

THE PLAN

*ECOLOGY PROVIDES THE SINGLE
INDISPENSABLE BASIS FOR LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING
- IAN MCHARG*

The plan outlined in this chapter is designed to guide future development and renewal of downtown Bridgewater over the next twenty years. Bringing together the vision of the residents with best practices for urban planning and downtown revitalization, the plan is rooted in the community and future forward. While physical renewal projects are integral to the plan, it seeks to strategically leverage economic and social revitalization in the downtown. To accomplish these lofty goals, the plan is comprised of physical projects, policy recommendations, and programming improvements, designed to work together to evoke the public's vision for Bridgewater.



3.1 Project Vision

In 2035, Bridgewater continues to be the regional centre and main street of the south shore. A vibrant and diverse community, Bridgewater's downtown integrates historic architecture with modern development in a sustainable, waterfront environment. Major business and economic enterprises are located in the downtown, easily walkable for the local community, and accessible for the broader region.

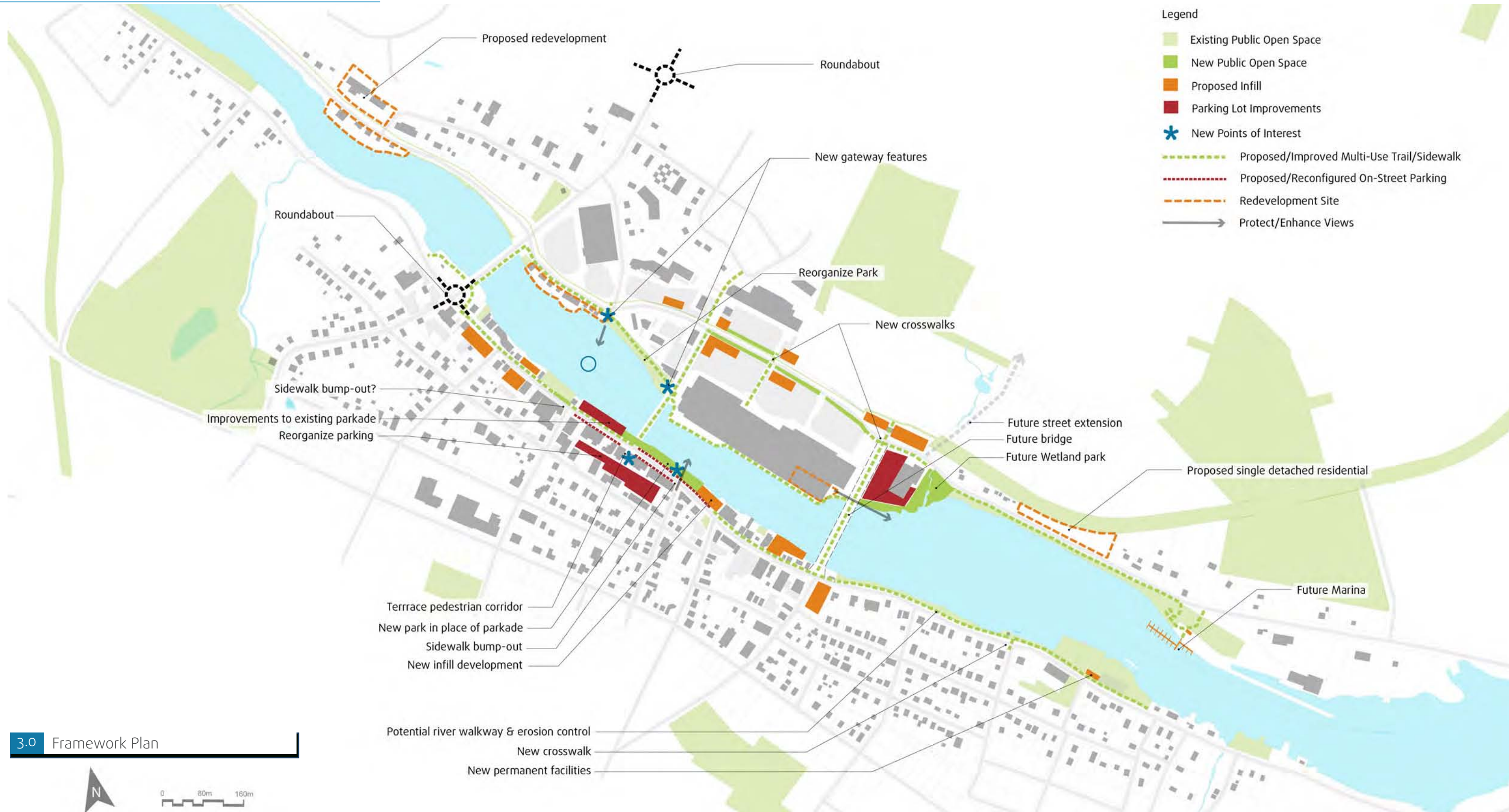
The downtown is once again centered around the LaHave River, and it is a source of pride, recreation, and beauty for the Town. New mixed use development and parks line the riverbank, connected by a series of multi-use trails, boardwalk, and wide sidewalk. The Town has embraced its identity as the green centre for Nova Scotia, and examples of sustainability and environmental ingenuity are everywhere, integrated into the Downtown as part of the urban beautification strategy. Rain gardens, bioremediation, and living murals add a lovely green tone to the town centre, as well as adding function to the urban environment.

The Town has worked hard with strategic partners like the Bridgewater Development Association, the Historic King Street Business District, the Chamber of Commerce, and others to create an economically vibrant downtown. Historic King Street is lined with boutique retail which capitalizes on its market, attracting visitors from as far away as Yarmouth and Halifax. The retail environment is complemented by a wide streetscape, complete with coordinating site furnishings and ample parking. The removal of the south parkade has opened up visibility to the River, one of King Street's best assets.

Across the River, the LaHave District has evolved to an interesting and engaging retail node. Strategic infill of new retail and mixed-use development has transformed LaHave Street into a tree-lined streetscape with active ground floor uses adjacent to the pedestrian areas. The transformation of the Old Bridge to a central pedestrian node has supported the emergence of a walking culture, and the amount of active transportation traffic crossing the river each day is significant. The Town worked with the Province on the construction of a new & modern bridge that is as striking as it is functional. The new crossing, located at Maple street, has improved the flow of traffic through and around the downtown. Trucks no longer travel on King Street, which the sidewalk cafe patrons appreciate.

The Town, in partnership with key stakeholders, has been able to invest in the downtown and waterfront, as a result of the 2013 strategic master planning process. It all seems quite distant, but the visionary decisions made by the Council of the day have reaped significant rewards for the Town. Bridgewater is an attractive, sustainable Town defined by its high standard of living and authentic sense of place, and one of Nova Scotia's most envied communities.





3.0 Framework Plan



3.2 Guiding Principles

Combining the outcomes, issues, and ideas that emerged from the review of the five thematic areas, together with the best practices review, six key principles have emerged that will guide the master planning process for Downtown Bridgewater.

History

The history of Bridgewater is important, and must be integrated into its urban design as inspiration. Fire has shaped the streetscapes of Downtown, so it is essential to preserve and protect remaining built heritage. A century ago, the river was the primary arterial connection in the community, and in the future that historic connection must be strengthened.

Connection

Connection speaks to the physical, visual, and social linkages in the community. The study team heard that connection is essential - the community wants to be more physically connected. This includes engineering infrastructure like roads, active transportation links, and bridges both to and throughout the downtown and other key destinations. Social connections must be encouraged and supported through the establishment and creation of formal and informal gathering spaces. Visual connection across and to the river should be enhanced, reinforcing its position of prominence within the community.

Sustainability

Sustainability should permeate all aspects of the project, reflecting Bridgewater's emerging identity as the regional green hub. The ecology of the LaHave River should be enhanced, addressing implications of sea level rise and climate change. Best practices for stormwater management should be integrated into the urban design, assisting with rainwater run-off and erosion mitigation. Long-term planning should focus on building a greener future for the Community.

Identity

The identity of Bridgewater is as diverse as the Community itself. Bridgewater has a European Heritage that is unique to Nova Scotia, with many Germanic influences. The LaHave River is undoubtedly a strong source of civic pride and identity, and the two bridges that cross it in the Downtown are incredibly important visual representations to the community. Recently emerging as a regional centre for sustainability, the notion of 'green' Bridgewater has broad appeal, especially to youth and young families. Overall, the community has a strong sense of pride that is evident in imagining their future.

Activity

Downtown Bridgewater needs to be active, vibrant, and engaging. This will be accomplished through support and enhancement of existing programs, and the development and expansion of both formal and informal gathering spaces in the study area. The focus needs to be on year-round activity, drawing a diverse mixture of residents and visitors to the downtown at all times of day, and in all seasons. Building a robust program of activities will enhance the quality of life found in the downtown core.

Design

Above all, the master plan for Downtown needs to focus on good urban design. The King Street streetscape should be a welcoming and inviting space that encourages diverse uses. Parking and circulation need careful consideration to balance competing interests. Heritage and identity should be used as inspiration for urban design, creating an attractive neighbourhood where people want to go.





3.1 Master Plan

3.3 Plan Components

The Plan is comprised of a series of physical projects, programming recommendations and planning amendments. The physical projects are comprised of circulation and parking recommendations, open space improvements, and streetscaping and urban beautification initiatives.

Circulation & Parking

King Street Reconstruction

The presence of the two parkades in the downtown presents a unique challenge for Bridgewater. Constructed in the late 1960s, the parkades typify the disconnect of the community from the river, as they both prevent both physically and visually access. More recently, the parkades have become a maintenance challenge for the Town, requiring more and more investment, and the general consensus in the community seems to be that they are a visual distraction to the King Street streetscape. However, the King Street merchants feel strongly that the parkades are an essential aspect of their business operation, and their removal would be a huge impediment.

The removal of at least one of the parkades presents a significant opportunity for Bridgewater to reconnect with the LaHave River. However, for this initiative to be successful, sufficient parking needs to be developed to replace what will be lost. Past studies have suggested Pleasant Street as a viable alternative, however the grade change between King Street and Pleasant Street makes this option challenging. If the south parkade were to be removed, it is recognized that a significant amount of parking will likely simply relocate to the north parkade. The cross section of King Street is wide enough for a reconfigured road alignment, one that provides angle parking immediately in front of the existing stores, with on-street parallel parking along the river side. In the long term, assuming the future relocation of the bridge crossing, there would be additional space captured for parking from what is presently the right hand turning lane. Under this scenario, approximately 25 angled parking spaces are provided directly in front of merchants, with the potential addition of up to 10 parallel parking spaces on the opposite side of the roadway.



3.2 King Street Reconstruction - Plan View



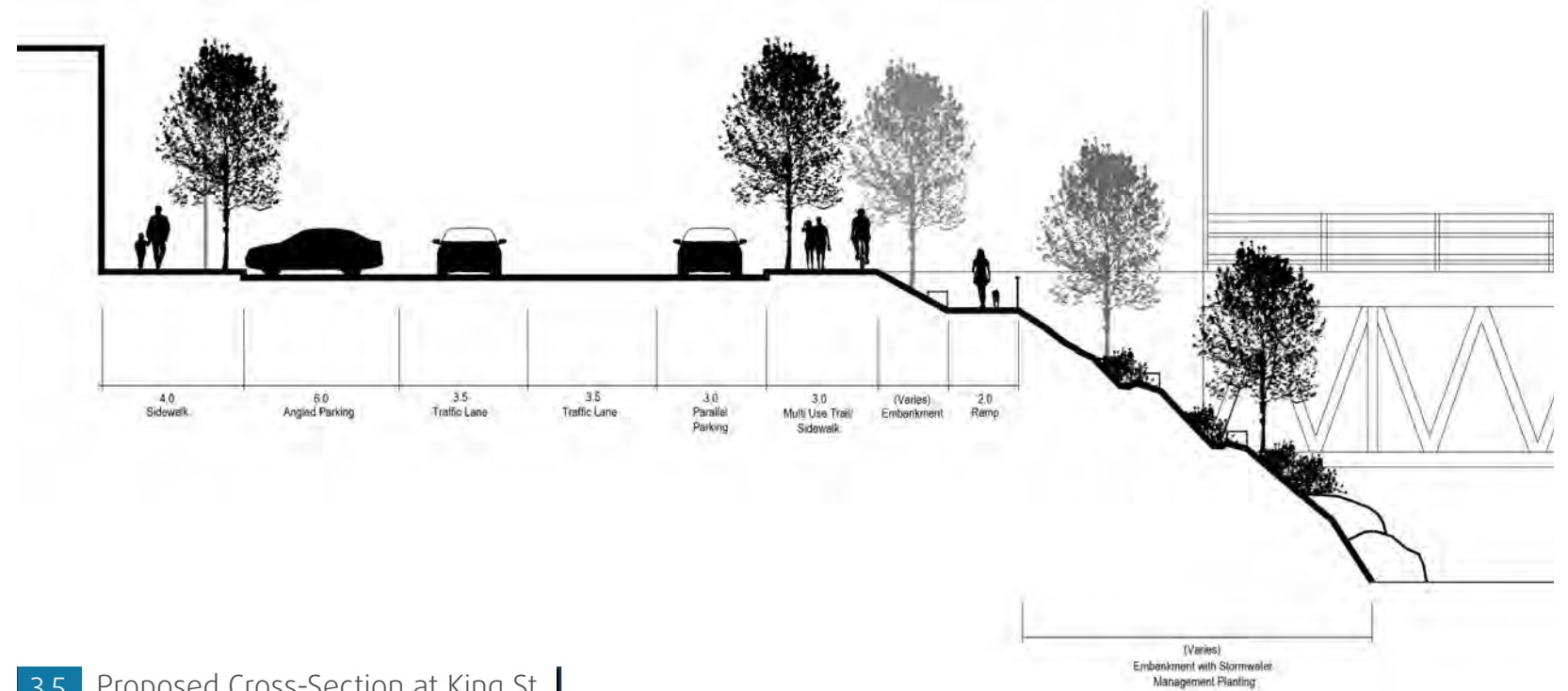
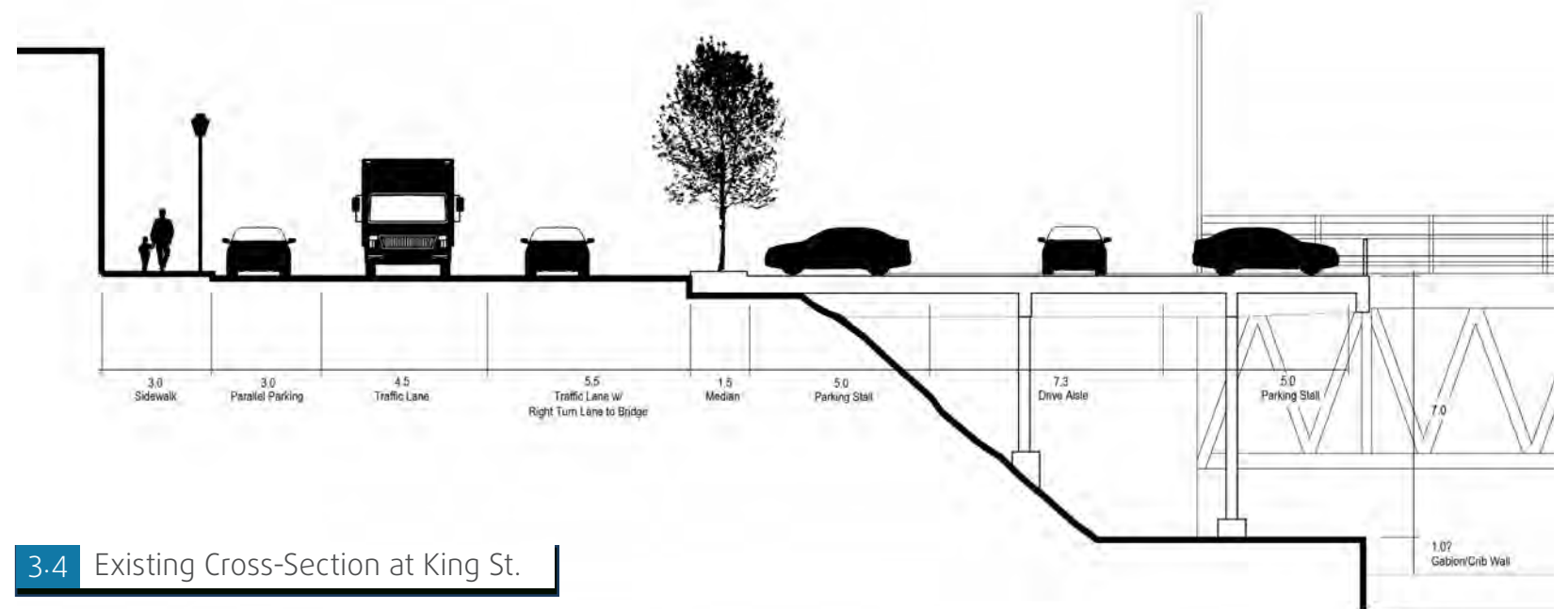
3.3 King Street Reconstruction

