

BELFAST RENAISSANCE
A Master Plan for Downtown and the Waterfront
Prepared in November 1994

Status Report on Master Plan Recommendations
November 1, 2005

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE OF REPORT

The Belfast Renaissance Plan was prepared in 1994 by the consultant firms of Kent Associates and Maine Tomorrow working in cooperation with 12 community representatives. The intent was to create a Plan that identified a ‘vision’ of what could be for the waterfront and downtown area, and specific work and projects that the City and private property owners should implement to achieve this vision. The heart of the Plan is a list of 37 Recommendations which were intended to be completed over a four Phase schedule:

- Phase I: 1995 – 1996
- Phase II: 1996 – 1997
- Phase III: 1997 – 1999
- Phase IV 2000 – 2005

This Status Report is largely intended as a quick review of work the City and private property owners performed between 1995 – 2005 to implement this Plan. The report also may serve as a launching point for the planning, engineering, and strategizing work that the City may soon undertake for the downtown and waterfront area. In short, it’s often nice to review where you have been before you take the next step.

On the whole, quite a few of the Recommendations have been completed, either by the City or private property owners, and work continues on several tasks. It also appears that the several elements of the ‘vision’ and Recommendations identified in 1994 are no longer appropriate. Further, several of the Recommendations that have not been implemented remain appropriate and warrant consideration for the next phase of work in the downtown and waterfront area. It is particularly noted that many of the recommendations contained in this report involve privately owned properties, and that to date, many of the private property owners have chosen not to redevelop their properties or to list them for sale. In constrast, most of the improvements that are largely City actions have been completed.

This Status Report is based on a review of the Plan recommendations performed by Mike Rauch and Jim Roberts, City Councilors, Terry St. Peter, City Manager, and Wayne Marshall, City Planner over the course of one 2 hour meeting. In short, it was not intended to be an exhaustive analysis. We have listed the Recommendation identified in the Master Plan, provided a status or assessment of work completed to date, and in some cases, suggested some issues that the community may want to consider in the next phase. Readers should refer to the original Master Plan for a full description of each Recommendation. The attached Map identifies the location of each Recommendation.

SUMMARY OF MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Acquire property (boathouse at Steamboat Landing) as waterfront park and access to breakwater.

Status: Essentially Complete. Public Project.

2. Construct new breakwater and floating breakwater (near Commercial Street).

Status. Not Implemented. New breakwater not feasible. Examine need for floating breakwater. Public Project.

3. Potential development site (former Mathews Brothers lumber yard).

Status: Partly implemented – Shift in focus. Now is a public park. Public and private project.

4. Demolish Penobscot Poultry Plan and Redevelop Site.

Status: Partly implemented – Shift of focus. Now is part of Belfast Commons. Public improvement.

5. Redevelop Mathews Brothers Building.

Status. Partly Implemented. Privately owned parcel.

6. Develop property (top of Belfast Commons) as parking lot and park.

Status. Largely completed. Public project.

7. Redevelop Consumer Fuels site.

Status. Little Action. Privately owned parcel.

8. Develop site (vacant land owned by Jean Evans and McCrum Processing).

Status. No action. Privately owned parcel.

9. Improve Heritage Park.

Status. Significant improvements to park, but some change in focus. Public project.

10. Penobscot Frozen Foods Building (redevelop site)

Status. No action. Privately owned parcel.

11. Revitalize corner (Winston York) property.

Status. No action. Privately owned parcel

12. Make Federal Street a pedestrian mall.

Status. Some street improvements, partly implemented. Public project.

13. Acquire land between Consumer Fuels and Dockside Restaurant on Main Street as a park.

Status. Not Implemented. Suggested public action.

14. Expand City owned parking lots (Cross Street).

Status. Generally Implemented. Public Action.

15. Make Pendelton Lane a pedestrian way.

Status: Some street improvements, partly implemented. Public project.

16. Improve the Beaver Street Area.

Status. Minimal improvements to date. Public project.

17. Upgrade the landscaping & restrooms at the foot of Main Street.

Status. Now being implemented. Public project.

18. Repair City wharf & retaining wall.

Status. Completed. Public project.

19. Upgrade waterfront restaurant (Weathervane).
Status. Private property owner has made some improvements. Private
20. Upgrade (Chamber of Commerce) information building.
Status. No longer applicable for this building. Semi-public action.
21. Make minor landscaping improvements (along Front Street)
Status. No action. Public Improvement.
22. Retain towboat facility.
Status. Performed by private property owner. Private Action.
23. Demolish all structures and redevelop (Lookout Pub area)
Status. Performed by private property owner. Private Action.
24. Create a waterfront pedestrian way.
Status. Planning underway. Public Action with private participation.
25. Address the odor problem at the sewage treatment plant.
Status. Completed public action.
26. Make improvements to City (Washington Street) parking lot.
Status. Much work completed, more envisioned. Public action.
27. Upgrade west side of Washington Street.
Status. Few improvements. Public action. Also involves private land.
28. Develop a pedestrian way between High and Washington Street.
Status. No action. City likely does not own land. Public improvement.

29. Retain existing commercial/recreational boat yard (Alex Turner)
Status. Boatyard remains in operation. Private Action.
- 30A. Improve Front Street (north side of Main)
Status. Some improvements to date, more needed. Public Action.
- 30B. Improve Front Street (south side of Main)
Status. Some improvements to date, more needed. Public Action.
31. Develop and expand the Belfast and Moosehead Lake Railroad yard.
Status. Thompson Wharf completed. Railroad likely gone. Public and private action.
32. Develop multi-purpose docking facilities (Thompson Wharf area)
Status. Thompson Wharf completed. Fisherman dock part of Old Belfast Bridge (Roberts project). Public and private action.
33. Undertake dredging in Belfast Harbor.
Status. Harbor channel dredged. Other dredging needed. Public action.
34. Improve functioning and appearance at Stinson's
Status. Change of use at site. Work underway. Private Action.
35. Bridge Street housing improvements.
Status. Completed. Private Action. City improvements to street.
36. Make improvements to the Old Route 1 Bridge
Status. Underway and soon completed. Public Action.
37. Make improvements to Pierce Street.
Status. Partly done. More may be needed. Public Action.

MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Acquire (Boathouse property) Property as waterfront park and access to breakwater. Phase IV

Acquire property to provide neighborhood access to water and access to a future breakwater, that is tied into Commercial Street.

Status: Essentially Complete.

Comments. The City now owns the boathouse and the lot on which it is located. It is noted that the original concept for this lot did not necessarily involve retaining the boathouse building. The City also uses this property as a landing/storage area for dinghy docks which is consistent with the original plan. This area, however, has minimal value as an access to a breakwater because it is impractical to construct a breakwater (reference recommendation # 2) in this location.

2. Construct new breakwater and floating breakwater. Phase IV

To increase safety and provide more protected moorings within Belfast Harbor two new breakwaters are proposed. One, on solid fill, would be at the base of Commercial Street, and the other (a floating breakwater) would be tied to the east shore at Patterson Point.

Status. Not Implemented.

Comment. The solid breakwater at the base of Commercial Street likely has little value as a project. It would be very difficult to obtain a permit for this breakwater, it would be costly to construct, and it has limited value. The concept of constructing a floating breakwater has merit and is supported by the Harbor Committee. This project would require at least feasibility engineering study to determine its effectiveness and cost before the City invests money in project construction.

3. Potential development site (former Mathews Brothers lumber yard). Phase III.

Underutilized waterfront site (currently Mathews lumber storage). Has potential as water dependent commercial/recreational boating site and waterfront residential/hotel/marina site. Plan in concert with adjacent

Penobscot Poultry and Mathews properties; i.e. parcels 4, 5 and 6 to the west. Require developer to provide public shoreline walkway to open up appropriate view corridors. Establish height, massing, and architectural standards and treat as a planned unit development. Allow for the extension of Miller Street towards the water.

Status: Partly implemented – Shift in focus.

Comment: MBNA purchased this property and developed most of it as a park, including a coastal walkway, and subsequently conveyed this area (Steamboat Landing) to the City. Clearly, the main thrust of the recommendation envisioned in 1994 was not implemented. The area is now an active and maintained City park and not a redevelopment site for either residential or nonresidential development. The only current development on the original site is French & Webb's boat building operation.

4. Demolish Penobscot Poultry Plan and Redevelop Site. Phase III

Create a redevelopment site by demolishing the old Poultry Plant processing building. Consider residential and commercial mixed uses. Plan in conjunction with properties to the east and west. Buffer from existing residential uses to the south. Allow for through views from Pearl Street. Establish height, massing and residential standards and treat as a PUD. This is a key site; it has a blighting influence on Belfast. This City should participate in its demolition so as to turn the property into an asset for redevelopment.

Status: Partly implemented – shift of focus.

Comment: The former Poultry Plant was demolished, which achieved a key recommendation of this report which was to eliminate the blight associated with this abandoned industrial plant. MBNA gifted this property to the City, and the City has retained the area as general open space. This is a significant change in focus from the 1994 concept which was to develop this area for residential and mixed use development, while being sensitive to water views from surrounding properties. It may be appropriate to revisit the concept proposed in 1994 for this property, and to consider strictly managed residential development of this lot along with that which was recently proposed for site number 5 (former Mathews Brothers building). Also, City should

consider expanding the size of the current parking lot it built on the southeasterly corner of this lot.

5. Redevelop Mathews Brothers building site. Phase III

Ugly structure in reasonable condition: could be torn down or revitalized with face lift and interior improvements for commercial office or other mixed use; lacks parking. Plan in conjunction with adjacent sites. Given its wooden construction and modern fire codes, demolition may be best. Should be subject to height, massing and architectural standards.

Status: Partly Implemented.

Comment: The former building has been demolished and this ½ acre parcel adjacent to Belfast Commons is a privately owned property. Current owner has contemplated a residential condominium project. As noted in # 4 above, the City may want to consider joint development of this site with a portion of the City owned Belfast Commons property as residential property.

6. Develop property as a parking lot and park (top of Belfast Commons). Phase III

Property is 75% vacant; contains one commercial structure in poor condition. Redevelop in conjunction with properties to the east (Penobscot Poultry and Mathews) as City or private parking lot and create an open space/park buffer on the west.

Status. Completed.

Comment. Last remaining building was demolished. The City now owns this property, has constructed a small parking lot, and uses the site as open space; it is part of Belfast Commons.

7. Redevelop Consumers Fuels Site Phase II or III

Currently used for none marine uses, has potential for variety of uses including expansion of Heritage Park; favor water dependent uses, commercial/recreation uses or other mixed uses. Plan in conjunction with adjacent properties. Set height, massing and architectural

standards; require public access through property on the water, utilize bonuses to achieve public goals.

Status: Little Action.

Comment: Property is privately owned and continues as a Consumers Fuels site and a marina. Little opportunity to develop this property as part of a larger scale project because it is mostly surrounded by park areas on the water. The site, however, continues to have redevelopment potential. City has implemented zoning standards to allow mixed use development and to consider issues such as height, massing and architectural standards. A public walkway through this property remains a long term goal.

8. Develop site (vacant land owned by Jean Evans and McCrum Processing). Phase II or III.

Largely undeveloped site (two parcels) with small vacant restaurant building. Excellent long-term development potential as mixed use site, retail/offices/residential/restaurant as possibilities; could be expansion of second phase of site to the north. Require massing and architectural design standards. Screen Mathews loading docks to west with on-site parking and landscaping. Develop as part of coordinated development plan for parcels 7, 8, 10 and 12.

Status. Not implemented. No change from 1994 status.

Comment. The two vacant privately owned lots remain as significant development parcels. Likely has greater value as residential/office development sites because of separation from downtown area unless significant redevelopment occurs on parcels 10 and 12. Comp Plan Committee is proposing a change of zoning for this area to Downtown Commercial zone. These properties clearly should be part of a waterfront – downtown TIF district to facilitate development.

9. Improve Heritage Park. Phase II

Attractive City owned parcel containing three vacant structures. Consider the following improvements.

- (a) Landscaping
- (b) Demolish both of the small buildings to open up views.

- (c) Refurbish and redesign the large building (inside and out) by adding pitched roof and outside deck. Use as tourist information and welcome center and bike touring center with offices above for harbor master and recreation department; also consider as a gallery for traveling exhibits, display of local products and local museum.
- (d) reshape and recontour the sloping lawns to provide an outdoor performance amphitheater.
- (e) reduce the parking encroaching on the park
- (f) respect the conservation restrictions on the property – do not add any new structures.

Status: Significant improvements to Heritage Park; but some change in focus.

Comments. City clearly operates Heritage Park as a park and has made significant nonstructural improvements to the Park. There has, however, been several significant changes in focus. The City has decided to retain all 3 buildings on the site, and 2 of these have undergone extensive renovations and now house a water related use, French & Webb's boat building operations. The remaining building likely will be used as the harbor master. There are no plans to construct an amphitheater on the site.

10. Penobscot Frozen Foods building (cold storage). Phase I or II

This is a vital property if the City wishes to “turn the corner” and shed its industrial downtown image and open the door to new mixed use development. Clearly, this site could be put to higher and better uses. It is located between the downtown, the waterfront and Heritage Park, and at the “front door” to potential redevelopment parcels to the south; development here could jump start further investment in the area and help provide the “glue” that links downtown and the waterfront. Possible future uses include: a Maine made Marketplace, a center for arts, crafts and speciality retail, restaurants, offices, residences (on the second level), and/or a hotel. Provide on site parking along Cross Street. New structures should extend the historic character of the downtown towards the waterfront, strict architectural and urban design controls should apply.

This, having been said, is not what the owners have in mind. The existing structure can be upgraded to meet their storage needs and this is a cost-effective option for them, that, without any incentive or buy-

out from the City, makes financial and business sense. In the end, the City must decide if the public cost of finding an alternative site for frozen food storage can be justified for the long term economic development opportunities that demolition offers.

Status: No Action. Remains a cold storage locker.

Comment. The key action identified in 1994, to redevelop this site as a vital connection between the downtown and waterfront is a true today as it was in then. The change in ownership of the processing plant may create future opportunities to redevelop this site. At a minimum, the City should include this property in the proposed waterfront – downtown TIF district. It also should work cooperatively with McCrum Processing to consider future reuse of this site. It is also noted that redevelopment of this site could present many financial challenges to a private party or the City.

11. Revitalize corner property (Winston York). Phase II

Assess building condition, revitalize if economically feasible or rebuild, create a pedestrian way through the parcel linking Pendelton Lane to Federal Street.

Status: Minimal Change.

Comment. The owner of the building has made improvements to the existing structure, however, the site remains a potential redevelopment property. City should encourage private redevelopment and should include this property in the proposed downtown –waterfront TIF district.

12. Make Federal Street a pedestrian mall. Phase I

Close Federal Street to traffic (except for deliveries and restaurant parking) so as to strengthen the pedestrian link between downtown and the waterfront. Improve with street furniture, plantings, lighting, and paving, require street level retail or similar uses on at least one side; provide a clear visual link to the Bay and to the Heritage Park area; create a small park/square on the intersection of Main and Federal Streets. This upgrade would best be done in phase with the redeveloped Penobscot Frozen Foods site, if not, the development should be phased in.

Status: Partly Implemented.

Comment. The City has upgraded Federal Street by installing sidewalks, paving and lighting similar to other areas in the downtown. The City should consider the future use of this street in concert with future redevelopment. This area should be part of the proposed downtown – waterfront TIF.

13. Acquire as a park (lot between Dockside and Consumer Fuels) Phase I or II.

City acquisition of this parcel would have these advantages.

- Keep view to the water open.
- Improve access to redevelopment parcel from the Washington Street lot.
- Embellish the Federal Street Mall as an urban park.
- Provide handicapped parking for adjacent uses
- Allow for a small commercial building.

Status: Not Implemented.

Comment: Change in focus is likely appropriate. Do not pursue as a park but encourage private redevelopment. Should be part of proposed downtown –waterfront TIF district.

14. Expand City owned parking lots. Phase II.

Parking availability is crucial to the growth of downtown. Parking lots in this vicinity could serve Main Street and businesses east of Cross Street. The lots should be terraced and landscaped.

Status. Generally accomplished.

Comment. City owns and manages the Cross Street parking lot as public parking lot. Expansion of this lot would be costly. The City may want to explore acquiring the Mathews Brothers parking area to provide additional parking, but some of this demand could be shifted to the parking area at the top of Belfast Commons and some on-street parking opportunities near Cross Street.

15. Make Pendelton Lane a pedestrian way. Phase I.

Whereas the Main Street façade of this block is of very high quality, the backside of the block is unattractive. Working together, property owners and the City should revitalize the area by making the alley a pedestrian way (closed to through traffic but available for truck deliveries and on-site parking); upgrading the architectural treatment of existing historic and contemporary structures, and undertaking attractive landscaping. The City should cooperate and improve the paving, lighting and furnishings of the alley. The Co-op Store could be encouraged to create a small park on the alley on the side of their building and the City should acquire the lot at the southwest corner of Maine and Cross for a parking lot.

Status. Partly Implemented.

Comment. The City has made significant improvements to Pendelton Lane, which is a one-way street; sidewalks, lighting and paving similar to other areas in the downtown. The concept of a pedestrian only street has an appealing ring to it, but this street likely is better left open to traffic. The wants pedestrians to walk along Main Street and the main entrances to the stores, and Pendelton Lane is important to those who have businesses or live along the street. At present, the City has no plans to purchase any of the buildings along Pendelton Lane.

16. **Improve the Beaver Street area.** Phase I and II.

The Beaver Street/High Street area is ugly and detracts from the visitors first impression of downtown Belfast. Recommendations include:

- (a) add a narrow sidewalk to the north side of the street.
- (b) provide a sidewalk on the south side of the street and plant trees
- (c) purchase and redevelop the Beaver Street/High Street and Pendelton Lane; place restrooms and place a transit/bus shelter on the property.

Status: Minimal Improvements

Comments. The Beaver Street area may warrant improvement, such as sidewalks and accessibility to public and private parking lots in the area. There likely is little need for a bus shelter, and constructing public restrooms in the area seems impractical and costly.

17. Upgrade the landscaping and restrooms at the foot of Main Street. Phase II.

Although serviceable, because of its central location, this building and its surroundings should be upgraded so as to set an example of quality.

Status. Now being implemented.

Comment. The City considered several options to upgrade its restroom facilities in this area and is currently constructing a new public restroom facility at the harbor.

18. Repair City wharf and retaining wall. Phase I

Make repairs to all three sides of the landing about 250 feet of retaining wall so as to prevent further undermining of the structure by wave action.

Status. Completed.

Comment. City has made repairs to the City wharf and regularly maintains the wharf and landing.

19. Upgrade Waterfront Restaurant (Weathervane). Phase I - IV

Make minor improvements to exterior with landscaping and architectural upgrade. Current building is large and not in character with Belfast's distinctive historic architecture.

Status. Property owner has made improvements.

Comment. This is a low priority issue. Restaurant seems to fit on the waterfront.

20. Upgrade Information Building (Chamber) Phases I – IV

Make architectural improvements to Chamber of Commerce building, consider reuse or redevelopment if information function is moved to a City building at Heritage Park.

Status: No longer applicable for this building.

Comment. This is a privately owned structure. Chamber of Commerce should identify its potential need for a new/different visitor's center.

21. Make minor landscape improvements. Phase I – IV

Building sets excellent example of appropriate waterfront architecture and serves as model for adjacent redevelopment. Minor landscape improvements are needed.

Status: Inconsequential.

Comment. No action. Little need.

22. Retain towboat facility. Phases I – IV

Good example of working, water dependent commercial facility. Maintain vehicular access/right-of-ways, maintain and improve existing buildings in shingle and/or clapboard; pitched roof style.

Status: Done by private sector.

Comment: Private owner demolished the former building and has constructed a new building.

23. Demolish Structures and Redevelop. Phases III – IV

Old Agway facility in very poor condition except for one section. Demolish and redevelop retail/office or restaurant and residential uses; also consider marine related retail. Require architecture compatible with adjacent buildings and no more than 2 and ½ stories. Link to pedestrian trail on railroad right of way.

Status. Done by private sector.

Comment. Look-out Pub is main tenant in the building. Area, in general, now supports more commerce than occurred in 1994; Three Tides, Look-out Pub, art gallery and offices.

24. Create a Waterfront Pedestrian Trail. Phase I – III.

Utilize the railroad ROW as a waterfront trail and bicycle way. Encourage adjacent businesses to capitalize on foot/bike traffic on the

trail. Develop unifying design for landscaping, lighting, signage, etc along the trail. Select appropriate material to pave the trail.

Status: Planning and financing for trail now active.

Comment. This walkway is one of the centerpieces of the City's efforts to the redevelopment of the waterfront area. Portion of trail will be built as part of Stinson redevelopment and City has received grant funds to assist in engineering and design of the trail. City will pursue downtown –waterfront TIF to provide funds for much of trail construction. Ties into the footbridge project.

25. Address the odor problem at the treatment plant. Phase I

Seek engineering advice on dealing with odor problem. ... Odor problem hurts economic development of the area.

Status. Completed in the 1990's.

Comment. City has made significant improvements to the Treatment Plant. Odor is no longer a significant issue.

26. Make Improvements to City Parking Lot (Washington Street). Phase I or II.

Although well located, this lot can be better utilized and made less of an eyesore by:

- (a) Improving signage to the lot.
- (b) Improving access from the lot to the waterfront
- (c) building a footpath along the edge of the lot
- (d) adding trees to break up the size of the lot
- (e) creating small parks on Main Street
- (f) providing a bus shelter

Status: Much work completed.

Comment. The City made significant improvements to the parking lot, including directional signage, a path to the waterfront, and building a park on Main Street. The Washington Street lot, however, is in need of reconstruction, including considering an alternative interior lay-out.

