Unlocking the Potential of the Commercial Corridor
Rockland and Rockport, Maine

DESIGN PRINCIPLES SUMMARY

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Friends of Midcoast Maine

For the complete set of corridor studies and reports visit
http://www.friendsmidcoast.org/towns/rockland.htm

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- Bike lanes alongside through lanes provide safety for bicyclist and a buffer between cars and people.
- Pedestrians on crosswalks need the refuge of a median or island and the protection of raised curbs and plantings.
- Critical mass of street trees and seasonal plantings will ameliorate traffic speeds and turning movements while maintaining appropriate sight lines.
- On-street parking – even shorter stretches – provides convenient access, protects pedestrians on sidewalks, and slows through traffic to village character speed.
- Wrap parking decks and garages with liner buildings: buildings which hold the street form.
- Allow Infill construction to make smaller structures marketplace competitive.
- Maintain views of water with corridors and extensions of street grid.
- Preserve possibility of connecting adjacent lots.
- Planted esplanades make sidewalk use more comfortable, pleasant and safe.
- Planted medians, on-street parking, and pedestrian amenities create safer pedestrian and bike travel while maintaining road capacity for vehicles.
- Pedestrian scale light fixtures convey a message of neighborhood and safety.
- Strengthen street wall with liner buildings and infill.
- Roundabouts can achieve 'slow-flow' traffic without obstacles, open visibility of businesses on all corners, opportunities for gateway or significant nodal design, and safer pedestrian crossing thanks to medians.
- Strong iconic buildings can be repurposed for coffee shops, restaurants, or small offices with lively outdoor social space.
- New buildings should be brought up to the ROW for a strong street wall.
- Provide transparency with windows and doors along street and allow/require multiple operating doorways to break up large mass of building walls and to provide active pedestrian life and vitality.
- Allow and/or require multi-story, multi-use buildings along entire corridor to provide maximum use of space, potential rental spaces, income and tax benefits as well as maximum economic vitality along and within the corridor.
- Invest and infill along Camden Street in areas where businesses already exist to build on strength. Provide places where people can meet for lunch, coffee, networking, and access to wi-fi.
- Develop 'Complete Streets' connectivity from Rockland downtown to the full extent of Camden Street, emphasizing multi-mode, active living and strong connections.
- Explore creation of Greenway – a linear pathway along shore or weaving through properties and connecting public spaces where possible – to support active living and alternative transportation modes.
- Respond to current scale of buildings with context sensitive design for both additions and infill.
- Use both buildings and strong landscape forms to hold corners and make strong entries and corners.

- Promote village scale street network by reserving possible right-of-way connections between adjacent parcels. (E.g. when one is up for development review, create optional future sideways connections.)
- Use open spaces in design of future commercial, residential and mixed use developments. Open spaces should be public, welcoming, and sized proportionately to blocks and streets.
- Provide internal organization such as connected plazas, open spaces and crosswalks, all of which can also be service and emergency access routes.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS
By Location

LOCATION 1

INTERSECTION OF CAMDEN STREET AND MAVERICK STREET: PUBLIC SPACE, ROCKLAND

Intersection Design

- While a roundabout would ordinarily be considered in this type of traffic situation, there does not appear to be sufficient room within the existing public ROW to accommodate the turning movements of larger vehicles, the approach lanes, and the bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure necessary to make it work.
- If additional land outside the ROW became available, the roundabout concept should be explored as a viable way to handle the volume of traffic currently using this intersection.
- When properly designed (if additional land were to become available), a roundabout could create a dynamic gateway into Camden Street while safely accommodating pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

Gateway Treatment

- Install planted median strips on the three major legs of the intersection to separate traffic, provide places for pedestrian refuge, and reduce the scale of the wide streets.
- Use slope-granite curbing to define the edge of the median strips and encourage motorists to allow more room for bicyclists nears the opposite curbline.
- Introduce the landscape elements (sidewalks, signage, lighting, crosswalks, plantings, etc.) that will be used throughout Camden Street.
- Consider a textured/patterned paving surface (an urban welcome-mat, as it were) for the middle of the street to make the space more distinctive and signal the start of the re-visioned streetscape).
- Install flush cobble (or similar textured) rumble strips at breaks in the median strips and the approaches to maintain a sense of continuity in the street.
- Select tree species that are tolerant of urban growing conditions, relatively maintenance free, and attractive throughout the year.

