

# SUMMER 2014: CITY OF GARDINER DESIGN WORKSHOPS



## COBBOSSEE CORRIDOR VISIONS

A series of community discussions about how the area around the Cobbosseecontee Stream and Gardiner's proposed Cobbossee trail system could best serve Gardiner's economic growth and community health.

A collaboration between the City of Gardiner, Healthy Communities of the Capital Area, and the University of Maine at Augusta Architecture Department, funded in part by the Orton Family Foundation.

Prepared for:

The City of Gardiner, Maine

6 Church Street

Gardiner, ME 04345.

Prepared by:

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**Photographs of Cobbossee Corridor:**



The upper end of Cobbossee Corridor at New Mills Dam.



The mixed-use, residential and commercial neighborhoods of Water Street, with D & H Motors in the mid ground and Gardiner Paperboard along the stream.



Historic Downtown Gardiner, the Arcade parking lot, Cobbossee Stream and the Hannaford shopping plaza (left to right).

## Background and Introduction:

The City of Gardiner was awarded a grant from the Orton Family Foundation to host a series of four community design workshops, at which Gardiner residents would discuss and envisage priorities for the redevelopment of the Cobbosseecontee (AKA Cobbossee) Stream area of Gardiner.

A team of four students from the University of Maine at Augusta's School of Architecture, whose thesis work earlier in the year had focused on the City of Gardiner, led the community workshops and developed images and plans for further discussion, with guidance and direction from their professor. The workshops were also assisted by Healthy Communities of the Capital Area (HCCA), whose focus on outdoor recreation and community health aligns with further development of the trail system in the area.

The Cobbossee Stream is a watershed of lakes and streams that feeds into the Kennebec River. It was an ideal location for the water powered industries of the 18<sup>th</sup> century because of the steep drop in elevation over its length as it descends towards Gardiner, which powered myriad small businesses from tanneries to grist mills. This area has been described as the Silicon Valley of early America, so dense and innovative was the commerce along its length. Many of these sites have potential industrial contamination, making them

challenging to redevelop or sell, due to the significant costs of environmental remediation.

The City of Gardiner has successfully applied for grant money from the Environmental Protection Agency's Brownfields Remediation Program to enable property owners of contaminated sites to receive assessment and remediation services, funded by the grant, thus enabling these properties to be repurposed to more community oriented and profitable uses. This is a voluntary program and the City of Gardiner has invested resources in applying for these funds as part of its wider goal of supporting the local economy and community.

The Gardiner community has been considering ways to revitalize this once-thriving tributary of the Kennebec for several years. **The Gardiner Downtown Revitalization Plan**, created in 1999, recommended a broad range of planning and financing strategies based on a detailed historic and economic analysis of the downtown area.

The Summer Street area as well as the Arcade parking lot and its connection to the Chapman's Garage site are all sites along the Cobbossee Stream for which the Downtown Revitalization Plan produced recommendations and plans, as shown in the following images.

# Gardiner Downtown Redevelopment Plan

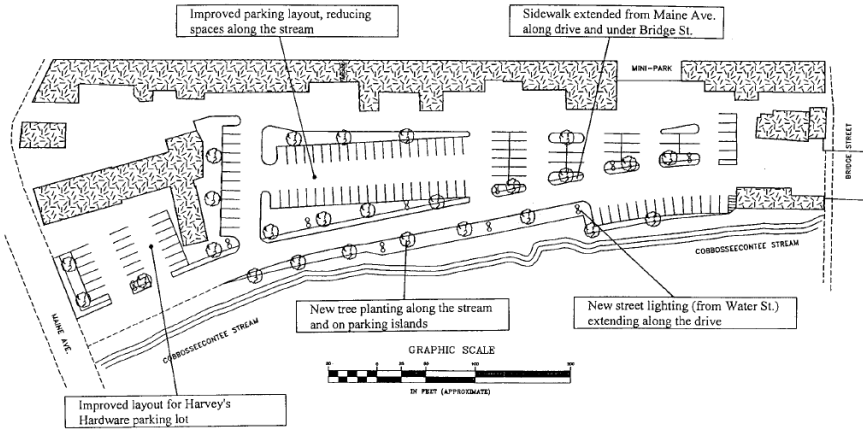
## ARCADE PARKING LOT

Prepared For:  
The City of Gardiner

By:  
Kent Associates  
Planning & Design Consultants  
Gardiner, Maine

In association with:  
Casey & Godfrey Engineers  
PA Strategies  
Critical Insights

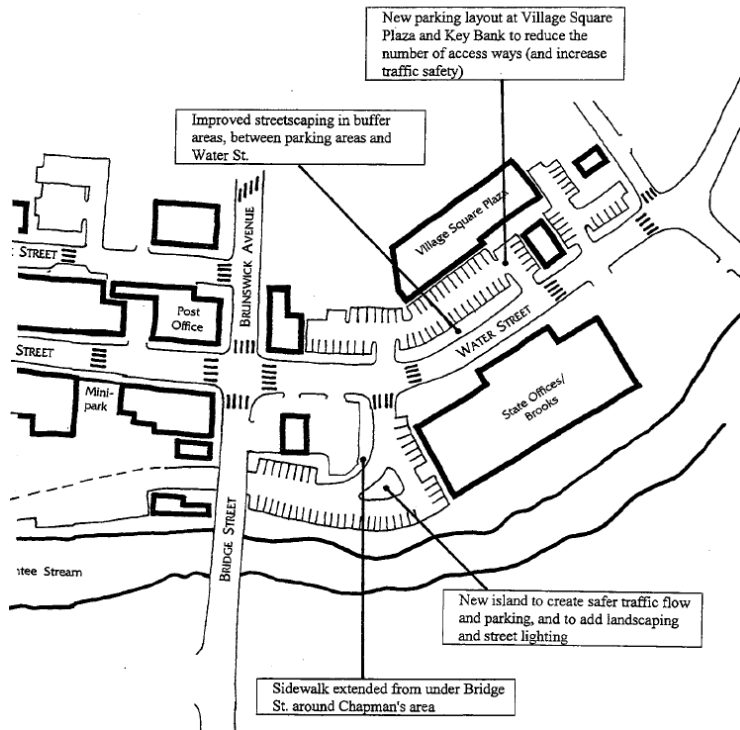
Plans prepared by:  
Casey & Godfrey Engineers