The proposed downtown and waterfront TIF district could help provide funds for this construction.

27. Upgrade west side of Washington Street Phase I - IV

The back-sides of buildings and the lack of landscaping detract from the positive aspects of downtown and present an ugly face to the municipal parking lot. Minor improvements are required.

Status: No Improvements to date.

Comment: The City should consider future plans for this area as part of its upcoming planning effort for the downtown and the waterfront. Washington Street is badly in need of repair and the private property on the west side of this street presents many opportunities for redevelopment. This area should be included in the proposed downtown – waterfront TIF.

28. Develop a pedestrian way between High and Washington Streets
Phase IV

Investigate the feasibility of this link which could connect High Street to the City parking lot and the Front Street railroad/marina complex. (Market Street did once extend to the waterfront, according to old City maps.)

Status: No Improvements.

Comment. The City likely no longer owns this right-of-way, but should conduct the necessary research to discern its status. If the ROW is available, the City should pursue construction of the path.

29. Retain existing commercial/recreational boatyard. Phase: Ongoing

Viable, active, water-dependent use that sets stage for possible expanded marine recreation to the north, on railroad waterfront. Maintain and improve and ensure access/R.O.W. is retained from Front Street.

Status: Belfast Boatyard remains in operation.

Comment: Belfast Boatyard remains a viable business. City should explore potential use of the property it recently acquired from the railroad to support waterdependent uses such as boat repair and storage.

30A. Improve Front/Water Street (North of Main) Phases: II or III

Front/Water Street provides the sole access to the entire waterfront between Main and Bridge Streets. With increasing use for commercial and tourist/recreational traffic, and as the front door to this area, it should be improved with curbing, an avenue of trees, pedestrian crosswalks, a sidewalk (on the north side), and attractive lighting. Avoid overhead wires if possible.

Status. Limited improvements to date.

Comment. The City should consider potential improvements to this area as part of the upcoming planning and engineering study for the waterfront area. Front Street should be pedestrian friendly, while providing good access and potential parking to area businesses and public places. This is a high priority target and performing the improvements could benefit from establishing a TIF district.

30B. Improve Front Street (South of Main) Phases: III or IV

With redevelopment, the entire length of Front Street between Main and Commercial will need upgrading to provide for on-street parking, broad sidewalks, lighting, tree planting, etc. This should be achieved with the cooperation of adjacent property owners. Further, Front/Commercial Street corner should be reengineered.

Status: Limited improvements to date.

Comment. City has made some improvements to the initial section of Front Street near Main Street, including providing additional parking. The proposed redevelopment of the former Stinson Seafoods property heightens the need to improve this street. This will be examined as part of the upcoming waterfront planning and engineering project, and should be considered as a high priority target for upgrade. The

proposed TIF district may help generate the funds to construct the improvements.

31. Develop and expand the Belfast and Moosehead Lake Railroad yard
Phases: I, II and III

The railroad proposes to expand the excursion/tourist attractions it offers by developing vacant land along Front Street, linking its rail and sail facilities, and by adding a recreational/commercial marina (see #32). Improvements proposed for the railroad's shore property include adding:

- An expanded historic railroad museum complex;
- A waterfront boardwalk (in conjunction with the marina) (see #24)
- Sp+ 100 parking spaces;
- Access for marina access and a marine holding area.
- Landscaping throughout the entire area.
- A docking area for the Voyageur. (see #32)

Status. Thompson Wharf work completed. Future railroad operations very questionable.

Comment. The Belfast and Moosehead Lake Railroad likely will have a limited future along the waterfront. The City has terminated its lease arrangement with the railroad, and the railroad would need to obtain future City approval to operate in this area. It is noted that the waterfront facilities envisioned in these Recommendations, Thompson Wharf, were constructed, and that the City now operates this dock. City reuse of the former railroad lands is now an issue before the Council.

32. Develop multi-purpose docking facilities Phases: I and II

The railroad proposed to establish multi-purpose decks along its shoreline property. One major wharf is proposed along with two minor floating piers. (See map 8) The facilities would offer:

- A tie up for excursion ships, such as the company's Voyageur, as part of a rail/sail attraction.
- An interface between the rail line and the water for barge/rail traffic transfers (provided any such plans are acceptable to both the City of Belfast and the Railroad, and it can be shown that noise and/or dust problems can be avoided and all applicable local, State and/or Federal laws can be met).

- Docks for recreational vessels (north of the major wharf), and commercial docking space for fishermen (in the vicinity of Stinson's).

Status. Constructed.

Comment. The City now owns and operates the Thompson Wharf facility for both private dock space and charter boat operations. This recommendation also envisioned this area being used to support fishermen activities. It is noted that the adjacent Old Belfast Bridge project will provide dock facilities specifically for commercial and fishermen uses and that this dock will be leased to the City to manage.

33. Undertake dredging in Belfast Harbor Phases: I and II

There is a need for considerable dredging in the harbor to accommodate commercial fishing vessels, charter boats and private sailing and motor boats. Three areas require dredging:

- First, a maintenance dredge of existing dredged areas and channel is required;
- Second, the shoreline between the Belfast Boatyard and Stinson's needs dredging to provide for recreational and commercial vessels;
- Third, in order to expand mooring space for motor boats, the bay north of the Old Route 1 Bridge should be dredged.

Status. Channel dredge completed. Other dredging needed.

Comment. The ACOE, in 2003, completed the long hoped for maintenance dredging of Belfast Harbor. The most critical current need for dredging is near the City boat harbor. This dredging likely will need to be paid for by the City. In addition, there is some long-term interest in dredging other areas of the harbor to provide additional mooring facilities, including the area to the north of the footbridge.

34. Improve functioning and appearance of Stinson's Phases III or IV

Stinson's must continue to function as a vital water-dependent use, yet adjustments should be made to accommodate new uses in the area. The following changes should be made.

- A parking lot to serve Stinson employees and overflow City/downtown parking should be developed with the City.

- The City should work with Stinson's to find the best location for the pedestrian way from the City wharf to the Old Bridge.
- Roadside delivery and pick-up at Stinson's should be carefully planned.
- General landscaping (planting and lighting) improvements should be made; and
- A highly functional commercial fishing pier and dock area must be planned in conjunction with the Railroad and harbor interests. (Note: Rights to the submerged waters off Stinson's should first be resolved.)

Status. Changed Approach now Underway.

Comment. Obviously, the proposed use of former Stinson plant is now different than envisioned in 1994. The current multi-use project, however, has addressed many of the issues raised in 1994. There will be a pedestrian path through the site, the use of the near-shore waters in front of the Stinson site have been resolved and will be developed as a marina, including an area for fishermen, and the appearance of the area will be improved.

35. Bridge Street housing improvements Phases: III or IV

Some Bridge street residences are in medium to poor condition. The City should offer to assist homeowners with improvement grants and/or loans if the residents so request. Overall, properties on Bridge Street should increase in value as the waterfront is redeveloped. The harbor views provide added value, and, as the odor problem is resolved redevelopment for higher density, low-rise multi-family housing is a possibility.

Status Private Investment has accomplished.

Comment. Most of the housing on Bridge Street is now in excellent condition. Private homeowners have invested considerable monies to upgrade their properties. This is no longer considered a blighted area..

36. Make improvements to the Old Route 1 Bridge Phases: III or IV

The old bridge can, with non-structural improvements, be made to serve as a walkway, bicycle trail, sewer and water carrier and fishing

platform. It does need safety and cosmetic improvements and a mini park is proposed for the Pierce Street shore-side.

Status. Work underway and nearing completion.

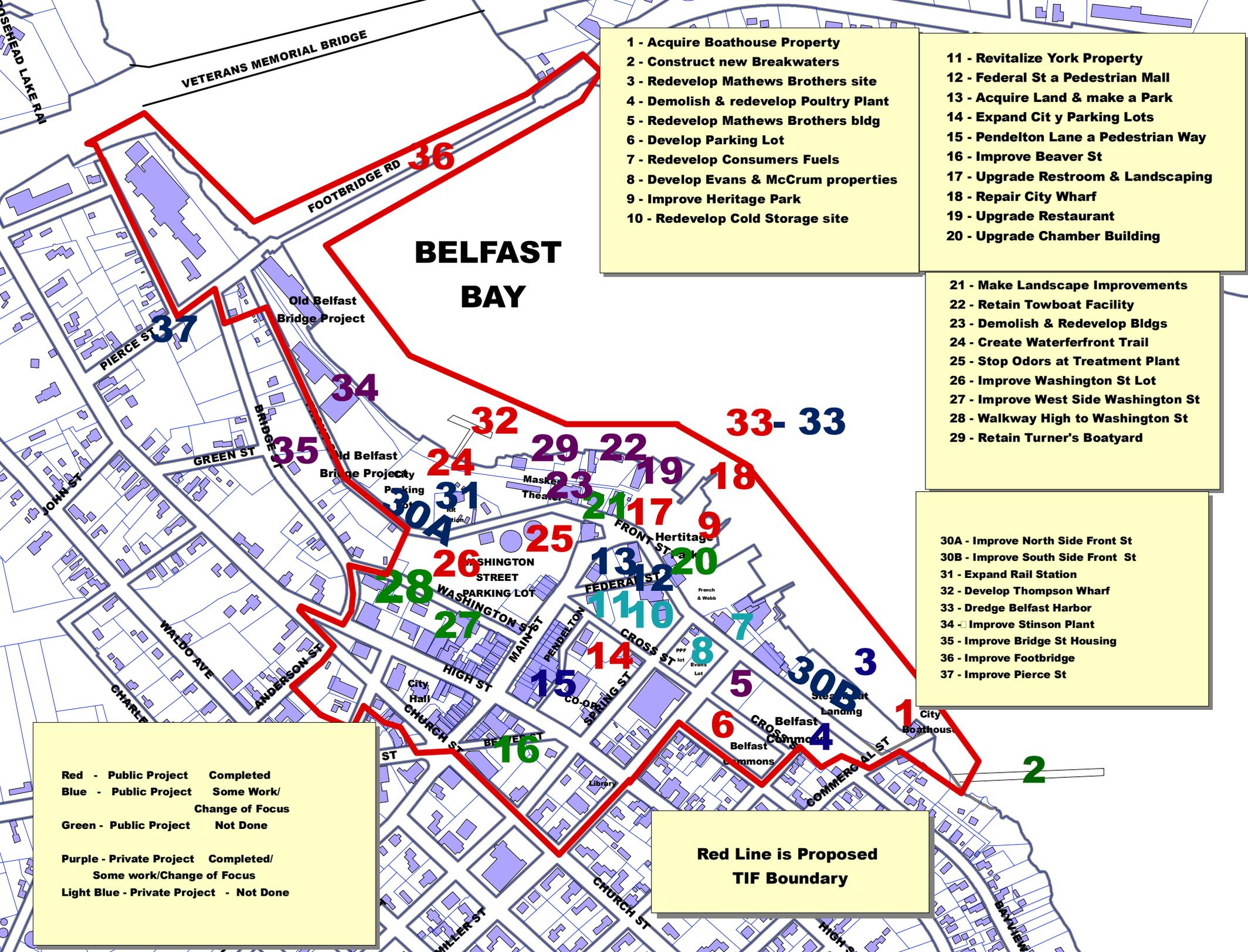
Comment. The footbridge project is underway and is a much different looking project than envisioned in 1994, and its cost also is much greater. This project is a centerpiece for waterfront redevelopment efforts. The project also includes the mini-park envisioned near the bridge entrance as well as a connecting walkway, and a draw bridge to allow upriver boat traffic.

37. Make improvements to pierce Street Phase: III

Pierce Street provides access to many waterfront businesses and, together with Front/Water and Commercial Streets, completes a service loop off Church and High Streets. Its maintenance and improvements for truck and trailer traffic is vital.

Status. Some Improvement. Potential additional work.

Comment. The City improved the sewer line of Pierce Street. The upcoming redevelopment of the former Stinson Seafoods property and potential redevelopment of the McCrum Processing property, as well as this street providing access to the footbridge, could warrant additional improvements. The potential need for improvements to this street could be considered as part of the upcoming downtown –waterfront planning project.



- 1 - Acquire Boathouse Property
- 2 - Construct new Breakwaters
- 3 - Redevelop Mathews Brothers site
- 4 - Demolish & redevelop Poultry Plant
- 5 - Redevelop Mathews Brothers bldg
- 6 - Develop Parking Lot
- 7 - Redevelop Consumers Fuels
- 8 - Develop Evans & McCrum properties
- 9 - Improve Heritage Park
- 10 - Redevelop Cold Storage site

- 11 - Revitalize York Property
- 12 - Federal St a Pedestrian Mall
- 13 - Acquire Land & make a Park
- 14 - Expand City Parking Lots
- 15 - Pendelton Lane a Pedestrian Way
- 16 - Improve Beaver St
- 17 - Upgrade Restroom & Landscaping
- 18 - Repair City Wharf
- 19 - Upgrade Restaurant
- 20 - Upgrade Chamber Building

- 21 - Make Landscape Improvements
- 22 - Retain Towboat Facility
- 23 - Demolish & Redevelop Bldgs
- 24 - Create Waterfront Trail
- 25 - Stop Odors at Treatment Plant
- 26 - Improve Washington St Lot
- 27 - Improve West Side Washington St
- 28 - Walkway High to Washington St
- 29 - Retain Turner's Boatyard

- 30A - Improve North Side Front St
- 30B - Improve South Side Front St
- 31 - Expand Rail Station
- 32 - Develop Thompson Wharf
- 33 - Dredge Belfast Harbor
- 34 - Improve Stinson Plant
- 35 - Improve Bridge St Housing
- 36 - Improve Footbridge
- 37 - Improve Pierce St

- Red - Public Project Completed
- Blue - Public Project Some Work/Change of Focus
- Green - Public Project Not Done
- Purple - Private Project Completed/Some work/Change of Focus
- Light Blue - Private Project - Not Done

Red Line is Proposed TIF Boundary

BELFAST RENAISSANCE

A Master Development Plan for Downtown and the Waterfront

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BELFAST RENAISSANCE

A Development Plan for Downtown and the Waterfront

The Downtown/Waterfront Advisory Committee recommended the Belfast City Council adopt this report on November 22, 1994. Unanimously adopted by the Council on the same date.

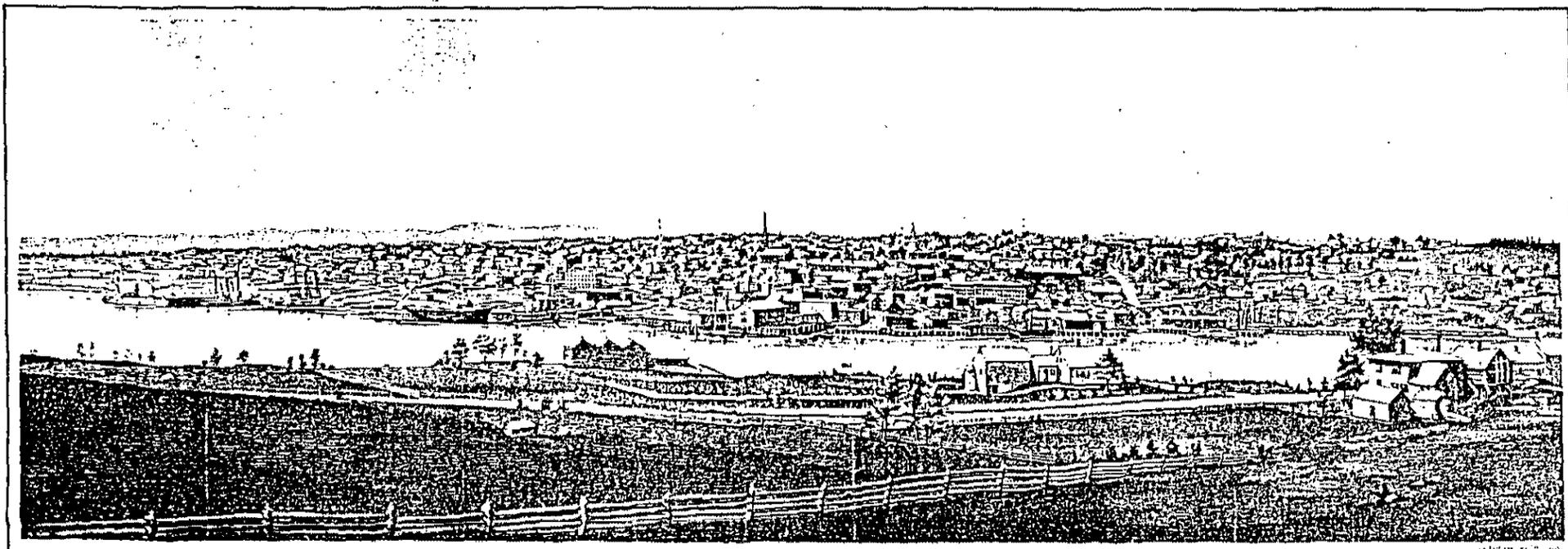
Acknowledgements

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The perspective illustrations were created by C. Michael Lewis of Portland, based on sketches and photographs by Brian Kent. Computerized mapping was by Kirk Holbrook of Maine Tomorrow; Kirk also created the computer-generated base map diagrams and photo-montage. Word processing was by Wendy Mahoney of Maine Tomorrow.

Work on this project was conducted under the direction of City Manager Arlo Redman and an advisory committee of citizens. The Advisory Committee consisted of:

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David Black
Lawrence Gleeson
Lois Higer
Terry Hire
John Krakar
Andy Kuby
Councilor Mike Lewis
Councilor Bruce MacLaren
James Roberts, Sr.
Rod Rodrigues
J. Douglas Thompson



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View of Belfast - One hundred years ago

1. Introduction

“... for the first time in 150 years, all key waterfront owners see an opportunity to work with the City to develop a long range plan.”

City centers exist and thrive because they are the heart of the community they serve. History has shown that downtown areas are resilient. They change and adapt over time, but they persevere, and at times, they flourish and celebrate their uniqueness with grand buildings, new public parks, boulevards or avenues. They are true centers of commerce, community and culture.

Belfast's downtown is no different. It is strategically located to serve Waldo County and beyond. It stands at the intersection of Routes 1, 3, 7, 52 and 137, with Belfast Harbor and the waterfront at its front door, and it has certainly witnessed and adapted to change. Most recently the City has seen a renaissance in its downtown, with the dedication of Heritage Park (on the waterfront), and a new interest in the potential of rail transportation. However, more can be done to prepare the City for the 21st century and to encourage its economic revitalization.

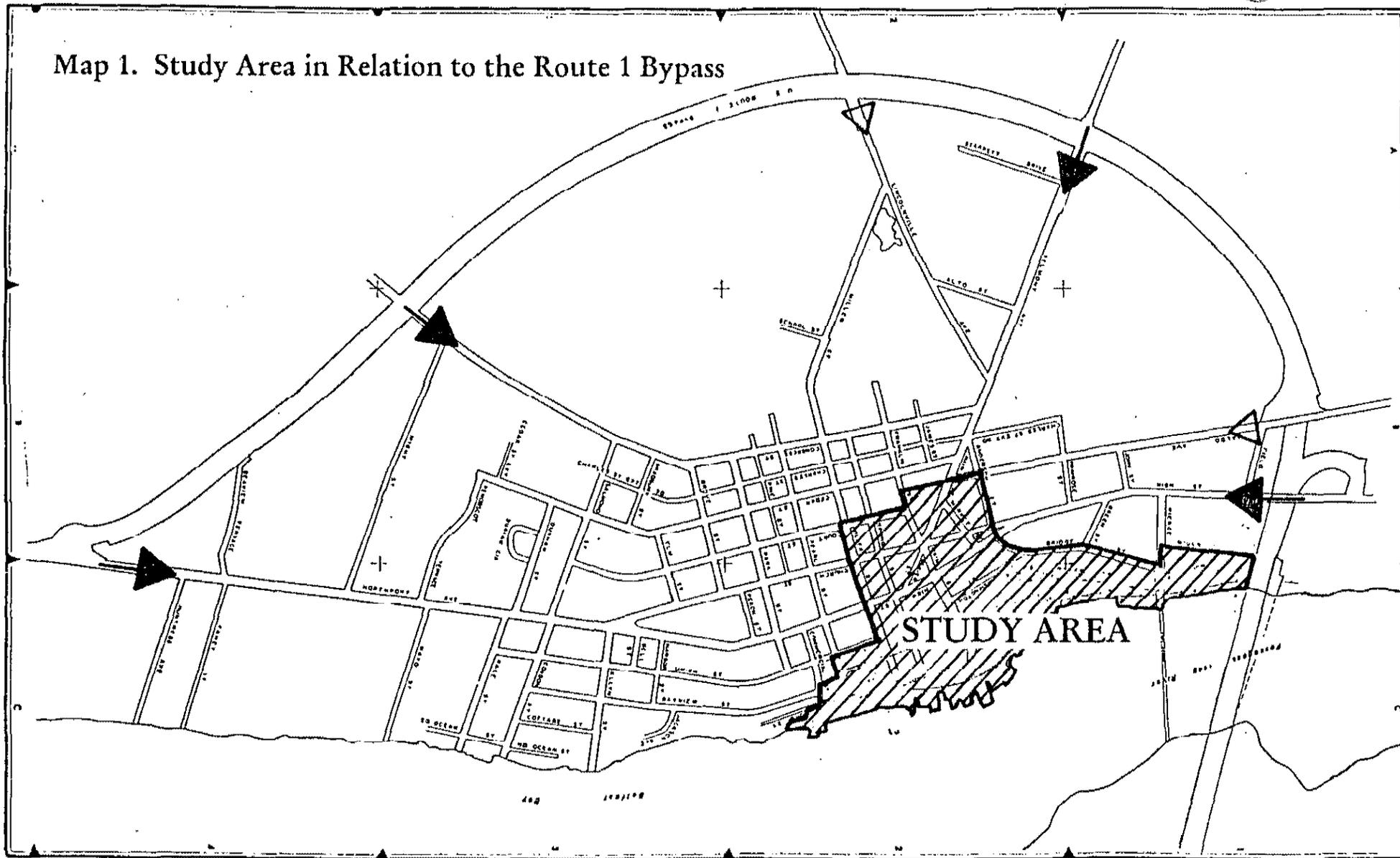
In early 1994 Belfast residents recognized that they stood at a historic crossroads. As new businesses have established themselves in the area and as obsolete businesses have failed, it has become clear that a thoughtful plan and overall vision for downtown and the "new" waterfront should be developed. Indeed, for the first time in some 150 years, all the key waterfront owners and the City officials recognize

that Belfast faces a unique opportunity – an opportunity to work together and develop a long-range plan for the future.

