

Village and Waterfront Plan for the Town of Orland



Prepared by the Orland Waterfront Committee
with support from
Hancock County Planning Commission
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Orland Village and Waterfront Project

The Maine Coastal Program awarded a Coastal Community Grant to Hancock County Planning Commission to work with the Town of Orland on the Orland Village and Waterfront Project. The main goals of the Project were to assess the impacts of pending changes to the waterfront, do public outreach to determine what residents want in the village and waterfront, and prepare an implementation strategy for the town.

This plan has been prepared by the Orland Waterfront Committee, a subcommittee of the Orland Comprehensive Plan Committee, with the assistance of the Hancock County Planning Commission.

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Village Background and History

The Wabanaki and their ancestors have known that the Narramissic River is a special place for thousands of years. Perhaps because of the rich food resource provided by the spring alewife run, the river and Alamoosook Lake were chosen by Wabanaki ancestors, especially between about 7,000 and 4,000 years ago, to locate several significant cemeteries and accompanying village and camp sites. Alamoosook is derived from *áləməssək*, a Penobscot word for dog, while Narramissic comes from the Penobscot word, *náləməssək*, which means at/in the chasm, crevice. Wabanaki use of the river and its tributaries continued up to the arrival in their homeland of Europeans, but the impact of colonization was quickly felt through disease, trade, conflict, religious missions, and the resulting cultural and economic impacts. Descendants of Orland's earliest residents are likely members of the Penobscot Nation and Passamaquoddy Tribe today. Natural resources in and along the Narramissic continue to be important for contemporary Wabanaki people, from the elver harvest to black ash trees for basketmaking.

The Town of Orland was settled by Europeans in the 1760s and incorporated in 1800. The earliest settlers made their homes in what is now considered the Village area. We know they operated mills and built ships, and that the river played an important role in the daily lives of residents, influencing the physical growth and development of the community. Boatbuilding and brickmaking industries thrived along the riverbanks. By the early 1900s, Orland village bustled around the river; the vibrant community boasted churches, shops, and schools, all within an easy walk.

The Narramissic River flows through Orland Village, and has been a central feature of human settlement for over 3000 years. Known as the Orland River south of village dam, it is a tributary of the Penobscot River where it joins the East Channel on the east side of Verona Island, and then empties into Penobscot Bay. The Narramissic River has been a center of community, commerce, and fishing, used extensively by the native people of Maine for centuries before European settlement. Home to Atlantic salmon, alewife, shad, eels, and other fish species, the Narramissic watershed has played an important part in subsistence, commercial, and recreational fishing for centuries. The commercial harvest of alewives and elvers continues to this day.



The current dam in Orland village, and earlier ones, were constructed across or near “Lower Falls”, which powered mills in the 1700’s, and which impeded navigation upstream. The Orland River has been dammed at Lower Falls since the early 1800s. The current dam was built in the 1930s by Maine Seaboard Paper Company, the predecessor to the paper mill in Bucksport most recently operated by Verso Paper. Originally, the dam was constructed to provide a water supply for the mill, a use that was never realized, as an alternative source upstream, Alamoosook Lake, proved preferable. Since the 1800s, the dammed stream has created a ponded area of the river which has become a characteristic of Orland Village.



Photos courtesy of Roger Wood

In 2010, Verso Paper ceded ownership of the dam to the Town of Orland. The Town hired engineering company Stantec, to perform an extensive study of the current conditions and options for the future of the dam. In association with this investigation, the Town conducted a paper- and web-based community value assessment survey of public opinion about the dam and surrounding waterfront areas in the village, and those sentiments have been taken into consideration by the Waterfront Committee as this plan has been formulated. The final study was completed in June of 2013, and the full report, along with a summary of the survey results, is available to view online on the Town of Orland's website, www.orlandme.org. A series of public meetings were held in Orland to educate citizens and encourage informed consideration of the financial, environmental, recreational, and public safety considerations of maintaining the dam, replacing it, or removing it. The residents of Orland voted in June 2016 to keep and maintain the dam.

A map of the broader village area is provided in Appendix B for context.

Priorities

Waterfront Access

The village's waterfront alongside the impoundment of the Narramissic River is an important part of the community's character. Even when daily livelihoods of residents no longer depended upon the water, the river still provided an important fishery and recreational asset. Alewives and elvers are still commercially harvested during their spring runs. Recreational and sport fisherman ply their lines along the length of the river, from Alamoosook Lake to below the dam.

The river and impoundment are also popular for recreation. Historically, neighborhood children would skate in the winter and swim in the summer. Boating along the glasslike surface of the impoundment is a relaxing activity enjoyed by many, and the annual River Day held every year in Orland draws locals and visitors to the village. Residents enjoy regular glimpses of aquatic animals and wildlife drawn to the waters' edge, and birdwatching is a popular draw in the area. At the dam in the spring, visitors can watch seals downstream, alewives migrating, and ospreys circling above.

