

# Walkability Audit

## Boothbay Harbor, Maine



October 30, 2012

Sponsored by

Friends of Midcoast Maine

&

The Walkable and Livable Communities Institute

In collaboration with

The Town of Boothbay Harbor, Maine



On October 30, 2012, Friends of Midcoast Maine (FMM) hosted an afternoon and evening Walkability Audit Workshop in the Town Boothbay Harbor, Maine. The workshop was held in collaboration with the Town of Boothbay Harbor and was guided by a community steering committee. Dan Burden, Executive Director of the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute, was hired by Friends of Midcoast Maine to lead a walk-audit in the town and assess opportunities for improvements to walkability.

The workshop was advertised as a *“Walkability Audit, Making it Happen: A Walkable Downtown Creates Economic Vitality -- A workshop to share your ideas and explore potential improvements to Boothbay Harbor’s downtown to improve retail life, downtown walkability, safety, traffic flow, community health, beauty and attractiveness and social interaction.”* Steering committee members took advantage of the local newspaper, the public access television, the Town website, Facebook, posters and word of mouth to advertise the workshop in advance.

Almost fifty people attended the workshop which was held from 3 p.m. until 7 p.m. during the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. This report summarizes:

- The existing conditions
- What we heard
- Recommendations for the community
- Appendices with technical information

A special thank you is given to all the participants who made this day a success as well as the following people who contributed organizational time and effort.

- Boothbay Harbor Board of Selectmen
  - William Hamblen
  - Valerie Augustine
  - Robert Splaine
  - Jay D. Warren
  - Arthur Hathaway
- Tom Woodin, Boothbay Harbor Town Manager
- Project Steering Committee members
  - Michael Tomko
  - Chip Newell
  - William Hamblen
  - Mary Neal
  - Catherine Wygant Fossett
  - Tom Woodin

*At the workshops*

- Stacy Benjamin, Maine Collaborative Planning
- Mary Beth Dubois, Rivers End Catering and the Welch House Inn, accommodations.

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Appreciation is also given to the members of and donors to FMM including a generous grant from the Environmental Funders Network Quality of Place Initiative and in-kind support from the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute.



*Boothbay Harbor, Maine Walkability Workshop and Audit*

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# Boothbay Harbor Existing Conditions



Downtown Boothbay Harbor is a beautiful coastal town with an historic downtown of multi-story structures and mixed uses with retail on the ground floors and offices and apartments on upper levels. Boothbay Harbor has historically been a fishing town and in recent years has developed a sizeable retirement community. Route 27 travels down the peninsula from US Route 1 in Edgecomb and extends through Boothbay Harbor through Southport and terminates in the village of Newagen. The tightly knit community is known as a tourist destination and is looking for ways to extend the tourist season and grow its year round economy. The community is seeking guidance on how to improve retail life, in-town walkability, traffic flow, healthy living and social interaction.

While Boothbay Harbor is literally at the end of the line and typically becomes a sleepy coastal village in late fall and winter, its potential is great to become a year round destination with activities, events and attractions in every season. During the peak summer season Boothbay Harbor citizens, shop keepers and town officials work hard to overcome the negative impacts of traffic congestion, while offering residents and visitors an attractive place to live, work, visit and do business.

According to the Midcoast Route 27 Corridor Management Plan, “The highest through traffic volumes on Route 27 are in Boothbay Harbor north of the Route 96 intersection. In 2009, the

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factored annual average daily traffic (FAADT) there was 11,028 vehicles. The lowest volume along Route 27 in the corridor, 3,054 FAADT, is found near the Southport town line.”<sup>1</sup>

“The largest concentrations of housing in the corridor are found in the Boothbay Harbor village area and the Ocean Point area of Boothbay... Many shoreland areas have notable densities due principally to the amount of seasonal homes. Newer housing tends to be placed at lower densities than was built traditionally and is far more dispersed than is represented by historical development patterns....Boothbay’s housing stock has been growing fastest, with 760 units built from 1990 to 2010, while Boothbay Harbor had 290 units built, and Edgecomb had 237 units built during this period. The corridor had 5,404 housing units in 2010, which was 23.0% of Lincoln County’s total housing stock in that year.”<sup>2</sup>

The same Corridor Study has recommended a number of walkability and safety improvements in the Boothbay Harbor area. These include:<sup>3</sup>

**Recommendations for Boothbay Harbor**

25	Conduct traffic study to determine locations for turning lanes	Safety - improve safety of exiting and entering vehicles	MDOT	Immediate
26	Install landscaped center median where turning lanes not required	Safety and environmental - shelter turning lanes and improve appearance of highway	MDOT	Long-term
27	Install sidewalks on both sides of Route 27 from Route 96 to the school complex	Safety - improve pedestrian access to the many businesses along Route 27 without increasing cross-road pedestrian movements	MDOT	Mid-term
28	Widen shoulders or install bike lanes to Boothbay Common	Safety - improve bicycle safety	MDOT	Mid-term
29	Install landscaping along sides of Route 27 in the Meadow	Environmental - improve visual appearance of corridor	MDOT	Long-term
30	Revise Hammond Lumber parking lot to reduce access width	Safety - reduce conflicts between entering and exiting traffic and eliminate vehicles backing out onto the highway	MDOT	Mid-term
31	Add sidewalk from the YWCA to Boothbay Center	Safety - improve pedestrian safety	MDOT	Immediate
32	Remove passing zone in Boothbay Harbor and evaluate the appropriateness of all other passing zones in the corridor	Safety - reduce unnecessary traffic conflicts created by vehicles passing in a congested area	MDOT	Immediate

