# Proposal to Create a Vision for Route 100

Draft: January 23, 2014

### Overview



The Route 100 area near Maine Turnpike Exit 53 in Falmouth has seen a transformation since the 1870's. One hundred and fifty years ago the center of activity was around the Gray Road, Mountain Road, and Falmouth Road intersection. This center moved one mile to the south after Exit 53 (formerly Exit 10) opened in 1955. The Exit 53 area has since become a major regional traffic crossroads and mixed use employment hub, home to the largest employer TD Bank.

The Route 100 area was designated in the 2013 Comprehensive Plan as one of two "Commercial Growth Areas" of the town (the other being Route 1). The intent of this area is for a mix of commercial and other uses, including residential. At this time, no vision or master plan exists for this area to help guide and coordinate future infrastructure investments and land use regulations. The proposal is to form an ad hoc committee to create such a plan for Town Council consideration so this 1.75-mile Route 100 corridor from the Portland City line to Mountain Road can become a well-planned growth area for the town.

# **Ad Hoc Route 100 Committee**

A committee of up to 9 members is recommended with representation from some, or all, of the following:

- Town Council
- Planning Board
- Falmouth Economic Improvement Committee (FEIC)
- Long Range Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC)
- Conservation Commission
- Falmouth-Cumberland Community Chamber
- Area Business Owners/Employees
- Neighborhood Residents

# **Committee Charge**

The committee is to develop a vision and master plan for Route 100 encompassing the approximate area from Portland city line going north about 1.75 miles (which includes the Mountain Road, Falmouth Road, Route 100 intersection) between the Maine Turnpike and the Piscataqua River. The plan is to include recommendations to the Town Council regarding:

- zoning considerations (incl. permitted uses, development intensity, and design/performance standards),
- public infrastructure improvements (incl. road, streetscape, utilities), and
- implementation steps.

## **Staff Assistance**

Theo Holtwijk, Director of Long-Range Planning, assisted by other Town staff, as appropriate, will provide staff assistance to the committee.

# **Concept Schedule**

January 2014 CDC and Council review of Draft Proposal

Winter 2014 Appointment of Ad Hoc Committee

Spring-Summer 2014 Research by Committee

Fall 2014 Community Charrette

Winter 2014 Draft Vision Plan Preparation by Committee

Spring 2014 Community/Council Feedback on Draft Vision Plan

Summer 2014 Finalize Vision Plan by Committee

Fall 2014 Vision Plan Review by Council

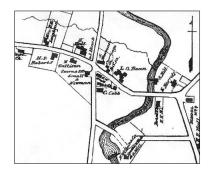
2015 Plan Implementation by CDC, including preparation of zoning

amendments and infrastructure improvements, as required

# **Attachments**

- A. Project Background
- B. Excerpts from 2013 Comprehensive Plan
- C. Overview of Commercial Zoning Districts Along Route 100
- D. Route 100 Road Construction Considerations

# **Appendix A: Project Background**



# Area History

According to the Falmouth Historical Society, by 1871 "West Falmouth was a thriving village. It had schools, a church, stores, a blacksmith, two mills, manufacturing companies, and its own post office. It grew around the crossroad where the modern Gray Road intersects Mountain and Falmouth Roads. Early stage routes came through West Falmouth, as did the railroads and the trolley line to Auburn and Lewiston later." <sup>1</sup>



# NORTH & SOUTHBOUND

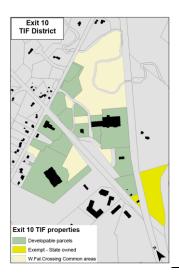
# Maine Turnpike Exit 53

The Maine Turnpike opened in 1947. Eight years later, in 1955, the highway was extended from Portland to Augusta, the Connector to Interstate 295 and Route 1 was built, and a new exit, Exit 53 (formerly Exit 10), connected the Turnpike to this section of Route 100. Average annual daily traffic volume (AADT) at this exit is currently around 10,000 vehicles. The accessibility of West Falmouth to Portland and the region was much enhanced and it was only a matter of time before new development in this vicinity followed.