Through in-person testimonials and survey responses, Orland residents have reiterated their enjoyment of the river for these and other purposes, and have expressed a desire for more public access to the waterfront. There is a special interest in promoting non-motorized boating uses, to preserve the peaceful village experience. Currently, boaters have informal access from several waterfront property owners, as well as some of town-owned property where boats can be launched, and swimmers can wade in. These sites are limited in their accessibility and utility, however, and identification of possible waterfront access sites, and planning for their possible development and improvement, is a priority of the Orland Waterfront Committee.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety

The village is dominated by Route 166, known locally as "Castine Road", which is the major route used for funneling traffic from U.S. Route 1 to Castine, a popular tourist destination and college town. This road has been upgraded in recent years, and its function and good condition make it easy for vehicular traffic to speed through the village. Providing a safe environment for pedestrians and bicyclists in the village area is of key importance. In addition to providing the health benefits of outdoor exercise, it

reduces the need for vehicular navigation, thereby reducing traffic load and parking demand in the village. Bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly downtowns also stimulate economic development. Pedestrians and bicyclists are likely to patronize village businesses, since they pass by at an easier pace than if they were travelling by car, and aren't hindered by the need to find a place to park. Both U.S. Bicycle Route 1 and the East Coast Greenway pass through Orland Village, bringing bicycle enthusiasts to the region who may choose to stop and enjoy waterfront amenities and/or village businesses. Promoting safe pedestrian and bicycle passage in the village is a priority of the Orland Waterfront Committee.

Village Area

Although Orland Village still retains the character of a quintessential New England village, it no longer functions as a hub of social and commercial activity in the community. Several large, historic commercial buildings still stand, but are largely vacant and/or underused. The 2016 comprehensive plan survey asked respondents to prioritize village improvements, and "more commercial businesses and shops" was the third choice overall, and more than half indicated that they would support their improvement and expansion through increased local taxes.

Several "destinations" still exist in the village area within an easy walking distance of each other (i.e. the post office, church, park, dam site). However, heavy traffic, combined with the lack of sidewalks, paved shoulders, and shoulder width inhibit bicycle and pedestrian activity in the village, and a lack of commercial activity makes for limited interest in the village from visitors, whether on foot, two wheels, or four. Promotion of a vibrant, attractive village that appeals to residents and visitors is a priority of the Orland Waterfront Committee.

Parking

An associated concern is the limited availability of public parking in the village area. Currently, public parking is extremely limited, consisting of an unlined parking area on Narramissic Drive. This may be sufficient for current parking needs, but if economic development in the village area and enhanced recreational use by boaters, walkers, and bicyclists are to be encouraged, associated parking needs will also need to be considered. The identification of areas for development as public parking is a priority of the Orland Waterfront Committee.

Current Conditions and Opportunities

Waterfront Access

As part of the study of the Orland Village Dam that was done by Stantec, public opinion surveys were collected from residents of Orland and other towns in the region to determine how the river was being utilized and why. The majority of people who responded to the recreational, aesthetic, and cultural use survey (87%) stated that they enjoy using the ponded Narramissic River for boating. In addition, several respondents used a fill-in-the-blank feature to say they enjoyed kayaking in this area. Another popular response was wildlife/bird watching (62%). Respondents also indicated that they enjoy fishing (35%) and swimming (30%) there. The vast majority (97% of respondents) indicated that they enjoy the river during summer, 76% during fall, 65% during spring, and 27% during winter. Many stated that the ponded river area gives Orland a “postcard” village, and feel that the water body provides Orland Village with its character.

In the 2016 comprehensive plan survey, twenty percent of respondents felt that the village boat launch needed improvement, and thirty percent were unsure whether it was adequate or not. When asked to choose their top priorities for village improvements from a list, respondents chose the following as their first, third, fourth, and fifth choices, respectively: a walking path along the Narramissic River, a public park by the dam site, wildlife watching opportunities, and an improved hand-carry boat launch. More than half indicated that they would support improvement or expansion of a walking path along the Narramissic and a public park by the dam site through increased local taxes. There was also significant support for a trailered boat launch, with 33% indicating that they would support it through increased taxes. When survey respondents were asked if Orland should expand certain recreational opportunities, walking paths were the most popular choice, hand-launch and wading water access was the second choice, and saltwater access was the third most popular.

There are no state-maintained public boat access sites on the Narramissic or Orland Rivers. The Orland River can be accessed using the public boat launch on Verona Island, but it is a lengthy route which can be difficult to navigate with tidal changes, and the Orland Village dam prevents further navigation, requiring a portage. No designated portage route exists at the dam site; anyone wishing to portage would need to find a suitable place on the wooded banks upstream and downstream of the dam to pull out and relaunch. There is informal access upriver just below the Alamoosook Lake dam. The property is

currently owned by AIM Development, the firm that purchased the former Verso Paper Mill in 2015, and is not mowed or maintained as a waterfront access site. The future of the parcel is unknown, but may become available in the future, as other properties tied to the former paper mill have.

Photographs of the current conditions of specific sites referenced in this section, as well as a map showing where each photo was taken, can be found in Appendix A. None of the town-owned waterfront sites have any signage identifying them as public areas.