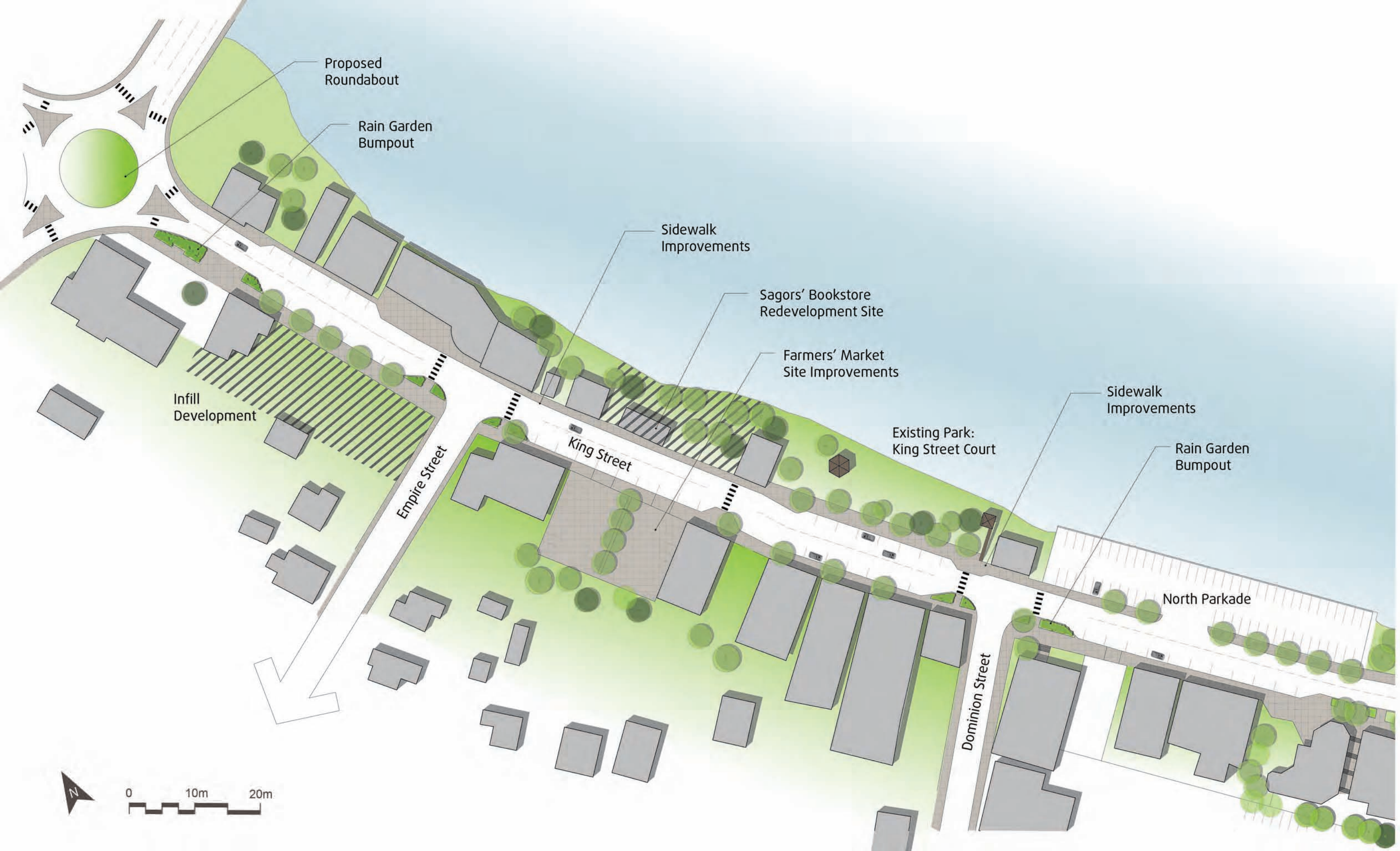
In the short term, the Old Bridge will remain a key route for vehicular traffic, and this will require the maintenance of all associated turning lanes and intersection requirements. This results in the interim provision of 20 angled parking spaces on King Street.

Generally, when examining the structure of King Street, it is important to consider:

- » Given the relatively narrow cross section of the roadway in this area, increasing cross sectional space is a priority to provide an improved environment;
- » The most cost effective addition of priority can be achieved through the use of the angle parking spaces positioned directly in front of the existing businesses.
- » The additional space will create a more clear thoroughfare, reduce driver workload and risk of conflicts, and provide a greater opportunity to utilize the north waterfront side of the road for active transportation or other recreational use;
- » Adequate separation should be provided between Old Bridge Street intersection and the first angle parking spots to ensure that parking maneuvers do not interfere with the functional area of the intersection;
- » Front in angled parking is generally considered an acceptable parking arrangement though cyclist safety adjacent to the parking spaces is frequently identified as a concern. It is recommended that in the presence of angled parking, cyclist traffic be redirected to an off-street multipurpose trail to minimize conflict potential in this complex on-street environment. Such an off-street multi-use trail connection has been provided, ensuring the continued connectivity of the Town's active transportation routes.
- » Rear-in angled parking is a modification that increases the safety of the streetscape environment, and could be a consideration for the Town as a strategy to minimize potential conflict.

With respect other traffic calming measures, a more detailed study of vehicle operating speeds, collision records and pedestrian operations would be required to ultimately recommend additional traffic calming measures that may be warranted. Raised and textured cross walks, raised intersections, designed roadside environments, and other measures may be appropriate; however they frequently create undesirable challenges with respect to operational and maintenance activities. While additional traffic calming measures may be considered, speed and operational control is best established through the effective design of the overall driving environment created along the full length of the street. Appropriate use of lane widths, roadside environment, signage and roadway painting are generally the most effective ways of promoting appropriate use of the roadway and should be integrated into the detailed design stages of the project.





Proposed Roundabout

Rain Garden Bumpout

Sidewalk Improvements

Sagors' Bookstore Redevelopment Site

Farmers' Market Site Improvements

Infill Development

Empire Street

King Street

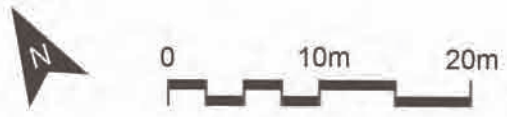
Existing Park: King Street Court

Sidewalk Improvements

Rain Garden Bumpout

Dominion Street

North Parkade





3.7 Proposed Cross-Section at King St.

Parking Reconfiguration

The proposed removal of the south parkade will require a reconfiguration of parking, but this can be accomplished with minimal impact to the King Street merchants. The addition of angled parking along the south side of King Street brings customers closer to the businesses, and alleviates the requirement to cross the street to reach their destination. Angled parking was the traditional parking configuration in Bridgewater in the 1960s, and is a condition found in many modern downtowns, including in the Cities of Charlottetown, PE, and Montreal, PQ.

To address concerns that specific merchants may have over the parking reallocation, there are several strategies that should be applied as part of the redevelopment. Encouraging employees to relocate their parking to the Town Hall lot could be facilitated through reserved merchant spaces. Town Staff who park in this lot could use street parking on Pleasant Street, or the Town could lease weekday parking from the nearby Lutheran Church (Phoenix and Pleasant Street). Several of the merchants have indicated specialized needs that require dedicated and proximal parking, and in this case, a proportionate number of angle parking spaces could be reserved on Kings Street for their specific use. For businesses like the Bank of Montreal and Royal Bank, where customers tend to require short term parking, a block of spaces could be dedicated with high-turnover parking meters (to encourage short duration parking).

The adjacent table summarizes the parking situation, both existing conditions and post-plan implementation. The removal of the south parkade does lead to a net loss of 20 spaces; however this loss is mitigated by the aforementioned strategies. It is important to note that without the south parkade, the study area still provides almost 2700 parking spaces in a rough square kilometer area. This effectively works out to one space for every three residents of the community.

Angled parking provides the opportunity to add a significant number of additional parking stalls directly in front of the commercial businesses on King Street. There is a significant amount of technical discussion and research being carried out currently on the advantages and disadvantages of angle parking though it is generally agreed that the provision of angled parking can increase the availability of parking spaces at key locations where other options for parking are limited. There is significant on the advantages of “drive-in, back-out” (traditional angled parking) and “back-in, drive-out” or “reverse angle parking”. In recent years, reverse angle parking has been gaining popularity as it generally provides increased visibility of pedestrians and cyclists, allows truck loading on the curb-side as opposed to the roadway side, promotes movements of children to the curb instead of towards traffic, plus other benefits. It is less intuitive than front in angle parking therefore signage and public education are critical components of such installations.

In general, angle parking provides a number of advantages for parking and access to the commercial properties along King Street and should be considered. As design progresses, an evaluation of front-in or back-in angled parking should be carried out which will help determine local preferences, expected levels of safety performance and design configuration for the angled parking areas.

3.8 Pre & Post Parking Numbers

	Existing	Post Plan
Municipal Parking	285	203
On-Street Parking	144	160
Private Parking	2288	2334
Total	2717	2697

New LaHave River Crossing

The existing (Old) Bridge Street crossing of the LaHave River has directed much of the development of the modern town centre. Over one hundred years old, the bridge is one of many on the Province's Department of Transportation & Infrastructure Renewal's (TIR) list for replacement. Given that it is likely the bridge will come up for replacement within the next five years, it is important to consider how that project will influence the downtown, and how can it be leveraged to align with the strategic direction of this plan. One of the options developed as part of this work includes the construction of the new bridge structure in an alternative location, near the east end of the Bridgewater Mall. The new bridge structure would essentially replace the existing structure on Old Bridge Street for vehicle traffic and would require that a roadway be formalized between LaHave Street and the new bridge.

There are a number of key reasons why this option is considered beneficial for the long term operation of the downtown core. A new bridge will:

- » Help to meet the region's longer term transportation needs;
- » Reduce or eliminate truck traffic through the historic downtown;
- » Facilitate improved safety and operations at the new intersections at each end;
- » Better integrate pedestrian and cyclist connections across the bridge and to trail and sidewalk networks on either side of the bridge;
- » Improve the general aesthetic and sense of purpose of the bridge in serving the community;
- » Leverage local improvements and development in the vicinity of the bridge;
- » Alleviate ongoing maintenance and repair costs for the Town;
- » Improve existing congestion, poor driving conditions, and an unsafe active transportation environment.
- » Increase the physical separation between bridges, creating a better distribution of traffic throughout the downtown;

The Old Bridge could be considered "functionally obsolete" and will require replacement in the short term future. Therefore, there is a current cost associated with maintaining, upgrading or improving the bridge that can be invested into the new structure. It is unlikely that the old bridge meets current design code requirements, therefore the new modern bridge will place the Municipality in an improved position from a service and liability perspective.

LaHave Street is currently a two lane undivided roadway with dedicated left turn auxiliary lanes in both directions, providing access to the Bridgewater Mall & Empire Theatres on the southeast side of the road and the former AppleBerry Farm Market on the northwest side. The driveway to the Bridgewater Mall includes a single entering lane and two exiting lanes including a dedicated right turn lane and a shared through / left lane. On the opposite side of the roadway, there is no management of access to the parking areas of the former AppleBerry property. Past studies have recommended improvements to access management principles in this area to improve safety and operations in the vicinity of the intersection.

A roadway connection at this location would require that this intersection be upgraded and it is recommended that a three leg T-intersection be considered. This would require eliminating direct access to the AppleBerry property within the functional area defined by the intersection. New access to that property could be provided further to the north as required and placing such a restriction on the property appears timely given the current unoccupied state of the property.

The roadway connecting the LaHave Street intersection and the bridge will serve three distinct functions. First, will be the conveyance of traffic between the two points will likely be accomplished on a basic two lane cross section. Its second major function will be providing access to the existing mall and Theatre properties, most likely at an intersection partway between the bridge and LaHave Street. This will require accommodating dedicated left turn lanes in each direction approaching the intersection. As a result it is likely that the road alignment centerline will need to shift to the south slightly away from the Sobeys to accommodate the cross sectional requirements of the roadway.

Accommodating truck deliveries at the rear and south sides of the building of the mall will be a significant challenge and require redesigning the area in conjunction with the new roadway and bridge structure. It is likely that additional space will need to be created near the river to permit trucks to enter the area, unload, and maneuver back to an exit point to the new roadway. Some building modifications and reconfiguration of the loading docks may be required to better accommodate deliveries.

Interim Design Approach (Before New Bridge Construction)

In the interim solution (while the Old Bridge is still opened to vehicular traffic), angled parking in the first block (or any parking for that matter), would not be recommended within the functional area of the intersection. This would generally include approximately 5 to 10 spaces closest to the bridge. The angled parking areas between Phoenix Street and the first driveway closest to the bridge would still be possible in the final and interim solutions.

Bridge Structure

Should the bridge proceed, a decision will have to be made on the capacity that the bridge will be required to accommodate in the short and long term. Presently, the Veterans Memorial Bridge essentially has 4 traffic lanes, though the lanes have been compressed at the north end to accommodate a 5 lane cross section. The bridge experienced an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) volume of approximately 8750 vehicles per day (based on 2010 traffic count volumes) with typical peak directional volumes of 350 to 400 vehicles per hour. The bridge also accommodates over 60 cyclists per day on average week days, with a pattern that suggests a notably higher number of cyclists on the weekdays as opposed to a limited number of cyclists on the weekends.

The Old Bridge has a narrow two lane cross section and the bridge experienced AADT volume of approximately 7230 vehicles per day with typical peak directional volumes of 300 to 350 vehicles per hour. The bridge accommodates around 30 - 40 cyclists per day on average week days, again with a higher number of cyclists on the weekdays.

In general, both experience relatively consistent volumes throughout the day with no real distinct peaking characteristics and both accommodate relatively high volumes of truck traffic based on NSTIR counts. That said, many of these trucks are smaller configurations. Both bridge crossings experience some capacity restriction due to the traffic signals present at each end of the bridges.



With the presence of 3 lanes in each direction, theoretical capacities could be in the range of 2700 to 3000 vehicles per hour in each direction. With the restrictions of traffic signals at each end restricting capacity by half for the purposes of argument, the bridge capacities are still likely 1200 to 1400 vehicles per hour in each direction. With current peak volumes around 300 - 350 vehicles per bridge in the peak hours, this would suggest that the bridges are generally operating in the range half of their total capacity. This further suggests that a new bridge structure composed of two through lanes would be appropriate to maintain capacity for the foreseeable future. Such a structure should also include adequate space to accommodate any turning lane requirements at the intersections at the ends of the bridge.

