add further congestion and delay. As a result, these roads do not feel comfortable for walking or biking.
Main Street on Saco Island looking south. Photo: GPCOG

Walking

Pedestrian connectivity is crucial to creating a successful transit-oriented development. A well-designed pedestrian environment entices people to get out of their car to explore and experience the character of the neighborhood. People are more likely to walk to transit in areas that are comfortable, safe, and interesting.

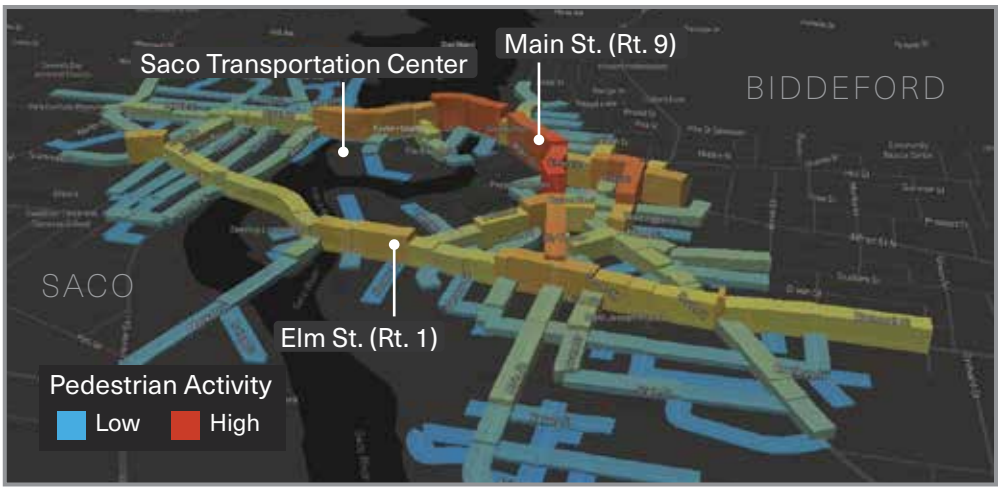


FIGURE 9:
Pedestrian Activity

The image above shows pedestrian activity within the study area using Streetlight Insights data, which contains anonymized location records derived from smart phones. The analysis shows the percent of pedestrian trips that occurred along each segment in 2019. Main Street (Route 9) and Elm Street (Route 1) stand out as the most popular pedestrian routes within the study area. Source: Streetlight Insights

"Anything that can be done to make it safer to walk in the Biddeford and Saco mill area would be wonderful."

~ Survey respondent

Top Walking Routes

Since there is no permanent count data for pedestrians, the project team used anonymized smartphone location data to better understand walking patterns and behavior (Figure 9). Similar to driving patterns, the major walking routes are also Main Street (Route 9) and Elm Street (Route 1). This is likely due to the previously described funneling effect caused by the limited routes across the Saco River.

Other popular walking routes include Alfred Street, Jefferson Street, and Lincoln Street. Although the RiverWalk bridge is one of just three ways to cross the Saco River, it does not show up as a popular walking route (perhaps due to construction in the area and lack of visibility). Likewise, from a transit-perspective, ideally Gooch Street, the primary connection to the Saco Transportation Center, would show up more prominently.

Pedestrian Facilities and Conditions

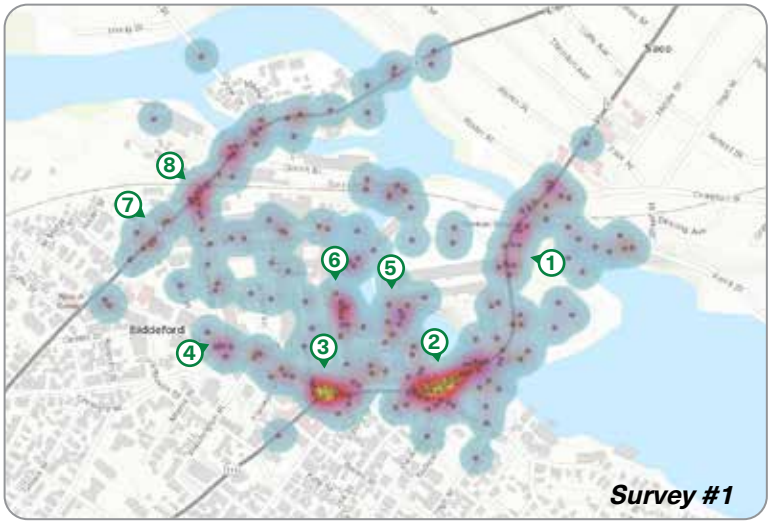
The presence and condition of pedestrian facilities varies widely. The following draws from on-the-ground observations by the project team and public input.

- ***Main Street (Rt. 9):*** Although narrow at times, the sidewalks along Main Street in Biddeford are well connected and present on both sides of the road. Several intersections in Biddeford, however, were identified by the public as intimidating and dangerous. On the bridge there is a sidewalk on the west side that is very close to speeding traffic. After crossing the Saco River, a sidewalk exists only on the west side of Main Street, although many people walk on the grass on the east side. There are no crosswalks on this section of roadway.

- ***Elm Street (Rt. 1):*** In Biddeford, Elm Street has sidewalks on both sides up until the bridge to Springs Island. However, in many places the sidewalks are narrow or in poor condition. Additionally, the many large-radius parking lot entrances/exits (without sidewalks) create unsafe and unwelcoming conditions for pedestrians. For the stretch of Elm Street that passes through Springs Island (including both bridges) a narrow asphalt sidewalk in relatively poor condition exists only on the north side of the road.
- ***Biddeford Mill District:*** While Biddeford has well connected sidewalks along most streets in the Downtown area, the sidewalks do not extend into the Mill District. Navigating the complex of mill buildings is difficult and deters visitors from the area. In many places there are no pedestrian paths between buildings or along parking lots or other internal streets.
- ***Saco Mill District:*** The pedestrian network connecting the mills on Saco Island is quite good. The newly constructed RiverWalk Trail provides a link from the Saco River all the way to the Saco Transportation Center. Concrete sidewalks along Gooch Street are also newly built and in excellent condition.

WHAT WE HEARD...

"Walking Issue" Hotspots



Representative Comments

① *"No sidewalk so people use a path on the side of the road."*

② *"Crossing even in crosswalks here is dangerous."*

③ *"The people who are yielding are looking the other way to see if it is clear and don't generally look in the crosswalk."*

④ *"This intersection needs stop signs or a light. Very dangerous for pedestrians and bikes."*

⑤ *"It's not intuitive how to get to the bridge from either side."*

⑥ *"Laconia Plaza is the perfect place to get a direct frontal view the falls, yet it's difficult to access. Extend RiverWalk from bridge to Plaza, please!"*

⑦ *"Elm Street has no "walkability" feel at all. Just a scary busy street, nothing is to scale for a walker."*

⑧ *"This area is not friendly to pedestrians and could use a crosswalk."*

1 "Need sidewalks on both sides of the road here."

2 "Would be better if there were crosswalks on both sides of the bridge. The crosswalk is very far away so its difficult to cross and get to the side that the crosswalk is on."

3 "Very difficult to know where I might want to go and, aside from the RiverWalk, how to get from one building to another."

Key

- Sidewalk or multi-use path
- Crosswalk
- Trail
- RiverWalk Trail

4 "No sidewalk on east side of Main St."

FIGURE 10:
Pedestrian Network
The image above shows the existing pedestrian network within the study area along with pictures of on-the-ground conditions in specific areas. The quotes are taken from the public input received through the project's first online survey. Photos: GPCOG

- ***Lincoln Street:*** Lincoln Street features newly installed sidewalk on the east side and sidewalk along roughly half the west side of the street. Presently, there are no formal sidewalks connecting to the Mill District.
- ***RiverWalk Trail:*** The crown jewel of the pedestrian network and the product of many years of hard work by local residents, the RiverWalk Trail is an approximately three-mile multi-use path. It begins in Mechanics Park in Biddeford and runs west through the Mill District along the Saco River to Laconia Plaza (a Greek-style amphitheater with views of the Saco Falls). A pedestrian bridge connects the Biddeford Mill District to Saco Island where the trail contours the west side of the island to ultimately connect to the Saco Transportation Center and Main Street. The "Fisherman's Path" is a new 500-foot extension to the RiverWalk Trail in Saco with views of the Cataract Dam.

The City of Saco is currently exploring the feasibility of constructing a pedestrian bridge (adjacent to the railroad bridge) to connect the Saco Transportation Center to the new Pearl Street Riverfront District. A bridge would significantly reduce walking distances to the Saco Transportation Center for people who live across the river in Biddeford and increase the viability of transit. Photo: GPCOG

Planned Improvements

There are several pedestrian improvements either planned or proposed in the study area. The following are a few of the larger projects on the horizon.

- ***Pedestrian Bridge:*** The City of Saco (in coordination with the City of Biddeford) is studying the feasibility of a multimodal bridge connecting the Saco Transportation Center to the planned Pearl Street Riverfront District in Biddeford. The bridge would provide a much-needed connection across the Saco River (adjacent to the rail bridge) and help reduce walking distances.
- ***RiverWalk Expansion***: As part of an agreement in 2019 with the developers of the Riverdam Mill, the City of Biddeford received permanent easements to the land between the Riverdam building and the river wall to extend the RiverWalk Trail upriver to the Pearl Street Waterfront District with the ultimate goal of extending the trail to Elm Street and the future Diamond Match Park.
- ***Pearl Street Improvements:*** As part of the new Pearl Street Waterfront District development, the City will reconstruct 900-feet of Pearl Street. The reconstruction will include a new sidewalk and traffic calming bump outs, in addition to utility upgrades. In 2021, the City of Biddeford received a $1.2 million grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration to fund approximately 50% of the project.

Biking

Since people are generally willing to bike longer distances to access a transit station or stop, providing safe and convenient bicycle facilities is another way to improve the effectiveness of transit-oriented development.

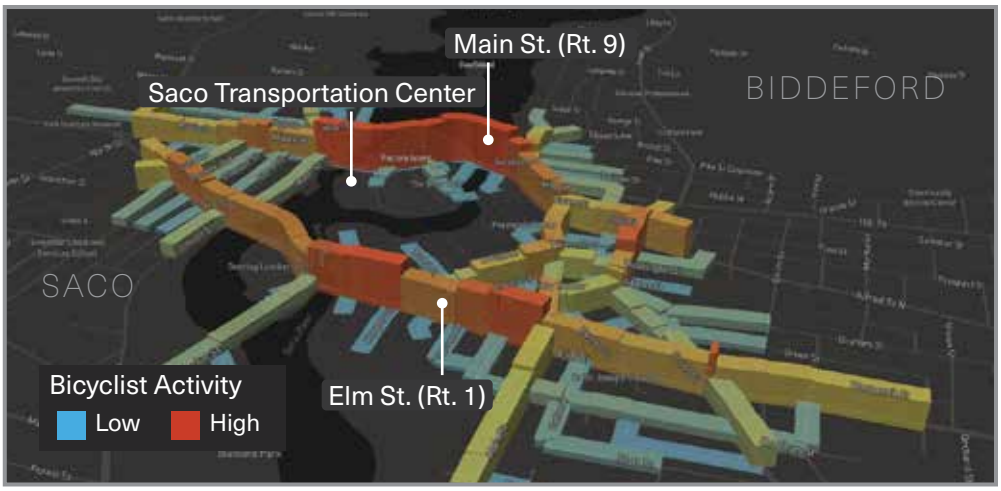


FIGURE 11:
Bicyclist Activity

The image above shows pedestrian activity within the study area using Streetlight Insights data, which contains anonymized location records derived from smart phones. The analysis shows the percent of pedestrian trips that occurred along each segment in 2019. Main Street (Route 9) and Elm Street (Route 1) stand out as the most popular pedestrian routes within the study area. Source: Streetlight Insights

Top Biking Routes

Similar to the walking analysis, the project team used anonymized smartphone location data to better understand biking patterns and behavior (Figure 11). As with the driving and walking patterns, the major biking routes are also Main Street (Route 9) and Elm Street (Route 1). Most notably, the segment of Main Street on Saco Island and the segment of Elm Street between Main Street and Market Street in Biddeford. Although Main Street and Elm Street stand out as the most frequently used routes for cyclists relative to other roads, biking was rarely observed in the study area.

Bicycling Facilities and Conditions

In many ways, biking conditions are challenging and unsafe. First and foremost, there are no on-road dedicated bike lanes anywhere in the area (or anywhere in Biddeford or Saco at large). Bike lanes are a great way to provide safe spaces for people to bike, and they have the added benefit of reducing speeding since motorists are less likely to speed on narrow streets. In the absence of bike lanes, paved shoulders provide cyclists some measure of separation and relief.

Unfortunately, the two most frequently used routes (Main Street and Elm Street) have neither bike lanes nor paved shoulders and are intimidating for even the most experienced cyclists. The following is a more detailed assessment of biking conditions for each.

- ***Main Street:*** In Downtown Biddeford, Main Street is narrow (one lane in either direction) with parked cars on either side. Here, cyclists must take the entire lane or risk getting car-doored or sandwiched between a passing vehicle and a parked one. On Saco Island, the road transitions to four lanes (two in either direction) with no bike lane or shoulder. Cyclists must take the entire lane (especially daunting when biking slowly up the hill northbound), or stay far to the side of the road while vehicles speed by within inches or feet. In Saco, Main Street transitions to three lanes (one lane in either direction and a center turn lane) with parked cars on either side. Here, cyclists must also take the lane to stay safe.
- ***Elm Street:*** Elm Street is primarily two lanes (one in either direction) for the length of the

study area, although an added turning lane is provided at some intersections. Similar to Main Street, Elm Street is one of the busiest roads in the area and has no bike lanes or paved shoulders. Additionally, the many intersections and parking lots for local businesses create dangerous turning movements. The two bridges connecting Springs Island, in particular, are narrow and intimidating due to the feeling of being trapped between speeding traffic and metal vehicle guardrails.

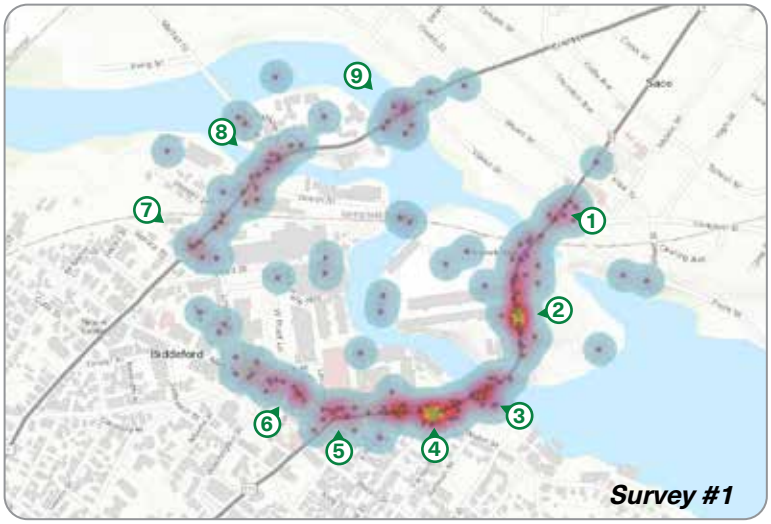
Regional Bike Routes

Two regional bike routes pass through the study area — the Eastern Trail and U.S. Bicycle Route 1 (Figure 12, next page). The Eastern Trail is a 65-mile recreational trail connecting South Portland to Portsmouth, NH. Envisioned as an off-road multi-use trail, on-road sections exist where off-road connections are not yet built. Absent a suitable place to cross the Saco River, the route passes the study area along the busy Elm Street corridor. (A feasibility study of a three mile off-road trail connection along the rail corridor in this area is currently underway).

U.S. Bike Route 1 is part of the U.S. Bicycle Route System, a developing national network. When complete, the route will run the length of the United States eastern seaboard from Florida to Maine. The route primarily passes through the study area along Main Street (Route 9).

WHAT WE HEARD...

"Biking Issue" Hotspots



Representative Comments

1. *"No bike lane downtown. With parking and car traffic I do not feel safe biking along here."*
2. *"No space for bikes to ride here. Cars go up and down the hill way too fast to be safe."*
3. *"I wouldn't dare ride a bike here for fear of getting hit."*
4. *"This is a hectic intersection for bikes and other non car modes of transport."*
5. *"No room to bike. Too dangerous on the entire stretch of Main Street."*
6. *"Bike conflict with parked cars and car doors opening."*
7. *"Narrow roads fast moving cars and heavy heavy congestion."*
8. *"Cannot connect to Eastern Trail in Saco without riding here or on Saco Island. Both have heavy traffic and no bike lane."*
9. *"I can't imagine biking over the bridge. Traffic is fast here."*

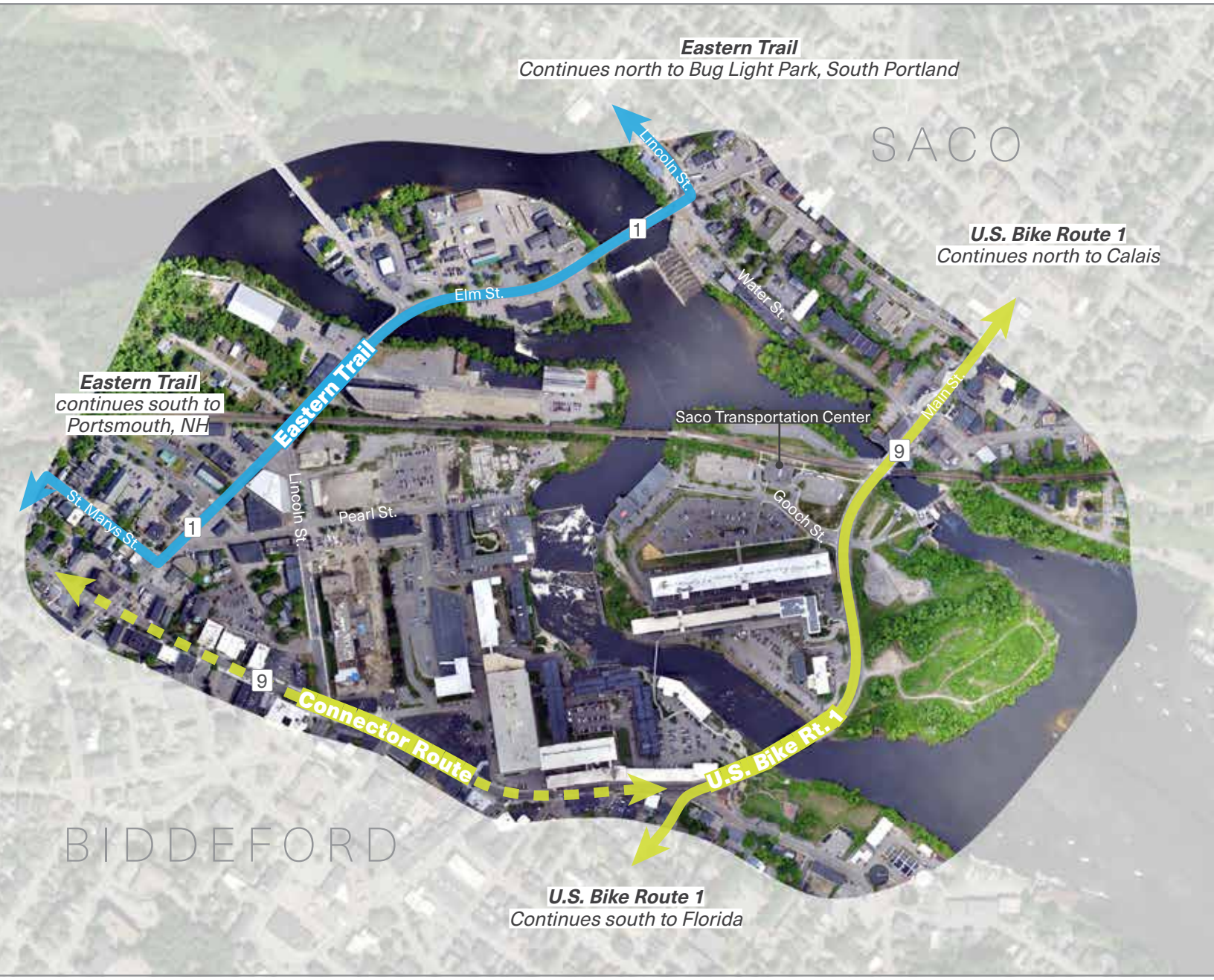


FIGURE 12:
Regional Bike Routes

The image above shows the routes for the Eastern Trail and U.S. Bicycle Route 1. Both regional bike routes pass through the study area on roads (Elm Street/Route 1, Main Street/Route 9) identified as unsafe by community members due to congestion, fast-moving traffic, and lack of space to bike. Image: GPCOG

The **Eastern Trail (ET)** is a 30% complete vision of a 65-mile recreation/transportation greenway connecting South Portland, Maine to Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The ET is also part of the East Coast Greenway bicycle trail that extends from Maine to Florida.

U.S. Bicycle Route 1 (USBR 1) is part of the U.S. Bicycle Route System, a developing national network of bicycle routes that will link urban, suburban, and rural areas using a variety of cycling facilities. When complete, USBR 1 will run the length of the United States eastern seaboard from Florida to Maine.

Bike Parking and Storage
Another key ingredient for encouraging bike use is bike parking and storage. According to survey responses, there is a general lack of bike parking throughout the area, especially along Main Street in Biddeford. At the Saco Transportation Center there is a small bike rack that fits a few bikes, but no long-term bike storage facility.

The lack of indoor bike storage can also be a barrier to bike use, especially for those who rent smaller apartments in mill buildings. While some buildings have indoor facilities dedicated to bike storage this is not the case everywhere. If people are forced to bring their bike (which may be wet or dirty) inside their apartment after each use they are less likely to bike regularly.

Bike-Transit Integration
It is equally important for people to take transit with their bike. While some people may prefer to lock their bike before boarding the bus or train, others may wish to take it with them to make a longer connection to their final destination.

In this regard, cyclists are generally well served. BSOOB Transit has bike racks with space for two bikes on the front of all buses. The bike racks are easy to use at no extra cost. A potential downside is the racks can only accommodate two bikes so space is first-come, first-served, which could pose a problem in certain situations.

The Amtrak Downeaster recently expanded its "carry-on bike program" to all stations along its routes. Newly installed luggage racks at the end of each car also convert to bike racks. (Previously, bikes had to be stored in a special car which restricted access to only a few stations). Because bicycles are hung vertically by their back wheels, the front wheel, panniers, and bags must be removed. Additionally, a bicycle fee of $3 to $8 applies (depending on the trip). Space is also limited to four bikes per train and advance reservations are required for the passenger and the bicycle.

Above: A cyclist "taking the lane" riding northbound on Main Street (Route 9) on Saco Island. Photo: GPCOG

Middle: The RiverWalk Trail is one of the only safe places for kids to bike free of traffic in the area. Photo: GPCOG

Below: A cyclist riding southbound on the shoulder of Elm Street (Route 1). Photo: GPCOG

The Amtrak Downeaster crossing the Saco River on its way to the Saco Transportation Center. Photo: GPCOG

Public Transportation

High-quality public transportation is essential for transit-oriented development to be successful. A high-density, walkable neighborhood centered around a transit station will still come up short if the transit service itself is not frequent or convenient.

In many ways, the Mill District is a model for transit-oriented development. Few communities in Maine have access to passenger rail, a fixed-route bus network, and demand-response paratransit service. However, there are certainly opportunities for improvement. This section first outlines the transit service that currently exists then identifies opportunities for how it can be improved.

Saco Transportation Center

The Saco Transportation Center is a multi-modal public transportation station on the north side of Saco Island. It serves as a stop for the Amtrak Downeaster, the central hub for the Biddeford Saco Old Orchard Beach (BSOOB) Transit bus routes, and as a destination for York County Community Action Corporation (YCCAC) transportation services, specifically the Southern Maine Connector route from Sanford.

The 5,000 square foot station opened in 2009, replacing the original sheltered platform. Owned by the City of Saco, the station has a spacious waiting room and now features a BSOOB Transit customer service office. Free public daily and overnight parking is available for all transportation services in the adjacent parking lots.

Amtrak Downeaster

The Amtrak Downeaster makes five daily round trips between Brunswick, ME and Boston, MA connecting 12 communities in Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts to each other and to the Amtrak national rail network. The service is managed by the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) and operated by Amtrak.

All Downeaster trains serve the Saco Transportation Center, which was the third

FIGURE 13:
Existing Public Transportation Network
The map above shows the existing public transportation network in the study area. The Saco Transportation Center is the primary focal point for transit. It serves as a stop for the Amtrak Downeaster and a hub for all BSOOB Transit bus routes. Source: GPCOG

busiest stop in Maine (behind Portland and Wells respectively) with almost 50,000 boardings in 2019. Through 2019, over half a million riders traveled on the Downeaster annually, breaking ridership records in ten of the twelve months leading up to the pandemic.[6]

While most Downeaster riders travel to or from Boston, the opportunity exists for the Downeaster to play a larger role in local and regional transportation. NNEPRA has developed marketing and incentive programs and passes to encourage travelers and visitors to use the Downeaster for travel within the Greater Portland region as well.

6 *"Amtrak Fact Sheet: Fiscal Year 2019"* AMTRAK

A rider boarding the BSOOB Transit Blue Line at the Saco Transportation Center. Photo: GPCOG

Biddeford Saco Old Orchard Beach (BSOOB) Transit

BSOOB Transit is a fixed-route bus service that primarily runs in the "tri-town" communities of Biddeford, Saco, and Old Orchard Beach, however, a few routes extend as far north as Portland. BSOOB Transit recently reconfigured its routes into a hub-and-spoke model centered around the Saco Transportation Center. The following is a brief description of each route:

- ***Orange & Black Line:*** These overlapping routes primarily serve Biddeford. The routes begin at the Saco Transportation Center and turn around at the Market Basket just west of I-95, making a variety of stops on Elm Street (Route 1) and Alfred Street (Route 111) along the way.
- ***Green Line:*** This longer-distance route travels from Biddeford/Saco to Portland, making stops in Old Orchard Beach, Scarborough, and South Portland (Maine Mall) along the way. The line mostly uses Route 1 with a few detours.
- ***Blue-White Line:*** These overlapping routes begin at the Saco Transportation Center and connect Saco to Downtown Old Orchard Beach (turning around at Pine Point). The lines mostly travel on Route 1, Route 9, and Route 5.
- ***Silver Line:*** A recent addition, this route incorporates the former Yellow Line into the new Downtown Circulator. The route still provides service to the University of New England (UNE) campus, but it now makes a short loop through Downtown Biddeford and Saco using Main Street, Lincoln Street, and Elm Street. The circulator is free to ride.
- ***Zoom Express:*** The Zoom provides express service between Biddeford/Saco and Portland. The route begins at the Park and Ride at Exit 32 in Biddeford, makes a stop at the Saco Transportation Center, then continues on I-95 to Portland.
- ***Seasonal Trolleys:*** One of the more popular services, BSOOB Transit operates four seasonal trolley routes between May and September. The trolley's primarily serve the Old Orchard Beach area and help tourists get around.

Prior to the pandemic, BSOOB Transit was expanding its services and experiencing growing ridership. In 2014, BSOOB Transit recorded 160,900 boardings, whereas in 2019 the agency recorded 366,527 boardings — a 28% increase.

In 2020, ridership plummeted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. BSOOB Transit temporarily suspended service then operated limited trips with no fare requirement. Presently, the service is back up and running at pre-pandemic levels although it will likely take some time for ridership to recover.

Amidst the pandemic, the agency also launched an electronic fare payment system called DiriGo TouchPass. Under this system, riders pay their fare by holding up a credit card sized "smart card" or mobile app to a scanner as they board the bus. On top of the added convenience, the DiriGo TouchPass is safer since it is contactless.

WHAT WE HEARD...

What would get you to ride the bus more?

"More frequency!!"

"More frequent service."

"More frequent stops and later times."

"More information about routes."

"Better information/communication about routes that are available."

"More visible public bus stops."

"Clearer schedule and routes."

"Better published schedules."

What would get you to ride the train more?

"Cheaper prices."

"More affordable tickets."

"Greater frequency of times available. I would LOVE to ride the train to/from Portland!!!"

"More frequent service."

"Consistent price, more frequent travel to Portland. It is helpful for getting to Boston."

"Expanding the schedule to make it more commuter friendly."

Representative comments from survey #1

York County Community Action Corporation (YCCAC)

YCCAC provides a wide range of transportation services and is the designated Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit provider for York County. The following is a brief description of the YCCAC's services that are offered in Biddeford and Saco:

- **Southern Maine Connector:** This route provides year-round service from Sanford to the Saco Transportation Center and operates Monday through Friday.
- **WAVE:** The Wave provides year-round curb-to-curb service connecting Sanford and Biddeford and Sanford and Wells. (Advance reservations are required).
- **Local Rides:** These routes take residents to the closest regional shopping and medical destinations on scheduled days of the week for each town served. (Advance reservations are required).

What We Heard

In the first survey respondents were asked, "What would get you to ride the bus (or train) more?" The comments were then categorized by most frequently mentioned topic areas.

The most common responses regarding the bus were requests for more frequent runs (11%), suggestions to change specific routes or stops (10%), and requests to make the schedule more available and easier to understand (10%).

For the train, the majority of respondents suggested they would ride the train more if fares were lower (35%), if it ran more frequently (16%), if the schedule better matched their needs, (14%), and if there was better access to Portland (11%).

Frequency and Spans of Service

As evidenced in the survey responses, low frequencies and short spans of service (hours of operation) are among the main ways public transportation can fail to be useful. Simply put, if service is not available when people need it they are less likely to use it.

Tables 4a/4b summarize the current route frequencies and spans of service for the region's fixed-route bus providers as well as the Amtrak Downeaster.

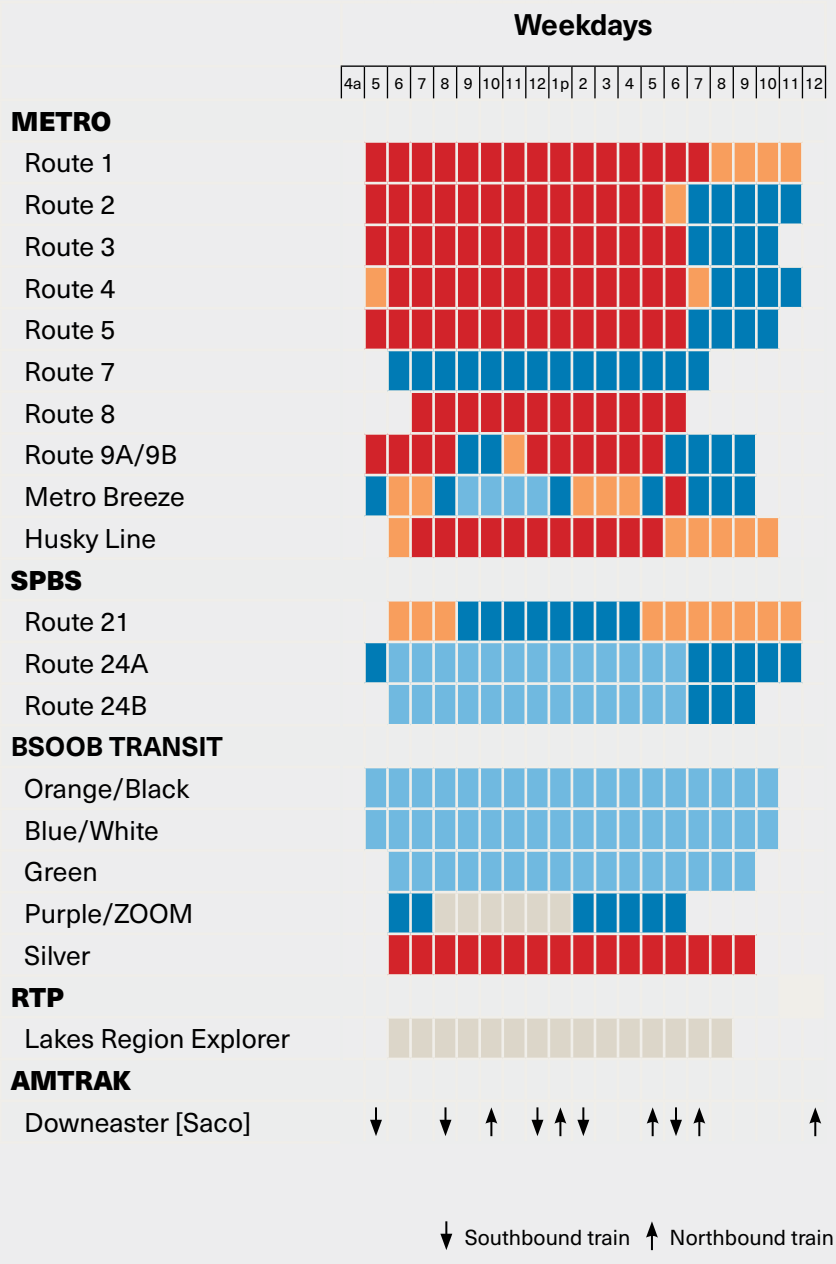
A bright spot for BSOOB Transit is the new Silver route, which operates as a Downtown Circulator between Biddeford and Saco (with a connection to the University of New England campus) at an approximate 30-minute frequency for much of the day and on weekends. The Orange/Black, Blue/White, and Green routes, however, fall in the two-to three-hour range, while the Purple/Zoom route, an express route to Portland, runs slightly more frequently with a midday gap and no weekend service.

Frequency

- 30 minutes or less
- 30 minutes to 1 hour
- 1–2 hours
- 2–3 hours
- Greater than 3 hours

Tables 4a/4b summarize the current route frequencies and spans of service for each fixed-route bus agency in the region as well as the Amtrak Downeaster. Frequencies were generalized based on the average outbound and inbound times for each hour. The graphic represents the greatest frequency and span of service for each agency. Additionally, areas in the region that are served by multiple, overlapping routes (for example Congress Street in Portland) will have shorter average wait times than shown in the tables.

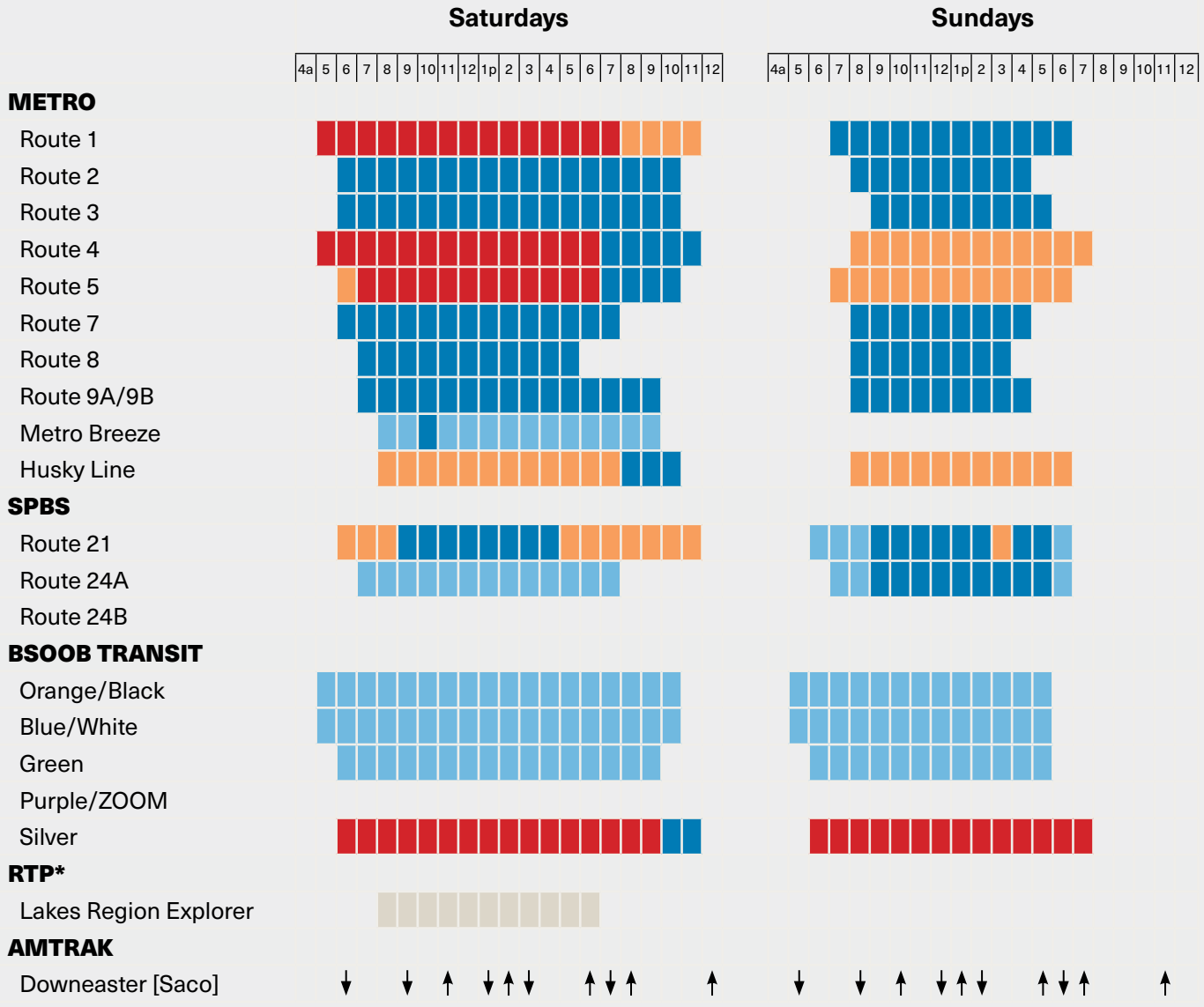
TABLE 4a:
Transit Frequency and Spans of Service



The Amtrak Downeaster makes five daily round trips. The schedule is well-suited for people commuting southbound to Boston, but less convenient for commuting to work or school in the Greater Portland region. For example, the early southbound train from Saco leaves at 5:40 a.m. and arrives in Boston at 7:50 a.m. The earliest northbound train from Saco leaves at 10:55 a.m. and arrives in Portland at 11:25 a.m. — not an ideal schedule for commuters. However, with track improvements in Wells, the Downeaster will operate a sixth-round trip between Brunswick and Wells and provide commuting options between Saco and Portland.