If the private and public plans for the revitalization of Belfast can be combined, everyone should benefit. Like Daniel Burnham, the visionary planner, they see the benefits to *"(m)ake no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make Big Plans: aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded, will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing...let your watchword be order and your beacon, beauty."*

This report, and the plans and illustrations that are included, provides the City with a vision of what could be. The plan focuses on downtown and the waterfront and seeks to link them so that they are mutually reinforcing. The plan is based on ideas from the consultants and the advisory committee, from past planning reports and from individual property owners; it presents a picture of what could be and describes the steps that need to be taken by a partnership of public and private interests to bring it to reality. It is indeed a Big Plan, but it will take cooperation and the integration of "little plans" to make it work. Map 1 (over) shows the study area.

Map 1. Study Area in Relation to the Route 1 Bypass



2. Issues and Goals

Background

Belfast faces a historic opportunity that cannot be allowed to be lost. The demise of the poultry industry and the willingness of property owners along the entire waterfront to work toward common goals provides a unique window of opportunity that is rare in any coastal town.

Clearly Belfast has turned the corner. Over the last five or six years the City has seen:

- ▶ an influx of artists and art establishments
- ▶ expenditures on downtown lighting and street and sidewalk improvements
- ▶ the relocation of the Co-op to the center of town
- ▶ the dedication of Heritage Park
- ▶ a resurgence of interest in excursion rail
- ▶ improvements to many downtown buildings
- ▶ the completion of an updated Comprehensive Plan
- ▶ revisions and improvements of the City's downtown zoning provisions
- ▶ the establishment of the "Green Streets" group who plant street trees
- ▶ a number of public and private studies that have focused on ways to identify new markets and job creation opportunities in the downtown area, and

- ▶ opportunities to tap into State and Federal funding sources.

Now is the time to build on this impressive base, to set realistic goals and to show how economic development, access, infrastructure, open space and the quality of life can be enhanced.

Downtown/Waterfront Development Plan Goals

The following goals sum up the advisory committee's recommendations:

- **Economic Development**
 - ▶ Stimulate economic development through public/private cooperation
 - ▶ Give preference to water-dependent redevelopment
 - ▶ Encourage compatible mixed redevelopment
 - ▶ Ensure proper, coordinated, waterfront management
 - ▶ Link downtown with the waterfront with appropriate new development
 - ▶ Redevelop key properties to stimulate investment and revitalization
 - ▶ Expand opportunities in the tourism/recreation markets
 - ▶ Recognize, and build upon, the arts as a key element in the economic development of Belfast.

■ Access

- ▶ Provide public access to, and along, the waterfront
- ▶ Create a linear, shoreline, trail and bikeway
- ▶ Ensure good access to the area for all modes (cars, buses, pedestrians, bikes, trains, boats)
- ▶ Expand rail service (for excursion and other traffic)
- ▶ Provide good vehicular access to waterfront uses
- ▶ Provide incentives for developers to create visual and pedestrian access to the water

■ Infrastructure

- ▶ Dredge the harbor to provide space for more vessels
- ▶ Investigate construction of new breakwaters
- ▶ Upgrade deteriorated streets, sidewalks and parking areas
- ▶ Upgrade the railroad track to meet modern standards
- ▶ Extend "street furniture" (lights, benches, tree planting) improvements

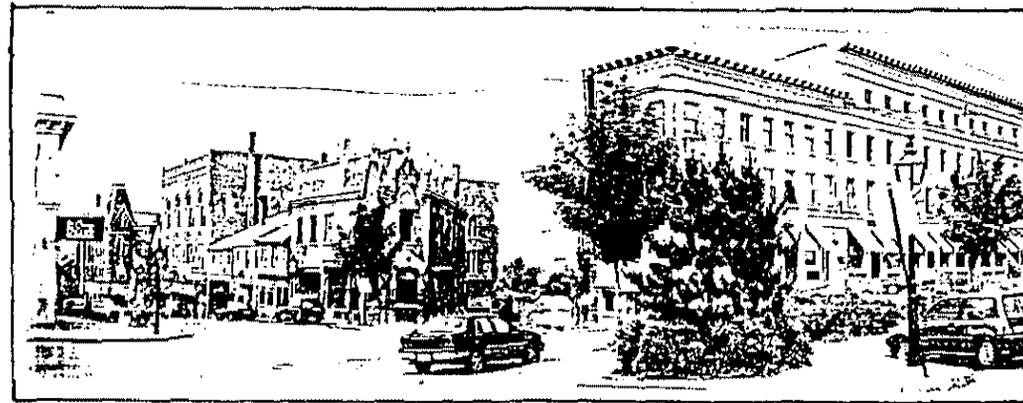
- ▶ Address the sewage odor problem
- ▶ Upgrade sewer and water systems as needed

Open Space

- ▶ Preserve and create more open space (public and private)
- ▶ Provide a variety of open space types (e.g. urban and waterfront parks)
- ▶ Expand and improve Heritage Park

■ Quality of Life

- ▶ Preserve views of the harbor
- ▶ Preserve mature trees where possible and plant more street trees
- ▶ Maintain the quality of existing residential neighborhoods
- ▶ Maintain the quality of the historic downtown core
- ▶ Ensure new development complements the historic architecture of Belfast



3. Analysis

Analysis of existing conditions provides clues about the root causes of problems and helps identify trends and solutions. The following discussion serves as a summary; it looks at the Belfast downtown/waterfront area in terms of its regional location, markets, access, parking, views and open space, pedestrian circulation, property ownership and developed and undeveloped lands.

Location

Downtown Belfast is much more than the center of the City of Belfast. It is a regional retail service and a cultural center for Waldo County. It is also a transportation hub for midcoast Maine. Further, the City is sited on Penobscot Bay and has been intimately tied to the sea for much of its history.

These assets can and should be built upon as the City looks to the future. Good access by way of the sea to the east, by road from the south, west and east, and by rail from the north, are all important, as is the existence of a good, local airport that offers a range of services and can accommodate executive jets.

(See Map 2)

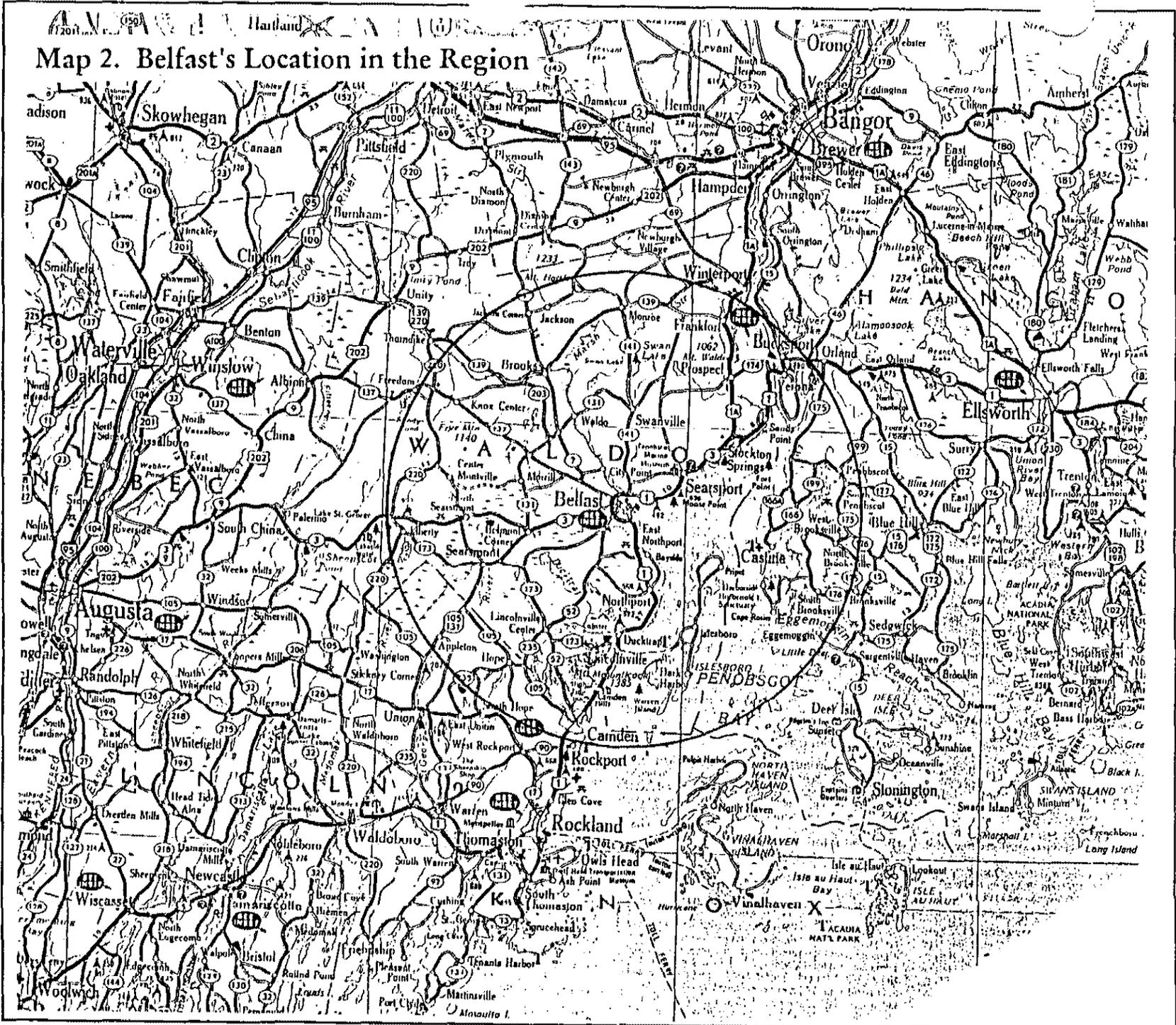
In this day and age it is the road system that gives Belfast a special advantage; located on the major tourist arteries, Routes 1 and 3, with an average of 13,820 vehicles per day throughout the year and even higher volumes during the summer, Belfast can tap into this flow to a greater extent.

The secondary road system radiates out to serve Lincolnville, Palermo, Troy, Waldo, Jackson, Winterport, Searsport and the towns between; these towns are also served by the regional bus system, Waldo County Transportation, which carries over 38,000 riders per year, many of whom come to Belfast to find services or to shop.

The Belfast and Moosehead Railroad has begun to capitalize on the tourist market by providing excursion train rides on its line out of Unity and Belfast. Ridership is expected to increase as more bus tour operators stop in Belfast. The potential for this line to serve both tourists and freight is also being explored. Further, a rail-port connection may soon open up further possibilities for "rail-sail" excursions (on the Voyageur) or a rail-barge interface.



Map 2. Belfast's Location in the Region



Markets

This study has not focused on an investigation of new markets or a marketing strategy for Belfast; that was not part of the contract. Nonetheless, future land use, job creation and revitalization efforts must consider what will work and/or sell in Belfast. Four studies, by others, as well as anecdotal evidence, provide some market guideposts, however.

First, the Sebago Technics/Market Decisions report (of September 1991) identified the following market opportunities, listed here in order of importance:

- **Near the waterfront**
 - ▶ marine-related development (marinas) (5)*
 - ▶ marine-related retail establishments and other water dependent uses (1)
 - ▶ commercial fishing (2)
 - ▶ boat building (4)
 - ▶ commercial/retail uses
 - ▶ restaurants (6)
 - ▶ residences, and
 - ▶ offices

- The numbers reflect the order of importance the public places on these uses, according to the 1991 public opinion survey. Public open space and waterfront parks rated third.

■ Back from the waterfront

- ▶ offices and residences (on second floors)
- ▶ motels/hotels
- ▶ other mixed uses such as retail, restaurants, services, etc.

The report also recommends that all major new development applications be handled as planned-unit-developments (PUDs). This procedure provides more flexibility for the developer and the city and stimulates a creative approach. Architectural design controls are also advocated.

A more recent study undertaken by a private entity explored some of the above markets and concluded that there was not great strength in the hotel/motel or office space markets, but that the recreational/marine business and regional retail markets looked more promising. (Clearly Belfast has witnessed a large increase in the demand for moorings and there is probably a need for more land-side services, such as fuel, supplies, restrooms with showers, ice, garbage disposal and sewage disposal.)

According to this report, a specialty retail center catering to tourists and residents that is unique within Maine, if not New England, may hold promise, particularly if its focus is "Maine-made" products, antiques and arts and crafts. Product manufacturing, on-site, is also a possibility. The key appears to be in creating a highly desirable destination retail center, so

that Belfast is the place to go to for Maine-made, quality products, food and entertainment.

The importance of Belfast's art galleries, theater and arts community in terms of their economic value should not be dismissed. The 1988 study of "The Arts in Maine's Economy," points to its \$92 million impact statewide and to the 2,600 people employed in the "industry." The 1992 figures, as reported in "Non-profit Cultural Organizations in the New England Economy," show total spending by arts organizations and audiences having a \$114.9 million economic impact on Maine. Belfast's piece of this market could be enhanced if it were made a priority and linked to a Maine-made center. The City's key location within the midcoast tourist region makes this possibility enticing and credible.

Of course, Belfast's importance as a service and retail center for the County should also be built into future marketing strategies. This is a "natural" market and Belfast should explore ways to maximize its draw on customers throughout Waldo County.

Another study, the 1992 Waldo County Tourism marketing Strategy lends credibility to some of the ideas expressed above. Although it took a county-wide view, this recent study suggests that the county (read, Belfast) should:

- ▶ recognize that visitors tend to be older and seek shopping, historical, cultural and natural experiences;

- ▶ "sell" its lack of crowds and congestion;
- ▶ recognize that the arts community is a distinguishing experience;
- ▶ take advantage of the shortage of organized tours such as schooner sailing, bike tours and sea kayaking;
- ▶ provide a large conference facility;
- ▶ increase utilization of the Bay and the access Belfast has to it;
- ▶ focus on a strategy that goes beyond only art and antiques;
- ▶ define an image for itself;
- ▶ get "on the map;"
- ▶ find strategies to get Route 1 travelers to stop; and
- ▶ work to encourage visitors to stay longer.

Finally, "USA Weekend," a newspaper magazine with 37.5 million readers, listed Belfast as one of "five culturally cool small towns," in its September 23-25, 1994 edition. Indeed, the City is featured in John Villani's book, "The 100 Best Small Art Towns in America." (See over) Belfast should capitalize on this new found reputation and link it to other marketing ideas.

Access

Belfast's Route 1 bypass is both a blessing and a curse: it keeps unwanted, unneeded through-traffic out of downtown, but it also diverts potential visitors. This means that Belfast must cultivate downtown as a destination and that access to, and within, the center must be easy. Travelers by car should have clear

TRAVEL

BY JEANNE WRIGHT

5 culturally cool small towns

LOOKING FOR CULTURE, but disenchanted with costly, crowded big-city art enclaves with an attitude? Then travel to small towns, says John Villani, the author of *The 100 Best Small Art Towns in America* (JOHN MUIR PUBLICATIONS, \$12.50), new in bookstores.

Five of Villani's favorites:

NEWPORT, ORE.

Hundreds of painters and writers and a few low-profile Hollywood types like David Ogden Stiers of TV's *M*A*S*H* are among the 9,000 who live in this beach haven and historic Yaquina Bay fishing town. Twenty commercial art galleries and three non-profit exhibition spaces at the Visual Arts Center, Backporch Gallery and Casbah lure art lovers. **Travel tips:** Annual events include February's Seafood and Wine Festival and October's

Brews and Blues Front rooms at the Beach Hotel are famous writers. Head for Danny dark, hit Riptide

CREEDE, COLO.

This former mir in the shadow Mountains bo "splendidly s near the reno tory Theater. from landsc from horsel tivals includ ing Compe the Old M

BELFAST.

"Bizarrel Belfast N leries ar

BELFAST, MAINE

"Bizarrely staged" theater by the Belfast Maskers and waterfront galleries are highlights of this Penobscot River town of 6,000. Gallery openings often coincide with theater and restaurant affairs. Artfellow non-profit exhibition space and three commercial galleries feature Maine artists. Belfast's working class coexists with a surprising crowd of craftspeople, artists and musicians. **Travel tips:** The Church Street Festival (a parade, performances, crafts) is Oct. 1. You'll find terrific enchiladas at Dos Amigos. Artists favor Darby's Restaurant.

Southern folk sts. For tasty ural food, to Manna rocery and estaurant.

NEW YORK MILLS, MINN.

Visit this nippy town of 900, settled by Finns in the 1870s, in any season. **Travel tips:** A July music and film festival showcases short works by Midwestern filmmakers. An annual philosophical writing contest, the Great Midwestern Think-Off, drew 650 entries in June. (This year's theme: "Does life have meaning?") Try rusinavelli, a fruit soup, at December's Finnish Mid-winter Festival. Railroad memorabilia adorns the Whistle Stop Bed and Breakfast, and artists enjoy Muggs Pub for pool and the Blue Horizon Ballroom for dancing.



directions to downtown and, once there, must be able to find convenient parking. Travelers by bus should be able to embark and disembark at a convenient, central location, preferably at a transit stop with restrooms. Cyclists also should be accommodated on designated bike routes and provision for bike parking should be made. Positive small actions such as these can make a difference and help put Belfast "on the map" as a visitor friendly town.

From the bypass, the principal access roads are, on the south, Northport Avenue and Congress Street; on the west, Lincolnville and Belmont Avenue (Route 3); on the northwest, Waldo Avenue (Routes 7 and 137) and High Street.

Within the downtown/waterfront area, the roads that presently serve as the primary access routes are, on the south, Church and High Streets; on the west, Belmont Avenue (Route 3); on the northwest, Waldo Avenue and High Street; and in the center of town, Main Street. In the future these same routes should continue to serve as the primary access routes for cars, trucks, buses and bicycles. (See Map 4)

Parking

Provision for adequate parking is essential to any downtown. In Belfast, parking is provided on street, in municipal lots and on private property. For the most part this parking is conveniently located and adequate, but it will not be adequate if future office, and retail floor space is added to downtown, and/or if

tourism increases, bringing more people by car into the City.

On-street parking in the immediate City center accounts for about 150 spaces; another 160 spaces are available in public parking lots off Washington Street, Cross Street and Main (at the Post Office) and about 70 spaces are available at the dock and Heritage Park. There are parking conflicts here, however, between commercial fishermen, recreational boat users and restaurant patrons. The remaining parking lots are private; the largest private lot is that in front of the Co-op on High Street.

In the future, access to (and directions to) the Washington Street parking lot and any other new City-owned (or private) lots must be improved. Further, any and all parking lots must be carefully integrated into the fabric of central City buildings so that they do not dominate or create barriers. This means carefully planned lots and a creative approach to required parking ratios in downtown zoning districts.

Access to the Water

The City boat ramp at the base of Main Street provides the only public boat access to Belfast Bay within the downtown/waterfront area. It is about 50 feet wide and is served by 12 boat trailer parking bays, between the water and Front Street.

All other access is by way of private land.

Commercial fishermen tie up at the City wharf and floating docks and excursion boats utilize the City pier. Otherwise, boaters rent slips at Belfast Boatyard, Inc., or the new pier across from the Consumers Fuel lot on the waterfront, or utilize moorings in the harbor. There are about 240 moorings.

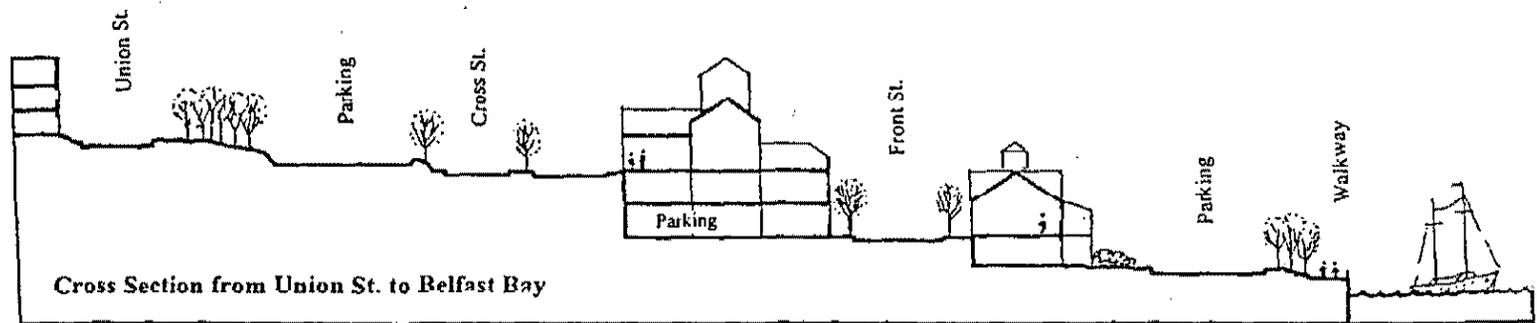
Public access to the shorefront to take in the view or launch a kayak is provided at Heritage Park and the City-owned pier. Public access to the water across private land needs to be addressed. In broad terms, cities on waterfronts around the world have gained from opening up public access to the water. Ideally there should be benefits to the property owners, to the public, and to the City for so doing. To achieve this, the City has incorporated mixed use zoning that allows retail, restaurants and/or marine recreation in these areas. Further, there should be development incentives built into the permitting process that encourage shorefront owners to provide access (both visual and physical) in return for density bonuses and/or setback relief, or other benefits.