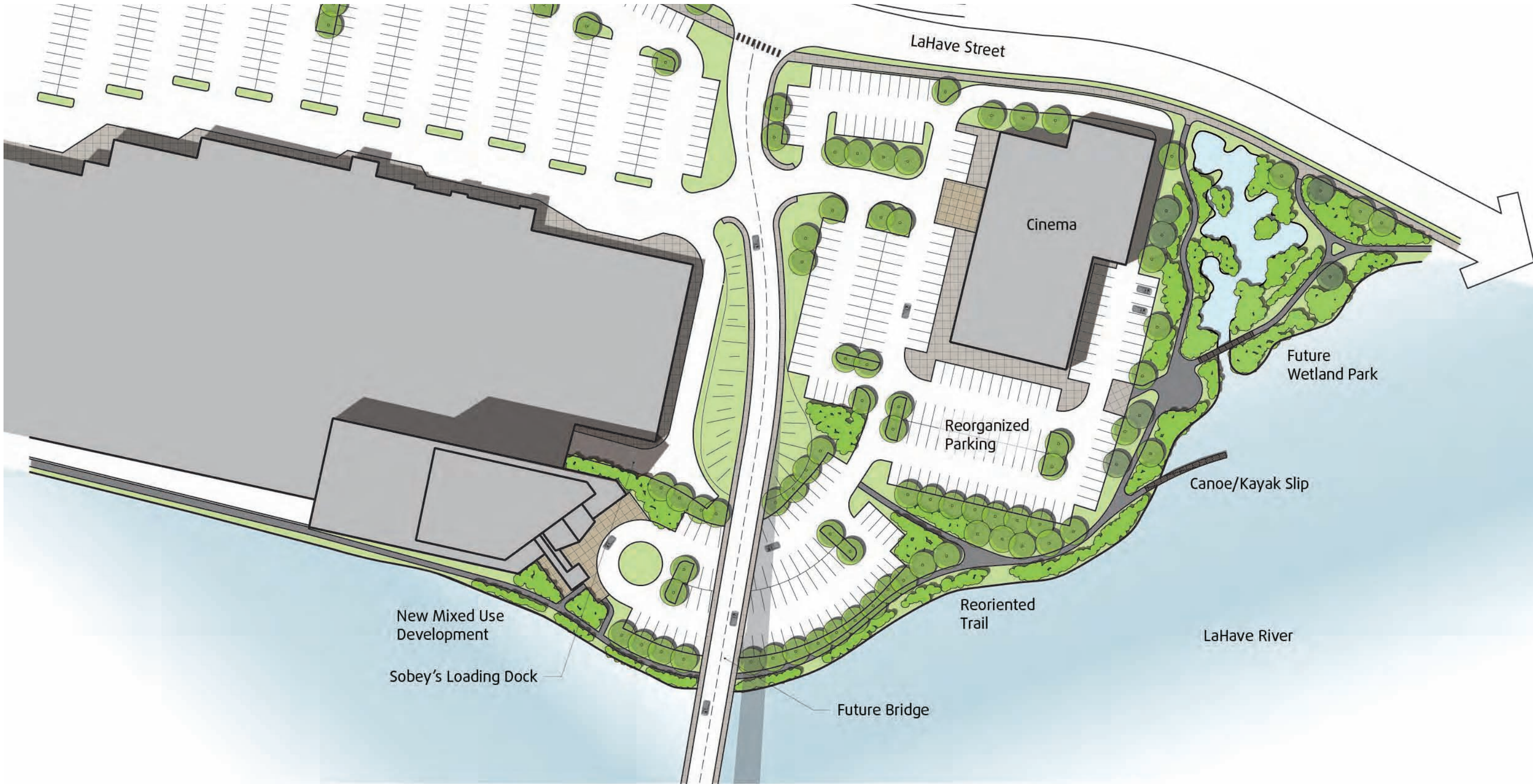
Connection to King Street

The proposed new route would connect to King Street in the vicinity of the Maple Street intersection which essentially is at the southeast limit of the commercial downtown region. Points further to the southeast become more residential and rural in nature. This is a logical connection point from the perspective of overall vehicular circulation through the Downtown area as it provides the primary crossing points at the ends of the commercialized area for vehicles of higher mobility, and leaving points inside of the two crossings more accessible for non-motorized, less mobile or active transportation modes. It is likely that some property acquisition will be required at this location. The intersection with King Street should be reconfigured as a four leg intersection including the Bridge Crossing and Maple Street.

Connection to Maple Street

The preferred arrangement for the new intersection located at the southwest terminus of the new Bridge and King Street is difficult to determine at this stage of the study. There are a variety of options that would be considered should the construction of the new bridge progress to the next stages of design, including the use of a roundabout, traffic signals / stop control, number of legs and configuration of surrounding infrastructure. The specific location of the bridge intersection and its configuration are impacted by the following:

- » The ability to acquire land along King Street to accommodate the bridge and associated roadway;
- » The preferences with respect to roadways to be used by the majority of traffic (Maple versus Dufferin);
- » Acceptance of roundabouts as a design alternative; and,
- » Expected volume of turning movements at the new intersection and required infrastructure to accommodate the volume.



3.9 Future Bridge and Development

Dufferin Street is clearly a preferred route (as opposed to Maple Street) to accommodate traffic as it is a Provincially owned road designed to accommodate higher traffic volumes. Direct alignment with Dufferin Street is not feasible due to the existing buildings located on either side of the River.

Ultimately, the objective should be to manage traffic in an appropriate way to encourage drivers to use the most appropriate roadways which would suggest directing traffic to Dufferin Street. A number of options could help achieve this including:

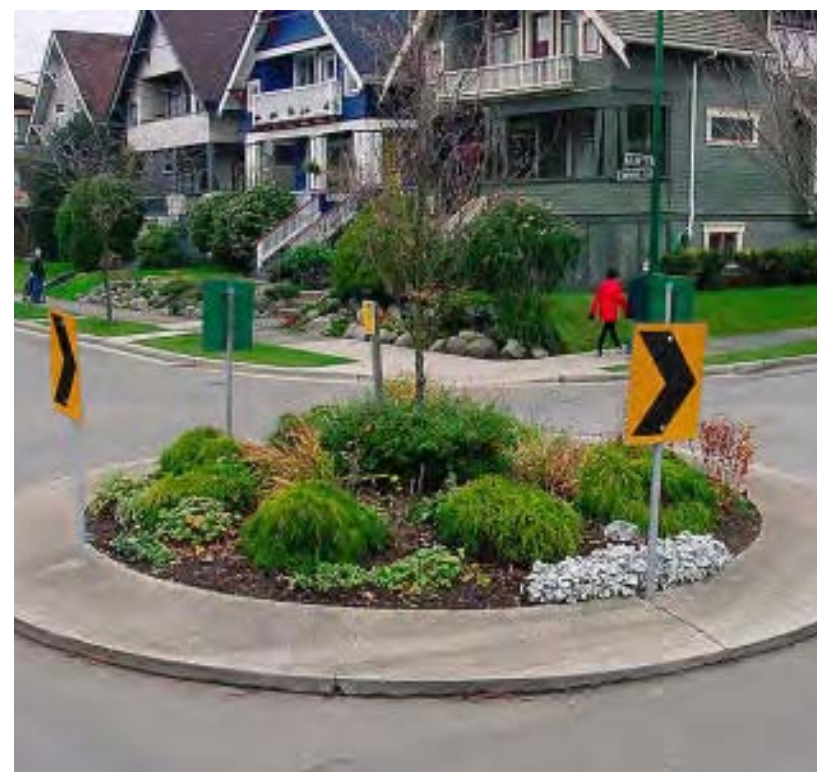
- » The ability to offset the intersection from Maple Street to create a T-intersection along King Street northwest of Maple Street. This will encourage drivers to make a right turn towards Dufferin Street as backtracking along King Street to Maple Street provides little benefit to drivers;
- » Align the intersection with Maple Street, but impose turn restriction (signage or physical guidance) which will eliminate or discourage drivers from using Maple Street;
- » Allow all turn movements at the intersection, but add traffic calming measures or other means on Maple Street to discourage drivers using this roadway as a through route. This could extend as far as closing a portion of Maple Street to eliminate through traffic by segmenting the street at an appropriate location and adding cul-de-sacs on each side of the closure. This option would likely allow Maple Street to be reconfigured to better accommodate bike and pedestrian traffic and create connectivity between the new bridge and the Alexandra Avenue corridor.

With respect to the design of the intersection, this work should take place under a more formal traffic impact assessment and functional design study which would address the details of the intersection design. This work is considered beyond the scope of this Master Planning Study.

It is expected that the bridge will consist of a two lane road cross section complete with bike lanes and sidewalk or possibly a multiuse trail. It is assumed that the bridge will not be widened to accommodate any additional turning lanes at its ends due to the cost implications. Considerations such as this may help determine the type of intersection configuration that will ultimately be constructed. For example, the use of a roundabout at this location would eliminate the need for any auxiliary lanes approaching the intersection.

The impact to residents on Maple Street will depend significantly on the configuration of the new intersection and associated infrastructure and any measures put in place to limit or discourage traffic on Maple Street. During the detailed design process, one of the key constraints that should be established is to limit any negative impacts of traffic operations on Maple Street. A more detailed traffic impact study should address these issues in detail and make the appropriate recommendations for managing traffic to meet the objectives of the Town, the Province and local community.

With respect to traffic on King Street, the elimination of truck traffic on this commercial corridor will be an important issue as it creates an improved downtown environment. The relocated bridge is also likely to promote traffic to use King Street to the southeast of the Old Bridge. This section of road is predominately commercial in nature, therefore increased traffic movement in this area is considered beneficial to local businesses. That said, traffic volumes are not expected to be significant enough to create conditions of congestion assuming adequate capacities are available at the new intersections. In general, it is expected that traffic impacts related to the new bridge will be minimal.



North Street & King Street Roundabouts

The use of modern roundabouts has been rapidly gaining popularity throughout Canada and the United States, and more specifically within the Maritime Provinces including Nova Scotia. Numerous intersections have been upgraded to take advantage of the safety, operational and environmentally sustainable benefits of modern roundabouts including:

- » Conversion of the Armdale Rotary to a modern roundabout;
- » Larry Uteck roundabout corridor;
- » Roundabouts at highway interchange terminals in Antigonish, Milford, Beaverbank/Sackville, Windsor, etc; and,
- » Various other locations throughout the province and Maritimes.

While frequently used and becoming increasingly popular, planners and designers must be aware of their limitations and recognize that a modern roundabout may not necessarily be the preferred option in all situations. Therefore, careful evaluation is required with respect to: vehicle, pedestrian and cyclist volumes and directional distribution; available right-of-way; gateway opportunities and impact; elimination of traffic signals; current safety performance; and, other potential benefits or negative impacts.

Two locations have been shown as potential locations for roundabouts. The intersection at Aberdeen Road and North Street has been documented in past studies as being a good candidate for conversion to a modern roundabout from its existing configuration as a signalized intersection. This location appears to have reasonable lands available to construct a roundabout, would be justified based on traffic volumes and distribution, and would certainly serve as a gateway opportunity to the Town based on its connection to Highway 103 via North Street, and Route 325 to the north.

The second location identified is at the intersection of Victoria Road and King Street, immediately south of the Veterans Memorial Bridge. Again, this location serves as a prime gateway opportunity being at the intersection of Provincial Routes 325 (Victoria Road) and 331 (King Street). Operationally, it is expected that this intersection would operated well as a single lane roundabout for the foreseeable future. There are likely to be some challenges from a design and construction perspective given the existing buildings adjacent to the intersection and the fixed alignment due to the bridge, though shifting the center of the circulatory roadway to the northwest of the existing intersection appears to provide adequate space to construct a roundabout. This roundabout would be designed to accommodate truck traffic heading towards the Business Park.

3.10 LaHave Streetscape



LaHave Streetscape

The existing LaHave streetscape is defined by expansive asphalt and surface parking. As part of the revitalization plan and ongoing street reconstruction and renewal projects, a conversion to a more pedestrian friendly environment is proposed. Sidewalk, street furnishings, street trees, and defined boundaries to the parking will improve the walkability of the area, building on the existing active transportation connections, and enhancing the safety of the shopper travelling on foot through this area. Strategic infill and new development opportunities take advantage of the surplus of surface parking area, and add diversity to this retail environment. Any new development should be pushed up against the street, creating a sense of scale, and animating pedestrian spaces. As the Glen Allen subdivision continues to develop, more and more traffic will be passing through this space. Streetscape improvements will beautify the route and may encourage visitors to travel to the downtown on foot or by bicycle.

To maintain a visual and aesthetic connection to the historic downtown, the same palette of site furnishings, street trees, and planting treatments should be applied to the LaHave streetscape.

Truck Routes

The designation of truck routes is intended to protect residential areas and other areas where trucks may be considered inappropriate for reasons of size, noise, safety or other operational issues and may be used to designate areas where the physical structure of the roadway is appropriate for truck loading. On the east side of the River, primary truck routes include North Street in and east/west direction connecting Highway 103 LaHave Street to Provincial Trunk Route 325. While there appears to be some logic in continuing the truck route along Glen Allen Drive to LaHave Street, this roadway has become more residential in nature including shared bike lanes and direct driveway access to the street in many locations.

Transitioning the truck route to Provincial Trunk 325 is reasonable in that it provides direct access to areas to the north and south of Bridgewater on this provincially designated route, including passage over the Veteran's Memorial Bridge. This is the preferred bridge for all truck crossings due to the bridge's wider 4 lane cross section, and the better geometric and operational considerations at the intersection at each end of the bridge. Truck access along LaHave Street is then accessed via Davison Street which provides access to the major commercial areas along LaHave Street including the Bridgewater Mall.

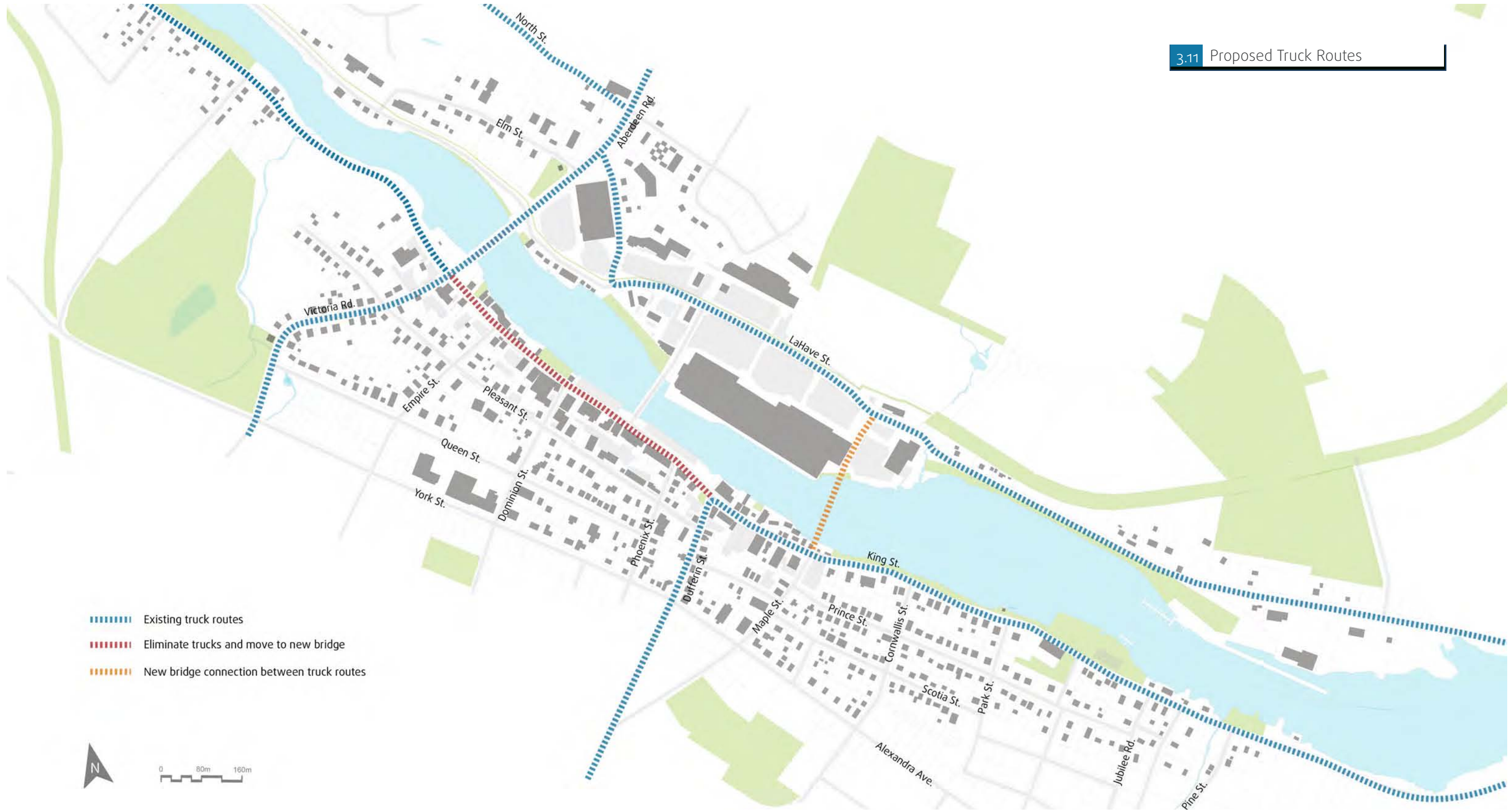
On the west side of the river, it would be preferable to eliminate or minimize heavy truck traffic on King Street as the primary commercial street other than local deliveries for a variety of reasons including:

- » The cross section is relatively narrow and alignments are inconsistent in many locations;
- » There is significant pedestrian and cyclist traffic in the downtown area including many crossing locations and many areas where the sidewalk is located directly on the back of curb. This can make the environment challenging for active transportation users in the area, particularly in the presence of larger vehicles;
- » Heavy truck traffic is not consistent with the traditional commercial nature of the downtown core and adjacent waterfront initiatives; and,
- » On street parking is available in many areas and there are numerous driveway connections to King Street making higher volumes of truck traffic more challenging to accommodate.