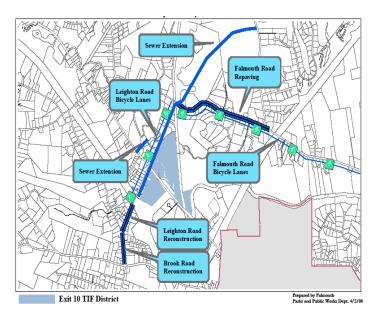
# West Falmouth Crossing Development

In the 1990's developer Richard Berman proposed a Mixed-Use Transit Oriented Development that combined commercial and residential development to be served by a reactivated rail line. This project as originally designed was not approved, but evolved into the West Falmouth Crossing development that is there today. Major components are the Hannaford Plaza and TD Bank facility. Additional uses have located around these two sites. Property, known as River Point, bounded by the Pan Am rail line and the Presumpscot River was donated by the developer to the Town.



In order to facilitate development on this property in 1998 the Town Council approved an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance for a "West Falmouth Crossing Planned Development District" as well as a 60-acre West Falmouth Crossing Tax Increment Financing District (TIF). With exception of one lot, the entire development is now built out.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Source: Falmouth, The Falmouth Historical Society, 2009, page 57



# West Falmouth Crossing Tax Increment Financing District (TIF)

This TIF district includes a Credit Enhancement Agreement (CEA), which is an arrangement that returns a portion of annual taxes collected by Town to the developer. The developer, in return, financed an extension of a sanitary sewer line to the West Falmouth area. The agreement expires in 2023. Property valuation of the district has increased from approximately \$0.5 million in 1998 to more than \$46 million in 2013. Besides the CEA payments, the Town has financed various infrastructure projects in West Falmouth with TIF funds and has plans to do so through the expiration date of the district. Examples of past projects are shown.



# **Current Land Use Regulations**

Besides the West Falmouth Crossing Planned Development District, this area is subject to two other commercial zoning districts and an overlay zoning district:

- The Mixed Use Cluster district is located to the south of West Falmouth Crossing (WFC).
- To the north of West Falmouth Crossing is the Village Mixed Use district (VMU), which small scale, low intensity non-residential uses that are compatible with the residential character of the district.
- In addition, there is a Route 100 Corridor Overlay District, which contains additional development standards for all uses within one thousand (1,000) feet either side of the centerline of Route 100.

Appendix C provides a comparison of permitted uses for these districts.

# Recent Development Projects

Recent projects include expansion of Cumberland County Federal Credit Union, Gorham Savings Bank, Little Hands Daycare, 75 Leighton Road Office Park, Falmouth Self Storage, and Mercy Hospital Primary Care. A project to redevelop the Portland North Business Park, located just south of Exit 53, to include a McDonald's did not go forward due to traffic concerns. Big box development inquiries have also been made, but did not result in specific development proposals. Recent inquiries have been made about sewer extensions in the area between its current terminus and the Mountain Road area.

Zoning issues that have arisen pertain to residential density requirements, application of residential planned development standards, and treating the Piscataqua River as a constraint, rather than an asset.

# **Traffic Issues**

Concerning road reconstruction, since 2001 there has been a State-led project in the works for the segment of Route 100 that begins at the Leighton Road intersection and extends northerly for one mile.

This project is intended to address many infrastructure, safety, and transportation needs, however it has failed to receive State funding for construction, despite many attempts by the Town to advocate in support of the project. See appendix D for a detailed memo from the Public Works Director concerning this project.