Views to the Water

Part of Belfast's charm and viability as a coastal city is its proximity to Belfast Bay, and fortunately, more by accident than by design, many views to the water remain. Map 5 shows the major viewpoints. Every effort should be made to retain these views and open up other views when redevelopment occurs; the views enhance the lure of Belfast as a tourist destination.

The principal viewpoints are described below:

- Views to the water from Main, Spring and Miller Streets are good, except Miller should visually extend to the waterfront; the same is true of Pearl Streets; any redevelopment beyond its eastern end should allow for through views.
- Views to the water from City property, notably the Washington Street parking lot, the City wharf and Heritage Park are remarkable; the northeast edge of the parking lot should be enhanced with a walkway and central viewing area. Views from the wharf and within Heritage Park are unobstructed but views from Federal Street are obstructed by some of the buildings in the Park; at least one, if not both smaller buildings should be removed.
- The attraction and value of a waterfront walkway for views (and for bringing people to private waterfront and shoreland attractions) is great. Incentives to make this happen should be put in place.
- Finally, as redevelopment occurs it is essential that a visual wall on (or near) the waterfront does not end up blocking views for those behind. Fortunately the lay of the land helps achieve this goal. Structures built between the water and Cross and Union Streets should be modest in height (i.e. 2 to 2½ stories at street level) and should step down the slope in a stairlike fashion. (See the Illustration on page 12.)



Pedestrian Circulation

Needless to say, a pedestrian-friendly city is a city that people will return to again and again. It must be easy and pleasant to get around in. Belfast has already started down this path; the City has:

- ▶ well designed, attractively paved sidewalks in its center
- ▶ a good street tree planting program
- ▶ "theme" gas-light lighting fixtures, and
- ▶ attractive street "furniture" (i.e. benches, trash containers)

Yet more should be done:

- ▶ the sidewalks should be extended in a logical pattern so that they link to parking lots and to downtown/waterfront features

- ▶ the street tree landscaping should also follow a plan so that major links and important public spaces are emphasized and celebrated
- ▶ a waterfront walkway, combined with the old RR right-of-way walkway, should be built and extended onto private land south of Heritage Park
- ▶ three vital pedestrian links should be made; one should begin at Beaver Street, follow Pendleton Lane and end up on Federal Street, and the other two should make strong links between the Washington Street parking lot and Front/Water Street. Map 6 shows this pattern of existing and proposed sideways and walkways.

Open Space

The pedestrian environment is embellished by open space. Open space can be public or private, it can be large or small, and it can be "hard" and edged with buildings and paving, or "soft" and full of planted materials. A mix is best and central Belfast has such a mix. Belfast also has some ugly, undefined, underutilized open space which detracts from the City's downtown character.

Belfast's urban streets in the center of the City form canyon-like open spaces. Where they are defined by historic building facades, trees and paved surfaces, they are an asset. Church and High Streets within a block of Main, and Main Street itself, are good examples. The areas around the Co-op and Washington Street are examples of ill-defined urban open space that could be improved.

Heritage Park represents "soft," grassed and landscaped open space. Further opportunities to create pleasant open space in the central City are provided by Federal Street, the edges of the Washington Street parking lot (where it meets Main Street), Pendleton Lane and the Co-op/Beaver Street area. A landscape plan for tree planting, paving, lighting and street furniture is needed. Map 5 shows the main elements of an integrated pedestrian/open space plan.

Development Opportunities

As has been stated, for the first time in living memory, almost all of Belfast's most important waterfront parcels are available for redevelopment. This is a rare opportunity, made all the more exciting by the fact that the owners wish to cooperate in doing what's best for the City and themselves. This plan offers that opportunity.

Practically all the property within the area defined by the waterfront (on the northeast); Bridge, Washington, Cross and Union Streets; on the southwest; Pierce on the north; and Commercial Street on the south, is underutilized. (See Map 3) (The main exceptions are: Stinson's, the railroad buildings, Belfast Boatyard, Inc., the towboat facility, buildings around the Weathervane Restaurant and buildings on Lower Main.)

The actions needed to make these properties attractive redevelopment parcels include:

- ▶ an overall plan "vision" based on realistic premises (i.e. this plan)
- ▶ public/private cooperation
- ▶ the identification of viable, new markets
- ▶ infrastructure upgrading (i.e. street, parking and sidewalk improvements, based on an overall plan)
- ▶ assistance for the demolition of blighted structures (primarily the Penobscot Poultry Plant, but possibly others)

- ▶ financial assistance (in the form of capital, low interest loans and grants), and
- ▶ a cooperative regulatory environment.

Beyond this waterfront area there appear to be two other areas of development opportunity in the downtown area: the under-utilized upper floors of existing businesses and residential land along Bridge Street. The markets for upper floor space are limited at present but, with growth, they offer in-town living space and/or professional office space. Bridge Street on the other hand, offers fine views of the harbor and, once the odor problem of the treatment plant is resolved, would be an excellent location for in-town, medium density residences.

Finally, the old Crosby School structure located on the edge of downtown has potential for innovative housing development, as a co-housing complex, or elderly or affordable housing. Another option might be artist studios or small business/crafts incubator space. These options need to be explored.

Harbor Issues

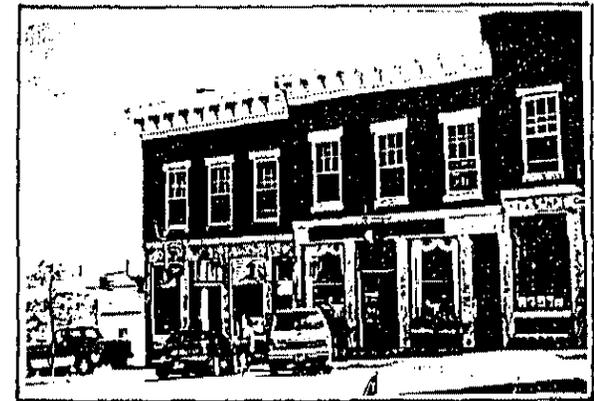
The 1991 "Harbor and Waterfront Management Plan" undertaken for the Harbor Committee recommends a number of actions geared to upgrading the harbor for commercial and recreational craft. They include:

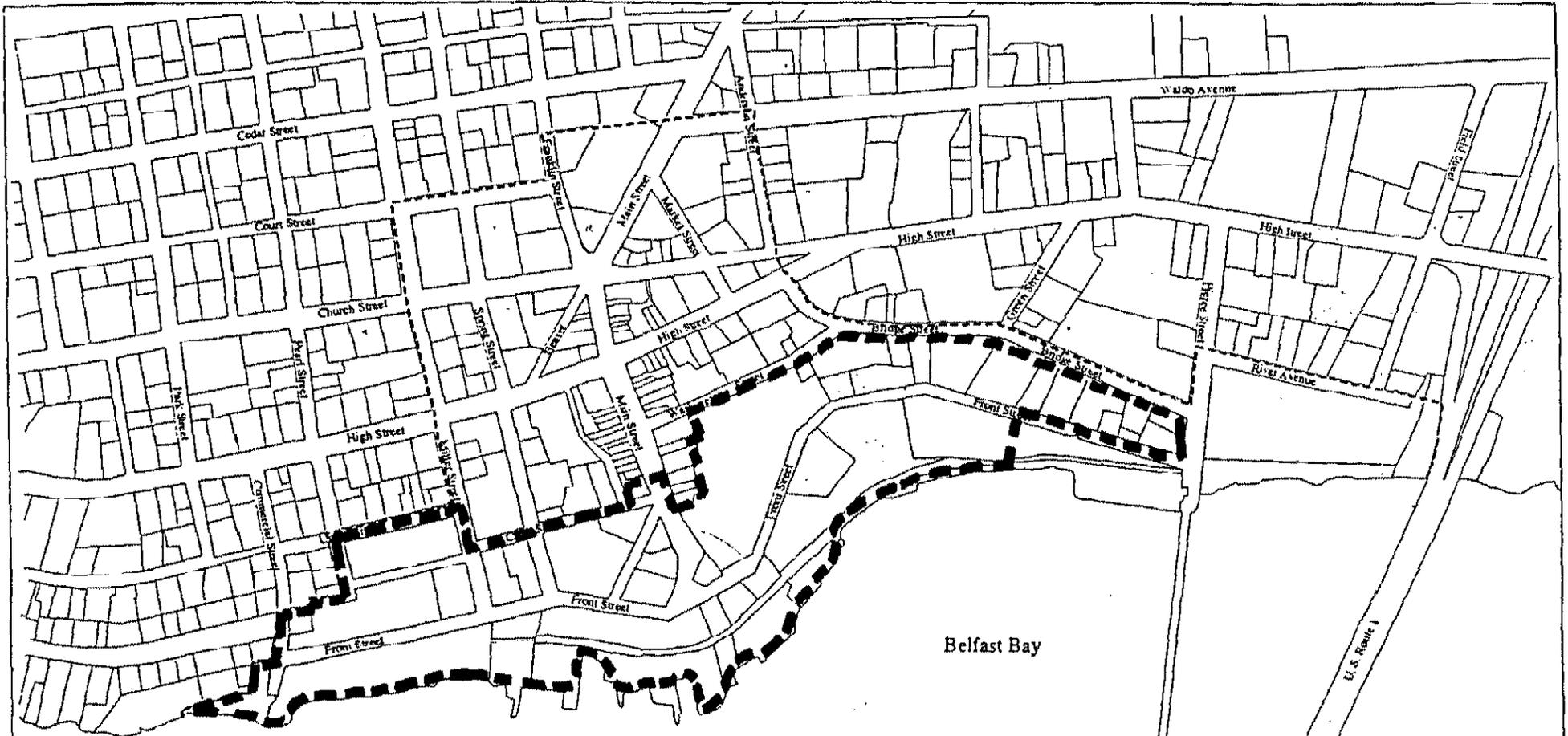
- ▶ increase mooring capacity by using two point moorings

- ▶ build a 400 foot breakwater/pier off Commercial Street
- ▶ install a wave attenuator off Patterson Point, and
- ▶ dredge the Bay north of the old Route 1 Bridge to provide moorings for motor boats.

Other issues that need attention include:

- ▶ repair of the City wharf; it is being eroded by wave action
- ▶ dredging of the channel, and
- ▶ dredging off Stinson's and the railroad property to increase docking space for commercial fishermen, recreational or tourist boating, and allow for the possibility of a small barge/freight facility linked to the railroad.





Map 3. Development Opportunity Area

 High Redevelopment Potential
(some parcels exempt)

City of Belfast
Downtown Waterfront Development Master Plan
 October, 1994



Prepared by:
Maine Tomorrow, Hallowell, Maine
 in association with
Kent Associates, Planning & Design-
Gardiner, Maine

4. Plan Principles

"... a noble, logical diagram once recorded, will never die..."

City design is based, in part, on planning principles. Some of these principles can be expressed as diagrams. The value of the diagrams is that they can capture the essence of an idea – the underlying concepts that give logic, longevity, and meaning to a plan. If the concepts or principles behind a plan are lost or ignored it is less effective.

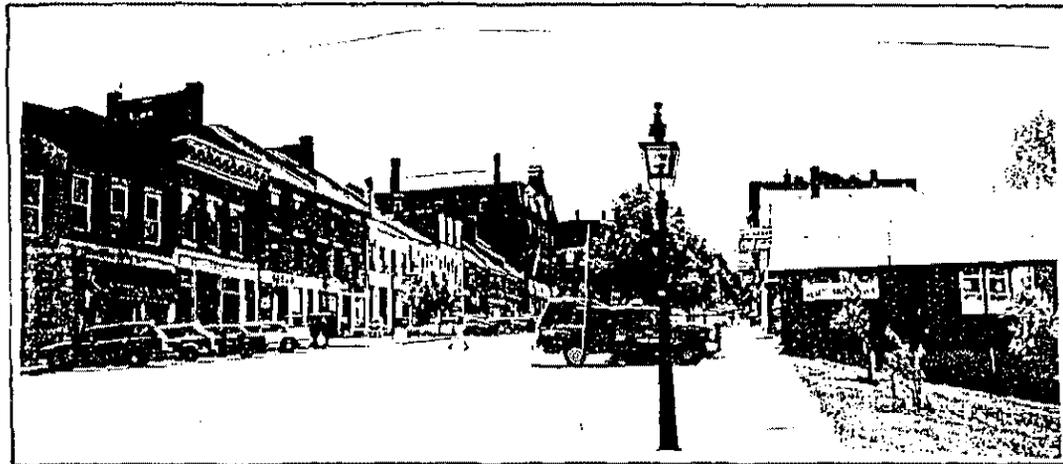
The major ideas that underpin this plan for Belfast are distilled in the diagrams and statements that follow. They provide the skeleton or framework on which the plan is built.

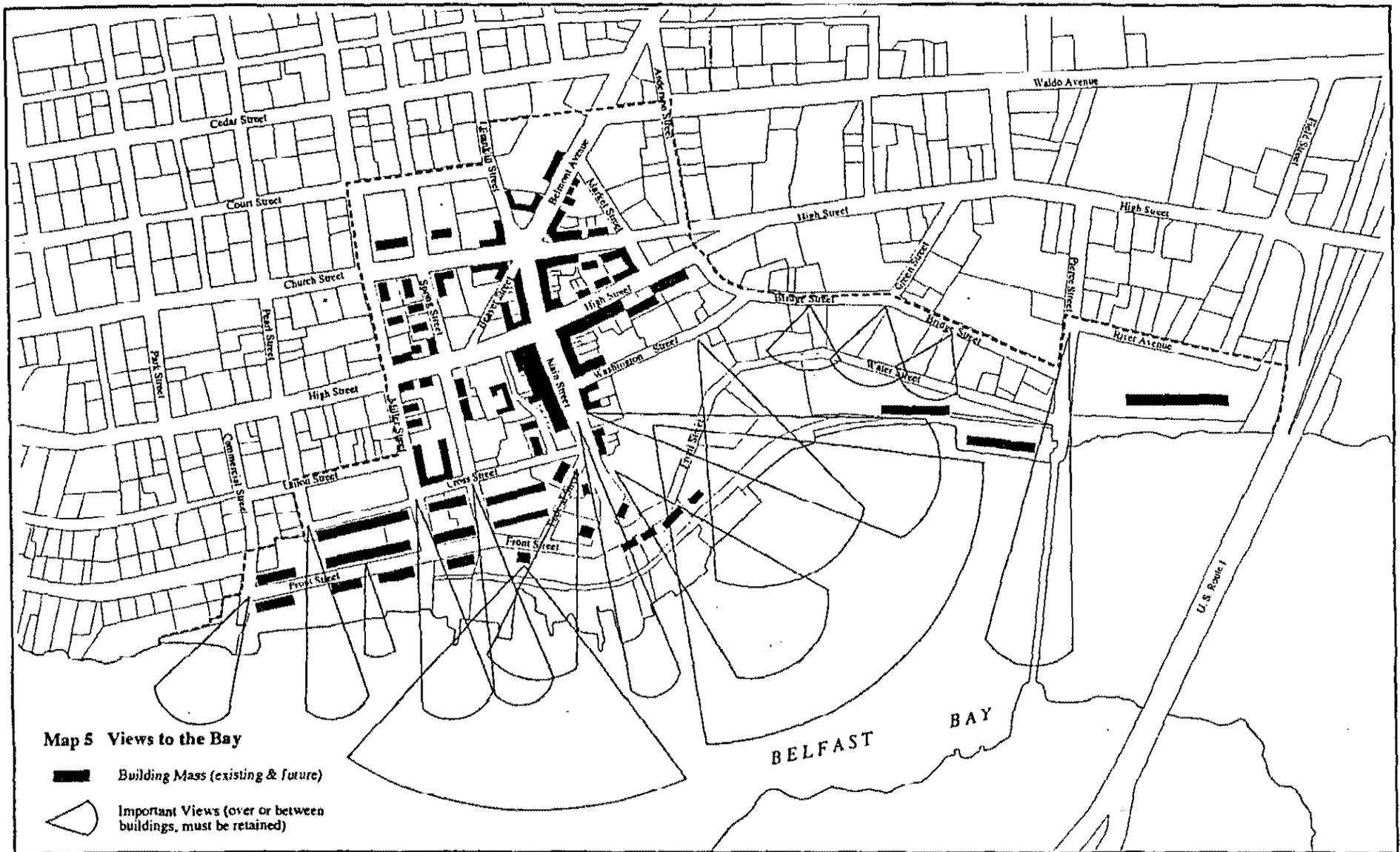
Principles

1. Provide good vehicular access to downtown and the waterfront along existing, major streets. (See Map 4.)
2. Maintain a grid of streets to maximize access to all parcels. (See Map 4.)
3. Provide conveniently located public and private parking on the periphery of downtown in easy-to-find lots. (See Map 4.)

4. Plan for and encourage increased use of public transit; locate transit stops in central locations within 1,000 feet walking distance of all major downtown facilities. (See Map 4.)
5. Ensure Belfast is "pedestrian friendly" by creating a superior sidewalk and walkway system that links parking and transit to all structures, amenities, and the waterfront. (See Map 6.)
6. Build a bicycle friendly Belfast with dedicated bike lanes, bike routes and bicycle parking.
7. Provide a variety of open spaces for walking, sitting, viewing, and playing and tie these into the walkway system. (See Map 6.)
8. Emphasize and beautify the principal walkways and streets with tree planting, lighting and other street furniture.
9. Provide a walkway along the waterfront. (See Map 6.)
10. Plan for a small-scale intermodal (rail/barge/truck) facility on the waterfront, provided it is compatible with adjacent land uses.
11. Provide views to the water down all streets that run perpendicular to the waterfront. (See Map 5.)

12. Maximize views to the water from public land.
(See Map 5.)
13. Set building height limits so that structures closer to the water do not block views for those behind.
14. Provide for a range of mixed uses on the waterfront but give preference to water-dependent uses.
15. Encourage a broad diversity of uses in downtown (retail, residential, office) to help maintain a vibrant, busy and safe environment.
16. Address the odor problem at the City's treatment plant.
17. Phase public improvements (i.e. sidewalks, utilities, street paving, lighting, landscaping, etc.) so that they occur from the center of the City outward.
18. Provide landscaped buffers between incompatible land uses.

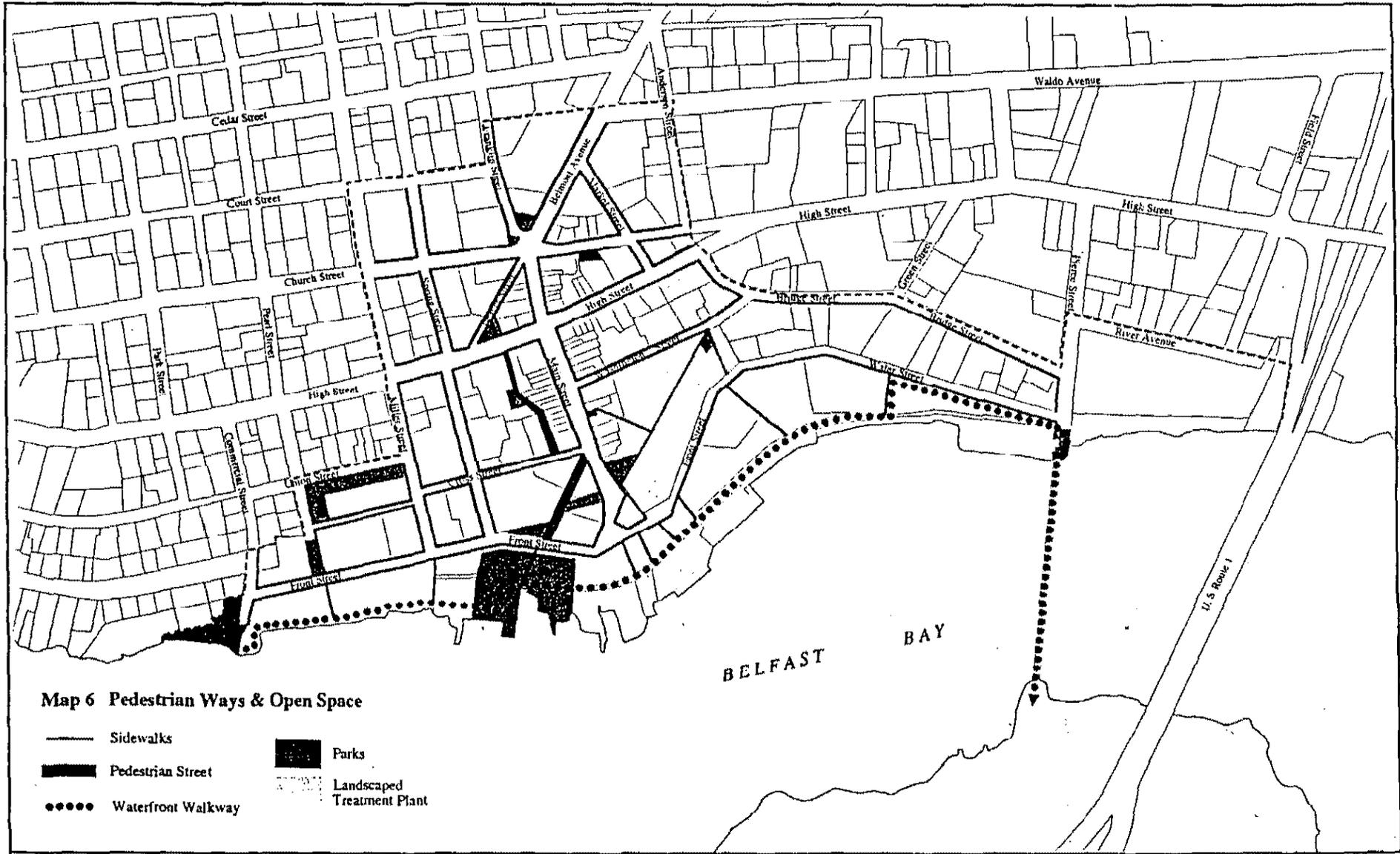




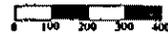
City of Belfast
Downtown Waterfront Development Master Plan
 October, 1994



Prepared by:
Maine Tomorrow, Hallowell, Maine
 in association with
Kent Associates, Planning & Design
 Gardiner, Maine



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Downtown Waterfront Development Master Plan
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5. MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The illustrative master plan and the aerial perspective drawings (on the following pages) provide a picture of Belfast's Downtown and Waterfront in some 15 years time. They show a vision of what might be if the goals and planning principles described here are implemented. They also provide the "ground rules" for future planned unit developments (PUDs). The master plan recommendations are based on:

- ▶ past studies and plans
- ▶ new ideas generated by the consultants and the advisory committee
- ▶ conversations and discussions with the major land owners on the waterfront
- ▶ the availability of funds (primarily the State's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program)
- ▶ the City's infrastructure and geography (most of which is discussed in Chapter 3)
- ▶ the plan goals and guiding principles (as described in Chapters 2 and 4).