- Install low-maintenance groundcovers, perennials, and ornamental grasses in the islands to add welcoming notes of color and texture to the streetscape.

Pedestrian Improvements

The junction of Camden Street (Route One) and Maverick Street is one of the distinctive gateways into the community. At this major intersection, there is currently no legal way for a pedestrian to cross Maverick Street.

- Install crosswalks at all four street crossings, using textured pavers or wear-resistant marking material.
- Design medians with breaks at the crosswalks to act as refuge islands for pedestrians.
- Reduce curb radii on all four corners as much as possible to minimize the length of the crosswalks.
- Incorporate pedestrian-actuated phases into the traffic signals.
- Select plantings with four seasons of interest for use in the median strips and any available land within the ROW.
- Use caution in selecting plants that do not block motorists' view of pedestrians within or approaching the crosswalks.
- Provide room for on-street parking between the intersection and Washington Street. Parked cars create a buffer to further separate the pedestrian from moving vehicles.

LOCATION 2

BREAKWATER MARKETPLACE
- **91 CAMDEN STREET**
- **92 CAMDEN STREET**

VACANT LAND NORTH OF BREAKWATER MARKETPLACE ON CAMDEN STREET
RESIDENTIAL GROUPING:
106, 122–124 (OLD CHURCH)
CAMDEN STREET, ROCKLAND

Liner Buildings / Infill Development

- Use liner buildings (primarily commercial uses) to screen parking lots and structures from view. Liner buildings are holding a street wall and defining the public space.
- Wrap liner buildings around at least two sides of parking structures for maximum effect.

New Structures and Build-to Lines

- Establish maximum setbacks or build-to lines to bring future buildings closer to the road to allow for greater density along the street.
- New buildings should be highly articulated and designed to provide visual interest at the pedestrian level.
- New outside doorways on buildings should be spaces no more than 30' apart to maintain an active streetlife.
- New structures should have 75% or more glazing on the street wall to maintain the transparency that promotes a safe and friendly pedestrian environment.

- New structures should have main entranceways facing the sidewalk.
- Parking areas for infill and new structures should be at the back or side of the structures, and not in the front setback.
- Consider requiring two or more story buildings in order to maintain the current forms of development.
- Scale new houses to the patterns of small market rate cottages on the west side of Camden Street.
- Require mixed use structures with retail and offices on lower level and residential uses above in order to increase the use, activity, income and lease potential and marketability of the buildings.

Screening Existing Parking

- Stone walls and dense plantings should be used to screen existing parking lots and visually separate them from the sidewalk.
- Plantings/walls should be a maximum of 3.5' in height to maintain views of the buildings and allow for surveillance.

Street Trees

- Incorporate street trees to provide shade, add visual interest, and help to unify and add scale to Camden Street.
- Tree selection should emphasize native species with interesting physical characteristics (bark patterns, spreading form, leaf/flower color, etc.) and minimum maintenance requirements.
- Tree locations should consider overhead and underground utilities, sight distance, sidewalk width, visibility for entrances and commercial signage, and other issues related to public safety.

Planted Medians

- Install planted median strips to separate traffic, provide places for pedestrian refuge, and reduce the scale of the street.
- Use slope-granite curbing to define the edge of the median strips and encourage motorists to allow more room for bicyclists near the opposite curbline.
- Install flush cobble (or similar textured) rumble strips at breaks in the median strips to maintain a sense of continuity in the street.
- Select tree species that are tolerant of urban growing conditions, relatively maintenance free, and attractive throughout the year.
- Install low-maintenance groundcovers, perennials, and ornamental grasses in the islands to add welcoming notes of color and texture to the streetscape.

Maintaining Village Scale and Character

- Incorporate architectural elements in new construction that complement existing styles found in Rockland/Rockport.

- Protect specimen trees wherever possible. Relocate transplantable trees that are in unavoidable locations, either on site or within the neighborhood.

Re-Use of Residential / Institutional (church) Properties

- Preserve remaining historic structures – such as the church – wherever possible. Combine with new building elements of similar scale and style to create bolder, more marketable buildings.

Protecting / Enhancing View Corridors

- Maintain and enhance views from Camden Street to the water. New development should frame views with trees and building walls, terminating at the harbor.