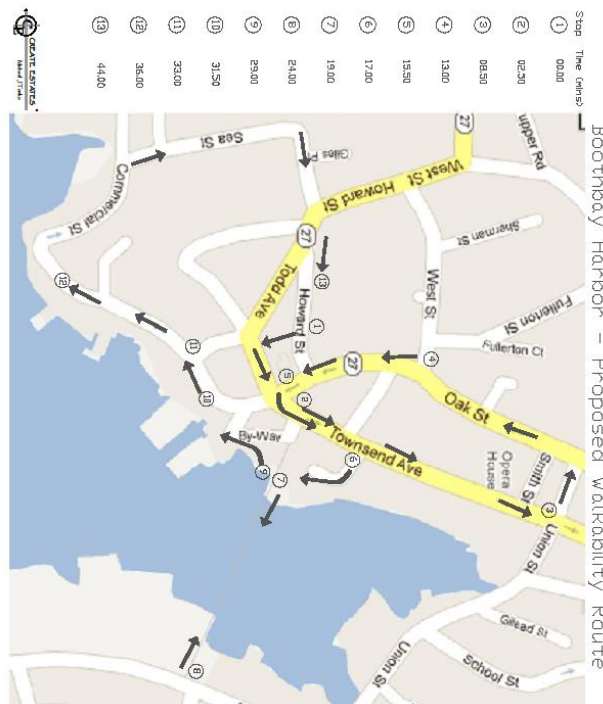
<sup>1</sup> Midcoast Route 27 Corridor Management Plan, Route 27 Corridor Committee, February 2012. Page 5.

<sup>2</sup> Midcoast Route 27 Corridor Report, Page 28

<sup>3</sup> Midcoast Route 27 Corridor Report, Page 48-49

In early April, 2012, Boothbay Harbor Planning Board member Michael Tomko and Friends of Midcoast Maine Board member Chip Newell met with Executive Director Jane Lafleur to discuss possible technical assistance to Boothbay Harbor. They agreed that improving the walkability and, in turn, the economic potential of downtown would be of interest to the Boothbay Harbor community. The three approached the Boothbay Harbor Board of Selectmen, who unanimously supported the proposal to bring Dan Burden from the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute for a community walkability audit.

The Boothbay Harbor community rallied behind this effort and a steering committee met to decide the walk audit route, finalize logistics of the event and to develop a stakeholder analysis so the news of the workshop would be widely spread and attendees would represent a broad spectrum of interests and concerns of residents and business owners. The following report summarizes the Walk Audit recommendations from the attendees as well as those of Dan Burden of the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute.



Walk Audit Route with slight adjustments on the day of the Audit

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# What We Heard from the Community

These notes summarize the six groups reporting out from small group work after the walk audit and presentations by Dan Burden.

## Group #1 Recommendations/Suggestions

- Waterfront trail along the harbor’s edge
- Cooperative beautification program
- Bike racks for employees and customers downtown
- Become a “bike friendly” town with bike racks at hotels and tours
- Map out and advertise good rides for bicyclists
- Have more road and bike races to attract families to Boothbay Harbor
- Develop a community program to coach businesses on neatness and charm
- Give out beautification awards
- Improve the gateways into the harbor area and at the meadow area of town
- We like our trash cans that have recycling attached - don’t change them
- Develop a “brand” for Boothbay Harbor
- Preserve the old buildings, their functions in their present structures, such as the bowling alley



## Group #2 Recommendations/Suggestions

- Develop a waterfront trail (shown in green on group map)
- Develop way-finding plan that includes how to get down to the water and the waterfront path
- Develop a consistent sidewalk plan, past the Blue Moon Café (shown in Blue on group’s map)
- Develop a pedestrian friendly walkable loop with great views
- Add sidewalks on Townsend Street, a loop of sidewalks., connect to Oak Street
- Consider three roundabouts, 3 way, small mini traffic circles as shown on map
- Look beyond Boothbay Harbor downtown-the image does not begin downtown, it begins on Route 27 after the Boothbay Center
- Make Route 27 a greenway and a beautiful entrance



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- Develop a brand a signage, develop business and pedestrian signage
- Develop signage to direct pedestrians that is different than street signs to direct pedestrians
- Develop directional signs back into town that say something like “Follow this to go back to town” so people don’t just drive through and leave
- Develop a visually appealing common theme to visually unite Boothbay and Boothbay Harbor
- Develop signs to point to the walkway and the walking waterfront path system
- Add more trash cans to town
- Add more planters and flags during the season

### Group #3 Recommendations/Suggestions

- Don’t ignore the footbridge that leads to the other side of the business district
- Add green space where possible along the water
- Redirect parking into the structures that look like New England housing; eliminate shorefront parking; consider behind Oak Street provisions and the Opera House; enter on Smith Street where there is a steep grade and you can multiple levels
- Consider parking structures (New England looking) outside town offices
- The trash cans are great as they are! Do not change them
- Add more trees in front of businesses to create enclosure
- Consider no busses downtown and add a shuttle to feed busses back to lots outside the downtown
- Add more benches downtown and seating along the water
- Add more handicapped accessibility overall
- Research roundabouts more thoroughly including snow clearing and learning to drive with them
- Consider an historic district and an historic commission
- Free parking at the Congregational Church parking lot.
- Sidewalks need improvement: at the Thistle Inn on the corner of Oak and Union Street and on Atlantic Avenue across from the Lobster Dock Restaurant where there are two levels of concrete that are a hazard