The small park along Narramissic Drive in the village, adjacent to the parking area, is a primary access point to the water (Photos A and B). From here a canoe or kayak can be hand-launched, and swimmers can wade into the impoundment area. No formal water access facilities, such as a reinforced ramp or dock, are maintained here, but the town does mow and maintain plantings in the park area. It is adjacent to the small unlined parking area on Narramissic Drive. There is a dry hydrant located at the parking area off Narramissic Drive that is sometimes used as a hand-launch site, but, again, no formal facilities or improvements exist (Photo C)

The town owns another waterfront location that has been used for launching trailered boats (Photo D). This area, off Fish Point Road, is still available for this use, but the launch site has an abrupt grade change from land to water, which many trailers cannot accommodate. There is no parking at this location, although it is within reasonable walking distance from the parking area on Narramissic Drive.

The town also has a right-of-way to the dam off Fish Point Road (Photos E and F). Although public use of this site is not promoted, and there is no good boat access site at the dam on this side of the river, if undeveloped land adjacent to the right-of-way could be acquired, there is potential for a public park and/or waterfront access, and possibly parking (Photos G and H). Public access to the dam on foot is possible via the discontinued town road on the east side of the river. The road runs from the Castine Road to just beyond the dam, between the river and Dark Mountain Road. Although this was a town road at one time, it is gated off to general vehicular access (Photos I and J). The road is used by commercial fishermen who harvest alewives and elvers around the dam in the spring. Although access during high flows and tides is inadvisable, there are several locations just above and below the dam where the water can be easily accessed (Photos K, L and M). The water accessed below the dam is

brackish, and navigable to Penobscot Bay. Beyond the dam the road is in a state of disrepair, and ends at a bend in the river (Photo N). The bend creates a flat, open area of calmer water which could be a good waterfront access site, although access would be limited at low tide (Photos O and P). The condition of the road in this last section is particularly bad, as the steep slope towards Dark Mountain Road has created significant runoff and erosion problems. There is a small parking area at the turnoff for the road from Route 166 (Photo Q). This area is owned by MaineDOT and is rarely used, except during the spring fisheries season. Whether or not public parking is formally allowed, or whether town ownership is a possibility, is unknown.

Additional waterfront parcels may be available for acquisition and/or development by the town. No “taking” of private property by eminent domain is warranted or proposed, but a review of any appropriate parcels that could be acquired through tax liens or purchase may be worthwhile. A possible partnership with another organization for acquisition, such as a local land trust, may also be an option. As an example, a waterfront parcel off Lower Falls Road is for sale (Photo R). The price of the parcel is not known, nor are the costs associated with developing it. However, if the town is interested in acquiring property to create a designated public waterfront park or access point, this parcel could be explored as an option. Although outside of the village area, it is also worth noting that there is significant use by boaters upriver at the Alamoosook Lake dam (See Map B in Appendix B). This dam is owned by AIM, and although it has been recently repaired and maintained, the future ownership and maintenance of the dam and site is undetermined, and it may become available for acquisition by the town.

A number of state and federal agencies, such as the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry or the Army Corps of Engineers, provide funding or other resources to maintain and establish waterfront access for public use. If the Town is considering improvement or expansion of existing access sites, such as the construction of a reinforced ramp at the Narramissic Drive park or the existing boat launch, it is worth exploring these funding options. Rivers and adjacent shorelines are sensitive environmental areas, and are protected by local, state, and federal regulations to maintain water and habitat quality. Additionally, the banks and underwater areas of the Narramissic and Orland Rivers house historic and archeological resources that may require identification and protection. Any work being proposed on or adjacent to the waterfront area would need to adhere to all applicable regulations, and may require permits from various agencies and jurisdictions.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety

Safe pedestrian access in Orland is a concern. There are several destinations in the village that could be accessed and enjoyed by an easy quarter-mile walk; including the church and park on Narramissic Drive, the Bicentennial Park on Gray Meadow Road, and historic storefronts along Castine Road (See Map C in Appendix B). If future public waterfront access areas are developed, they also will draw pedestrians and bicyclists. Besides the destinations, Orland has opportunities to promote designated “walks” in the village that promote health and wellness, and highlight the beautiful residential architecture and fishing and industrial history of the village and waterfront. These walks must be developed in consideration of routes that are safe for traversing on foot.

Additionally, through-traffic on the way to Castine often travels at a high rate of speed through the village area. There are automated speed-feedback signs in the village, maintained by MaineDOT, for traffic approaching the bridge from either direction, but additional traffic-calming devices may be warranted to slow vehicular speeds and enable safe road crossings, especially across Castine Road. Guidelines for the Use of Traffic-calming Devices, provided by MaineDOT, are included as Appendix C.



Narrow, unpaved shoulders in the village area and heavy through-traffic make safe walking and biking a challenge.

Historic photos show that the village area may have had sidewalks in the past. Today, the only sidewalk in the village area is on the Castine Road bridge over the river. Road shoulders in many areas are narrow

or non-existent. While most of the town roads in the village have a low traffic load and can be negotiated easily by pedestrians, even without designated pedestrian ways, Castine Road (Route 166) has a heavy traffic load, and is a major thoroughfare passing through the village area.



Photos indicate that at least some sidewalks existing in the village in the past. Today, the sidewalk on the Castine Road bridge is the only one in the village. *Historic photos courtesy of Roger Wood*

Limited road width and speeding traffic are also concerning for bicyclists. Two major multi-state bicycle routes pass through the village on Castine Road and Dark Mountain Road; the East Coast Greenway and

U.S. Bicycle Route One. These routes are traveled casual enthusiasts and “through-bikers”, who may travel hundreds of miles on bikes loaded down with gear.