For ease of explanation, all the plan recommendations are listed below in the order in which they appear on the plan. (See Map 7.) Clearly this is not the order in which they should be undertaken, nor is it a listing of

priorities. Phasing and priority are addressed item by item.

Table A, together with Map 7, summarizes the recommendations. A full explanation of each recommendation follows, along with priority, responsibility and phasing suggestions. The phases referred to are:

Phase I	1995/1996
Phase II	1996/1997
Phase III	1997/1999
Phase IV	2000/2005

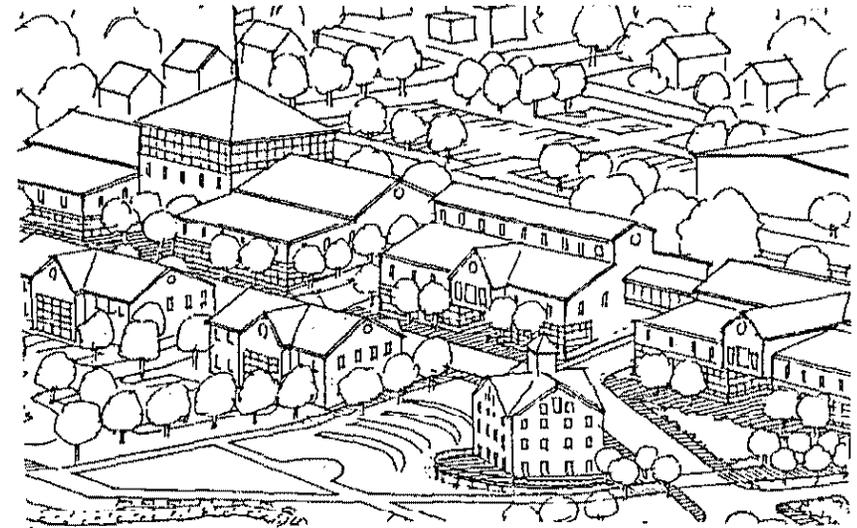
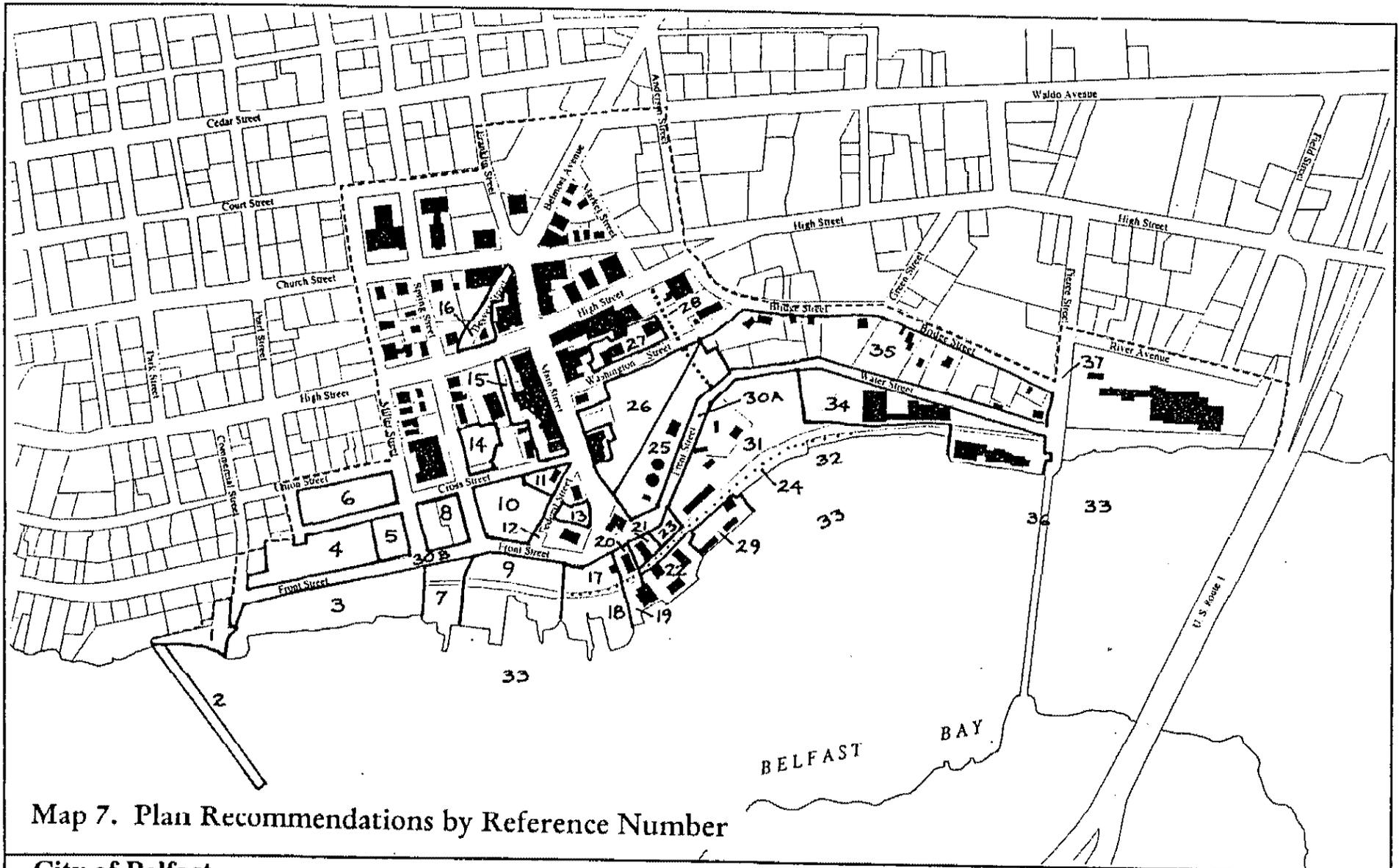


TABLE A

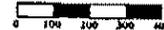
Summary of Master Plan Recommendations
(numbers refer to parcels and land areas
shown on Map 7)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Acquire property as waterfront park and access to breakwater | 20. Upgrade Information building |
| 2. Construct new breakwater and floating breakwater | 21. Make minor landscape improvements |
| 3. Potential redevelopment site | 22. Retain towboat facility |
| 4. Demolish Penobscot Poultry Plant and Redevelop Site | 23. Demolish all structures and redevelop |
| 5. Redevelop Mathews building | 24. Create a waterfront pedestrian way |
| 6. Develop property as parking lot and park | 25. Address the odor problem at the sewage treatment plant |
| 7. Redevelop Consumers Fuel site | 26. Make improvements to City parking lot |
| 8. Develop site | 27. Upgrade west side of Washington Street |
| 9. Improve Heritage Park | 28. Develop a pedestrian way between High and Washington Streets |
| 10. Penobscot Frozen Foods building | 29. Retain existing commercial/recreational boat yard |
| 11. Revitalize corner property | 30A. Improve Front/Water Street (north of Main) |
| 12. Make Federal Street a pedestrian mall | 30B. Improve Front Street (south of Main) |
| 13. Acquire as park | 31. Develop and expand the Belfast and Moosehead Lake Railroad yard |
| 14. Expand City-owned parking lots | 32. Develop multi-purpose docking facilities |
| 15. Make Pendleton Lane a pedestrian way | 33. Undertake dredging in Belfast Harbor |
| 16. Improve the Beaver Street Area | 34. Improve functioning and appearance of Stinson's |
| 17. Upgrade the landscaping and restrooms at the foot of Main Street | 35. Bridge Street housing improvements |
| 18. Repair City wharf and retaining wall | 36. Make improvements to the Old Route 1 Bridge |
| 19. Upgrade waterfront restaurant | 37. Make improvements to Pierce Street |
-
-

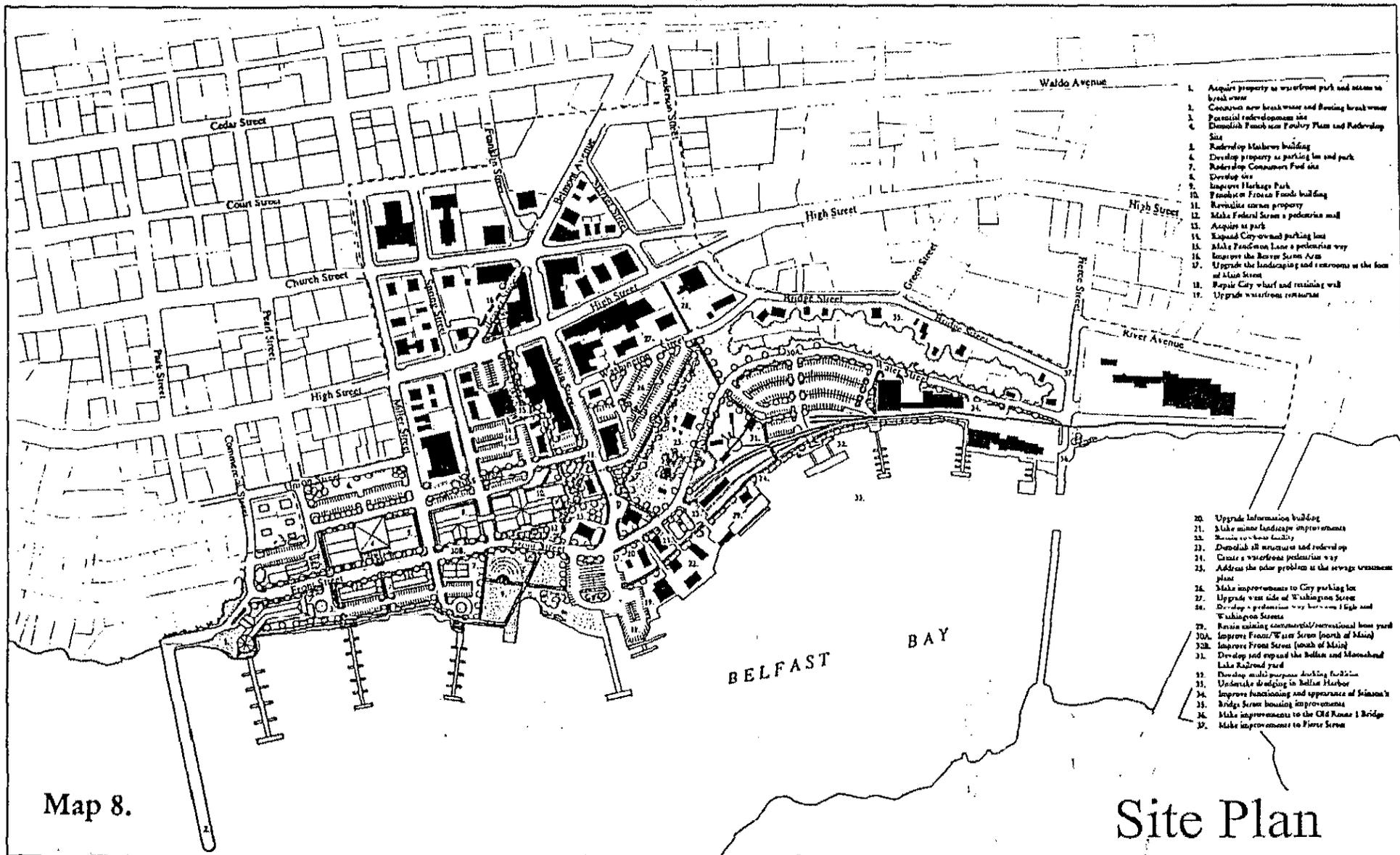


Map 7. Plan Recommendations by Reference Number

City of Belfast
Downtown Waterfront Development Master Plan
 October, 1994



Prepared by:
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 Gardiner, Maine



1. Acquire property to waterfront park and ocean to beach view
2. Construct new breakwater and housing breakwater
3. Potential redevelopment site
4. Demolish French Iron Foundry Plant and Redevelop site
5. Redevelop Mathews building
6. Develop property as parking lot and park
7. Redevelop Consumers Feed site
8. Develop site
9. Improve Heritage Park
10. Foundation for new building
11. Redevelop corner property
12. Make Federal Seaman a pedestrian mall
13. Acquire site park
14. Expand City-owned parking lot
15. Make Fenimore Lane a pedestrian way
16. Improve the River Seaman Area
17. Upgrade the landscaping and restaurants in the foot of Main Street
18. Repair City wharf and retaining wall
19. Upgrade waterfront restaurant

20. Upgrade Information building
21. Make minor landscape improvements
22. Sewer collection facility
23. Demolish all structures and redevelop
24. Create a waterfront pedestrian way
25. Address the odor problem at the sewage treatment plant
26. Make improvements to City parking lot
27. Upgrade west side of Washington Street
28. Develop a pedestrian way between High and Washington Streets
29. Retain existing commercial/recreational boat yard
- 30a. Improve Front Wharf Seaman (north of Main)
- 30b. Improve Front Seaman (south of Main)
31. Develop and expand the Bullen and Monmouth Lake Railroad yard
32. Develop multi-purpose docking facility
33. Undertake dredging in Belfast Harbor
34. Improve functioning and appearance of Seaman's
35. Bridge Seaman housing improvements
36. Make improvements to the Old Route 1 Bridge
37. Make improvements to Finner Seaman

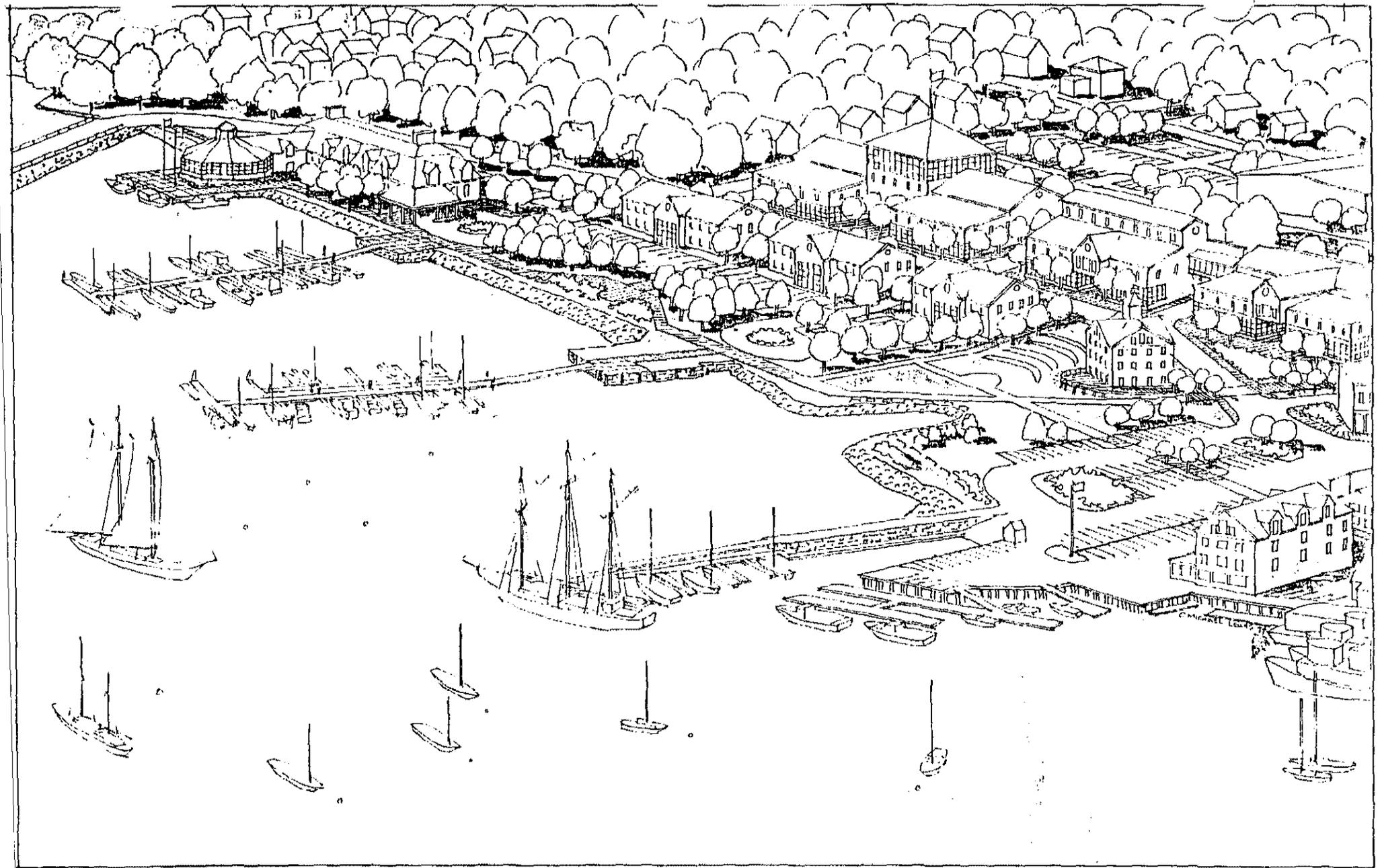
Map 8.