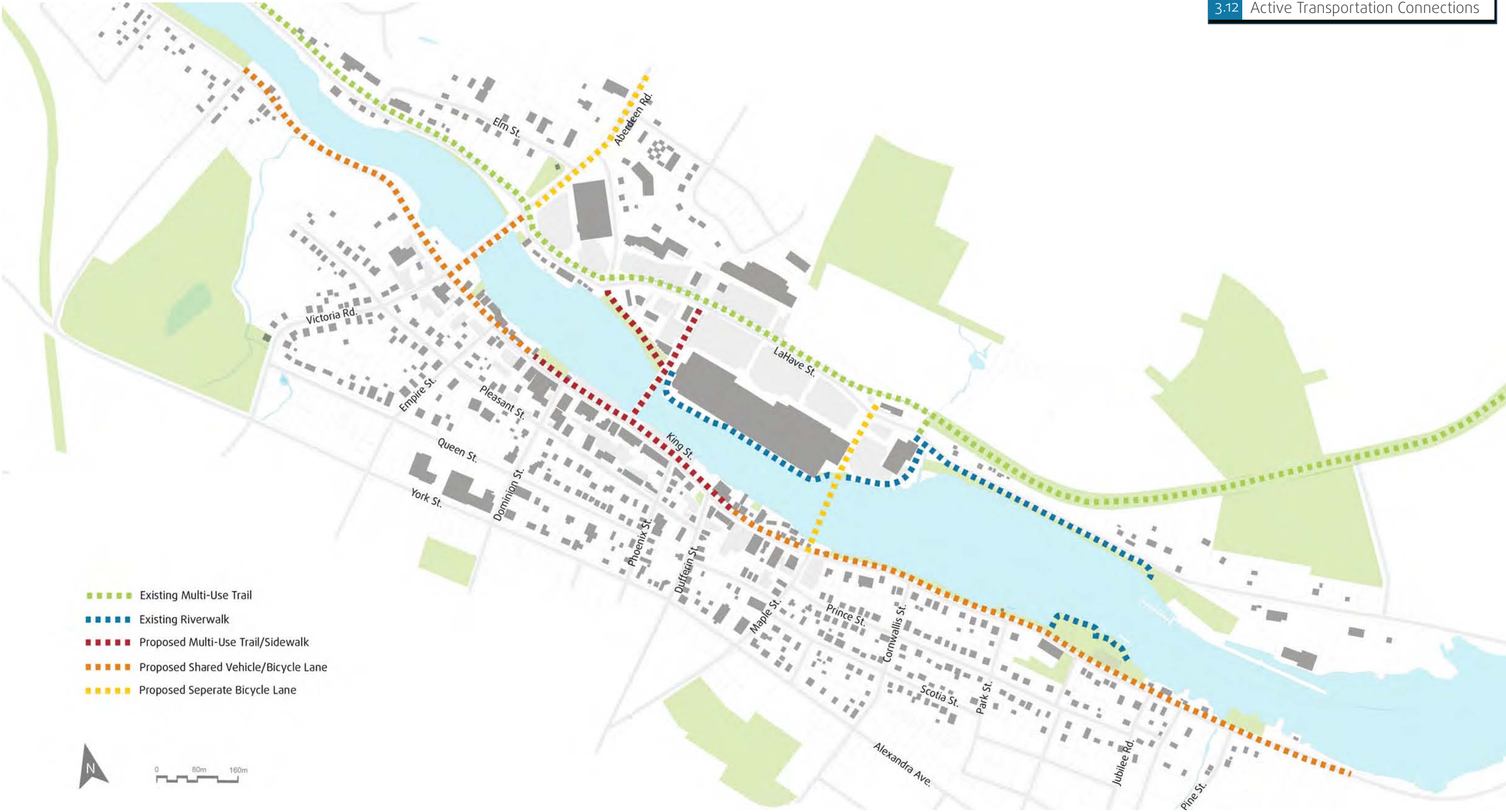
On the south side of the river, the primary truck usage routes include Nova Scotia Highway 331 to the east of the Town and Route 3 / Dufferin Street to the south of the Town. To connect these routes to the north trucks must progress along King Street to the Veterans Memorial Bridge.



3.11 Proposed Truck Routes



3.12 Active Transportation Connections



Active Transportation Connections

Bridgewater’s Active Transportation Master Plan (2008) outlines a vision for an active Town where it is easy to walk and bike to key destinations. As part of the downtown revitalization, integrating new active transportation (AT) facilities and building upon existing connections is an essential element. One of the interesting themes that arose during the public consultation was the vision for a walkable and bikeable town, which was in conflict with the expressed notion that many people consider the Old Bridge too far a walk.

The reconstruction of King Street allows for the Town to better integrate AT facilities into the downtown. In areas of sufficient width, pedestrian traffic is directed to an enhanced streetscape. Areas of existing conflict, such as the tree-lined paved area between the north parkade and the road are redeveloped to provide for an unobstructed flow of traffic. Traffic calming measures such as the bump outs slow through traffic, making it more comfortable for on-road cyclists. This focus on AT would be further supported by the installation of share the road signage and sharrow line painting on the road.

The proposed Old Bridge Landing uses a 3 metre wide multi-modal trail to provide access to the River. Cyclists, pedestrians and those with mobility restrictions can all use this new facility safely and effectively. Any future waterfront development should require the construction of multi-use trail, helping to eventually build an AT link to Shipyard’s Landing and to the Port. These proposed facilities will further connect existing trails and sidewalks, making it easy and fun to travel through the downtown on foot or by bicycle.



Recreation Oriented Waterfront

Over the last thirty years, the connection of the Community to the riverfront has decreased, in part due to reduced visual and physical access. Recent initiatives like the development of King Street Court, the proposed wetland park (behind the Empire Cinemas) and the marina development are addressing this disconnect but further work should be done. The river used to be a core recreational amenity for the Town. With the completion of the Lunenburg County Lifestyle Centre, much of the community's indoor recreation and leisure needs will shift to that site, including the relocation of the library. To counteract this, it is important to create a strong recreational node in the downtown. A recreation waterfront will enhance other downtown uses, and will add as a standalone attraction, generating traffic to the area.

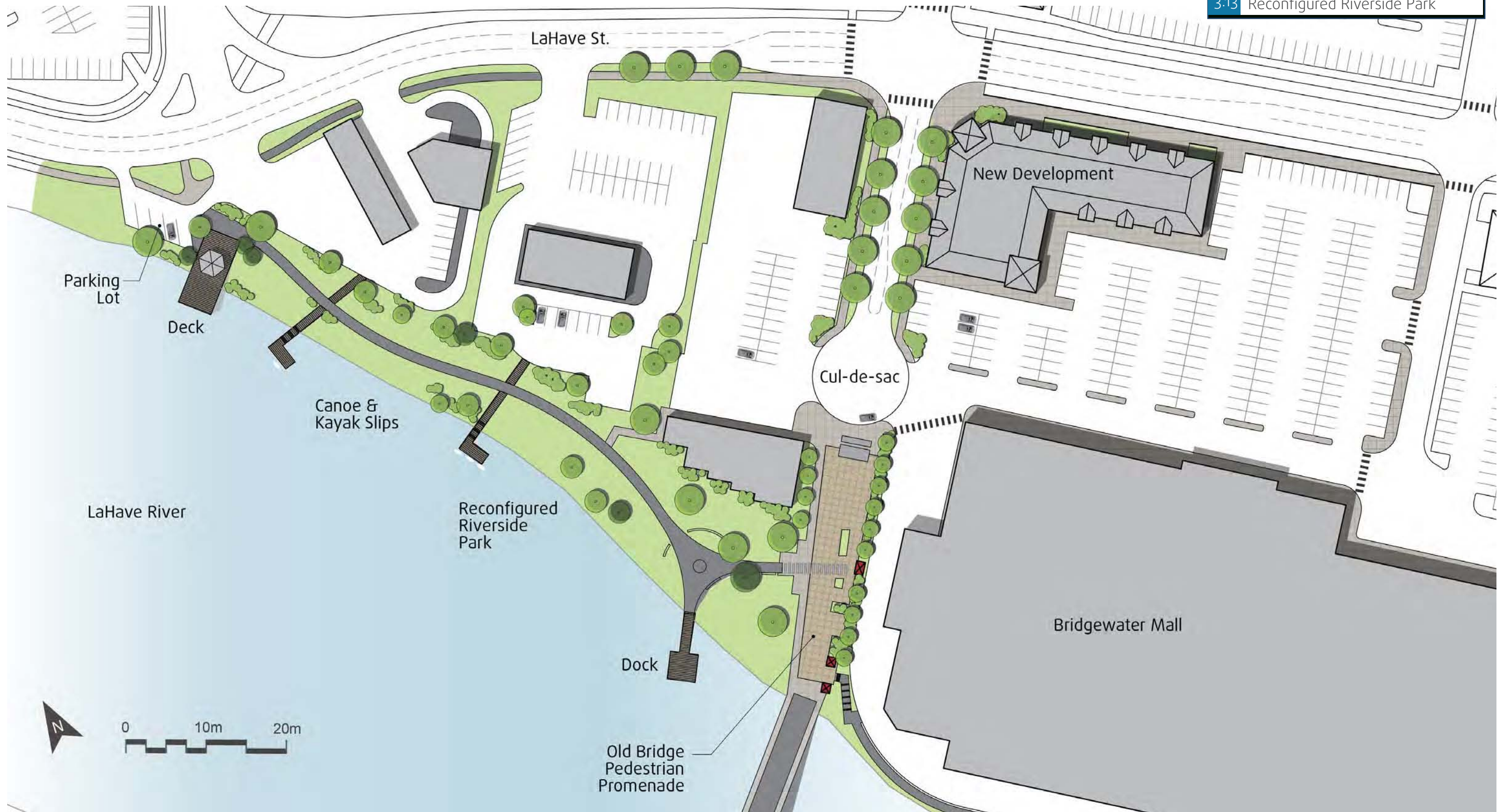
Riverside Park & Old Bridge Plaza

Riverside Park is a lovely and inviting space, with excellent views of the downtown streetscape. However, the park's visibility from the LaHave District streetscape is poor, and the park is not well connected to this side of the downtown. The park bleeds out onto LaHave Street on the north end, and there is little separation between park users and the parking lots of the adjacent gas station and fast food restaurants. Old Bridge Street forms the southern boundary of the park and separates it from the retail environment of the Bridgewater Mall. Old Bridge Street, while currently serving as an important vehicular crossing of the LaHave River, also presents difficulties for bicycle and pedestrian navigation along the LaHave which is so fundamental to the precepts of Bridgewater's Active Transportation Strategy.

By reclaiming the Old Bridge as a pedestrian-centric thoroughfare and extending that pedestrian-oriented design between Riverside Park and the Mall, a large green zone is created in the heart of Downtown, helping to link together the Historic Downtown and the LaHave District while providing promenade space, recreational opportunities, water access, and space for open-air events such as art walks, street fairs, farmer's markets, etc.

Riverside Park has been slightly reimagined in order to enhance its present configuration. The trail system has been pulled away from the north side parking lots and brought more into the interior of the park. A curvilinear form has been adopted over the current arrow-straight path in order to encourage strolling, establish better views, and slow down bicycle traffic. Low-grow shrubs and plantings have been added between the walk and the parking areas in order to reduce pedestrian / vehicular conflict, while maintaining safety standards. Large sweeping grassy lawns are envisioned for the majority of the space much as the park looks today, but with a balance more favoured toward foot traffic. Additionally, four docks have been added, two for canoe and kayak access to the LaHave, and two as strategically placed river overlooks. The overlook at the north end will provide shade and seating and act as a visual bookend to the site. It will serve as the north 'gateway' to the park and help to establish a boundary against the highly trafficked LaHave Street. The south end overlook is closely tied to Old Bridge Plaza and can play an integral role in joining the energies of the two areas. There are spaces in the park or in the nearby retail plaza that would be ideal for seasonal or permanent boat rentals, small craft sales, or other passive recreational activities.





North Basin Rowing & Paddling Club

The LaHave river front affords the Bridgewater community an exciting opportunity to take advantage of an underutilized asset. The Town could develop active recreation opportunities for canoeing, rowing, kayaking and paddle-boating in the area to the north of the shopping centre. Indeed, there is scope to establish a canoeing or rowing club in Bridgewater, to rival similar clubs in Dartmouth and Halifax. The club could cater to Lunenburg and Queens Counties. It could be devoted to training provincial and national caliber athletes or for purely recreational purposes such as the Halifax Rowing Club at St. Mary's boat club on the North West Arm.

The river is very straight here and a course could be easily demarcated. Below this, the area could be dedicated to less formalized active boating pursuits such as paddle boats and canoes. A boat launch could be provided near the shopping centre and it could be made available for locals and tourists alike. There is lots of demand for motorized boating in south western Nova Scotia. A marina could be developed to cater to small motor boats, but we would also recommend that strict speed limits be placed on these boats when they are in the upper reaches of the river. Small dinghy sailing is probably more appropriate elsewhere on the river where there are stronger winds.



Old Bridge Plaza

The Old Bridge Plaza, site of the reconfigured Old Bridge Street is envisioned as a active and vibrant urban plaza which sits at the node of several highly energized areas; the pedestrian bridge to Historic Downtown; the Riverside Park; the Mall; and the new pedestrian oriented Old Bridge cul-de-sac retail area. This plaza will provide a much needed link between the two Downtown areas. As such, the plaza will be of high grade design and materials, embracing all the modern construction technologies. It will become a hub for pedestrian signage and wayfinding, and serve as a public gathering spot for a variety of cultural occasions. The plaza will be well lit with water and electrical outlets for vendors, open-air bands, stages, summer-time movies in the park, Saturday morning art walks, Remembrance Day Celebrations, harvest festivals, etc.

In the interim, while the Old Bridge continues to function as a major vehicular connector, better sidewalk and trail connections to Riverside Park and the trail behind the mall will be important. The expansion / reconstruction of the stairs from the south side of Old Bridge Street down to the waterfront trail will improve the visual connection to this important asset. The existing crosswalk & streetscape should be enhanced to encourage the connection from Riverside Park to the trail, and back across the bridge to the Historic Downtown.