The Town of Orland may choose to promote safer walking and biking which implements Complete Streets principles. This approach dictates that the development of bicycle and pedestrian amenities (such as widened shoulders, narrowed road width, sidewalks, crosswalks, striped bicycle lanes, etc.) be given consideration when roads are scheduled for design, repair, and maintenance, and incorporated where possible and economically feasible. This approach creates a network of roads and streets that, over time, are made more accommodating for all users at a minimized cost. The Town may partner with MaineDOT, Bicycle Coalition of Maine, Healthy Acadia, the regional planning commission, and/or other agencies to implement Complete Streets at the local level. MaineDOT’s Complete Streets Policy is included as Appendix D.

Village Economy

Businesses in Orland village have struggled in recent years. Currently, a few of the historic commercial storefronts are vacant. Another houses an antique shop, but is for sale. A handful of bed and breakfast establishments have closed in recent years, and currently no lodging establishments are open in the village area. The unique setting of the village so closely tied to the river makes the area ideal for water-dependent and recreation-based businesses, such as kayak rentals or shops specializing in eco- or history-based tourism. The through-bikers on U.S. Bike Route One and the East Coast Greenway require lodging and supplies, and are another potential market for business owners.



Historic storefronts in the village area are currently vacant. There are no sidewalks or crosswalks in this area, and narrow shoulders limit on-street parking.

Several of the goals of the Committee are consistent with and complementary to the promotion of business development and vibrancy in the village area. Creating public waterfront access areas will bring visitors to the village area, and establishing safe walking and biking environments will also make it easier for those exploring the village casually to stop in at a shop or for a bite to eat. Significant economic growth, in turn, will require consideration of public parking availability. Implementation of the strategies laid out in this plan set the stage for a rebirth of commercial investment and revitalization.

Parking

Few public parking spaces exist in Orland Village. Currently, public parking is limited to a handful of unlined spaces on Narramissic drive, across the road from the church and maintained by the Town. A few on-street parking spaces are also available, as are several private spaces maintained by businesses for patron use. Some potential exists for the development of parking behind the commercial buildings on Castine Road, which could promote business growth in the buildings. As mentioned previously, there may also be potential for public parking at the entrance to the discontinued dam access road on the MaineDOT parcel. This parking lot is used by commercial fishermen, and is usually full during spring

alewife and elver seasons. An adjacent vacant parcel, formerly home to a blacksmith shop and known as the “Ginn” property, may also have potential, although it is not advertised as for sale.



Parking area off Narramissic Drive

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Organizing an action plan into goals, objectives, and strategies, and assigning a responsible entity for each, is an effective way to build upon data and observations and identify the path forward. Each goal that is identified by the committee is partnered with one or more measurable objectives that work toward that goal, so that plan elements can be evaluated periodically. Each objective is coupled with one or more strategies that can be employed to achieve the objective.

1. Goal: Identify and promote public waterfront access in the village area

- a. Objective: Maximize the potential of existing town-owned waterfront sites
 - i. Strategy: Explore costs, permitting and signage for creating new or upgrading existing public waterfront access (*selectboard, parks staff*)
 - ii. Strategy: Pursue any available funding and assistance from private, federal and state entities for development (*selectboard, parks staff, HCPC*)
- b. Objective: Explore opportunities for acquiring additional waterfront sites
 - i. Strategy: Form a volunteer recreational access interest group to explore the various options for enhanced waterfront access, and work with town officials
 - ii. Strategy: Identify available resources for property acquisition and/or property improvements (*selectboard, recreational access interest group*)
 - iii. Strategy: Obtain cost estimates for property acquisition and /or property improvements (*recreational access interest group*)
 - iv. Strategy: Consider cost and benefits, long- and short-term, of available acquisition and/or upgrade options (*selectboard, town staff, recreational access interest group*)
- c. Objective: Explore opportunities for developing riverside trails
 - i. Strategy: identify existing town-owned property and/or public easements for development as trails for non-motorized use (*comprehensive plan committee, selectboard, recreational access interest group*)
 - ii. Strategy: identify properties that will provide linkages to create a trail network (*comprehensive plan committee, selectboard, recreational access interest group*)

2. Goal: Make walking and biking safer in the village area

- a. Objective: Identify roads or road stretches for development of a village sidewalk network
 - i. Strategy: Review state/local records to determine if rights and easements are still in place for village areas that formerly had sidewalks (*selectboard, assessor, historical society, village enhancement interest group, see below*)
 - ii. Strategy: Pursue reconstruction of historic sidewalk networks where possible and economically feasible, in conjunction with routine road construction and maintenance (*selectboard, road commissioner, MaineDOT, village enhancement interest group*)
 - iii. Strategy: Pursue construction of additional sidewalks to provide linkages and create a network of safe pedestrian access where possible and economically feasible, in conjunction with routine road construction and maintenance (*selectboard, road commissioner, MaineDOT*)
- b. Objective: Identify roads or road stretches for increased shoulder width and/or bike lanes
 - i. Strategy: Meet with MaineDOT to discuss options for improvements that align with MaineDOT Complete Streets policy and possible funding sources (*selectboard; HCPC; village enhancement interest group*)
 - ii. Strategy: Meet with municipal officials to discuss options (*selectboard, road commissioner, village enhancement interest group*)
- c. Objective: Reduce speeding in the village area
 - i. Strategy: Meet with MaineDOT to discuss options and funding for potential traffic-calming options (*selectboard, HCPC, village enhancement interest group*)