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#### Group #4 Recommendations/Suggestions

- Sidewalks are treacherous on the East Side
- Cruise ships need an information station to direct people to town
- McKown Street - scenic street
- Shut off the byway on Bridge Street to all vehicles
- Grainery Way corner is hazardous
- Jay walking on Union Street between Oak and Townsend Avenue
- The footbridge is an historic monument - Mr. Madison, potato sticks festival, a local hero



#### Group #5 Recommendations/Suggestions

- Make a scenic walk from Commercial Street to Sea Street; a loop with sidewalks
- Add sidewalk seating
- Add a shadow lane, outside the traffic lane with striping as a safe zone (Townsend Ave to McKown to Oak Street)
- Add parking spaces next to old town offices, Todd and McKown Street
- Resize some of the parking spaces in the town offices parking lot to compact size
- Add signage for other parking areas
- Consider an electronic component so people can electronically find empty spaces on a cell phone application
- When looking at alternative uses for the harbor parking lot, consider the cost of lot repaving versus the cost of converting it to a waterfront park
- Be aware of the public transportation plans for Damariscotta, Newcastle and Boothbay Harbor for older and non-drivers
- Consider a water taxi option as a private transportation option



Example of a water-taxi

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- Consider all the businesses on the other side of the harbor including the freezer area, to the co-op, to the large floating pier, to the ships and commerce that come in, to lobstering
- Consider mini-circles at Oak Street and Townsend Avenue (also known as Townsend Square)
- Consider a downtown business district to help fund downtown improvements, street furniture and landscaping
- Consider a downtown historic district for consistency and uniform planning



#### Group 6 Recommendations/Suggestions

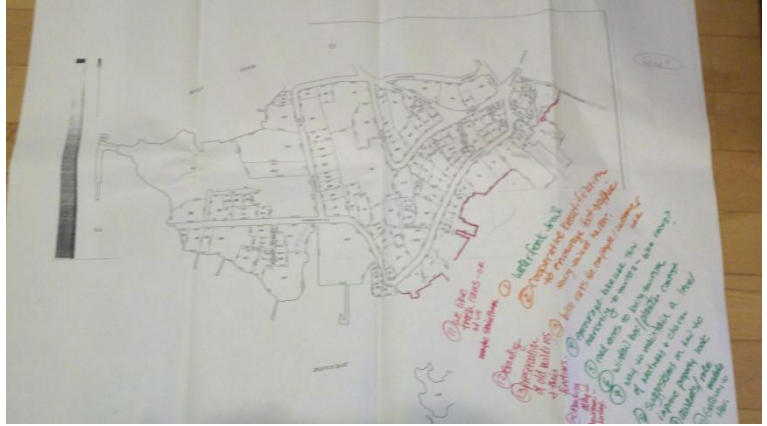
- Improve town signage
- Oak Street sidewalks
- Atlantic Ave sidewalks
- West Street crosswalks have pedestrians back to the traffic; Fix this
- Remove two spaces across from library for a more distinct turning lane
- Consider the Hannaford area as the Gateway to Boothbay Harbor



#### Final questions:

- 1) Consider putting overhead utilities underground; it is expensive but it makes a difference
- 2) Consider on-street parking meters with the fees being dedicated to downtown aesthetics

# Group Map Work and Group Recommendations



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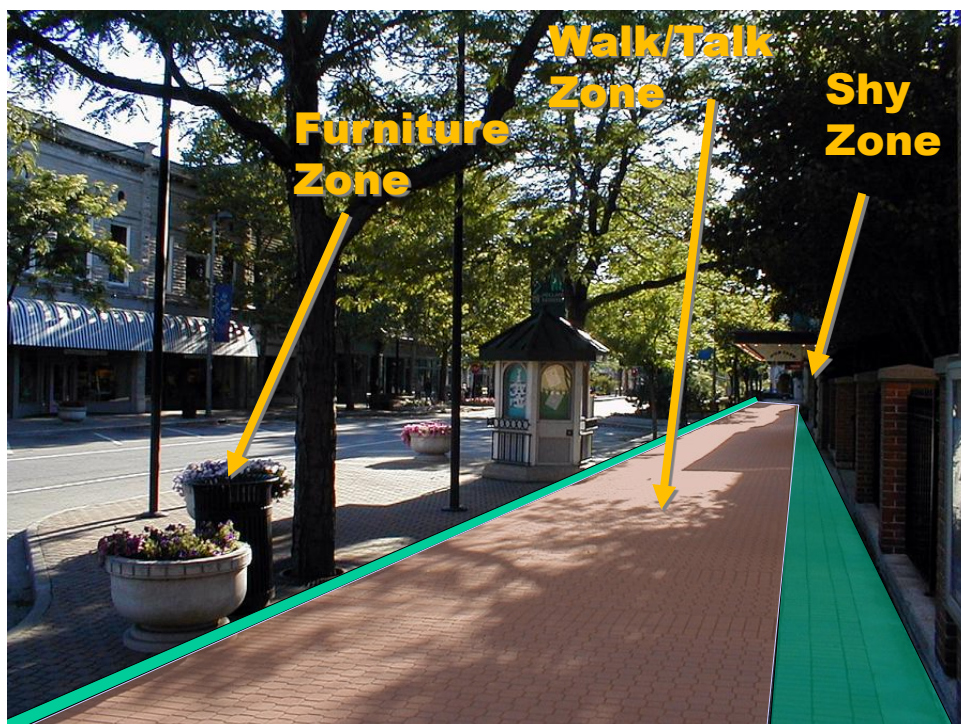
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# Walk Audit Recommendations from Dan Burden

- The first two feet from the edge of the building is called the *shy zone*. The area where all the furniture is placed is the *furniture zone*. The space between is called the *walk-talk zone* and it varies in size all around Boothbay Harbor.