Walkability

- Incorporate sidewalks on both sides of Camden Street; extend to Waldo Avenue, major side streets, and nearby residential areas and institutional uses.
- Wherever possible, incorporated a planted esplanade between the sidewalk and the street to buffer pedestrians and provide an additional layer of safety and separation.
- Establish a formal waterfront trail system, incorporating existing pathways where possible, to provide an attractive pedestrian/bicycle link that parallels Camden Street.
- Extend pathways/walkways from the public sidewalk into development sites, and to the waterfront pathway, to encourage pedestrian activity.
- Provide on-street parking where possible on Camden Street to separate the pedestrian from moving vehicles and reduce the visual scale of the street.

Streets and Blocks

- Require new development on large lots to have a public street network of blocks with perimeters of 1500-2000 feet.
- Require each project to provide public ROW stubs for connections to future adjacent projects and streets.

LOCATION 3

INTERSECTION OF CAMDEN STREET AND WALDO AVENUE, AND SAMOSET CORNER PROPERTY, ROCKLAND

Designing Roundabouts

- A roundabout at Waldo Avenue should be designed to facilitate through-traffic and turning movements of large trucks.

- Treat the center island as a gateway to the waterfront. The treatment could include plantings, sculpture, light and water features, or other devices to create a focal point in this highly visible portion of Camden Street.
- Allow sufficient room for a paved apron surrounding the central island to accommodate trucks, ambulances and other large vehicles.

- The design shown is the minimum that may be required by MDOT. Final design will need to respond to survey of existing conditions and a thorough analysis of the types and volumes of anticipated traffic.

Options for Small Scale Buildings

- The existing structure at the corner of Waldo Avenue and Camden Street could be re-purposed as a small office, non-drive-through coffee shop, or similar type of pedestrian-oriented use.
- On-site parking should be expanded to provide up to 4 spaces or as much as required for the expanded interior space.
- Additions to the building should bring it closer to the street to set the pattern for future development along Camden Street.

Future Nodal Development

- Future development in this area should consider the Camden Street/Waldo Avenue intersection as a node of higher density, with allowances for multi-story mixed used buildings that afford closer interactions between the pedestrian and the building, as well as setting the pattern for a street life beyond store hours.

Pedestrian Accommodations

- Incorporate well marked crosswalks into the median strips leading to the roundabout.
- Incorporate sidewalks on both sides of Camden Street, extending to Waldo Street, major side streets, and nearby residential areas and institutional uses.
- Wherever possible, incorporate a planted esplanade between the sidewalk and the street to provide an additional layer of separation.

LOCATION 4

BAR HARBOR BANK AND TRUST: 245 CAMDEN STREET, ROCKLAND

Liner Buildings

- Use liner buildings (primarily commercial uses) to screen parking lots and structures from view.
- Avoid continuous buildings that may block views toward the water or significant green spaces.
- Consider mixed-use, multi-story buildings as an alternative in this area.

Relating to the Street

- Establish maximum setbacks or build-to lines to bring future buildings closer to the road. These dimensions may vary to accommodate outdoor use areas (gardens, patios, sidewalk cafes).
- Provide breaks in linear buildings to allow pedestrian circulation between the street and the parking in the rear.
- Site buildings parallel and perpendicular to the street to establish or maintain a strong street line.
- Angled buildings should be expanded toward the street. Angular spaces can offer opportunities for interesting outdoor spaces to add visual interest to the pedestrian environment.
- Design new buildings with a high degree of detail to provide visual interest for both the pedestrian and the passing motorists.
- Provide main entrances facing the street, designed, signed, and lit to differentiate them from the other parts of the façade.
- Parking areas for infill and new structures should be at the rear or side of the structures, and not in the front setback.
- Grade changes can be taken up effectively in the building: e.g., a two-story building facing the street can have a three-story façade on the rear. Likewise, grade changes can be used to screen service areas, loading docks, and other functional aspects of the buiding.

Importance of Corners

- Buildings on corners should be two or three stories in height to add mass and visual prominence to the street. All buildings on corner lots should have a second story with a usable floor area.
- Upper floors should be visually related to the ground floor through repetition of design elements, e.g., color, materials, window treatment, and detailing that will unify the structure and help frame the ground floor.
- The main entrance to the building should be located on the major street or on the corner and designed to be visible from both streets.
- Corner locations offer opportunities for distinctive architectural elements: signs, sculpture, lighting, or landscaping.

Streets and Blocks

- Require new development on large lots to have a public street network of blocks with perimeters of 1500-2000 feet.
- Require each project to provide public ROW stubs for connections to future adjacent projects and streets.