Site Plan

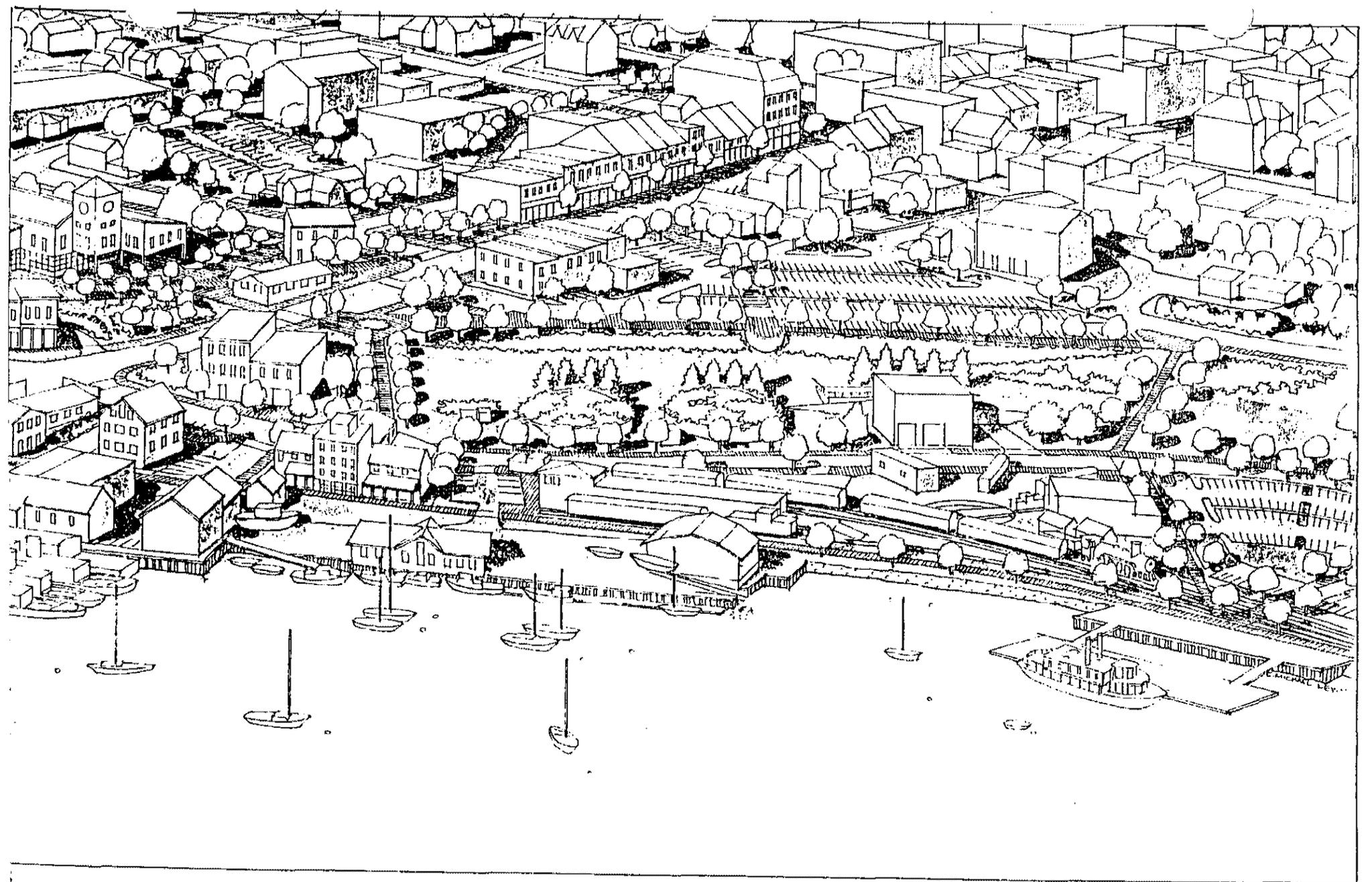
City of Belfast
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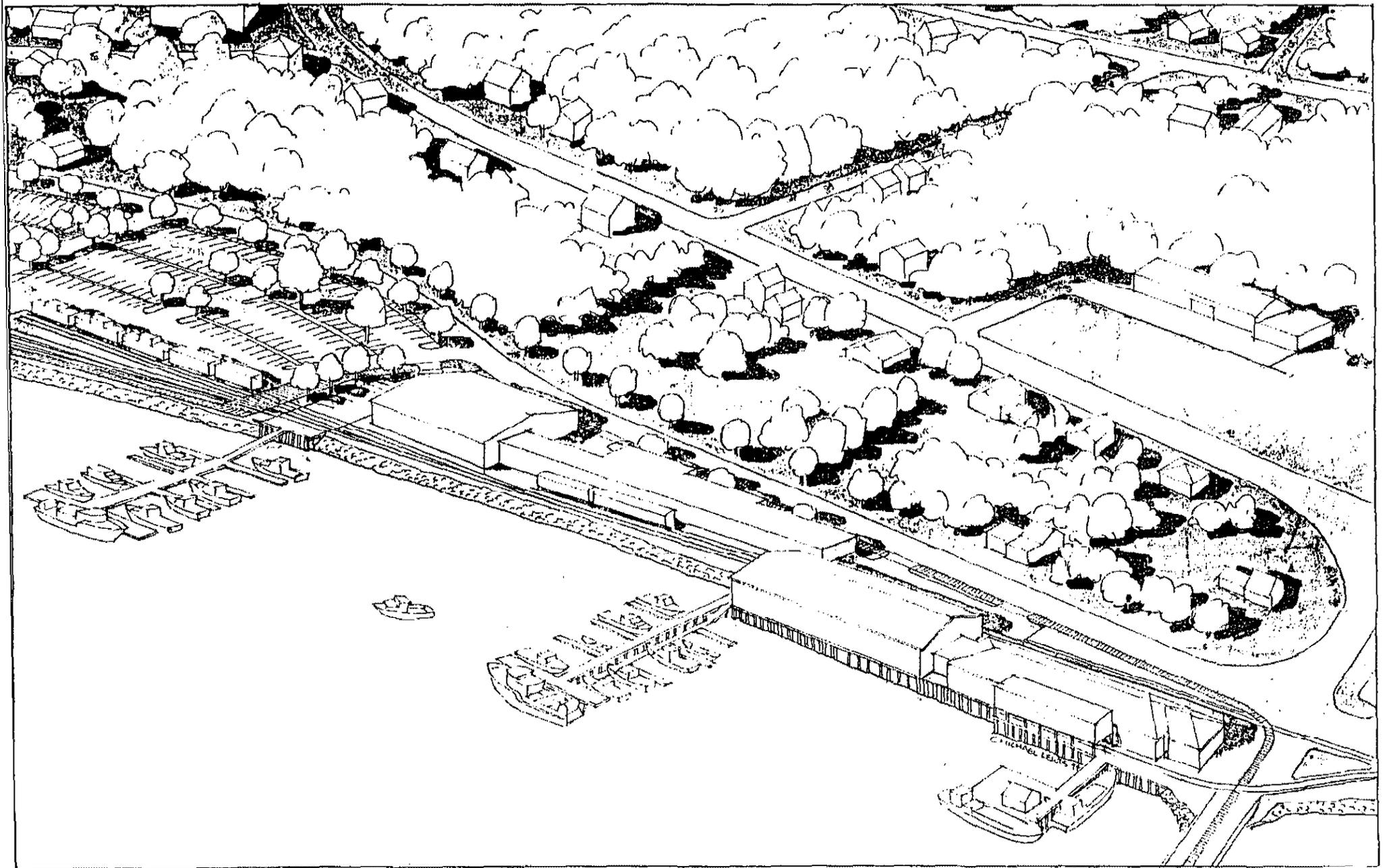


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Aerial Views of Waterfront





MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS
(numbers refer to Parcels and Land areas shown on Map 7)

1. Acquire Property as waterfront park and access to breakwater

Acquire property to provide neighborhood access to the water and for access to a future breakwater, that is tied into Commercial Street.

Phase: IV

Responsibility: City, Harbor Committee

Priority: Medium/low

2. Construct new breakwater and floating breakwater

To increase safety and provide more protected moorings within Belfast Bay two new breakwaters are proposed. One, on solid fill, would be at the base of Commercial Street and the other (a floating breakwater) would be tied to the east shore at Patterson Point.

Phase: IV

Responsibility: City, Harbor Committee

Priority: Medium/low

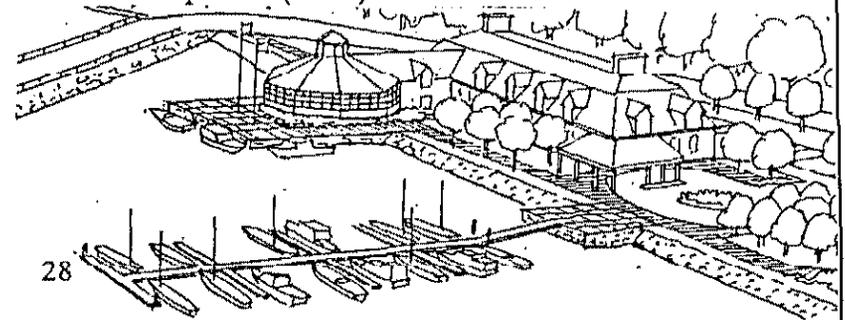
3. Potential redevelopment site

Underutilized waterfront site (currently Mathews lumber storage). Has potential as water-dependent commercial/recreational boating site and/or waterfront residential/hotel/marina site. Plan in concert with adjacent Penobscot Poultry and Mathews properties, i.e., parcels 4, 5, and 6 to the west. Require developer to provide public shoreline walkway and to open up appropriate view corridors. Establish height, massing and architectural standards and treat as a planned unit development (PUD). Allow for the extension of Miller Street towards the water.

Phase: III

Responsibility: Private developer

Priority: Medium/low



4. Demolish Penobscot Poultry Plant and Redevelop Site

Create a redevelopment site by demolishing the old poultry processing plant. Consider residential and commercial (mixed) uses. Plan in conjunction with properties to east and west. Buffer from existing residential uses to south. Allow for through views from Pearl Street. Establish height, massing and residential standards and treat as a PUD. (See Section on page 12.) This is a key site; it has a blighting influence on Belfast. The City should participate in its demolition so as to turn the property into an asset for redevelopment.

Phase: III

Responsibility: Public/Private demolition; private redevelopment

Priority: Medium

5. Redevelop Mathew building site

Ugly structure in reasonable condition; could be torn down (or revitalized with face lift and interior improvements) for commercial (office) or other, mixed uses; lacks parking. Plan in conjunction with adjacent sites. Given its wooden construction and modern fire codes, demolition may be best. Should be subject to height, massing and architectural standards.

Phase: III

Responsibility: Consider public/private demolition; private redevelopment

Priority: Medium

6. Develop property as parking lot and park

Property is 75% vacant; contains one commercial structure in poor condition. Redevelop in conjunction with properties to east (Penobscot Poultry and Mathews), as City or private parking lot, and create an open space/park buffer on west.

Phase: III

Responsibility: Private (but City should require its use for parking and a park

Priority: Medium

NOTE: Parcels 3, 4, 5 and 6 should be planned and developed in a coordinated way so that parking, views, height, massing and architectural and landscape elements do not conflict and trade-offs between owners can be achieved.

7. Redevelop Consumers Fuel site

Currently utilized for non-marine uses; has potential for variety of uses, including: expansion of Heritage Park; favor water-dependent, commercial/recreation uses or other mixed uses. Plan in conjunction with adjacent properties. Set height, massing and architectural standards; require public access through property, on the water; utilize bonuses to achieve public goals.

Phases: II or III

Responsibility: Private

Priority: Medium

8. Develop site

Largely undeveloped site (two parcels) with small, vacant, restaurant building. Excellent long-term potential as mixed use site: retail/offices/residential/restaurant are possibilities; could be expansion (2nd phase) of site to north. Require massing and architectural design standards. Screen Mathews loading docks to west with on-site parking and landscaping. Develop as part of coordinated development plan for parcels 7, 8, 10 and 12.

Phase: II or III

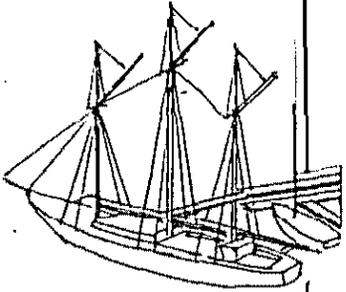
Responsibility: Private

Priority: Medium

9. Improve Heritage Park

Attractive City-owned parcel containing three vacant structures. Consider the following improvements:

- (a) landscaping (tree planting, lights, more benches, waterfront walk, etc.);
- (b) demolish both of the small buildings to open up views;
- (c) refurbish and redesign the large building (inside and out) by adding pitched roof and outdoor deck; utilize as tourist information/welcome center and bicycle touring center with offices above (for harbor master and/or recreation department); also consider using as a gallery for traveling exhibits, display of local products and local museum.
- (d) reshape and contour the sloping lawns to provide an outdoor performance amphitheater
- (e) reduce the parking encroaching on the park (see plan).
- (f) respect the conservation restrictions on the property -- do not add any new structures.



Phase: II
Responsibility: City
Priority: Medium

10. Penobscot Frozen Foods building

This is a vital property if the City wishes to "turn the corner" and shed its industrial downtown image and open the door to new mixed use development. Clearly this site could be put to higher and better use. It is located between downtown, the waterfront and Heritage Park and at the "front-door" to potential redevelopment parcels to the south; development here could jump-start further investment in the area and help provide the "glue" that links downtown to the waterfront. Possible future uses include: a "Maine-made Marketplace," a center for arts, crafts, specialty retail, restaurants, offices, residences (on the second level) and/or a hotel. Provide on-site parking along Cross Street. New structures should extend the historic character of down-town towards the waterfront; strict architectural and urban design controls should apply. (See illustration.)

This, having been said, is not what the owners have in mind. The existing structure can be upgraded to meet their storage needs and this is a cost-effective option for them, that, without any incentive or buy-out from the City, makes financial and business sense. In the end the City must decide if the public cost of finding an alternative site for frozen food storage can be justified by the long term economic development opportunities demolition offers.

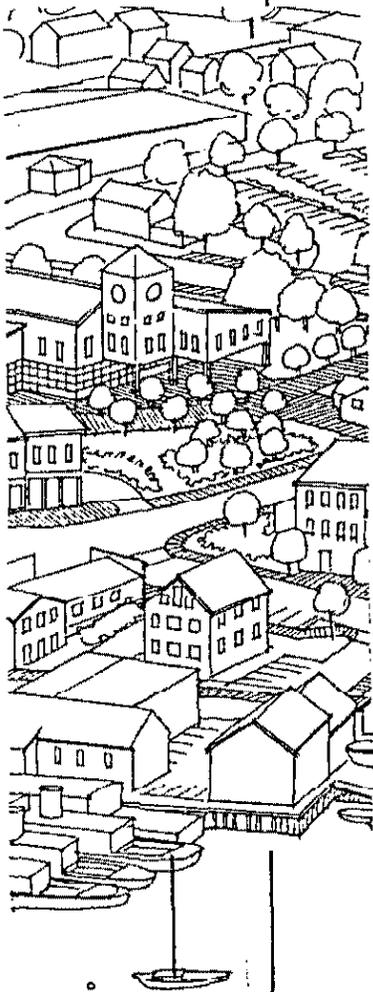
Phases: I or II
Responsibility: Public/private partnership
Priority: High

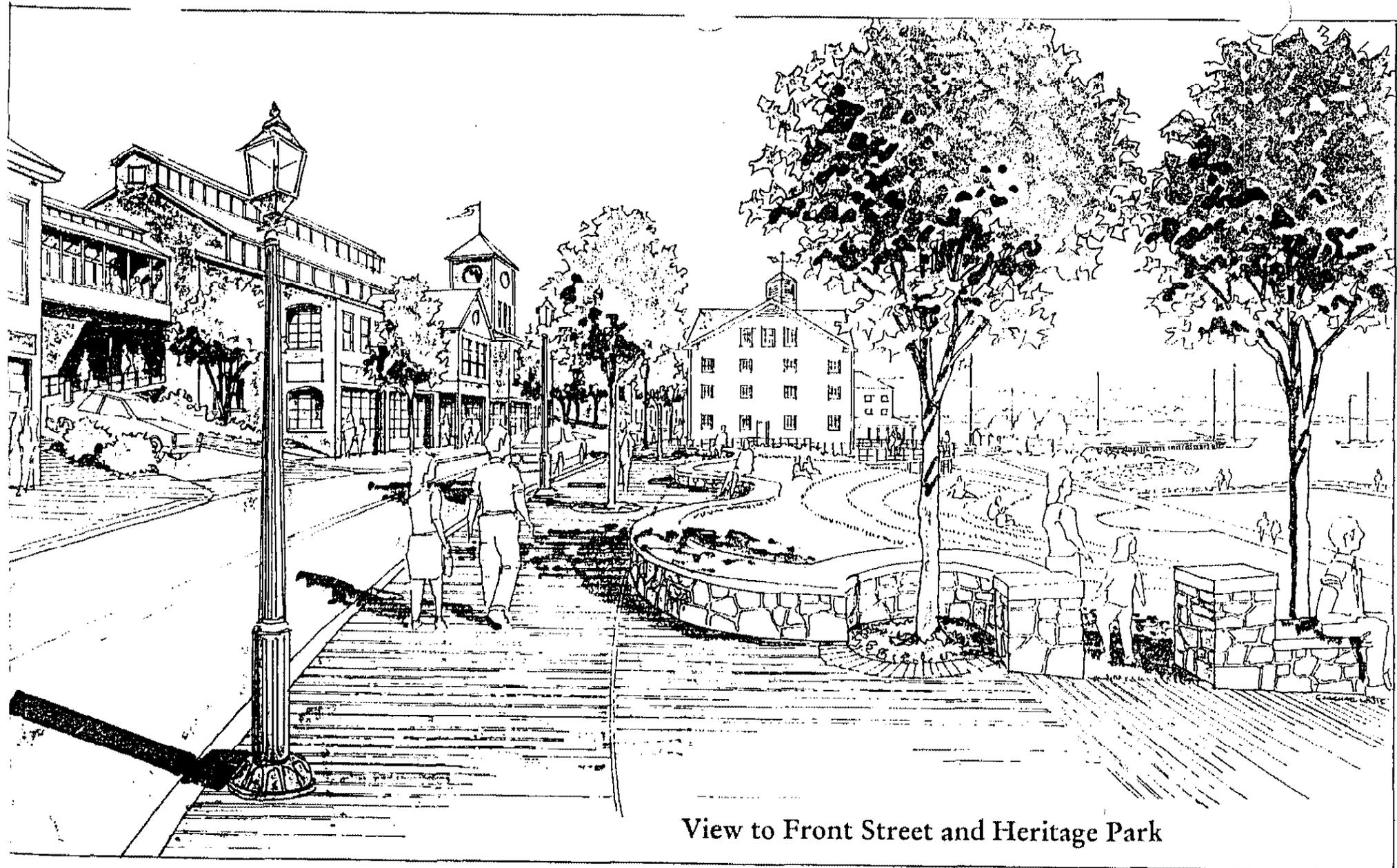
11. Revitalize corner property

Assess building condition; revitalize if economically feasible, or rebuild, create a pedestrian way through the parcel linking Pendleton Lane to Federal Street.

Phase: II
Responsibility: Private
Priority: Medium

NOTE: Parcels 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 should be planned and developed in a coordinated way.





View to Front Street and Heritage Park

12. Make Federal Street a pedestrian mall

Close Federal Street to traffic (except deliveries and restaurant parking) so as to strengthen the pedestrian link between downtown and the waterfront. Improve with street furniture, planting, lighting, and paving; require street level retail or similar uses on at least one side; provide a clear visual link to the Bay and to the Heritage Park area; create a small park/square at the intersection of Federal and Main. (See illustration.) This upgrade would best be done in phase with the redeveloped Penobscot Frozen Food site; if not, the improvement should be phased in.

Phase: I

Responsibility: City

Priority: High

13. Acquire as park

City acquisition of this parcel would have these advantages:

- ▶ keep views to the water open
- ▶ improve access to redevelopment parcel from the Washington Street parking lot
- ▶ embellish the Federal Street Mall, as an urban park
- ▶ provide handicapped parking space for adjacent uses
- ▶ allow for a small commercial building

Phases: I or II

Responsibility: City

Priority: High

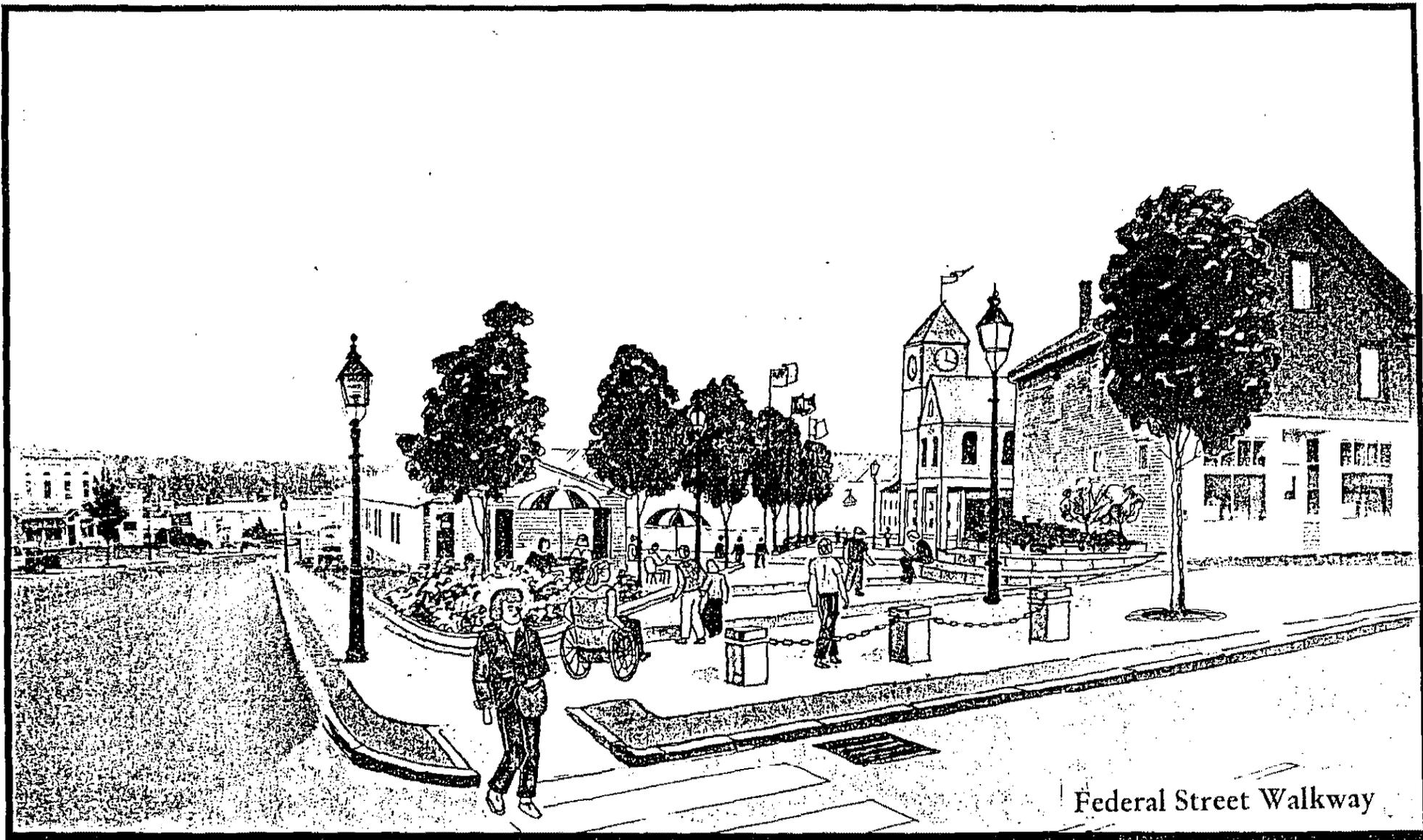
14. Expand City-owned parking lots

Parking availability is crucial to the growth of downtown. Parking lots in this vicinity could serve Main Street and businesses east of Cross Street. The lots should be terraced and landscaped.

Phase: II

Responsibility: City

Priority: Medium



Federal Street Walkway

15. Make Pendleton Lane a pedestrian way

Whereas the Main Street facade of this block is of very high quality, the backside of the block is unattractive. Working together, property owners and the City could revitalize the area by: making the alley a pedestrian way (closed to through traffic but available for truck deliveries and on-site parking); upgrading the architectural treatment of existing historic and contemporary buildings; and undertaking attractive landscaping. The City should cooperate and improve the paving, lighting and furnishing of the alley. The Co-op store should be encouraged to create a small park on the alley on the side of their building and the City should acquire the lot at the southwest corner of Main and Cross for a parking lot.