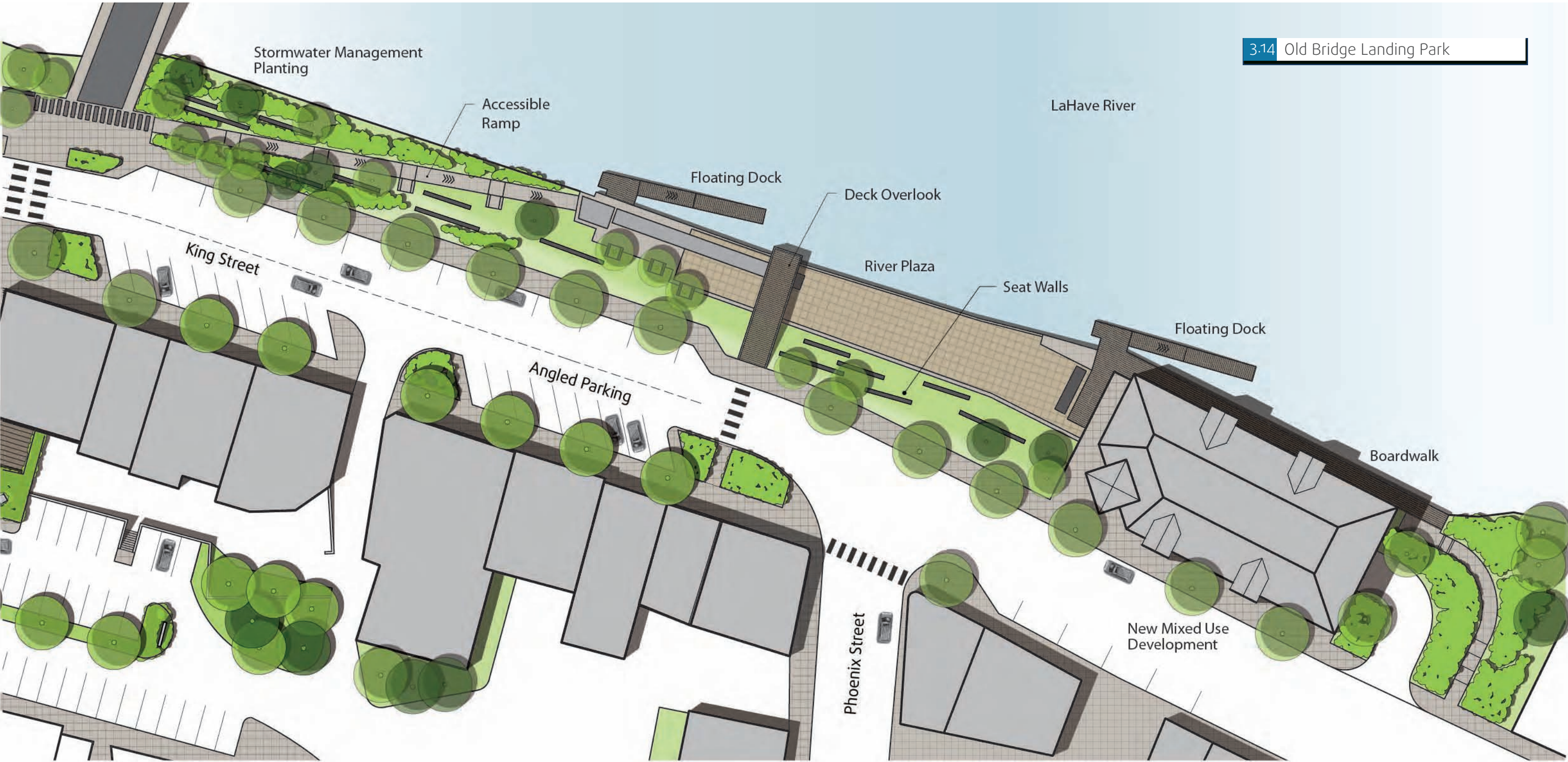
Old Bridge Landing Park

Old Bridge Landing Park will replace the south parkade in order to provide a much desired public riverfront access point and visual connection to the water. The park is optimally located in the heart of Downtown at the foot of the Old Bridge and will create a continuous active transportation corridor linking with the park and future plaza at the east side of the bridge. The park is wheelchair friendly, bikeable, and fully accessible along a ramp which runs down the north end of the site. An innovative stormwater management system is integrated into look off and down the terraced slope to filter pollutants which would otherwise be deposited directly in the river. This process of bioremediation will be highly visible from the trail and streetscape and serve as a showcase piece of sustainable technology.

At the bottom of the trail visitors will transition from a vegetated zone into an open plaza that will serve as the Town's central riverfront gathering space. The plaza accommodates flexible programming and remains adaptable to many different uses such as performance space, art walk, or small open air market. The slope leading down to the plaza is composed of a series of linear retaining walls which stabilize the bank and act as seating to create an informal outdoor theatre. Direct water access is provided by two floating docks which also offer a location to launch canoes and kayaks, or dock boats arriving from down river. A deck, which is aligned with the crosswalk at Phoenix Street, extends out over the park from street level to provide views down into the space.



3.14 Old Bridge Landing Park





The south end of the site is anchored by a new development which will integrate a mix of uses including residential, commercial space, and a cultural centre at street level. A boardwalk continues along the river where access is then provided back up to King Street. In the future, and when land becomes available, there is the potential to connect the park with adjacent waterfront spaces to create a continuous public waterfront. Prior to construction on this development parcel, a interim connection should be made to link the south edge of the park back up to street level. This connection does not need to be accessible, as the existing trail serves that function, but the grades could allow for a ramp or staircase access back to King Street.



Riparian Restoration

Rivers, in their natural state, are typically diverse and biologically productive environments. However, once subjected to urbanization they often experience moderate to severe degradation brought about by the cumulative effects of flow alteration, unsanitary discharge, and channelization. Research has shown that adjacent land-use modification can cause decreases in aquatic diversity, decrease in the diversity of habitat zones, a decrease in linkages between water and land ecologies, and general decrease in river ecology complexity that is the hallmark of a successful ecosystem.

The current stream edge along the LaHave River is typical of a more urbanized river environment. In areas of private ownership the bank conditions varies from mown edge to more naturalized vegetation. Tree cover varies, depending on the adjacent land use, but is generally patchy and sparse, especially adjacent to public open space. The lack of saplings and new growth suggests that any new vegetation is being eliminated either through wildlife interaction or by horticultural practice. The existing maintenance practices vary depending on land use and ownership.

Generally the regular mowing of grass right up to the edge is hindering the establishment of a more diverse collection of native plants that would naturally occur adjacent to a river corridor. While the mown edge signifies that effort and care is being taken, the ability of native species to colonize the area and improve the natural function is limited. Where no maintenance is taking place native colonizers are more successful but may attract more incidents of littering and pollution. In order to convey to the public that riparian restoration is being implemented, a designated no-mow area should be established along naturalized areas of the shoreline. This zone should be reinforced by the presence of a clear boundary between maintained and naturalized areas, and if necessary, this distinction should be clarified with interpretive signage.

Another key feature of river pollution which can be mitigated with some fairly simple steps is the issue of surface water discharge and runoff. Surface water runoff is exacerbated by the impervious surfaces and lack of vegetation which predominate in any urban environment. Surface water discharge and runoff waters increase river flows, erode banks and subaqueous topography, raise river temperature, and add to siltation and pollutants.

Stormwater quality varies significantly throughout the year and during each storm. The 'first flush' from a storm event contains the most concentrated pollutant load of a storm, and the spring run-off unleashes an entire winter's worth of pollutants and salts into the river. Any means of intercepting stormwater before emptying into the river can significantly improve water quality. These could include engineered wetlands, rain gardens, or just a conscientious maintenance program of cleaning out manholes and storm water pipes.

Bridgewater should promote pervious surfacing in future developments. This will aid in the uptake of waters into the existing aquifers and reduce overflow directly into the river. The installation of pervious surfaces on public and private lands facilitates infiltration and minimizes the risk of contaminated run-off from entering the river. Residential point-source pollution prevention programs are also simple and highly effective. Private owners should be encouraged not to wash household chemicals, soaps, or garden fertilizers down the storm drains.

Finally, the establishment of a wetlands-oriented park would not only aid in the cleansing and infiltration of storm water, it would also create new environments for riparian flora and fauna. Most importantly, it would serve as an educational outpost to encourage the widespread understanding and acceptance of healthy river corridor tactics. Exposing and explaining the riparian system to students and the public will help Bridgewater continue to build upon its identity as the green hub of the South Shore.



Streetscaping & Urban Beautification

The redevelopment of King Street offers a great deal of potential improvement to the downtown, both in terms of function as well as urban form. In the long term, the redevelopment will capitalize on the relocation of the Old Bridge Street crossing, capturing additional street width for on-street parallel parking and creating a strong pedestrian crossing through the centre of Bridgewater. In the interim, streetscape improvements will create additional parking capacity directly in front of the King Street merchants, improve pedestrian safety by shortening crossing distances in key locations, and beautify the downtown through a cohesive approach to site furnishings and urban design.

King Street's reconfiguration will provide significant, pedestrian-friendly solutions such as the narrowing traffic lanes, the provision of shorter pedestrian crosswalks, and the general widening of pedestrian sidewalks. In widening these street-side sidewalks, granite sidewalks should be considered because they last ten times longer than concrete, but they cost only fractionally more to install. In fact, most downtowns in Maine have moved to granite sidewalks because their lifecycle costs are often much lower than concrete. These and the following King Street improvements will help redefine the downtown area and provide a safer, new 'Pedestrian Promenade' for visitors and locals alike.



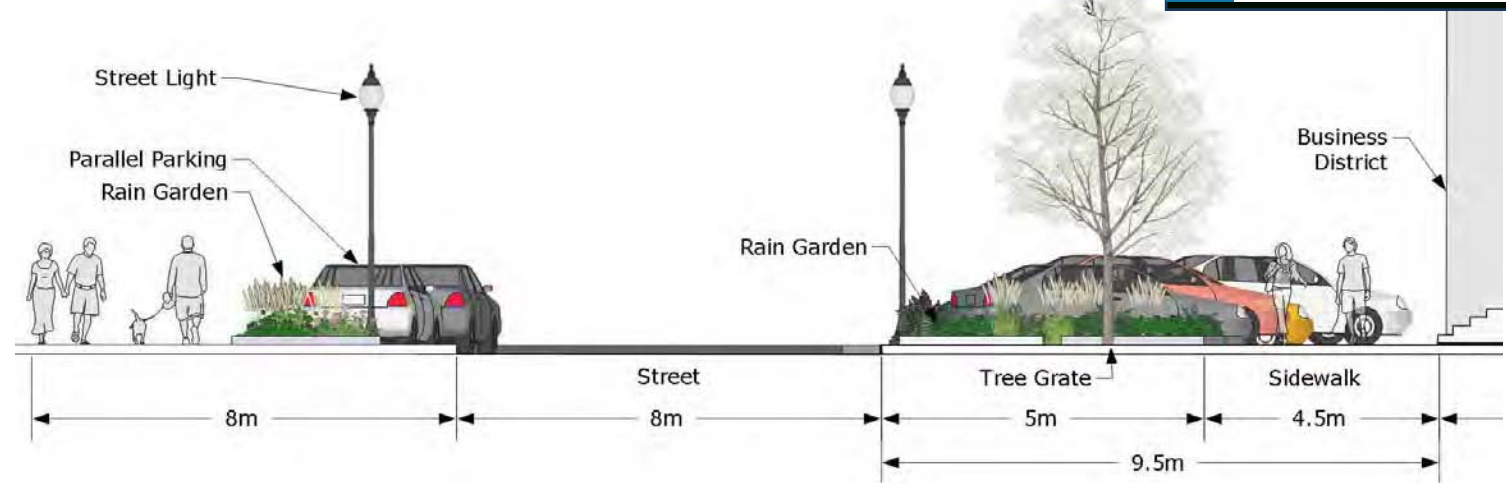
3-15 Rain Garden Bump Outs

Bump Outs

A bump out or curb extension is a traffic calming measure primarily used to extend the sidewalk to allow for a safer crossing for pedestrians. By reducing the crossing distance and providing a clearer crossing perspective for oncoming drivers, bumps-outs improve the pedestrian environment. Bump outs also shield on-street parking spaces by the extended sidewalk and clearly defining parking areas. Additionally, the extra space in the public realm can be used to provide zones for stormwater management strategies like rain gardens and add space for urban amenities like street trees, site furnishings, and street lighting.

Bump outs along King Street will be proposed at several locations including the new pedestrian crossing at Old Bridge Street, proposed and existing crosswalk locations, and all street corners that include parallel/angled parking within the downtown area.

3.16 Section of Proposed Bump Out





Sidewalk Rain Gardens

Rain gardens are depressed areas of land that allow rainwater runoff from streets, sidewalks, rooftops, and other impervious surfaces to be collected and absorbed. This in turn reduces pressure on local storm drains, street flooding, and general water pollution. The King Street sidewalk rain gardens are proposed to collect much of the downtown sidewalk runoff and even street runoff in some locations. Many of the proposed bump outs have rain garden depression areas designed into them with the intent of mitigating further urbanization.

The rain gardens will be enclosed by a 150mm granite or concrete curb to contain the rain garden depression and to direct runoff. The curb will be cut in low grade locations (as necessary) to direct the run-off into the rain garden. The rain garden itself will contain a permeable, bio-retentive soil mixture and plant material that tolerates both saturated and dry soil. Plant material examples include perennials such as aster, astilbe, iris, and many fern types; grasses such as sedge, switch grass, and ribbon grass; and shrubs such as buttonbush, dogwood, inkberry, winterberry, and some viburnums.

Maintenance will be minimal over the lifespan of the rain gardens, however, initially, the plant material will need to be watered until properly established, and weeding will be required for the same time period. Dead plant material will need to be removed on occasion and shrubs, if installed, may also require pruning if desired. The proposed plant composition does need careful consideration given both the urban character and environmental conditions; however there are numerous examples of successful rain garden installations in urban / downtown environments.



Lighting & Site Furnishings

The current street light fixtures appear to be of appropriate height (at least 4.2m from the base to the bottom of the luminaire). If the current fixture is not an LED, a retrofit is recommended. LED lights not only improve efficiency, illumination, and reduce energy costs, but also enhance the pedestrian experience by providing suitable lighting for security and comfort in the evenings. With the addition of safer, on-street parking along King Street, much of the lighting will require relocation along the adjacent curb extensions as well other crosswalk bump outs along the corridor.

Beyond lighting, other site furnishings for downtown Bridgewater should be standardized as well. These may include items such as benches, waste receptacles, bike racks, tree grates, bollards, and planter boxes. The furnishing standard should be carefully considered. It should be reflective of the downtown character of Bridgewater, be of a quality that does not deteriorate quickly, and reduce the need for frequent maintenance. The location of proposed urban furnishings should not interfere with pedestrian traffic, but should complement it. Suitable locations include bump outs, amenity strips, or other landscaped areas.

A consistent palette of site furnishings applied across the entire Town will have a number of benefits. In addition to setting a strong urban design tone for the Town for streetscapes, parks, and open spaces, there are cost efficiencies to be captured through bulk purchasing power. Many of the existing benches in the downtown area are in need of upgrading, and this improvement can be easily phased in over time, as budget allows. King Street Court has relatively new site furnishings, and these should stay until replacement is required. Otherwise, any replacement or new site furnishing in Bridgewater should stay consistent to the Town's adopted palette.

3.18 Site Furnishing Palette

	Bench Option #1 Maglin MLB700W		Trash Receptacle Maglin MLWR550-32
	Street Light Philips Lumec L8o Series		Ginkgo Maglin MBR972
	Bench Option # 2 Maglin MLB970W		



Street Trees

Downtown King Street is fortunate not to have overhead powerlines. Street trees should be proposed wherever possible along both sides of the street and ideally, outside of sight distance triangles of major and minor intersections. Currently, the north side of King Street has done a modest job of providing shade for pedestrians; however, there is much opportunity for improvement as there are tree gaps in several locations, virtually no trees on the south side of King Street, and a more formalized tree installation would be ideal (i.e. tree grate versus the existing wood timbers with a small turf strip). Also, existing tree locations could be retrofitted with a standardized tree grate.

The proposed bump outs can accommodate new tree wells along both sides of King Street. Bump out locations provide landscape opportunity while maintaining a clear sidewalk passage to downtown business. Generally, a sidewalk in this type of location should have at least 3 metres in minimum width clearance. An urban street tree policy should be developed and an arborist hired (full or part time) to manage the urban forest.