## Arcade Parking Improvements

Prepared by Casey & Godfrey Engineers

Arcade parking lot



Chapman's Garage  
Bridge St. and Water St. intersection

**Summer Street Study:  
Redevelopment Potential**

Prepared for the City of Gardiner  
by Kent Associates, Gardiner ME

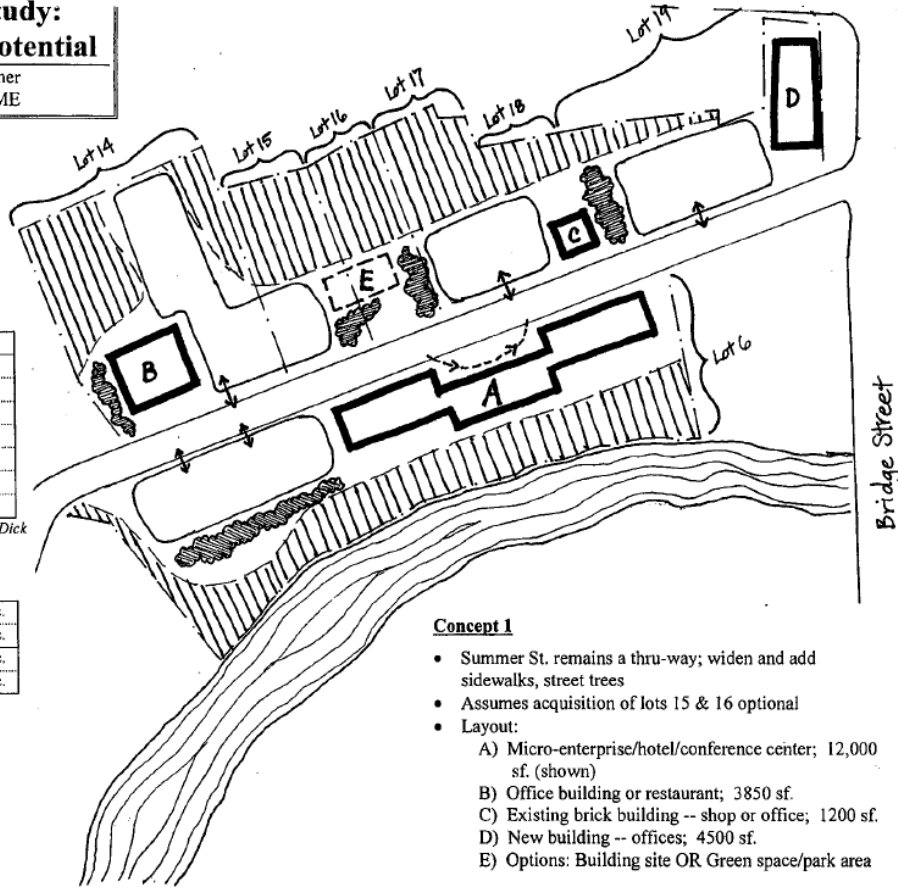
**ACREAGE TABLE**

Lot #	Acreage	Developable
6	1.64 ac.	67% (1.09 ac.)
14	0.88 ac.	75% (0.66 ac.)
15*	0.29 ac.	50% (0.145 ac.)
16*	0.25 ac.	50% (0.125 ac.)
17	0.29 ac.	50% (0.145 ac.)
18	0.18 ac.	60% (0.11 ac.)
19	0.57 ac.	80% (0.456 ac.)

\* properties *not* currently owned by T.W. Dick

**SUMMARY FOR  
STUDY AREA PROPERTIES**

Total T.W. Dick property:	4.11 ac.
Developable:	2.46 ac.
All properties (incl. 15 & 16):	4.65 ac.
Total developable:	2.73 ac.



**Concept 1**

- Summer St. remains a thru-way; widen and add sidewalks, street trees
- Assumes acquisition of lots 15 & 16 optional
- Layout:
  - A) Micro-enterprise/hotel/conference center; 12,000 sf. (shown)
  - B) Office building or restaurant; 3850 sf.
  - C) Existing brick building -- shop or office; 1200 sf.
  - D) New building -- offices; 4500 sf.
  - E) Options: Building site OR Green space/park area

Summer St. Redevelopment Concept

One of the long-range actions recommended in the Gardiner Downtown Revitalization Plan was the construction of a trail along the Cobbossee Stream, using the old railroad trestle as a new pedestrian / bicycle bridge.



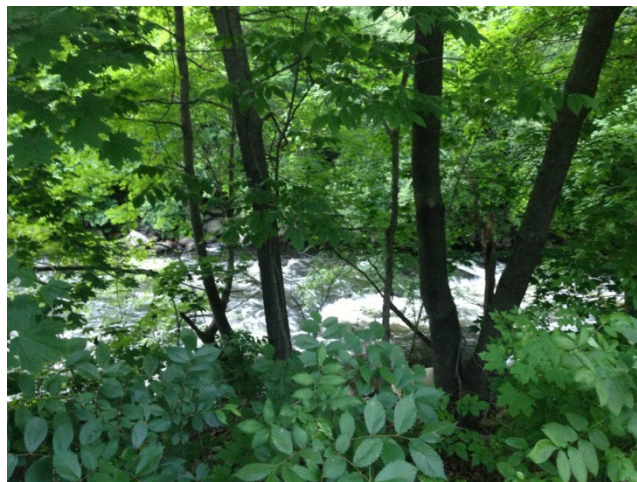
Railroad Trestle

In 2004/2005, the **Cobbossee Corridor Master Plan** was developed by a group of Gardiner Community members, led by Kent Associates Planning and Design Consultants and approved by Gardiner City Council. They created a comprehensive strategy, containing plans and recommendations for both the natural and built environment along the banks of the Cobbossee Stream from the New Mills Bridge down to Bridge St./ Rt.201 and the TW Dick and Chapman's Garage properties.

It was noted that the corridor has a "rich history, great scenic beauty and the potential to become a vibrant and important part of the city's future." It is a gateway to the downtown, connecting it to the interstate, only two miles away. The Cobbossee Stream's drop in elevation of 127 feet over one and a third (1.3) miles soon led to its strength being harnessed for water power when Gardiner was first settled. Lumber and grist mills were established at the sites

of the seven dams. Soon, factories would produce lead pipes, cast iron plows, carriages and shingles. When a fire destroyed these buildings in 1849, new businesses sprang up to make textiles, shoes and paper. Despite this rich history, the corridor has been in decline for the last fifty years, leaving a legacy of contaminated sites and discontinuous infrastructure.