3. Goal: A vibrant, attractive village that appeals to residents and visitors

- a. Objective: Determine why businesses have not been able to thrive in the village
 - i. Strategy: Form a volunteer “village enhancement” interest group to champion village improvement projects and work with town officials, organizations, and volunteers
 - ii. Strategy: Collect any available data from closed businesses about factors leading to closure (*village enhancement interest group*)
 - iii. Strategy: Review existing ordinances and policies for regulations that impede business development (*village enhancement interest group, town staff*)

- iv. Strategy: Research and pursue any available funding options for business development, including TIF, grants, or other funds (*village enhancement interest group, HCPC*)
- b. Objective: Promotion of village as destination
 - i. Strategy: Meet with Chamber of Commerce and Bucksport-area economic development groups to explore ideas and options (*village enhancement interest group*)
 - ii. Strategy: Develop wayfinding system to guide visitors to destinations/highlights (*village enhancement interest group*)

4. Goal: Encourage walking and biking as a healthy way to enjoy and explore the village

- a. Objective: Identify routes for walking, jogging, and biking that take advantage of the safest routes, and highlight scenic and historic features
 - i. Strategy: Partner with volunteers from local organizations, like the historical society, to develop and promote routes. (*village enhancement interest group*)

5. Goal: Ample village-area parking options

- a. Objective: Increase village-area parking options for passenger vehicles to promote pedestrian enjoyment of village area
 - i. Strategy: Identify town-owned property that may be appropriate for development as parking areas (*village enhancement interest group, town staff*)
 - ii. Strategy: Identify available resources for property acquisition and/or property expansions (*village enhancement interest group, town staff*)
 - iii. Strategy: Obtain cost estimates for property acquisition and /or property expansions (*village enhancement interest group*)
 - iv. Strategy: Consider cost and benefits, long- and short-term, of available acquisition and/or upgrade options (*village enhancement interest group, town staff, selectboard*)

Implementation

Implementation of the goals, objectives and strategies is detailed below. Implementation of multiple goals may be pursued concurrently, or one at a time, as funding, volunteer interest, and other resources are available.

Goal 1: Identify and promote public waterfront access in the village area.

There are two types of waterfront access that the Committee feels should be pursued, sites for hand-launching boats, and riverside trails. For hand-launch sites, the first objective is to maximize the potential of waterfront sites that the town already owns. The objective can be met by town officials and staff carefully evaluating the sites (namely the existing park and dry hydrant on Narramissic Drive, the boat launch site on Fish Point Rd., and on the east side of the river, on either side of the dam, and the area beyond the dam) to determine which will provide the best level of boat access for the lowest associated costs. These costs may include repair, improvement, or construction, future maintenance, permitting, and signage. Particular attention should be paid to signage warning of variable access dependent upon tides beyond the dam, or to floating dock networks that make that site accessible at all times. When each site has been evaluated, the town will prioritize one or more sites for development. It may be that more than one site is selected to provide access to both freshwater and saltwater, or to create a trailered boat launch or ramp in addition to a hand-launch site.

Once necessary costs are estimated and sites prioritized, resources for development should be identified and secured. These could include municipal funds and/or staff and material resources, as well as public funding and assistance from state and federal agencies or grants.

If, after evaluation, it is determined that the municipally-owned sites are not adequate to meet the goal, a similar process of evaluating potential sites and obtaining cost estimates can be done for properties along the waterfront. If this objective is pursued, the committee recommends the formation of a volunteer “recreational access” interest group to work with town officials on this endeavor. This group should ideally be formed of members from the various subcommittees and volunteers that have been part of the dam, waterfront, and comprehensive plan projects, as well as other interested members of

the public who can represent varied interests and perspectives. When considering potential properties, the committee and town officials should consider not only properties that are advertised for sale, but properties that may be obtainable through gifts or tax liens. Once the available options have been evaluated and prioritized, resources for acquisition, development, and maintenance should be identified as before.

To address the second type of waterfront access identified by this goal, exploring opportunities for developing riverside trails in Orland, it is recommended that the volunteer access interest group be formed to take the lead. This group of volunteers, working with municipal officials as needed, should begin by identifying existing town-owned properties and rights of way that may be appropriate for the development of trails for non-motorized use (trails for motorized use are not recommended in the village or riverfront areas, although they may be appropriate elsewhere in Orland). Using the results of this inventory as a starting point, a plan can then be developed for acquisition of additional property through purchase, grant, or easement as needed, to create linkages and develop a trail system or network. As was the case for the boat launch site evaluations, consideration will need to be given to acquisition and development costs for all options. Special consideration should be given to the rights-of-way and easements currently owned by AIM. The nature of future redevelopment at the mill property in Bucksport is unknown. Easements in Orland associated with that property may not be needed or useful for redevelopment purposes, and may be obtainable by the Town. Development of trail networks is rarely accomplished quickly, and having a good inventory of desired acquisitions and improvements will allow development over time, and as funding and opportunity permits.