A list of suitable street trees for downtown Bridgewater is provided in the following figure:



Hedge Maple
Acer campestre



Thornless Honeylocust
Gleditsia tricanthos
var. *inermis* "Shademaster"



American Hornbeam
Carpinus caroliniana



Common Hackberry
Celtis occidentalis



Ginkgo
Ginkgo biloba



Green Ash
Fraxinus pennsylvanica



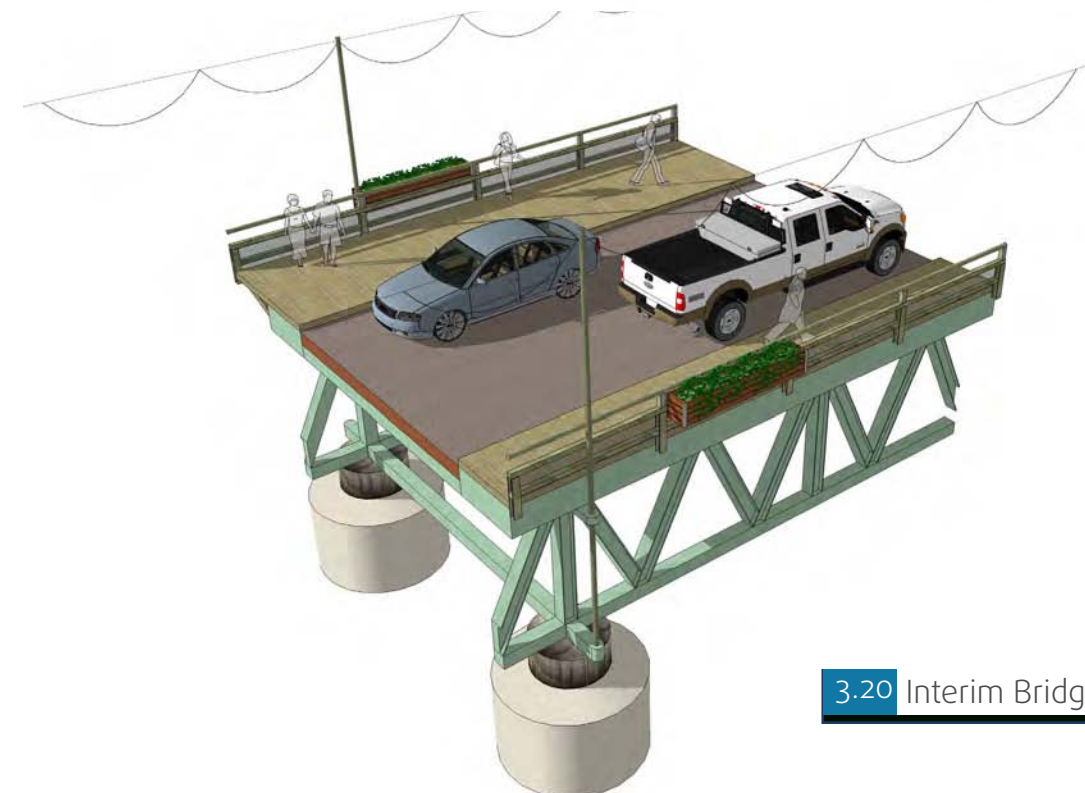
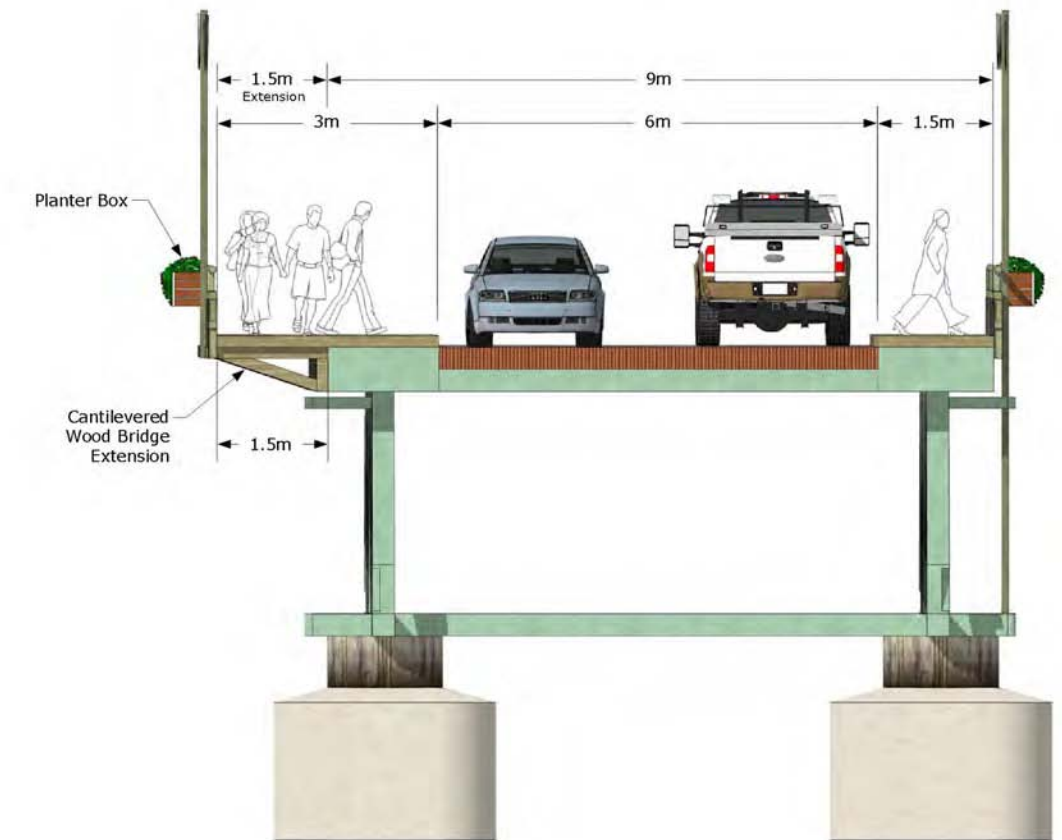
3.19 Street Tree Palette

Old Bridge Retrofit

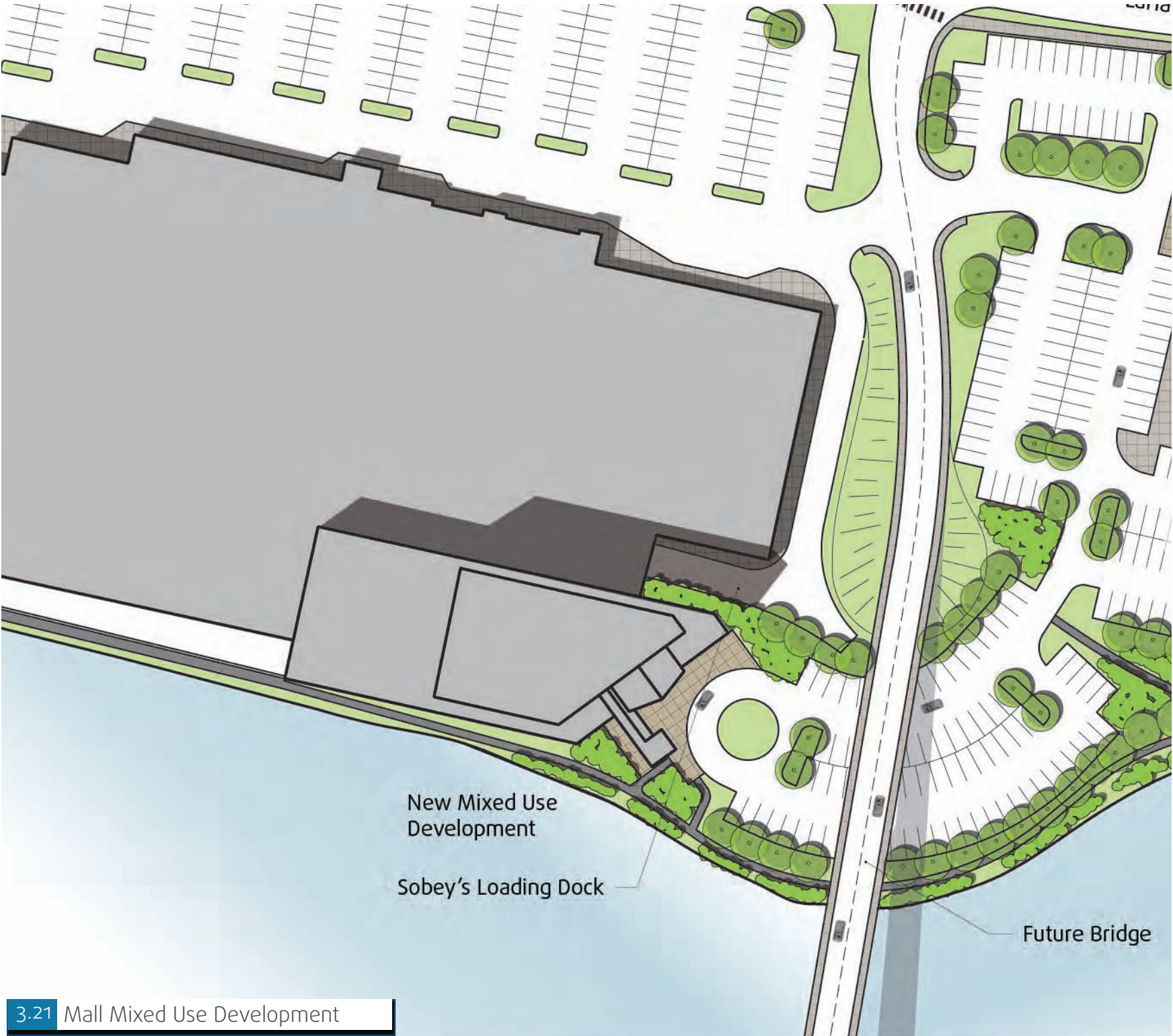
The existing Old Bridge is a 9 meter wide vehicular bridge with a 6 meter wide, two lane vehicular cross section, and two 1.5 meter wide pedestrian sidewalks on either side. The traffic lanes consist of a ribbed metal surface while the pedestrian crossings are of wood construction. There is an approximate 1m height railing on either side of the sidewalk; however, there is no railing or guard separation from the sidewalk to auto traffic. This bridge is considered narrow by current vehicular standards and dangerous by pedestrian standards.

The relocation of a newly constructed bridge has the potential to dramatically alter the downtown. Once this project moves forward, and the old bridge is no longer required to carry traffic, if feasible it should be transformed to a pedestrian bridge. As the construction of a new bridge is several years away, an interim solution for Old Bridge Street is required. One such proposal is the expansion of one side of the pedestrian sidewalk, where the existing rail would be temporarily removed, the sidewalk width doubled to a three meter cross section, and then retrofitted with the old rail and existing lighting. At 3 meters in width, the pedestrian crossing now becomes a multi-use trail crossing safe for pedestrians and cyclists. The new sidewalk expansion would continue to be of wood construction (for cost-efficiency), cantilevered, and bolted to the existing metal bridge frame. The cantilevered design would require engineering approval; however, it is believed that this solution would resolve a current major pedestrian safety problem until the development of the new bridge.

In addition to the bridge expansion, Old Bridge St. can continue to be improved using urban site furnishings such as hanging planters, bollards, and/or pedestrian friendly street lighting. Further, the existing railings are badly rusted and could use either replacement or a fresh coat of paint.



3.20 Interim Bridge Improvements



3.21 Mall Mixed Use Development



Downtown Destinations

Mall Mixed Use

One of the most unique aspects of downtown Bridgewater is its proximity to two grocery stores. This factor dramatically increases the practicality of living & walking downtown, and provides an ideal scenario for increased residential development. When possible, opportunities for strategic residential development as part of an overall mixture of uses should be promoted. The Bridgewater Mall is one such site that could support future development. The southeast corner of the Mall has spectacular views down the LaHave River and out towards the historic downtown. Here it would make sense to build on top of the mall, creating residential infill in close proximity to retail and commercial services. The grade change afforded by the existing slope and future bridge redevelopment creates space for surface parking, and separates the Maple Street extension from the Sobeys loading area. An active ground floor use such as a complimentary health centre would relate well to the existing retail uses, and encourage the development to position itself to attract recent retirees or young professionals. In this area of Bridgewater, mid-rise height is appropriate, as there is no single storey residential in the immediate vicinity. The proximity to the planned wetland park, Bridgewater marina, and historic downtown only add to the desirability of this site.

Old Library

The Bridgewater Library is relocating to the new Lunenburg County Lifestyle Centre, and is providing an excellent redevelopment opportunity for King Street. A number of options have been presented and reviewed by Town Council.

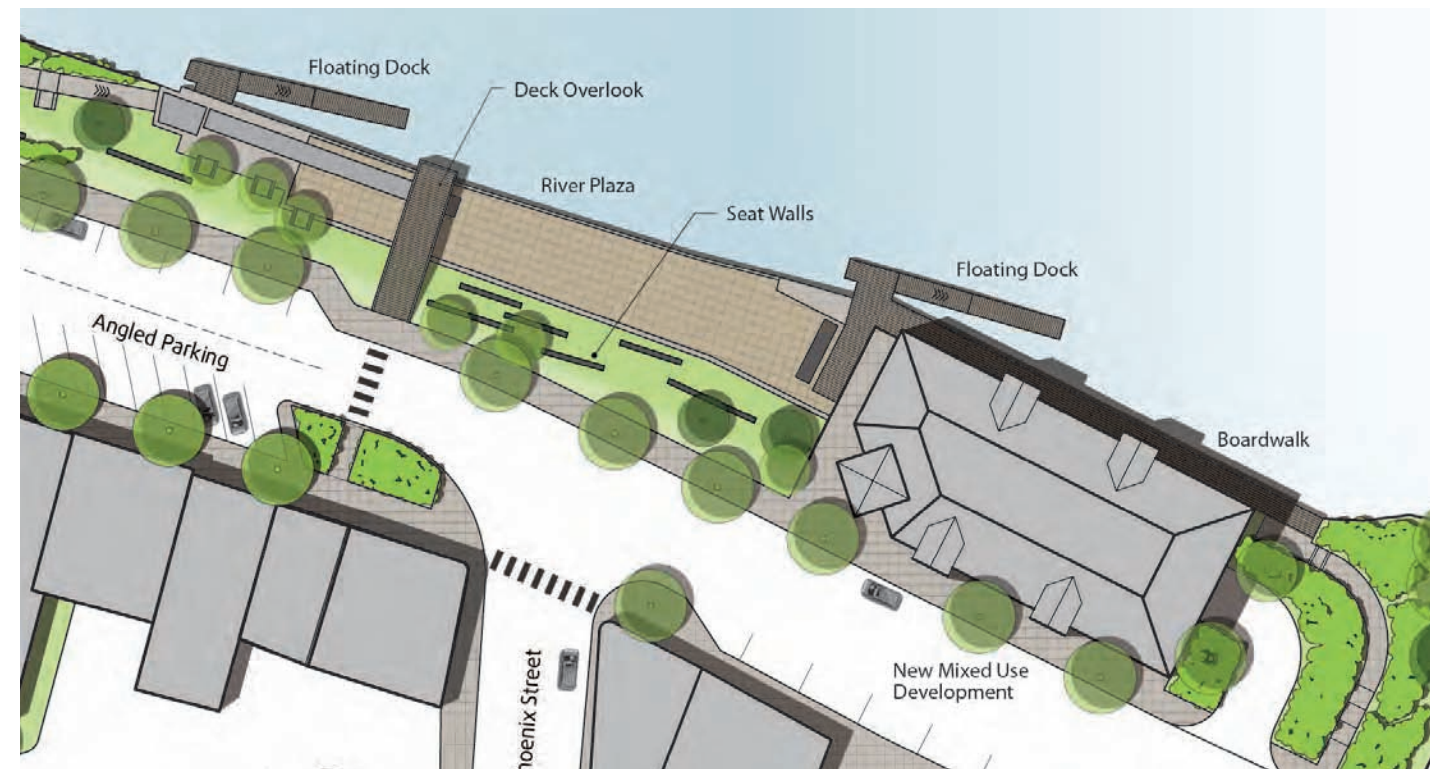
In evaluating the various proposals, the Town should consider the ground floor use. Active spaces provide animation and vibrancy to the streetscape. Main floor residential or office uses do not provide the type of activity that animates the streetscape. Mixed use redevelopment is also a feasible option, given the inclusion of an active commercial use on the ground floor.

The proposed urban design improvements for King Street include a future bump out in front of the library building. This increased pedestrian space would facilitate the creation of a sidewalk cafe or other streetscape use. This type of activity is ideal for King Street, as it will create a sense of vitality and action in the downtown.