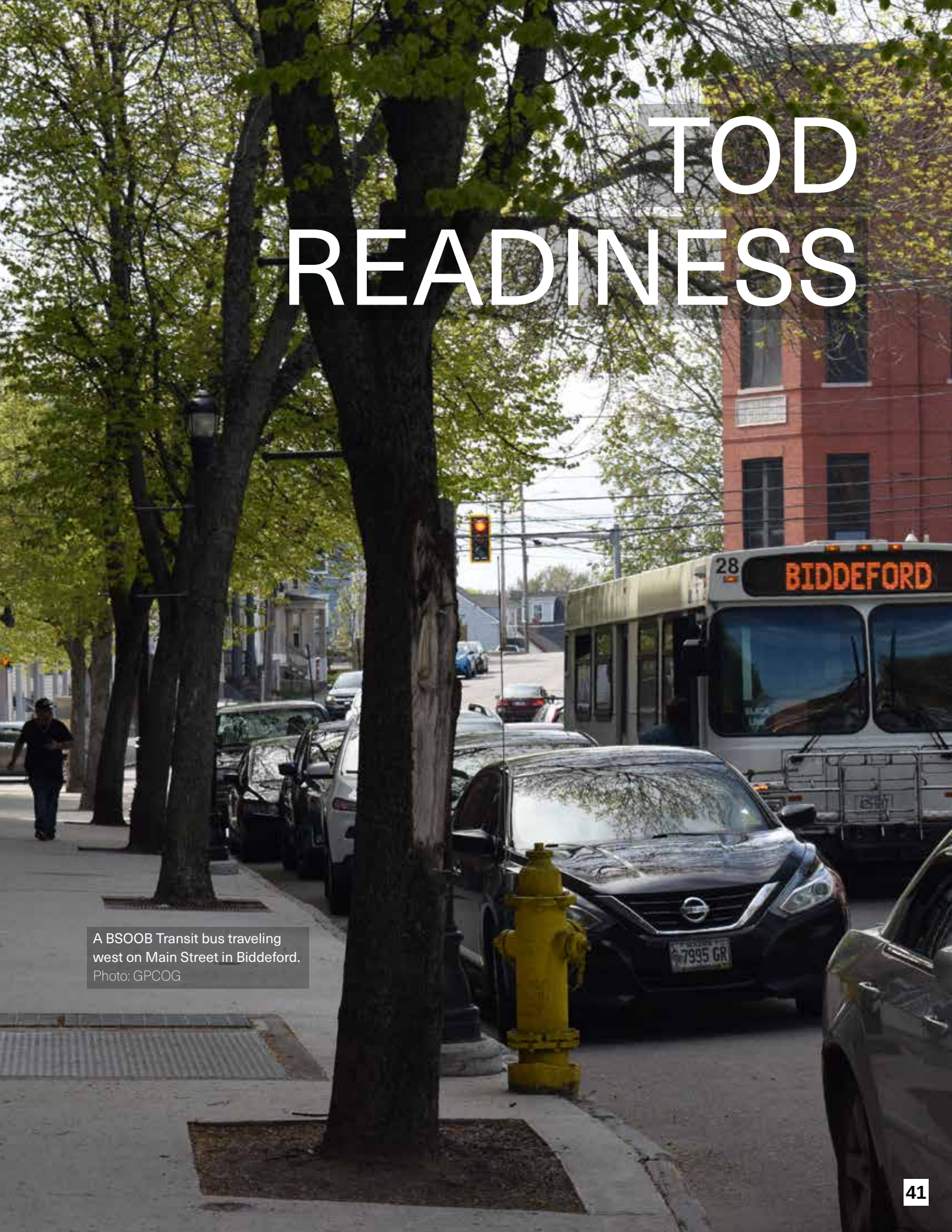
TABLE 4b:

Transit Frequency and Spans of Service



*Saturday service only available in summer

TOD READINESS



A BSOOB Transit bus traveling west on Main Street in Biddeford.
Photo: GPCOG

THE PRIMARY ELEMENTS that contribute to successful TODs are widely recognized in urban planning as the "5 Ds." Described below, these are: Density, Diversity, Distance, Demand Management, and Design. The successful application of these principles can go a long way towards addressing current challenges associated with suburban sprawl and auto-oriented development.

This section evaluates the study area with respect to these principles. Additionally, it includes a review of environmental and social equity considerations to help ensure that any proposed changes take into account potential impacts to people and natural habitats.

Density

Density is the measure of the intensity of the use of land and is typically measured in people, households, or jobs per acre. Increasing residential and employment density near transit is the most effective way to reduce levels of automobile dependence and increase transit ridership. Higher densities support greater levels of transit service, as there are more potential riders in the same amount of space.

Diversity

The availability of a wide range of amenities and activities within a given area is one of the main aspects that underpin successful TODs. Mixed land use means having a complementary and context-appropriate combination of shops, services, housing types, offices, and employment opportunities within the same area that allow people to meet most of their daily needs nearby. Locating a mix of land uses and housing near transit facilities fosters increased transit ridership and supports walking and biking.

Distance to Transit

Proximity to transit stops and stations is also associated with increased transit use. While every individual has different walking speeds and distances they may feel comfortable walking, a generally held principle is the average person is willing to walk five minutes to use transit. At an average walking speed this equates to roughly 1/4 to 1/2 mile distance. Beyond 1/2 mile, it can be reasonably expected that most people would elect to use a vehicle rather than walk. Design elements such as short blocks and well-connected streets and sidewalks can also help by providing direct connections and reducing walking distances.

A generally held principle is the average person is willing to walk five minutes to use transit.

Demand Management

Transit-oriented development is intended to reduce the need for vehicle use and promote walking, biking, and transit as viable means of transportation. Large expanses of surface parking lots tend to erode an area's overall sense of place and contribute to a pedestrian environment that is less safe, convenient, or attractive.

Successful TODs can accommodate vehicles while minimizing their impact on the landscape. Often, this involves reducing the amount of parking spaces available (many places have an oversupply of parking), consolidating surface parking lots into parking structures, or making more efficient use of existing parking lots by carefully locating and designing them.

Other management strategies, such as shared parking, can cut down on the number of chronically empty parking spaces. The overall goal is to reduce the amount of land devoted to parking in order to unlock the potential for higher development density.

Creating great spaces for people to meet, relax, enjoy the scenery or eat contributes to an area's overall design.

Above: Shevennel Park in Biddeford is a small pocket park.

Below: Mechanics Park in Biddeford provides great views of the Saco River, places to sit and a grassy expanse.

Photos: GPCOG

Design

Design is the most nuanced of the 5 Ds and means different things to different people. In the context of TOD, design primarily refers to the elements that make for an attractive, interesting, and pedestrian-friendly place. This includes the appropriate provision of sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, parks, street trees, and green space.

Other examples of TOD-specific design strategies include short blocks with street network connectivity (to reduce walking distances), appropriately scaled and continuous sidewalks, sidewalks buffered from traffic, street-oriented buildings, and comfortable and safe places to wait. A well-designed pedestrian environment entices people to get out of their car to explore and experience the character of the neighborhood. People are more likely to walk to transit in areas that are comfortable, safe, and interesting.

Beyond the Ds

The 5 Ds are a useful framework for considering the key factors of a successful TOD, but they do not encompass everything. Larger scale forces such as demographic changes, shifts in the national economy, or changes in consumer preferences can all influence the viability of a TOD. Most recently, the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic remain to be seen. As we begin to resume "normal" activity, will urban centers in Maine be more, or less, attractive?

It is also worth noting these concepts are mutually supportive. For example, design improvements such as adding sidewalks, crosswalks, and lighting add to the streetscape while also reducing the distance to transit.

Lastly, environmental and social equity considerations should underscore every decision regarding new development and public spaces. Any proposed changes should have a justifiable net benefit to both the people who live in the area and to the overall goal of creating a more sustainable community.

Density

Density is arguably the most important factor for encouraging transit use. Higher densities of people and jobs per acre support greater levels of transit since there are more potential riders in the same amount of space.

The Mill District and Saco Island are natural places to encourage TOD strategies since they already support so many people and jobs (in addition to the many new development projects currently underway). As Figure 15 on the following page shows, the study area has the highest concentration of both people and jobs in Biddeford and Saco. Outside of Downtown Portland, it is the second-largest urban center in Southern Maine.

Employment Density

The three census tracts that encompass the study area (and most of Downtown Biddeford and Saco) collectively support approximately 4,400 jobs (roughly 1.6 jobs per acre). As a proportion of all jobs in Biddeford and Saco, this accounts for approximately 25% of all jobs in the two cities.

The study area includes a wide mix of job types, but the most predominant industries are Accommodation and Food Services (19%), Health Care and Social Assistance (17%), and Retail Trade (17%).

Residential Density

From a population standpoint, the study area supports even more density with approximately 19,300 people and 8,600 households living within the same three census tracts (roughly 6.9 people per acre). The study area's residential population has increased by nearly 1,000 people since 2010, and will likely continue to do so as new residential units are built.

As might be expected for an urban area with many revitalized mills, the study area has a much higher proportion of multi-unit housing than its surroundings. Approximately two-thirds of housing units within the three census tracts are located in buildings with two or more units.

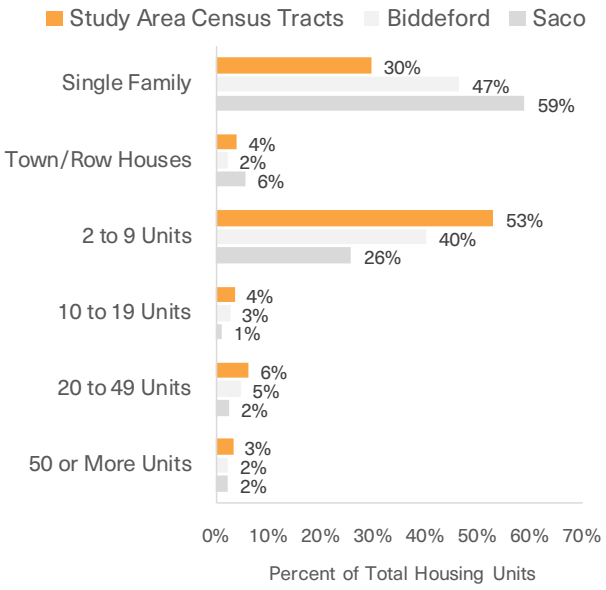


FIGURE 14:
Housing Unit Types
The graph above shows...

Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-year estimates

High-density residential development is beneficial for transit since it adds built-in demand for the service. Additionally, from an economic standpoint, residential development brings a built-in market for stores.

Increasing Density Over Time

As mentioned previously, many properties within the study area have yet to reach their full development potential. For example, the City of Biddeford's 2020 Comprehensive Plan Working Draft states that as of February 2020, the Downtown/Mill District is "45% occupied in terms of square footage of built space." Presumably, this occupation rate will increase over time as more vacant and underutilized space is developed.

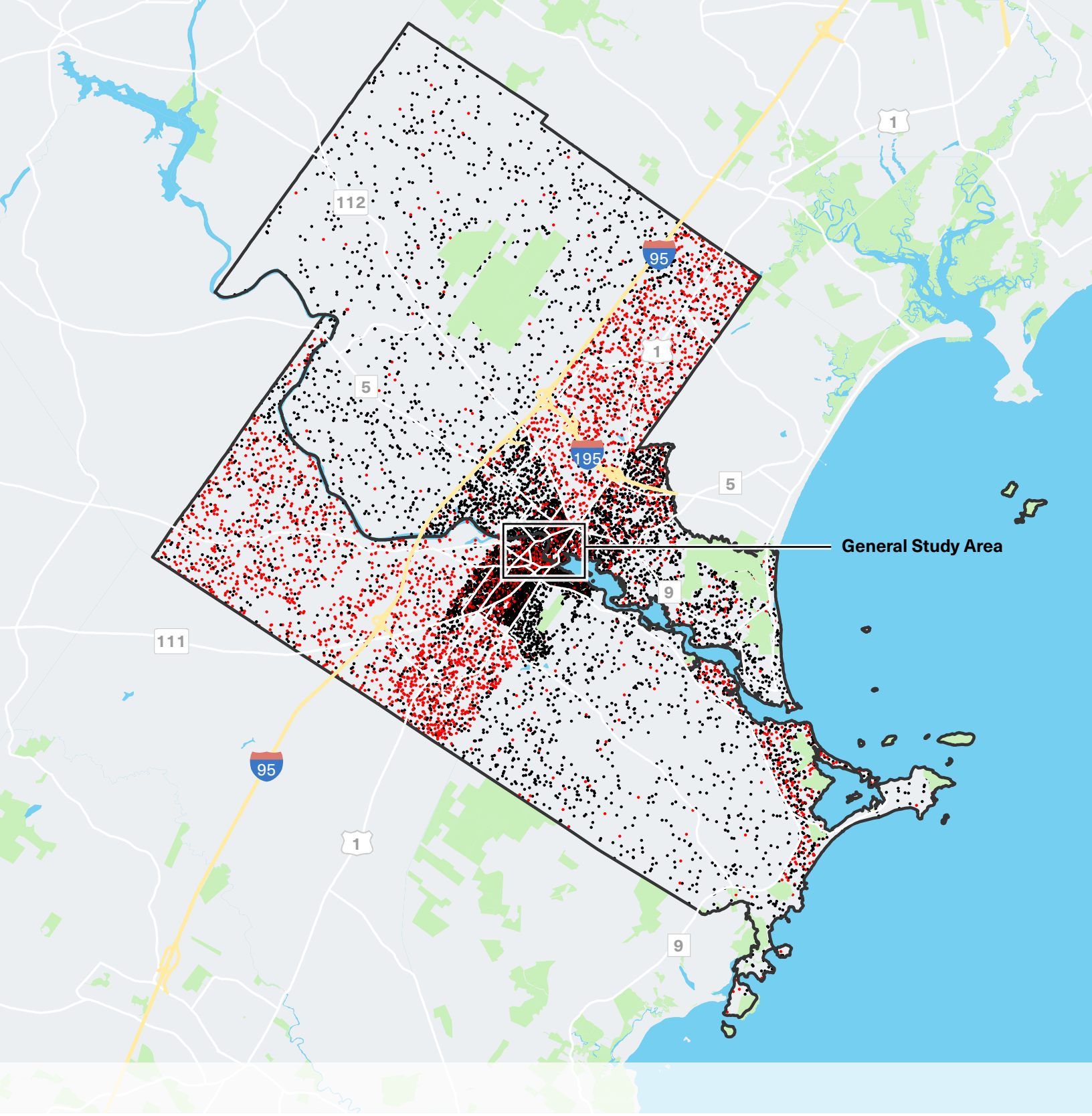


FIGURE 15:

Population and Employment Density

The dot density map above provides a rough depiction of population and employment density in Biddeford and Saco. In this map, one red dot represents five jobs, while one black dot represents five residents. As the map illustrates, the study area has the highest concentration of both population and jobs in Biddeford and Saco. Source: GPCOG

Diversity

Access to a wide range of amenities and activities within a given area is one of the main aspects that underpin successful TODs. Mixed land use means having a complementary combination of shops, services, housing types, and employment opportunities within the same area that allow people to meet most of their daily needs nearby.

Mixed land use can include vertical mixing within a building, horizontal mixing of adjacent buildings, or a mix of uses within a wider area. A diverse area with a variety of housing types, tenures, and price points, and various shops and employment opportunities is also important so a community can attract a broad cross-section of people and better support transit.

Existing Uses

The Biddeford Mill District and Saco Island provides a broad mix of land uses for the surrounding communities. The redeveloped mill buildings are now primarily residential or mixed-use (a combination of uses including residential, commercial, cultural, institutional, or entertainment), and the same holds true for areas where development is planned or underway, such as the Pearl Street Riverfront District.

As the Walk Score Heat Map shows (Figure 16), the area now features a diverse array of amenities and land uses within a short walking distance. According to the Walk Score website, "most errands can be accomplished on foot." Of the amenities within walking distance, the study area is particularly strong in dining and drinking, shopping, services, and culture and entertainment. Generally speaking, there are fewer options within walking distance for groceries, parks, and schools.

The Land Use Diversity Assessment (Figure 17) provides a parcel-by-parcel breakdown of general land uses. Due to the rapid pace of development, this information is challenging to keep up-to-date. However, at the time of this writing, the map shows a complementary balance of uses within the study area.

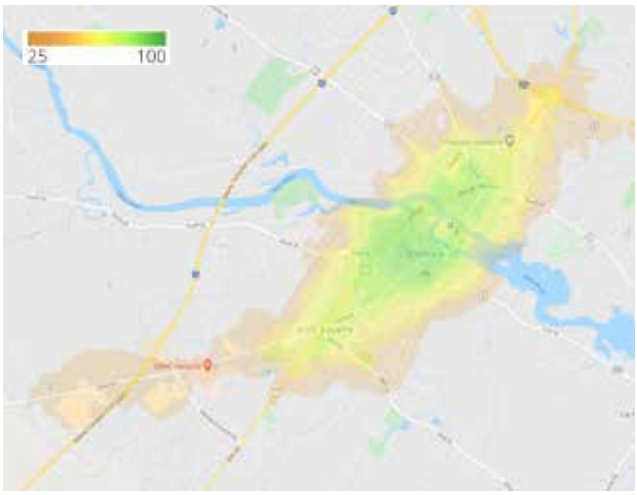


FIGURE 16:
Walk Score Heat Map

The Walk Score is a web tool that assigns a numerical walkability score to any address in the United States (the higher the score, the better the area is for walking). Since the Walk Score measures the concentration of a variety of amenities (e.g., shops, services, schools, parks, culture/entertainment) within walking distance, by proxy it also highlights areas with diverse land uses.

As the heat map above illustrates, the study area (and Downtown Biddeford and Saco) stand out (in green and yellow) as areas with high walkability scores and correspondingly diverse land uses. While Walk Score shows areas with high concentrations of amenities, it does not calculate whether there are sidewalks, crosswalks, or how many lanes of traffic one must cross to get to a location.

Source: www.walkscore.com

Most notably, mixed-use (27%), commercial (16%), and residential (13%) development comprise a large portion of the land area. With respect to transit-oriented development, this is a beneficial mix since these uses, combined with pedestrian-oriented design, can make walking and transit more convenient. Although there are several large tracts of vacant land, most are owned by developers with active residential, commercial, or mixed-use development plans.

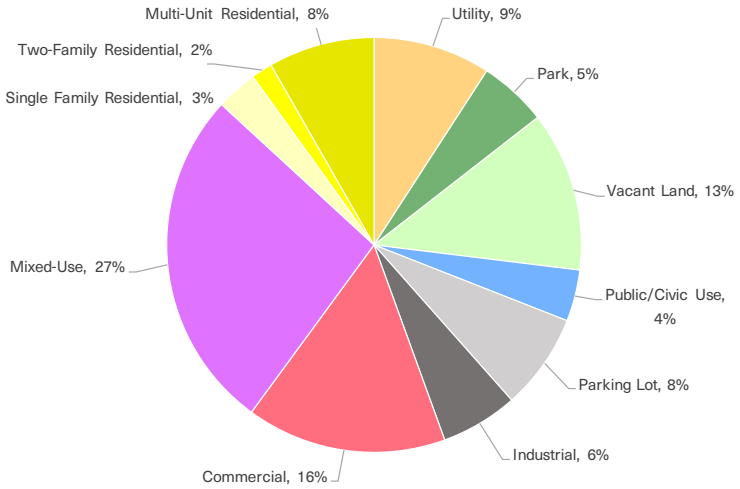
FIGURE 17:

Land Use Diversity Assessment

The map above shows the general breakdown in land use within the study area; the pie chart shows the approximate percent of land area devoted to each use. Overall, the study area has a strong mix of uses and a complementary balance of residential (13%), commercial (16%), and mixed-use (27%) development. The combination of these uses helps make walking and transit more convenient, and creates more opportunities for people to live and work in the same area.

Data Sources: City of Biddeford, City of Saco
Data Notes:

- *The Pearl Street Riverfront District shows land uses that are pending development; in this area future property lines are estimated.*
- *Only parking lots that comprise an entire parcel are shown in the map. Parking lots are therefore underrepresented in the pie chart.*
- *Public right-of-ways and water are not included in the percent of land area assessment.*
- *The municipal-ownership overlay is included for informational purposes since the Cities of Biddeford and Saco have direct influence over the future of these properties.*



On the other end of the spectrum, industrial uses now account for just 6% of land area, and parks are somewhat underrepresented at 5%.

Future Land Use

As the Mill District and Saco Island continue to develop, cultivating a mix of uses and maximizing the amount of residential, commercial, and mixed-use development will help create a vibrant place that supports transit and allows people to meet most of their daily needs nearby. To stitch these uses together, however, future development should emphasize pedestrian connectivity and design. A diverse mix of uses coupled with auto-oriented design will simply reinforce an auto-dependent atmosphere.

Finally, there are many opportunities to create a stronger connection to the natural environment. Parks, playgrounds, urban agriculture, and enhanced streetscaping can improve the area's quality of place, provide spaces for socializing, decrease noise and air pollution, and even promote mental and physical health.

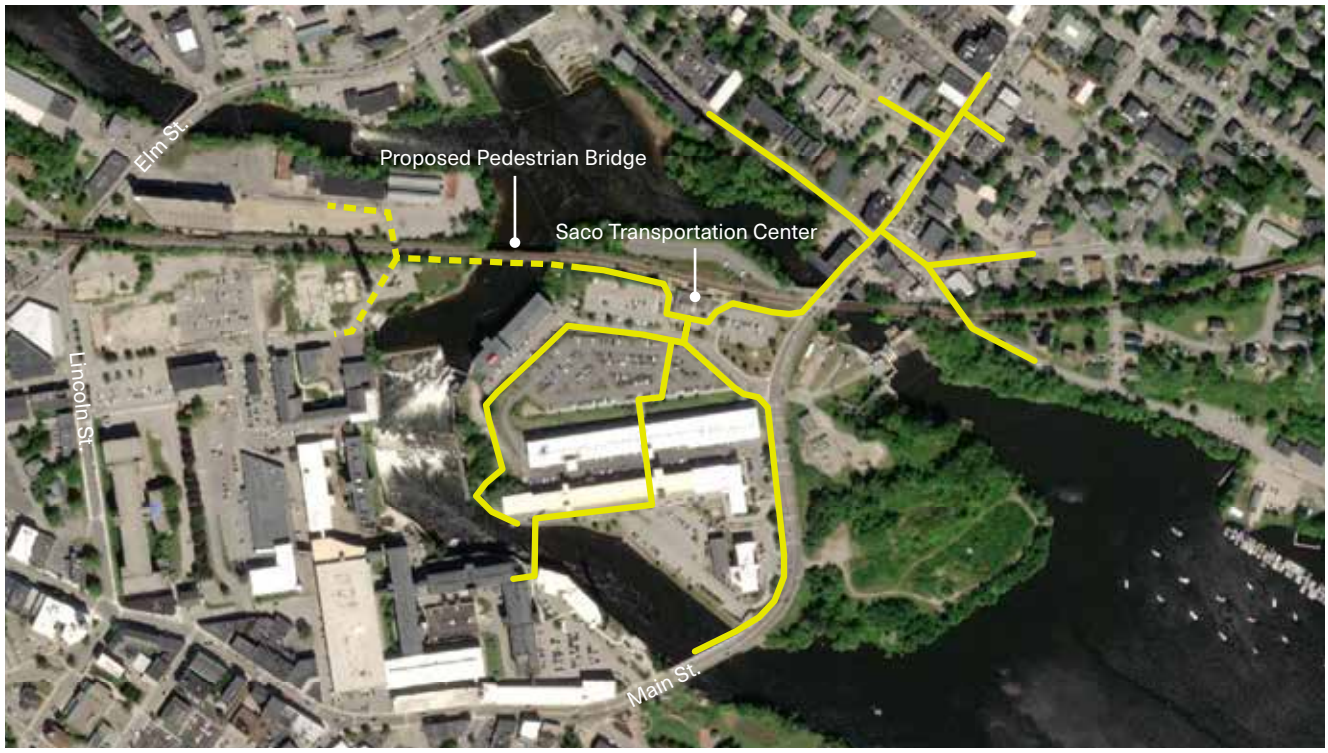


FIGURE 18:

Walking Distances to the Saco Transportation Center

The map above shows ¼ mile walking distances to/from the Saco Transportation Center for the most common pedestrian routes (yellow). The dashed route is included for reference to show what a ¼ mile distance would look like if the proposed pedestrian bridge is built across the Saco River in that location.

Distance to Transit

Proximity to transit is a key factor associated with increased transit use. The further people need to walk to transit, the less likely they are to take it. Additionally, living within walking distance of public transportation is especially important for population groups historically more likely to depend on it, such as seniors, racial/ethnic minorities, and people in poverty.

Although every individual is different, the generally held principle is the average person is willing to walk five minutes, or approximately ¼ mile, to use transit. However, most people are willing to walk up to ½ mile to use faster services, such as passenger rail, if sidewalks and pathways are available. Beyond ½ mile, most people elect to drive rather than walk.

Design elements such as short blocks and well-connected streets and sidewalks can also help by providing direct connections and reducing walking distances.

Walking Distances

Figure 18 shows ¼ mile walking distances to/from the Saco Transportation Center for the most common pedestrian routes. While BSOOB Transit has a few on-street bus stops on Main Street, Lincoln Street, and Elm Street, the Transportation Center is the central hub for all bus routes as well as the stop for the Amtrak Downeaster. Furthermore, most people coming from outside the area via transit would arrive at the Transportation Center.

While the mill buildings on Saco Island are well within walking distance, the mills on the Biddeford side of Saco River are beyond the ¼

Improving the pedestrian network and providing more visible and welcoming bus stops are two key ways to make it easier for people to access transit.

Above: A BSOOB Transit bus stop on Main Street in Biddeford. Bus stops in the area lack visibility and do not have benches, shelters, or other amenities to provide comfortable, safe places to wait.

Below: Signage has improved in the area, but more is needed to help people navigate through the mill buildings.

Photos: GPCOG

mile mark. On top of this increased distance, people on the Biddeford side must navigate other barriers such as finding their way through the complex of mill buildings and climbing the hill on Saco Island. Adverse weather and winter conditions provide additional barriers to access the Transportation Center.

As the map shows, the proposed pedestrian bridge across the Saco River adjacent to the railroad bridge would significantly improve pedestrian connectivity and reduce walking distances to the Transportation Center (and other destinations in Downtown Saco). BSOOB Transit's new Downtown Circulator will also help improve access to transit on the Biddeford side.

Walking Conditions

As mentioned earlier, gaps in the pedestrian network, the variability of sidewalk conditions, the speed and volume of traffic, and lack of signage can often make walking in the Mill District and Saco Island challenging. Since people are more likely to walk — and walk longer distances — to transit in areas that are comfortable, safe, and interesting, strategies to improve the pedestrian environment should be a priority in this area.

Bus Stop Design

Similarly, a well designed and properly outfitted bus stop can cut down on the disutility of waiting and signal to the broader public the importance of transit as a viable means of transportation. Most people are willing to put up with delays provided there is a comfortable and safe place to do so. While the Saco Transportation Center stands out as a modern, comfortable, and well-maintained facility, the on-street bus stops lack visibility and do not have benches, shelters, curb ramps, or other amenities like lighting or trash receptacles. Safe, accessible, and comfortable bus stops are particularly important for the elderly, people with disabilities, and families traveling with young children.

The Creative Shelters Project — a partnership between Creative Portland, GPCOG, and METRO — provides a model for the use of art and public-private partnerships to raise the profile of existing services and define transit as a welcoming, comfortable space for all. The "Hope and Friendship" shelter by Ebenezer Akakpo is one of several Creative Bus Shelter locations. The project was made possible by a National Endowment for the Arts "Our Town" grant award.
Photo: Corey Templeton

Demand Management

Transit-oriented development is intended to reduce our reliance on driving and elevate walking, biking, and transit as the preferred ways of getting around. The idea is to create the conditions where people who live, work, or visit the area feel comfortable walking, biking, or taking transit for most trips, while those who drive can park once then walk to get to their final destinations.

Clearly, driving is here to stay, and TOD strategies do not propose eliminating driving. However, large expanses of surface parking lots and auto-oriented design tend to erode an area's overall sense of place and contribute to a pedestrian environment that is less safe, convenient, or attractive.

The City of Biddeford recently completed construction of a 5-story parking garage on Lincoln Street. The garage provides 640 new spaces and contains short-term hourly pay parking and long-term permit parking. Parking garages can be an effective way to improve the design and placement of parking since they reduce the land area devoted to parking and allow buildings to be closer together and more tightly integrated.

Photos: GPCOG

Successful TOD's are able to accommodate vehicles while minimizing their impact on the landscape. Often, this involves reducing the amount of parking spaces available (many places have an oversupply of parking), consolidating surface parking lots into parking structures, or making more efficient use of existing parking lots by carefully locating and designing them. The overall goal is to reduce the amount of land devoted to parking in order to unlock the potential for other uses such as housing, stores, parks, or plazas.

Successful TODs are able to accommodate vehicles while minimizing their impact on the landscape.

Existing Parking Supply

With so much construction and ongoing development in the area it is difficult to determine, at this time, if the amount of parking strikes the right balance. In the first survey, public feedback noted that parking is difficult due to lack of availability, confusing layout of buildings, and lack of parking enforcement. Several residents also expressed frustration for visitors parking in reserved spots.

However, since that survey the City of Biddeford has completed construction of a five-story parking garage on Lincoln Street. The garage provides 640 new spaces and contains short-term hourly pay parking and long-term permit parking.

Public feedback expressing frustration about parking largely centered on the Biddeford side of the river. In particular, people noted the difficulty of finding on-street parking on Main Street, the lack of off-street parking within the

Demand Management refers to a set of strategies to maximize travel choices (such as walking, biking, taking transit, and carpooling) in order to reduce vehicle trips.

Mill District, and the confusing layout of mill buildings. The new parking garage will hopefully address issues of parking availability in the area and alleviate parking pressure on Main Street.

On Saco Island, parking is more straightforward. Most of the developed area west of Main Street not occupied by buildings is devoted to surface parking lots (there is no on-street parking on Main Street). Saco Island contains over 850 parking spaces — a mix of public and reserved spots. The Saco Transportation Center sits between a short-term parking lot (on the east side) and a long-term parking lot (on the west side). Those who identified parking concerns on Saco Island noted the lack of parking in front of businesses they frequent, or issues with people parking in reserved spots. The City is currently working with a consultant to study parking conditions in Downtown Saco.

Existing Parking Requirements

The Cities of Biddeford and Saco maintain off-street parking requirements which mandate a minimum number of parking spaces types of development must include. These requirements are modeled after national standards determined by peak occupancy studies. As described below, many industry professionals believe there are more effective ways to manage parking.[7] While both cities allow case-by-case exemptions, and larger projects require parking studies as a basis, as written these requirements may mandate excessive space to parking which could otherwise be used to fulfil housing or economic development goals, among other options.

Parking Reform

There is a rapidly growing movement in the United States to discourage excessive parking supply by reforming outdated parking requirements. Many cities have adopted policies reducing or eliminating off-street parking requirements, allowing for parking practices to be set by developers and on-street parking to be better managed by municipalities. Alleviated

Above: Large surface parking lots characterize parking conditions on the developed side of Saco Island west of Main Street. Reducing the area needed for parking would free up space for more productive uses like housing, stores, parks, or plazas. Photo: GPCOG

Below: A bike corral installed on Commercial Street in Portland. On-street bike corrals transform a standard parking space into bike parking for up to ten bikes. Additional pavement markings and buffers, such as rubber parking blocks, bollards, or planters, help delineate the bike parking area. Photo: Portland Press Herald

7 *"People Over Parking"* Jeffrey Spivak. Article in the American Planning Association Magazine

Parking Reform Examples

Bath, Maine

Population: 8,766

Description: Settled on the Kennebec River, Bath is known for its 19th century architecture, its shipbuilding legacy, and the Bath Iron Works.

Reform Type: Eliminated parking minimums in the City Center / Business District for commercial land uses.

Belfast, Maine

Population: 6,679

Description: Belfast is a small, coastal city in Southern Maine. The city has several historic districts, an active waterfront, and a thriving arts scene.

Reform Type: Eliminated parking minimums in the City Center / Business District for all land uses.

Portland, Maine

Population: 68,408

Description: The most populous city in Maine, Portland is also a stop for the Amtrak Downeaster and BSOOB Transit's Green and Purple (Zoom Express) lines.

Reform Type: Eliminated parking minimums within ¼ mile of fixed-route transit; allows up to three homes without parking in low-density residential zones.

Dover, New Hampshire

Population: 32,191

Description: Known for its shipbuilding and mill heritage, Dover is the fastest growing city in New Hampshire and also a stop for the Amtrak Downester.

Reform Type: Eliminated parking minimums citywide for all uses.

Manchester, New Hampshire

Population: 112,673

Description: Manchester is a mid-size city in southern New Hampshire. Settled on the Merrimack River, Manchester has its roots as a textile mill town and today has a vibrant downtown entertainment center.

Reform Type: Eliminated parking minimums in the City Center / Business District for all land uses.

Somerville, Massachusetts

Population: 80,906

Description: Just northwest of Boston, Somerville is the most densly populated community in New England and known for its vibrant arts scene and numerous neighborhood squares.

Reform Type: Eliminated parking minimums for residential uses within ½ mile of transit; implemented parking maximums for commercial uses within ¼ mile of transit.

Source: Parking Reform Network

from limitations, these cities have begun to see higher density development and maximization of urban space in addition to deprioritizing cars as the determining factor in the shape of cities.

The collection of cities that have taken action is ever-growing and can be monitored through the Parking Reform Network's "Progress on Parking Mandates"map,[8] which monitors reforms as they are enacted across the U.S. and Canada.

The map currently logs over 200 reformed cities. A few examples of cities in New England that have reformed their parking policies are described above.

[8] *Progress on Parking Mandates Map* Parking Reform Network

Street trees, flower boxes, a mural, inviting storefronts, and on-street parking (which provides a buffer from traffic) help create a comfortable, safe, and interesting pedestrian experience on Main Street in Biddeford. Photo: GPCOG

Design

In the context of transit-oriented development, design primarily refers to the elements that make for an attractive, interesting, and pedestrian-friendly place. A well-designed pedestrian environment entices people to get out of their car to explore and experience the character of the area. People are more likely to walk to transit in places that are comfortable, safe, and interesting.

Pedestrian Design

There are many opportunities to employ good design principles to improve the area's overall walking experience. Generally speaking, the best places to walk are Downtown Biddeford and Saco where there are sidewalks, well defined crossings, storefronts to peak into, and street trees and on-street parking to buffer traffic. The RiverWalk Trail, which is mostly separate from traffic, is also a great way to get around while also taking in views of the river.

The most obvious places to improve the pedestrian experience are along certain segments of the two major roads — Elm Street and Main Street — as well as within the Mill District itself.

Although sidewalks exist along most sections of Elm Street and Main Street, in many places the amount of curb cuts (parking lot entrances/exits), and lack of a continuous sidewalk (or crosswalk) through them, requires pedestrians to constantly be on their guard. Additionally, a lack of planting strips, street trees, on-street parking, or other design elements to buffer pedestrians from traffic forces people to walk next to speeding vehicles which is intimidating and often unsafe.

Street design can make a big difference in how safe it feels to walk or bike in certain areas

Above: A pedestrian walking on Main Street in Biddeford. A wide sidewalk, flower boxes, street trees, storefronts, and on-street parking that buffers traffic all help to make walking here feel comfortable and safe.

Below: A pedestrian walking on Elm Street in Biddeford. The large parking lot entrance, lack of sidewalk, and lack of a buffer from traffic makes it feel unsafe to walk here.

Photos: GPCOG

Walking within the Biddeford Mill District is also challenging. While sidewalks are present on most perimeter streets (Main Street, Elm Street, Lincoln Street), in most cases these sidewalks do not extend into the Mill District itself. Additionally, in many places gates, dead-ends, and a lack of signs or maps prevent pedestrians from easily navigating the area. As one resident put it, “This area [referring to the center of the Mill District] seems a bit off the beaten path in an unsafe way.”

Plans to extend the RiverWalk Trail upriver from Laconia Plaza to Pearl Street will help provide a more direct, and scenic, connection through the Mill District. Ideally, a well-defined network of pedestrian routes could then connect to the RiverWalk Trail and provide easy pedestrian access throughout the whole Mill District.

Building Layout and Design

The historic brick mill buildings and views of the Saco River are what make the Mill District and Saco Island such a unique and compelling place. Walking through the area and seeing how the mill buildings, originally built in the 1800’s for industrial uses, are getting renovated and repurposed for modern-day apartments, stores, restaurants, and breweries adds to the area’s special allure. However, since this former industrial complex was not originally designed as a mixed-use pedestrian center, the layout and design of the mill buildings can present challenges.

For example, the mill buildings were built close together without a traditional street grid in mind. While this layout creates an interesting network of alleyways, courtways, and unique spaces, it can be difficult to navigate. In some cases, what looks like a pedestrian route will dead-end at the river, an enclosed courtyard, or gate that says, “Private Property No Trespassing.”

The sheer size of the mill buildings also poses challenges. In many places the buildings restrict views to long, narrow corridors of imposing brick walls and asphalt. Additionally, the length

Above: Large surface parking lots tend to detract from the pedestrian experience, are uncomfortable to walk through, and hot in the summer. **Middle Left:** An example of a well-designed crosswalk on Lincoln Street. The crossing is well-signed and features street lights, pavers to differentiate the crossing from asphalt, short crossing distances, and Americans with Disabilities Act compliant curb ramps that are easily managed by people with visual or physical disabilities. **Middle Right:** In the summer, even a small place with a bench, a few trees to provide shade, and a view of the river can be an appealing place to take a break. **Lower Left/Lower Right:** The Mill District can be difficult to navigate. In several places it is unclear if pedestrians are welcome or if the route dead ends. Photos: GPCOG

of the mill buildings means there are less places for pedestrians to make shortcuts or zig zag through to get to their destination. The Saco Mill #4 and Saco Mill #1 buildings, for example, run parallel to each other and are both over 500 feet long. A typical city block, by comparison, is about 300 feet.

Providing safe, well-signed, and easy-to-navigate walking routes through the mill buildings is critical for pedestrian use. Eliminating barriers, such as dead-ends and private access gates, and promoting walking routes with lighting, kiosks, and signs and maps would encourage more people to explore the area by foot.

