

FALMOUTH, MAINE

Route 100 Vision Plan

Developed by the Ad Hoc Route 100 Committee

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With assistance from

WRIGHT-PIERCE 
Engineering a Better Environment

Land Use
Planning and
Development

In association with:

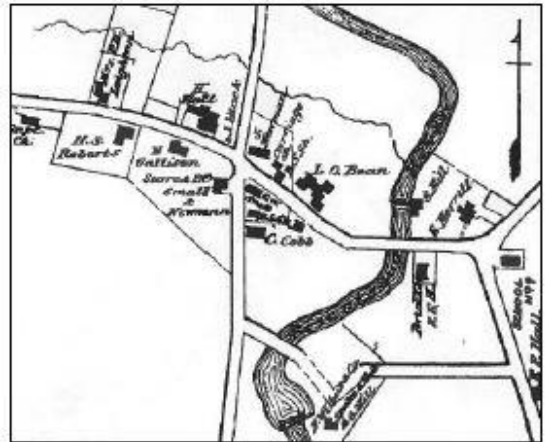
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Vision Plan

3.1 ENHANCING THE WEST FALMOUTH COMMUNITY

For generations the west side of Falmouth was a tightly knit community with churches, local stores, and an elementary school anchoring neighborhoods and people to the area. As Falmouth grew, the school was consolidated to another side of town, Route 100 developed into a busy commuter route to Portland and south, and the sense of being a distinct neighborhood declined. Residents were no longer able to walk to visit other neighbors because of the busy road with no shoulders or sidewalks, the local store closed, and local residents were forced to shop and recreate in other parts of town.



Gray Road and Mountain/Falmouth Road intersection circa 1871.

The West Falmouth Crossing development and its related businesses, while a positive move for the area, remained just another shopping area to drive to; residents of West Falmouth have no safe way to walk, or bike to the stores, banks or medical offices of this development. West Falmouth Crossing was not integrated into the West Falmouth community and neighborhoods; it is another destination place among many to choose from for West Falmouth residents.

As noted, the committee began its work by touring and learning about the neighborhoods, farms, and businesses of this area. Committee members progressed by interviewing residents and completing in-person surveys with the people, who live, work, and commute and use this area. That information was compiled and used in a public forum to gather more information and opinions as to how to best improve the West Falmouth/Route 100 corridor. The message from this work has been very clear: the residents and businesses of the Route 100 corridor want to make changes to this area in order to recreate and enhance the West Falmouth community.

There are four key pieces that summarize the committee's vision. They can be summarized as follows:

- 1. Traffic and roadway improvements:**

The number one message from all sources is that the intersections and roadway of this area need to be changed and improved.

2. Sidewalks/Pedestrian amenities:

In the most populated and business-oriented area of West Falmouth sidewalks and landscaping that allow neighbors to visit neighbors and walk to stores and businesses is essential to the recreation of the West Falmouth community. From older residents to new arrivals with children, the message that people who live in this area want to be able to get around without their car was clear.

3. Bicycle access and safety:

The data the committee saw and the feedback from the discussions and forums make it clear that West Falmouth is at the heart of a vibrant and active bicycling community. Currently there is no safe way to traverse Route 100 which not only connects everything north of West Falmouth crossing to the rest of Falmouth and Portland, but also to the miles of beautiful trail infrastructure that has been developed in town and land trust owned properties in West Falmouth. Making improvements to allow safe bicycle traffic will substantially change this area to the positive.

4. Zoning and Development Changes:

Currently the Route 100 corridor is zoned for commercial development which will eventually occur. The committee listened to the residents and users of this area and has made broad recommendations to guide this development in a cohesive and managed way so that it fits the character of the area and will help recreate the West Falmouth community. These recommendations include traffic flow, the extension of public sewer and water, and the encouragement of sensible business development that stays in the character of the different parts of Route 100.