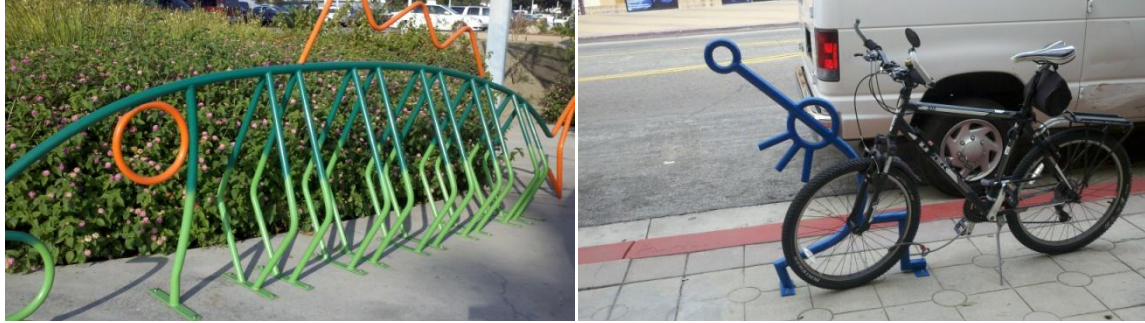
- People walk more and more naturally. Right in front of the Town Offices, what catches you by surprise? A tree, a trash can, a fire hydrant but no bike racks.

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Examples of creative, attractive bike racks

- In the town offices parking lot, the parking bays are nine feet wide. It is the national norm but if there is a parking shortage, nine feet is generous. Eight feet in width (and even seven) is possible, especially in employee parking areas or all day parking, where there is less in and out.
- The parking aisles (drive bays) are 25 feet; fifteen foot bays are sufficient. More green space, rain gutters, etc. are possible. Environmentally it is not making it and not giving a lot of parking yield.



- The sidewalk ends at the northeast corner of the town parking lot. There is a cross walk directing pedestrians across the street, rather than safely guiding them across the front of the bank drive-thru lanes. A small portion of the sidewalk should be extended to the curb, and crosswalk striping added to meet the sidewalk on the opposite side of the drive-thru lanes.



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- There could be angled parking with intersection redesign could happen at corner of Todd and McKown Streets. Five or six more spaces could be picked up.
- Boothbay Harbor is about *destination* and *access* to parking, stores, and the water, etc. It is not about speed.

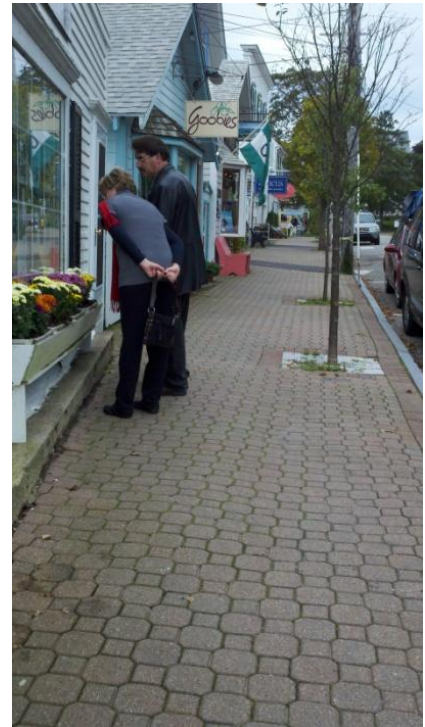


- A recessed doorway that is home for a bench is a great use of space, leaving walking space for the pedestrians and giving space for planters. More trade will be brought into a store. Robert Gibbs could be brought in to consult with shop keepers to work in unison to increase sales of merchants. Shop keepers that work in unison are like a magnet.
- The furniture zone is a clean and clear line of 3.5 feet. Trees line up here. Signs and kiosk are here.
- Along McKown Street, the walk-talk zone is 8 feet wide and a marvelous and generous width. This attracts shoppers to this block. It is beautiful and cohesive. Care must be taken to place furniture in the best places to not interfere with pedestrians or car doors opening.

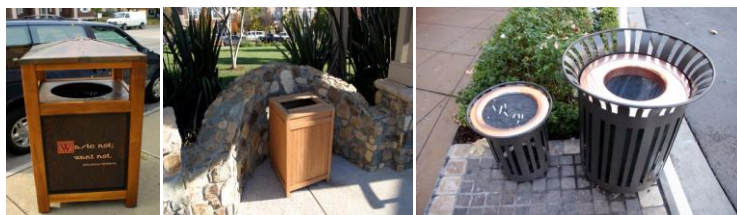


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- When we rate a Main Street or commercial area, we look at *five* things:
  - *Enclosure*, how enclosed we feel. The more enclosure, the more comfortable we feel. Parking, trees, lamps, canopies and building articulation create a sense of enclosure.
  - *Transparency*: where the buildings sit and how much window glass at grade, should be 70-90% glass.
  - *Image-ability or memorable-ness*: Boothbay Harbor has a high level of memorable-ness. The church and the sidewalk are memorable.
  - *Complexity*: If you walk 100 or 1000 times, do we see new things even if they were there the whole time.
  - *Human Scale*: Many blocks in downtown Boothbay Harbor have good human scale. Other areas outside the downtown do not have as good human scale.