Parks, Common Areas, & Green Space

Parks and common areas, such as plazas, scenic viewpoints, and playgrounds, help create a fun, inviting outdoor destination and enhance pedestrian use in the area. Likewise natural features such as trees, grass, landscaping, and gardens can improve the environment, provide shade and reduce "heat island" effects, and create a more attractive setting for walking.

Within the study area, only a small fraction of land is devoted to parks, common areas, or green space. Currently, the area contains two parks, a plaza, a small dog park, and a multi-use path. Street trees and light landscaping exist in places, but for the most part these natural features are overshadowed by the mill buildings and vast expanses of concrete and asphalt.

Adding more places for people to sit, relax, enjoy the surroundings, and be in the shade is important for quality of life and livability of the area. Within the mill complex there are many opportunities to add more natural features. Gateway parks, scenic viewpoints, and enhanced landscaping in parking lots would make a big difference. The long brick facades of the mill buildings could also be used for vegetated walls or vertical gardens.

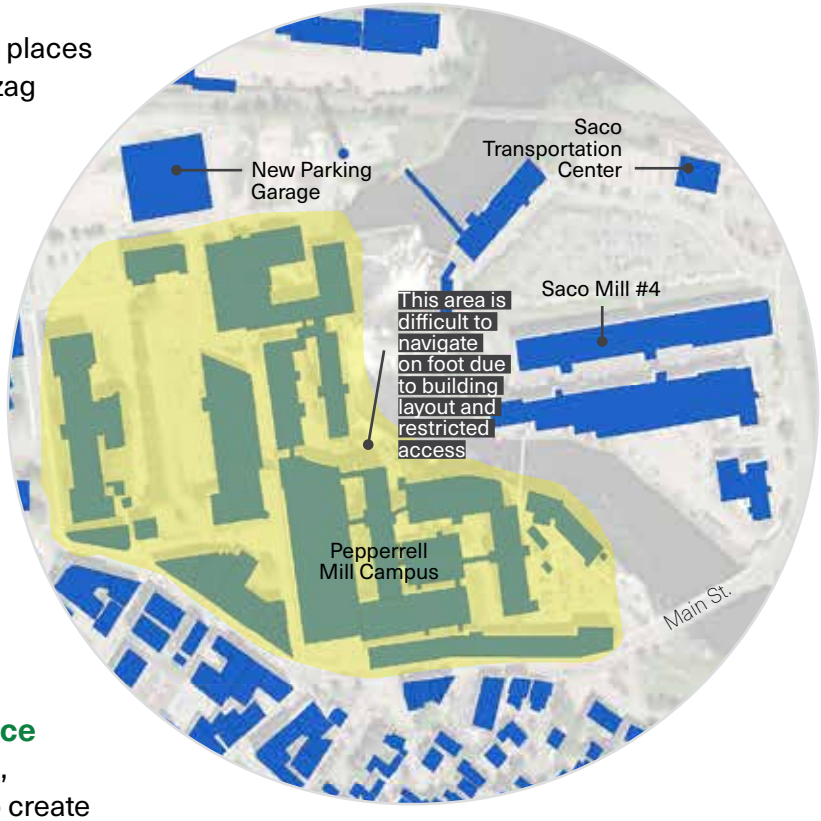


FIGURE 19:
Building Layout

The mill buildings were built close together without a traditional street grid in mind. While this layout creates an interesting network of alleyways, courtways, and unique spaces, it can be difficult to navigate, especially the Biddeford Mill District (in yellow). In some cases, what looks like a pedestrian route will dead-end at the river, an enclosed courtyard, or gate that says, "Private Property No Trespassing."

Additionally, the length of the mill buildings means there are less places for pedestrians to make shortcuts or zig zag through to get to their destination. The Saco Mill #4 and Saco Mill #1 buildings, for example, run parallel to each other and are both over 500 feet long. A typical city block, by comparison, is about 300 feet.

Heat Islands are urbanized areas that experience higher temperatures than outlying areas. Structures such as buildings, roads, and other infrastructure absorb and re-emit the sun's heat more than natural landscapes such as forests and water bodies.

With the Mainer Project, street artist Orson Horchler (aka "Pigeon") tackles the multifaceted topic of immigration. He portrays Maine residents, some of whom are asylum seekers, refugees, and immigrants, to ask questions about the dynamics of power in society and who gets to call themselves a "Mainer." The mural is located in the Biddeford Mill District. Photo: GPCOG

Social Equity

The benefits of transit-oriented development can create a high demand for housing that often make it inaccessible to people with lower incomes. The rapid appreciation and development of new investments in these areas can lead to gentrification and displacement of long-time residents, especially in low- to moderate-income communities most likely to rely on public transit. Therefore, when employing TOD strategies social equity should underscore every decision regarding new development and public spaces.

Without an explicit equity framework, lower-income people in emerging TOD neighborhoods will be displaced. The best way to ensure equitable TOD is to preserve — and create more — affordable housing. Strong affordable housing policies and a commitment to create balanced, mixed-income communities helps ensure the benefits of TOD are experienced by all people regardless of income, race, ethnicity, age, gender, or immigration status.

> Without an explicit equity framework, lower-income people in emerging TOD neighborhoods will be displaced.

Other strategies to ensure equity are to provide meaningful participation in public and private development projects, and to create explicit equity performance measures that ensure community needs are prioritized.

Ultimately, when centered on racial inclusion and community wealth building, TOD can be a driver of positive transformation and help to close the socioeconomic and racial gaps between neighborhoods.

Environmental Impacts

While there are environmental impacts associated with any form of development, transit-oriented development promotes a more sustainable form of growth by providing a variety of transportation choices, maximizing the use of space, and reducing development pressure on rural areas and natural habitat. The following section provides examples of how these key features of TOD can bring about environmental benefits in Biddeford and Saco.

Emissions Reductions

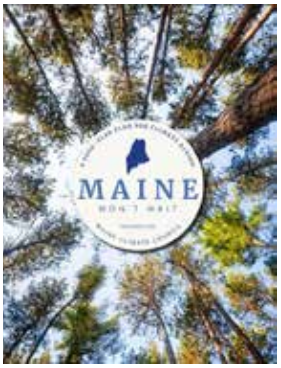
In 2019, Governor Mills signed legislation to require the reduction of Maine's greenhouse gas emissions 45% by 2030 and by at least 80% by 2050. According to *Maine Won't Wait: A Four-Year Plan for Climate Action*, transportation is responsible for 54% of Maine's annual greenhouse gas emissions — the most of any sector.[9] The main strategies outlined in the plan to reduce transportation emissions include transitioning to electric vehicles, reducing the number of miles Mainers drive, and supporting policies that, "encourage development of housing, schools, and shopping areas in pedestrian-friendly downtowns and villages."

> "One of the main benefits of TOD is that it supports low carbon lifestyles by enabling people to live, work, and play without depending on a car for mobility."

One of the main benefits of transit-oriented development is that it supports low carbon lifestyles by enabling people to live, work, and play without depending on a car for mobility. A 2010 study of the Chicago Metropolitan Region, for example, showed that households in downtown areas — with higher concentrations of transit, jobs, housing, shopping, and other destinations — had 78% lower emissions.[10] While results are likely more profound in large cities like Chicago, creating more places in Greater Portland where people can live car-free or car-light lifestyles can play a substantial part in reducing transportation-related emissions.

Watershed Protection

The Cities of Biddeford and Saco are also within the Saco River Watershed, the primary drinking water source for much of southern Maine. Presently, most of the region's population resides in the urban centers of Biddeford and Saco below the public water intake. Since much of the watershed remains rural and undeveloped, water quality is generally quite



Maine Won't Wait, A Four-Year Plan for Climate Action is Maine's Climate Action Plan. In June 2019, Governor Mills signed LD 1679 into law, to create the Maine Climate Council. The Council — an assembly of scientists, industry leaders, bipartisan local and state officials, and engaged citizens — was charged with developing the four-year Climate Action Plan to put Maine on the path to decrease greenhouse gas emissions by 45% by 2030 and 80% by 2050, and achieve carbon neutrality by 2045.

9 *"Maine Won't Wait: A Four-Year Plan for Climate Action."*

10 *"Transit-Oriented Development and the Potential for VMT- related Greenhouse Gas Emissions Growth Reduction."* Center for Transit-Oriented Development.

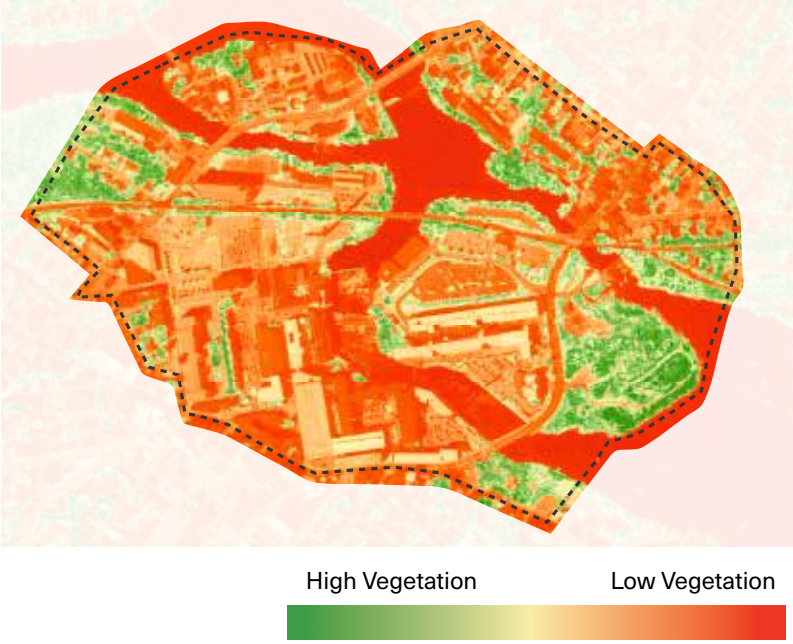
FIGURE 20:

Vegetation in the Study Area

The map to the right shows a vegetation index for the study area. Areas in green have high vegetation values and are typically trees, plants, or grass. Areas in red/yellow have low vegetation values and are typically buildings, roads, or parking lots. (Free standing water has high reflectance and therefore shows up in red).

About the Data: The Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) imagery layer features recent high-resolution (1 meter or better) aerial imagery for the continental United States and is made available by the USDA Farm Services Agency.

Data Source: Esri



good. TOD strategies can help protect the Saco River as a drinking water resource by reducing development pressure in the rural and forested portions of the watershed.

Stormwater Management

One of the main environmental benefits of transit-oriented development is that it uses existing water and sewer infrastructure, which is less detrimental to the environment than building new infrastructure or relying on private wells and septic tanks. However, one of the main challenges that all urban areas face is stormwater management.

As watersheds are urbanized, much of the vegetation is replaced by impervious surfaces (rooftops, roads, parking lots, and sidewalks). These surfaces collect solar heat and prevent the natural soaking of rainwater into the ground. Instead, rainwater accumulates and flows rapidly into storm drains, collecting salt, gasoline, motor oils, and other pollutants along the way.

As Figure 20, above, shows, there is a distinct lack of vegetation within the study area. An effective way to mitigate the impacts of stormwater runoff — and create beautiful green spaces — is to plant trees, native plants, and employ other "green infrastructure" techniques to absorb stormwater where it falls. For example, many cities have set tree canopy goals to restore the benefits of trees lost when the areas were developed. Other ways to green the area and reduce stormwater runoff include green roofs, rainwater harvesting (large cisterns attached to buildings), rain gardens, planter boxes, and permeable pavement.

Brownfields Redevelopment

Brownfield land is any previously developed land that is not currently in use that may be potentially contaminated. Cleaning up and reinvesting in brownfields properties turns formerly abandoned sites into housing, jobs, and tax resources for municipalities, and most importantly, removes contaminated land and hazardous waste sites as pollution sources.

As outlined earlier in this plan, the Cities of Biddeford and Saco have both benefited tremendously from the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Brownfields Program. The Pepperell Mill, the Pearl Street Riverfront District, and Laconia Plaza are all examples of projects that have received brownfields funding assistance.

THE TOD VISION

FIGURE 21:
Focus Areas for Visuals
The image to the left shows the focus areas for the conceptual plans and illustrations that follow. The focus areas were determined by the project steering committee.

THE FOLLOWING PAGES present a vision for what the Mill District and Saco Island could look like in 10-20 years if development and investments are guided by transit-oriented development principles. The plans and illustrations that follow are conceptual only. They were developed by the project steering committee to provide examples of what is possible, and to show what those changes might look like on the ground. Many of the ideas would need further study and evaluation.

Developing the Vision

The project steering committee met with the landscape architecture firm Richardson & Associates on several occasions to develop example visuals for the study area. After an initial workshop session and site walk, Richardson & Associates worked with the committee to identify three focus areas — two on Main Street in Saco and one on Pearl Street in Biddeford.

Once the focus areas were established, Richardson & Associates gathered input from the committee and developed example layouts to put visuals to these initial ideas. During this time, the second public survey also went out to the communities. Many of the surveys questions asked people to weigh in on the committee's bolder, more transformative ideas, such as a pedestrian bridge to connect the Saco Transportation Center to the planned Pearl Street Riverfront District in Biddeford, lane reconfigurations on Main Street in Saco, bike lanes, new sidewalks, and gateway parks.

Finding the right balance between visionary and unrealistic was a major consideration for the project steering committee. While the plan is an opportunity to think big — and to think creatively — about how to transform the area, if the proposed vision has no grounding in real-world constraints, such as cost, regulations, or political will, it would be a squandered opportunity.

To vet the feasibility of the committee's initial ideas, the project team met with municipal staff, committees, local developers, and property owners. Although a few adjustments were made, most ideas received support and enthusiasm. The results of the second public survey, which showed wide support for the larger, more ambitious ideas, helped ensure the plan's visuals reflected the preferences of most community members.

Focus Area #1

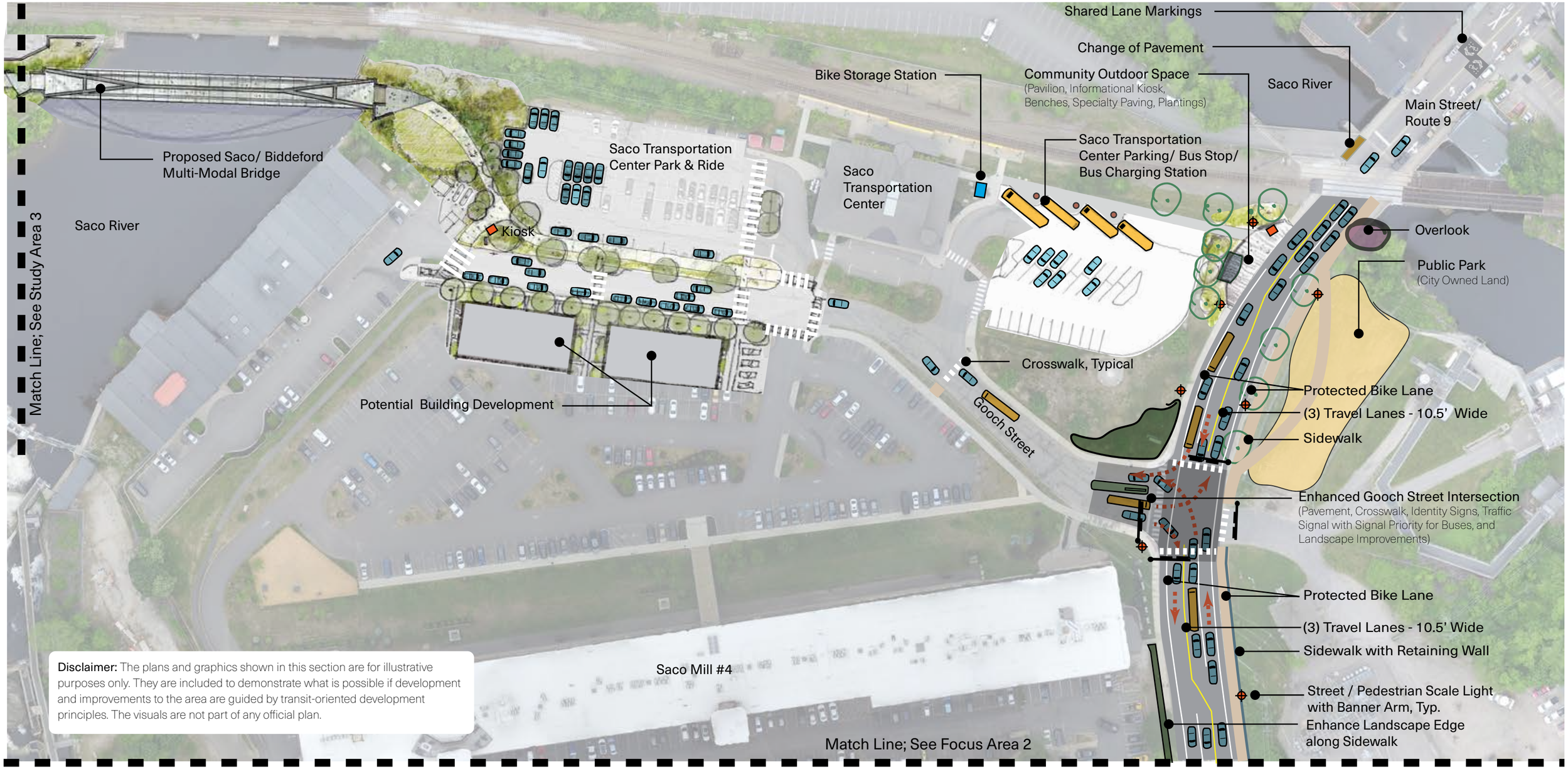
As the hub for transit in Biddeford and Saco, the area surrounding the Saco Transportation Center is a natural place to focus placemaking efforts. Highlights of the conceptual design developed by the steering committee include:

- **Gateway Parks:** A river overlook on the east side of Main Street; a shaded plaza on the west side of Main Street.
- **Gooch Street Intersection:** A signalized crossing on Gooch Street with signal priority for buses, a pedestrian refuge island on Gooch Street, and crosswalks on all legs.
- **New Sidewalks:** A new sidewalk, and pedestrian paths, along the east side of Main Street.
- **"Road Diet"/Bike Lanes:** Reconfiguration of Main Street from four to three 11' travel lanes with a center turn lane; the added space allows for protected bike lanes on each side (road width is 50').
- **Gooch Street Development:** Additional mixed-use development lining Gooch Street.
- **Pedestrian Bridge:** A pedestrian bridge connecting the Saco Transportation Center to the Pearl Street Riverfront District in Biddeford.
- **Bike Parking Station:** A secure, covered bike park station outside the Saco Transportation Center.

Above: A current view of Main Street (Route 9) looking south with the Saco Transportation Center on the right. Photo: GPCOG

Below: A conceptual illustration of the same area shown above. The illustration shows a river overlook park on the east side of Main Street with new sidewalks and pedestrian paths, a shaded plaza and sitting area on the west side of Main Street, a signalized Main Street/Gooch Street intersection, and additional development on Gooch Street across from the Saco Transportation Center. Graphic: Richardson & Associates

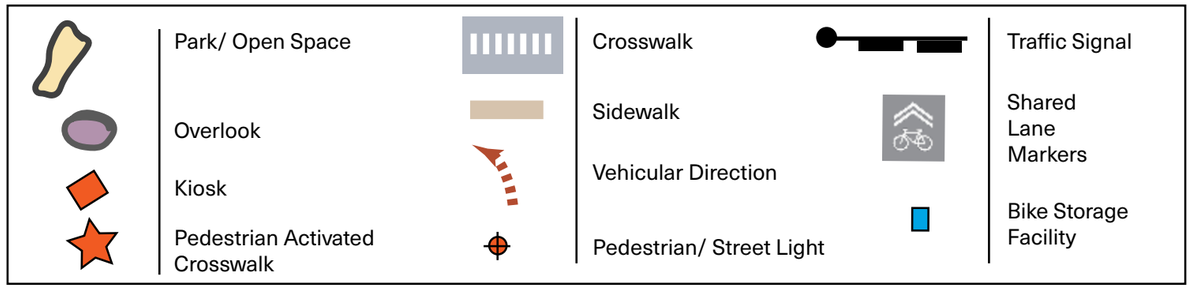
Next Page: A plan-view perspective of the conceptual design developed by the project steering committee. Graphic: Richardson & Associates



Disclaimer: The plans and graphics shown in this section are for illustrative purposes only. They are included to demonstrate what is possible if development and improvements to the area are guided by transit-oriented development principles. The visuals are not part of any official plan.

Notes:

- Many ideas require further study. For example, a traffic signal would need a signal warrant analysis, a road diet must comply with MaineDOT's road diet guidelines, development on Gooch Street would need to be reviewed by the City, etc.
- The City is redesigning the parking lot on the east side of the Saco Transportation Center to accommodate electric charging stations for BSOOB Transit buses. Shown here is the most current design.
- The Cities of Biddeford and Saco have developed initial plans for a pedestrian bridge across the Saco River in this area. Shown here is the most current design.
- The Park & Ride lot and the large surface parking lot in front of Saco Mill #4 are prime locations for future development.
- A roundabout was also discussed at the intersection of Gooch Street and Main Street as a way to keep traffic moving and help buses make the left turn on Main Street.



Focus Area #2

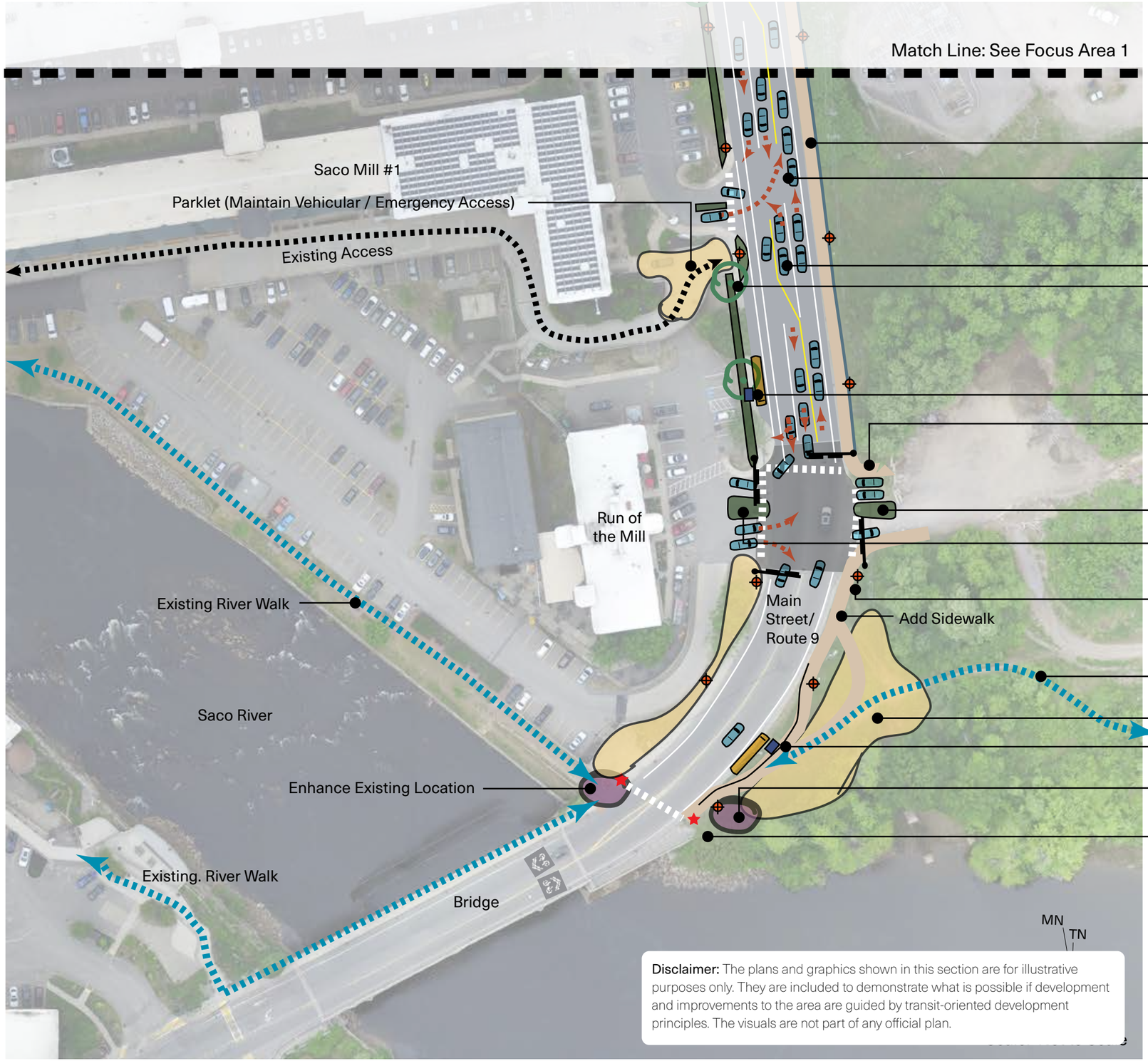
The Main Street corridor on Saco Island (known locally as "York Hill") is just south of Focus Area #1 and poised for transformation. Presently, the corridor features four, 12'-wide travel lanes which leave little space for shoulders or bike lanes. The corridor's auto-oriented design is inconsistent with Main Street in Biddeford to the south (two travel lanes plus on-street parking), and Main Street in Saco to the north (three travel lanes plus on-street parking). Ideas to improve this corridor include:

- **"Road Diet"/Bike Lanes:** A continuation of the road diet/ bike lanes concept mentioned for Focus Area #1.
- **New Sidewalk:** A new sidewalk, and pedestrian paths, along the east side of Main Street.
- **Parklet:** A small, parklet/ scenic viewpoint south of the entrance to Saco Mill #1.
- **Activated Traffic Signal:** With new development pending east of Main Street, an active, pedestrian-friendly crossing at the Run of the Mill intersection will be necessary.
- **Gateway Parks:** Scenic river overlooks on either side of Main Street by the bridge.
- **RiverWalk Crossing/ Extension:** An enhanced (pedestrian activated signal) crossing on Main Street and continuation of the RiverWalk south along the river bank around Saco Island.

Above: A current view of Main Street (Route 9) looking north (up York Hill) towards Saco. Photo: GPCOG

Below: A conceptual illustration of the same area shown above. The illustration shows a "road diet" with protected bike lanes on either side, an enhanced RiverWalk crossing of Main Street, a scenic river overlook, and a continuation of the RiverWalk south along the river bank around Saco island. Graphic: Richardson & Associates

Next Page: A plan-view perspective of the conceptual design developed by the project steering committee. Graphic: Richardson & Associates



Sidewalk with Retaining Wall

(3) Travel Lanes - 10.5' Wide
(2) Protected Bike Lanes - 6' Wide
(Assuming Road Width of 50')

Designated Center Turn Lane

Landscape Treatment at Sidewalk Edge

Add Bus/ Uber, etc. Stop/Shelter

Add Sidewalk to New Development

New Entrance for Future Development / Activate Traffic Light)

Reduce Driveway Entrance Width with Landscape Island

Street / Pedestrian Scale Light with Banner Arm

Future Extension of the RiverWalk Trail System (Private/ Public Partnership)

Saco River Park (Future Public Private Partnership)

Add Bus, Uber, etc. Stop/Shelter

Overlook (Future Public/ Private Development)

Pedestrian Activated Crosswalk
(Coordinated with Traffic Signal at Run of the Mill Intersection)

- Park/ Open Space
- Overlook
- Kiosk
- Pedestrian Activated Crosswalk
- Crosswalk
- Sidewalk
- Vehicular Movement
- River Walk
- Bus Stop
- Pedestrian/ Street Light
- Traffic Signal
- Shared Lane Markers

Disclaimer: The plans and graphics shown in this section are for illustrative purposes only. They are included to demonstrate what is possible if development and improvements to the area are guided by transit-oriented development principles. The visuals are not part of any official plan.

Notes:

- As mentioned previously, a road diet would need to comply with MaineDOT"s road diet guidelines.
- The bike lanes in this segment would transition to shared lane markings to the north and south to provide better continuity.
- Traffic signal infrastructure is in place at the Run of the Mill intersection but not currently activated.
- A pedestrian activated signal crossing would need additional analysis.
- Bus stop locations would need further evaluation for safety.

Focus Area #3

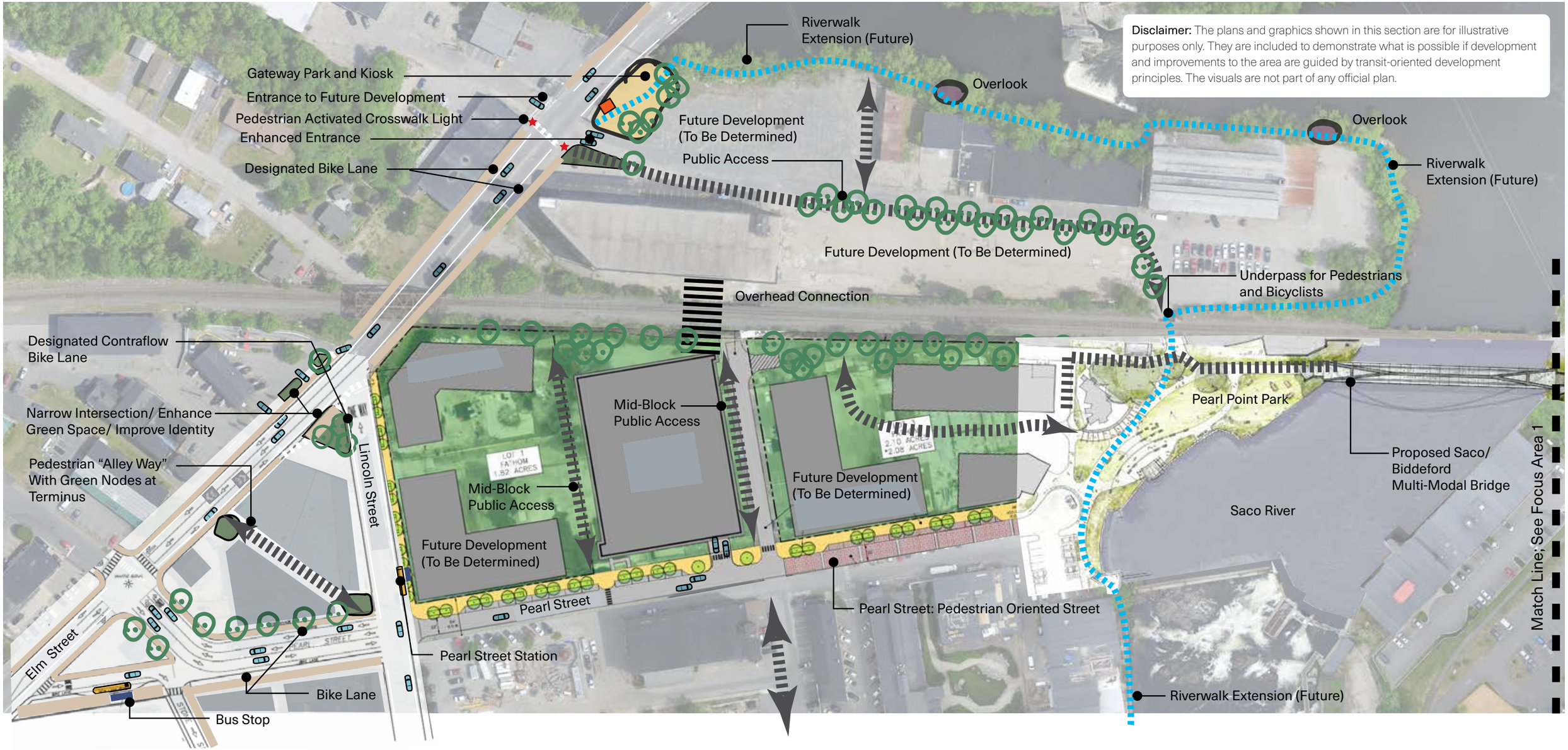
Focus Area #3 is located in Biddeford and centered around the Pearl Street Riverfront District — a new $90 million mixed-use public/private development project currently underway. The parking garage was just built in the summer of 2021, and there are active plans for the remainder of the site, but more planning and investment is needed to realize the area's full potential. The following are highlights of the steering committee's vision for this area:

- **Pearl Point Park**: Shown in the plan on the next page is a concept design for the Pearl Point riverfront park.
- **Redesigned Intersection**: Shown in the plan are conceptual plans for ways to improve the intersection of Lincoln Street and Elm Street (Route 1).
- **Bike Lanes**: The addition of bike lanes on Elm Street, Lincoln Street, and Pearl Street. On Elm Street the bike lanes would transition to shared lane markings when space is limited.
- **RiverWalk Extension:** The extension of the RiverWalk to Elm Street with scenic overlooks and a gateway park.
- **Overhead Connection**: An elevated walkway between the parking garage and the building on the other side of the railroad track.
- **Pedestrian Underpass:** Opening of the (currently gated) underpass to allow for pedestrian connectivity.
- **Shared Street:** To have a portion of Pearl Street a pedestrian-only or shared street.
- **Pedestrian Bridge**: A pedestrian bridge connecting the Pearl Street Riverfront District to the Saco Transportation Center.

Above: A current view of Main Street (Route 9) looking south with the Saco Transportation Center on the right. Photo: GPCOG

Below: A conceptual illustration of the same area shown above. The illustration shows additional development adjacent to the parking garage and a redesigned, pedestrian-friendly intersection of Lincoln Street and Elm Street. Graphic: Richardson & Associates

Next Page: A plan-view perspective of the conceptual design developed by the project steering committee. Graphic: Richardson & Associates



Disclaimer: The plans and graphics shown in this section are for illustrative purposes only. They are included to demonstrate what is possible if development and improvements to the area are guided by transit-oriented development principles. The visuals are not part of any official plan.

Park/ Open Space	Pedestrian Cross Walk	River Walk
Overlook	Sidewalk	Bus Stop
Kiosk	Shared Lane Markerings	Mid-Block Public Access
Pedestrian Activated Crosswalk	Pedestrian/ Street Light	

Notes:

- Most ideas presented in this rendering would require further study. For example, the reconfiguration of the Lincoln Street and Elm Street intersection, sidewalk and bike lanes on Elm Street, and the extension of the RiverWalk Trail upriver to Elm Street.
- Pearl Street Station is a conceptual idea for a transit mobility hub coordinated with future development on Pearl Street. The hub could feature indoor (or sheltered) waiting areas, secure bike parking, and a bike share station, among other amenities.
- Included above is the most recent rendering for Pearl Point Park developed by Richardson & Associates.
- The reconfiguration of Elm Street, Pearl Street, and Spruce Street shown above is a conceptual idea taken directly from the City's 2020 application to PACTS for intersection improvement funding. With several new development projects nearby, the area needs additional study as there are many improvement options to consider.

NEXT STEPS

THIS IS AN EXCITING TIME for the Cities of Biddeford and Saco. Both communities are experiencing an influx of new residents, businesses, and development interest. The transit-oriented development vision presented in this plan is a way to support this resurgence in a way that meets people's needs for getting around, but also their expectations for a livable city – a place where you can comfortably walk your dog, bike to work, or take public transit to run errands. Additionally, as a method for maximizing the value of real estate and making cost-effective use of public infrastructure, the TOD-approach can attract even more growth and long-term economic development.

This plan outlines six big-picture goals to guide future decisions and investments. Included within these goals are more specific strategies and actions the cities and stakeholders can take to realize the TOD vision. In some cases, actions are labeled "quick win" to indicate a temporary, or immediate, action is possible. The six goals are:

1. Invest In Public Transit

A high-quality public transit system is the foundation of the TOD vision. For transit to be successful, it needs to be fast, frequent, and a prominent feature in the community.

2. Make Walking And Biking Easier And Safer

Since most transit trips begin or end with a walk or a bike, the areas surrounding transit stations and stops need to be highly accessible for these modes. Additionally, with improved accessibility more people will walk or bike for non-transit trips.

3. Build More Compact, Mixed-Use Development

More people and jobs in a smaller area shortens the distance people must travel to reach their destinations and supplies the ridership that can support more frequent public transit service.

4. Support Multimodal Mobility

In addition to providing better access to transit — and better transit service — there are a broad variety of programs, policies, and strategies to encourage alternatives to driving alone.

5. Create Great Places

People are more likely to walk to transit in places that are comfortable, safe, and interesting.

6. Reduce Environmental Impacts

With a more compact footprint, well-managed transit-oriented development can conserve natural landscapes and reduce sprawling development patterns.

One way to improve the bus transit experience is to invest in more welcoming stops. Few (if any) bus stops in the area have shelters, benches, or other amenities. The picture above shows a BSOOB Transit stop at the intersection of Elm Street and Gooch Street in Biddeford. The grassy area next to it could be used to develop a more welcoming stop with a comfortable place to sit and wait. Photo: GPCOG

The most effective action the Cities of Biddeford and Saco can take to improve mobility and prepare for future growth is to invest heavily in public transit.

GOAL 1 Invest in Public Transit

Compact urban development and high-quality public transit mutually reinforce each other. Transit can support the large passenger volumes of urban areas, while the concentration of jobs and housing around stations and stops helps make transit viable. Although the Biddeford Mill District and Saco Island have benefited from considerable investment, improvements to transit have not kept pace. The most effective action the Cities of Biddeford and Saco can take to improve mobility and prepare for future growth is to invest heavily in public transit.

Develop Welcoming Bus Stops

Adopt goals and funding mechanisms for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant, family-friendly stops. While the Saco Transportation Center is a vibrant facility with modern accommodations and facilities, few (if any) bus stops in the area have shelters, benches, or other amenities. Design options for stops could include additional amenities for frequently used stops like secure bicycle parking, and “smart shelters” with Wi-Fi, lighting, and real-time arrival information.