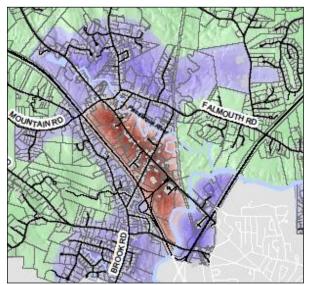
The Police Chief commented: "While much of this report concerns issues related to planning, I would offer thoughts on the traffic memo submitted by Jay Reynolds. I am aware of most of the information contained in Jay's memo and would agree the road is in poor condition and needs to be reconstructed. A more important piece of the traffic memo is the redesign of the intersection of Mountain Road and Rt. 100. The current design creates a difficult traffic pattern at best for motorists. I realize this has been in the plans for MDOT for a number of years and due to lack of funding has been postponed, but it is my hope the committee will stress to MDOT the need for the improvements along this stretch of Rt. 100."

# Sanitary Sewer considerations

Two current sewer issues are relevant to the Route 100 area:

- 1. Capacity for additional sewer service west of Interstate 295: Future increased service west of Interstate 295 will likely require significant improvements to the system. This will be studied in a forthcoming West Falmouth Sewer Master Plan.
- 2. Possible sewer extension to Marston Street: The Sewer Department is interested to potentially explore extending the Route 100 sewer to Marston Street, but no outreach has been done and it is unknown the residents in this area desire such service.

### APPENDIX B: EXCERPTS FROM 2013 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



As noted above, the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan designates this section of Route 100 as a "Commercial Growth Area" (area in red). Surrounding that is a "Residential Growth Area" (area in blue). The vision statement in the plan, "Falmouth in the early 2020's....a smart town, with great neighborhoods," explains how the Town hopes these areas will evolve over the next ten or so years.

Below is an excerpt from the vision:

"Falmouth has kept a balanced tax base by funding further investments through effective economic development. We improved the overall business environment and attracted new employers, who have populated the two commercial hubs in

Falmouth along portions of Route 1 and Route 100. They attract an even flow of jobs, both stable and seasonal, that also benefit local residents. This has created a new community of consumers during weekdays and, for residents, a more dynamic area for shopping and entertainment on weekends. These commercial areas are welcoming — with green spaces for gathering and relaxing — enhancing our sense of community.

Trails connect these commercial hubs with other Town areas, in keeping with the Open Space vision: extensive Town open spaces form a green network that connects many areas of the Town and surrounding communities, enabling varied types of activity — promoting a healthy environment. This network connects through paths, trails, and bike paths that give residents access to parks, fields, and places of solace and natural beauty.

Residents enjoy a myriad of housing opportunities that can fit changing life circumstances; housing that affords easy maintenance — with cost and energy efficiencies. There are neighborhoods that offer convenient and walkable access to services and entertainment, and others that offer privacy and quiet in a rural environment. Our geographic location and public transportation provide residents easy connections to businesses, entertainment, and the arts in surrounding areas."

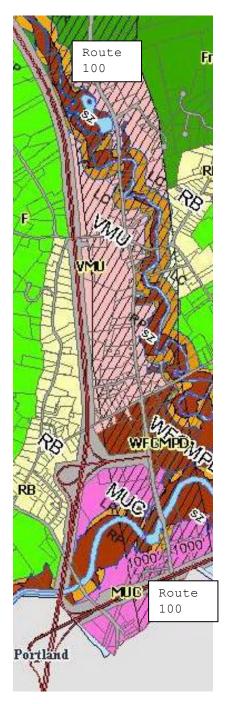
The Route 100 area was further described by some essential land use characteristics:

- a. "Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan Vision: This district represents the second commercial hub in Falmouth. The district provides employment, retail, and service opportunities in West Falmouth.
- b. **Natural opportunities and/or constraints**: This district was developed as a master-planned district at Maine Turnpike Exit 53 along a major travel corridor from Portland to Gray. Key opportunities include its proximity to Portland, and the direct access to the Maine Turnpike.