- Boothbay Harbor embodies the quaint charm typical of a New England seaside community. As such, amenities like trash cans, light fixtures and benches should reflect a more sophisticated appearance, rather than merely serving as functional devices with a homemade look. The existing trash cans are not up to the rest of the caliber of the town although the addition of a side pocket for recyclables shows a responsible stand towards recycling. Consider an alternative choice of trash can materials or even conduct a contest to discover a unique and tasteful design. Add more cans and empty them frequently.



Other trash can options

Yankee ingenuity

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Alleys present an opportunity for a terminating vista. Look at every alley as a way to draw you down to a feature. In Victoria, the deck was changed and nice color with baskets and lamps were added to create “complexity”. Not big or expensive but they add up and people want to stay longer. These things put you on the map, more than you are already.



Potential to beautify



Example of a beautiful alley way

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- BBH is getting more parking in than many towns do. BBH is getting many spaces in on the one-way street. A thought is to moderate the space to slow down traffic. A travel lane needs to be ten feet. But add a bold painted edge, parking is six feet, then a transition lane, it will give a safer way for people to access and get in and out of their car. Better turn radii, better sight lanes, adding a little paint.
- This is a bike friendly street. Bike lanes are not needed until speeds are above 25 mph.



- At the Mobil Gas station intersection of Townsend and Union Streets, there is confusion and a lack of knowledge of who has the right-of-way. It is a two way stop, not a four way stop. Consider changing this to a four way stop. It may improve the level of service (LOS). Current pattern might be creating some problems. Modeling this with software might show how this can be improved.
- Can a community have an off season-on season shift to traffic patterns? Some towns do that. In Boothbay Harbor, there is an arrow pointing which way to go; it could be bolder. If you see the wrong behavior, you can exceed the manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices.
- The one way couplet system is probably an ok system because the street is narrow and one lane. Problem may be if a tourist goes one way, headed out of town, they may not know how far they have to go to come back to town. Look into a traffic circulation study.



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- By Oak Street Provisions on Oak Street, the travel lane can be ten feet wide. Then there can be a buffer to the raised sidewalk so there is more safety for the pedestrian. Paint is reasonably priced to give massive change to a street.
- The Oak Street sidewalk obviously does not meet ADA standards; as we get older, the raised sidewalk may be too difficult to get up. Pay attention to this.



- Parking can be on the side where sidewalk is but it would have to be moved even further out to get door open by the raised sidewalk.



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- By the intersection past Oak Street Provisions, at Oak Street and West Street, the pedestrians’ back is to the traffic due to the cross walk location. The intersection can be rescued by considering a mini-traffic circle. Seattle has put in many mini-traffic circles. They are inexpensive to build. They can have trees in them even. Look at this intersection carefully.
- At the Oak Street and West Street intersection, narrow the throat to 14 feet. Put in an island. It is a state road. The Town has approached Maine DOT about the Oak Street and West Street intersection and the State has been opposed to a traffic island here. MeDOT has created something that is highly unsafe and they should be invited in and shown sister states that are doing better things. Vermont and NH are doing great things. It is a learning curve. MaineDOT officials are being more open to working with communities and building roads that help communities.
- The pedestrian crossing cross walk sign is too small and the wrong shape. Need WB 11 full sized. It should be full sized.
- Candle pin bowling lanes are currently closed and their reopening is uncertain. It is an incredibly precious site.
- The parking lot is on fill. It drains into the bay. Participants noted how this restricts redevelopment potential. There are also some deed restrictions that present a hurdle for redevelopment.
- Think about how you honor the waterfront and bring the heart and soul spirit to the area. A parking lot near the water is a poor use of waterfront land. People see the blemishes in a town. A drop dead waterfront that honors your town passes from person to person. The pedestrian bridge is a great treat but you have to cross parking lot first.

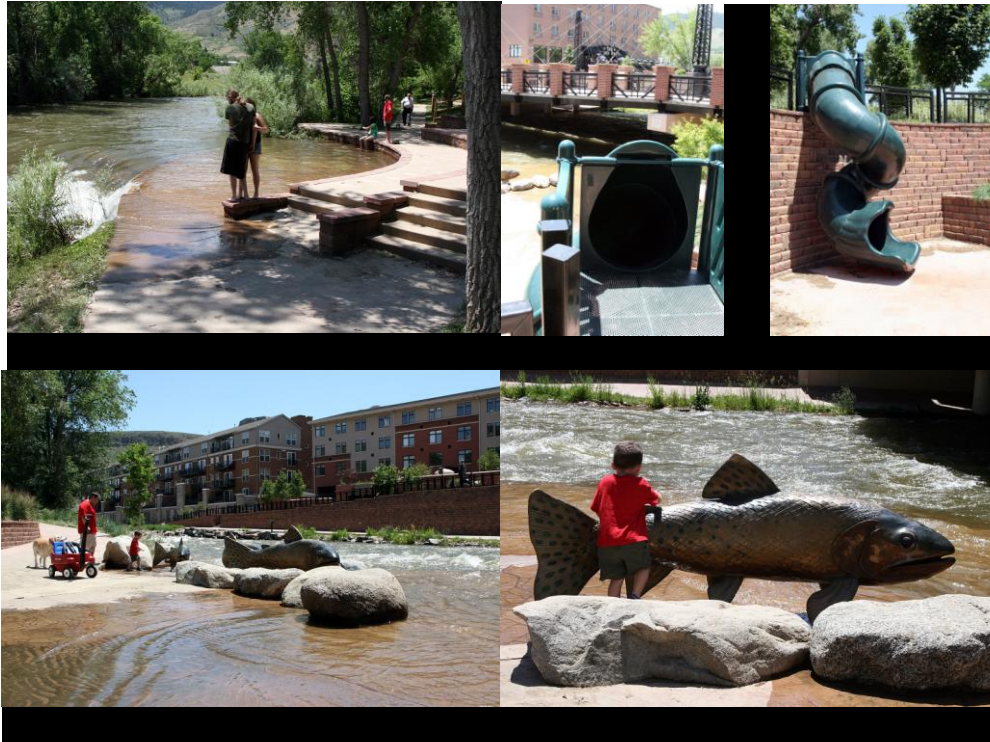


An active waterfront for people



A waterfront for vehicles

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Examples of waterfront “placemaking”