Goal 2. Make walking and biking safer in the village area

The strategies to achieve this goal fall into two categories, creating infrastructure to allow for safe walking and biking, and reducing the speed of traffic through the village. The first objective works towards the former, with the identification of roads or stretches of roads for the development of a network of sidewalks in the village. Historic photos of Orland Village suggest that sidewalks may have existed in some village areas at one time. It is recommended that the selectboard, along with municipal staff, and perhaps the historical society, identify as many of the locations of former sidewalks as possible, and investigate whether rights and easements are still in place for them. The most cost-effective way to pursue the establishment of sidewalks is likely in conjunction with road reconstruction and maintenance projects. Once locations for reestablishment of sidewalks are identified, areas where

new sidewalks are needed to create connections for a continuity of safe pedestrian access can be identified, and the selectboard, in conjunction with the road commissioner and MaineDOT, can work to reestablish and reconstruct sidewalks where rights, road widths, and resources permit. As there has been significant interest in this issue from area residents, it may be appropriate for the village enhancement interest group, formed as part of Goal 3, below, to be involved in these talks with MaineDOT.1030

The selectboard should also take a similar approach to identifying roads in the village that would permit increased shoulder width or designated bicycle lanes. Once an inventory has been created, the town can work to implement wider shoulders and/or bike lanes as resources permit, and as road maintenance activities are planned. Coordination with MaineDOT on state-maintained roads and roadwork, in keeping with MaineDOT's "Complete Streets" policy, will be an important step in implementation.

To address the issue of heavy, speeding traffic in the village area, it is recommended that the selectboard meet with representatives from MaineDOT to discuss the various options for traffic-calming measures on Route 166, and funding opportunities for potential implementation. The Town may also want to consider meeting with the Hancock County Sheriff to discuss options for enhanced speed enforcement.

Goal 3. A vibrant, attractive village that appeals to residents and visitors

The objectives for this goal focus on the development of economic opportunity and a sense of place that draws people to the village. Foremost in tackling these issues, it is recommended that a volunteer "village enhancement" interest group be formed. This group is separate from the waterfront access interest group recommended to meet the first goal, but it similarly builds upon the enthusiasm and interest of residents that has come from the comprehensive planning process. This village enhancement group will take the lead with the strategies laid out to meet Goal #3. The first objective is to determine, as best as is possible, why businesses have not been able to thrive in the village in recent history. It is recommended that the village enhancement group collect as much information as possible, through collective discussion, interviews, and research, about the factors that have led to business closures in the village in recent memory. With that information, the group can work with municipal staff and officials to review existing ordinances and policies for any existing regulations that impede business

development. If such regulations are found, the group may be able to work with municipal officials to find appropriate resolutions.

It is also recommended that the village enhancement group take on the task of championing the village and promoting it as a destination. This may include collaborating with the area Chamber of Commerce to find out what options exist for promotion and area-wide campaign involvement. There is also an opportunity for Orland to capitalize on the interest and enthusiasm associated with economic development in Bucksport in the wake of the Verso mill closure, and to work with some of these groups to promote the region as a whole. The village enhancement group should also assess the need for signage and wayfinding in the village, in association with other initiatives laid out in this plan. If the Town significantly expands waterfront access, trails, or other public areas, signage for pedestrians and bicyclists may become a priority. The village enhancement group may also undertake the coordination of small village beautification projects, such as trash receptacles and flower beds or planters.

Goal 4. Encourage walking and biking as a healthy way to enjoy and explore the village

Like so many elements of this plan, the objective and strategies for this goal are separate from, but related to, those of the other goals. The main objective is the identification of routes in and around the village area that can be promoted as “walks” or “tours”. The village enhancement group should take the lead on this, identifying walks that take advantage of the safest pedestrian and biking routes. This involves collaboration with those groups working towards Goals 1 and 2; namely the identification of and plans for new trails and expanded sidewalk networks and bike lanes. There is also an opportunity to collaborate with special interest groups, such as a partnership with the Historical Society to develop a walking tour of historic architecture, or other partners to promote unique natural features or heart-healthy loop walks.

Goal 5. Ample village-area parking options

Ensuring adequate parking in the village is another goal that is integrated with the others. While the limited parking that’s currently available may meet current needs, future development of public recreational areas and businesses will necessitate and benefit from more parking. It is recommended that the village enhancement group lead this effort, working with town staff and following strategies similar to those described for other land development goals in this plan. After establishing which town-owned parcels (if any) might be available for development as parking areas and exploring the associated

costs, the group can review available properties that may be acquired to create parking or expand existing parking, and the associated costs. It is also suggested that town officials contact MaineDOT to discuss the potential for using their parking area off Castine Road at the end of the dam access road (Appendix A, Photo P) for public parking. The use of this space by commercial fishermen during the spring fisheries season is an important consideration, since access to parking is essential to supporting Orland's working waterfront and economy. There should also be consideration given to developing parking areas that will accommodate vehicles hauling boat trailers. While the current village waterfront facilities limit the use of trailered boats, future improvements or development of a boat ramp should also include necessary parking requirements.