Actions

- ☐ Identify priority stops and explore improvement options.
- ☐ [Biddeford] Prioritize the development of Pearl Street Station (a conceptual idea for an enhanced transit hub on Pearl Street. See page 65 for more information).
- ☐ Team up with local organizations and artists to transform a local bus stop.
- ☐ Provide signage at stops that includes route specific information. Quick Win
- ☐ Begin an “adopt-the-stop” program to ensure accessibility in winter. Quick Win

Adopt Innovative Customer Service Technology

Transit technology has evolved rapidly. With smart phones and GPS, it is now possible to offer real-time status information and provide critical updates to riders through transit apps. The Downeaster train status is available through the Amtrak app and Downeaster e-ticketing allows for touchless payment. BSOOB Transit recently joined other transit agencies in the region to introduce the Dirigo Touchpass, an advancement that allows touchless payment and reduces idle time at stops. Although BSOOB Transit has a real-time bus tracker feature on its website, the routes and stops are not featured in some of the more popular transit apps such as Moovit, Transit, and Google Maps.

Action

- ☐ Get BSOOB Transit routes into the most used transit apps. Quick Win

Increase Bus Frequency & Hours Of Operation

For bus routes operating in urban areas, 15-minute frequency is the standard. Aside from the Downtown Circulator route, which runs at 30-minute frequency, most BSOOB Transit routes have wait times of one to three hours between buses. Improving frequency and hours of operation requires significant investment in vehicles, gas, labor, etc. However, when compared with other areas in Greater Portland (or similarly sized regions in the U.S.), the level of support for service in Biddeford and Saco is lacking.

Action

- ☐ Leverage federal and state transit supportive programs to invest in operations.
- ☐ Use American Rescue Plan and PACTS Six-Year Capital and Operating Plan funding to increase revenues to build up frequency.
- ☐ Work with the cities to explore special taxing districts and other approaches to provide a funding mechanism to transit.

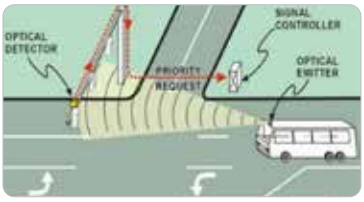
Implement Transit-Supportive Roadway Improvements

Bus priority roadway treatments, such as signal prioritization, queue jump lanes, and bus stop curb extensions are now common in many urban areas. These features improve reliability, travel time, and convenience, and can be pursued in the short term, especially on major corridors where routes overlap.

Action

- ☐ Partner with Bicycle Coalition of Maine's (BCM) Imagine People Here campaign to develop a demonstration bus stop curb extension or other bus-priority treatments. Quick Win

Dirigo Touchpass allows touchless payment and reduces idle time at stops. Electronic readers have been installed in all revenue generating vehicles. With the new technology it is now possible to pay for bus fare using a smartphone app or value smartcard branded as the DiriGoPass. The Amtrak Downeaster also offers electronic and touchfree reservation and ticketing.



Transit Signal Priority uses technology to modify traffic signal timing when transit vehicles are present. This is done by holding the green lights longer or shortening red lights to improve transit efficiency.

Queue Jump Lanes are short bus lanes by traffic signals that enable buses to by-pass waiting traffic. This is combined with transit signal priority or special bus-only signals to allow buses to cut out in front or make easier turns improving transit reliability and travel time.

Involve The Community

Active involvement and support from the municipalities and the public is critical to improving transit service in the area. Engage the municipalities and a full range of community members in planning for the future transit system — including low-income, minority, and transit-dependent residents who may face barriers to public participation.

Action

- ☐ BSOOB Transit can coordinate with the municipalities to establish a Ridership Committee composed of a cross-section of residents who regularly ride the bus and are willing to act as community liaisons for decisions around service improvements and changes.

Consider Bus Route Redesign & Microtransit Options

The region's seven transit agencies, including BSOOB Transit, YCCAC, and NNEPRA, are currently working alongside PACTS and a consultant team on the *Transit Together* study. One aspect of the study is a regionwide network redesign of bus routes that considers routing, scheduling, and other service adjustment opportunities, to improve the rider experience and bolster the viability of transit as a transportation option in Greater Portland.

Another aspect of the *Transit Together* study is exploring the feasibility of microtransit in the region. Microtransit is simply technology-enabled shared ride services. Vehicles typically range in size from vans and shuttles to small buses and schedules and routes are flexible and based on demand.

Action

- ☐ Pending the results of the study, BSOOB Transit and YCCAC may wish to consider changes to their routes and schedules, and Downtown Biddeford and Saco may be a viable place to pilot a microtransit service.

Electric Buses: BSOOB Transit recently received a Federal Transit Administration Lo/No (low emissions/no emissions) grant as well as matching dollars from MaineDOT to purchase two electric buses and charging infrastructure at the BSOOB Transit garage and Saco Transportation Center. Additional investments are necessary to increase the fleet of electric buses.

***Transit Together*:** The region's seven transit agencies, including BSOOB Transit, YCCAC, and NNEPRA, are currently working alongside PACTS and a consultant team on the *Transit Together* study. Among other tasks, the study will prepare a regionwide network redesign of bus routes and explore the feasibility of microtransit.

Microtransit is an on-demand transit service that uses multi-passenger vans, shuttles, or buses that can offer fixed routes and schedules, as well as flexible routes and on-demand scheduling. Microtransit can provide real-time dynamic routing, allowing riders to go anywhere in the service zone on-demand, sharing the same vehicles with other people traveling in the same direction.

Transit Tomorrow is an ambitious 30-year strategic plan for enhancing public transportation in the Greater Portland region. The plan proposes a four-part strategy that includes the goals of:

1. Making transit easier;
2. Creating more frequent connections throughout the region;
3. Improving rapid transit opportunities; and
4. Implementing transit-friendly land use policies that support more development in our villages and downtowns already served by transit.

Transition To Electric Vehicles

In addition to reducing air pollution and environmental impacts, electric buses are safe, reliable, and quiet. BSOOB Transit recently received a Federal Transit Administration Lo/No (low emissions/no emissions) grant as well as matching dollars from MaineDOT to purchase two electric buses and related charging infrastructure. Additional planning and investments are necessary to increase the fleet of electric buses. In 2022, MaineDOT is developing a *Transit Bus Electrification Plan* to help transit agencies with this transition.

Actions

- ☐ Set a target date by which to transition all BSOOB Transit buses to battery-electric vehicles.
- ☐ Continue to apply for grants and funding opportunities as they arise.
- ☐ Coordinate with utility providers to program preferred supply rates.
- ☐ Participate in MaineDOT's *Transit Bus Electrification Plan* and pursue recommendations that arise from it.

Support Downeaster Improvements

Currently, the Downeaster makes five round trips per day between Brunswick and Boston. However, track upgrades in Wells will enable the addition of a sixth daily round trip which will add morning service between Brunswick and Wells and provide commuting options between the Saco Transportation Center and Portland. Other major initiatives planned for the Downeaster include: the installation of Positive Train Control (PTC), which would improve performance and safety; the relocation of the Portland station closer to Downtown Portland which would reduce travel time; the addition of a station in West Falmouth that is convenient to Exit 53 off I-95; and new energy and environmentally friendly trainsets.

Plan For Rapid Transit

In *Transit Tomorrow*, the newly adopted long-range public transportation plan for the region, the corridor connecting Biddeford and Saco to Portland is identified as a top priority for implementing high-frequency rapid transit opportunities, such as commuter rail, light rail, or bus rapid transit. An alternatives analysis is the next step in this process. An alternatives analysis evaluates the different rapid transit options that could address local and regional needs and provides a more detailed sense of the demand, opportunities, and challenges for the corridor as well as cost-benefit estimates. The analysis concludes with a preferred transportation mode and route that best meets the needs of the corridor.

GOAL 2

Make Walking and Biking Easier and Safer

Since most transit trips begin and end with a walk or a bike, bike and pedestrian access to transit is especially important. Improvements to walking and biking facilities have the added benefit of improving quality of life and reducing vehicle trips since people have more options to walk or bike for shorter trips.

Address Gaps In The Pedestrian Network

In an urban area with so much vehicle activity, a high quality pedestrian network is critical to provide a safe way for people to walk (or roll) to get around. Although sidewalks are present in most of the study area, as Figure 22 (next page) illustrates, there are many gaps to address. There are places where sidewalks are on just one side of the road, where multiple parking lot entrances create large gaps, where there is no buffer from fast-moving vehicle traffic, or where crosswalks are not present or lack visibility and prominence.

Actions

- ☐ Improve crossings and provide continuous sidewalks on both sides of the street in downtown areas, particularly on streets served by transit.
- ☐ Review/update each city's sidewalk and crossing policies to identify opportunities to strengthen requirements. For example, downtown areas should have continuous sidewalk policies (the sidewalk extends across driveways), larger minimum widths when the sidewalk is adjacent to fast-moving traffic, and sidewalks provided on both sides of the street whenever possible.
- ☐ [Saco] Develop an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan (see information box).

Extend The Riverwalk Trail

Improving and extending the RiverWalk Trail is mentioned in both cities' comprehensive plans and has strong support from residents. Extending the trail upriver to Pearl Street is currently in development and other improvements are on the horizon. (Figure 22, next page).

Actions

- ☐ Formalize a connection to the Fisherman's Path in Saco and a connection to the Eastern Trail in Biddeford.

Before (Vannah Ave., Portland)

After (Vannah Ave., Portland)

Continuous sidewalks across parking lot entrances/exits can make a big difference for aesthetics, convenience, and walking safety.

A requirement of the Americans with Disabilities Act, an **ADA Transition Plan** is a formal document outlining a City's commitment to provide programs, services, and activities in a nondscriminatory manner to individuals with disabilities. A Transition Plan typically includes a comprehensive self evaluation of pedestrian facilities in the public right-of-way such as facilities and parks, bus stops, sidewalks, curb ramps, and crossings. The City of Biddeford recently completed a Transition Plan in 2021 and is available here.

Key

- Sidewalk, path, or crosswalk
- RiverWalk Trail
- Opportunities to improve/ expand pedestrian network
- Opportunities to extend the RiverWalk Trail

FIGURE 22:

Opportunities to Address Gaps in the Pedestrian Network

A high quality pedestrian network is critical to provide a safe way for people to walk (or roll) to get around. The image above shows the existing network of sidewalks, crosswalks, and multi-use paths within the study area (in red) along with opportunities to improve or expand the network (dashed yellow) as well as opportunities to expand the RiverWalk Trail (dashed yellow and black).

Complete Streets is a term for transportation planning that seeks to make streets safe and accessible for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Many communities have adopted complete streets policies to formalize an intent to plan, design, and maintain streets that accommodate all anticipated users. In addition to local policies, MaineDOT approved a complete streets policy in 2014 and PACTS is drafting a policy for consideration.

Biddeford Route 111 / South Street Connection Study: The City of Biddeford is currently working with MaineDOT, the Maine Turnpike Authority, and a consultant to evaluate, "a range of alternatives to improve safety and mobility along Route 111 west of the Maine Turnpike to Downtown Biddeford, including a new road connection between Route 111 and South Street."

If implemented, some of the proposed alternatives (such as the South Street connector road) may alter traffic patterns along the major corridors in Downtown Biddeford and Saco.

In coordination with the Route 111/South Street Study, this plan proposes a similar level of analysis for Main Street (Route 9) and Elm Street (Route 1) in Downtown Biddeford and Saco. In this case, the primary goals would be to explore opportunities to improve conditions for walking, biking, and accessing transit without compromising overall vehicle mobility.

The Route 111/South Street Study will conclude in December 2022. More information can be found here.

Create A Streets Master Plan

A streets master plan can provide the cities with a cohesive design language and set of technical standards to guide decision-making and investments in both the public right of way and private frontage zones. Streets master plans communicate and coordinate across multiple departments how to best provide services and improvements to meet abilities of all street users while supporting local economic development. Besides addressing equity and accessibility, a typical plan will include goals, benchmarks, street cross-sections, network improvements by mode, materials and technical specifications for seating placement and other furnishings, lighting, signage, shelter, stormwater integration, bicycle facilities, maintenance and implementation strategy.

Action

- ☐ Develop a downtown and corridor streets master plan (if practicable, the cities should consider a collaborative effort).
- ☐ Draft/adopt local complete streets policies to formalize a commitment to the streets master plan.

Improve Walking And Biking On Major Corridors

Due to the constraints of the Saco River, Main Street (Route 9) and Elm Street (Route 1) are the only two on-road corridors connecting Biddeford and Saco in the area and act as funnels for vehicle traffic. They are also the most common walking and biking routes, and both are part of regional bike networks (U.S. Bike Route 1 and the Eastern Trail).

Due to the amount of walking and biking that occurs on these corridors, and the critical connections they provide, pedestrian and bicycling facilities should be of the highest standard. The plan proposes many ideas for how to improve walking and biking on these corridors (see "The TOD Vision"), including a possible “road diet” on Main Street (reducing travel lanes from four to three with a center turn lane while adding bike lanes and better crossings), and narrowing travel lanes and adding bike lanes on Elm Street. These, and other ideas, would need further study but have the potential to improve mobility and safety for all users.

Actions

- ☐ Conduct corridor studies of Main Street (Route 9) and Elm Street (Route 1) to explore options for reducing lane widths, calming traffic, and improving walking/biking safety and accessibility.
- ☐ Partner with Bicycle Coalition of Maine’s (BCM) Imagine People Here campaign to add shared lane markings on Main Street and/or temporary bike lanes on Elm Street. Quick Win

Long gap between curb ramps without a crosswalk.

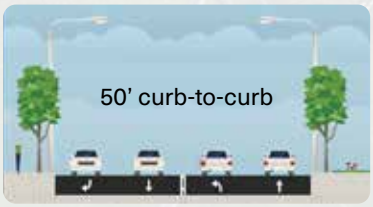
"Desire path" shows demand for a sidewalk.

What is a road diet?

A "road diet" on Main Street would reduce travel lanes from four to three with a center turn lane while adding bike lanes and better crossings. A road diet here would need further study and is one option for how to improve mobility and safety on this major corridor.

Existing Cross Section

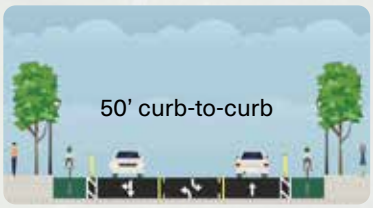
Main Street on Saco Island



12' right turn lane | 12' travel lane | 12' left turn lane | 12' travel lane

"Road Diet" Cross Section

Main Street on Saco Island



6' bike lane w/2' buffer | 10.5' travel lane | 12' center turn lane | 10.5' travel lane | 6' bike lane w/2' buffer

Images: Street cross sections courtesy of www.streetmix.net

Photo: A pedestrian crossing Main Street in Saco. GPCOG

All four bridges on Main Street (Route 9) and Elm Street (Route 1) are narrow, lack buffers from vehicle traffic, and are intimidating for pedestrians and cyclists. Only one bridge has sidewalks on both sides.

Although the cities have installed well-designed kiosks and signs at major decision points, additional visual cues and information are needed, especially within the Biddeford Mill District. **Left:** An example of current wayfinding signs. **Right:** A pedestrian walking through a parking lot in the Biddeford Mill District in winter. A well-defined sidewalk network, or clearly delineated pedestrian route, through the Mill District would allow people to avoid walking through parking lots to get where they need to go.

Expand Wayfinding And Access In The Mill District

Navigating the Mill District can be challenging. Although the cities have installed well-designed kiosks and signs at major decision points, additional visual cues and information are needed. A well-defined sidewalk network, or clearly delineated pedestrian route, that navigates the Biddeford Mill District would be especially helpful.

Actions

- ☐ Install additional kiosks and signs throughout the area. Quick Win
- ☐ Coordinate with property owners to eliminate private access dead-ends where possible.
- ☐ Work with property owners to formalize pedestrian cut-thrus of mill buildings.

Plan For Bridge Improvements

Crossing the Saco River there are two bridges on Main Street (Route 9) and two bridges on Elm Street (Route 1). All four bridges are narrow, lack buffers from vehicle traffic, and are intimidating for pedestrians and cyclists. Only one bridge has sidewalks on both sides, the other three have sidewalks on one side only. Any major reconstruction, or replacement, of these bridges should fully consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.

Action

- ☐ Pilot sidewalk buffers on bridges with removable safety bollards.

Pursue Funding For Multimodal Bridge

The Cities of Saco and Biddeford have prepared a feasibility study for constructing a multimodal bridge adjacent to the rail line that would link Saco Island to the Pearl Street Riverfront District in Biddeford. This bridge would dramatically reduce walking distances to/from the Saco Transportation Center and would mark a major step in creating a transit-oriented develoment hub in the area.

Action

- ☐ Submit the project to PACTS for consideration to get included in the Connect 2045 long-range transportation plan. (Projects included in the plan are more likely to receive PACTS funding in the future and more competitive for discretionary funding opportunities).

Provide Better Short-Term Bike Parking

There is a general lack of bike racks and opportunities for secure and convenient short-term bike parking in Downtown Biddeford and Saco. Installing bike parking front and center promotes a more orderly streetscape and encourages more people to bike.

Actions

- ☐ Identify locations of existing bike racks. Develop a plan with proposed locations for new bike racks.
- ☐ Encourage businesses to convert parking spaces to bike parking corrals. Quick Win
- ☐ Install bike racks at all municipal buildings and facilities. Quick Win

Explore The Feasibility Of A Protected Bike Storage Station

The long-term parking lot next to the Saco Transportation Center has roughly 90 spaces, yet there is just one bike rack available for only a handful of bikes. While buses are outfitted with racks, and bikes are allowed on the Downeaster, not everyone wants to take their bike on transit. A protected bike storage station gives people the option to safely leave their bike and provides a visual emphasis on the importance of biking.

Action

- ☐ Identify possible locations for a protected bike storage station.
- ☐ Provide additional bike racks at the Saco Transportation Center. Quick Win

Pilot A Bike Share Program

Bike share programs are especially useful for visitors and tourists who arrive to an area by transit and wish to cover more distance (with the advent of e-bikes, the range people can travel by bike is even greater). However, due to traffic volumes in the area and the general lack of bike lanes and facilities, a city-coordinated bike share program may be a longer term idea that finds more success after improvements to bicycling conditions are implemented.

Above: A general lack of bike racks in Downtown Biddeford and Saco means people are locking their bikes to street trees or anything else that looks convenient. Installing bike parking front and center promotes a more orderly streetscape and encourages people to bike. Photo: GPCOG

Below: An example of a bike storage station in Monterey, CA. Protected bike parking provides users with a safe place to store their bike for longer periods of time and serves as a visual emphasis of the importance of biking. Photo: BikeMonterey.org

GOAL 3

Build More Compact, Mixed-Use Development

Zoning should allow for higher density residential and mixed-use development that supports car-free living and active pedestrian-friendly streets.

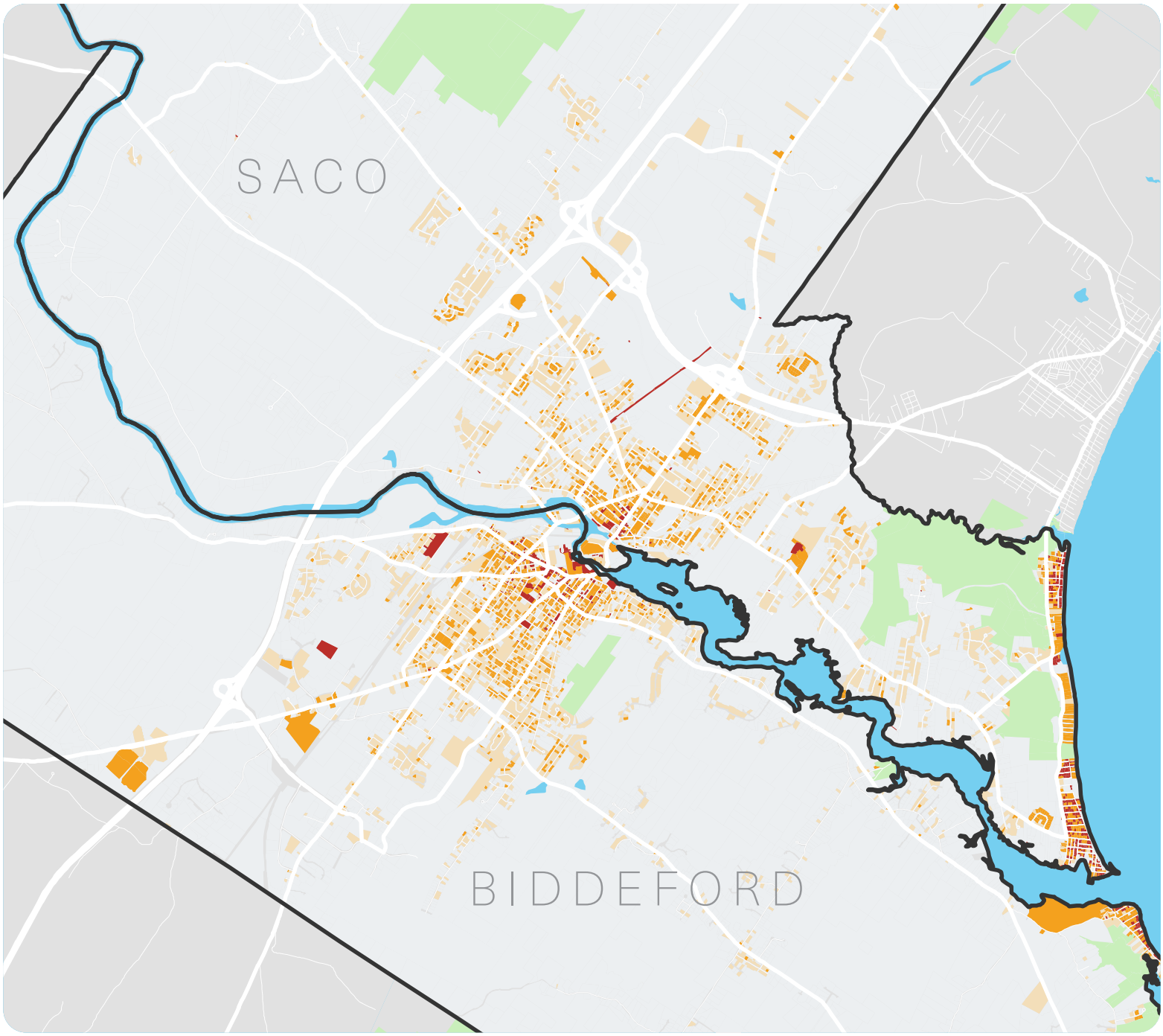
Compact, higher density development patterns shorten the distance people must travel to reach their destinations and supply the ridership that can support more frequent transit service and a greater variety of routes.

Align Zoning To Support Higher Density Transit-Oriented Development Principles

To ensure new development or redevelopment is consistent with the principles of transit-oriented development, zoning should allow for higher density residential and mixed-use development that supports car-free living and active pedestrian-friendly streets. A deeper level evaluation of current zoning and development regulations should be initiated to determine how TOD can be integrated into municipal ordinances and to identify provisions that may complicate or preclude appropriate TOD designs. Zoning should focus on building scale and size rather than regulating by units per acre. Lot coverages, setbacks, attachment standards and maximum building heights should be adjusted to accomplish the desired pattern of development and density that will enable enhanced transit services.

Actions

- ☐ **[Saco] Saco Island District:** Adjust current 60% lot coverage to permit 90-100% lot coverage. Adjust max height of 60' to permit podium-tower building types that step back after the 5th floor.
- ☐ **[Saco] Downtown District:** Eliminate the 1,500 sf/dwelling unit standard in favor of no mandatory sf/dwelling unit. Continue to allow 100% lot coverage, min 35'-max 60' height. Reduce frontage minimum from 30' to 18' to permit a broader range of building types.



Value per Acre

- Less than $500,000
- $500,000 - $1M
- $1M - $2.5M
- More than $2.5M

FIGURE 23:

Property Value Per Acre

The map above displays the assessed value per acre of land in Biddeford and Saco according to the most recent municipal data. The map shows which properties are generating the maximum amount of value for the space and resources they consume (orange and red), and which are not (gray).

Why map property value per acre?

Analyzing the data in this way illustrates how mixed-use, traditional development close to the city center produces the most value for the communities.

Data: Cities of Biddeford and Saco. Map: GPCOG

As the primary hub for public transit in the region, the areas closest to the Saco Transportation Center should be considered priority locations for increasing development, providing affordable housing, and investing in walking, biking, and streetscape improvements. Over time, the Saco Transportation Center can evolve to become a nexus in the district for events, services, and travel. Photo: GPCOG

Leverage The Saco Transportation Center As A Community Anchor

Successful TOD's typically have a central transit station as a prominent feature, or anchor, for surrounding development. In many respects, the Saco Transportation Center fulfills this role, however, more can be done to surround the station with mixed-use development and improved pedestrian conditions.

For example, the parking lots in this vicinity are some of the most valuable real estate in the area, with ability to significantly contribute to the success of TOD. With less parking, a portion of these lots could be devoted to additional residential and commercial development. For example, affordable and market rate housing coupled with mixed-use development could front Gooch Street without a significant impact on parking.

Advance Development And Investment Through Public-Private Partnerships

Public-private partnerships offer unique opportunities for municipalities to share infrastructure costs with developers and implement projects faster. These arrangements, along with innovative economic development tools like tax increment financing, are often the only way to enable high-value investments to happen. There is strong precedent for this collaborative approach in the development of the Pearl Street Riverfront District.

Example of a Public-Private Partnership
The City of Biddeford is engaging in a public-private partnership with a developer team to create the Pearl Street Riverfront District on the former Maine Energy Recovery Corp. waste-to-energy industrial site. The City acquired the property, built a 640-space public parking structure, and will soon rebuild Pearl Street and the riverfront into a walkable street and park (helped in part by $1.2 million in federal funding from the Economic Development Administration). Under the arrangement, the City will then sell most of the property to the developer team, who plan to construct approximately 325,000 square feet of mixed-use development on the site. Refinements to local transit routes and an extension of the RiverWalk Trail will better connect the site to downtown Biddeford and the Saco Transportation Center. Image: Fathom Companies

Increase Affordable Housing Supply

Preserving, and creating more, affordable housing of all types near transit is the most important factor for ensuring equitable TOD. Although low-income riders are the most dependent and reliable transit users, targeted investments in the area can increase land values and attract new development catered to high-income earners, ultimately displacing the households that would benefit most from improved access.

Actions

- ☐ Consider targeted financing programs and incentives, a taxpayer supported affordable housing fund, a TOD community land trust, and public-private partnerships to direct money to low- and moderate-income housing opportunities.
- ☐ Consider adopting displacement prevention policies, such as just cause eviction ordinances, tenant opportunity to purchase acts, and foreclosure prevention policies.
- ☐ Review zoning regulations to identify barriers to affordable housing construction.

Activate The Ground Level With People

At the building scale, new development should be transit-supportive by fronting streets and pedestrian passages with windows and operable doors, retractable awnings and free-standing structures for shelter, and welcoming public-private space design. For larger residential buildings, first floor interior spaces fronting streets and passages should be programmed to generate people traffic, such as common areas, gyms and children's play spaces, cafes, coworking, and concierge.

Why Bundled Parking Drives Up the Cost of Housing

"Minimum off-street parking requirements, a central component of land-use regulation in the U.S., warrant detailed study and policy reform. In most cities today, municipal regulation requires developers to provide on-site parking. Renters or buyers then pay for this parking as part of their monthly rent or purchase price; the price of parking is thus "bundled" with the price of the housing unit. While many households might have chosen to pay for on-site parking in a free market, this proportion is surely lower than what has been mandated. Moreover, the historical effect of minimums and bundled parking hides a transportation cost burden in housing prices, leaving households unable to choose. Minimum parking requirements force developers to build costly parking spaces that drive up the price of housing. Urban policymakers have recently taken an interest in reforming parking regulations and allowing unbundled parking based on social equity and environmental sustainability rationales."

The Hidden Cost of Bundled Parking
Access Magazine, Spring 2017
C.J. Gabbe, Santa Clara University
Greg Pierce, University of California

Strategically Manage Parking

Parking is a major challenge for cities everywhere. While parking is still an essential component within a TOD, an oversupply of parking erodes an area's overall sense of place, contributes to stormwater runoff and the urban heat island effect, drives up the cost of housing (see information to the left), and represents lost future tax revenue for the city. Biddeford and Saco should evaluate their parking policies to ensure that existing requirements do not encourage an oversupply of parking.

"Improving parking policies could be the cheapest, quickest, and most politically feasible way to achieve many social, economic, and environmental goals."

~ Donald Schoup
The High Cost of Free Parking

Actions

- ☐ Evaluate lowering or eliminating minimum off-street parking requirements. (See pages 49-50 for more information on the growing parking reform movement).
- ☐ Continue to pursue shared parking opportunities. Shared parking agreements allow a parking facility to serve different uses at different times (e.g., an office building shares parking with a restaurant or movie theater).
- ☐ [Saco] Implement recommended actions from Saco's Downtown Parking Study.
- ☐ [Biddeford] Consider paid on-street parking. Many communities across the country are rethinking their free parking policies, shifting to paid parking via smart meters and demand-pricing. Demand-pricing creates more frequent turnover of spaces which results in more free spaces to support shorter visits to business, less circling of vehicles around the block and thus, reduced vehicle miles traveled.
- ☐ [Biddeford] Consider creating parking benefit districts. A parking benefit district is a specified geography in which revenue generated from on- or off-street parking is reinvested within the district for a wide range of transportation-related improvements (e.g., walking/biking facilities, street trees, benches, lighting, etc.).
- ☐ [Property Owners] Consider separating (or "unbundling") parking costs from rents to allow residents and busineses to choose how much parking they want. (See information box to the left).

Most parking spaces are only used part of the time by a particular user group or facility. Shared parking agreements allow a parking facility to serve different uses at different times. Additionally, with the new parking garage in Biddeford, and improved walking and biking facilities, large surface parking lots like this one may not be as necessary. Photo: GPCOG

A pedestrian crossing Main Street (Route 9) in Biddeford. Photo: GPCOG

GOAL 4 Support Multimodal Mobility

A key way to alleviate traffic and parking pressure in any urban setting is to elevate walking, biking, and transit as safe and attractive alternatives to driving. In addition to the needed infrastructure investments (e.g., sidewalks, bike lanes, bus shelters), there are a broad variety of programs, policies, and strategies that encourage alternatives to driving.

Encourage Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plans

Transportation Demand Management is the general term used for strategies to maximize travel choices (such as walking, biking, taking transit, or carpooling) in order to reduce vehicle trips. Many cities across the country (including Portland, ME) require that all commercial or institutional development of a certain size include a TDM plan complete with strategies to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips as part of the project's site plan review. In addition to providing more flexible travel choices, TDM plans can help fulfill MaineDOT's traffic movement permit requirements and minimize the need for costly motor vehicle infrastructure such as traffic signals and turn lanes.

Actions

- ☐ Encourage or incentivize TDM plans for new development of a certain size that occurs in Biddeford and Saco.
- ☐ The cities can lead by example and offer commuter benefits to municipal employees, such as allowing more telecommuting or other strategies to shift the priority away from driving alone. Quick Win

Promote Shared Vehicles

Studies show the typical car is parked 95% of the time. Car sharing programs provide an alternative option to owning a vehicle for those who only drive periodically. Vehicle sharing services take many forms. Some programs provide a fleet of vehicles distributed throughout a neighborhood that members can rent on an hourly or daily basis. In other cases, business and property owners can employ customized car sharing programs of their own for employees and tenants. Vehicle share programs with electric vehicles further decrease emissions, while also helping to increase awareness and familiarity with electric vehicles.

Action

- ☐ Monitor efforts in other jurisdictions and by private companies to offer car-share services. Quick Win

Expand Transit Incentive Program

In many urban areas, large employers and residential developments partner with transit agencies to provide benefit programs, such as discounted or free passes, to their employees or tenants. BSOOB Transit's Transit Angel Project does just this. It also allows businesses to purchase passes to donate to a charity of their choice.

Actions

- ☐ Expand the transit incentive to include large residential or mixed-use developments.
- ☐ The cities can lead by example and offer transit incentives to municipal employees. Quick Win

Promote Bike Incentive Programs

Bicycle Benefits is a well-known national program where participating businesses offer discounts to patrons who show up on their bike with the Bike Benefits helmet sticker. Presently, only one business (a bike shop) in Biddeford and Saco participates in the Bicycle Benefits program. (For reference, in Portland approximately 60 businesses participate in the program, and in Portsmouth approximately 15 businesses have joined).

Action

- ☐ Partner with Saco Main Street and Heart of Biddeford to promote more participation in the Bicycle Benefits program.

Work With Go Maine

GO MAINE is a state-funded commuter connections program operated by MaineDOT. The GO MAINE program supports environmentally-friendly commute initiatives throughout Maine by connecting commuters to organized vanpools and carpools, and providing a rewards program for people who choose to opt out of commuting alone by private vehicle.

Action

- ☐ The cities can lead by example by participating in GO MAINE initaitives, such as the Way 2 GO MAINE commuter challenge, and by encouraging municipal staff to join.

Establish A Transportation Management Association (TMA)

A Transportation Management Association is a nonprofit, member-driven organization that works to reduce congestion and address commuter issues in a defined geographic area. TMA members typically include local businesses and anchor institutions. TMAs coordinate a variety of potential services and education and incentive programs to encourage more efficient use of transportation and parking resources. Consider exploring the development of a transportation management association for Downtown Biddeford and Saco.

Action

- ☐ Municipal staff and elected officials from the Cities of Biddeford and Saco can meet with staff from the Cities of Portland and South Portland to learn about their efforts establishing a TMA. Quick Win

A musician performing in Shevennel Park during the Biddeford Fringe Fest. Photo: GPCOG

GOAL 5 Create Great Public Spaces

People are more likely to walk to transit in places that are comfortable, safe, and interesting. A well-designed public realm entices people to get out of their car to explore and experience the character of the area. Parks and common areas, such as plazas, scenic viewpoints, and playgrounds, help create a fun, inviting outdoor space and enhance pedestrian use in the area.

Create Inviting Parks & Overlooks

Within the study area, only a small fraction of land is devoted to parks, common areas, or green space. This plan identifies several locations for future parks and common areas (see "The TOD Vision"), including:

- A gateway park on either side of Main Street next to the Saco Transportation Center with views of the dam.
- A scenic overlook on the Saco-side of the Main Street bridge.
- A gateway park just north of the intersection of Elm Street and Gooch Street in Biddeford.

Action

- ☐ Require usable public open space where appropriate as a condition of approval for large projects.

Showcase Public Art

Improve the visual appeal of the area through artwork. The brick walls of the mill buildings provide a great canvas for local artwork such as community murals or large-scale industrial sculpture installations. Both cities have active public arts committees and the local non-profit Engine, whose mission is to connect and inspire the community through art, design, and education, has faciliated several public art projects in the area and hosts many popular community based programs and events.

Actions

- ☐ Continue to support the work of the cities' public arts committees and partner with Engine on public art projects, programs, and events.
- ☐ Consider passing a percent-for-art ordinance (more information below).

A **percent-for-art** ordinance encumbers a percentage (usually 0.5%-2%) of publicly funded capital improvement projects per year for the commissioning of public artworks to be sited on or near the project being constructed. Percent-for-art ordinances guarantee a funding stream for public art projects regardless of what happens to city budgets or arts funding.

Extend Pedestrian-Scale Lighting

In contrast to roadway lighting, better lighting for pedestrians is achieved by light poles that are lower, spaced closer together, and with fixtures that place lights over sidewalks or paths. While pedestrian-scale lighting is present on Main Street (Route 9) in both Biddeford and Saco, it is not present on Elm Street (Route 1) or in many places within the Mill District where the large buildings — and spaces in between — can feel imposing. Adding pedestrian-scale lighting can help bring visibility to the area and improve safety. Additionally, lighting can be used for public art, such as digital light projections on the side of buildings, or even 3D light sculptures.

Action

- ☐ Identify locations where pedestrian-scale lighting is needed.

Pilot Open Streets

Open streets (or pedestrian-only streets) prioritize people over cars and are typically most appropriate in corridors with commercial activity on both edges of the street. Open streets can take many forms. In some places, like Church Street in Burlington, the street is closed to vehicle traffic. In other places, streets are shared between pedestrians and vehicles. Another option is to temporarily close a section of a street to vehicle traffic on certain days of the week. Internal roads within the Biddeford Mill District, such as portions of Pearl Street, Saco Falls Way, York Street, and Laconia Street, could be possible locations to pilot an open street. The Biddeford Fringe Fest, which blocks off a portion of Main Street to vehicles, is an example of a temporary open street.

Action

- ☐ Identify locations where a permanent or temporary open street may be possible.

Gateway parks and overlooks help create a fun, inviting outdoor destination and enhance pedestrian use in the area. **Above:** A conceptual idea for a park on City-owned land opposite the Saco Transportation Center on Main Street. **Below:** A conceptual idea for a scenic overlook on the Saco-side of the Main Street bridge. Illustrations: Richardson & Associates

Murals on the sides of brick mill buildings are a great way to improve the visual appeal of the area and showcase local artists.

A green roof is easily installed on any type of building, residential or commercial, and can be as simple as a single layer of groundcover or as intricate as Fenway Parks' extensive vegetable garden (above). In addition to providing excellent stormwater management and improving water quality, green roofs also provide such benefits as reduced energy use and air pollution, and improved comfort and quality of life. Photo: Major League Baseball

GOAL 6

Reduce Environmental Impacts

There are inherent environmental benefits associated with transit-oriented development. When employed effectively, targeting growth in a focused area and making it easy for people to walk, bike, and take public transit can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and preserve rural and agricultural lands. To minimize environmental impacts even more, the cities can develop strategies and set targets to decrease emissions across all sectors (transportation, buildings, energy, etc.), and incorporate low impact design techniques and natural features to minimize stormwater runoff.

Implement Low Impact Development Techniques

An effective way to mitigate the impacts of stormwater runoff — and create beautiful green spaces — is to plant trees, native plants, and employ other "low impact development (LID)" techniques to absorb stormwater where it falls. For example, many cities utilize green roofs, rainwater harvesting (large cisterns attached to buildings), rain gardens, planter boxes, and permeable pavement to reduce runoff.

Action

- ☐ Audit local codes and ordinances to identify barriers to low impact development. (The Environmental Protection Agency has many resources to guide these assessments).