- Get rid of antiquated parking requirements. Shuttle people if needed from outskirts. Then people can enjoy the pristine quality of the waterfront.
- The space from the water to the front of a car is about 1/3 acre. In Monterey they installed a movie theater, a deli, a shoe store, a tarot card reading shop with 32 studio apartments above. It adds to the community. Boothbay Harbor may not want this intensity of use but you are the real deal and you do not have to block the view of other people. There is fill but there is a lot of land to use on 1/3 acre. Parking is the least desirable.

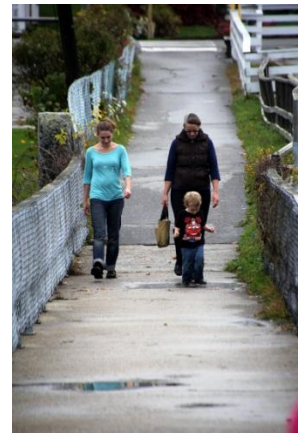
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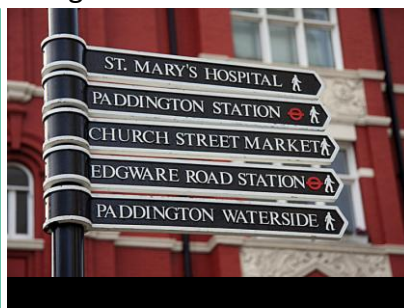
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- The pedestrian bridge could be dressed up. It is an historical monument. “No diving from railing” is good advice.

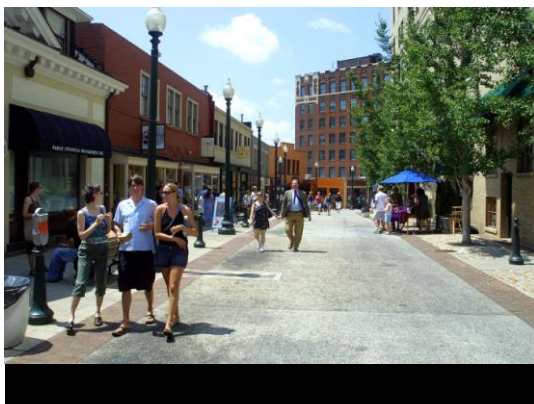


- The Country Store/Gimbels area is character driven. The town’s character gets defined here. Used to be Bank Square but have names for places that are wonderful discoveries. Use this with new way-finding.



### Examples of Way-finding Signs

- A participant questioned about design controls and color pallet. Design control is possible but most Midcoast towns do not get into this.
- This square shows enclosure. People cross at all places. Keep speeds down to walking speed. Misbehaving drivers can be controlled with design issues.
- Could go to a “curbless” street or a flexible street or festival street. Pedestrians own the entire space. A truck driver doing a freight delivery can still make deliveries but it is purely pedestrian oriented.



### Examples of a curbless or flexible street

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- At the restrooms and park area, the assets are the view, the park, the street view and the vertical and horizontal use of space. Consider trying to get more width on sidewalk. Summer analysis is important. Put video camera on roof line for 2-3 days. Learn what people are doing and see the needs of the area and how people are using the space.



Attractive Boothbay Harbor street with vertical and horizontal beauty

- The approach to the harbor is a parking lot and public restroom. (see photo below) This may be one of the best places to make changes. Guide the eye to the church across the water, the water front. As an outsider, those are the things to work on. The lodging could have the most beautiful flower boxes, even off season.



An opportunity to make changes to build upon the assets of the area

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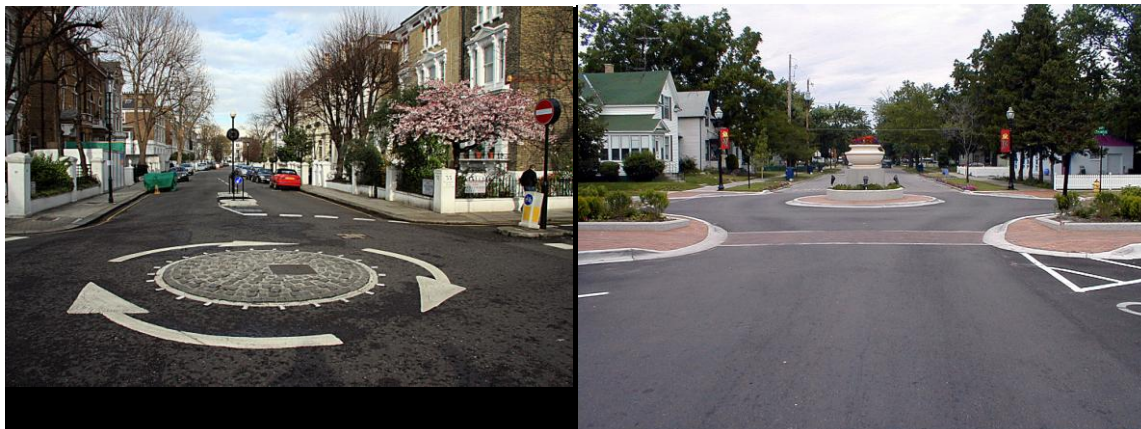
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- The ridge line across the harbor is iconic and a brand image of the area. It is an asset that cannot be seen from the street. The parking is access to the tour boats and privately owned. It is functional but can be beautified.
- Boothbay Harbor has more beauty and more good sense than most places.
- Library Square has so many places and pockets. Edmonds, Washington has a beautiful mini-circle with a fountain and other assets. Check that out. This place can define the Boothbay Harbor community. A mini circle can fit here. They are accessible for large trucks. Traffic circles are friendly to pedestrians. They are attractive, authentic and low speed but can carry volume.