Conclusion

Orland Village has many features that make it a desirable and attractive place. The village, nestled along the banks of the Narramissic, is picturesque and looks remarkably similar to the way it did one hundred years ago, with commercial structures intact and still displaying their historic character and features. The ponded river brings beauty, nature, and recreation to the village. The residents of the Town are engaged, having been involved in the recent discussions around dam removal, comprehensive planning, and waterfront access.

The Town has an opportunity to embrace these features, protect them and capitalize upon them to draw visitors, new residents, entrepreneurs, and with them, economic opportunity. By dividing responsibility and capitalizing on volunteerism to work towards smaller goals addressing the interconnected issues in the village, a variety of benefits and positive change can be realized. The goals and strategies laid out here will serve as a map forward, while making the waterfront more accessible and the village more enjoyable.

The Orland Waterfront Committee is encouraged by the many options and opportunities that have surfaced during this process, and is excited to move forward towards implementation of plan elements with the encouragement and participation of the broader Orland community.

Appendix A. Photos



Photo A. Waterfront park on Narramissic Drive



Photo B. Waterfront park on Narramissic Drive



Photo C. Dry Hydrant off Narramissic Drive (photo courtesy of Google)



Photo D. Boat launch on Fish Point Rd.



Photo E. Right-of-way to dam off Fish Point Rd.



Photo F. Dam site off Fish Point Rd.



Photo G. Undeveloped land adjacent to dam right-of-way on Fish Point Rd.



Photo H. Undeveloped land adjacent to dam right-of-way on Fish Point Rd.



Photo I. Discontinued road to dam off Castine Road (gated off to vehicles)



Photo J. Discontinued road to dam off Castine Road (gated off to vehicles)



Photo K. From the dam, looking downstream



Photo L. Possible waterfront access site just below dam



Photo M. Looking downstream from dam

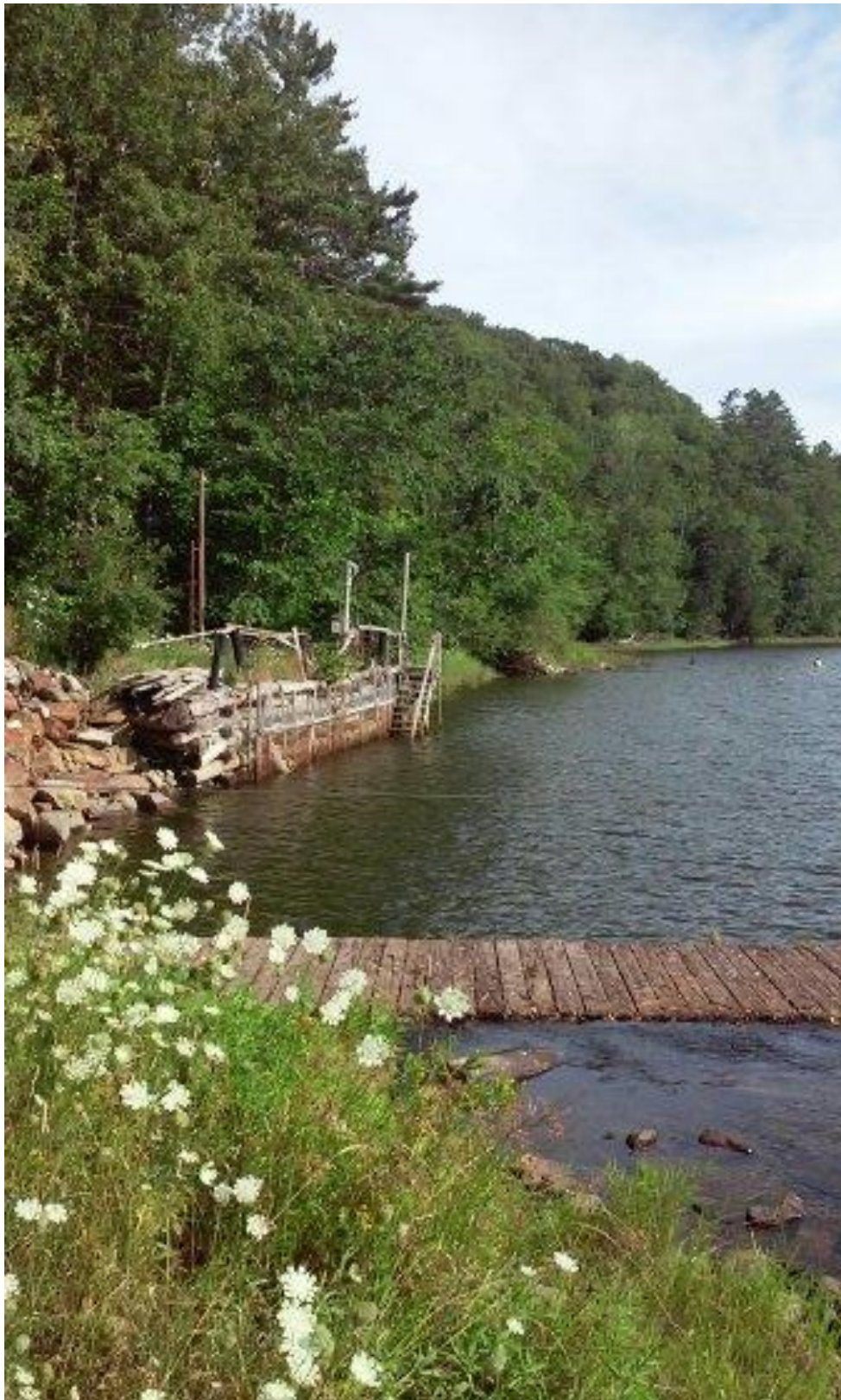


Photo N. Below dam, access road becomes a footpath (not maintained)