Phase: I

Responsibility: Public and private owners

Priority: High

16. Improve the Beaver Street Area

The Beaver Street/High Street area is ugly and detracts from the visitors' first impression of downtown Belfast. Recommendations include:

- (a) add a narrow sidewalk to the north side of the street
- (b) provide a sidewalk on the south side and plant street trees
- (c) purchase and redevelop the Beaver/High Street and Pendleton Lane; place restrooms and a transit/bus shelter on the property.

Phases: I and II

Responsibility: City

Priority: High/medium

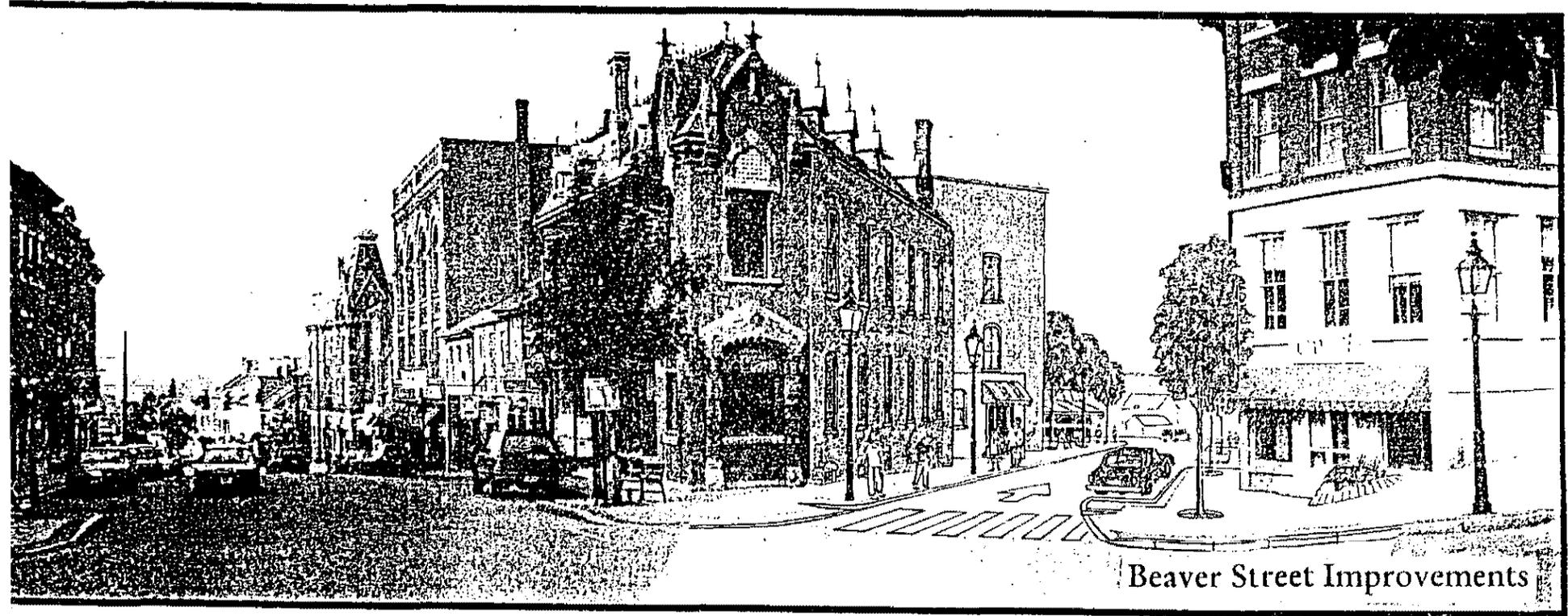
17. Upgrade the landscaping and restrooms at the foot of Main Street

Although serviceable, because of its central location, this building and its surroundings should be upgraded so as to set an example of quality.

Phase: II

Responsibility: City

Priority: Medium



Beaver Street Improvements

18. Repair City wharf and retaining wall

Make repairs to all three sides of the landing - about 250 feet of retaining wall so as to prevent further undermining of the structure by wave action.

Phase: I

Responsibility: City and Harbor Committee

Priority: High

19. Upgrade waterfront restaurant

Make minor improvements to exterior with landscaping and architectural upgrade. Current building is large and not in character with Belfast's distinctive, historic architecture.

Phases: I-IV

Responsibility: Owner

Priority: Low

20. Upgrade Information building

Make architectural improvements to Chamber of Commerce building; consider reuse or redevelopment if "information" function is moved to City building at the Heritage Park.

Phases: I-IV

Responsibility: Owner

Priority: Low

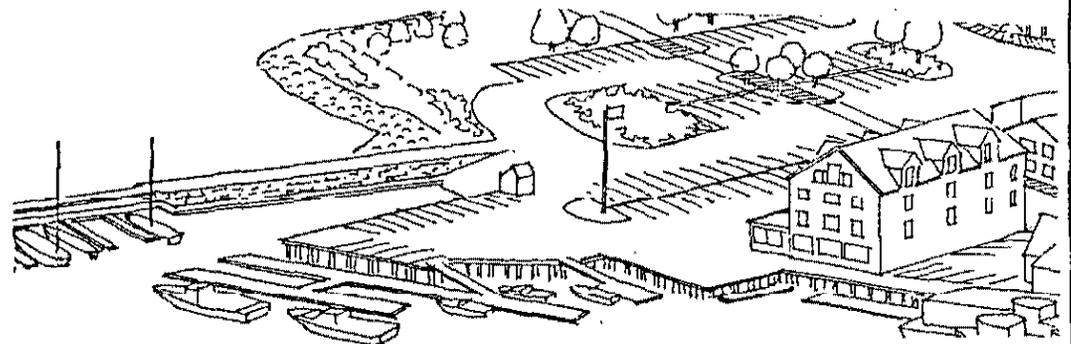
21. Make minor landscape improvements

Building sets excellent example of appropriate waterfront architecture and serves as model for adjacent redevelopment. Minor landscape improvements are needed.

Phases: I-IV

Responsibility: Owner

Priority: Low



22. Retain towboat facility

Good example of working, water-dependent commercial facility. Maintain vehicular access/right-of-way ; maintain and improve existing buildings in shingle and/or clapboard, pitched roof style.

Phases: I-IV

Responsibility: Owner

Priority: Low

23. Demolish all structures and redevelop

Old Agway facility in very poor condition except for one small portion. Demolish and redevelop for retail/office and/or restaurant/residential uses; also consider marine related retail. Require architecture compatible with adjacent buildings and no more than two and a half stories. Link to pedestrian trail on railroad R.O.W. (See illustration.)

Phases: III or IV

Responsibility: Owner

Priority: Medium/low

24. Create a waterfront pedestrian way

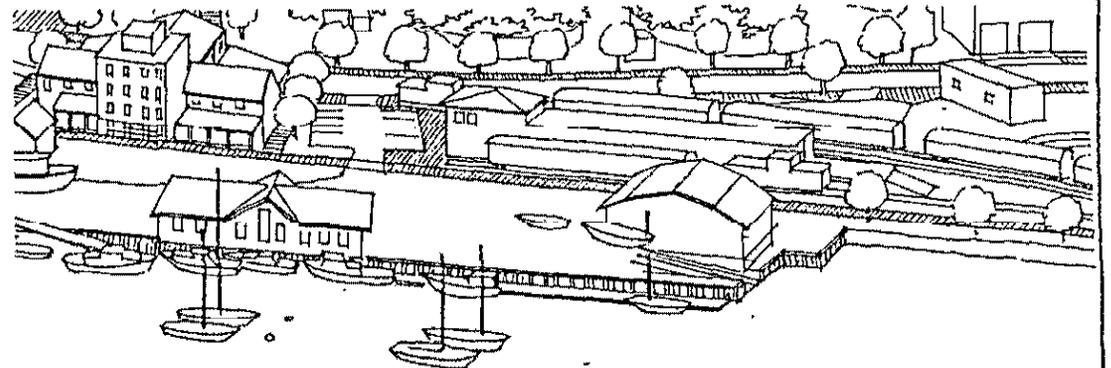
Utilize the railroad R.O.W. as a waterfront trail and bicycle way. Encourage adjacent businesses to capitalize on foot/bike traffic on the trail. Develop a unifying design for landscaping, lighting, signage, etc. along the trail. Select appropriate material to pave the trail. (See below) (See illustration.) Look at two options for the trail location at Stinson's:

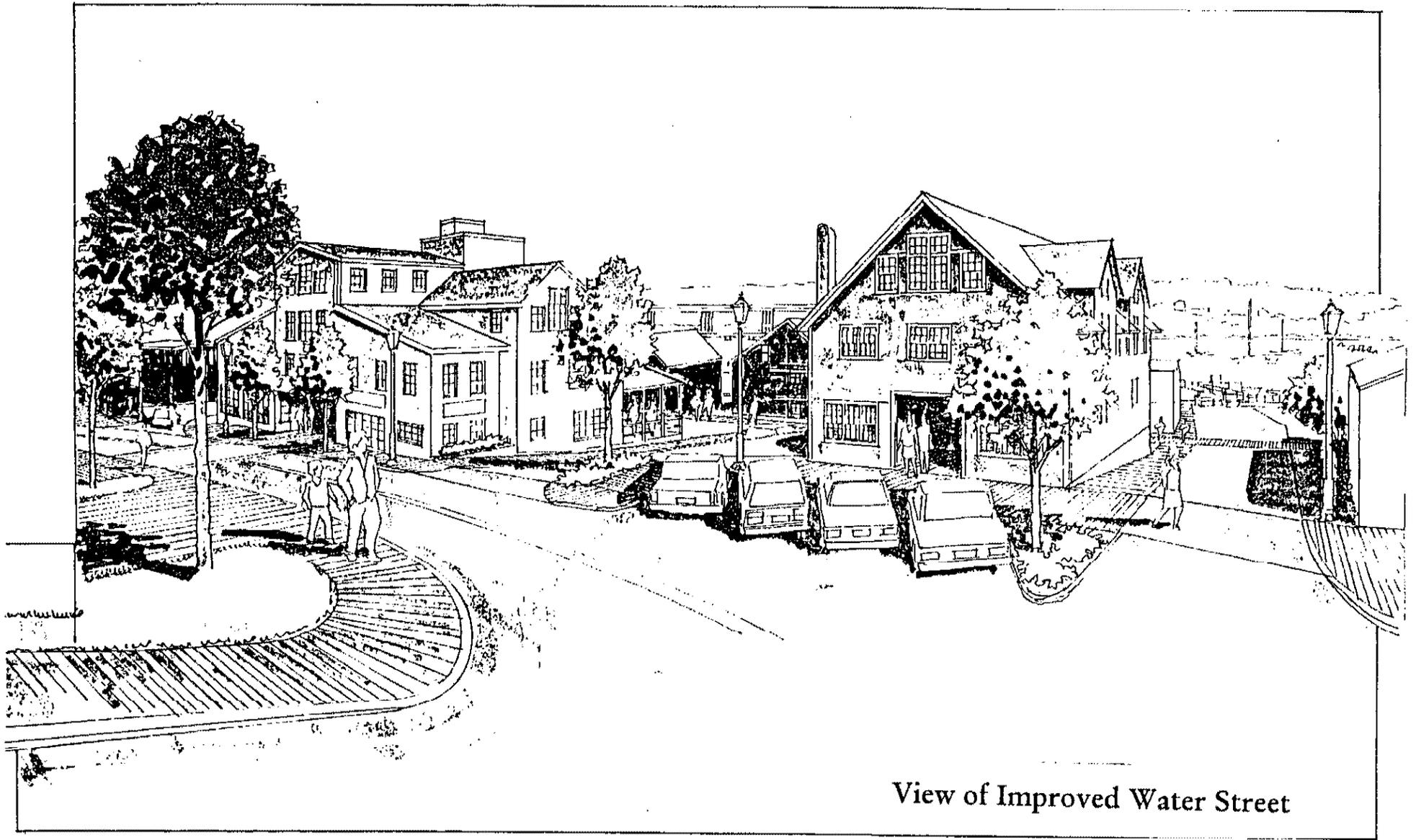
- (a) place trail behind, using the Water Street sidewalk to the old Route bridge
- (b) construct an elevated, wooden boardwalk around the water-side of Stinson's, to link up with the Old Route 1 bridge.

Phases: I-III

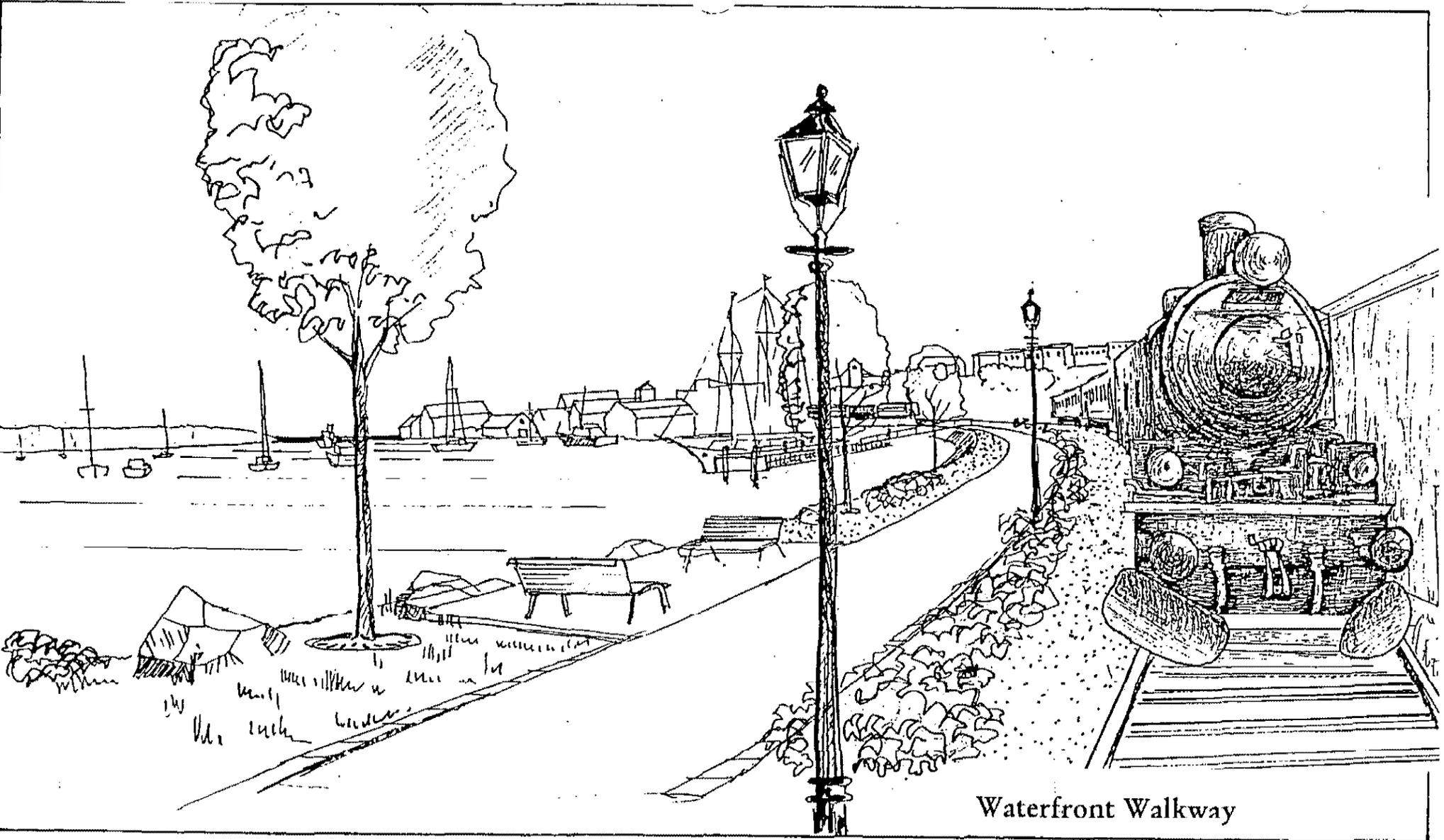
Responsibility:

Priority: High





View of Improved Water Street



Waterfront Walkway

25. Address the odor problem at the sewage treatment plant

Seek engineering advice on dealing with the odor problem. Consider air-scrubbers and covering the settling tanks with domes. Add trees, creepers and shrubs to soften and screen structures; they fail to blend with the historic character of the area. The odor from the plant is a disincentive to economic development in the area and needs to be addressed immediately.

Phase: I

Responsibility: City

Priority: High

26. Make improvements to City parking lot

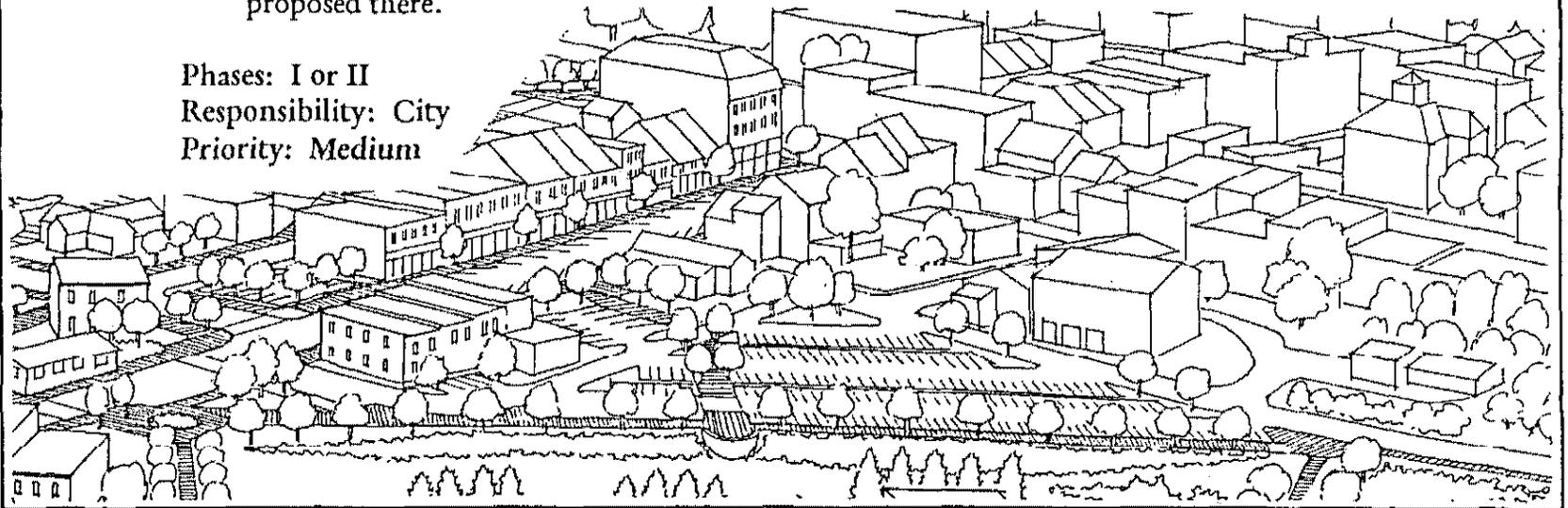
Although well located, this lot can be better utilized and made less of an eye-sore by:

- (a) improving signage to the lot;
- (b) improving access from the lot to the waterfront, with attractive terraced, landscaped and well lighted pathways down to Front Street on both ends of the treatment plant site;
- (c) building a footpath along the edge of the lot, closest to the water and providing benches and a "viewing" area;
- (d) adding trees to break up the size of the lot, frame views and provide shade;
- (e) creating small parks on Main Street that will act to draw visitors to upper Main and the new development fronting on Federal Street; and
- (f) provide a transit/bus stop on lower Main, across from Federal Street, next to the small parks proposed there.

Phases: I or II

Responsibility: City

Priority: Medium



27. Upgrade west side of Washington Street

The back-sides of buildings and the lack of landscaping detract from the positive aspects of downtown and present an ugly face to the municipal parking lot. Minor improvements are required.

Phases: I-IV

Responsibility: Property owners/City

Priority: Low

28. Develop a pedestrian way between High and Washington Streets

Investigate the feasibility of this link which could connect High Street to the City parking lot and the Front Street railroad/marina complex. (Market Street did once extend to the waterfront, according to old City maps.)

Phase: IV

Responsibility: City

Priority: Low

29. Retain existing commercial/recreational boat yard

Viable, active, water-dependent use that sets stage for possible expanded marine recreation to the north, on railroad waterfront. Maintain and improve and ensure access/R.O.W. is retained from Front Street.

Phase: Ongoing

Responsibility: Private

Priority: Medium

30A. Improve Front/Water Street (North of Main)

Front/Water Street provides the sole access to the entire waterfront between Main and Bridge Streets. With increasing use for commercial and tourist/recreation traffic, and as the front door to this area, it should be improved with curbing, an avenue of trees, pedestrian crosswalks, a sidewalk (on the north side), and attractive lighting. Avoid overhead wires if possible.

Phases: II or II
Responsibility: City
Priority: Medium

30B. Improve Front Street (South of Main)

With redevelopment, the entire length of Front Street between Main and Commercial will need upgrading to provide for on-street parking, broad sidewalks, lighting, tree planting, etc. This should be achieved with the cooperation of adjacent property owners. Further, the Front/Commercial Street corner should be re-engineered.