Rooftop Solar Arrays
Many of the mill buildings in Biddeford and Saco have rooftop solar installations. The Pepperell Mill Campus, for example, has a 1,192-panel solar array spread over 1.5-acres of rooftop that produces roughly 437,320 kilowatt hours of energy annually, more than enough electricity to meet the needs of the campus's residential units. The solar array results in annual carbon offsets of approximately 460,500 pounds per year, the equivalent greenhouse gas emissions from 40 passenger cars driven for one year or 500 barrels of oil. Photo/Data: Revision Energy

Reduce Emissions And Prepare For Climate Change

Both cities are working proactively to respond and adapt to the climate change crisis. For example, the City of Biddeford formed a Climate Action Task Force, which is currently developing a Climate Action Plan, and the City of Saco is incorporating the concepts of sustainability and resiliency into its comprehensive plan. *Maine Won't Wait*, the State's recently adopted climate action plan, puts Maine on a path to decrease greenhouse gas emissions by 45% by 2030 and 80% by 2050, and achieve carbon neutrality by 2045. While there are many actions the cities can take to reduce their respective carbon footprints and prepare for climate change, pursuing the goals and strategies outlined in the State's climate action plan is a great place to start.

Actions

- ☐ Identify locally applicable strategies from *Maine Won't Wait* and set a timeline for implementation.
- ☐ Monitor funding opportunities that may emerge from the State's *Clean Transportation Roadmap* report.
- ☐ As part of capital improvement planning, ensure that all public buildings use high-efficiency lighting, heating, and cooling; climate-friendly construction materials; and renewable energy, such as rooftop solar arrays, to reduce operating costs and achieve emissions reductions.

The North Dam Mill received $540,000 in Brownfields Revolving Loan Funds and $108,000 in Brownfield Assessment Grant Funds for asbestos removal, cleanup of lead-contaminated paint and soil capping.
Photo: Maine Architectural Ironworks

The Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission's (SMPDC) Brownfield Redevelopment Program started in 2004 with an assessment grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through their Brownfield and Land Revitalization Program. This grant formed the foundation of the program to address brownfield sites with potential hazardous waste contamination. Two additional grants provided funding to expand initial efforts: a Brownfield Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund Grant provides funding for environmental cleanups and a Petroleum Assessment Grant provides funding to address sites with potential petroleum-related contamination. Since its inception, brownfields cleanups supported by SMPDC have leveraged more than $200 million in development. In June 2021, SMPDC received an additional $500,000 from the EPA Brownfields Program, which it will use to recapitalize its revolving loan fund.

Leverage Brownfields Funding

Brownfield land is any previously developed land that is not currently in use that may be potentially contaminated. Cleaning up and reinvesting in brownfields properties turns formerly abandoned sites into housing, jobs, and tax resources for municipalities, and most importantly, removes contaminated land and hazardous waste sites as pollution sources.

The Cities of Biddeford and Saco have both benefited tremendously from the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Brownfields Program, coordinated by the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC).

Action

- ☐ Continue to coordinate with developers and apply for brownfields funding in applicable locations within the Mill District in Biddeford and Saco Island.

Set Tree Canopy Goals

Cities around the world are using tree canopy goals, usually in the form of percent tree canopy coverage, to guide urban forest management and meaningfully improve the livability of their communities. The first step in the process is to identify a baseline of current coverage. Once a baseline is established, the community can set a more informed target and develop a planting strategy to achieve it. Special emphasis should be given to areas with lower-than-average canopy and income levels.

Action

- ☐ Apply for a Maine Forest Service "Project Canopy" grant to have a consultant research and map out a plan to increase canopy cover in Biddeford and Saco, especially in the downtown areas, by a designated percent over a given number of years.

Support Local Agriculture

Outside the downtown area there are many active farms in rural Biddeford and Saco. The Mill District and Saco Island can support these, and other local farms, by providing space for farmer's markets, food trucks, or farm share deliveries. Excess surface parking could be used for farmer's markets in the summer while the large mill buildings are ideal for hosting indoor farmer's markets in the winter. The cities and property owners can also support residents who wish to grow their own food in downtown areas by allowing, and encouraging, community gardens and urban agriculture activities.

Actions

- ☐ Revise zoning standards to formally acknowledge community gardens and urban agriculture as permitted uses in the area.
- ☐ Revise local policies to allow public land to be used for gardens or farms.
- ☐ Identify locations suitable for supporting and showcasing local agriculture within the Mill District in Biddeford and Saco Island.

Above: A tree-lined segment of Main Street in Biddeford. Street trees are essential to a city's environmental health. In addition to providing shade from the sun, they decrease the circulation of greenhouse gas emissions and are known to lower the average driving speed making roadways safer for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. Photo: GPCOG

Center/Below: Outside the downtown area there are many active farms in the rural parts of Biddeford and Saco. The Mill District and Saco Island can support these, and other local farms, by providing space for farmer's markets, food trucks, or farm share deliveries. Photos: GPCOG / Saco Farmer's Market

MAKING IT HAPPEN

An artistic rendering of the proposed Pearl Street Riverfront District in Biddeford. Image: Fathom Companies

THIS PLAN IS INTENTIONALLY AMBITIOUS. Achieving its vision will require a willingness from the municipalities, transit agencies, MaineDOT, PACTS, and private developers to prioritize investments in walking, biking, and public transit and actively pursue grants that fit the TOD vision. The completion of this plan is well-timed to take advantage of an unprecedented amount of federal funding opportunities. In this regard, the plan can be referenced in application materials to strengthen proposals. The next few pages highlight a selection of these opportunities in more detail.

American Rescue Plan Act

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) is a $1.9 trillion economic stimulus bill signed into law in March 2021 to help speed the country's recovery from the pandemic. From this amount, the City of Biddeford received approximately $9.7 million, while the City of Saco received roughly $2.1 million. Both cities are in the process of collecting input and considering how to expend the funds.

York County was issued $40 million in recovery funds. The payment is split into two tranches, the first payment of $20 million arrived in June 2021. The second payment of $20 million is scheduled to arrive in June 2022. The County is currently considering requests for the first round of funding.

PACTS also received $8 million in ARPA funds to support transit agencies during the pandemic. PACTS has received applications from the transit agencies and the PACTS Policy Board is scheduled to make selections in March 2022.

Helpful Resources

More information on the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) can be found on the York County's website here.

The completion of this plan is well-timed to take advantage of an unprecedented amount of federal funding opportunities.

For the purposes of the TOD vision outlined in this plan, ARPA funding can be used to support affordable housing goals as well as public transit service. The transit agencies and Cities of Biddeford and Saco should continue to monitor this funding opportunity and apply as funds are made available.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

In late 2021, Congress passed the $1.2 trillion Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). What is often described as a once-in-a-generation opportunity, it is the largest long-term investment in our nation's infrastructure and economy in nearly a century. While many details remain unknown, it is clear Maine stands to benefit considerably from this historic investment.

Of the available funds, a considerable portion will be apportioned to the states via formula. The remaining funds will be provided through discretionary grant programs (competitive grants). The following is a selection of opportunities made available by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (either new programs or existing programs bolstered by renewed or additional funding).

- **Rebuilding American Infrastructure Sustainably and Equitably (RAISE) Grants** This existing competitive grant program is for road, rail, transit and other surface transportation projects of local and/or regional significance. It provides $7.5 billion with an additional $7.5 billion subject to Congressional approval.
- **Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grants**: This existing program supports highway and rail projects of regional and economic significance.

Notes

These are just a few examples of the many opportunities emerging from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that may align with the TOD vision.

For larger infrastructure programs, such as the RAISE Grant, the application process is extensive and requires significant capacity. Many of these opportunities also require coordination with multiple partners including MaineDOT (or other relevant state agencies) or in some cases the transit agencies, PACTS, or SMPDC.

Not highlighted here, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will also provide $66 billion to Amtrak to improve and expand service nationwide.

Helpful Resources

- The National Association of Regional Councils has put together a helpful Analysis of the Bipartisan Senate Infrastructure Bill.
- The Competitive Infrastructure Funding Opportunities for Local Governments Fact Sheet, put out by the Whitehouse in January 2022, is a useful resource for understanding what opportunities local governments are eligible for and where to find additional information.
- The 465-page Guidebook to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, released by the Whitehouse in January 2022, is the "one-stop-shop on the law and contains the most comprehensive information to date on the more than 375 programs included in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law."

- **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program:** This existing program provides a flexible funding source to local and state governments for transportation projejcts and programs to help meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. Approximately $2.5 billion is available to reduce congestion and emprove air quality for areas that do not meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone, carbon monoxide, or particulate matter (nonattainment areas) and for former nonattainment areas that are now in compliance (maintenance areas). With the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, funds can now be used for operating assistance for public transit projects, and new eligibilities include micromobility and heavy duty zero emission vehicles.
- **Bus and Bus Facilities Competitive Grants:** This existing program provides capital funding to replace, rehabilitate, purchase, or lease buses and bus related equipment and to rehabilitate, purchase, construct, or lease bus-related facilities, as well as capital funding for low or no emissions bus projects.
- **Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program:** A new competitive grant program to construct active transportation networks that connect people with public transportation, businesses, workplaces, and schools. Eligible projects must cost more than $15 million (or $100,000 for planning/design projects).
- **Safe Streets and Roads for All:** This new $5 billion competitive grant program will provide funding directly to local governments to support efforts to advance "vision zero" plans and other complete street improvements to reduce crashes and fatalities.
- **Pilot Program for TOD Planning:** The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law continues the TOD Planning Program that provides funding for efforts associated with an eligible transit project for which the project sponsor will seek funding through the Federal Transit Administration's Capital Investment Grants Program.
- **Railroad Crossing Elimination Program:** The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law puts $600 million per year towards a new competitive grant program aimed at eliminating (or improving the safety of) congested or unsafe railroad crossings with highways.
- **Brownfields Remediation Program:** This existing Environmental Protection Agency program will provide $1.2 billion in grants and technical assistance to communities to assess and safely clean-up contaminated properties and offer job training programs.
- **Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants**: This Department of Energy block grant program will provide $550 million to states, local governments, and tribes for projects that reduce energy use, increase energy efficiency, and cut pollution.

Maine Department of Transportation

In addition to the many federal opportunities, MaineDOT has several new and existing programs for partnering with communities on transportation projects. While most programs below require a higher local match, they are popular because the funding is flexible and projects happen quicker. MaineDOT-sponsored programs include:

- **Village Partnership Initiative**: From small spot improvements to large transformative projects, this new program is focused on developing transportation projects that improve Maine's villages and downtowns with the ultimate goal of accessing federal discretionary funds. Biddeford and Saco are well positioned to apply for this opportunity.
- **Municipal Partnership Initiative:** This program focuses on the road core and may include surface treatments, road reconstruction, drainage improvements, and intersection improvements, among other potential projects.
- **Planning Partnership Initiative:** This initiative is intended to address time-sensitive, locally initiated planning and feasibilty studies.
- **Business Partnership Initiative:** This program is designed to promote public private partnerships. If a municipality and a local business (or businesses) feel that state highway infrastructure are impediments to them being able to reach their economic potential, this program will allow them to improve a portion of the state highway to enhance the business climate, create new opportunities, or to allow for expansion.
- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Program:** MaineDOT annually allocates about $3 million in federal funds for projects like sidewalk or crossing improvements, multi-use paths, and other safety and accessibility improvements. This funding comes from a different source from those above and has different matching requirements.

Helpful Resources

- More information on the Village, Municipal, Planning, and Business Partnership Initiatives can be found on MaineDOT's Community-Based Initiatives page.
- More information on the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program, including how to apply, can be found here.

Notes

These are just a few examples of opportunities available from various State of Maine agencies and departments.

In the case that application deadlines are missed, many of the programs referenced here are offered annually.

Helpful Resources

- GOPIF offers a similar opportunity for "service provider organizations." More information about the GOPIF Community Action Grants can be found here.
- More information on Project Canopy Grants available here.
- More information on the AARP Community Challenge Grant available here.
- The Bicycle Coalition of Maine's Imagine People Here Campaign is referenced several times in the Next Steps section as a way to try out various ideas before fully committing to them. More information available here.

Other State of Maine

Other opportunities from the State of Maine include:

- **Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF) Community Action Grants**: These newly released grants can support two categories of climate action by communities: 1) Actions from an approved list of climate and mitigation activities that align with Maine Won't Wait, and 2) Other projects proposed by a community that support capacity building, planning, and implementation projects.
- **Maine Forest Service Project Canopy Grants:** These grants are available for projects that support sustainable community forestry management and efforts to increase awareness of the benefits of trees and forests. The grant awards a maximum of $10,000 for planning and education, and $8,000 for planting and maintenance.

Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS)

PACTS receives approximately $6 million per year from Federal Highway Administration and MaineDOT to put towards road and multi-modal projects and roughly $20 million per year from the Federal Transit Administration to support the region's public transit agencies. With passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, PACTS will likely see an increase in planning and capital funding.

Other Opportunities

Although there are too many funding opportunities from private or non-profit organizations to list here, below are a few programs that seem particularly relevant.

- **AARP Community Challenge Grants.** This annual "challenge" funds projects that "build momentum for local change." These are typically quick action projects that help make communities more livable for people of all ages.
- **Bicycle Coalition of Maine Imagine People Here Campaign:** Offered annually, the Bicycle Coalition of Maine works with local advocates and municipal officials to "create temporary demonstration projects that improve access for bicyclists and pedestrians. Using temporary infrastructure such as flexible posts, signs, and paint, Imagine People Here projects demonstrate the value of dedicated bicycle and pedestrian facilities like bike lanes, curb extensions, and other traffic-calming measures. The goal is to show how a bicycle, pedestrian, or traffic-calming facility could improve safety and comfort at an affordable price (most demonstrations cost less than $1,000). Speed and yield studies are performed before and after installations to evaluate effectiveness."

TABLE 5:

Funding Opportunities

The table below highlights a few of the many funding opportunities that may align with the TOD vision outlined in this plan.

Opportunity	Schedule	Typical Award Size
American Rescue Plan Act [US GOV] [YORK COUNTY]	Next round June '22	N/A [Approx. $20M available]
RAISE Grants [US DOT]	Applications Q1 '22	$6-$22M [Approx. $15B available]
INFRA Grants [US DOT]	Applications Q1 '22	$5-$100M [$900M available]
CMAQ Program [US DOT] [MDOT]	N/A	N/A [Approx. $2.5B available]
Bus & Bus Facilities Competitive Grants [US DOT]	Applications Q1 '22	$400k-$13M [$2B available]
Active Transportation Infrastructure Program [US DOT]	N/A	$15M [$200M available]
Safe Streets and Roads for All [US DOT]	Applications May '22	N/A [$5B available]
Pilot Program for TOD Planning [US DOT]	NOFO Q1 '22	$300k-$900k
Railroad Crossing Elimination Program	N/A	>$1M [600M available]
Brownfields Remediation Program [US EPA] [SMPDC]	N/A	N/A [Approx. $1.2B available]
Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grants [US DOE]	Fall '22	N/A [$550M available]
Village Partnership Initiative Large Transformative [MDOT]	Ongoing	N/A [$4M available]
Village Partnership Initiative Small Spot Improvement [MDOT]	Ongoing	N/A [$1M available]
Municipal Partnership Initiative [MDOT]	Ongoing	$600k-$800k [$8M available]
Planning Partnership Initiative [MDOT]	Ongoing	<$50k [$200k available]
Business Partnership Initiative [MDOT]	Ongoing	<$1M [$2M available]
Bicycle & Pedestrian Program [MDOT]	Ongoing	<$400k [$3M available]
PACTS Road & Multi-Modal Funding	Ongoing	N/A [Approx. $6M available]
PACTS Transit Funding	Ongoing	N/A [Approx. $20M available]
Project Canopy Grant [MFS] [DACF]	Applications March '22	<$10k
Community Action Grant [GOPIF]	Applications March/Sept. '22	$5k-$50k
AARP Community Challenge	Applications March '22	$10K
BCM Imagine People Here	Ongoing	$1k-$5k

BIDDEFORD SACO | TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN

CITY OF BIDDEFORD

Planning and Development Department

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PLANNING BOARD MEMO

TO: Larry Patoine, Chair & Members of the Biddeford Planning Board

FROM: Eric Freeman, Assistant City Planner

DATE: January 25th, 2023

RE: Comprehensive Plan Draft

I. BACKGROUND:

The City of Biddeford has been engaged in an ongoing effort to create a new Comprehensive Plan for our community. The Comprehensive Plan is an important and influential long-term visioning document. It serves as the City's "blueprint" for the next 10 to 15 years, and provides policy guidance for a host of elements and goals from guiding growth and development to addressing ongoing local and regional challenges facing our community.

The development of the city's new Comprehensive Plan has been informed by a robust, year-long community engagement process as well as direct input from the Planning Board, City Council, local stakeholders and city staff. The Planning Board, with staff, developed and approved the "Goals, Policies and Strategies" framework as well as the city's core values statement.

The Planning Board was presented with the new Future Land Use Plan in late September of 2022. The Future Land Use Plan was revised based on Planning Board feedback and presented to a joint session of the City Council and Planning Board on October 11th, 2022. Following that, another Planning Board workshop was held on November 16th, 2022 to discuss the Vision Statement and core values of the Comprehensive Plan.

The first section of draft chapters, which included:

- Vision Statement
- Regional Coordination
- Housing
- Future Land Use
- Economy
- Climate Change

were presented to the Planning Board on December 14th, 2022. Feedback from the board will be incorporated into the final draft chapters.

Included in this release are the following draft chapters of the comprehensive plan:

- Public Engagement
- Population & Demographics
- Transportation
- Historic, Cultural & Archaeological Resources
- Marine Resources
- Recreation & Open Space

Staff anticipates that the three remaining sections of the Comprehensive Plan will be complete and presented to the Planning Board by mid-February.

II. STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As part of the development of the Comprehensive Plan draft, Planning staff has sought to engage with stakeholders and the community throughout the drafting process.
The first section of draft chapters were released for public comment via the "OurBiddeford" portal in early January. The OurBiddeford portal allows for members of the public to read and provide comment on each individual chapter. As of January 25th a total of 17 comments have been received on all chapters.

The first section of draft chapters were presented to the Conservation Committee at their December 15th, 2022 meeting. Additionally, these chapters have been reviewed by staff at the Southern Maine Planning & Development Commission (SMPDC) and feedback from both groups has been incorporated into the revised drafts for each chapter.

III. NEXT STEPS

Following the February 1st Planning Board workshop, planning staff will work to revise and finalize all current and draft chapters. The final three draft chapters is expected to be presented to the planning board at their February 15th meeting.
Following this, further community and stakeholder engagement will continue until mid March. The public engagement process will conclude with a final planning board hearing in late March to recommend the plan to the City Council.
It is the goal of city staff to finalize the Comprehensive Plan with the Planning Board and City Council for adoption by April, 2023.

2 Demographics

1. What's happening?

Biddeford has seen substantial growth and change in recent years. A growing and evolving population is reshaping many aspects of our community as part of the ongoing story of change that has defined Biddeford throughout its history. To move forward as a community, it is important to fully understand how and why our city's demographics are changing, and how Biddeford compares to other communities in our region. This section of the Comprehensive Plan looks at both population and demographics for Biddeford as well as York County and Maine as a whole.

2. Population

Biddeford's population grew by **5.9%** between 2010 and 2020

Year	Population	% Change
1980	19,638	-1.7%
1990	20,710	5.4%
2000	20,942	1.1%
2010	21,277	1.6%
2020	22,552	5.9%

Although it grew slower than the rest of York County… Biddeford was one of the fastest growing communities in Maine between 2010 and 2020

Biddeford is the 7th Largest Community in Maine

Biddeford has
9,198
Households

Average Household Size is
2.3 Persons

749
Population per Square Mile

88.3%
Of residents live in the same home as 1 year ago

Community	2020 Population	% Change from 2010
Maine	1,385,340	1.7%
York County	211,972	7.5%
Biddeford	22,552	5.9%
Portland	68,408	3.3%
Lewiston	37,121	1.4%
South Portland	26,498	5.6%
Scarborough	22,135	16.8%
Sanford	21,982	5.3%
Saco	20,381	10.1%
Kennebunk	11,536	6.6%
Old Orchard Beach	8,960	3.7%

Source: 2020 Census

Biddeford has seen steady and consistent growth for over 30 years. However, the pace of population growth notably increased in both Biddeford and surrounding communities in Southern Maine between 2010 and 2020.

Biddeford's growth is a largely a result of both increasing migration into the region by out-of-state residents and regional population shifts as residents of the "core" of the Portland metropolitan area seek lower-cost living options in communities with high quality of life that are still close to regional centers of employment and recreation.

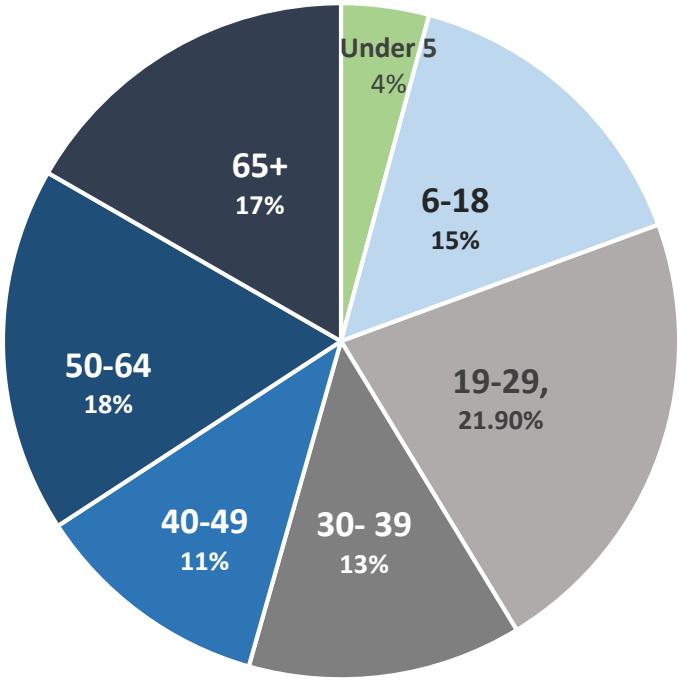
3. Age and Gender

36.2
Median Age

50.4%
Female

16.7%
Of residents are over 65

Biddeford is the Youngest Community in York County



Biddeford's Age Distribution

Area	Median Age
Maine	44.6
York County	45.2
Biddeford	36.2
Saco	43.1
Portland	37.6

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates 2016-2021

2011 Residents over 65 — **14.9%**

2021 Residents over 65 — **16.7%**

2011 Median Age - **37.1**

2021 Median Age - **36.2**

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates 2016-2021, & ACS 5-Year Estimates

Biddeford has a relatively even distribution of ages living in our community. Biddeford is younger than both York County and the State of Maine a whole, with the lowest median age of any community in York County. This can be partially attributed to the presence of the University of New England, which increases the number of younger residents. This may also be the result of increased in-migration by younger individuals and families moving into new residential space in the Mill District.

While Biddeford's median age decreased between 2011 and 2022, the percentage of residents over the age of 65 increased slightly. This is in line with regional and state trends of aging populations.

4. Race and Ethnicity

Like most communities in Maine, the large majority of Biddeford's population is White. However, the demographics of the community and state have slowly shifted to become more diverse in recent years.

Community	% White	% Black or African American	% Hispanic / Latino	% American Native	% Asian
Maine	94.2	1.8	2.0	0.7	1.4
York County	95.1	1.2	2.0	0.3	1.5
Biddeford	91.8	1.3	2.7	0.1	2.6
Portland	83.0	8.9	2.4	0.2	4.1
Lewiston	83.4	7.3	2.2	0.2	2.0
South Portland	88.3	5.2	2.9	0.3	2.1
Scarborough	92.6	0.2	2.2	0.6	2.8
Saco	90.9	1.2	1.7	0.4	1.8
Kennebunk	93.4	0.1	3.4	0.1	2.7

Source: 2020 Census

2010 Population Identified as White **92.6%**

2020 Population Identified as White **91.8%**

Hispanic & Latino residents make up the 2nd largest ethnic Group in Biddeford

Biddeford is More Diverse than York County and Maine as a whole

3.6% of Biddeford Residents are Foreign Born

5. Education

2,465 Students Enrolled in Biddeford Public Schools in 2020

8.8% Of Biddeford residents Have a Masters Degree or PhD

Biddeford has lower educational attainment than the rest of York County

Community	% with High School Diploma	% with Bachelor's Degree or more
Maine	93.7	33.6
York County	94.4	32.8
Biddeford	93.8	27.2
Portland	94.2	56.5
Lewiston	88.1	21.3
South Portland	95.9	46.3
Scarborough	97.8	55.0
Sanford	91.2	21.3
Saco	94.5	40.7
Kennebunk	97.7	45.2
Old Orchard Beach	95.8	41.6

Source: 2020 Census

6. Income and Economy

$58,142
Median Household Income

63.3%
Population in Civilian Workforce

$278,350
Median value of owner-occupied homes

13.3%
Population living below the poverty line

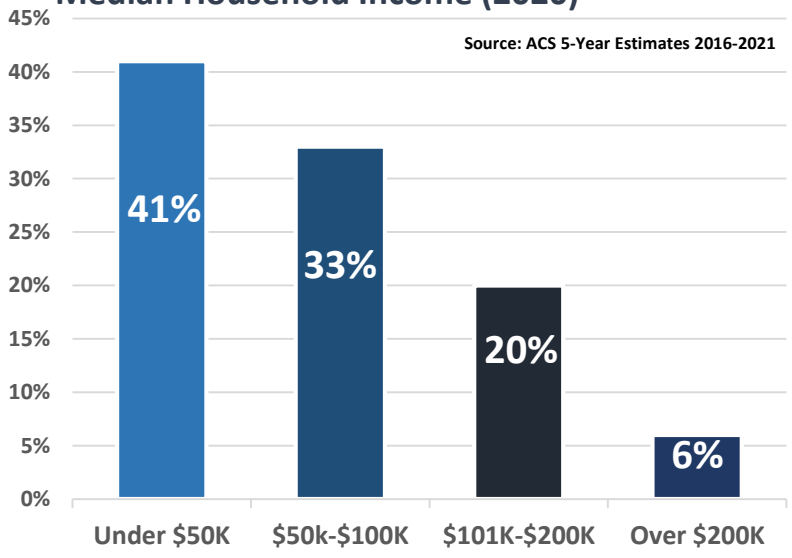
Community	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income	% Below Poverty
Maine	$63,182	$$36,171	11.5
York County	$73,856	$39,450	8.3
Biddeford	$58,142	$33,413	13.3
Portland	$66,109	$42,960	12.7
Lewiston	$48,069	$27,856	16.3
South Portland	$73,899	$42,822	6.1
Scarborough	$105,960	$56,863	3.7
Sanford	$65,671	$32,648	9.5
Saco	$72,700	$40,927	9.3
Kennebunk	$88,865	$47,197	6.2
Old Orchard Beach	$55,766	$45,572	10.6

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates 2016-2021

Although still lower than the County Average, Biddeford's Median Income has risen faster than the rest of York County from 2010-2020

Biddeford's Income Distribution

Median Household Income (2020)



Biddeford's median and per-capita income is lower than Maine as a whole and notably lower than surrounding communities in both York and Cumberland Counties. Biddeford also has a higher overall percentage of the population living at or below the poverty line compared to surrounding communities.
However, Biddeford's overall per-capita and median income for families and households grew at a slightly faster than some other surrounding communities between 2010 and 2020.

3 Public Engagement

1. What's happening?

Public Engagement is crucial to a Comprehensive Plan in order for the plan to be reflective of the community. City of Biddeford staff, Planning Board members, and members of other city committees and commissions worked together to pursue a robust public engagement process throughout 2021. The information received from the public was used to inform the content of the plan, particularly the Core Values and the Goals, Policies, and Strategies

2. By the Numbers

1,500+
community members engaged during the public process

53
residents participated in focus groups

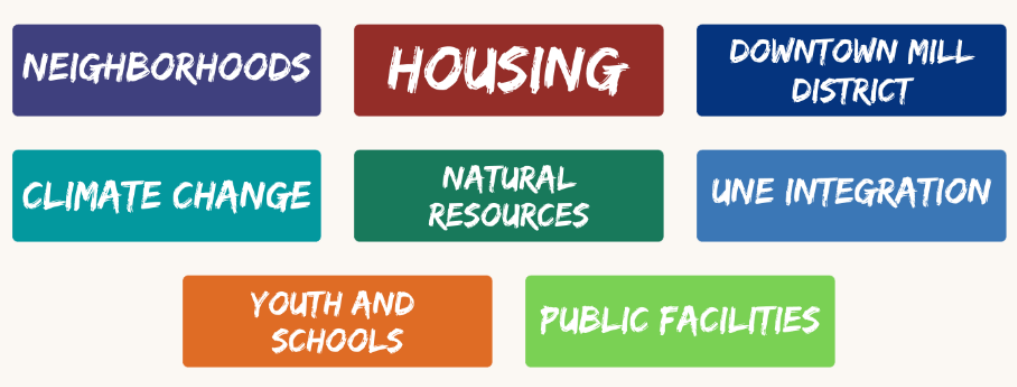
25
members on the Advisory Committee

1,212
responses to the Community Survey

30
participants in the April 2022 public sessions

40+
public engagement opportunities

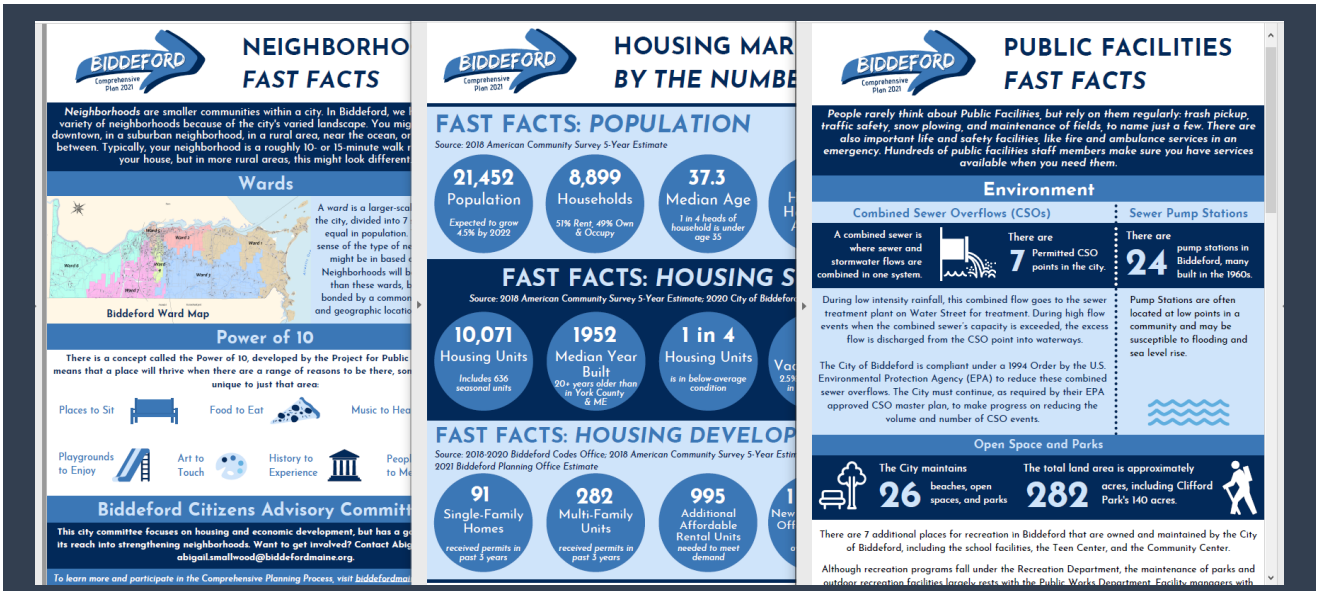
As part of the development of the Comprehensive Plan, Biddeford pursued a robust, transparent, and inclusive civic engagement process. The Planning Board, with staff, developed a Public Engagement Plan (PEP), as well as a PEP Advisory Committee to facilitate the civic engagement program.



Eight major topics, hosted on the City's website

Planning Board and staff identified eight major topics, and each topic was assigned a Planning Board member, a City staff member, and a member of a City Committee/Commission. The eight topics were Neighborhoods, Housing, Downtown, Climate Change, Youth and Schools, UNE Integration, Natural Resources, and Public Facilities.

For each topic, a fast fact sheet, an overview video, and a survey were developed. The Fast Fact sheets and the overview video gave a brief introduction to the topic, so community members had basic information before taking the survey.

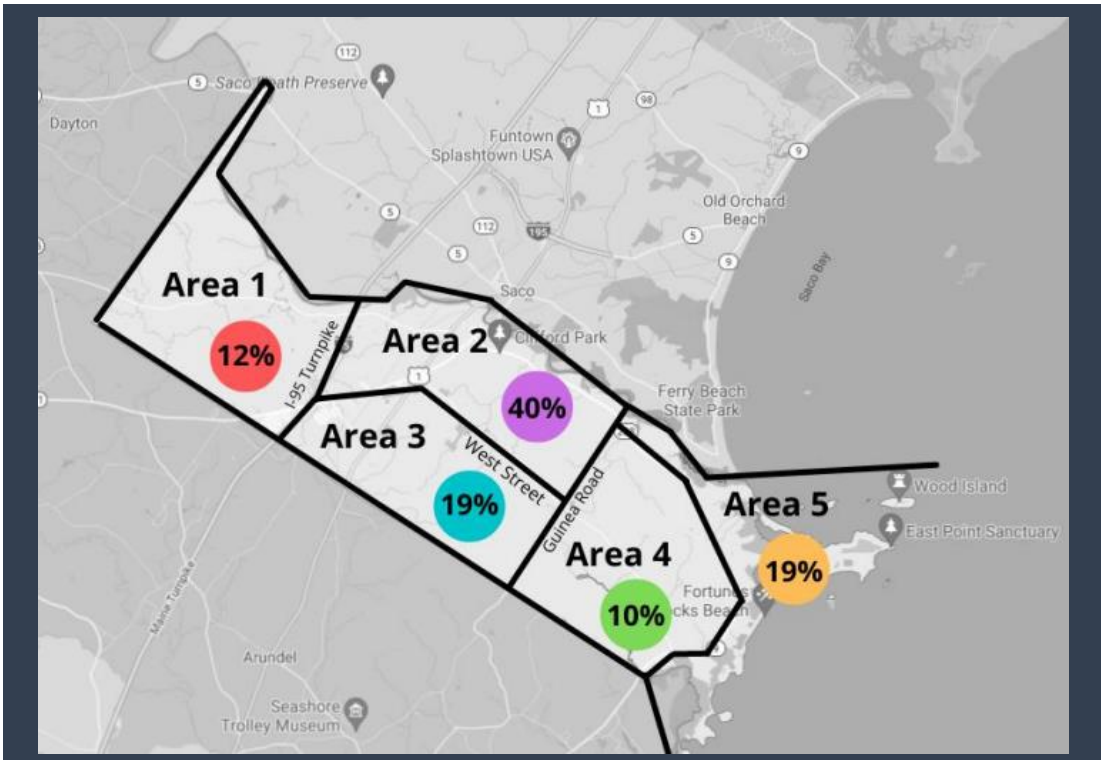


Three of the fast fact sheets

The surveys were released on a weekly basis on the MetroQuest survey platform, a platform designed specifically for municipal and transportation planning. Surveys stayed open for at least 3 weeks (average: 7 weeks), and there were 1,308 responses total over the eight surveys. We expect that some people took multiple surveys, so this number is not unique individuals. The highest responses were for the Neighborhoods, Downtown, and Housing surveys.

PEP Advisory Committee members reviewed and analyzed the results to determine major takeaways and to develop follow-up questions for focus groups. There was one focus group for each topic. The input received at these meetings was compiled into a summary sheet on each topic.

From all the feedback received on these topics, a Community Survey was compiled to go into more detail and to get feedback from a broader section of the community. The survey was available online and on paper in September 2021. Paper copies were mailed to every address in Biddeford. There were 1,212 responses to this survey. There was a follow-up presentation of the results, including an analysis of the differences between Biddeford's population and those who took the survey. The survey was not intended to be representative of the population, but the information was shared in order to contextualize the responses.



