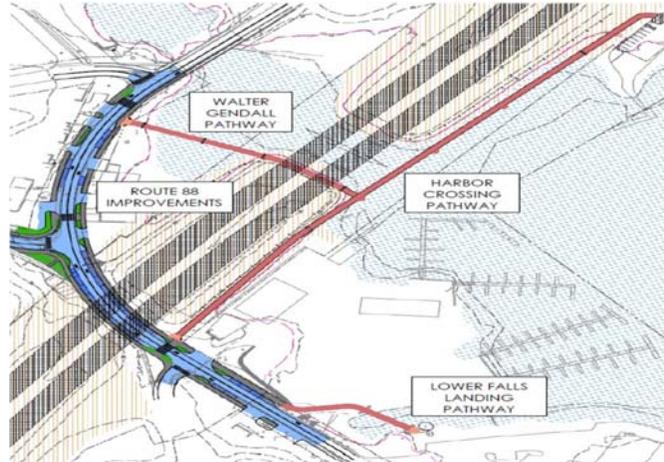




## **Town of Yarmouth Reconnecting Yarmouth Village to the Working Waterfront**



Overview plan of proposed improvements

### **PARTNERS**

Yarmouth Harbor and Waterfront Committee, Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee and Yarmouth Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee

### **ISSUE AREA**

The most challenged connection is connecting the Village to the Town Landing facility on the north side of the Royal River, an area severed from the Village by Interstate 295.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION (completed December 2012)**

The Town of Yarmouth received grant funding and hired Baker Design Consultants to conduct a public facilitation process and engineering study to determine a suite of pedestrian and infrastructure improvements to facilitate the movement of pedestrians and cyclists between the Village and the two sides of the waterfront.

### **THE CHALLENGE & APPROACH TAKEN**

The study process included identifying and assembling a group of key stakeholders, including: private marina owners, residents, business owners, Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation Systems (regional metropolitan planning organization) and MaineDOT transportation staff, local bicycle and pedestrian committee, Maine Rivers.org, the Royal River Conservation Trust, local harbormaster and town staff.

With the participation of the key stakeholders, the consultants facilitated a conversation to identify potential routes and a series of improvements to the existing road and intersections. Research conducted and that informed decision-making by the stakeholder group included identifying road right of way, potential private property

impacts, state and federal highway right of ways, evaluation of environmental resources and river hydrology and geology, and of course costs for various types of pedestrian facilities.

Early in the information gathering process, the consultants (with assistance from town staff and Maine Rivers) set up a display and circulated a questionnaire at the Eco-Market at Clam Festival, sharing information about the study and asking people, “if we build it, will you use it?”.

Approximately 100 town residents filled out these questionnaires or left comments. Those comments were folded into the final recommendations for improvements.

### **THE RESULTS, NEXT STEPS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The final report and plans were to the Town Council in November 2012 and later endorsed and adopted on June 26, 2015. This action served to officially combine the waterfront and marinas into the downtown district for designation as part of the Downtown Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district.

The Town Council will continue to consider recommended improvements in their Capital Improvement Planning process, as some of the larger, more expensive components to completing the pedestrian connections will require fund-raising and many include TIF revenues.

The final report identifies potential funding sources the town may explore to implement the plan. The results of the project have been shared with MaineDOT Planners, and the Town will need to work in partnership with MDOT, as the recommended improvements have been designed to a 25 mph speed limit, which is 5 mph slower than the street is currently posted at.

Additionally, the Town received a Shore and Harbor Planning grant to build upon the Reconnecting the Waterfront grant by developing a Master Plan for the Town Landing facility. This project re-mobilized many of the same stakeholders from the Reconnecting the Waterfront project. The Town awarded the contract to the same consulting team to build upon the work that has been completed to date. “Yarmouth Town Landing Master Plan, Creating a Sustainable Waterfront” was and endorsed as a long range vision and plan for the harbor and waterfront area of the Yarmouth Town Landing and mooring field by the Town Council April 17, 2014.

### **LESSONS LEARNED**

The key lessons learned relate to public process and communication. The Consultants and town staff worked together to create a schedule of meetings that was time efficient and convenient (always a max 1½ hrs, over breakfast or lunch with food provided), provided ample brainstorm, review and feedback loops for stakeholders, and included use of local press, the Planning Department’s Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/yarmouthplanning](http://www.facebook.com/yarmouthplanning)) and display at an annual community



## COASTAL COMMUNITY GRANTS: Public Access to the Waterfront

event (Clam Festival) to engage the public and raise awareness for the project. The list of stakeholders invited to participate in the process was broad, meetings were documented with detailed notes, notes were circulated in a timely manner, and deliverables were produced and distributed on schedule.

The total length of time of project was approximately 6 months start to finish, and expectations of time commitment was shared with the stakeholders at the beginning of the process.

### APPLICABILITY TO OTHER MUNICIPALITIES

The fundamental concept to be shared from this project relates to the rethinking of the functionality of Rt 88 (Lafayette Street) as a commuter thoroughfare to a slow-flow street where the existing businesses and properties might have an opportunity to re-invest and create a stronger commercial identity as its underlying Village zoning and current built form suggests it should have. The intersections with Pleasant Street, Marina Road, and Main Street have been tightened up forcing automobiles to make turning movements at slower speeds and the plan has been designed and engineered for a 25 mph speed through addition of on-street parking, reduced curb radii, closure of some curb cuts, application of shared lane markings and narrowed pedestrian crossings.

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Vanessa L. Farr, Director of Planning and Development (2009-2015)  
Town of Yarmouth served as PM for this project

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