- Constraints include the limited availability of land served by public sewer and the lack of master plan north of Leighton Road to Mountain Road.
- c. Types and intensity of proposed land uses, including residential density: A variety of retail, office, and service uses are permitted as well as residential uses north of Leighton Road. Residential densities are 1 unit per 20,000 sf. Where applicable, reward development with a residential density bonus for projects that exceed ordinance requirements for open space and bicycle/pedestrian connectivity.
- d. Compatibility of proposed uses to current uses, critical natural resources and important natural resources within and around the district along with any special development considerations: The proposed uses are very similar to the existing uses in this district. As this commercial area grows, existing residential uses may be replaced by commercial uses. There are several major streams in this district which need to be protected from development impact.
- e. Anticipated major municipal capital investments needed to support the proposed land uses: Various infrastructure investments are planned in the West Falmouth Crossing Tax Increment Financing District. These include streetscape improvements. Investigation of a new TIF district north of Leighton Road is prudent to help guide Town investment in this area. Investment in a sewer extension may help to facilitate additional commercial growth in this district. This may also require investment in upgrades of sanitary pumping stations and piping outside this district. Access to the River Point Conservation Area may require the investment of a new bridge across the Pan Am rail line. Natural gas is proposed to be provided to 80% of the community by others."

Developing a vision and master plan for the Route 100 area will allow the Town to reach the community vision expressed above.

### APPENDIX C: OVERVIEW OF COMMERCIAL ZONING DISTRICTS ON ROUTE 100



# MUC = Mixed Use Cluster (pink)

To establish within the Town of Falmouth areas for well-planned mixed-use developments with access to the region's major highway system.

# VMU = Village Mixed-Use (tan)

To establish within the Town of Falmouth areas for small scale, low intensity nonresidential uses which are compatible with the residential character of the district. Areas designated as VMU are areas with historical development patterns as village centers.

# WFCMPD = West Falmouth Crossing Master Planned Development District (brown)

To create a planned development at the West Falmouth Crossing interchange that will be in keeping with the semi-rural character of West Falmouth and surrounding neighborhoods. To permit maximum creativity in site design and to ensure high quality construction with special attention to landscaping, lighting, building orientation and form, coordination of architecture, and signage. To accomplish these goals, the Town Council may approve a Master Development Plan that guides the site plan review process in keeping with general performance standards of the ordinance, but with more flexibility granted to developers and the Planning Board in implementing the approved Master Development Plan.

# **CO = Route 100 Corridor Overlay District** (cross hatch)

To establish additional development standards for all uses within 1,000 feet either side of the centerline of Route 100, throughout its length in Falmouth, to assure that the traffic capacity of Route 100 is maintained while the visual environment and rural character of the corridor is maintained.

# Legend for Use Chart (see next page)

**P** = Permitted Structures and Uses

**C** = Conditional Uses

**MP** = Permitted uses if specifically shown on a Master Development Plan approved by the Town Council

	MUC	VMU	WFCMPD
Accessory buildings and structures	Р	-	Р
Accessory buildings and uses	-	Р	-
Accessory Dwelling Units	С	С	-
Arts and craft studios	-	P	-
Automobile related sales and service	-	-	MP
Bed and Breakfast establishments	-	Р	-
Business offices	Р	-	Р
Cemeteries	-	С	-
Churches	С	С	С
Commercial Schools as part of mixed use development	Р	-	Р
Commercial Schools with less than 5,000 sf of gross floor	-	P	-
area			
Congregate care facilities	-	С	-
Convenience stores with gas pumps as an accessory use	-	-	MP
Day Care Centers	С	С	С
Day Care Homes	С	С	-
Elderly Boarding Home	-	С	-
Excavating Business	С	-	-
Farmer's Markets	-	-	Р
Health institutions	-	С	-
Home occupations	-	С	-
Land reclamation	С	-	-
Libraries	-	С	-
Light manufacturing operations with no exterior storage of	Р	-	MP
material, equipment or products			
Motels and hotels	-	-	MP
Movie theaters	-	-	MP
Multiplexes	-	Р	-
Multiplexes as part of a mixed use development	Р	-	-
Municipal buildings and uses	Р	Р	Р
Museums	-	Р	-
Outdoor Eating Areas	С	С	С
Outdoor recreation facilities	С	-	MP
Processing of Mineral materials for resale	С	-	-
Professional offices	Р	Р	Р
Public Utilities	С	С	С
Research facilities	P	-	-
Residential planned developments	-	Р	-
Residential planned developments as part of mixed use	Р	-	-
development	•		
Restaurants (not including carry-out or drive through	Р	_	Р
restaurants)	•		
Restaurants (not including carry-out or drive through	-	Р	-
restaurants) with less than sixty seats			