Potential for mini-traffic circle



Examples of Mini Traffic Circles

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## In summary

- Boothbay Harbor's downtown is its "canvas" – excellent buildings, beautiful views, a great compact mixed use place.
- Downtown merchants and establishments have an outstanding opportunity to coordinate and increase marketability of the area.
- There are a number of opportunities to create change that improves the economics, safety, walkability and memorability of Booth Bay Harbor.
- Mini traffic circles move more traffic and are safer for pedestrians – can transform the identity of a place.
- Make alleys more attractive and for low cost.
- Make spot improvements to some intersections to increase safety.
- Consider way-finding to direct people to the water, to different named squares and to places in town.
- Use community partnerships and local initiative to be proactive and find ways to say "yes" to good ideas.

# Next Steps

Boothbay Harbor *has the capacity* to carry out many of the recommendations contained in this report. The enthusiasm for the community should be harnessed and targeted toward those initiatives that make the most sense for the community. Many towns start with “the low hanging fruit” that are the easiest and least expensive steps. Others start with the steps that have the greatest community support. Some start with the most visible changes to make an immediate impact. Next steps might include:

- Integrating the ideas into the update of the Comprehensive Plan to allow for future town action
- Establishing a community Task Force or Action Committee made up of representatives from downtown businesses, Town officials and staff, the Selectmen, the Comprehensive Plan Committee, the Chamber of Commerce, citizens and residents, and community organizations to initiate the changes contained in the report
- Setting project priorities, task schedule, responsible parties and partners, and funding mechanisms including town support and public-private partnerships
- Developing a downtown business organization, informally at first, but later possibly working with the Maine Downtown Center as a Network Community.
- Initiating a dialogue with similar coastal towns for the exchange of ideas on what efforts they have tried and found to work in their business districts. (Try not to re-invent the wheel)
- Keep community enthusiasm high by beginning immediately!

# Appendix 1 Definitions

## Roundabouts

Roundabouts facilitate through-traffic and turning movements without requiring a signal control. Roundabouts allow vehicles to circulate around an island that is often used for landscaping, a gateway or for other decorative features, like artwork. The circulating roadway is typically wider than the approach roadways and features an additional 'apron' against the edges of the island; both of these features allow for fire trucks, ambulances and other large vehicles. Roundabouts increase intersection carrying capacity by up to 30 percent. As the only requirement for yielding the right-of-way is to traffic already in the circulating roadway, roundabouts also reduce delays for everyone.



## Mini Circles

Mini Circles are one of the most popular and effective tools for calming traffic in neighborhoods. Seattle has 1,200 Mini Circles and this has led to a reduction in intersection crashes. They are the best neighborhood safety feature of any treatment type. These inexpensive features do not interrupt drainage. Mini Circles work outward from intersections on all three or all four legs of approaching traffic. Mini Circles bring speeds down to levels where motorists are more courteous to pedestrians, they allow all types of turns, including U-turns, which can assist with school area traffic management. A common engineering mistake is to put in four way stops around a mini circle. Mini Circles require yield signs instead.



## Road Diet

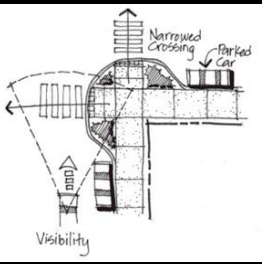
A road diet involves eliminating travel lanes to improve safety for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists. Motorist crashes are typically reduced 12 to 30 percent, with some drops as high as 70 percent. High end speeds, especially, are reduced. While there can be more than four travel lanes before treatment, road diets are generally conversions of four-lane, undivided roads into three lanes—two through-lanes plus a center turn lane or median island. The fourth lane may be converted into bicycle lanes, sidewalks, planter strips for street trees, a bus stop, a separated multi-use trail, a wider outside lane or for on-street parking.

## Curb Extensions

Curb extensions are a nearly universal tool for school areas. In transforming overly wide streets, curb extensions (also known as bulb outs, elephant ears and nibs) bring down right turning speeds, identify important crossings, and make it much easier for motorists to see children and for children to see motorists. When used in a series, curb extensions can significantly bring motorist speeds to acceptable levels. Curb extensions can be used at intersections, mid-block, inside of parking strips (tree wells) and other locations. Although many curb extensions are kept plain in appearance, at the entry to a neighborhood, they can be landscaped to serve as attractive gateways.