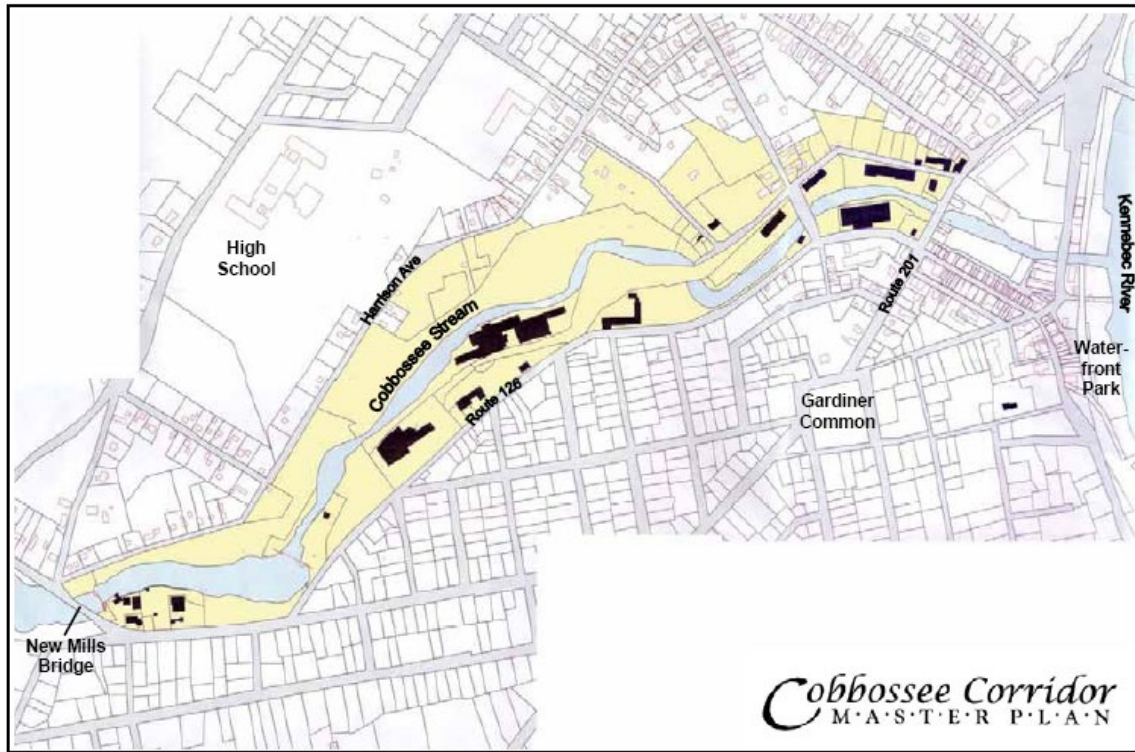
The Master Plan's vision was to "bring people back into the corridor by developing trails and open space, housing and new commercial activity." The plan maps show the intended development of a trail system as well as potential redevelopment sites along the stream. The trails are both a recreational resource and a way of connecting neighborhoods to the downtown and the areas of outstanding natural beauty on their doorstep. Informative signs at key locations along the trail would also enable the trails to become an outdoor museum.



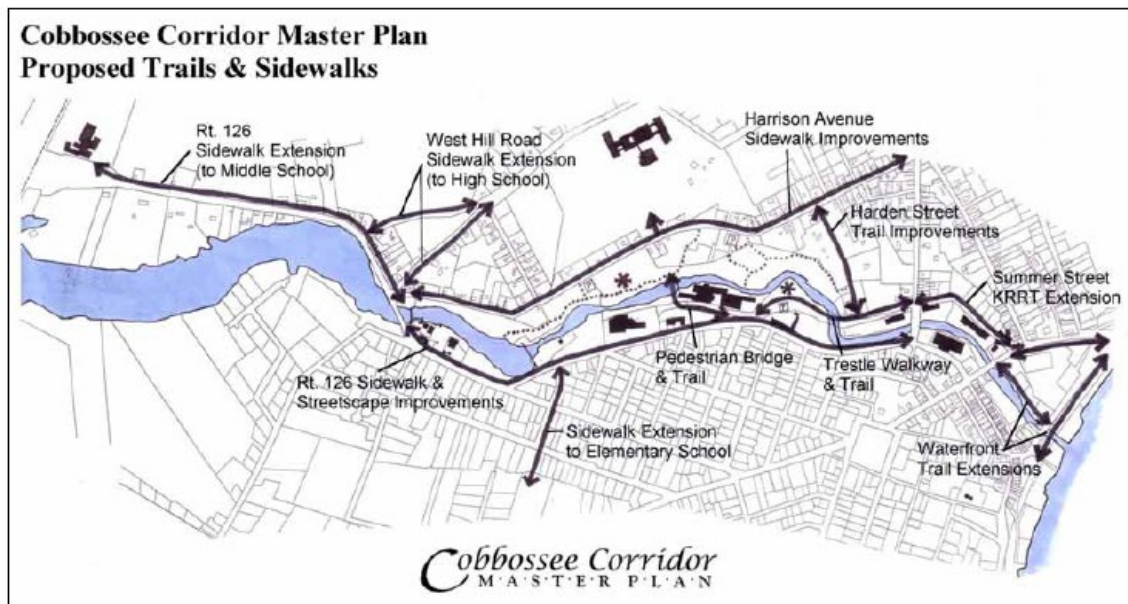
Cobbossee Stream, beyond Chapman's Garage



# COBBOSSEE CORRIDOR STUDY AREA



The highlighted section shows areas of Gardiner included in Cobbossee Corridor

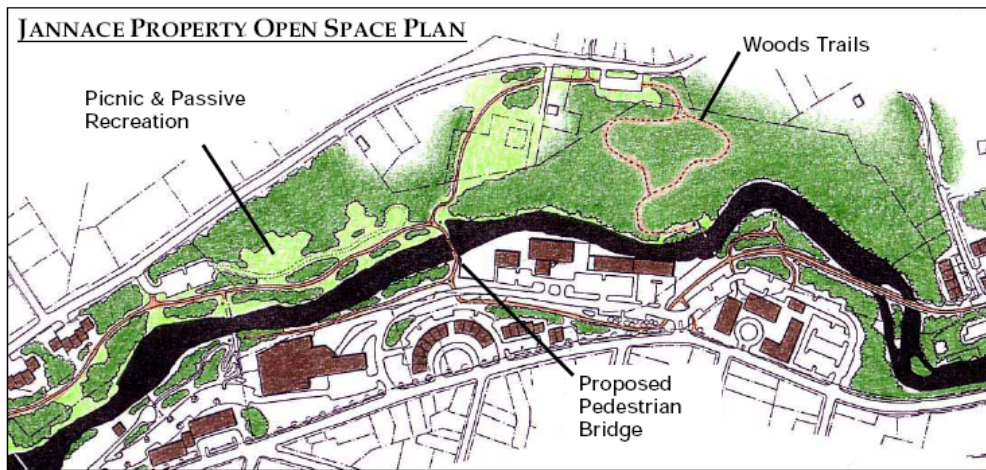


Map of the proposed trail network along Cobbossee Corridor

## COBBOSSEE CORRIDOR MASTER PLAN



The Cobbossee Corridor Master Plan showing green spaces, buildings and trails.