	MUC	VMU	WFCMPD
Restaurants with carry-out or drive through service	-	-	MP
Retail and service establishments with less than 5,000 sf of	-	Р	-
gross floor area			
Research facilities	-	-	Р
Retail businesses as part of a mixed use development	Р	-	Р
Service establishments	-	-	MP
Single Family Detached Dwellings	-	Р	-
Single Family Detached Dwellings (only in established	Р	-	-
residential areas and except on lots fronting on Gray Road)			
The conversion of an existing structure into multi-family	-	С	-
housing with no more than three dwelling units			
Tier I Personal Wireless Service Facilities	Р	Р	P
Tier II Personal Wireless Service Facilities	Р	Р	Р
Tradesman's offices	Р	Р	Р
Veterinary Clinic	С	С	С
Wholesale, warehousing, and distribution facilities	Р	-	MP
Wholly enclosed places of assembly, amusement,	Р	-	Р
recreation, and government			

# **Corridor Overlay District (CO)**

# Permitted Uses:

- Any use permitted in the underlying zone which is not prohibited by this section except extractive industries
- Residential Planned Developments
- Office, retail, and service uses as part of a residential planned development provided that less than ten percent of the total lot area is devoted to the non-residential uses and the non-residential development does not have a separate vehicular access
- Tier I Personal Wireless Service Facilities
- Tier II Personal Wireless Service Facilities

### APPENDIX D: TRAFFIC CONSIDERATIONS

Town of Falmouth Public Works Department 101 Woods Road Falmouth, Maine 04105 207-781-3919



Date: June 5, 2013

To: Nathan Poore, Town Manager From: Jay Reynolds, Public Works Director

Re: Gray Road/Route 100

# Introduction:

As requested, I am providing this memo and enclosed pertinent information regarding the last ten years of history of the State's road reconstruction project along Gray Road. This information is being provided so that it may be provided to the Town Council as part of their Route 100 visioning process. Please contact me if I can provide additional information.

# **Background:**

Gray Road is a major arterial road in West Falmouth. The specific section of road this report focuses on is approximately one-mile long, beginning at the Leighton Road intersection and ending north of the Mountain Road intersection near the Piscataqua River. This road segment serves approximately 11,000 vehicles per day (Average Annual Daily Traffic: AADT).

# **Project description:**

The project begins at the northern side of the Gray and Leighton Road intersection and extends 1.07 miles northerly to the Libby Bridge over the Piscataqua River (north of the Mountain/Falmouth/Gray Rd. intersection).

The project is categorized as 'reconstruction', which is a complete rebuild of the road. Sidewalks were designed as part of the project, per request of the Town. Between 2005 and 2007, the Town included funding (\$100,000.00) for sidewalks in the West Falmouth TIF capital improvement budget. Sidewalks were designed along the westerly sideline of Gray Road as part of the DOT's engineering design.

Specifically, the design of Gray Road reconstruction includes the following:

- Geometric Changes to the intersections, which includes addition of turn lanes.
- New Sidewalk (5-foot wide)
- 12-foot wide vehicular travel lane widths
- 6-foot wide paved shoulders
- Access management, sight distance, and vertical curvature improvements.

A copy of the roadway's proposed cross-section is enclosed in the Appendices.