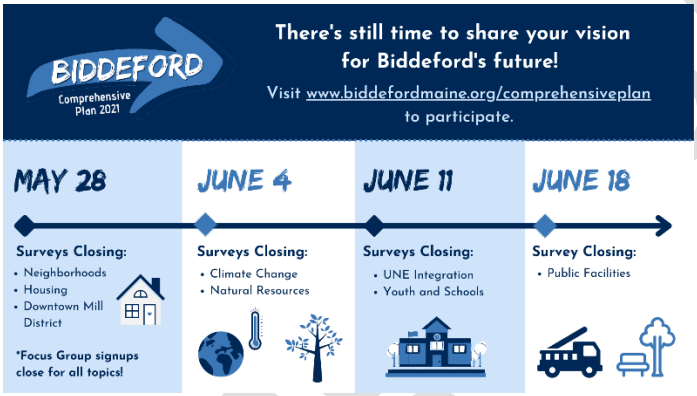
Community Survey respondents by area

From all the information gathered, the existing Goals, Policies, and Strategies for each section were updated, and there were three public sessions in April 2022 to determine level of support and interest in the identified strategies. In general, there was support for the strategies – nothing scored below neutral (3 on the 5-point scale), and 91% scored 'somewhat support' (4) or higher on average. Staff will look into the items that scored above a 4.5 on average and determine whether to prioritize some of these items in the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

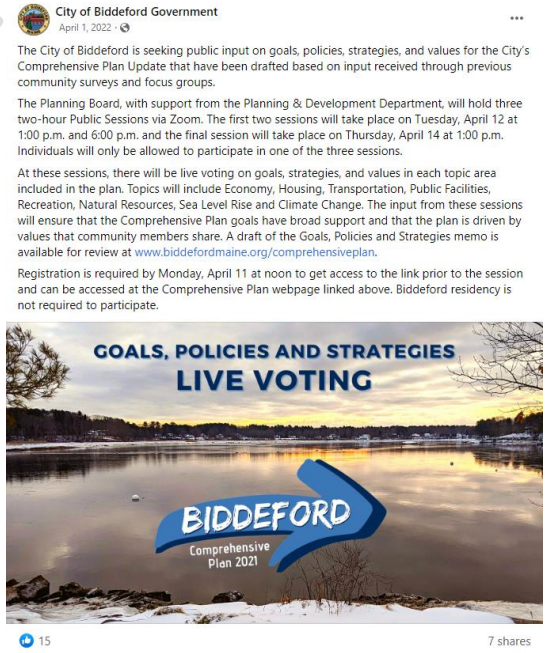
Throughout the process, opportunities for engagement were promoted a variety of ways:

- Biddeford Beat, the City's weekly email newsletter
- City of Biddeford Facebook and Twitter
- Our Biddeford, the City's engagement platform
- Direct mail to Biddeford addresses
- Courier newspaper ads and articles
- Comprehensive Plan email list
- Updates on the front page of the website
- Partner organizations such as Heart of Biddeford

One of the Courier ads, promoting the topic-based surveys

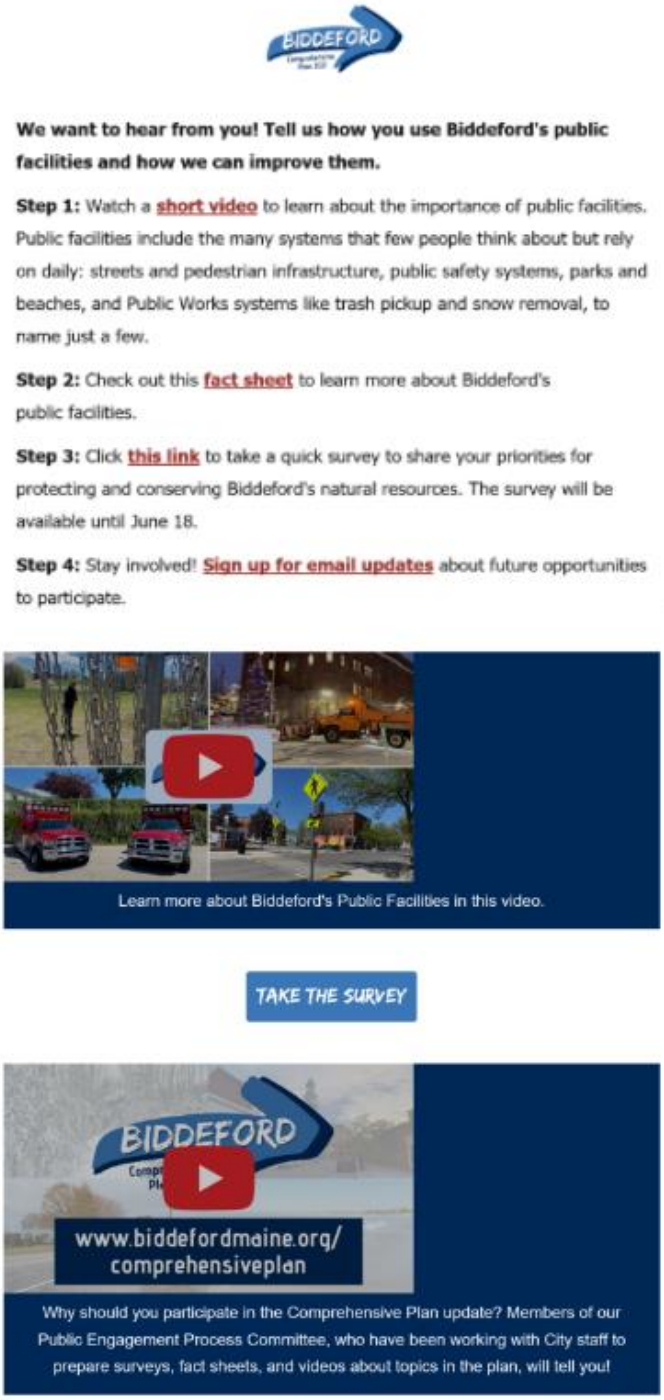


Timeline shared through social media



Two of the posts sharing public engagement opportunities on Facebook

3-5



Example of topic-based survey promotion in Biddeford Beat

Example of focus group recruitment in Biddeford Beat

Additionally, due to high interest in affordable housing identified through the Comprehensive Plan process and regular citizen engagement with City officials and staff, the Mayor formed an Affordable Housing Task Force that met during 2022 to assess the current reality of housing in Biddeford, collect feedback from the community on affordable housing, and compile data. From this information, the Task Force made recommendations in a Final Report approved on January 4, 2023. The Report went to City Council for action on January 24, 2023, and implementation steps will follow.

What Comes Next?

The City of Biddeford is committed to continuing implementation and updates as necessary to the Comprehensive Plan during the 10 years that it is in effect. With Biddeford's rapid growth, it is vital that this plan is a living document. Residents are encouraged to contact the Planning and Development Department with questions and ideas and updates that would affect the information in the plan and the goals based on that information.

Civic engagement is vital to the community, so that this plan and the work of the City reflects the values and goals of those who live here.

Some specific projects moving forward are as follows:

In Fall 2022, City staff and the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), in partnership with the Mayor and City Councilors, launched a series of Ward meetings as a way to connect with residents in order to share updates and hear questions, concerns, and ideas.

Moving forward, staff and CAC, which is the designated committee to oversee the spending of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, plan to hold Ward meetings on a yearly basis, as well as more targeted neighborhood meetings and walks. Additionally, every five years, staff and the CAC put together a Consolidated Plan for CDBG funds, which sets goals for the next five years. CDBG funds are targeted toward low-to-moderate income residents in a variety of ways. Public engagement is a key component of creating the plan, so that funding

goes towards projects supported by the community, particularly those who are low-to-moderate income. There is a new Consolidated Plan being written in spring 2023, which will launch in July 2023, and the next plan will be written for launch in July 2028.

The City is in the process of completing a Climate Action Plan. In October 2020, City Council passed a Climate Emergency Resolution, which led to the formation of the Climate Task Force. This group is tasked with creating an action plan that focuses on adaptation, mitigation, and sustainability strategies that address the real effects of climate change that threaten our coastal community. Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC), the regional council of goverments focused on planning and development, is leading a cohort of communities to create their Climate Action Plans – Biddeford, Kennebunk, Kennebunkport, and Kittery. Public engagement is an important part of this process and there will be numerous opportunities to participate in 2023. Biddeford's Climate Action Plan is expected to be completed in September 2023. At that time the City's focus will shift to implementation of strategies established by the plan to reduce carbon emissions.

Other public engagement efforts will develop based on needs in the community.

8 Transportation & Mobility

(01/23 Draft)

1. What's happening?

Roads, streets, and other means of transportation are often referred to as the city's circulation system. This system is necessary to move people, goods, and services from one part of the city to another, into and out of Biddeford and into the surrounding region and country as a whole.

Transportation and mobility may be thought of as the framework upon which the city is built. In addition to the basic functions of connecting residents, businesses and services, our transportation system is also the setting from which we view much of the city. The views from the roads in the city, including views of fields, forests, the ocean, and the places where people live and work all form the visual impressions of our community. The efficiency of our city, the value of our land, and how we view and experience our surroundings are all affected by our transportation system and how well it balances the needs of cars, commercial vehicles, public transportation, cyclists and pedestrians.

2. What the Community is Saying

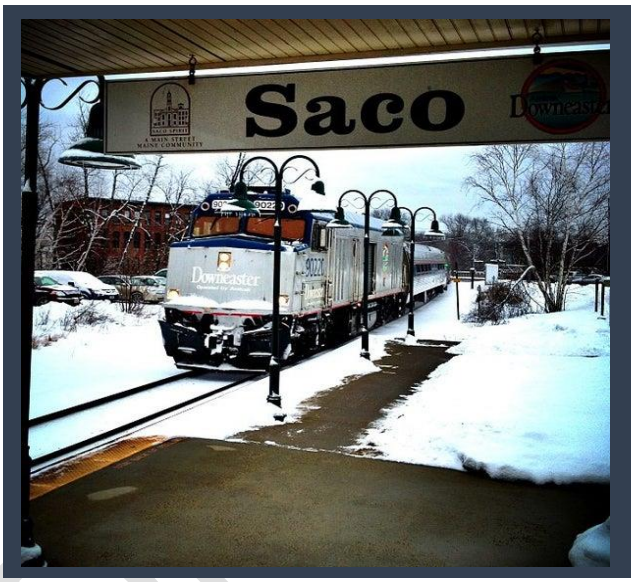
"Crossing some streets can be challenging and dangerous"

"More bike lanes and wider shoulders would be appreciated"

"So many people speed down residential streets"

"Bike racks downtown would make it easier to bike around the mill district"

"Traffic around Five Corners can be a nightmare"



3. Transportation and Mobility in Biddeford Today

60
Miles
Of Public Sidewalks

$7.8 Million
Grant
To improve parts of Route 1 / Elm St

138
Miles
Of roads and streets in Biddeford

242,847
Riders
On BSOOB Transit (2022)

4. Roads and Streets

Types of Streets and Roads

Biddeford has almost 140 miles of streets and roads ranging from interstate highways to small local and private drives. Roads in Biddeford are categorized based on traffic volume, ownership and state or federal designation.

Interstate Highway

A Limited-Access Highway which is part of the national interstate highway system

Local Examples Include:

Interstate 95

Federal / State Highway

A major numbered road that is not part of the interstate highway system. Often maintained by Maine DoT

Local Examples Include:

Route 1, Route 111, Route 9

State-Aid Highways

Local collector roads not included in the state highway system that receive maintenance funding from Maine DoT

Local Examples Include:

Main St., South St. , Pool St. , May St.

Local Collector Road

Low-to-medium traffic local streets maintained by the City of Biddeford

Local Examples Include:

Granite St. , Union St., Prospect St.

Minor Local Connector Roads

Low-traffic local streets maintained by the City of Biddeford.

Local Examples Include:

Many local residential streets

Private Roads

Privately owned roads and drives maintained by private property owners

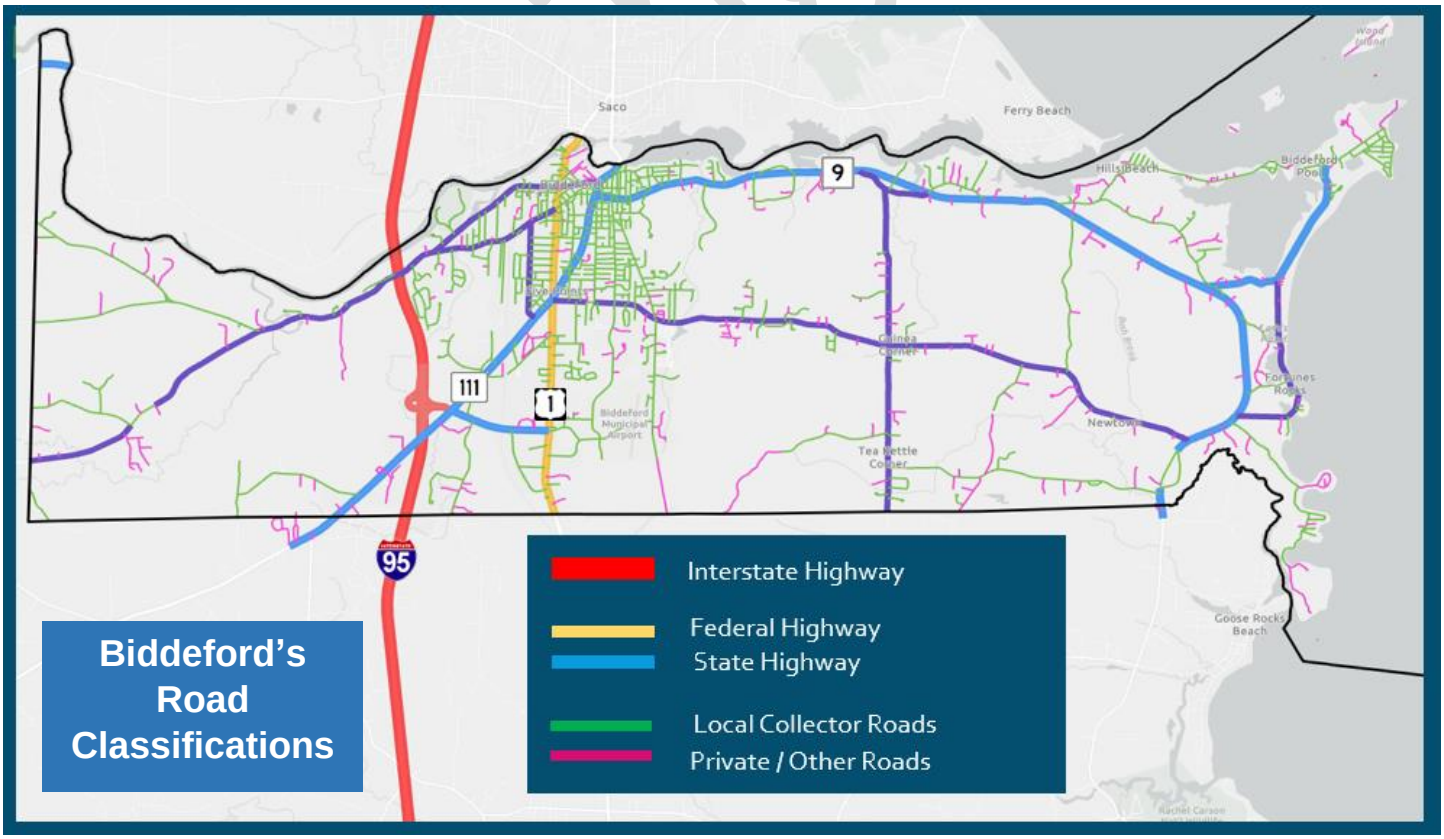
Local Examples Include:

Many dead-end subdivision roads

In addition to these classifications, Maine Department of Transportation has its own definitions of roadway priorities. These designations are used to guide funding for maintenance and capital projects on roads throughout the state.

Table 8-1: Maine DoT Definitions of Highway Priorities

Priority	Definition
Priority 1 Roads	These roads include the Maine Turnpike, the interstate system and key principal arterials like Route 1 in Aroostook County, the Airline (Route 9), Route 2 west of Newport, and Route 302. The 1,400 miles of Priority 1 roads represent only 7 percent of the miles, but carry fully 40 percent of all vehicle miles traveled in Maine.
Priority 2 Roads	These roads total about 940 miles. They are non-interstate, high value arterials that represent about 4 percent of the total miles of road but carry 11 percent of overall traffic.
Priority 3 Roads	These roads generally are the remaining arterials and most significant major collector highways. These 2,050 miles represent only 9 percent of miles, but carry 19 percent of the traffic.
Priority 4 Roads	These roads generally are the remainder of the major collector highways, often also part of Maine's unique state aid system, in which road responsibilities are shared between the state and municipalities. These 1,900 miles represent about 8 percent of total miles, and carry 10 percent of the traffic.
Priority 5 Roads	These roads are 2,500 miles of minor collector highways, almost all on the state aid system. They represent 11 percent of miles, but carry only 7 percent of traffic.
Priority 6 Roads	These roads are local roads and streets, and are the year-round responsibility of our municipal partners. Though they carry just 13 percent of the statewide traffic, these 14,300 miles make up 61 percent of the total miles



8-4

Biddeford has a number of high-traffic areas and traffic-generators. These are locations which draw a large number of visitors and vehicles. Major traffic generators can create traffic and congestion at nearby intersections and along primary and secondary roads.

Table 8-2: Major traffic generators in Biddeford.

Generator	Peak Hours
Biddeford Crossing	Daytime Hours, peaks in the evening and on weekends
Walmart Plaza	Daytime Hours, peaks in the evening and on weekends
University of New England	September to May, peaks in morning (7-9) and afternoon (3-6)
Biddeford High School	September to May, peaks in morning (7-8) and afternoon (3-5)
Robert G. Dodge Business Park	Year-round, peak in AM (7-9) and PM (4-6)
Airport Industrial Park	Year-round, peak in AM (7-9) and PM (4-6)
Biddeford Industrial Park	Year-round, peak in AM (7-9) and PM (4-6)
Mill at Pepperell/NorthDam Mill	Year-round, peak in AM (7-9) and PM (4-6), but steady throughout the day.

5. Public and Active Transportation

"Active transportation" refers to any form of mobility that is powered by human energy, primarily walking and bicycling. Active transportation enables communities to become healthier and more interconnected. Cities and transportation agencies can create opportunities for people to exercise for recreation and to build physical activity into their daily routine. This can be achieved by improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities and promoting mixed-use development which enables more people to safely and effectively bicycle or walk to work, school, businesses, and services.

Improving public transportation services produces similar results. Although public transportation is not typically defined as active transportation, studies have shown a higher level of physical activity among public transportation riders. This is because every public transportation trip is a multi-modal trip. Most people who use public transportation walk to or from stops and stations or make other trips by foot during the course of their day.

Transportation agencies can also support projects that enhance mixed-use neighborhoods where different destinations are within walking distance of one another. For example, improved public transportation service can foster new development near a stop or station that already has a variety of housing, jobs, shops, and services.

Biddeford-Saco-Old Orchard Beach Transit (BSOOB)

Biddeford-Saco-Old Orchard Beach Transit (BSOOB Transit) provides fixed-route and paratransit services throughout its namesake communities. BSOOB transit operates six fixed-route services which operate seven days a week. In addition, BSOOB transit provides intercity bus service to South Portland and Portland and offers direct connections to South Portland Bus Service and Greater Portland METRO.

BSOOB Transit acquired two new all-electric buses in 2022

BSOOB Transit carried 242,847 riders in 2022

As part of the regional "Transit Together" project completed in Fall of 2022, BSOOB Transit is working to realign its local fixed-route transit services to meet the changing needs of riders and better serve the community. These changes would streamline services along key corridors and improve frequency of service in many high-ridership areas.

BSOOB Transit has also obtained two new all-electric Proterra 40-foot buses. These buses are among the first electric transit vehicles in the state. BSOOB Transit may acquire more electric buses in 2024.

Bicycle Connectivity

Bicyclists have the same mobility needs as any other road user. Increasingly, land use and transportation planners are recognizing bicycles as a viable transportation mode. While recreation is still the primary use of a bicycle, more people are beginning to cycle as a way to commute to work and run errands. Cyclists should be included in all phases of transportation planning including new road design, construction, and rehabilitation (for more on this, see the Complete Streets section below).

Maine bicycling laws generally give bicyclists the same rights and responsibilities as motor vehicle operators. Bicyclists may use public roads, and they must obey traffic laws such as stopping at red lights and stop signs, yielding to pedestrians at crosswalks, and yielding to traffic when entering a road from a driveway. Motorists are required to give at least three feet of clearance when passing bicyclists.

Any segment of roadway having a paved shoulder of at least four feet wide is generally considered appropriate for bicycle travel. As highways are improved and upgraded, the

City will encourage adequate shoulder widths and protected bicycle lanes when necessary in order to safely accommodate and encourage bicycle travel.

Amtrak Downeaster

The Amtrak Downeaster runs five round-trip trains per day from Boston, Massachusetts to Brunswick, Maine. The train stops within walking distance of downtown Biddeford at the Saco Transportation Center located on Saco Island. Nearly 22,000 people boarded the Downeaster at the Saco Transit Center in 2021.
In coming years, the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority (NNEPRA) plans to enhance the Downeaster with new locomotives and passenger coaches, which will improve travel times and reduce emissions.

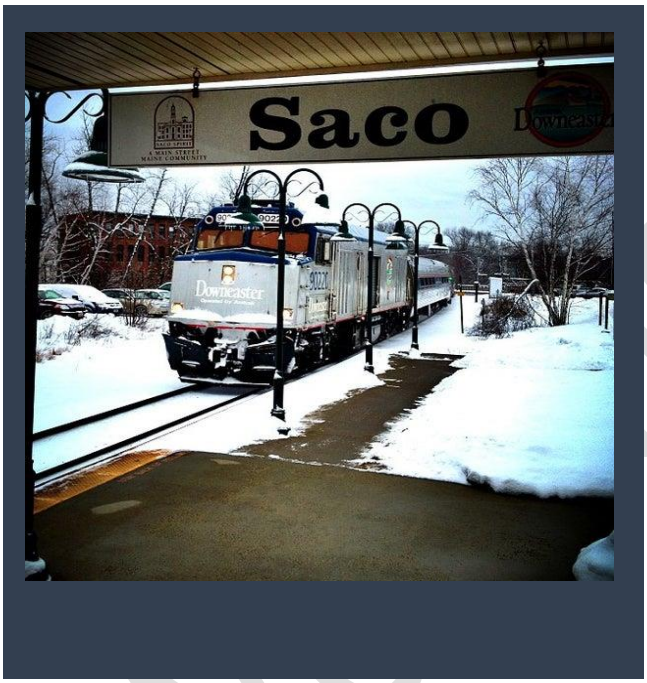
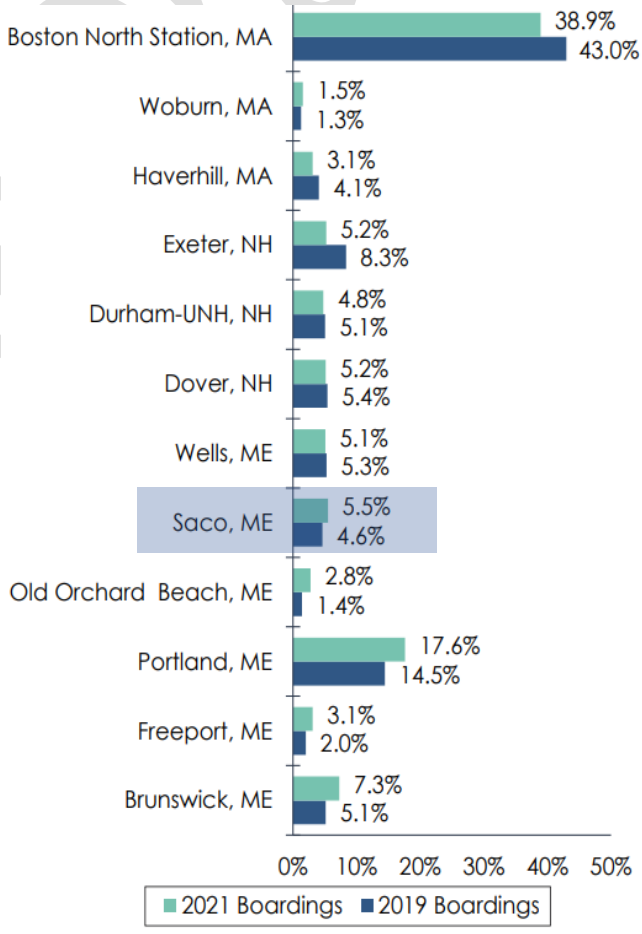


Table 8-3 : Downeaster Ridership by Station: 2019 & 2021



Biddeford Municipal Airport

The Biddeford Municipal Airport is owned and maintained by the City of Biddeford. It is located two miles south of the downtown area. The airport is open to the public and provides access for recreational and private aircraft. Aircraft are allowed to take off and land at no cost. There is one runway measuring 3,000 feet by 75 feet.

6. Challenges and Opportunities

Exit 32 and South Street Connector

Potential Exit 32 & South Street Connector Right-of-Way

Biddeford's only point of access to Interstate 95 is Exit 32, which connects directly to Route 111 and Route 1 via the Biddeford Connector road. As the population and economy of our region has grown, Exit 32's existing condition has created congestion and barriers to access for many Biddeford residents and residents of surrounding communities. These accessibility barriers are particularly notable for residents of West Biddeford and Dayton, who must cross Interstate 95 and use local streets to access Route 111 and Exit 32. Route 111 has also experienced increasing congestion from traffic traveling to-and-from Alfred and Sanford using Exit 32 to access Interstate 95

To help address these challenges, the City of Biddeford has worked with Maine DoT and the Maine Turnpike Authority to study potential solutions to improve Exit 32 and create new connections which would improve regional connectivity and reduce non-local traffic using local streets to access Interstate 95.

The Maine Turnpike Authority has begun preliminary engineering and design for a reconstruction of Exit 32 which would extend some ramps to the west along a new right-of-way behind the Home Depot and connecting to Route 111 at a new signalized intersection to the west of the Biddeford Crossing shopping center. This ramp extension would improve highway access to traffic traveling to-and-from Alfred and Sanford, and reduce traffic congestion around Biddeford Crossing

In addition, the City of Biddeford has explored the possibility of constructing a new, limited-access connector road which would connect Exit 32 directly to South Street. This connector would dramatically improve highway access for residents of West Biddeford, Dayton and points west. As of Spring 2023, this project is still in a pre-design phase and future plans will be dependent upon funding, community support and environmental review.

Complete Streets

Complete Streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users: pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation users of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work. They also allow buses to run on time and make it safe for people to walk to and from train stations. Cities and towns in Maine, large or small, can begin building a safer and more welcoming street network by adopting a Complete Streets Policy and then ensuring its full implementation.
As of 2019, Nine communities in Maine have adopted a local Complete Streets Policy.

A Complete Streets Policy does not dictate a one-size fits all approach. A Complete Street in a rural area will look quite different from one in an urban area. Both are designed to balance safety and convenience for everyone using the road. A Complete Street may include sidewalks, bike lanes, paved shoulders, comfortable and accessible bus stops, safe crosswalks, median islands, curb extensions (bump-outs), narrower travel lanes, and more.

Elm Street Rehabilitation and Intersection Change

As part of a Federal SS4A Grant, in 2021 The City of Biddeford was awarded $7.8 Million for a reconstruction of portions of Elm St. / Route 1 in Downtown Biddeford. These enhancements will make the corridor safer and more efficient for all road users by improving and realigning intersections, rebuilding sidewalks and adding space for bicyclists where available
These improvements will allow Elm St. to better accommodate growth and development in Downtown Biddeford and support regional connectivity.

Transit-Oriented Development

The City of Biddeford has worked in coordination with the City of Saco and the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) to study opportunities for transit-oriented housing development for downtown Biddeford and the Mill District, as well as Factory Island and downtown Saco. This study envisions a more dense, connected and mixed-use urban downtown supported by improved transit service by bus and rail, as well as safe, convenient bicycle and pedestrian connectivity.

This study is expected to be published in the Summer of 2023.

Five Corners

The “Five Corners” intersection of Elm St, Alfred Rd and West St. sees very high traffic volume and an above-average number of vehicle accidents. The intersection has been identified as an area of concern and potential future study and redesign.

Riverwalk

The Biddeford Riverwalk is a series of interconnected walkways, plazas and bridges that form a cohesive 3-mile loop through the Mill District in Biddeford and Saco. The Riverwalk has been continually enhanced and expanded since 2015 with new wayfinding signage and public amenities. In coming years, the Riverwalk will be expanded along the edge of the Saco River from the NorthDam mill Complex to the new Pearl Point Park site and pedestrian bridge to the Saco Transit Center. The Riverwalk will continue onward across Elm Street. This extension will greatly enhance pedestrian connectivity throughout downtown Biddeford and provide car-free access to many residents and businesses in the Mill District.

Transportation & Mobility -

What Comes Next?

As our region grows and evolves, so to do our transportation needs and opportunities. In order to meet the ever-changing needs of our community, respond to the increasing threat of Climate Change and reduce dependence on single-occupancy vehicles, our community must continually evaluate and embrace new ideas and solutions that will make our city more equitable, sustainable and connected.

We will accomplish this by:

PRIORITIZING Community and regional needs for safe, efficient and optimal use of transportation systems

SAFELY Preserving and improving the transportation system

PROMOTING Public health and enhance livability by managing land use in ways that maximize the efficiency of the transportation system and minimizes vehicle miles traveled.

MEETING
The diverse transportation needs of all residents by providing a safe, efficient and equitable transportation system for all types of users.

PROMOTING
Fiscal prudence by maximizing the efficiency of the state or state-aid highway network

MAXIMIZING
Parking efficiency without compromising safety or maintenance efforts

Goal 1

PRIORITIZE

Community and regional needs for safe, efficient and optimal use of transportation systems

How We Get There:

- **Engage in regional and state transportation efforts through Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT), Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation Areas System (PACTS), Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC), Biddeford Saco Old Orchard Beach (BSOOB) Transit, Eastern Trail Management District, Northern New England Passenger Rail Association, and other appropriate agencies.**

- **Identify and prioritize the multi-modal capital improvements needed to maintain or upgrade the transportation system (with priority given to public transit and "active transportation" – i.e. biking and walking) to accommodate the community's anticipated growth and changing demographics.**

Goal 2

SAFELY

Preserve and improve the transportation system

How We Get There:

- **Maintain inventory of existing streets and their status.**

- **Continue to update and maintain the City's 5-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) related to priorities for public expenditures on the City's transportation network.**

- **Plan for increased demand for EV charging infrastructure.**

Goal 3

PROMOTE

Public health and enhance livability by managing land use in ways that maximize the efficiency of the transportation system and minimizes vehicle miles traveled.

How We Get There:

- **Maintain, enact or amend ordinance standards for subdivisions and for public and private roads as appropriate to foster transportation-efficient growth patterns and provide for future street and transit connections.**
- **Adhere to Smart Growth principles to guide development toward compact, walkable mixed-use neighborhoods.**
- **Partner with local and regional stakeholders to reduce peak period traffic congestion.**

Goal 4

MEET

The diverse transportation needs of all residents by providing a safe, efficient and equitable transportation system for all types of users.

How We Get There:

- **Maintain, enact or amend local ordinances as appropriate to address multi-modal transportation demands and needs, or avoid conflicts with the policy objectives of the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 M.R.S.A. §73), the State access management regulations pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704, and State traffic permitting regulations for large developments pursuant to 23 M.R.S.A. §704-A.**

- **Prioritize the implementation of the recently completed "ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan" to improve and ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities to city programs, services, activities, and infrastructure.**

- **Ensure future city expenditures on the transportation network are compliant with current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.**

- **Adopt and maintain a City of Biddeford Complete Streets Policy.**

Goal 5

PROMOTE

Fiscal prudence by maximizing the efficiency of the state or state-aid highway network

How We Get There:

- **Ensure local expenditures on the state or state-highway system are consistent with existing planned state transportation improvements on those highways.**

Goal 6

MAXIMIZE

The parking efficiency without compromising safety or maintenance efforts

How We Get There:

- **Maintain, and adjust as necessary, the City's Parking Demand Management strategy.**

- **Allow parking on Main Street overnight to give a presence of activity downtown and to take advantage of supply. Only prohibit parking on nights where maintenance is planned.**

- **Begin planning for a second parking structure next to the Police Station. Ensure it is designed with commercial uses on street level, public restrooms, EV charging stations, and can be re-developed later for housing or other non-parking uses.**

- **Evaluate parking connections to destinations for sidewalk, lighting, and wayfinding improvements.**

- **Work with Premium Parking (the City's contracted parking management company) to ensure adjustments are made to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of public parking in the City of Biddeford.**

1. MaineDOT Customer Service Levels

   Similar to the Highway Corridor Priorities, the Customer Service Level is prioritized on three criteria: safety, condition, and service. Each criterion has several factors that are included in the overall rating of each category. Roads and road segments are given an A-F rating with A being the best and F being the worst. To get a better idea of the customer service levels for each road/node, including specific sections of roadways listed below, visit the MaineDOT Customer Service Level webpage at http://maine.gov/mdot/about/assets/hwy/#undefined2.

Customer Service Level – Safety:

Most roads in Biddeford are classified in the A or B category. There are small sections of Route 111, Route 208, and Main Street in the C category. This is primarily due to crash history, pavement width, and pavement rutting. Sections of South Street and West Street are in the D category. This is primarily due to crash history and pavement width on these roads. A significant portion of South Street is in the F category. This is primarily due to crash history and pavement width.

MaineDOT uses the following criteria to rate Customer Service Level – Safety:

8Table 6-3. MaineDOT Customer Service Level Criteria for Safety.

Customer Service Criteria	Category	Definition
Crash History	Safety	This measure includes the two types of motor vehicle crashes most likely related to the highway- head-on and run-off road crashes. The A-F scale compares these crash rates with the statewide average.
Paved Roadway Width	Safety	This measure compares total paved width (lane plus shoulder) with minimum acceptable widths by Highway Corridor Priority (not new design standards). If a highway segment fails this minimum, the Safety Customer Service Levels for that segment is decreased one letter grade.
Pavement	Safety	This measure looks at wheel path rutting, since excessive

Rutting		rutting holds water and contributes to hydroplaning and icing in winter. The A-F scale set points vary by Highway Corridor Priority, and are based on hydroplane tests.
Bridge Reliability	Safety	This measure is pass/fail. If a highway segment contains a bridge with a Condition Rating of 3 or less (excluding non-overpass decks), the Safety Customer Service Level is decreased one letter grade. These bridges are safe, but may require increased inspection or remedial work that could affect traffic flow.

Customer Service Level – Condition:

Most roads in Biddeford are classified in the A or B category. There is a section of Route 208 in the C category. This is primarily due to ride history. There is a very small section of Route 1 in the D category. This is primarily due to ride quality. A small section of Route 9 in the downtown is in the F category along with small sections of Route 1. This is primarily due to ride quality.

Table 8-4. MaineDOT Customer Service Level Criteria for Condition:

Customer Service Criteria	Category	Definition
Pavement Condition	Condition	This measure uses the Pavement Condition Rating (PCR), a 0-5 scale that is composed of International Roughness Index, rutting, and two basic types of cracking. The A-F scale varies by Highway Corridor Priority.
Roadway Strength	Condition	This measure uses the results of the falling weight deflectometer, a device that estimates roadway strength. The A-F scale is uniform across Highway Corridor Priority, since even low-priority roads must support heavy loads in Maine's natural resource-based economy.
Bridge Condition	Condition	This measure converts the 0-9 national bridge inventory (NBI) condition ratings to pass or fail; it is uniform across Highway Corridor Priority.
Ride Quality	Condition	This measure uses the International Roughness Index (IRI), which is expressed in inches per mile of deviation. IRI is the nationally accepted standard for passenger comfort, and the A-F scale varies by Highway Corridor Priority.

Customer Service Level – Service:

Most roads in Biddeford are classified in the A or B category. There are sections of Route 1, Route 9, Route 111, the Biddeford Connector, West Street, and Pool Street in the C category. This is primarily due to congestion. Small sections of Route 111 and May Street are in the D category. This is also primarily due to congestion

on these roads. There are small sections of Route 111, Route 1, and Route 9 in the downtown in the F category. This is primarily due to congestion as well.

Table 8-5. MaineDOT Customer Service Level Criteria for Service:

Customer Service Criteria	Category	Definition
Posted Road	Service	Each year MaineDOT posts more than 2,000 miles of road during spring thaw to protect their longevity, but some posted roads directly affect Maine's economy. Road segments that are permanently posted get a D, those with seasonal postings get a C.
Posted Bridge	Service	This measure uses load weight restrictions to arrive at an A-F score that varies by Highway Corridor Priority.
Congestion	Service	This measure uses the ratio of peak traffic flows to highway capacity to arrive at an A-F score for travel delay. Peak summer months are specifically considered to capture impacts to Maine's tourism industry. This scale is uniform across Highway Corridor Priority, since tourist travel is system-wide and sitting in traffic affects customer service similarly on all roads.

9 Historic, Cultural & Archaeological Resources

"What do high-paying jobs, billions in private investment, and historic buildings have in common? Together, they are revitalizing communities all across America." - National Trust Community Investment Corporation

1. Biddeford's Story

Biddeford has a long and storied history dating back many centuries. Before Europeans first arrived in the early 17th century, Native peoples lived along the Saco River, taking advantage of its abundant fishing and easy transportation.

European explorers arrived in what is now Biddeford in 1603, one of the earliest European settlements in North America followed soon after in 1611. The Biddeford pool area was permanently settled in 1626, followed soon after by additional settlements further up the Saco River. For the next 100 years, Biddeford grew slowly as an important stop on the "Kings Highway" linking Falmouth (Portland) and Boston. By the time of the American Revolution, Biddeford was a thriving small community of about 1,000 people with an economy based largely on farming and forestry.

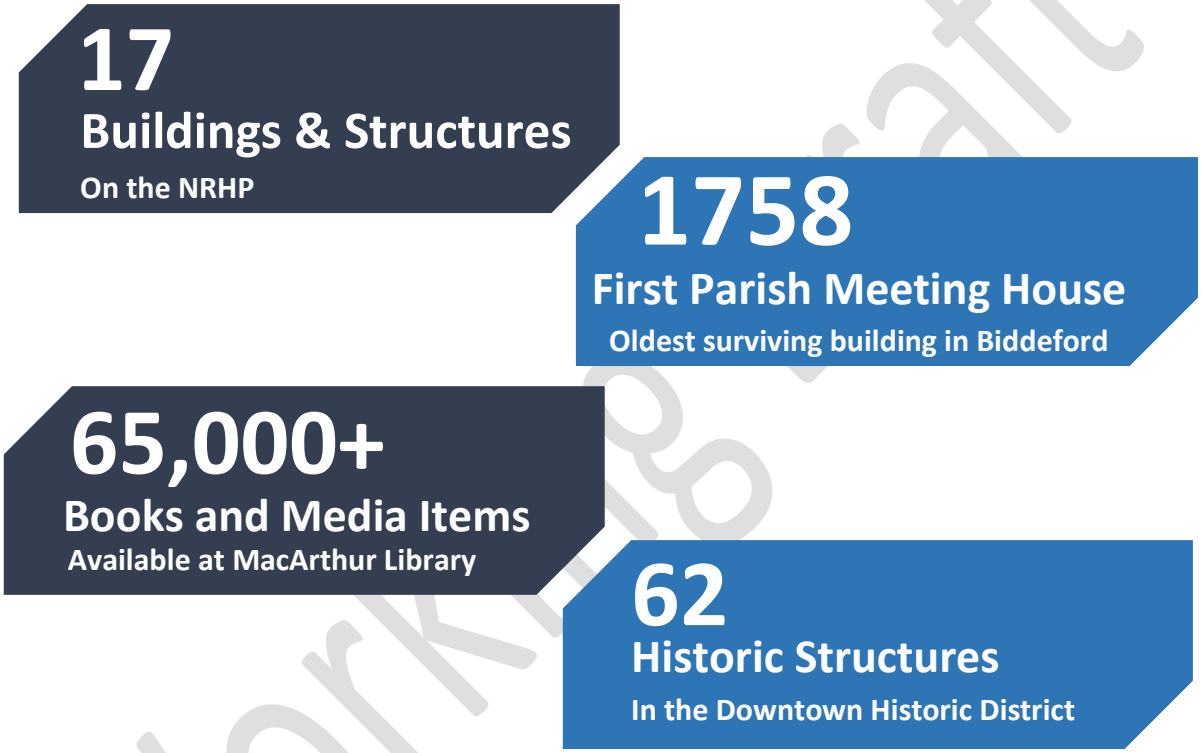
Beginning in the mid-19th century, textile mills became the dominant force in the city's economy and began to dramatically reshape the community.
Thanks to the city's advantageous position near major markets, railroads and abundant hydropower, Biddeford grew to become one of the largest textile manufacturing cities in the country by the end of the 19th century. The textile industry employed thousands of people and was an economic engine for the city and the region. Migrants from Canada and Europe flocked to Biddeford to find work in the mills and start a new life in the United States.

