

Hampden Town Center Plan
Public Meeting #2 – Considering Options for the Town Center
September 25, 2018

The Town of Hampden is undertaking a planning effort for the area generally located along Main Road from Western Avenue to Kennebec Road. It includes Western Avenue to about the Route 202 and school entrance intersection. The purpose of this planning effort is to review zoning and infrastructure changes that will enable the development of a Town Center, the vision and goals for which will be defined through this process.

Purpose of the Meeting

The purpose of the second meeting held on September 25, 2018, was to build on the visioning work from the first session by gauging preference for potential strategies to meet the goals of the planning project.

The meeting was split into two parts. The first part was based on a presentation by Ben Smith, AICP, of North Star Planning. The second was a review of poster stations in an open house-style format.

Presentation

The presentation included an introduction to the concept of an activity center hierarchy. This is a useful way to think of commercial and mixed use areas based on the number and types of businesses and from how far away does the area attract people to shop and spend time. The areas discussed include:

- Convenience Center
 - The Main Road/Kennebec Road intersection is a Convenience Center, centered on that key intersection. The mix of uses is highly dependent on being easy for customers to “grab and go,” whether they live in the immediate vicinity or are passing by on either of the major roads.
 - Every town has one of these centers, some have more than one.
- Neighborhood Center
 - The Maine Road/Western Avenue intersection is part of a larger Neighborhood Center. That area includes a mix of more day-to-day services and shopping. It is built on a larger residential base than a Convenience Center, serving residents in the immediate area and from around town.
 - Can be found in most medium and large sized Maine towns. This type of center might be a neighborhood in a larger town or city.
 - Often characterized by a full line grocery store. In Hampden, this is the Hannaford’s in the Town Center study area.

- Community Center
 - This type of activity center draws people from many surrounding communities and includes comparison shopping options.
 - Examples include Wilson Street in Brewer, High Street in Ellsworth, or downtown Belfast.

The 4-Point Approach from the Maine Street Maine program of the Maine Downtown Center was described. The four elements of this program are on Organization, Promotion, Design and Economic Restructuring.

These two introductory topics set the stage for review of the priority areas that rose to the top at the first meeting and the online survey. These areas are:

- Place: Community Space & Streetscape
 - Community gathering places and landmarks
 - Signage, benches, bike racks, banners, flowers and other landscaping in the public spaces
- Place: Design Guidelines or Standards
 - Ensuring quality design for new and redeveloped buildings
- Mobility: Traffic & Parking
 - Mitigating traffic during the busiest times
 - Encouraging shared parking or on-street parking to ensure adequate parking supply
- Mobility: Pedestrian and Bike
 - Improving and expanding the sidewalk network
 - New off-road bike and walking trails
 - Potential bike lanes on Main Road

Finally, how these areas and uses might tie into new zoning updates was discussed.

Open-house Workshop

The informal time at the open house made it possible for participants to discuss the ideas presented above with staff and each other. Each station included a poster with main ideas from the presentation so participants voted with green dots for the ideas that seem right for Hampden currently. Posters with votes from the workshop are included below.

MOBILITY: TRAFFIC AND PARKING

- Encourage shared parking (require for new uses) ●●
- Develop municipal parking lot ●
- Change lane striping to slow traffic, make space for on-street parking
- Remove 2-way center turn lane (in conjunction with school improvements to get school traffic off Main Road) ●●
- Work with school to better understand how internal traffic circulation impacts Main Road during peak periods ●●●●●●●●

MOBILITY: PEDESTRIAN & BIKE

- Add bike lanes on Main Road and Western Ave. ●●●
- Create year round trail system on existing snowmobile system within 4-mile square ●●●
- Create formal trails behind Old Hampden Academy for river views/access ●●●●
- Sidewalks on both sides of Main Road ●
- Add wider sidewalks/grass areas on Main Road

PLACE: DESIGN

- Add signage, more banners, street furniture, planters & landscaping ●●●●●●●●
- Change lane striping to slow traffic, make space for bike lanes ●●
- Narrow and close existing entrances (*driveway*)
- Increase design requirements for new construction and redevelopment ●●●●●●●●
- Add public art/monument at key location ●

PLACE: COMMUNITY SPACE

- Better use/redevelop existing town owned properties - town office, Kiwanis property, old fire station ●●●●●●●●
- Partner with RSU for more general access to school owned land ●●●●●●
- Partner with Old Hampden Academy for more access to privately owned property ●
- Purchase/acquire new town owned property in the vicinity ●
- Organize or support community street party or other events