City owned Jannace property with dramatic topography and views.

The City-owned Jannace property on the northwestern side of Cobbossee Stream is the largest piece of open space in the corridor, with dramatic topography and views. Trails and a picnic area are proposed on this land, as indicated in the map, above.

Restoration of the trestle bridge was again recommended. The stream was recognized as a natural resource that provides rich plant and animal habitat as well as recreational opportunities such as kayaking and fishing. Its dramatic topography both lends drama to the scenery and limits development opportunities.

Most recently, a **Department of Transportation (DOT) Preliminary Design Report** for the Cobbossee Stream Pedestrian/ Bicycle Trail was prepared by Milone and MacBroom in 2008. One of the main goals was to use trails to connect the neighborhoods and the downtown district and a key feature was the utilization of the former railroad trestle and trail dating from the early 1900s.



View from the railroad trestle

Safety concerns were raised about the Summer St. and Bridge St. intersection, due to short sight distance and congestion. Installing a traffic signal seems to be the only practical solution

for this issue. Trucks turning at the Winter Street Bridge are also a concern and the turning radius of the sidewalk needs to be wider.

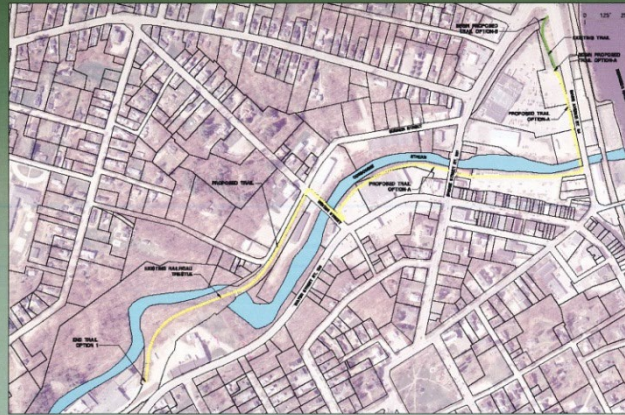
Two alternate trail paths were proposed. Alternate A was chosen to move forward with because of the difficulty of constructing a safe crossing of Bridge St, as called for in Alternate B. Alternate A has a trail which utilizes mostly the South side of the stream, whereas Alternate B traverses the north side which has pristine landscape, but would be challenging to construct a trail upon, due to the steep pitch of the topography.

However, in the future, a soft trail on the North side of the stream could possibly be funded by a Department of Conservation (DOC) Recreation Trails Grant for about thirty thousand dollars. Ideally, both Alternate A and B would eventually be constructed, which would make the trail system better used and connected.

Pricing was completed and Maine Department of Conservation (Me DOT) estimated that the total cost for the trail as developed in Alternate A would be a total of approximately \$1.2M, of which one fifth would be provided by City sources (\$200K) which would then be matched with a 5/1 DOT grant (\$1M).

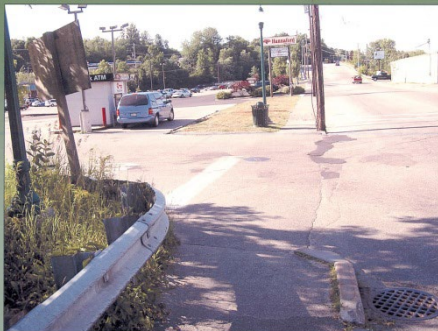
Again, restoring the trestle bridge was a focus of this design.