Phases: III or IV
Responsibility: City and adjacent landowners
Priority: Medium/low

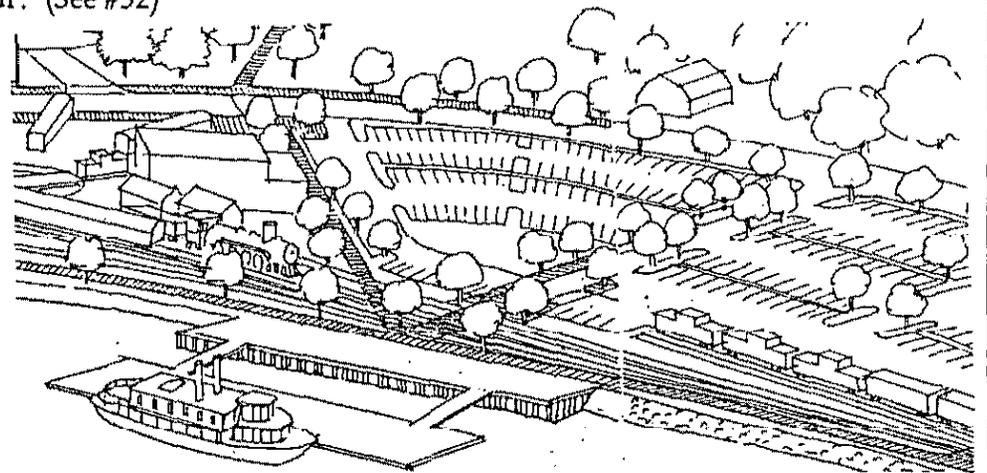
31. Develop and expand the Belfast and Moosehead Lake Railroad yard

The railroad proposes to expand the excursion/tourist attractions it offers by developing vacant land along Front Street, linking its rail and sail facilities, and by adding a recreational/commercial marina (see #32).

Improvements proposed for the railroad's shore property include adding:

- (a) ± 100 parking spaces;
- (b) an expanded historic railroad museum complex;
- (c) a waterfront boardwalk (in conjunction with the marina) (see #24)
- (d) space for marina access and a marine holding area;
- (e) landscaping throughout the entire area.
- (f) a docking area for the Voyageur. (See #32)

Phases: I, II and III
Responsibility: the Railroad
Priority: High



32. Develop multi-purpose docking facilities

The Railroad proposes to establish multi-purpose docks along its shoreline property. One major wharf is proposed along with two minor floating piers. (See Map 8) The facilities would offer:

- ▶ a tie-up for excursion ships, such as the company's Voyageur, as part of a rail/sail attraction
- ▶ an interface between the rail line and the water for barge/rail traffic transfers (provided any such plans are acceptable to both the City of Belfast and the Railroad and it can be shown that noise and/or dust problems can be avoided and all applicable local, State and/or Federal laws can be met).
- ▶ docks for recreational vessels (north of the major wharf), and
- ▶ commercial docking space for fishermen (in the vicinity of Stinson's).

Phases: I and II

Responsibility: the Railroad

Priority: High

33. Undertake dredging in Belfast Harbor

There is a need for considerable dredging in the harbor to accommodate commercial fishing vessels, charter boats and private sailing and motor boats. Three areas require dredging:

- ▶ first, a maintenance dredge of existing dredged areas and channel is required;
- ▶ second, the shoreline between the Belfast Boatyard and Stinson's needs dredging to provide for recreational and commercial vessels; and
- ▶ third, in order to expand mooring space for motor boats, the bay north of the Old Route 1 Bridge should be dredged.

Phases: I and II

Responsibility: City, MDOT and Corps of Engineers

Priority: High

34. Improve functioning and appearance of Stinson's

Stinson's must continue to function as a vital water-dependent use, yet adjustments should be made to accommodate new uses in the area. The following changes should be made:

- ▶ a parking lot to serve Stinson employees and overflow City/downtown parking should be developed, with the City

- ▶ the City should work with Stinson's to find the best location for the pedestrian way from the City wharf to the old bridge
- ▶ roadside delivery and pick-up at Stinson's should be carefully planned;
- ▶ general landscape (planting and lighting) improvements must be made; and
- ▶ a highly functional commercial fishing pier and dock area must be planned in conjunction with the Railroad and harbor interests. (Note: Rights to the submerged waters off Stinson's should first be resolved.)

Phases: III or IV

Responsibility: Owners/City/State and harbor committee

Priority: Medium

35. Bridge Street housing improvements

Some Bridge Street residences are in medium to poor condition. The City should offer to assist homeowners with improvement grants and/or loans if the residents so request. Overall, properties on Bridge Street should increase in value as the waterfront is redeveloped. The harbor views provide added value, and, as the odor problem is resolved redevelopment for higher density, low-rise multi-family housing is a possibility.

Phases: III or IV

Responsibility: Private owners and City

Priority: Low/medium

36. Make improvements to the Old Route 1 Bridge

The old bridge can, with non-structural improvements, be made to serve as a walkway, bicycle trail, sewer and water carrier and fishing platform. It does need safety and cosmetic improvements and a mini-park is proposed for the Pierce Street shore-side.

Phases: III or IV

Responsibility: City/State

Priority: Low

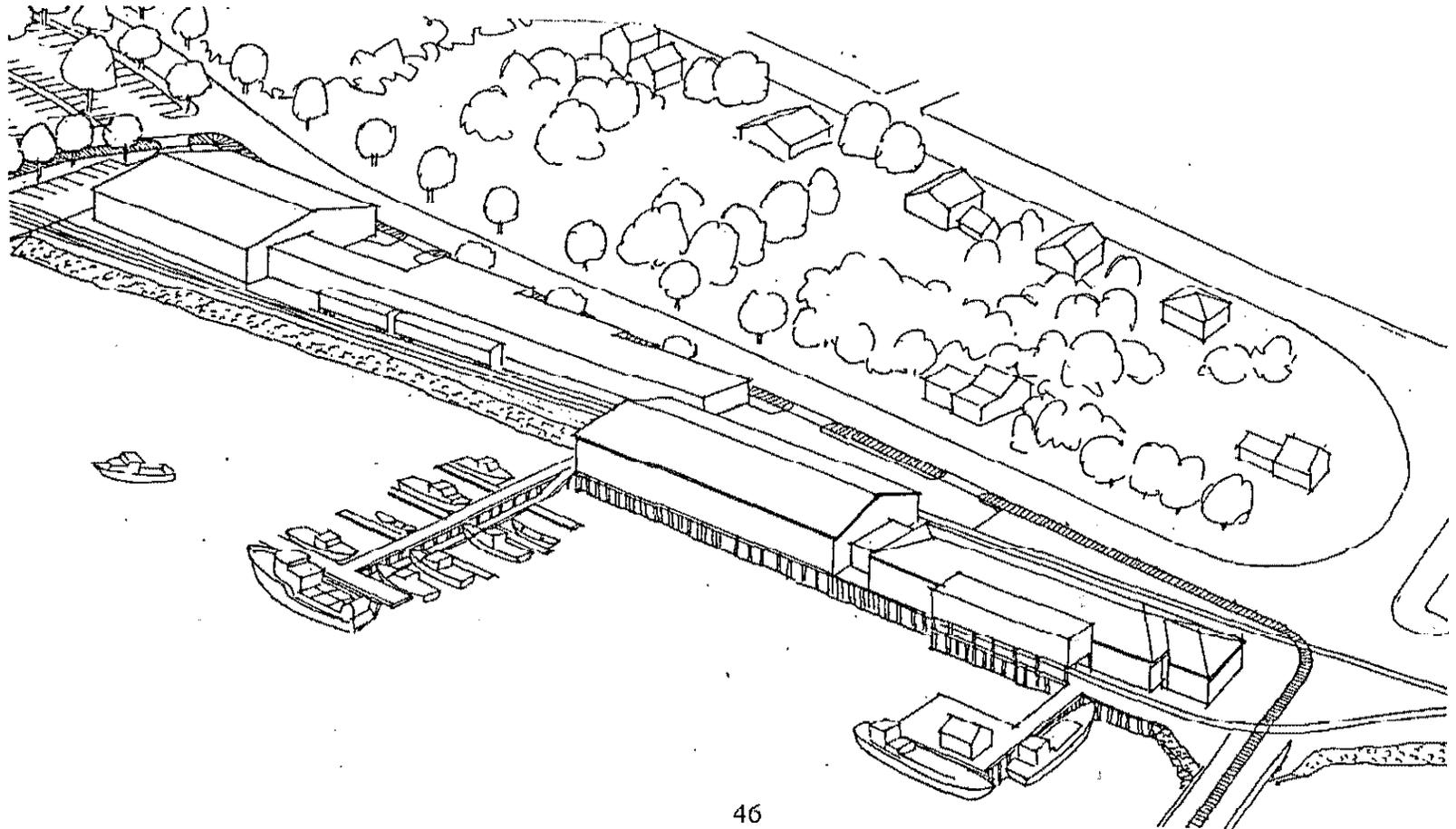
37. Make improvements to Pierce Street

Pierce Street provides access to many waterfront businesses and, together with Front/Water and Commercial Streets, completes a service loop off Church and High Streets. Its maintenance and improvement for truck and trailer traffic is vital.

Phase: III

Responsibility: City

Priority: Medium



6. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The Study Goals

At the outset this planning effort had two major goals:

- I to bring together the best ideas for the revitalization of downtown Belfast and the waterfront in a form that attracts attention and allows residents, owners and officials to visualize the future with maps and drawings; and
- II to use the master plan as the centerpiece of future grant applications to the State; past applications have failed to place funding requests in the context of an agreed upon, overall strategy.

This report, and the maps and illustrations that accompany it, achieve these broad goals, however, the vision must be more than pretty pictures and recommendations – no matter how well grounded they are. This last chapter focuses on implementation measures.

Public/Private Cooperation

This master plan has come about through cooperation and consensus building. While there are some areas in which there is not strong or total agreement as to specific ideas, the strength of the main ideas and plan principles have been agreed upon. A strong framework has been established; it has worked because the City and those private interests with a stake in the future of downtown and the waterfront see the value of cooperation as a means to achieve community and individual goals. This is what good planning is all about.

The next steps, however, are crucial and this spirit of cooperation must persevere. It can do so through the following public/private initiatives.

A. CDBG Application

In the short term (1994-1996), the City should apply for CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) funds, through the Public Facilities Infrastructure Grant program. A successful application, based on this master plan, would provide funding for 2 years for needed public and private projects, such as: improvements to the City landing, covers for the sewage treatment plant settling tanks, facade grants and sidewalk improvements. The application must verify that the City and private owners are willing and able to contribute to the success of the program and

that adequate public participation has occurred. The program would be administered by the City. Up to \$400,000/year for 2 years is available to successful applicants.

B. City/Landowner Cooperation

One of the most effective ways of implementing this plan is for the major landowners to work directly with the City Manager and Council. This public/private partnership can work provided there is public support for this master plan and it is adopted as the official guide for the area.

C. The Role of Belfast's Development Corporation

If the City is to maintain a sustained effort to attract new business ventures to the downtown/waterfront area, the existing Belfast non-profit development corporation should be reinvigorated. It could:

- ▶ offer assistance to present and potential developers/owners in redeveloping waterfront and other downtown parcels;
- ▶ pursue grants;
- ▶ provide liaison with City boards;
- ▶ help fund a market study and then target key tenants and entrepreneurs;
- ▶ help achieve public access goals; and
- ▶ work toward the active implementation of the master plan.

D. Tax Increment Financing

Towns as diverse as Presque Isle, Old Town, Brewer and Gardiner have used Tax Increment Financing (TIF) as a means of funding public improvements needed to support private investment. In Belfast, the TIF mechanism could be used to remove the blighted Penobscot Poultry factory and/or other structures and help build support to redevelop the area on both sides of Front Street between Commercial Street and Main Street. (See Map 9)

The TIF concept is simple and presents a win-win situation. As the assessed value of the redeveloped parcels rises, as a result of investment, the increased tax revenues are dedicated to retire the debt on the public improvements in the TIF designated area. TIF can be used for demolition, construction, relocation, parking lot development and street and sidewalk improvements; it can also cover professional fees, organization and other associated costs.

In Belfast, the key to making a TIF scheme work will be establishing a level of confidence, if not certainty, that a major new attraction (perhaps a Maine-Made Marketplace) can succeed and that there is private financing, capital and commitment to make it work. The local development corporation, or the City

itself should explore these options. Assistance and information on TIF procedures is available from the Department of Economic and Community Development in Augusta.

Public Initiatives

Park, Sidewalk and Other Improvements

The City has already achieved remarkable progress in the downtown through a sustained, phased, sidewalk improvement program. The pavement, lights, trees and benches the City has installed are the tangible results. This high quality program should continue and all other public works efforts in the master plan area should be informed by the plan. Quality landscape plans for sidewalks, mini-parks, alleys, public parking lots and Heritage Park itself should be prepared by a landscape architectural firm. The initial cost will be greater but the benefits will be reaped later. Sources of funds for these and other downtown/waterfront improvements include:

- ▶ the CDBG program (see above)
- ▶ Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants (contact the Department of Conservation Bureau of Parks and Recreation)
- ▶ Boat Facilities Program Grants (contact the Department of Conservation Bureau of Parks and Recreation)
- ▶ Waterfront Action Grants for construction projects (probably available in 1995) through DECD

- ▶ Maine DEP, Section 205, water quality planning grants
- ▶ The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- ▶ EDA public works grants

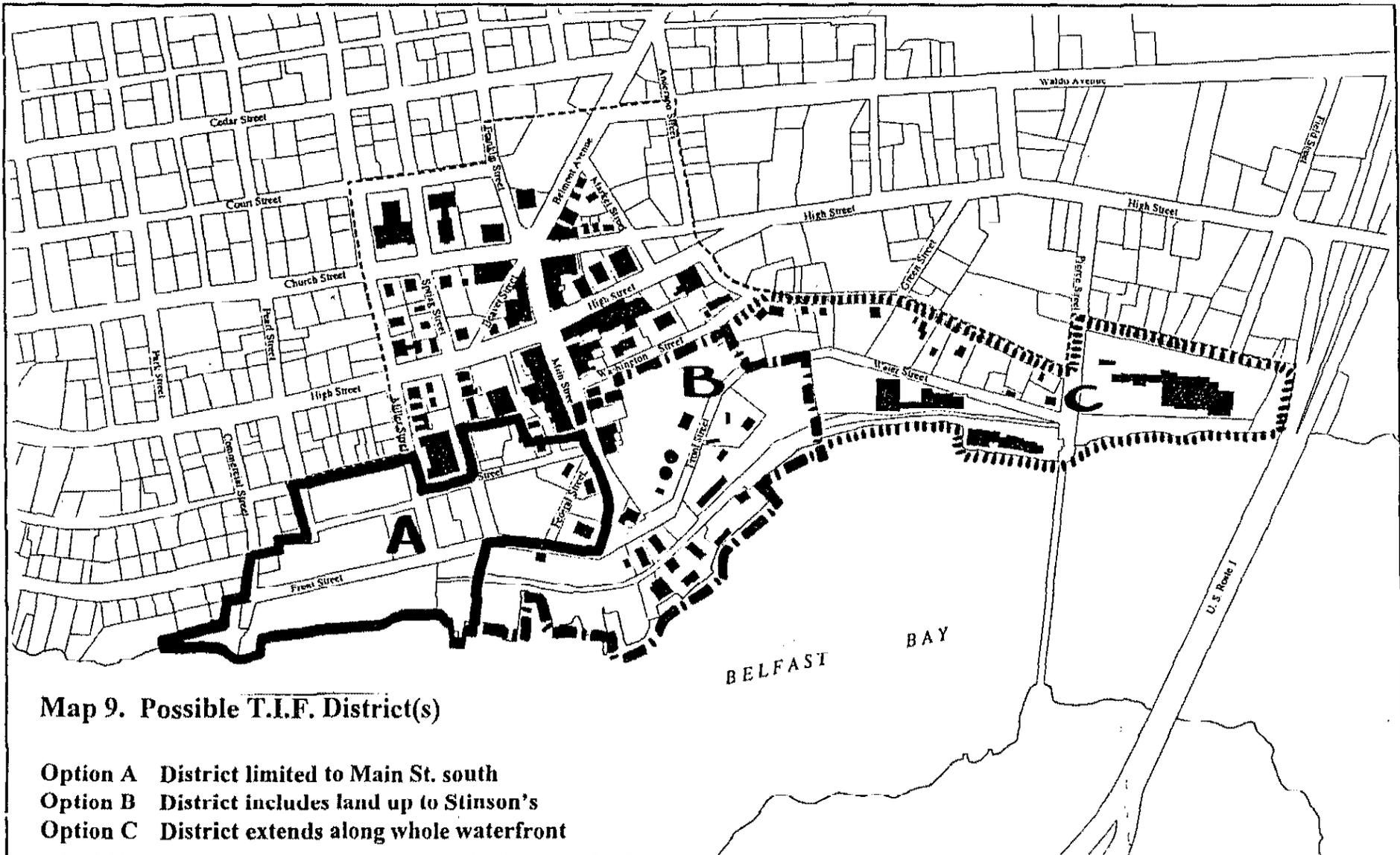
Transportation Funds

Belfast should also continue to pursue funds available through MDOT under the federal ISTEA program. About \$2.5 million per year is available in Maine for Transportation Enhancement. This money is awarded every two years. The 1996/97 awards have just been made but about \$5 million will be available for 1998/99 and applications must be submitted by the Fall of 1996. This money is awarded in 3 categories:

- I Pedestrian and/or Bicycle
- II Scenic and/or Environmental
- III Historic and/or Archaeological

Further, MDOT has Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ) funds available for programs that help reduce air pollution. (About \$7.5 million was awarded for 1996/97.) Projects that qualify include those that:

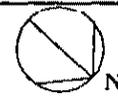
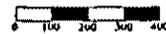
- ▶ improve public transit (the bus station on High Street at Beaver Lane);
- ▶ promote ridesharing



Map 9. Possible T.I.F. District(s)

- Option A** District limited to Main St. south
- Option B** District includes land up to Stinson's
- Option C** District extends along whole waterfront

City of Belfast
Downtown Waterfront Development Master Plan
 October, 1994



Prepared by:
Maine Tomorrow, Hallowell, Maine
 in association with
Kent Associates, Planning & Design
 Gardiner, Maine

- ▶ reduce truck or single-occupancy vehicle use (by converting to rail, for example);
- ▶ provide fringe parking (such as is proposed on Water Street near Stinson's);
- ▶ provide bicycle lanes and bicycle storage (such as might be provided along the waterfront and beyond and at the Heritage Park information center); and
- ▶ close streets for pedestrian use (Federal Street and Pendleton Lane may qualify, but it is a long shot).

Belfast is probable best able to take advantage of these two programs by focusing on the waterfront walkway/bikeway (provided this trail can be shown to be expandable) and continuing to investigate ways to utilize the railroad so that it qualifies for CMAQ funds – through expanded passenger/excursion service, an intermodal connection or as a freight carrier. Because of public and council opposition to such funding this year (1994) the railroad would have to prove the effectiveness and logic of any such mitigation program.

Harbor Improvements

The master plan looks to Belfast Bay as a safe, convenient harbor and mooring area. The economic benefits and spin-off from harbor improvements could be substantial. But the improvements will require a sustained and concerted effort to achieve. The proposed breakwater beyond Commercial Street and the dredging needed to increase mooring,

channel and dock space will require an inordinate amount of effort, primarily on the part of the Waterfront Management Committee. The Committee should use the master plan to spearhead discussions with MDOT and the Corps of Engineers. The plan helps justify these projects.

MDOT's Ports and Marine Transportation Division stands ready to work with the City to help it affirm its importance as a regional harbor and to assist the City with applications for harbor improvement funds from general obligation bond sources, as described in MDOT's State Transportation Plan. MDOT's Port Division can also provide technical assistance and advise the City on possible non-State funding sources.

Private Initiatives

As has been said, a remarkable spirit of cooperation and willingness to work towards common, master plan goals has been exhibited by private property owners in the study area. However, where public goals impose conditions on private property, the City must be prepared to provide incentives (fiscal, regulatory and other) to private owners. (Public access along private land on the waterfront is but one example of a public benefit that should be rewarded.)

One kind of private initiative that needs to continue has already occurred. The Belfast and Moosehead Lake Railroad, Consumers Fuel and Mathews

Brothers have all conducted privately funded studies to look at redevelopment and market opportunities. Some of their ideas are incorporated in this master plan; clearly, such studies build on each other and benefit everyone with a stake in Belfast's future.

Other Public Responsibilities

Selling the Plan

The most vital, immediate implementation strategy for the City is to "sell" this master plan.

That is the central purpose of this plan, to instill in people's minds a picture of what can be. This means:

- ▶ good, extensive, press coverage including a summary of the plan with pictures in a fold-out or special edition of the local newspapers
- ▶ state-wide coverage, using the aerial perspective drawing, in the Bangor and Portland weekend editions; and
- ▶ possible New England-wide exposure through Downeast or Yankee Magazine.

Further, such publicity should be sustained. The display drawings should be available for public display in stores and banks and should be displayed in City Hall, the information center, and elsewhere.

The master plan and drawing(s) can also be the centerpiece of an economic development brochure

for Belfast. It should show prospective developers and investors that Belfast has the vision and commitment to achieve its own renaissance.

Promotion

Beyond this the City should participate in and encourage merchants and downtown businesses to market and promote themselves in a coordinated fashion. Cooperative advertising, special events, facade improvements, attractive signs, coordinated business hours and the like, can all help improve downtown's competitive advantages.

Regulations

Belfast has already taken steps to revise its zoning ordinance language to allow for a compatible, but broad mix of land uses in the downtown/waterfront area. Past studies have also pointed out the need to:

- a) Ensure architectural design guidelines inform future development schemes so that quality design that is compatible with Belfast architectural heritage is assured.
- b) Include bonus provisions and incentives that make it worthwhile for developers/owners to provide public access, open space and visual access to the water.
- c) Use a planned unit develop (PUD) approach that provides for regulatory flexibility, innovation and creativity while setting

“ Belfast must not just emerge from the cloud that the failure of the chicken/poultry industry has cast over it, but it must define a new vision.”

reasonable parameters on the project. (Note: to be effective, a PUD approach should involve the services of staff or consultant with architectural/design/planning training.)