New Cultural Centre

A number of infill and redevelopment sites have been identified as part of this planning process. One of the key sites is the land adjacent to the proposed Old Bridge Landing Park. This site is primed for development, given its ideal King Street and riverfront location. One of the issues that emerged during the public consultation and subsequent stakeholder follow up is the disappearing anchors in the downtown. The loss of the Post Office and Library, though civic / institutional uses, does reduce traffic to the Town center. Establishing a new anchor should be a priority for Town Council in the subsequent year. This riverfront site is perfect for such an anchor facility. Any development should integrate multiple uses, especially something in the cultural or interpretive family. A stand alone museum or cultural venue is likely to struggle, however if combined with boutique retail or a higher-end restaurant is more likely to stay viable.

The Town should be an active partner in soliciting development opportunities for this site. Regardless of the type of development that moves forward, the site's prominence warrants a high caliber, high quality development. The future building must address King Street, the river, and the adjacent park, and should add character and vibrancy to the downtown core.



3.22 New Riverfront Cultural Centre



Living Mural Program

One of the interesting ideas that arose during the public consultation was the idea for a mural project. Many communities such as Chemainus, BC, and Amherst, NS, have used murals as a strategy to transform their communities. An innovative approach to this idea that integrates Bridgewater's identity as the sustainability hub of the South Shore is to adopt a living mural program. Blank walls would be transformed with plant material, creating living works of art. In addition to numerous environmental benefits, the green walls would add a unique aspect to the downtown and could function as an attraction unto themselves. Green wall technology is very adaptable to the Nova Scotian climate, with a couple of high profile installations now into their second and third years. There are no other communities in Nova Scotia at this time who are encouraging living murals as part of their downtown revitalization, so this is an excellent time to adopt such an initiative. There are several community groups in Bridgewater who may be interested in championing such a program, with the support of the Town. With supportive planning policies in place, community groups or the Town could bring in a green wall expert to lead a seminar on installation and maintenance. To further support this initiative, the Town could either offer grants or tax deferrals for building owners. Private sector sustainability funding may also be available to support this initiative.



3.4 Programming Recommendations

New Town Visual Identity

The new identity Form:Media developed for the Town of Bridgewater was designed to convey the elements that make Bridgewater an ideal community. The landmark icon we came up with is essentially two halves of a circle divided by an undulating negative space. The circle represents the town as a whole. The negative space forms a wavy line representing the river and flow of water dividing the two essential sides that together create the downtown of Bridgewater. Without one or the other, the circle is not evident. The green colour is introduced to represent the sustainable 'green' initiatives of Bridgewater, and the blue is introduced to represent the waterway that binds the downtown and is the reason of its existence. A serif font was used to give a nod of acknowledgement the historical presence in the town while maintaining a modern identity. The 'town of' tagline was placed in such a way that it leaves the name as the main focus, and can easily be changed to 'downtown' when desired for downtown Bridgewater specific elements such as wayfinding signage.





Brandmark: Full Colour



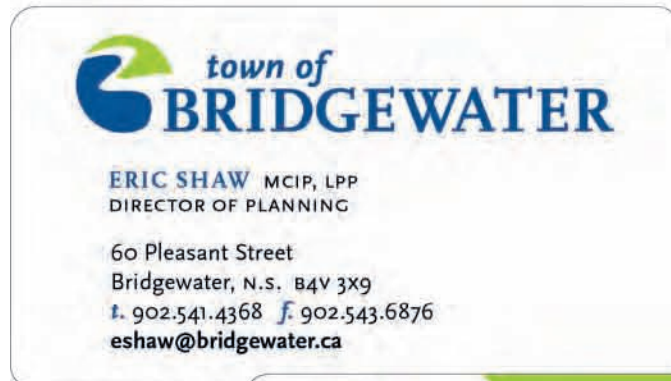
Brandmark: Solid Black



Brandmark: Solid White (reversed-out)



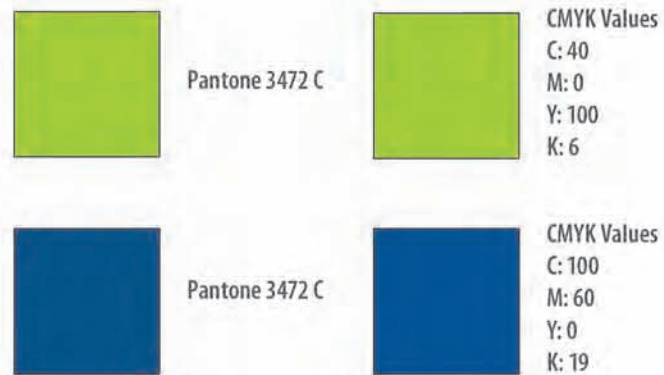
Brandmark: 'Downtown' version



Business Card – Front



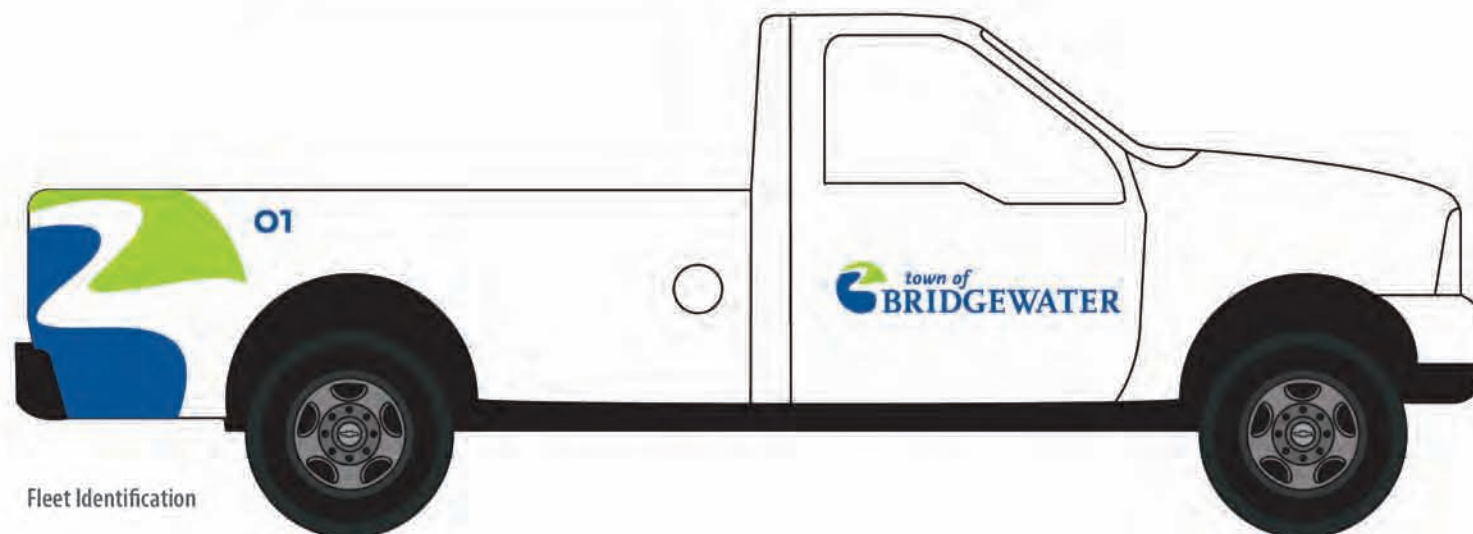
Business Card – Back



Pantone and Process Colour Values



Office Letterhead



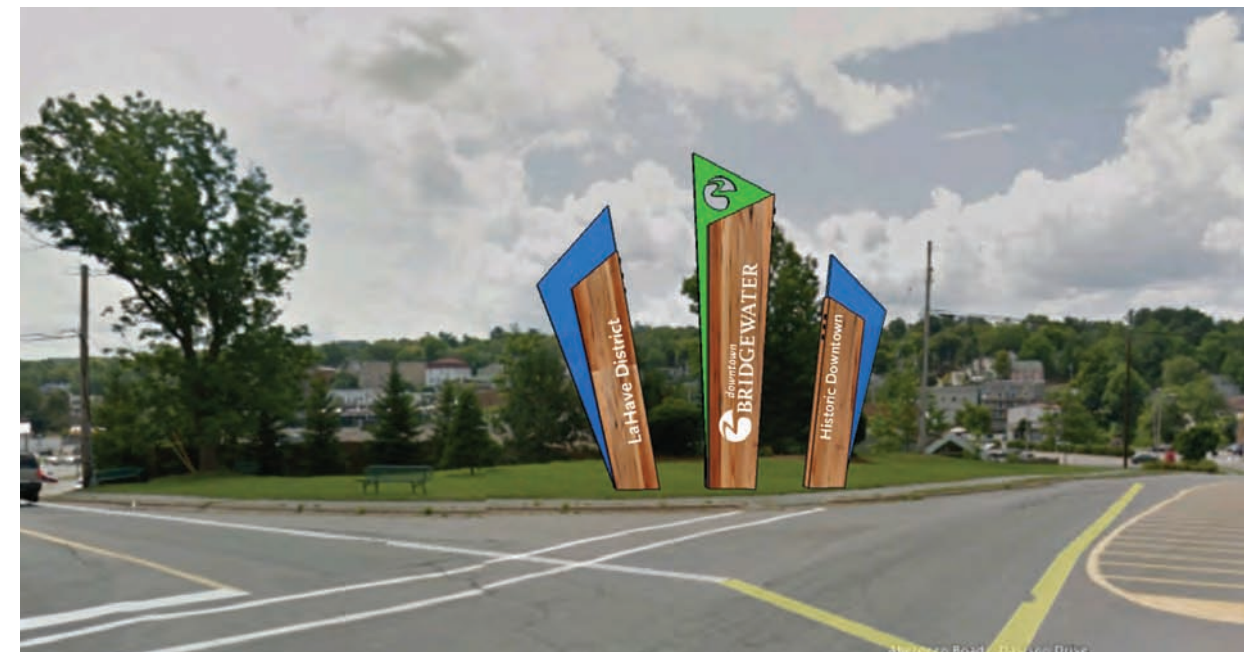
Fleet Identification

3.25 Proposed Signage Map





3.26 Proposed Destination Signage



3.27 Primary Gateway Signage

Signage and Wayfinding Strategy

Coordinating community signage is a programming aspect that has the potential to become a significant asset to the downtown. Not only does it strengthen and reinforce the newly redesigned Bridgewater brand, but it defines the downtown area, and helps to ensure visitors to the community can navigate to key destinations. As a full detailed civic signage strategy is beyond the scope of this study, the following hints at the necessary elements and approaches needed, as well as provided the basis for a future signage program for the Town.

The following hierarchy of signage is recommended for downtown Bridgewater:

- » Gateway Signage
- » Directional Signage
- » Wayfinding Sign and Event Kiosk
- » Interpretive Panels
- » Street Banners

Like the new civic visual identity, it is imperative that the Town's signage adhere to a consistent design vocabulary.

Gateway Signage

There are four primary gateways into downtown Bridgewater. One on Aberdeen Road, one on King Street, one on Victoria Road, and one on LaHave Street. For each of these locations, a downtown gateway sign is recommended, to signify a clear boundary to the downtown area. Ideally this signage should be integrated into the landscape with appropriately scaled plantings.

The primary is a key part of the overall downtown wayfinding and branding strategy. It is an ode to both the past and future for the community. The forms of the gateway sign take their cues from the logging history of the LaHave River. Three tall slender timber structures represent the historic resources of both sides of the river and the river itself in the centre while also directing traffic between the Historic Downtown and LaHave District. These columns are inset with large timber and more modern 3Form exterior resin allowing for some very dramatic LED internal lighting in the structures which will make this signature entrance way a memorable gateway to the downtown.



3.28 Secondary Gateway Signage

Wayfinding Sign

One of the challenges that was voiced during the public consultation process was the hidden nature of the downtown. For visitors to Bridgewater who exit the highway, it is not immediately apparent how to access the town centre. Developing a legible wayfinding system that is accessible to both pedestrians and vehicles is important, both for visitors but also for the Bridgewater community itself. The wayfinding system should be readily visible throughout the Town, and linking into the overarching signage family. The system should include a community map, locating major features and attractions, and possibly keyed to a directory of Town businesses and services. The map could be integrated into a kiosk or sign board that could be used to highlight Town events and programming. Wayfinding signage and structures should be located in high traffic areas and at key decision making points, for both pedestrians and vehicles.



3.29 Interpretive & Wayfinding Signs

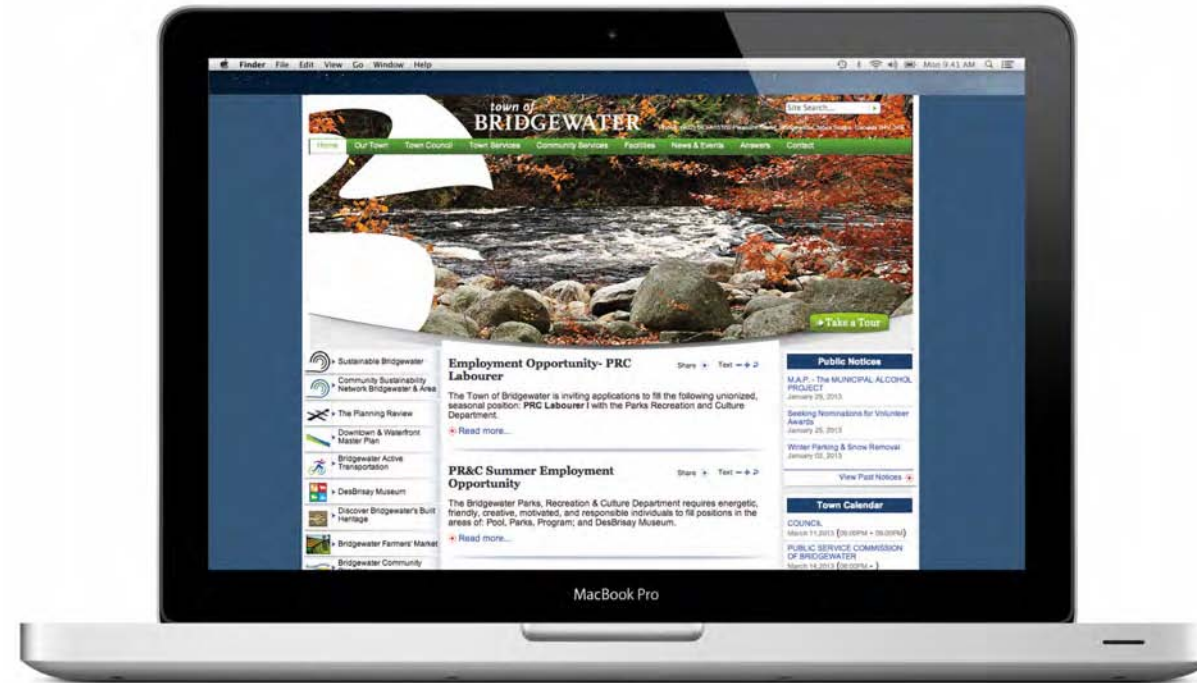
Interpretive Panels

The Bridgewater Development Association (BDA) has been instrumental in creating a series of interpretive panels as part of their Riverfront Renaissance project. Expanding upon this program will further convey the unique aspects of Bridgewater’s history and development. Interpretive panels should be located along the river, in select downtown areas, and in key parks. Each panel, as was done for the Riverfront Renaissance, should address one specific topic with a maximum of 150 words in French and in English. The visual look and feel of the panels should be contemporary, but still relate to the Town’s landmark and civic identity. The Town should also consider the integration of more modern features, such as pod casts, smart phone apps, and augmented reality. Although these features are definitely more ‘detailed’ than simple interpretive panels, they represent the direction interpretation is heading, and it will become an attraction for the visiting public.