The committee's recommendations are broad and encompass a vision which enhances this area of Falmouth, maintains its long-time character and uniqueness, ensures sensible business development, and restores the sense of community to the businesses and residents.

3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The public outreach (see Appendix D) showed that the top concerns expressed by residents for the Route 100 area are:

1. Make road and intersection improvements,
2. Make bicycle and pedestrian improvements,
3. Provide public sewer expansion, and
4. Enable appropriate development.

Specific recommendations for each of these areas and others follow below.



3.2.8 LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee made various recommendations to help guide appropriate future development and land use in the Route 100 area. As noted, the committee's objective was to guide development in a cohesive and managed way, so that it fits the character of the area and will help recreate the West Falmouth community. The committee recommends the encouragement of sensible business development that stays in character with the different parts of Route 100.

In general, the committee envisions the southern section of Route 100 between the Portland line and Mountain Road for mixed use, commercial development. This section is currently already zoned for commercial use through three different districts: Mixed Use Cluster (MUC), West Falmouth Crossing Planned development District (WFCPDD), and Village Mixed Use (VMU).

The northern section between Mountain Road and the Cumberland line is envisioned by the committee for low to medium density residential, agricultural, and recreational uses. This area is currently zoned as Village Mixed Use (VMU) and Farm and Forest (F).

The specific land use recommendations fall in various categories.

Zoning Map

1. Some misalignment exists in VMU district north of Mountain/Falmouth Road where zoning boundaries traverse through individual properties rather than follow property boundaries. The committee recommends that this be corrected as it will allow for a more clear interpretation of zoning rules.