The growth of the mills also lead to the growth of Biddeford's downtown, as a number of business and shops emerged to cater to the large workforce in the mills.
However, after World War 2, the textile industry in New England began to decline as manufacturing moved to other states or overseas. Biddeford's once thriving mills began closing in the 1950's and the city's traditional urban core began to

struggle as development and investment moved into the suburbs. In the 1980's, the community began to see a resurgence as new investment lead to redevelopment of the former Textile mills.

Throughou

2. Historic and Cultural Resources Today



3. Biddeford's Historic and Archaeological Preservation

Historic Preservation

The Biddeford Historic Preservation Commission protects the historic and architectural heritage of our city and its historically significant areas, landmarks, and sites, while accepting compatible new construction as needed for the city to grow. Biddeford is home to dozens of historically significant buildings and structures, especially in the downtown. It is the duty of the HPC to protect and defend these

structures, and to preserve the essential character of historic neighborhoods in such a way that enhances and improves the value of properties. Historic preservation can play a role in economic development of Biddeford by making it more desirable place to live and work, and by encouraging place-making and place-keeping that can help draw in new visitors to our city.

The Code of Ordinances of the City of Biddeford grants the Historic Preservation Commission the authority to review all construction projects in the three Main Street Revitalization District (MSRD) land use zones to ensure compliance with preservation practices. The HPC adheres to the standards set by the U.S. Department of the Interior's Standards of Rehabilitation while also taking into consideration the City's Code of Ordinances.

The HPC considers projects taking place within the MSRD-1, MSRD-2, and MSRD-3 Land Use Zones

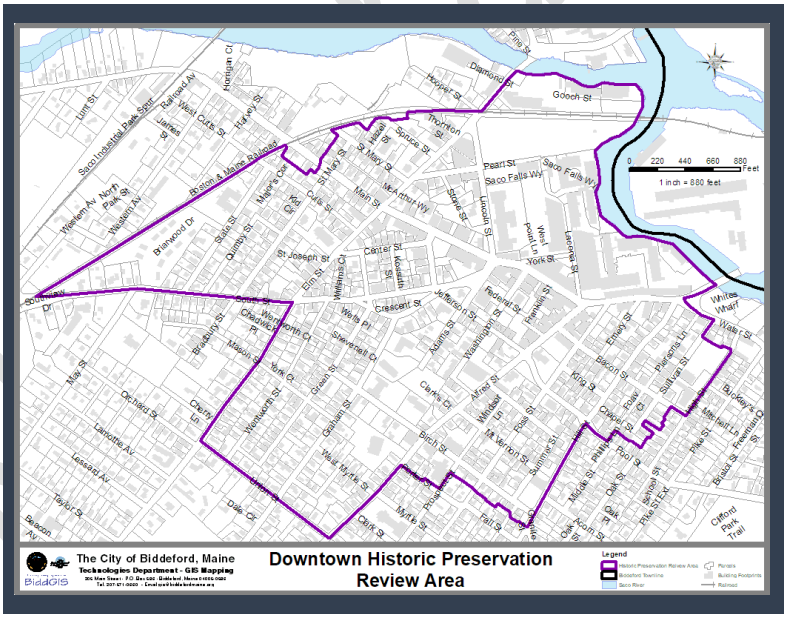


Table 9-1. Biddeford Historic Sites on the National Register of Historic Places, 2020

Name	Address	Approx. Year Built	Year Added to the National Register
First Parish Meeting House	Old Pool Road	1758	**1972**
Biddeford City Hall, Including City Theater	205 Main Street	1895	**1973**
U.S. Post Office	35 Washington Street	1914	**1973**
Fletcher's Neck Lifesaving Station	Ocean Avenue	1874	**1974**
John Tarr House	29 Ferry Lane	c. 1730	**1980**

Dudley Block	28-34 Water Street	1848	**1982**
St. Joseph's School	Birch Street	1887	**1984**
Wood Island Light Station	Wood Island	1808	**1988**
Biddeford-Saco Mills Historic District	See Map	Various	**2008**
Biddeford Main Street Historic District	See Map	Various	**2009**
Emery School	116 Hill Street	1912	**2011**
St. Andre's Parish	41 Sullivan Street	1900	**2015**
Timber Point	1-2 Timber Point Road	1931-1954	**2016**

Source: *National Register of Historic Places.*

Archaeological Resources

Biddeford has a number of archaeological sites spanning centuries of human habitation. A large number of these sites can be found in the Biddeford Pool area, where both indigenous peoples and European settles have fished, farmed and lived for many hundreds of years. The coastal area of Biddeford is also home to a number of shipwreck sites.

There are nine prehistoric archaeological sites known in Biddeford. Eight of these may be significant or are known to be significant. Several of the sites known to be significant are located on the campus of the University of New England (UNE). These sites are villages or farmsteads that were still present and inhabited when the area was visited by Samuel de Champlain in 1604.

The Maine Archaeological Society, Inc. published an article of interest in Spring of 2006 that reviews the "Chouacoet Site" which is located on the site of the present UNE campus According to the article's author, Richard J. Lore, Samuel de Champlain visited the Chouacoet Site near the mouth of the Saco Rive River and found an Armouchiquois Indian village.

During construction of several buildings on the University of New England Campus, a number of archaeological sites were monitored and some artifacts were recovered. In future surveys related to development projects it is noted in the University of New England Campus Master Plan that the majority of the rest of the site of proposed development on the campus as having been "extensively disturbed" and no further significant archaeological resources have been discovered

Table 9-2. Biddeford Archaeological Sites

Site Name	Site #	Site type	Periods of Significance
Winter Harbour	ME 041-001	Settlement	1616-1617, 1630-1675, 1708-1775
Saco Fort	ME 041-002	Military, Fort	1676-1725 (1693-1708)
Fleetwing	ME 041-003	Wreck, Schooner	March 2, 1891
Anahuac	ME 041-004	Wreck, Screw	April 15, 1923.
George and Albert	ME 041-005	Wreck, Schooner	November 17, 1887
Marshall Perrin	ME 041-006	Wreck, Schooner	November 16, 1907
Fred Tyler	ME 041-007	Wreck, Schooner	October 27, 1920
Roger Drury	ME 041-008	Wreck, Schooner	January 12, 1918
Biddeford Pool Dugout Canoe	ME 041-009	Wreck, Canoe	c. 1630 to 1900
Biddeford Pool Wharf	ME 041-010	Wharf	c. 1750- c. 1800
Thomas Williams	ME 041-011	Domestic	c.1636 - c.1689
Richard Hitchcock	ME 041-012	Domestic	c.1636 - 1676 or 1689
Edward's Farm #1	ME 041-013	Domestic	c. 1636- c. 1689
Hitchcock's Point #1	ME 041-014	Structure, Unidentified	c. l770
Hitchcock's Point #2	ME 041-015	Structure, Unidentified	c. l850
Stackpole - Jordan	ME 041-016	Domestic	c. 1717 - present
'Hiawatha'	ME 041-017	Wreck, Schooner	November 1860
'William and Harris'	ME 041-018	Wreck, Schooner	November 1840
'Game Cock'	ME 041-019	Wreck, Schooner	1867
'Rara Avis'	ME 041-020	wreck, gas screw	1893-1918
'Washington'	ME 041-021	Wreck, Schooner	1856
'Nellie Grant'	ME 041-022	Wreck, Schooner	1869
'C.N. Gilmore'	ME 041-023	Wreck, Schooner	1876-1925
'Valetta'	ME 041-024	Wreck, Schooner	Wrecked on Wood Island on October 28, 1909.
'Queen of the West'	ME 041-025	Wreck, Schooner	1898
Wood Island Lighthouse	ME 041-026	Lighthouse	Original light house station built in 1808
'Livelihood'	ME 041-027	Wreck, Schooner	November 28, 1925
'Augusta'	ME 041-028	Wreck, Schooner	Information Not Provided
'Jessie Lena'	ME 041-029	Wreck, Schooner	March 13, 1912

4. Cultural Resources

McArthur Library

Founded in 1863, McArthur Library is one of the oldest publically funded libraries in New England.

The mission of McArthur Library is to connect the Biddeford community with materials, programs, services, and informational and cultural resources needed to lead fuller, better, and richer lives. McArthur Library is also home to the Biddeford Historical Society and the Franco-American Genealogical Society collections

Today, the library offers over **59,000** books and over 7,000 e-books, audiobooks and magazines. The library also has an extensive collection of audio-visual media.

Library services are available for free to residents of Biddeford and students at the University of New England

In 2019, McArthur Library Welcomed

115,000 Visitors

and circulated more than 120,000 items

McArthur Library hosts hundreds of programs and community events each year which are attended by over 10,000 people

City Theater

Biddeford City Theater is located adjacent to Biddeford City Hall on Main Street. It is managed by City Theater Associates, Inc., which is a non-profit organization, housed with the Theater. Its mission is "to foster an appreciation for the performing arts by using creative avenues to increase community involvement."

The City Theater has been in continuous operation for 125 years. Today, it hosts concerts, films, plays and performing artists throughout the year. City Theater serves as a venue for Heart of Biddeford events and seasonal downtown festivals such as Winterfest.

Biddeford Mill Museum

The Biddeford Mills Museum (BMM) was established in 2011. It is overseen by a dynamic board of directors who are devoted to seeing the Biddeford Mills Museum find a permanent space in Biddeford where they can display and care for their collections

and offer interactive exhibits, classes and walking tours that tell the history of the mills and the pivotal role they played in shaping Biddeford.

Engine

Engine was established in 2010 and was "Founded on the belief that artistic expression and creative vibrancy are the gateway to cultural, social, and economic revitalization,

Engine's Mission is "To make arts-driven programming, cultural development, and sustainable creative entrepreneurialism an explicit community value and civic priority in Biddeford."

Engine partners with the UNE to hold student and faculty art shows at its Main Street gallery and also organizes an ArtWalk on the final Friday of every month. Engine also oversees the public art committee, which guides investment in public art throughout the community.

Biddeford Museum in the Streets

The Museum in the Streets is a walking tour of Downtown Biddeford and follows a series of signs highlighting important historical features in the heart of Biddeford. It was developed by the Biddeford Historical Society.

Biddeford Historical Society

The Biddeford Historical Society (BHS) works to preserve, promote and interpret Biddeford's long and rich history.
BHS works to preserve historic sites and artifacts and maintains an extensive archive of historic materials. BHS also hosts classes, workshops and walking tours of Biddeford's historic sites.

Heart of Biddeford

Heart of Biddeford (HoB) is a volunteer-driven organization that works in partnership with the City of Biddeford, the business community, property owners, and residents to foster economic development and improve quality of life in downtown Biddeford by supporting existing businesses, attracting new businesses, promoting the downtown through events, and working to beautify the urban core.

Historic Preservation and Economic Development

In a 2011 economic impact report for Maine Preservation titled ***The Economic and Fiscal Impact on Maine of Historic Preservation and The State Historic Preservation Tax Credit Planning Decisions*** examined the impact historic rehabilitation projects had between 2007 and 2011. The report notes that this was a recession period of the economy which had a significant negative impact on the construction industry in Maine for this period. For example, unemployment in the construction sector rose from 6.5% to 14.2%, housing starts fell in half, and commercial construction activity severely declined.

During the same period, however, the report notes that the value of historic rehabilitation activity increased from $7 million in 2007 to $40 million in 2011. Further, in 2011 alone, tax credit sponsored Historic Rehabilitation were anticipated to support nearly 800 Maine jobs and $30 million of income.

Further, according to this same report 25, historic tax credit rehabilitation

projects were anticipated to have been completed between 2007 and the end of 2011, with an anticipated increase in Maine's property tax base by $135 Million. Further, these projects, although there will be an resulting in an estimated $3.5 million lost to the State from through the tax credit, would add $2.6 million in additional State income and sales tax revenues and an additional $1.9 million in municipal property tax revenues.

- **Every $1 spent on Historic Rehabilitation goes in a higher proportion to Maine crafts people than those out of State, than $1 spent on new construction (I.e., Maine workers benefits more)**
- **Another benefit is that since the Maine tax credit is typically coupled with the 20% Federal Historic tax credit, which can attract out of State investors thereby bringing money into Maine and promoting Economic Development**

Biddeford Main Street Historic District

The Biddeford-Saco Mills Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in December 2008. It is roughly bounded Pearl Street, Lincoln Street, York Street, Laconia Street, Main Street (Biddeford), and Main Street and Gooch Street in Saco. The buildings are generally characterized as being in good condition and that they retain adequate integrity so as to represent their significance as components of a mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century downtown. The downtown historic district also includes three parks.

The Main Street Historic District consists of over 50 structures built between 1846 and 1952.

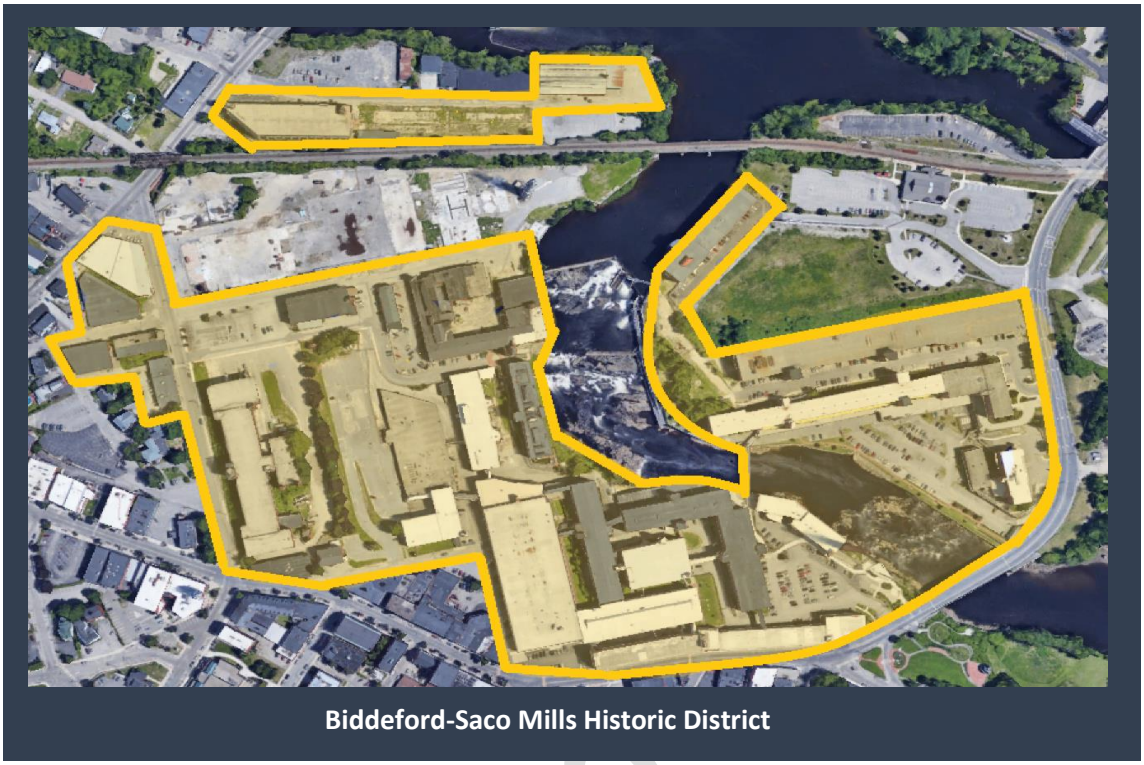
These building form a cohesive group that conveys the significance of the district as a social and commercial center of Biddeford.

Biddeford / Saco Mills Historic District

The Biddeford-Saco Mills Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in December 2008. It is roughly bounded Pearl Street, Lincoln Street, York Street, Laconia Street, Main Street (Biddeford), and Main Street and Gooch Street in Saco. It is characterized by its significance in the industrial history of Biddeford and its architecture which is a mix of Mid-19th Century/Greek Revival, Late Victorian/Italianate, and Modern Movement/Tanate.

According to the National Register of Historic Places:

"The Biddeford/Saco Mills Historic District is a cohesive collection of historic manufacturing buildings situated on roughly 38 acres of land flanking the Saco River. The district includes 13 properties in the city of Biddeford and the entirety of, or portions of six properties within the Saco city limits and is located adjacent to the downtown commercial areas of both cities. The river, which separates the two municipalities, runs through the district roughly north to south, with Biddeford on the west bank and Saco to the east…."



Biddeford-Saco Mills Historic District

Historic Architectural Survey

In Fall of 2022, The Biddeford Historic Preservation Commission embarked on a project to document historic buildings in the downtown and surrounding areas of the city. This project is called an Architectural Survey, and will be conducted by Kleinfelder, Northeast, Inc., a consultant the City hired through a competitive RFP process. Biddeford is fortunate to have a rich assortment of historic buildings, and this survey will record the wide range of buildings its history reflects, dating from the 1700s through the early 1970s.

The project will begin on or around November 1, 2022 and is expected to be completed by September 30, 2023. The Biddeford Architectural Survey is supported in part by a grant administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior and the Maine Historic Preservation Commission.

What Comes Next?

Educate citizens and property owners about the value of historical, archaeological, and cultural preservation.

Protect Biddeford's historic, cultural and archaeological resources to the greatest extent possible

Reduce The impact of climate change and sea level rise on Biddeford's historic, cultural and archaeological resources.

Support arts and culture facilities, events and the "creative economy" throughout Biddeford.

Goal 1

Educate Educate citizens and property owners about the value of historical, archaeological, and cultural preservation.

How We Get There:

- **Promote and support Downtown Biddeford, including the Mill District, as the historic and cultural core of the City.**
- **Continue to support the efforts of the Biddeford Historical Society, the Biddeford Historic Preservation Commission, and other entities such as the Biddeford Mills Museum, in promoting Biddeford's history and historic resources**
- **Support the implementation of the Biddeford Cultural Plan, completed in November 2021.**

Goal 2

Protect Biddeford's historic, cultural and archaeological resources to the greatest extent possible

How We Get There:

- **Maintain Biddeford's accreditation as a Certified Local Government (CLG) community.**
- **Building on Biddeford's new CLG status, begin a comprehensive community survey of historic buildings and structures in Biddeford. priority areas most at risk to loss. Potential match funds are available as a CLG community through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).**
- **Identify historic resources that are at risk of loss or damage due to climate change impacts.**
- **Amend the land development regulations to require that projects subject to Planning Board (or its designee) review incorporate maps, information, and comments available from the Maine State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).**
- **Ensure the Land Development Regulations, including the subdivision review regulations, require known historic resources be identified and that developers take appropriate measures to protect those resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation.**
- **Incentivize methods to increase adaptation of historic resources to climate change that is consistent with National Park Service Standards and protects the long-term stability of these structures.**
- **Continue to support efforts of the Biddeford Cultural Coalition, which advocates a strong role of arts and heritage in the city's social and economic fabric.**
- **Continue to support McArthur Library and its contribution to the arts and culture realm in Biddeford.**
- **Support the mapping of private cemeteries throughout Biddeford to better protect them from land use change and development.**
- **Ensure the Land Development Regulations, including the subdivision review regulations, require known archeological sites and areas sensitive to prehistoric archeology be identified and that developers take appropriate measures to protect those resources including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation**

Goal 3

Reduce The impact of climate change and sea level rise on Biddeford's historic, cultural and archaeological resources.

How We Get There:

- **Conduct an assessment of existing historic, cultural, and archaeological resources that may be vulnerable to sea level rise and other climate change related weather events**

Goal 4

Support Biddeford's historic, cultural and archaeological resources to the greatest extent possible

How We Get There:

- **Continue to support and fund efforts that enhance the promotion and marketing of Downtown through festivals and events such as the Biddeford-Saco Art Walk and River Jam festival**
- **Support the adoption and implementation of a Biddeford Public Art Policy which will establish a Biddeford Public Art Program and the development of a Public Art Master Plan.**
- **Work with community partners, including Heart of Biddeford and Engine, to seek out financial and technical assistance opportunities to support the creative economy in Biddeford.**
- **Formally recognize the history and culture of Indigenous People who inhabited the area that is now Biddeford with the support of the Cultural Community.**

Historic and Cultural Resources: Appendix

Biddeford's Historic Buildings

First Parish Meeting House.

The First Parish Meeting House is located on Old Pool Road. Built in 1759, the first Parish Meeting House was constructed for the purposes of holding public meetings. In 1840, it underwent remodeling. The belfry was removed, the galleries along the sides were taken down, the pulpit lowered and the sounding board removed. The Meeting House has remained unchanged since this time. It is owned by the Biddeford Historical Society and is used for public and private meetings. The Meeting House is in serious need of repair as the structure is plagued with dry rot and the foundation continues to deteriorate.

Biddeford City Hall, including City Theater.

Biddeford City Hall is located at 205 Main Street and is the most prominent building in the downtown. Originally built in 1860 it was destroyed by fire and rebuilt in 1894, when rebuilt the building was designed by John Calvin Stevens a noted Maine architect. The building was added the National Historic Register in 1973 and is part of Biddeford's Main Street Historic District.

City Hall is a large three and a half story brick building with a clock tower and belfry. The first floor is faced with granite which was saved from the original 1860s building. Each floor features different window structures and décor. The tower is built in three sections. The first section rises from the ground to two stories above the roof of the building. This section is topped with a heavy dentil cornice which in turn is topped with a balustrade. The next section is the clock housing which is constructed of wood over timber framing, this section as well was decorated with heavy dental cornice and balustrade. Above this is an open belfry which is topped with 10 12 foot high columns which support the dome. It should be noted that all of the balustrades have been removed because of their poor condition and so they wound not fall to the street.

City Hall and its clock tower are a significant part of Biddeford's skyline and an icon of the city.

City Hall is also home to City Theater, which originally opened in 1860 as an opera house within City Hall. After the fire that destroyed City Hall, it was decided by the city to rebuild City Theater as well. Over the years as entertainment had changed and opera

gave way to vaudeville, minstrel shows, and community pageants. The introduction of talking movies in the late 1920's began the transition from opera house to Movie Theater. In 1955 improvements were made to enhance movie going and the name of the opera house was officially changed to Biddeford 's City Theater. In the 1990's City Theater began a full interior restoration project which was completed in the early 2000's and is a popular venue for the Performing Arts, drawing crowds locally, regionally and beyond.

The building is owned by the City and is in poor shape. Although the heating system has been replaced major work is needed to repair the clock tower. In 2009 stabilization work was done to the tower to keep water from deteriorating more of the structure framing of the tower and to shore up the bell. The building is also in need of new windows throughout, re-pointing of the brick work, and upgrades to the electrical and fire alarm systems as well as installing a sprinkler system. An effort should be made to bring the interior back to a historically correct look as part of any renovation work.

Former U.S. Post Office.

The former U.S. Post Office is located at 35 Washington Street and was built in 1914. It is an excellent example of period (20th Century) architecture utilizing masonry construction of brick with granolithic quoins, lintels and arches. The original tin roof was replaced with copper in 1939. The main entrance and secondary entrance were also remodeled in 1939 to eliminate the original revolving doors and to replace them with swinging doors, vestibule and vestibule doors. For the most part, however, the building remains as originally built. The building was used by the Maine District Court while it was building a new facility across the street. Following use by the Maine District Court, it was used off and on by various small businesses, but has largely been vacant.

Fletcher's Neck Life Saving Station.

Located at 18 Ocean Avenue, Biddeford Pool, Fletcher's Neck Life Saving Station was built in 1874 and served as one of the first five life-saving stations established in Maine and New Hampshire by the Revenue Marine Bureau. It is a small one and a half story gable roofed building of frame construction. Most of the first story was used for storage of the 1,000 pound life boat. There was a room behind this area where seamen could sit during off-duty hours. The half story contained a room for the keeper and a dormitory for six men. The building is privately owned and being restored. It has been moved off its original site, closer to the road. Biddeford Pool's Life Saving Station remains as a small scale example of stick-style architecture as well as a coastal landmark of considerable maritime significance.

James Montgomery Flagg House.

The James Montgomery Flagg House ***was*** located on St. Martin's Lane, Biddeford Pool. It was built in 1910 and as of 1999 was identified as having been completely unaltered, privately owned, and in good condition. The house was of frame construction, with one

and a half stories, gabled roof, two brick chimneys, stucco finish and a field-stone foundation. The house served as the summer residence for illustrator, James Montgomery Flagg (1877-1960) who became best known for is illustration of the "I Want You" Uncle Sam recruiting poster.

By 2013 the house had fallen into significant interior and exterior disrepair. The principal reason the house was on the Historic Register was due to the preponderance of murals located on the interior of the house painted by Flagg. The owner of the house was represented by a Maine architect who had determined that the house would cost more to renovate than to build new, and that the owner intended to preserve the murals and include them in the design of a new house on the property. The house was demolished on November 15, 2013.

John Tarr House.

The John Tarr House is located at 29 Ferry Lane and was built around 1730. It is one of the State's earliest surviving dwellings. Its exterior displays characteristics typical of the low-posted Cape Cod style house with central chimney, central entrance and five-bay facade. Another entrance of indeterminate date faces south. The most significant feature of the house is the kitchen which has
completely wainscoted walls and ceiling and internal sliding wooden shutters. Presently, there are very few other examples of this type of work. The house is privately owned and is in good condition.

Dudley Block.

The Dudley Block is located between 28 -34 Water Street. It was built in 1848 and is a large, substantial commercial building in the Greek revival style. The three and a half story block is of brick construction with gable roof, 6/6 fenestration and granite trim and foundation. Each shop has its own single-door entrance between two store windows. The windows above the first story carry simple granite lintels typical of the period. The block is privately owned and despite minor storefront and internal alterations over the years, the original architectural theme is still there.

St. Josephs School.

St. Joseph's School is located at Birch Street. It was built in 1882 and served as a parochial school for a large Franco-American population. It is a rectangular three-story red brick building with a full fourth story contained beneath a steeply-pitched mansard roof. There is a one story brick shed-roofed exterior projection, rectangular in plan, appended to the southwest corner of the building. A four story rectangular brick stair tower at the north end of the building was added in 1916. The structure is set on a cut granite foundation and is characterized by a sparse Romanesque detailing. Over time, the entire building has been renovated. It is privately owned and utilized as an apartment building. The school is one of the principal monuments of the French-Canadian immigration to the State and the City of Biddeford.

Wood Island Light Station.

Wood Island Light Station is located on the east side of Wood Island. It was built in 1808 and consists of a conical granite light tower connected via a long narrow passageway to a two story frame, gambrel lightkeeper's house. The light tower is 47 feet tall and supports an iron walkway with railing and a centrally placed ten-sided lantern. The original keeper's house was built in 1858 and was a one and a half story, three bay frame dwelling sheathed in clapboards. In 1890, the roof was raised, a porch added and the ell height increased to from today's keeper's house. There is a stone oil house to the southwest of the Station, built in 1903, which consists of a gable roof and a door surmounted by a narrow ventilator opening at one end. The property is owned by the U.S. Coast Guard and the light station has been equipped with an automatic beacon. The property and buildings are in good shape.

The Friends of Wood Island Lighthouse (FOWIL) was formed in 2003 and is a Chapter of the American Lighthouse Foundation. It was formed specifically to preserve and restore the Wood Island Light Station. Although Maine Audubon Society owns most of Wood Island, the Coast Guard still owns the lighthouse. FOWIL became involved when the Coast Guard was looking for a nonprofit group to repair, maintain, restore and preserve Wood Island Lighthouse, which it still actively does today.

10 Recreation & Open Space

(01/23 Draft)

1. What's happening?

The City of Biddeford offers many recreational opportunities open to residents and visitors. With eighteen parks including three saltwater beaches, seven recreational facilities, and many other trails, open spaces and athletic facilities, Biddeford supports a strong recreational environment that allows residents of all ages to live active, healthy lives and engage with their community.
In addition to managing public parks and open space, the City of Biddeford hosts a wide array of programs, events and resources for the community

As Biddeford's population grows and demographics change, the recreational demands and needs of the community will also change.

Like many departments throughout the recreation field, the department transitioned from one that was entirely dependent on taxpayer funding to a hybrid that has allowed for growth and experimenting with programs. This transition took place in the late 90's and early 2000's. The department with the support of the community, volunteers and team members that dedicated a great deal of time and energy helped to provide this growth.

As many organizations when Covid-19 arrived it drastically affected the programs and services offered. The department continued to operate providing what it could to help support the community during this period. As we continue to work around Covid, the department continues to work to bring its former services back into the fold. Programs have once again begun to flourish being well received with so many looking to participate. Like many organizations and businesses, the challenge today is to find and retain full, part-time and seasonal staff that support the growth of these programs.

As a community agency, the Recreation Department also collaborates with local agencies such as the Heart of Biddeford and the Coastal Healthy Communities Coalition to provide opportunities for the community. These occur with local events such as the Family Fun Festival (former Bacon Street Festival), Winterfest and River Jam. The department also schedules activities in the parks with the Parks Department at

Public Works working to maintain the cities fields, parks and playgrounds. The Recreation Department also oversees the three ocean and one fresh water beaches providing lifeguard coverage and maintaining public restrooms within the parks.

It is also important to share the work the department does in collaboration with the Biddeford School Department. The School Department is a strong supporter of the Recreation Department; the two departments share facilities, the Recreation Department utilizes the schools to provide afterschool care and summer camps along with youth and adult sports. The School Department utilizes the city fields for its sports programs such as baseball, softball and field hockey along with classroom space at the J. Richard Martin Community Center. It is also important to note the Center of Technology (COT) has provided a great deal of service for the city constructing picnic tables, dugouts, the gazebo at Mechanics Park from the brick work up and recently the construction of a facility at Doran Field including restrooms, concessions, press box and rehab of the dugouts.

The Recreation Department also works with a multitude of city departments. Some assist with daily operations such as the Parks Department and others assist with projects or help support events such as the Public Works Department, Police and Fire Departments, Codes, Clerks and Engineering offices to name a few.

The department also works with area recreation departments and the University of New England to expand and enhance programming.

2. What the Community is Saying

"I Love our open spaces. Thanks to all who keep our open spaces clean, free from trash and well maintained"

"Recreational opportunities are important for tourism, and winter activities especially for locals. Need more dog friendly places in the city"

" Our farm and forest land should be preserved through conservation easements

"There are lots of opportunities to put more land into conservation"

"Accessing the beaches can be difficult"

3. Recreation and Open Space in Biddeford Today

26
Public Spaces
Parks, Beaches and Open Space

282
Acres
Of public open space

7
Recreational Facilities
Operated by the City

11%
Of Biddeford
Is Conserved as Public Open Space

The Recreation Department programs, activities and services for community members starts with preschool age youth to those 80+. Below is only a sampling of those services, programs and activities. The department is always adding new programs to its offerings.

Youth sports offerings include:

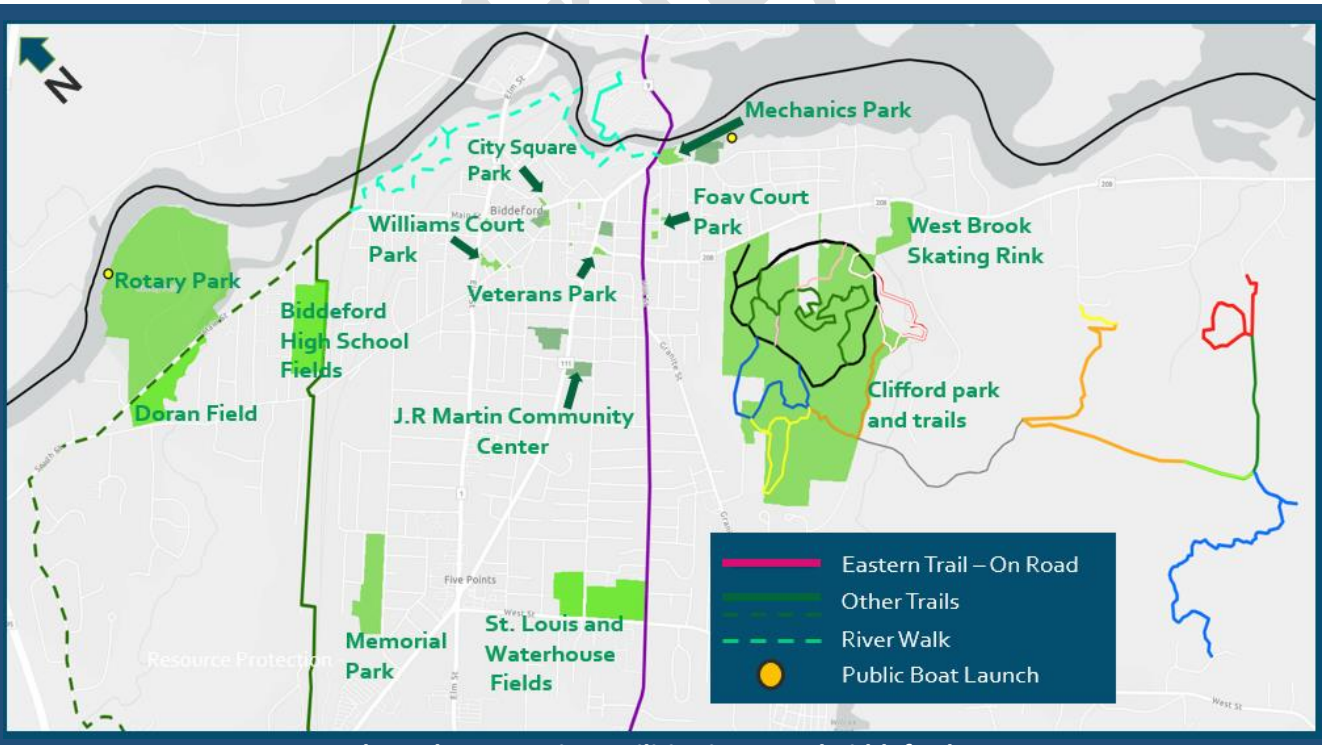
- Basketball
- Soccer
- Cheering
- Tennis
- Wrestling
- Parent-Child pre-school gym

Adult sports offerings include:

- Basketball
- Softball
- Volleyball
- Pickleball
- Fitness classes
- Outdoor adventure trips

The department also offers an afterschool care program (Cub Care) serving grades K-5, vacation camps, summer day camp programs for youth and teens, teen center, youth and family special events such as the Community Halloween Party and Easter Egg Hunt. Fifty Plus activities include; trips and wellness programs and housing the 50 Plus Club Ross Center, which offers social opportunities for those 50 Plus.

The department also manages the J. Richard Martin Community Center, which houses organizations such as Adult Education, Lakermesse, 50 Plus Club and St. Louis Alumni.



Parks and Community Facilities in Central Biddeford

Table 10-1. City Parks: Conditions and Needs		
Facility	**Condition**	**Needs**
Biddeford City Square / City Hall Plaza	N/A	None
Biddeford Pool Beach/Gilbert R. Boucher Memorial Park	Good	Additional Parking, Walkway Improvements
Biddeford River Walk	Excellent	Additional Seating
Cannon Park	Very Good	None
Clifford Park	Very Good	Trail Work, Signage
Diamond Match park	N/A :Undeveloped	Work with private developer to enhance riverfront access
Fortunes Rocks Beach	Very Good	Additional Parking
Foav Court Park	Good	None
Liberty Park	Fair	General maintenance and rehabilitation
Mechanics Park	Good to Fair	Repairs and rehabilitation of lower level
Memorial Park Recreation Hall	Fair	New roof, New windows, interior renovation
Memorial Park Playground and Tennis Courts	Very Good	New playground equipment
Middle Beach	Very Good	Additional Parking,
Park in the Pines	Very Good	Additional water source
Pierson's Lane Playground	Good	New Fence, security cameras
Rotary Park Bathhouse	Good	Possible restroom expansion
Rotary Park Teen Center	Very Good	None
Rotary Park Fields	Fair	Dog park lights, invasive species control, security cameras, field improvements
Shevenell Park	Fair	Rehabilitation, security cameras
St. Louis Field	Good to Fair	New building doors, ADA compliant restrooms, fencing

Staples St. Beach	N/A	None
Town Landing	Fair	Signage
Vines Landing	Very Good	New boat ramp
Yates St. Park	N/A	None – Passive Park

Table 10-1. City Parks: Conditions and Needs

4. Challenges and Opportunities

Regional Coordination and Partners

The City of Biddeford is fortunate to have a strong community of nonprofits, community groups and regional organizations that create and maintain public open spaces, trails and conservation areas. In total, over 700 acres of land in Biddeford is set aside for conservation and recreation.

Blanding's Park Wildlife Sanctuary.

Blandings Park Wildlife Sanctuary was founded in 2006 as a public charity 501 (c) 3 grassroots land trust. It is located off Pool Street at Blanding's Way approximately one (1) mile east of Downtown Biddeford. The Sanctuary now has over 200+ acres of valuable wildlife habitat preserved which consists of a network of trails.

East Point Sanctuary.

East Point Sanctuary is owned by the Maine Audubon and is located on the far eastern tip of Biddeford Pool - it is located directly North East of the Abanakee Golf Club. There is virtually no parking here and no restrooms but it is very well known for wildlife viewing, particularly birds.

Kennebunkport Conservation Trust.

The Kennebunkport Conservation Trust owns .92 acres of land at 501 West Street and has a conservation easement over 99 acres of land at 880 Pool street (City of Biddeford Open Space Plan, November 2012).

Marblehead Boat Launch.

Marblehead boat launch is a State of Maine facility located off Pool Street. It is heavily used particularly in the summer months. Restrooms provided. There are two boat ramps and a pier at this location, which makes it an ideal location for

boat launching into the Saco River. There is parking for approximately 60 vehicles including trailers.

Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service).

In Maine, the "Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1966 in cooperation with the State of Maine to protect valuable salt marshes and estuaries for migratory birds. Located along 50 miles of coastline in York and Cumberland counties, the refuge consists of eleven divisions between Kittery and Cape Elizabeth. It will contain approximately 14,600 acres when land acquisition is complete. The proximity of the refuge to the coast and its location between the eastern deciduous forest and the boreal forest creates a composition of plants and animals not found elsewhere in Maine. Major habitat types present on the refuge include forested upland, barrier beach/dune, coastal meadows, tidal salt marsh, and the distinctive rocky coast." .