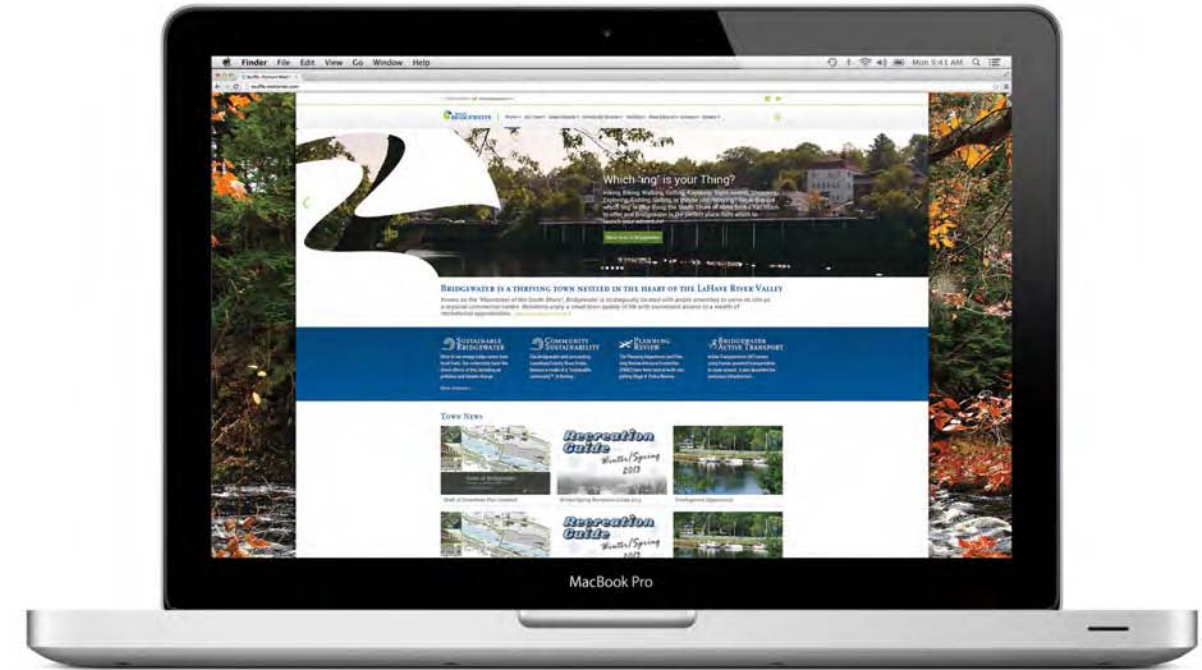
Banners

A banner program is a quick and relatively inexpensive program that should be developed for the major streets in the downtown. Ideally, banners should be changed frequently, and created for various civic events such as the sustainability festival or the Christmas parade. Typically banners cost approximately \$200, and the program could be run and sponsored by the downtown business community, who may wish to see banners in front of their businesses.

3.30 Redesigned Website - Option 1



3.31 Redesigned Website - Option 2



Bridgewater Website

Option 1 - Retain Existing site. Update with rotating banner.

The current Bridgewater website could simply be updated to include a rotating banner plugin. A JQuery Slider could be added to the website to highlight local photography, or promote events on the site header. This solution is cost effective, easy to implement and adds a Wow Factor to the website header section. This solution does not, however, address some underlying structural and design deficiencies within the current Bridgewater site.

Option 2 - Redevelop the website with a Content Management System (Wordpress)

Option 2 proposes redesigning the site, using a content management system to allow for easy update, a more modern look, and friendliness to the mobile market (Smart Phones, Tablets, etc) This proposal is more costly, but will update the look of the site and bring it in line with proposed visual identity and signage solutions that compliment the downtown plan. The wordpress iteration features rotating sliders, easy to update news feeds, as well as space to highlight local businesses and establish a social media presence.

Land Acquisition & Assembly

Building and land developers are very predictable: they want to make a profit. When the right conditions exist (e.g., market demand exists, the Town has clear planning and development rules, there is readily available supply of land), development will thrive. When anyone of these ingredients is missing, uncertainty is created. This could include delays in getting planning approvals, the inability to acquire a serviced parcel of land that is large enough to support the development, etc.).

When considering the Town of Bridgewater, some of these same conditions are true. Since the Osprey Village retail area was developed at Exit 12, a large amount of commercial development has been moving to the periphery of the Town of Bridgewater. Unfortunately for the Town, this new development has shifted a good portion of the commercial property tax base to the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg (MODL). As the retail environment changes, new retailers and older more established ones have migrated to Osprey Village or the Bridgewater Business Park, in search of large, serviced lots that have modern amenities.

To a lesser extent, the same conditions are true in downtown. For example, the Federal Government relocated the new post office to North Street in 2010 even though they would have preferred to stay downtown. When interviewed about this at the time, the response was “there wasn’t a large enough parcel of serviced land on King Street to allow us to stay downtown”. Until someone takes the time to assemble and zone property downtown for medium to larger uses, it is likely that over time more key services will re-locate outside the downtown core.

The creation of the Glen Allan Heights residential subdivision has created a similar phenomenon, albeit with a few differences. First, the new serviced residential land is within the Town of Bridgewater, so there is no loss of property tax revenue to a neighbouring jurisdiction. However, unlike the commercial and industrial sector, there are developers that would be interested in servicing and selling land for residential purposes. In speaking with local residential developers, it was clear that there was interest in developing new residential housing downtown. However, according to these investors, the problem is the lack of serviced land available for purchase, and the unwillingness to take the time and energy required to assemble land for this purpose.

The Town should take an active role in assembling parcels of land downtown for redevelopment. If land is readily available that is properly zoned and serviced, and fairly priced, new demand will be induced to come to the downtown.



Sagor's Bookstore Site

The Sagor's bookstore is an old rundown building, which is both an eyesore to King Street, and does little to stimulate new investment downtown. In addition, it is providing very little property tax revenue to the Town. As the building is for sale, the Town has made an offer to purchase the property. It is understood that there was a large difference between the asking price (\$85,000 or so) and what the Town was willing to pay (\$60,000 to \$65,000). If the Town's expectation was that they would pay \$65,000 to purchase the property and another \$5,000 or \$10,000 to demolish it, and then create a park, the reticence to purchase the property is understandable. An alternative scenario is for the Town purchased the property for \$80,000, demolished the structure (\$10,000), and then re-zoned the property to allow a reasonable amount of development. Under this option, the Town could likely re-sell the property and likely recover most of the costs. Even if the property was sold to a developer at a small loss (\$70,000), the \$20,000 subsidy (\$80,000 + \$10,000 - \$70,000) would likely be recovered in 5 to 7 years through increased tax revenue, AND the result would be a new building that added to the vitality of downtown.

This is the same approach at the Waterfront Development Corporation Limited (WDCL) takes on the Halifax and Lunenburg Waterfronts. As a provincial crown corporation, WDCL is self-financing. They purchase various land parcels along the waterfront using a line of credit backed by the Provincial Government. To cover operating costs they rent buildings and parking to help cover their operating costs while they rezone the property to “create value” once it is redeveloped. Once the new plans are in place, the land is leased/sold to developers through a public bidding process and the proceeds used to pay down the accumulated debt.

This approach works well when the development community is too small to take on these long-term projects, or, when there is a long-term public mandate that can be best achieved through the use of this semi-public entity. This is also the traditional role of many small town redevelopment authorities. Bridgewater is lucky to already have a development organization working with the community. As such, it wouldn't take much amend the strategic plan for The Bridgewater Development Association to include responsibility for identifying and assembling development parcels along the Bridgewater Riverfront. Should staffing or resources be an issue, it may be possible to shift responsibility for the development of projects like Glen Allan Heights to the private sector, as there are many companies in the region that would likely be interested in that type of work, whereas very few would take on the responsibility for the Bridgewater Industrial Park, or assembling key development parcels in the downtown core.



Residential Infill

Many towns across Canada are facing the issue of decreasing residential populations in their downtown cores. Having a robust residential population is one of the primary principles in downtown revitalization, as it creates a captive audience with money to spend in the area, and contributes to the animation of public spaces outside of typical business hours. In recent years, living in the downtown has once again become fashionable, even in smaller communities like Bridgewater. Young professionals and baby boomers are attracted to communities based on the quality of life they offer, and are less restricted by local employment or other factors. The ability to live without a car is seen as a real opportunity, and in Bridgewater this idea could be linked into the Town's emerging identity as a green hub. Therefore, the Town, in partnership with the downtown business community and landowners, should develop an active strategy to attract and support the development of expanded residential opportunities in the downtown.

Some strategies that would support this initiative could include:

- » Deferral of tax assessments for two to five years for all investments that make use of vacant space on the upper stories of existing buildings (permitted under the MGA).
- » Adopt a residential improvement program, similar to a facade program, where the Town provides grants to redevelop residential space in the downtown.
- » Focus the Bridgewater Development Association's mandate on the downtown, with specific emphasis on residential development.
- » In partnership with the BDA, organize a downtown conference or offer seminars on upper storey conversion, by bringing in developers from other communities how have experience in this kind of revitalization.
- » Town or the BDA should inventory available space in the downtown and create an accessible database for this information. A central clearinghouse or registry where developers, land owners, and potential tenants can be connected would direct development interests towards downtown opportunities.
- » Solicit the development community. Invite experienced developers from other jurisdictions in Atlantic Canada to visit Bridgewater, and learn about the community's potential. Actively recruit development dollars to the Town.
- » The Town Building Inspector should be proactive in the promotion and advocacy of adaptive reuse of existing buildings. If possible, permit fees should be reduced for downtown residential conversions.
- » Set a goal for a specific number of new residential units in the downtown, in a set period. Work with the BDA, Town Centre, and other stakeholder groups to see this goal realized. Downtown Halifax engaged in a similar program over a decade ago that saw the establishment of 500 new units in the downtown. A similar program on a smaller scale would be very effective for Bridgewater.



Downtown Wi-Fi

Almost everyone these days has a smartphone, and the need to be connected to the internet is widespread. While some businesses in the study area (mainly food service vendors) provide access to wi-fi, with the relocation of the library to the Lunenburg County Lifestyle Centre (LCLC), internet accessibility may become challenging in the downtown. Recent advancements in wi-fi technology allow the Town to provide wi-fi access across a range of several kilometres for a very reasonable cost. Fredericton, Amherst, and the Halifax waterfront all provide free wi-fi in core areas for public access. The Town should look to partner with their local internet provider for a pilot project in the short term. This service should be branded and promoted as part of the downtown revitalization.

Business Improvement District

The Business Improvement District (BID) model is considered a success story across North America because of how it functions to link private sector creativity, municipalities, and other stakeholders in a process that allows participants to collaboratively and cooperatively work to address complex municipal issues.

The proliferation of BIDs has emerged as a result of several factors including the loss of historic downtowns, the replacement of Main Street retail by large footprint/format malls, and retail development that typically occurs in lower value land on the fringed of metropolitan areas with good connectivity to major traffic routes. The BID provides an outlet for focused attention on a common issue within a defined geography. They effectively supplement public service in a given area by pooling private sector know-how and facilitating a working relationship with local and /or provincial government.

Within the more academically inclined literature on BIDs, there is debate over the extent to which these organizations are democratic (given that they serve a focused area and are usually comprised of merchants in that area), are broadly accountable (given that they serve their memberships interest first and foremost and may receive public funding to both study and implement various initiatives), are inappropriately governing public areas (given that BIDs may direct, execute, and monitor programs from façade improvements to BID branding), or the extent to which they create local wealth/achieve their missions – from revitalization of particular areas to increasing traffic flow.



In addition to the moniker business improvement district, these bodies have been called city area improvement districts, business improvement areas. There does not appear to be any one single format for a BID and they occur in response to both sources of challenge as well as in response to opportunities. Still, BIDs do appear to exhibit some common characteristics. Those longer-standing BIDs typically:

- » Represent a particular area and has a defined footprint of emphasis & focus;
- » Specify their mission and mandate towards a commonly agreed to need or goal, the achievement of which benefits all participants in approximately equal proportion (ie., they may focus on an area promotion initiative, they tend not to focus on the promotion of a specific merchant within their area);
- » Are sufficiently well-resourced;
- » Have good linkages to a defined region with appropriate boundaries within which to work;
- » Have a system for dealing with cooperative efforts with regions outside their boundaries but are nevertheless important for the BID;
- » Function with a working network that has good bilateral communications channels with members as well as other stakeholders;
- » Engage its community of members as well as customers;
- » Give back to the community, through charitable events and or other community support mechanisms;



In exploring the feasibility of a BID for downtown Bridgewater, it will be important to have a defined geographic area with a small and defined scale. There has been a suggestion to apply the BID model to the entire Town, and there are not many case studies that support the effectiveness of this option. Instead, the BID should focus specifically on the Historic Downtown Area and offer programs and initiatives specific to the merchants and businesses in this area.

Moving forward, the basic steps should be followed to determine the guidelines for the BID:

- i. **Initiate a Broad Planning Process:** In determining the best structure / area for the BID, it will be important to engage in a broad planning process, to determine the area, fit, and willingness to form a BID. During this phase, the funding implications should be explored (is the Town collecting the funds through a fee assessment to the property, for example), the needs of the merchant community should be explored, and a basic governance structure (including bylaws, accountability, etc) should be developed. This phase of the project could take place through consultation with existing stakeholder groups, or independent of any particular organization.
- ii. **Consult the Public:** Once a basic area, structure, and format for the BID has been developed, it may be beneficial to seek broad public input on the proposal.
- iii. **Approval & Formation:** Town Council and staff could formalize the BID through an approvals process, but this is not necessarily required.

In general, the BID is a self - governing organization that could be comprised of existing entities, or could be a completely new group for the Town.



Civic Events and Festivals

Throughout the public engagement process, the popularity and success of Bridgewater’s major civic events, such as the Growing Green Sustainability Festival and Christmas Parade, was made evident. These events bring increased local and visitor traffic to the downtown, which is half the battle towards increasing sales. Ideally, the downtown should offer a regular program of events and festivals designed to keep the community’s focus on this central area. A series of seven to ten events, with a concentration of four to six during the tourism season will continue to draw traffic and dollars to the downtown.

The programming of civic events can be seen as time consuming and expensive. While the Town should ultimately be responsible for the coordination of major events, it is important to partner with relevant stakeholder groups to make these events possible. Local service clubs, interest groups, and business organizations are valuable resources, and offer an effective way to extend restrictive civic resources and continue to expand on the types of programs available. Building upon Bridgewater’s emerging identity as a green hub along the South Shore, some possible programs & events include:

- » An annual road race (start with something like the 5 km Lunenburg Muffin Run, and build up from there).
- » River ecology conference
- » Arborist / Lumberjack Challenge
- » Eco / Adventure Race
- » Riverfest
- » Weekend regatta
- » Rowing / Paddling Races or Events
- » Outdoor Black & White Movies (on the Mall wall)
- » Ice Carving & Snow Sculpture
- » Outdoor Performances
- » Christmas Tree Festival

Many of these events could be organized with partners, or supported by Corporate Sponsors. As the residential population in the downtown area increases, the need for programming as a source of energy and activation will diminish, so the need to program the downtown is very much a short to medium term strategy, with significant potential for return on investment.





Density and the revitalization of downtown.

In order to revitalize downtown, the Town needs to encourage more day and night time activity to the areas along King and LaHave Streets. Based on the work completed for this study, the most realistic way to make this happen is to encourage increased residential housing. Specific thoughts include:

- » Enable low to medium density housing along the portion of the LaHave River north of Aberdeen Road. The developer should prove to the Town that they have taken precautions to minimize potential damage due to flooding.
- » Along King and Pleasant Street, increased residential should occur either through the redevelopment of existing parcels, or through the addition of extra units by amending the land use by-laws to encourage this activity (i.e., reducing parking requirements, the inclusion of in-law suites, etc.).
- » Along LaHave Street, new residential housing would occur principally through infill in existing retail areas. This would include the redevelopment of some portion of existing parking lots with new residential housing. If needed, parking requirements for the remaining retail space could be softened.
- » Additional housing could be warranted adjacent to the Bridgewater Marine Terminal in order to increase the viability of this site for recreational use. To prevent possible conflicts with Marine Industrial uses, a development agreement process (or similar mechanism) would require the inclusion of air conditioning and noise reducing window technology so that residents could escape noise pollution associated with the marine terminal.
- » Minimum parking requirements should be lowered or removed along King Street to ensure that redevelopment sites can be utilized. Complete elimination could be allowed if the owner contributes to a municipal parking in lieu fund, which would help fund additional public parking improvements.