LOCATION 5

WILLOW BAKE SHOP:
1084 COMMERCIAL STREET AND NICOLE'S HAIR SALON: 1088 COMMERCIAL STREET, ROCKPORT

Relating New Development to Surrounding Use Patterns

- Inventory existing structures, specimen trees, stone walls, and other memorable design elements at the start of the planning process to understand what gives the site its individual character.
- Plan development around these features to preserve the visual qualities of Commercial Street.
- Where possible, incorporate significant structures (such as older single family homes, outbuildings, and barns) into the overall design of new mixed-use development. These types of buildings can provide a good scale reference for new construction and help integrate new buildings into the community.

Streets and Blocks

- Require new development on large lots to have a public street network of blocks with perimeters of 1500-2000 feet.
- Require each project to provide public ROW stubs for connections to future adjacent projects and streets.

Terminated Vistas

- Provide a focal point at the end of new streets to terminate the view and provide a memorable image for new community development
- Focal points could be simple structures (e.g., gazebo or bandstand), a significant public building with a steeple or other prominent architectural element, a large-scale sculpture, or a similar feature.
- Avoid placement of single-family homes to terminate views, unless they contain significant architectural or site features, such as cupolas or specimen trees.
- Frame view corridors with new, existing, and re-purposed buildings.
- Site buildings at the entrance to new multi-unit developments to create a gateway effect and interesting spatial experiences between the public street and the more private parts of the site.

Treatment/Scale of Parking Areas

- Avoid siting parking spaces with more than a dozen cars within view of Commercial Street.
- Use new buildings facing the street, stone walls, hedges, and similar devices to screen parking lots and service areas from view.
- Utilize pervious pavement and other Best Management Practices to control and treat stormwater runoff on site.

Streetscape Treatment

- The streetscape treatment for Rockport (including sidewalk widths and materials, lighting, esplanade, plantings, etc.) should underscore the change in scale of development and land use as the motorist and pedestrian travels north from Rockland.
- Continue the pattern of planted median strips throughout Commercial Street, utilizing a planting palette and detailing that is Rockport-specific.
- Provide street lighting the meets IESNA minimum standards. Select fixtures that reflect the aesthetics and cultural outlook of Rockport.
- Provide on-street parking where possible to create a buffer to further separate the pedestrian from moving vehicles.

LOCATION 6

CLADDAGH MOTEL,
1044 COMMERCIAL STREET, ROCKPORT

A Variety of Options

Large redevelopment sites offer a variety of opportunities to advance the goal of strengthening community cohesion and livability. The principles developed in **Location 5** above are demonstrated in the three options developed for this site. In all examples, the design could be adapted to a variety of uses, including residential, professional office, small-scale retail, or mix-use. And in all concepts, the street network is envisioned as a system of public streets and spaces, with sidewalks and on-street parking.

Option 6A preserves many of the existing structures (assuming it makes economic sense to retain/reuse them) and incorporates them into an overall plan for the site. New buildings are brought close to the street, existing and expanded buildings anchor the development and set a pattern for style and scale. Convenient on-street parking encourages mixed-use development (with commercial on the ground floor). Off street parking is located out of site behind the front row of building, and connected by landscaped walkways.

Option 6B retains existing structures next to Commercial Street and used them, along with a variety of new, similarly-scaled buildings, to define a public community green space and plaza. Focal points within this space add variety and richness, while providing a functional and attractive space to a variety of possible uses.

New buildings are located near to the street to create a highly-walkable, pedestrian-scaled village environment. Parking is both on-street and in nodes at the rear of buildings. Roads are designed to extend and connect laterally into surrounding properties when they are ready for similar development, thus reducing the need for additional curb cuts in the future.

Option 6C creates a community of new structures – residential, commercial, office, or preferably mixed-use with apartments above commercial on the first floor – designed around a U-shaped circulation system. Internal walkways provide both lateral and perpendicular connections for pedestrians. Building setbacks vary to lend visual interest and encourage a variety of usable spaces between the front of the building and the street. A separate driveway provides an alternative access back out to the street. Most of the parking is on-street, with some smaller lots established behind several of the buildings.

Streets and Blocks

- Require new development on large lots to have a public street network of blocks with perimeters of 1500-2000 feet.
- Require each project to provide public ROW stubs for connections to future adjacent projects and streets.