# **Current Issues:**

- Road Classifications: The State and Federal roadway classification systems are complex in Falmouth. Road classifications determine a number of outcomes that include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - Whether a road segment is eligible for State/Federal funding
  - Maintenance Responsibilities
  - Capital Improvement Responsibilities

This particular road segment falls outside of the Federal Urbanized area and outside the defined Metropolitan Planning Organization area (MPO). This means that this road segment is not eligible for both Federal funding and funding through the greater Portland's regional transportation group known as PACTS.

In addition, this road segment falls within the State's Urban Compact Lines, which means that Capital Improvements and ongoing maintenance responsibilities belong to the Town.

- Currently, the road is in poor condition. In 2009, the Town's transportation master plan identified the majority of this road segment as having a road condition ranking of 33 (on a scale of 1-100). It is estimated that in 2013, this roadway condition ranks in the high-teens to lower twenties, thus is nearing the end of its life cycle and ability to serve the travelling public.
- The intersection of Gray/Falmouth/Mountain Road was identified as having safety issues associated with them. These appear to be related to the horizontal and vertical alignments within the intersection. These issues were acknowledged by MDOT early in the development of their State reconstruction project.
- The intersections within the project areas have capacity/level of service issues. The Town's Transportation Master Plan noted the following results for Level of Service in 2009 and also for long-term forecasting (2035):

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Route 100 at Leighton: 2009 PM Peak Hour = C 2035 Projection = F
Route 100 at Falmouth: 2009 PM Peak Hour = D 2035 Projection = F
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Level of service rankings range from A to F, and they indicate the following:

C= 20 to 35 seconds of delay per vehicle

D= 35 to 55 seconds of delay per vehicle

F= Greater than 80 seconds of delay per vehicle

- The roadway is also very narrow. It does not meet the State and Federal guidelines for roadway widths (arterial roadway standards). There is no paved shoulder or sidewalk for bicycles or pedestrians.
- There are also steep slopes that are failing, along with failing/substandard guardrail, and failing drainage infrastructure.

# **Project Area Map:**

See appendices for the project location map.

# **Advocacy Efforts:**

As noted in the timeline, the Town has attempted many times to secure construction funding for this project. Unfortunately, these efforts have been unsuccessful due to a number of factors including State funding, State budgets, and the economic downturn in 2008.

It should be noted that MDOT has continued to include this project in their 6-year capital improvement plan (State Transportation Improvement Plan: STIP) for the last two cycles (2005-2010, and 2010-2015).

# **Timeline of Significant Events:**

- ➤ 2001: MDOT began the survey, engineering, and design phases of the project.
- ➤ 2002: On January 24, 2002, MDOT held a preliminary public meeting at Falmouth Town Hall to discuss the project. Some of the major issues that were discussed at the meeting and further discussed with Town staff are as follows:
  - o Sidewalks: Sidewalks were not proposed by MDOT as part of the project.
  - o Turn Lanes: Should a center turn lane be added?
  - Access Management: The State identified curb cuts/entrances and access management issues that they hoped to improve as part of this project.
  - Mill Road Bridge: Should the bridge be discontinued to vehicular traffic?
  - Gray/Falmouth/Mountain Road intersection: In order to make this intersection work correctly, a number of properties at each corner would be significantly affected.
- > 2004: Preliminary engineering design plans were generated by MDOT.
- ➤ 2004: On November 10, 2004, a public meeting was held at Falmouth Town Hall to discuss the project with MDOT. See Appendices for a copy of the public notice.
- > 2005/06: Funding for a new sidewalk was budgeted and approved by the Town.
- ➤ 2006: Two buildings at the intersection of Gray/Falmouth/Mountain Road were relocated in anticipation of the road reconstruction and intersection realignment. See appendices for more information.
- 2008: In 2008, MDOT announced the State Legislature approved an additional 50 Million Dollars towards transportation improvements. This was referred to as 'MPO/ Service Center Challenge Funds'. The Town applied for these funds in an effort to secure construction funding for the project, but were unsuccessful.
- ➤ 2009: In 2009, this project was considered for funding under the Federal Economic Stimulus Package. At one point, it was on a list for funding, but in the end, it was cut from this funding source.