In Biddeford, there are two divisions of the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge: the Biddeford Pool Division and the Little River Division. The Biddeford Pool Division controls property on the west side of Biddeford Pool off Old Pool Road. The Little River Division controls several properties on the east side of Little River in Granite Point including Timber Point and Timber Island. At the southernmost extent of Granite point Road, there is a small parking area that leads to what is referred to as Timber Point Trail which runs along the west side of Timber Point. At low tide, Timber Island can be accessed from the southernmost tip of this trail.

Rachel Carson's total acreage between the Little River Division and the Biddeford Pool Division is approximately 244.55 acres (City of Biddeford Open Space Plan, November 2012).

Saco Valley Land Trust.

Saco Valley Land Trust owns or has easements on over 725 acres of land scattered throughout Biddeford (City of Biddeford Open Space Plan, November 2012).

South Point Sanctuary.

South Point Sanctuary includes a pathway that runs from 7th Street southwest and ultimately to Biddeford Pool Beach. The land is owned and maintained by the Biddeford Pool Land Trust.

Riverwalk & Pearl Point Park

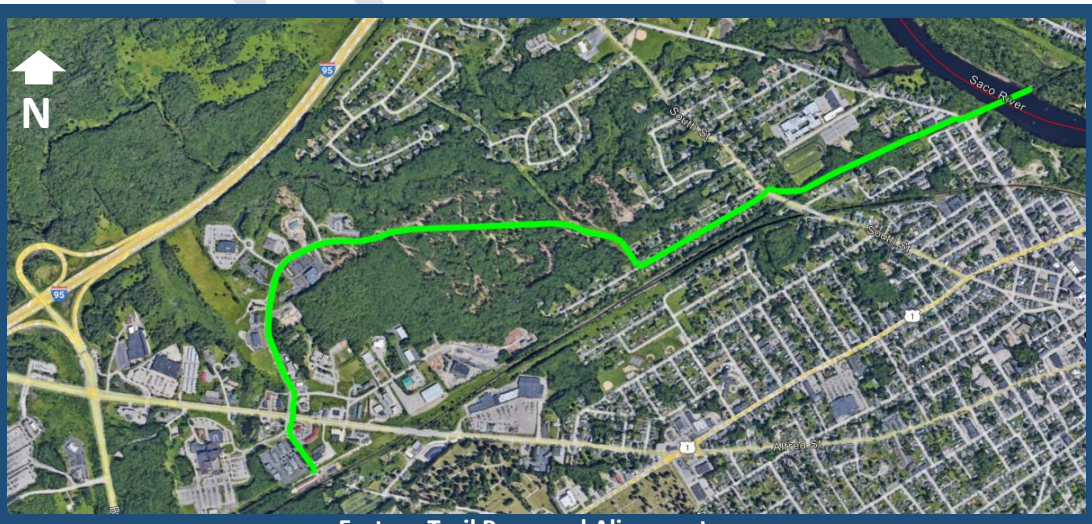
Working with private partners, the City is working to develop and expand the public riverwalk through the Mill District to connect the Diamond Match property, Pearl Point, and the Mill District. This expansion will greatly enhance public waterfront access and create enhanced connectivity to support new downtown development.

Pearl Point Park – Design Option #1

The Riverwalk will closely follow the Saco river, and will be anchored by a new signature downtown park to be named Pearl Point Park. This new park will connect Pearl Street with the riverfront, and will provide a direct connection to the Saco Transit Center via a new pedestrian bridge.

Eastern Trail

The Eastern Trail Alliance works to maintain, and promote the use of the Eastern Trail, a recreation and transportation greenway from Kittery to Portland. The Eastern Trail Alliance is currently in the planning phase of developing a new, off-road alignment for the trail through Biddeford and Saco. The proposed alignment would create new shared pathways along portions of Bara Rd, Westmore Ave. and a “rail with trail” alignment following the Saco Industrial Railroad. This new alignment would greatly improve trail connectivity and user safety while creating new recreational opportunities for our community.

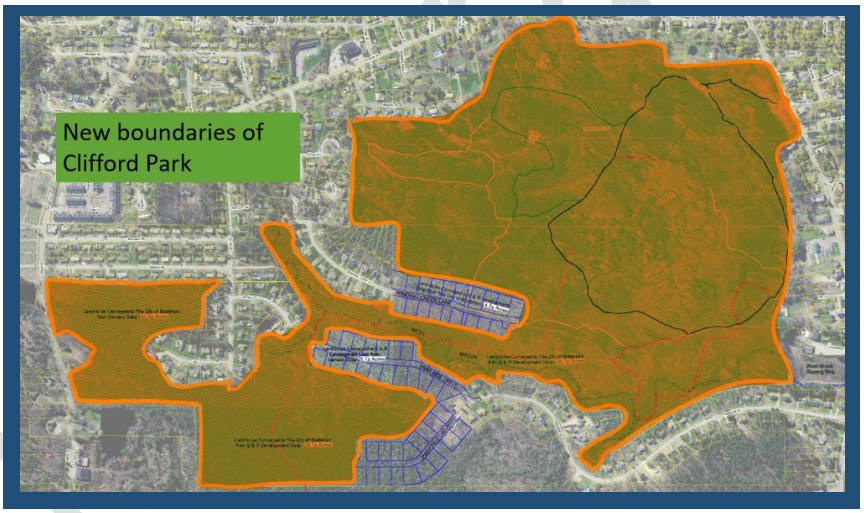


Eastern Trail Proposed Alignment

New Conservation Areas

The City of Biddeford has worked with private land owners, land trusts and the community to set aside new areas for conservation and recreation. These partnerships will create approximately 350 acres of new open space in coming years.

- **~250 acres** of conservation land created as part of the Maine Water Company relocation project. This conservation easement will be publically accessible managed by the Maine Coast Heritage Trust.
- **~100 acres** of new publically accessible land added to Clifford Park as part of a private land exchange. This park expansion will be managed by the city



New Playground

The City is in the early stages of developing and planning for a signature playground facility for children in the community. This playground would be accessible year-round for children of all ages, backgrounds and ability levels. (e.g., mentally and/or physically challenged children) and would feature a wide variety of modern, safe and unique playground equipment.

Open Space Master Plan

In order to fully understand the changing needs and opportunities for public parks, open spaces and community facilities in Biddeford, the City plans to develop an Open Space Master Plan in the near future. This plan would create a new framework for guiding investment in parks, trails, community facilities and recreation

Recreation & Open Space -

What Comes Next?

Much of what the department offers is dependent on the wants and needs as expressed by members of the community and feedback from the Recreation Commission. As the community changes so, will the offerings by the Recreation Department.

With Covid there has been an increased use of the public parks and trails as people searched for options to stay healthy and active.

Goal 1

MAINTAIN AND UPGRADE

Existing recreational facilities and infrastructure as necessary to meet current and future needs

How We Get There:

- **Develop a Recreation & Open Space Master Plan to address on-going maintenance needs as well as new facilities to meet current and future needs.**

- **Work with neighborhood groups to determine neighborhoods specific recreation needs and demands for consideration for future planning and implementation. Tie development requirements to these needs in the ordinance to best create an equitable distribution of recreation space.**

- Identify one (1) recreational facility location for improvements to create a signature playground for children of all ages, backgrounds, and ability levels (e.g., mentally and/or physically challenged children).

- Support and fund needed renovations at the Rotary Park bathhouse to meet current needs, ADA requirements, and to ensure equitable access is available to all Biddeford residents.

- Explore combining the maintenance of School and City recreation facilities under one management unit.

- Identify and plan for either a replacement to the Westbrook Skating Rink (should one be necessary) or for a second outdoor public skating rink in Biddeford.

- Analyze and prioritize funding for lighting and Americans with Disabilities Act (mobility) improvements at existing City facilities for users and spectators

- Evaluate options to provide additional public restrooms in Biddeford, especially Downtown and within the city's park system. Consider composting toilets or other ecologically sound options.

- Ensure that potential upgrades to facilities include a consideration/assessment of environmental issues such as energy/resource usage, climate change, lighting and noise impacts, and wildlife/biodiversity.

- Ensure safe travel lanes and parking spaces for bicycles at beaches and other recreational areas, particularly where car parking is limited.

Goal 2

PRESERVE

equitable access to open space for recreation and enjoyment

How We Get There:

- Provide educational materials regarding the benefits and protections for landowners allowing public recreational access on their property.

- Improve management, education and signage around Clifford Park trails and other City-owned areas to protect vernal pools, sensitive areas, and wildlife.

- **Improve public transit to and from Biddeford's recreational areas and facilities.**

- **Develop a Recreation and Open Space Master Plan that includes opportunities for public access to farm and forest lands where appropriate (e.g., hiking, cross-country skiing, nature observation).**

Goal 3

IMPROVE

Public access to the water for boating, fishing and swimming

How We Get There:

- **Complete the River Walk and Diamond Match Park property to create better access to waterfront activities for the urban population of Biddeford. This includes the new park at 3 Lincoln Street.**
- **Seek funding to implement the Mechanics Park carry-in canoe/kayak boat launch already designed and ready for implementation.**

14 Marine Resources

(1/23 Draft)

1. What's happening?

Marine resources are a critically important natural resource for the City of Biddeford, providing a multitude of commercial and recreational opportunities to residents and surrounding communities. To provide context, Biddeford has a total area of 59.08 square miles, of which 28.99 square miles are covered by water. Our proximity to the Atlantic Ocean and Saco River make Biddeford a highly desirable community to live, work and play.

The Saco River and Biddeford coast provide vital habitats for a variety of plant and wildlife species, and its miles of river frontage and coastline provide many recreational opportunities to local residents and tourists alike. Although the importance of Biddeford's marine resources has declined from a commercial perspective, there still exists a number of commercial operations that are resource dependent. As we look to the future, it will be critically important to balance commercial and recreational activiites with the desires and goals of the community as we plan for anticipated climate related impacts to our marine environment. Although man plays an important role in securing and protecting the health and vitality of our community's marine resources, our greatest threat is coming from Mother Nature herself.

As defined in the Climate Change chapter, Biddeford's coastline is facing severe consequences of sea level rise and the rapid warming of the Gulf of Maine. Because storms tend to intensify over warm water, Maine is experiencing an increase in the severity and impacts of coastal storms. But its not only the coastline that is potentially vulnerable. Heavy rainfall across the state impacts the Saco River, making our community more vulnerable to flooding and catastrophic impacts to municipal infrastructure. Some of our most treasured community assets, our beaches, parks, estuaries and water access points, and important, life-sustaining infrastructure, our water and wastewater and transportation infrastructure, are our most vulnerable.

2. What the Community is Saying

"The Saco River and the estuary is one of the best kept secrets in York County. Its abundance of birds and fish species make it a beautiful place to experience being on the water. We need to protect this resource for future generations."

"Biddeford's beaches are changing as the environment changes. Erosion is a huge challenge for homeowners and the city. We need to be more proactive about how we're going to handle damage from future storms."

"It would be nice to have easier access to Biddeford's beaches. Parking is hard to find in the summer."

"I'd like to see more access for kayaks and canoes on the Saco River"

"I'd love to see the City develop a Town Landing for boats to visit the downtown area. I think it would attract a lot of people who are curious about Biddeford's new food scene"

"We need to ensure future generations have access to the water. Too many property owners think the beach is exclusively for them. They are public assets everyone should be able to enjoy"

3. What are Biddeford's Marine Resources?

In order to better understand the challenges that lie ahead, we must first understand how we define and categorize Biddeford's marine resources. Much of the detail behind each of the following uses may be found in the Appendices of this document.

A. Water Dependent Uses In Biddeford:

The following represent the major water dependent uses in Biddeford who gain economic benefit from the Saco River and the coastal waters surrounding Biddeford.

1. Shellfish Harvesting at Biddeford Pool
2. Commercial Boat Yard on the Saco River
3. Biddeford Pool Yacht Club
4. Biddeford Pool Fishermen's Association
5. University of New England – Department of Marine Sciences and Center for Excellent in the Marine Sciences
6. Brookfield Renewable
7. Commercial processors

B. Current Land Use Regulations On or Near the Shoreline:

The following are responsible for land use regulations near the shoreline. Virtually any activity or use must be reviewed and/or approved by the following list of organizations. Detailed descriptions of each entity may be found in the Appendices.

1. Saco River Corridor Commission
2. Maine DEP Site Law (Site Location of Development)
3. Natural Resources Protection Act
4. Biddeford's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance [See Section 12: Water Resources for more information about Biddeford's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance districts.]

C. Marine Facilities

The following is a list of public and private marine facilities in the City of Biddeford and Biddeford Pool. Detailed descriptions may be found in the Appendices.

1. Biddeford Pool Beach/Gilbert R. Boucher Memorial Park
2. Biddeford Pool Yacht Club
3. Fortunes Rocks Beach
4. Marblehead Boat Launch

5. Mechanics Park
6. Middle Beach
7. Park in the Pines
8. Rotary Park
9. Town Landing
10. Vines Landing
11. Wood Island
12. Biddeford RiverWalk
13. Diamond Match Park
14. East Point Sanctuary
15. Staples Street Beach
16. Yates Street Park
17. Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge

[We could use a graphic/map of all locations flagged]

4. Challenges and Opportunities

Biddeford has been actively engaged in coastal water quality monitoring, water pollution planning, restoration of the clam flats, protecting water dependent uses, addressing land-use conflicts, reviewing land use zoning for working waterfronts, participating in regional and local future land use planning efforts, working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to dredge the Saco River and Biddeford Pool/Wood Island Gut, and ensuring that the public has access to Biddeford's marine waters for years to come. Much of this work is on-going and will be in-process for many years to come. A significant vulnerability to the completion of this work is public interest and engagement.

Marine Resources -

What Comes Next?

In order to best protect Biddeford's Marine Resources for future generations, the city will need to adopt policies, supported by strategies and tactics to accomplish specific goals. It will take hard work, but future generations are sure to be thankful for the efforts.

Goal

Protect The State's and Biddeford's marine resources industry, ports and harbors from incompatible development and provide access to the shore for commercial fishermen and the public.

How We Get There:

To protect, maintain and, where warranted, improve marine habitat and water quality:

- Ensure that land use ordinances are consistent with applicable state law regarding important natural resources.
- Encourage owners of marine businesses and industries to participate in clean marina/boatyard programs.

To foster water-dependent land uses and balance them with other complementary land uses:

- Identify needs for additional recreational and commercial access (which includes parking, boat launches, docking space, fish piers, and swimming access).
- Provide information about the Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program and current use taxation program to owners of waterfront land used to provide access to or support the conduct of commercial fishing activities.

14-5

To maintain and, where warranted, improve harbor management and facilities.

- Provide information about the Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program and current use taxation program to owners of waterfront land used to provide access to or support the conduct of commercial fishing activities.

- If applicable, provide sufficient funding for and staffing of the harbormaster and/or harbor commission.

To protect, maintain and, where warranted, improve physical and visual public access to the community's marine resources for all appropriate uses including fishing, recreation, and tourism.

- Identify needs for additional recreational and commercial access (which includes parking, boat launches, docking space, fish piers, and swimming access).

To promote the maintenance, development, and revitalization of the State's ports and harbors for fishing, transportation and recreation.

- Identify needs for additional recreational and commercial access (which includes parking, boat launches, docking space, fish piers, and swimming access).

- Provide information about the Working Waterfront Access Pilot Program and current use taxation program to owners of waterfront land used to provide access to or support the conduct of commercial fishing activities.

Manage the marine environment and its related resources to preserve and improve the ecological integrity and diversity of marine communities and habitats, to expand our understanding of the productivity of the Gulf of Maine and coastal waters and to enhance the economic value of the State's renewable marine resources.

- Encourage owners of marine businesses and industries to participate in clean marina/boatyard programs.

To support shoreline management that gives preference to water-dependent uses over other uses, that promotes public access to the shoreline and that considers the cumulative effects of development on coastal resources

- Work with local property owners, land trusts, and others to protect major points of physical and visual access to coastal waters, especially along public ways and in public parks.

To discourage growth and new development in coastal areas where, because of coastal storms, flooding, landslides or sea-level rise, it is hazardous to human health and safety.

- To encourage and support cooperative state and municipal management of coastal resources.

To protect and manage critical habitat and natural areas of state and national significance and maintain the scenic beauty and character of the coast even in areas where development occurs.

To restore and maintain the quality of our fresh, marine and estuarine waters to allow for the broadest possible diversity of public and private uses.

- Encourage owners of marine businesses and industries to participate in clean marina/boatyard programs.

- Support implement of local and regional harbor and bay management plans.

To restore and maintain coastal air quality to protect the health of citizens and visitors and to protect enjoyment of the natural beauty and maritime characteristics of the Maine coast.

Marine Resources - Appendix

Water Dependent Uses in Biddeford:

1. Shellfish Harvesting:

The Maine Department of Marine Resources used to (up until approximately 10-12 years ago) issue shellfish licenses. Currently licenses are issued by the City Clerk's Office and are valid from June 1 to May 31.

In terms of shellfish, the primary shellfish harvested in Biddeford is clams. Up until the 2010/2011 shellfish season, there were eight (8) available shellfish permits in Biddeford (seven (7) resident commercial license holders and one (1) non-resident commercial holder). As noted above, currently there are ten (10) commercial shellfish license holders within Biddeford (nine (9) resident commercial license holders and one (1) non-resident commercial holder). Of the nine (9) resident commercial licenses, 2 are reserved for persons 62 years and older. Current commercial license holders have first rights to those permits in a subsequent season.

In terms of recreational shellfish licenses, there is an unlimited number of shellfish licenses available for residents of Biddeford. For non-residents since the 2010/2011 there have been only sixty (60) recreational shellfish permits available, all of which have been issued. Recreational shellfish licenses limit possession at any one time to 10 gallons (approximately a peck).

As seen in Table 14-1, the number of resident recreational shellfish permits has generally increased over the past twelve (12) shellfish seasons.

Recreation Resident Shellfish Licenses, 2006/2017 Season through 2017/2018 Season (At End of Season)

Season	# of Recreational Resident Shellfish Licenses
2006/2007	89
2007/2008	84
2008/2009	81
2009/2010	86
2010/2011	110

2011/2012	135
2012/2013	161
2013/2014	141
2014/2015	122
2015/2016	126
2016/2017	163
2017/2018	156

1. Rumery's Boatyard:

Rumery's Boat Yard. Rumery's Boat Yard is located on Cleaves Street in Biddeford. It operates year-round primary activity is repair, service and electric boat rental. In 2022, Rumery's Boat Yard employed 10 people. The location is also home of Maine Electric Boat Company and Marine Solar Technologies.

Rumery's is a full-service facility that can support vessels up to 55 feet in length. There is a 25 ton travel lift and storage inside for about 50 boats and outside for another 40 boats. The facility cannot provide wet storage because the Saco River freezes over in this area. There is an earth-filled, stone bulkhead with access to the floats. There is a large brick building used as an office and repair shops. There is also a large metal building and two wooden boat sheds. There is about 900 feet of shore frontage on a Federal Turning Basin of the Saco River.

Plans: Rumery's is investing in electric propulsion and autonomous water monitoring buoys for near-shore research.

2. Biddeford Pool Yacht Club.

   The Biddeford Pool Yacht Club (BPYC) is located at 17 Yates Street in Biddeford Pool Village. BPYC is privately owned, and according to its website (www.biddefordpoolyachtclub.org) has been in existence for over seventy-five (75) years (incorporated on August 13, 1934) and offers its members opportunities for sailing, fishing, and racing. Sailing lessons are available for both members and non-members and Biddeford youth can obtain free lessons through its Maryann Beaudry Memorial Scholarship. BPYC also works with the Fisherman's Association to promote fishing in Biddeford's waters. The BPYC also has five (5) transient moorings for guests for $35 a night, which, according to the website, includes showers, two round-trip launch rides, and wireless internet access.

3. Biddeford Pool Fisherman's Association.

   The Biddeford Pool Fishermen's Association operates a wooden pile, wooden-plank decked pier with float landings. There is electricity on the

dock, mechanical handling equipment and night lighting. There is a small one-story, wood-frame building abutting the pier that is used as a bait shed. The facility is leased from the BPYC (see above) use by the fishermen of the area.

4. University of New England.

   The University of New England (UNE) has nearly 4,000 feet of shore frontage on the Saco River. Aside from the scenic qualities of its riverfront environment, UNE also uses the Saco River for rowing and sailing activities.

   More importantly, UNE's Department of Marine Sciences and Center for Excellence in the Marine Sciences program utilizes the Saco River and coastal areas of Biddeford for academic and research purposes.

   UNE researchers recently completed the Saco River Estuary Project which touted itself as "A unique collaboration between UNE scientist, students and community partners to study a biologically unique body of water and the rich assemblage of species adapted to its dynamic conditions" (http://www.une.edu/sacoriver). See below for more information about this project.

5. Brookfield Renewable:

   Brookfield Renewable owns two hydroelectric dams on the Saco River from which they generate electricity. They were acquired from Central Maine Power in 1999.

6. Commercial Wharves:

   There are no active commercial wharves in Biddeford.

Current Land Use Regulations On or Near the Shoreline:

1. Saco River Corridor Commission: The Saco River Corridor Commission, created by legislative action in 1973, is a regional level land use regulatory agency made up of a member and an alternate from each of the twenty Corridor communities. The Corridor includes all lands within 500 feet of the riverbank on each side. If the 100 year floodplain extends farther than 500 feet, the Corridor follows the flood line up to 1000 feet from the river bank. The purpose of the Saco River Corridor Act and the Commission is to protect and preserve land and water quality within the Corridor. In order to accomplish this purpose, the Act provided a permit procedure and established three land use districts: resource protection, general development and limited residential. In each of the three different districts, the Act specifies those types of uses which are allowed without a permit, allowed with a permit or prohibited altogether. All buildings regardless of the district, must be setback

at least 100 feet from the normal high water line of the Ossipee, Little Ossipee or Saco River. The permit procedure is the main stay of the Saco River Corridor Act. Through its system of permits and variances, the Commission is able to safeguard the Corridor lands and waters.

2. Maine DEP Site Law (Site Location of Development): Large development projects are required to obtain a permit through the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (Maine DEP) under this law. The purpose is to ensure that these larger projects are subject to an increased level of review regarding their potential to have an impact on the environment. There is an opportunity also that community can obtain "Delegated Authority" to review projects within a communities own boundaries under this law instead of Maine DEP if they receive the authority to do so. Biddeford has been identified as having the "Capacity" to have Delegated Authority, but has not requested this designation from the Maine DEP.

3. Natural Resources Protection Act: Through the Maine DEP activities in, on, or adjacent to protected natural resources, including rivers, streams, brooks, great ponds, coastal wetlands, freshwater wetlands, and sand dunes require a permit. Standards within the Act spell out what is and is not permitted.

4. Biddeford's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance: In an attempt to protect Biddeford's streams and waterways and the land abutting these areas, a Shoreland Zoning Ordinance was adopted by the City Council in December of 1990. It was recently updated in 2016. Shoreland zoning's goal seeks to preserve the quality of local surface waters, preserve wildlife habitat areas and preserve the general quality of life factors such as scenic vistas and open space. See Section 12: Water Resources for more information about Biddeford's Shoreland Zoning Ordinance districts.

Marine Faciltiies (boat launches, piers, etc.)

Biddeford Pool Beach/Gilbert R. Boucher Memorial Park. Located off Beachhouse Lane this is a large sandy beach that offers opportunities for swimming general beach activities. Small boats may also be able to be launched at this location via hand-carry. There is a bathhouse for changing and restrooms. The City of Biddeford provides lifeguards in the summer months. There is a substantial amount of parking available (approximately 100 cars). Seasonal beach parking permits are required for the summer months.

Plans: None.

Biddeford Pool Yacht Club. The Biddeford Pool Yacht Club (BPYC) is located at 17 Yates Street in Biddeford Pool Village. BPYC is privately owned, and according to its website (www.biddefordpoolyachtclub.org) has been in

existence for over seventy-five (75) years (incorporated on August 13, 1934) and offers its members opportunities for sailing, fishing, and racing. Sailing lessons are available for both members and non-members and Biddeford youth can abtain free lessons through its Maryann Beaudry Memorial Scholarship. BPYC also works with the Fisherman's Association to promote fishing in Biddeford's waters. The BPYC also has five (5) transient moorings for guests for $35 a night, which, according to the website, includes showers, two round-trip launch rides, and wireless internet access.

Plans: None.

Fortunes Rocks Beach. Located approximately 1 mile southwest of Biddeford Pool, this large two (2) mile long sandy beach offers opportunities for swimming general beach activities. Small boats may also be able to be launched at this location via hand-carry. Many people also use this area for surfing. There are seasonal portable bathrooms and the City of Biddeford provides lifeguards in the summer months. There is some on-street parking available (approximately 50 cars). Seasonal beach parking permits are required for the summer months.

Plans: None

Marblehead Boat Launch. Marblehead boat launch is a State of Maine facility located off Pool Street. It is heavily used particularly in the summer months. Portable restrooms are provided. There are two boat ramps and a pier at this location which makes it an ideal location for boat launching into the Saco River. There is parking for approximately 60 vehicles including trailers.

Plans: None.

Mechanics Park. Mechanics Park is located at the corner of Main Street and Water Street.

Plans: Through a State grant the City has a fully-designed and ready for construction canoe/kayak launch for the eastern limit of Mechanics Park.

Middle Beach. Middle Beach is located opposite of Bridge Road at its intersection with Mile Stretch Road. Is a flat sandy beach and the City of Biddeford provides lifeguards in the summer months. There are no restrooms at Middle Beach. There is a limited amount of parking available (approximately 25 cars) on Beach Avenue directly across from Bridge Road. Seasonal beach parking permits are required for the summer months.

Plans: None.

Moorings. A mooring is a means in which to secure a vessel to a particular location in Biddeford's waters.

Park in the Pines. Park in the Pines is a small passive park located at 194 Hills Beach Road. It offers tremendous views of Biddeford Pool and its wildlife. It also provides access to the pool for hand-carried boats such as canoes and kayaks. Park includes a Bocce Ball Court. There are no parking or restroom facilities at this park.

Plans: None.

Rotary Park. Rotary Park is a popular park located at 550 Main Street on the Saco River. It is 72 acres in size and features walking trails, two playgrounds, the softball field with lights, youth football field, the teen center, a dog park, Skate Park, picnic tables and grills, a sand volleyball court, and a beach for access for swimming in the Saco River. It also features a boat launch for access to this non-tidal portion of the Saco River. Further, Rotary Park is a popular location for winter sledding with its hilly terrain.

Plans: Although there are no current plans, the following should be implemented, including but not limited to:

- Bathhouse expansion to add a family restroom and changing area.
- Dog Park-lights should be installed.
- Certain sections of the swimming area need to be addressed as the clay has become a hazard.
- Security Cameras are needed.
- Martel Field backstop needs replacing.
- Minor fence repairs are also needed.
- Invasive species located throughout the park (2016 report) need to be dealt with.

Rumery's Boatyard. Rumery's Boatyard Inc. is located on Water Street in Biddeford. It operates year-round primary activity is repair, service and dockage rental. In 1999 Rumery's Boatyard employed 16 people. In Spring 2018 it employed 10 people.

Rumery's is is a full service marina that can build craft up to 55 feet in length. There is a 17 ton travel lift and storage inside for about 45 boats and outside for about 100 boats. The facility cannot provide wet storage because the Saco River freezes over in this area. There is an earth-filled, stone bulkhead with wooden pile, wooden-deck access piers to the float landings. There is a large brick building used as a marine supply store, office, repair shop, storage

building. There is also a large metal building used as a boat shed. There is about 480 feet of shore frontage.

Plans: Rumery's is currently exploring the establishment of a pump-out station, but this may be 1-2 years out. It is also considering starting sailboat tours out of its facility in June 2018.

Town Landing. Town Landing is a laid out city street, approximately 15 feet wide, that provides access to the Saco River from Hills Beach Road within the UNE campus.

Plans: None.

Vines Landing. Vines Landing is located at the westerly end of Lester B. Orcutt Boulevard at what is locally referred to as "the gut". It is a passive park with a gravel boat launch and features great scenic views of Biddeford Pool, the Atlantic Ocean, and Wood Island Lighthouse. There is limited parking available at Vines Landing.

Plans: None.

Wood Island. Wood Island is home to a Maine Audubon Nature Preserve as well as the U.S. Coast Guard's Wood Island Lighthouse. The Nature Preserve is approximately 30 acres in size and offers opportunities for walking and nature viewing including wildlife. There is a small boat launch/ramp located at the west end of the Island. No public restroom facilities.

Plans: None.

Public access points to marine resources.

Biddeford Pool Beach/Gilbert R. Boucher Memorial Park. Located off Beachhouse Lane this is a large sandy beach that offers opportunities for swimming general beach activities. Small boats may also be able to be launched at this location via hand-carry. There is a bathhouse for changing and restrooms. The City of Biddeford provides lifeguards in the summer months. There is a substantial amount of parking available (approximately 100 cars). Seasonal beach parking permits are required for the summer months.

Condition: Bathhouse - Good; Walkways - Good
Needs: Additional Parking is needed. Walkway improvements to reduce the grade from the sea wall to the beach are needed.

Biddeford RiverWalk. The Biddeford RiverWalk is an evolving project intended to connect Mechanics Park on Water Street to the Diamond Match Park project (future) and points west including the Eastern Trail. To date the RiverWalk project connects Mechanics Park to the City of Saco via a concrete walkway 135 foot pedestrian bridge over the Saco River to Saco Island, thus connecting to Saco's RiverWalk. The RiverWalk also continues through the North Dam Mill complex to Laconia Plaza located on the Saco River. The City of Biddeford's recently completed a master plan that conceptually lays out the future RiverWalk from Laconia Plaza to the Diamond Match site via alternate routes along the river, with potential further connections to the City of Saco via two additional pedestrian bridges. In 2016 the City completed, with the assistance of Wright-Pierce Engineers, a RiverWalk Master Plan Update.

Condition: Excellent. No boat access. No public restroom facilities.
Needs: Seating on the Overlook by Main Street. Implementation of the 2016 Master Plan Update.

Diamond Match Park. This park is not yet constructed but a Master Plan was completed in July 2010. The parcel of landed is owned by the city of Biddeford now comprises approximately 9.8 acres of land that is undeveloped. Visual access to the Saco River is available here.

Condition: N/A. Undeveloped Vacant Land. No boat access. No public restroom facilities.
Needs: Implementation of the July 2010 Master Plan.

East Point Sanctuary. It's point sanctuary is owned by Maine Audubon and is located on the far eastern tip of Biddeford Pool - it is located directly North East of the Abanakee Golf Club. There is virtually no parking here and no restrooms but it is very well known for wildlife viewing, particularly birds, and its visual access to the Atlantic Ocean.

Condition: N/A. No boat access. No public restroom facilities.
Needs: None known.

Fortunes Rocks Beach. Located approximately 1 mile southwest of Biddeford Pool, this large two (2) mile long sandy beach offers opportunities for swimming general beach activities. Small boats may also be able to be launched at this location via hand-carry. Many people also use this area for surfing. There are seasonal portable bathrooms and the City of Biddeford provides lifeguards in the summer months. There is some on-street parking available (approximately 50 cars). Seasonal beach parking permits are required for the summer months.

Condition: Very Good
Needs: Additional Parking

Marblehead Boat Launch. Marblehead boat launch is a State of Maine facility located off Pool Street. It is heavily used particularly in the summer months. Portable restrooms are provided. There are two boat ramps and a pier at this location which makes it an ideal location for boat launching into the Saco River. There is parking for approximately 60 vehicles including trailers.

Condition: N/A – State Owned
Needs: Unknown

Mechanics Park. Mechanics Park is located at the corner of Main Street and Water Street. It features a walking path down to a River Overlook and great views of the Saco River. It also contains a gazebo where events such as weddings occasionally occur, picnic tables and feeding seating, bicycle parking, and a fitness station. Parking is available on Water Street as well as at what is referred to as the Gas House parking lot adjacent to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. It is a fairly well used passive park with quite a bit of open green space. Future plans include additional walking trails along the river and a possible carry-in canoe and/or kayak launch.

Condition: Upper level - Very Good; Lower Level - Fair to Poor. No boat access. No public restroom facilities.
Needs: Lower Level is in need of major repairs to the wall between the park and river. A sink hole has developed making one section of the lower level hazardous. The remainder of the park needs a solution to overgrown vegetation creating potential unsafe areas for visitors. Purchase of a piece of property between the Current Park and former CMP piece is desirable to create a singular park along the river. Security cameras are needed.

Middle Beach. Middle Beach is located opposite of Bridge Road at its intersection with Mile Stretch Road. Is a flat sandy beach and the City of Biddeford provides lifeguards in the summer months. There are no restrooms at Middle Beach. There is a limited amount of parking available (approximately 25 cars) on Beach Avenue directly across from Bridge Road. Seasonal beach parking permits are required for the summer months.

Condition: Very Good. No boat access. No public restroom facilities.
Needs: Additional parking and the control of invasive species.

Park in the Pines. Park in the Pines is a small passive park located at 194 Hills Beach Road. It offers tremendous views of Biddeford Pool and its wildlife. It also provides access to the pool for hand-carried boats such as canoes and kayaks. Park includes a Bocce Ball Court. There are no parking or restroom facilities at this park.

Condition: Very Good. No public restroom facilities.
Needs: Volunteers have requested a water source to maintain plants and flowers within the park.

Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). In Maine the "Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1966 in cooperation with the State of Maine to protect valuable salt marshes and estuaries for migratory birds. Located along 50 miles of coastline in York and Cumberland counties, the refuge consists of eleven divisions between Kittery and Cape Elizabeth. It will contain approximately 14,600 acres when land acquisition is complete. The proximity of the refuge to the coast and its location between the eastern deciduous forest and the boreal forest creates a composition of plants and animals not found elsewhere in Maine. Major habitat types present on the refuge include forested upland, barrier beach/dune, coastal meadows, tidal salt marsh, and the distinctive rocky coast."
Source: *https://www.fws.gov/refuge/rachel_carson/about.html*.

In Biddeford there are two divisions of the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge: the Biddeford Pool Division and the Little River Division. The Biddeford Pool Division controls property on the west side of Biddeford Pool off Old Pool Road. The Little River Division controls several properties on the east side of Little River in Granite Point including Timber Point and Timber Island. At the southernmost extent of Granite point Road there is a small parking area which leads to what is referred to as Timber Point Trail which runs along the west side of Timber Point. At low tide Timber Island can be accessed from the southernmost tip of this trail.

Condition: N/A. No formal boat access. No public restroom facilities.
Needs: None Known

Rotary Park. Rotary Park is a popular park located at 550 Main Street on the Saco River. It is 72 acres in size and features walking trails, two playgrounds, the softball field with lights, youth football field, the teen center, a dog park, Skate Park, picnic tables and grills, a sand volleyball court, and a beach for access for swimming in the Saco River. It also features a boat launch for access to this non-tidal portion of the Saco River. Further, Rotary Park is a popular location for winter sledding with its hilly terrain.

Condition: Bathhouse - Good;
Needs: Bathhouse expansion would be helpful in order to add a family restroom and changing area. Dog Park-lights should be installed. Certain sections of the swimming area need to be addressed as the clay has become a hazard. In general the projects laid out in the 2009 Master Plan should be addressed. Invasive species located throughout the park (2016 report) need

to be dealt with. Security Cameras are needed. Martel Field backstop needs replacing. Minor fence repairs are also needed.

South Point Sanctuary. South Point Sanctuary includes a pathway that runs from 7th Street southwest and ultimately to Biddeford Pool Beach. The land is owned and maintained by the Biddeford Pool Land Trust.

Condition: N/A. No boat access. No public restroom facilities.
Needs: None Known

Staples Street Beach. Staples St., Beach is located at the end of Staples Street in Biddeford Pool is a small rocky beach that is maintained by the Biddeford Pool Improvement Association. There is no parking available so access is pedestrian only.

Condition: N/A. No formal boat access. No public restroom facilities.
Needs: None Known

Town Landing. Town Landing is a laid out city street, approximately 15 feet wide, that provides access to the Saco River from Hills Beach Road within the UNE campus.

Condition: Fair. Carry-in boat access only. No public restroom facilities.
Needs: For the public to be able to access this location signage/demarcation is needed.

Vines Landing. Vines Landing is located at the westerly end of Lester B. Orcutt Boulevard at what is locally referred to as "the gut". It is a passive park with a gravel boat launch and features great scenic views of Biddeford Pool, the Atlantic Ocean, and Wood Island Lighthouse. There is limited parking available at Vines Landing.

Condition: Very Good. No public restroom facilities.
Needs: Boat ramp.

Wood Island. Wood Island is home to a Maine Audubon Nature Preserve as well as the U.S. Coast Guard's Wood Island Lighthouse. The Nature Preserve is approximately 30 acres in size and offers opportunities for walking and nature viewing including wildlife.

Condition: N/A. There is a small boat launch/ramp located at the west end of the Island. No public restroom facilities.
Needs: None Known

Yates Street Park. Each Street Park is located next to Vines Landing in Biddeford Pool. As a park that was established by the Biddeford Pool Land

Trust upon donation of the land from its former. It is a passive park with great views of Biddeford Pool is suitable for picnicking and birdwatching. Parking is very limited in the area.

Condition: N/A. No boat access. No public restroom facilities.
Needs: None Known

G. Working Waterfront Current Use Lands:

"Working waterfront land" means a parcel or portion of a parcel of land abutting tidal waters or one that is located in the intertidal zone (located between the high and low water mark) the use of which is more than 50% related to providing access to or in support of the conduct of commercial fishing (including commercial aquaculture) activities. Working waterfront land used predominantly (more than 90%) as working waterfront is eligible for a 20% reduction from just value. Working waterfront land used primarily (more than 50%) as working waterfront is eligible for a 10% reduction from just value. Working waterfront land that is permanently protected from a change in use through deeded restriction is eligible for the aforementioned reduction plus an additional 30% reduction. If the property no longer qualifies as Working Waterfront, then a penalty would be assessed using the same methodology as is used for removal from Tree Growth classification.

Biddeford did not have any acreage in the Working Waterfront Current Use Program in 2006 and 2016.