## Trail Location Map

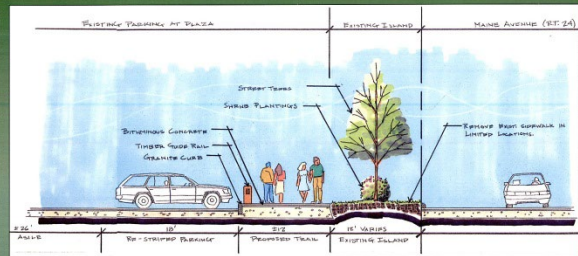


Department of Transportation Trail Location

## Plaza Parking & Maine Avenue



## Plaza Parking & Maine Avenue



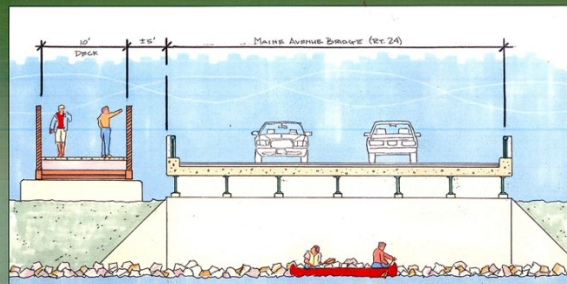
Photographs of existing conditions

Images showing proposed new designs

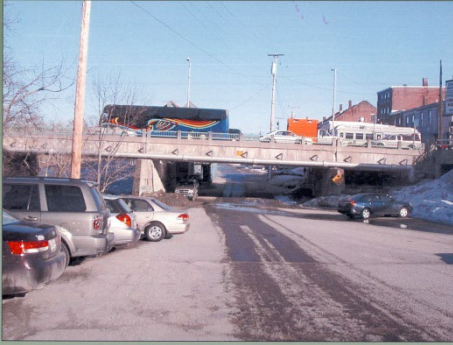
## Pedestrian Bridge



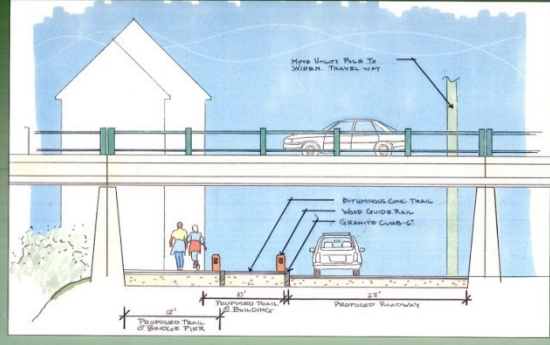
## Pedestrian Bridge



### Bridge Street Overpass



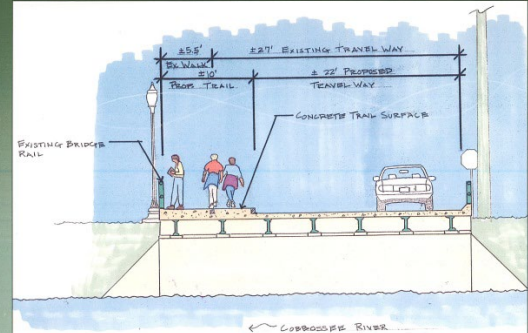
### Bridge Street Overpass



### Winter Street Bridge



### Winter Street Bridge



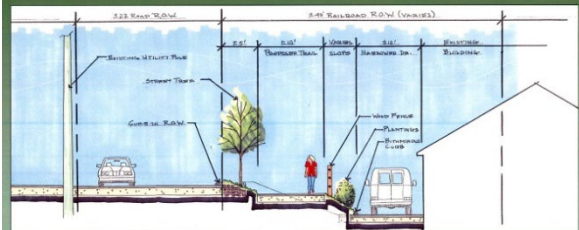
Photographs of existing conditions

Images showing proposed new designs

### Summer Street Extension



### Summer Street Extension



## **Summary of present conditions:**

There has been a thorough and comprehensive analysis of redevelopment opportunities for both the downtown and Cobbossee Stream area in previous reports and the City of Gardiner is pursuing many of the recommendations made therein.

Development of the trail system is still a priority and there is a desire to jumpstart the funding to construct the trail and ascertain local support for both the trail building process and the use of Brownfields redevelopment funds.

While past reports have provided both written analysis and plans and layouts showing possibilities, it can be challenging for individuals without a design or engineering background to envisage how potential projects might look and make informed decisions whether they want to support a particular direction of growth. Public support will be critical in order to raise the necessary funds to construct the trail system.

## **Cobbossee Corridor Visions. Community Discussions. Summer 2014**

Over July and August 2014, the City of Gardiner, in collaboration with the University of Maine at Augusta and Healthy Communities of the Capital Area, represented by Karen Tucker,

organized a series of four design workshops. Facilitated by a grant from the Orton Family Foundation, these discussions aimed to facilitate discussion between attendees about potential new uses for suspected Brownfields properties and how a future trail system could be used.

Rather than replicating already completed work, we facilitated a series of visioning sessions where local business owners, City Council members, elected representatives and residents were able to express their priorities and desires for Gardiner's future growth, which were then given form by the students' images and designs.

At the first meeting on **July 10<sup>th</sup>**, Nate Rudy, Economic and Community Development Officer for Gardiner, Nick Sabatine and Erik Phenix from Ransom Engineering (the City's consulting engineers), Brian Kent from Kent Associates Planning and Design Consultants, and four students from UMA gave presentations about various aspects of the history and current conditions of the Cobbossee Corridor to all attendees.

There was then a site walk through the Arcade parking lot, under the bridge, up behind Chapman's Garage, and along the stream, culminating at the trestle bridge.



Site walk along proposed trail



At the second meeting on **July 24<sup>th</sup>**, the attendees divided into three groups and discussed three different aspects of development in the Cobbossee Corridor. Three tables were set up, each with large copies of the Cobbossee Corridor Master Plan and these were used to refer to and make notes on as the discussion developed. One table discussed the Bridge Street and Water Street intersection, another focused on the Summer Street area and the third table discussed the trail itself.

For an hour, the students led a discussion in each group about the

potential uses of the spaces and their respective assets and liabilities. Participants rotated every twenty minutes while the students stayed at their tables to gather all comments.

The combined comments, drawings, and notes from each table were then shared with the whole group and there was an opportunity for final comments for the record. There was a brief discussion about what the gathered attendees would like to have the students illustrate for them, to present at the next meeting.





On **August 7<sup>th</sup>**, images and renderings of potential future uses were presented by the students and, as before, the attendees gathered around three tables, rotating every twenty minutes as they discussed the proposals. Again, all comments were noted and at the end of the meeting, the students summarized the discussions and were asked to produce a further development of their initial proposals, based on the evening's findings.



The final meeting was on **August 21<sup>st</sup>**. The students presented their final proposals to the entire group and each proposal was discussed. The attendees then split up into three smaller groups for a final discussion about short and long term priorities in the development process and the challenges and possibilities ahead.

## Summer Street Neighborhood:

The following narrative captures the working group discussion about proposed development opportunities around Summer Street. Architecture students Arielle Cousens and Benjamin Stoodley led the discussions about the images and plans that they produced after each discussion.

The suggestions from the participants centered on creating a recreational center where the *Off Price* retail store now stands. Gardiner does not have an all ages recreational center and it would be an ideal location along the edge of the proposed trail, providing access to public restrooms for outdoor rec. users. In addition, it would be on the same side of the stream as many of the Winter Street hill residential neighborhoods. Currently there is a sense of there being no public resource on that end of the downtown district to serve local residents, and a rec. center could be a place for generations to come together. The topography creates a naturally sloped outdoor gathering place that could be used for small concerts. People felt it would be great to open up views to the stream.

The public identified a need for retirees to be able to stay in their homes and have an easily accessible place to gather, which a recreational center could support. An indoor skate park at the same location would give younger people a four season, safe indoor exercise venue. This location is fairly close to the Middle School and the High

School. Bath, for example, has an indoor skate park. Public baths and saunas would be wonderful but almost certainly prohibitively expensive. The group questioned how the proposed rec. center would generate income to cover expenses.