### Curb Extension (Advantages)

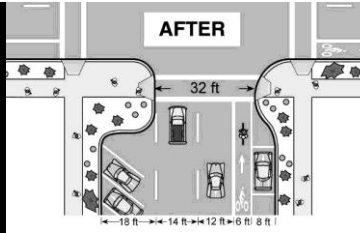


- ❑ Motorists no longer block sight lines
- ❑ Ground cover is kept trimmed to 24 inches
- ❑ Trees are undercut to seven feet
- ❑ Motorists can pull forward to see past parked cars
- ❑ Motorists are able to see pedestrians standing in a prominent location

Labels in diagram: Narrowed Crossing, Parked Car, Visibility

### Curb extensions

Most focus is on reduced crossing distance



Labels in diagram: AFTER, 32 ft, 18 ft, 14 ft, 12 ft, 6 ft, 8 ft

### Other advantages:

- Better visibility between peds and motorists
- Traffic calming
- Room for street furniture

## Bike Lanes

One of the most cost effective ways to reduce speed while improving overall vehicular flow and creating improved conditions for bicycling and walking, is the conversion of overly wide roads to bike lanes. Generally, travel lanes can be reduced to 10 feet. Narrower travel and storage lanes are proving to be slightly safer. Motorists appear to become more attentive when lanes are narrowed from 11-12 feet to 10 foot travel lanes. Bike lanes should be at least 5 feet wide and seamless. Thick striping and regular markings remind drivers to anticipate bicyclists. Bike lanes have an added benefit to pedestrians in that they provide a buffer to moving traffic.



## Plazas, Parks and Paseos

Transforming a street, sidewalk, plaza, square, paseo, open lot, waterfront or other space into a community source of distinction, brings joy to the community. Good places make good experiences possible and they have consequences in our lives. People want to be in attractive, well designed and cared for public places. Investment in streets and other public spaces brings added value to all buildings and homes in an area. A compelling sense of place allows the time spent there to be rewarding and memorable. Converting alleys, sidewalks and streets into pocket parks, plazas and paseos creates lively places for people to gather, celebrate, eat and enjoy being together.



## Signalized Intersections

Intersection control devices are critical if walking, bicycling and motoring are to work, and work together. People who cross at intersections, when they are signaled to do so, are most predictable. Drivers appreciate predictable and compliant behavior. When intersections become so complex and challenging that signals are added, there is oft en ample justification to go beyond conventional standards to address the needs of people walking and bicycling. Signal timing should be automated for inclusion of walking cycles. Signal timing should be adjusted so that signals recall to WALK during the cycle, minus the clearance interval.



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## Sidewalk Design

Sidewalks require high levels of design and care. It is within the protected spaces of a sidewalk where people move freely, but also spend time engaging others and enjoying their public space. Sidewalks work best when they are fully buffered from moving traffic. Color, texture, street furniture and other materials can distinguish functional areas of sidewalks. Using saw cuts rather than trowel cuts provides a better surface for wheelchairs and wheeled devices.

Sidewalks have three parts: the shy zone, furniture zone and the walk/talk zone. If driveways must interrupt, keep these to minimal widths (14 feet for one way and 26 feet for two way). Use contrasting colors and materials and keep sidewalks fully fl at across driveways.



## On Street Parking

On-street and inset parking visually narrows streets and brings down traffic speeds, while providing the most sustainable and affordable parking. Speeds are brought down even more when tree wells are used to provide a canopy to the street. Since it already has its own turn radii into each spot and access, on-street parking only takes up one-third of the land of off-street parking. But the primary reason for maximizing parking on street is to help civilize streets that were overbuilt for speed. On-street parking belongs on center city streets, serving as a buffer between pedestrians and moving cars as a natural traffic calming tool.

## Back in Parking

Back-in angle parking provides motorists with better vision of bicyclists, pedestrians, cars and trucks as they exit a parking space and enter moving traffic. Back-in angle parking also eliminates the risk that is present in parallel parking situations, of a motorist may open the car door into the path of a bicyclist. Back-in angle parking also removes the difficulty that drivers, particularly older drivers, have when backing into moving traffic.



The concept has many benefits over other parking types. Some of these benefits include increased parking capacity (10 to 12 feet of lateral curb per vehicle, versus 22 feet per vehicle for parallel parking), clear sight lines when pulling out, better maneuverability on snowy days, ease of loading and unloading cargo and helping children in and out of car seats, and protection for children because the open car door now directs young children back to a point of safety rather than out into the street.



Installation and conversion to back-in angle parking requires careful site planning to ensure that the car stops before encroaching into the pedestrian space. Engines should not idle as tailpipe emissions are now directed to the sidewalk, which is particularly undesirable near a sidewalk café or other sensitive location. (See U.S. EPA listing of state and local communities with anti-idling laws at <http://www.epa.gov/SmartwayLogistics/documents/420b06004.pdf>). The change should be publicized prior to implementation, as people are more likely to accept a program that they understand. A learning curve should be expected, thus parking a city vehicle in one of the spaces each morning can help drivers understand the action.

Many communities install curb extensions to shorten pedestrian crossing distance as part of a back-in angle parking project. Typical dimensions are: 60-degree angle stalls about 10 feet wide (which works out to 11 feet of curb length), and 20 feet deep (measured perpendicular to the curb). As a general rule, back-in angle parking should be installed on side streets first. It should also be considered on non-arterial streets where speeding is a problem and increased parking is a need. Over time and with community acceptance, there may be reasons to expand the concept to major streets. Bonuses of back-in angle parking include potential calming of traffic speeds, especially around schools and in downtowns or other commercial areas. Its use on downhill grades should be studied carefully and it may have limited usefulness on single lane, one-way streets. (Source: [www.walkinginfo.org](http://www.walkinginfo.org))



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*“Helping Midcoast communities shape their future”*



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