Photo O. Riverbend below dam (possible water access)



Photo P. Riverbend below dam (possible water access)



Photo Q. Parking area off Castine Rd. leading to dam access road (owned by MaineDOT)



Photo R. Waterfront parcel for sale on Lower Falls Rd.

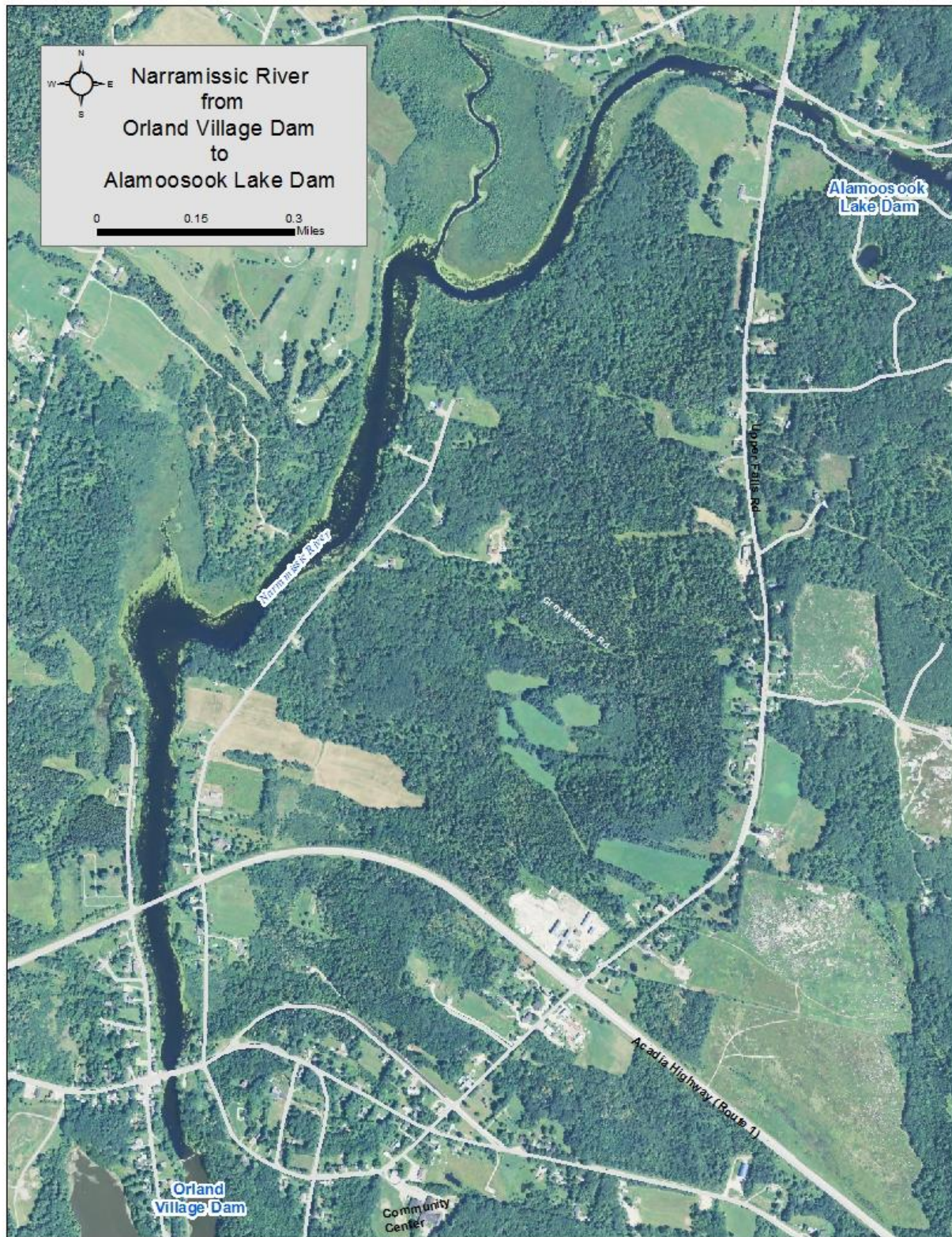


Appendix B. Maps

Map A. Village Area Context



Map B. Narramissic River



Map C. Bicycle and Pedestrian Destinations



Appendix C. MaineDOT Guidelines for the Use of Traffic Calming Devices

(available online:

<http://www.maine.gov/mdot/completestreets/docs/Guidelinesfortrafficcalmingupdated9711.pdf>)

Appendix D. MaineDOT Complete Streets Policy

(available online:

<http://www.maine.gov/mdot/completestreets/docs/MaineDOTCompleteStreetsPolicyFinal061814.pdf>)