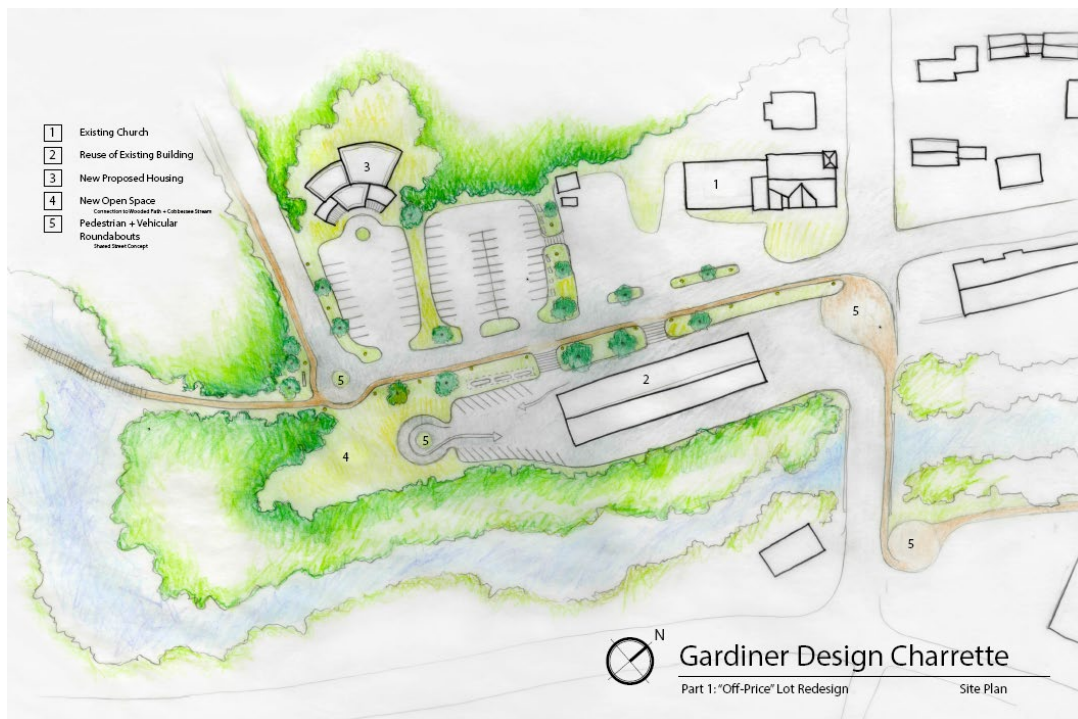
There is also a potential need for apartments and possibly a market for two bedroom condominiums for retirees in Gardiner, and the proximity of this area to both downtown and the natural beauty of the stream and future trail system would be ideal for such uses and could stimulate development. The Bridge St. end of Summer St. is the closest to downtown and might be the optimal location for retirement housing or a small hotel.

The first proposal below shows how the *Off Price* store might be repurposed as a recreational center. The second proposal shows mixed use development along Summer St. with a mix of retirement housing and a hotel and restaurant in the current TW Dick building. It also includes a new pedestrian bridge across the Cobbossee Stream and a roundabout on Bridge St. to ease congestion and improve pedestrian safety.

The discussion in response to the second proposal focused on how to create a safe pedestrian crossing at the bottom of Highland Avenue and the difficulty of the current exit from Hannaford's onto Bridge St. because of

the steep incline. Turning left is tricky, people say. It was noted that one lane rotaries reduce collisions, both pedestrian and vehicular. They are safer than four-way intersections. There was some discussion about whether a rotary

would be warranted at this particular intersection but it was agreed that the pedestrian crossings are not clear now. This fact has also been noted in previous studies.



Proposed reuse along Cobbossee Stream at the corner of Winter and Summer Streets



A model of a recreation center at the current *Off Price* retail store



Proposed reuse of the TW Dick property with a rotary to provide safer pedestrian crossing on Bridge Street



Proposed reuse of the T.W. Dick office building on Bridge Street

## Bridge Street / Water Street Intersection:

Architecture student Earl Shields led the working group discussions about the area around Chapman's Garage and the intersection of Bridge St. and Water St. Below are descriptions of the issues that people raised in the discussions, followed by Earl's design proposals:

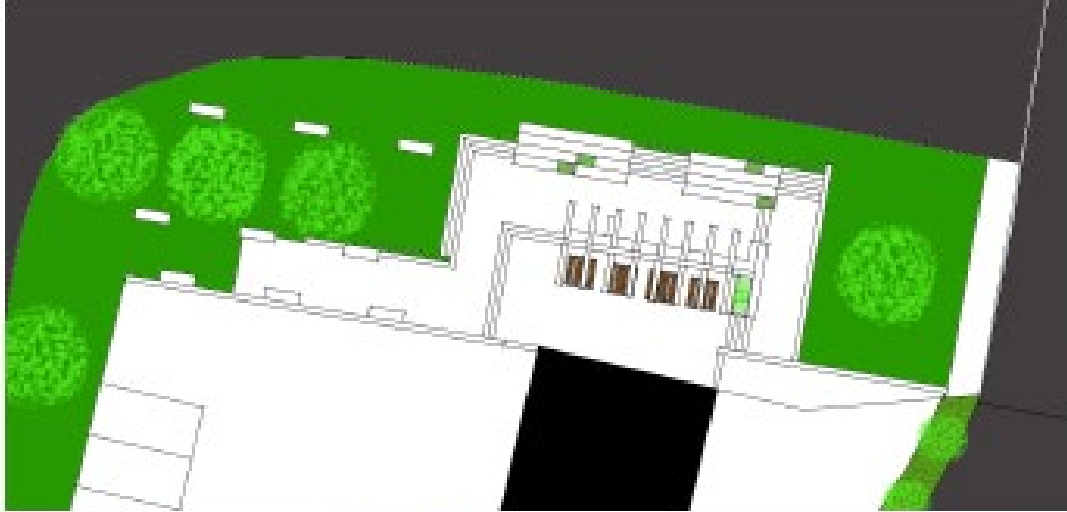
Participants raised many safety concerns for pedestrians and vehicle traffic. The current turning radius when turning right from Bridge Street Southwest onto Water St. may not be wide enough for large trucks to turn at the intersection, so they currently take a back route through Summer St. which creates safety issues on Bridge St. and is not conducive to new development at

TW Dick. A rotary on Bridge Street is one option that wouldn't take up a lot of space and which would improve safety. There was a question as to whether an island could serve the same function as a rotary. It is also important to consider the potential repercussions of traffic changes at one intersection on the rest of the traffic patterns in town. Pedestrian safety is a major concern and a coordinated system at intersections on Bridge Street would be ideal.