- 2010: The Town, through PACTS and GPCOG, applied to the State through its' "Transportation Project Requests" process to urge the State to fund this project in their 2012/2013 funding cycle.
- ➤ 2012: The Town applied to the State through its "Transportation Project Requests" process to urge the State to fund this project in their 2014/2015 funding cycle.
- ➤ 2012: In addition, the Town contacted MDOT through PACTS. MDOT was soliciting input for safety improvements within the Greater Portland region. The Town provided a history of the project and noted some of the intersection safety issues to MDOT.
- 2013: The Federal Government announced a new Federal Economic Stimulus Package known as 'TIGER grants". The Town contacted MDOT to urge the State to apply for construction funding for Gray Road. MDOT notified the Town that these funds are for larger infrastructure projects and that MDOT are only applying for funds for two large bridge replacement projects.

# **Conclusion:**

Gray Road is in need of major infrastructure improvements. Although the State of Maine continues to place this project in their work plan, the project continues to lack the construction funding that it needs.

The Town may wish to consider the following options concerning reconstructing Gray Road:

- 1. Converting this project from a State project to a Town Project.
  - a. This would assume the funding responsibilities. The State project's construction estimate is approximately 3.7-million dollars. A municipal design could lower the project cost to approximately 2.5-million dollars.
- 2. Convert this project to a Town project and request funding through new/alternative sources. The State has begun a new funding source for municipal projects called "Municipal Partnership Initiative", or MPI's. These funds are allocated towards projects that are managed by municipalities and the State has been funding projects that are designed and 'shovel-ready.'
- 3. Lobby through State Officials such as The Transportation Commissioner using alternative resources, such as our State Representatives.

# Recommendation:

- 1. Consider all the information presented in this report as part of any future Route 100 visioning process.
- 2. Utilize this report to assist in future decision making towards any future transformation of the Route 100 corridor.

# Appendix C-1 Gray Road Reconstruction Project Area



# Appendix C-2 Building Relocations at Gray Road/Falmouth Road/Mountain Intersection

2006 Building Relocations

Gray Rd. at Falmouth Road

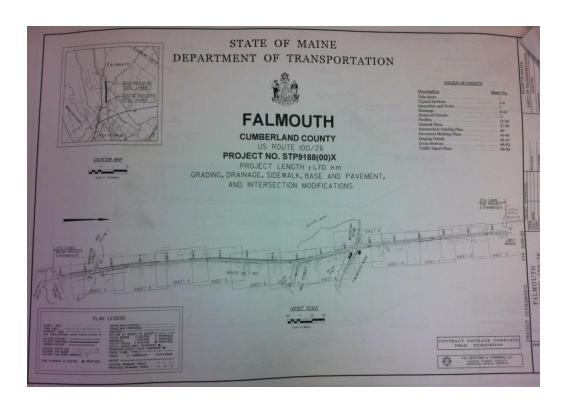


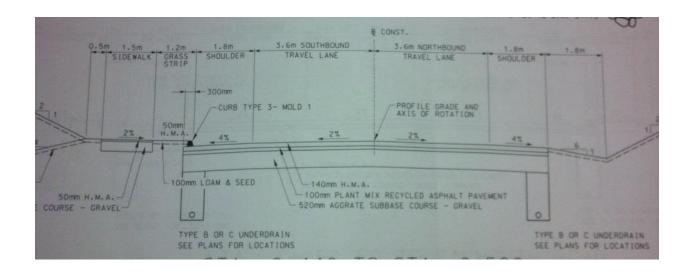
2006



2012

# Appendix C-3 MDOT Plan and Proposed Roadway Cross-Section





# Appendix C-4 2004 Public Meeting Notice