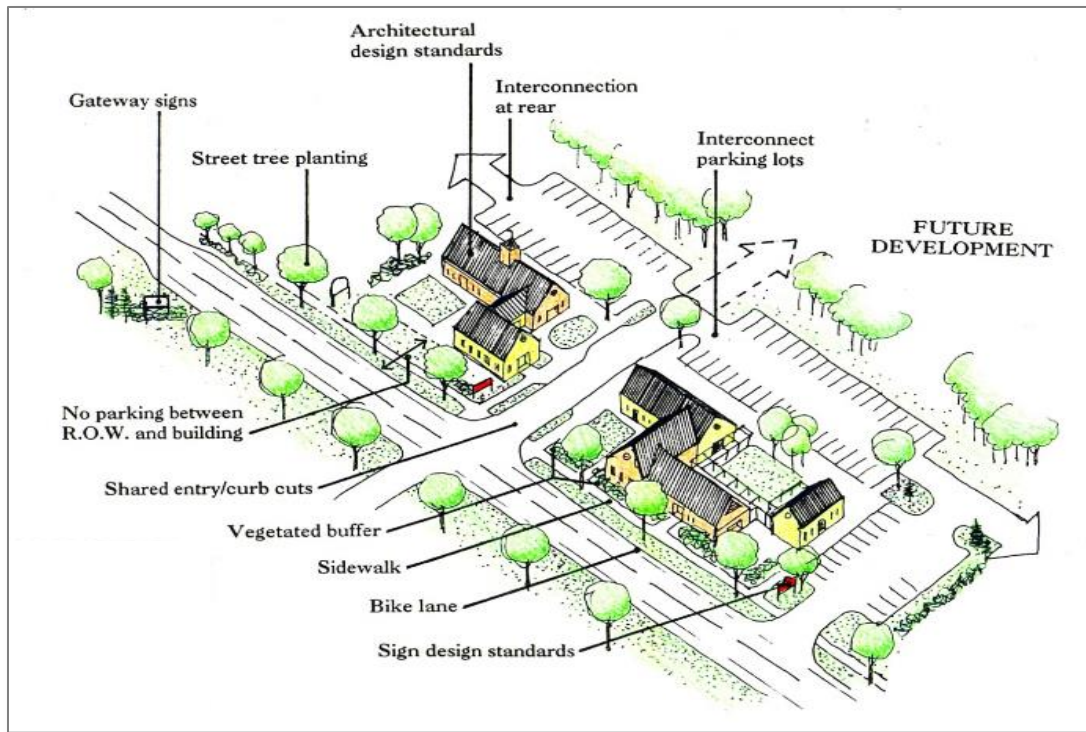
Permitted Uses

1. The committee felt that existing farms could be supported by expanding the list of permitted uses for existing primary and accessory structures in Farm and Forest (F) district. By example, the list could include studio, art gallery, event space, etc. As the Farm and Forest district covers a large portion of Falmouth and the committee did not want to overstep its bounds, the recommendation is limited to properties that have frontage on Route 100.
2. The committee felt there is an opportunity for hotel development in the area south of Leighton Road. However, such is not permitted currently. The committee recommends to list "hotels" as a permitted use in the MUC and WFCMPD districts.
3. The committee felt that the mixed use requirement in the MUC district was unnecessarily burdensome and may lead to some arbitrary mixing of uses on a site only to meet the letter of the law. The committee felt, instead, that the market should determine to what extent uses will be mixed and that the entire area should be seen as a mixed use area. It recommends that stand-alone retail businesses, multiplexes, and residential planned developments be permitted in the MUC district and that the mixed use development requirement be removed.

4. The committee does not seek a proliferation of drive-through windows in this area, but felt that walk-up windows for restaurants should be permitted in the VMU district.
5. The committee recommends that the Route 100 Overlay District requirements be reviewed in detail to make sure they are current.

Dimensional Standards

1. Currently, a single-use retail building of any size (commonly referred to as “big box”) can be built in the MUC district. The committee recommends setting a maximum footprint limit of 50,000 square feet on single-use retail buildings in the MUC district. This is similar to the requirements in the Village Center district along Route 1.
2. The committee recommends setting a maximum footprint size of 20,000 square feet and maximum height of three stories for hotels in the MUC and WFCMPD districts.
3. The committee recommends deleting the maximum 60 seat requirement for restaurants in the VMU district as long as they served by public sewer. Such a requirement may be appropriate for restaurants that are served by septic systems.
4. The committee recommends providing short-term parking setback flexibility for the Portland North Business Park property located in the MUC district. This was a specific request made by the owner of the Portland North Business Park property, Joe Cooper, who was also a member of the committee. In the case of future redevelopment of this property, the committee recommends zoning compliance with the building setback and parking standards that are discussed in (5) below.
5. Unless such is not feasible due to topographic or other limitations, the committee recommends discouraging parking between the front property line and any new building in the MUC district and the VMU district south of Mountain/Falmouth Road and setting the front building setback from the property line to a minimum of 0 and maximum of approximately 30 feet. This is a more traditional building pattern that is in keeping with many older buildings in the area, one that the committee feels helps to promote walkability in the area. This is illustrated in the sample graphic on the next page.
6. The committee recommends reducing the minimum lot width from 150 feet to 75 feet in the VMU district. This will help to promote more compact development.



Examples of measures to recreate the Route 100 neighborhood.

Design Guidelines

1. The committee recommends incorporating more flexibility for the reuse of existing structures in the application of site plan requirements and design guidelines.
2. The committee recommends a detailed review of the “Exit 10 Design Guidelines” to make sure they are current.

Access Management

1. The committee recommends updating the Town’s access management rules to strive for (future) shared access driveways and lot interconnections where possible, unless such is not feasible due to topographic or other limitations.

Stormwater Management

1. The committee recommends updating the zoning ordinance to include the stormwater recommendations that are contained in the “Route 1 Commercial District Stormwater Management Report” by Woodard & Curran.

In conclusion, implementing all of the recommendations may result in a transformation of Route 100. Below is a photo simulation of what Route 100 could look like in the future.



Existing view of Route 100 looking north. Cumberland County Credit Union is located on right.



Potential future view looking north showing infrastructure improvements and hypothetical new infill development.