In response to the initial discussion, Earl proposed the following terraced landscaping and building reuse ideas to encourage views and interactions with the stream.



Initial plan for a proposed reuse of Chapman's Garage property



A series of renderings showing a potential reuse of the Chapman's garage property, including views of an overlook on Cobbossee Stream

These images generated a range of responses:

There was a question about whether the truck turn crescent would be effective for pedestrians. Also, people wanted more visibility and views to the trail from the proposed overlook. Would the seating be used in winter? People liked the idea of a communal gathering hub on the Cobbossee Stream.

Other Questions: Is there a way to mirror the intensity of the use across the street in the downtown district? What if you eliminated the building and used the whole property as open space? Would eliminating the crosswalk on the Chapman's side of Brunswick Avenue help? Would rebuilding the metal A1 staircase help redirect foot traffic under the bridge?

It would be good to have parking on the north side of the Chapman's lot, closer to the stream. Is there a way to create more activity on the peninsula but still face the stream and screen Route 9/126 traffic? Can you design to accentuate stream sounds over traffic noise? Would a trellis with greenery help?

Could you use the roof of the building for patio seating? A big parking lot in the heart of downtown may not be as "cool" as saving the historic gas station. Pergolas, natural surfaces and materials and more vegetation would be desirable.

Is there a way to be sheltered for three seasons and still feel "outside" with a glass enclosure and passive solar heat? Maybe a fabric structure could be used? Is there a way to capture the solar gain on the south facing slope?

Taking into account this feedback, Earl revised his design for the next meeting. The second proposal was a development of the first proposal based on feedback and comments:

One of the key goals was to ensure a safe turning radius for truck traffic. This design also directs traffic around and down into the Arcade parking lot while bringing the trail through the site and onto to Water St. Nineteen more parking spaces are created on the North side of the lot and the narrowed street makes vehicle access more directed. The stairs and ramps would help with easy access to down town. Building a second story above the existing garage would increase the flexibility of the space, particularly in winter.

This is a high visibility corner and improvements at this location would have a high profile. Any undertaking must be realistically manageable and cost effective in order to be funded by the City and/ or to demonstrate strong need and the potential for positive ripple effect at surrounding properties.





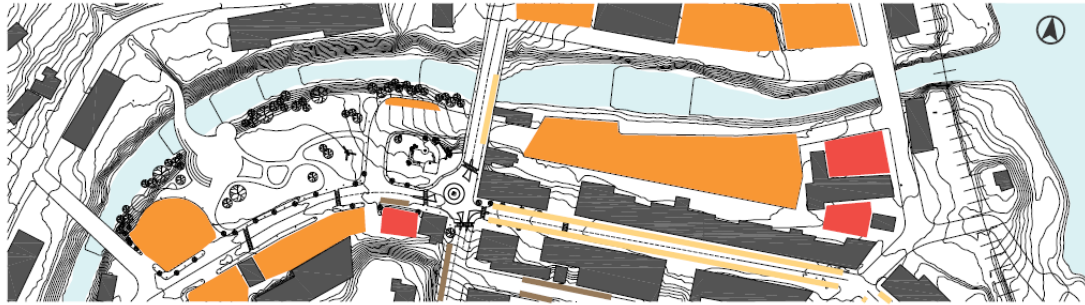
Note the larger turn radius proposed to assist tractor trailer traffic



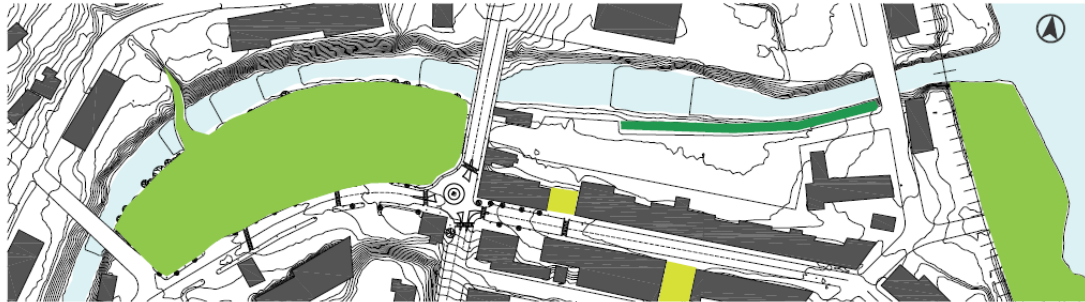


Additional views of a proposed reuse project at Chapman's garage





**PARKING**    ■ PARKING LOTS    ■ RESERVED LOTS    ■ STREET    ■ HOURLY STREET



**PARKS + GREEN SPACE**    ■ LARGE PARKS    ■ POCKET PARKS    ■ TRAIL



**PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION**    ■ NEW    ■ EXISTING    ■ REDESIGNED    ■ PATH



**VEHICLE CIRCULATION**    ■ OLD BYPASS ROUTE    ■ NEW ROUTE OFFERS OPTIONS

Analysis done by Arielle Cousens as part of her thesis work at UMA (above) had resulted in a similar solution to improving the safety of this key downtown intersection, but by using a rotary to direct traffic.

## Cobbossee Corridor Trail:



### The Cobbossee Stream from *On Target* to the Kennebec River

Architecture student Jaimee Anderson's group discussed the development of the proposed trail system.

The initial meeting focused on the trail system as a whole:

Workshop participants wanted the trail to have multiple uses and be flexible. It could be a nature trail with fitness stations at scenic overlook points along the stream. Businesses along the trail should be able to access it easily and ideally it would also act as a transportation corridor. High visibility corridors deter vandalism and trespassing.

The trail system could be a mix of more natural and off road recreation, combined with more easily accessible trails. Lighting and benches should be appropriate to the nature of the area. Participants wanted to keep the natural areas feeling natural and respect the abundant wildlife. There was also a

suggestion to use the left over 'scrap' steel left over from earlier industry for sculptures on the trail.

A multiple-use trestle was suggested with fishing platforms and swimming hole and there was a discussion about whether there could be a beach area by the *Off Price* store. A desire was expressed for enhanced access to the water (including for those with limited mobility) and easier whitewater kayaking access (a high risk sport).

If the trail could be designed as a loop it would be more interesting for regular users. A plan for winter uses such as cross country skiing and snowshoeing would increase year-round usage and flexibility. Enhancing the connections to the high school and the neighborhoods, making rest spots at scenic moments and creating a scenic overlook on the bridge are all ways to tie the trail into the community. Historic markers and interpretative signs could be at key locations to tell the story of the stream.

Fencing needs to be provided along parts of the trail for erosion control and to direct access and in order to keep motorized vehicles off the trail, bollards need to be provided at key access

points. Project proponents must also consider the costs and practicalities of trail maintenance and parking.



A view of the Arcade parking lot from the Hannaford lot, north of the Cobbossee Stream

The second discussion focused on the Arcade parking lot and the trestle bridge:

The new trail would start at the Hannaford parking lot and continue along the south side of the Cobbossee Stream. It was noted that cars go fast through the Arcade parking lot and the addition of a pedestrian walkway along the stream edge would be a big improvement. As the area floods, any improvements need to be flood resistant.

The use of different ground textures to differentiate the trail and the driving surfaces was suggested. If the parking lot area became more attractive it might encourage building owners to add porches, decks and outside seating to the backs of their buildings, which would improve the appearance of the area.

This back façade and parking lot is one of most problematic 'entry' views for Gardiner, as it is widely visible by passing traffic and at the core of the community. Being able to create the feel of a pedestrian Maine Avenue along the stream could encourage new façade

investment from property owners, which would transform the space.

If dumpsters were aggregated or shared, it would open up space for more parking. Screens or fences around some of the more utilitarian uses in the parking lot would improve its appearance. The current walkways behind the buildings are uninviting and ice overhangs from eaves of the buildings high above can be significant. Adding new fire escapes would improve safety and the appearance of the back

façade. The area needs to be accessible for fire trucks and easy snow removal.

Reserved parking spaces for residents would be desirable.

Clear and consistent signage is essential to mark the trail's path. This issue has also been raised in previous reports in some detail. Bicycles along the trail and racks for them must also be taken into account.



A proposed parking scheme for the Arcade lot to improve the look and feel without losing spaces



Rendering of the Arcade parking lot with proposed trail and improved parking

The proposed parking plan creates ten new parking spaces and a sidewalk (created through a change in texture) along the edge of the buildings by the parking lot as well as showing the new trail in use. Textures are used to define a variety of uses and create safe pedestrian routes without interfering with vehicle accessibility. The scaled and ordered environment should naturally

slow traffic down while encouraging a variety of people centered uses. Exterior gyms along the riverbank and trail, for example, would provide exercise options for the whole family.

The focus groups felt that the arcade parking lot is critical to public perception of Gardiner and that increased pedestrian access would be desirable.





A proposed two level design for the trestle bridge

Workshop participants agreed that the key focal point of the trail system is the trestle bridge. They also felt that the trestle should be maintained and developed as a historical attraction. Could a diversity of use be developed in the area adjacent to the trestle? If one could access a level below the trestle, the complexity of the structure and the scenic outlook could be better appreciated. This would enhance the natural draw of the trestle itself.

Lighting across the trestle bridge was seen as desirable, along with a scenic

turnout at the center. The history of the original industries and the railroad could be highlighted. Is the trail going to be plowed in the winter and does that affect the choice of surface? Or is it going to be left un-plowed to allow for show shoeing and cross country skiing?

A restaurant near the trestle could be attractive so long as the noise of the water did not interfere with diners' conversations. There was a question about whether the trestle platform would flood and how that would be managed.





A two-level trestle bridge would provide users with access to the water.



## **Future Directions:**

How do you eat an elephant? - One bite at a time!

A focused growth plan is a tool for sustained future development. Starting with downtown improvements and working up the trail may help to create a momentum for future growth. There must be a continued focus on long term strategic development. A plan to make downtown attractive to 20-30 year old demographic would be desirable, as would increasing housing options and accessibility for retirees and mature entrepreneurs.

Incorporating multiple use possibilities into the trail aligns with workshop participants desire for flexibility which has been repeatedly expressed. Partnering with the land trust may be a great option for future trail development.

Similarly, planning future development along the corridor with connectivity and mixed use in mind would be prudent. Design the trail with the expectation that uses will change over time.

Erik Phenix from Ransom Engineers summarized Brownfields parameters:

It should be determined where along the trail Brownfields money might be used for site remediation. Brownfields funds do not have to be used for commercial reuse projects.

The T.W. Dick property is in the first phase of assessment. Chapman's garage was just given the go ahead for funding. The Arcade parking lot is eligible for funding and Johnson Hall is in progress of utilizing the funds.

Knowing the information about site contamination helps developers manage the risk involved.

Kathy Castagna, Gardiner's field coordinator from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) discussed other resources in addition to Brownfields Funds for site and building rehabilitation:

There are green infrastructure funds available in the form of Smart Growth Funds. There are planning tools for Sustainable Communities. Gardiner's thorough planning process was, in large part, what led to its being awarded Brownfields funds and the EPA will be working with the City of Gardiner to see

what further funding is available. It was noted that the reuse of a space can be a trail or green space as well as the built environment.

Chris Redmond from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) discussed the trail construction:

DEP permits will be needed for most of the trail work. 'Permit by Rule' process may be able to be used for construction of any pedestrian bridges. Vegetation removal is regulated at a municipal level. There may be restrictions on clearing a pre-existing trail if it has reverted to shrubs and growth.

### **Next steps:**

Nate Rudy, Gardiner's Director of Economic and Community Development, will continue to move forward with the Brownfields assessment process and developing the financial structure to construct the MeDOT trail. The Parks and Recreation Committee is working on clearing parts of the proposed trail system right now and will continue their efforts in partnership with the City's Code Enforcement Officer. There is an open position on the Kennebec River Rail Trail Board, which could be a way to support efforts to create a Cobbossee Corridor Trail as well as maintain the well-used Kennebec River Trail.

There appears to be deep well spring of local support to improve the way Gardiner can work as a community for those who both live and work there. Local engagement is evident at multiple levels, from downtown business owners, to the many hours those in the school system spend caring for the children to the pragmatic and caring public servants who consistently work behind the scenes to make the often difficult decisions involved in running a community.

Continued efforts will need to be made to provide events and services that draw people in and provide ongoing marketing and advertising for Gardiner. Getting buy-in from building and land owners about proposed future development and listening to their concerns is key to moving forward.

Our thanks go to the many residents and business owners who attended the series of workshops and so thoughtfully shared their thoughts, inspirations and concerns about the future of Gardiner. It has been a privilege to work with this community and our hope is that the work done this summer proves helpful as a tool to envisage and encourage sustainable future growth.