

X. COMMUNITY DESIGN

Issues of community design were considered to help achieve the visions within the Small Area as they pertain to visual character and improved access. Through site-specific design studies, the design consultants Rhodeside and Harwell, Inc. developed conceptual plans and design guidelines with input from County Staff, the Small Area Plan Committee, property and business owners. As part of an adopted Small Area Plan, these conceptual plans and design guidelines will establish policies that must be adhered to by any future development in these areas.

Future development plans submitted for each of these sites may differ from the concept plans presented herein, due to adjustments required during the detailed engineering phase and/or changes in market demand.

The Pasadena Small Area Planning Committee considered a wide range of opportunity sites prior to identifying two specific areas (see Figure 1):

- The **Riviera area** encompassing the land uses around the intersection of Fort Smallwood Road, Bar Harbor Road, and Riviera Drive, and extending roughly to Kenton Road/Cottage Drive on the south, Stony Creek on the west, Church Road on the north, and Rock Creek on the east.
- The Mountain Road commercial corridor, extending from Lake Shore Plaza to Waterford Road.

The design focus for each of these areas was significantly different, and will be discussed in greater detail below. It should be emphasized that these plans comprise a long-term concept for the area, one in which changes will occur gradually over time.

The Riviera Village Center

Existing Conditions

The Riviera opportunity area serves as a commercial node for those living and working in the area, as well as for those passing through. The area contains a mix of commercial uses, including large and small grocery stores, a major chain drug store, several restaurants including fast food options, and other, smaller commercial ventures. In addition, the institutional sector includes an independent fire station, a post office, a library and an elementary school (see Figure 2). The area is framed by both public and private parks and other open spaces, and is bounded on the east and west by water bodies. Yet, with all of these assets, the central core of the Riviera area functions largely as a “pass through” space, rather than a “community place.” Nevertheless, members of the Small Area Planning Committee expressed the desire to transform the area into a Village Center, a place that would serve as a focal point and gathering place for the Riviera community; a place to which people would choose to come and stay rather than simply stop at briefly and drive through.

Although many of the land use components needed to achieve the community focused “Village” concept desired by the Committee are already in place, the way that these have been put together

Figure 1 page 92

Figure 2, page 93

contribute to the lack of a cohesive “sense of community” for the area (see Figure 3). The factors limiting the achievement of a lively and attractive Riviera Village Center include:

1. **The lack of adequate connections/linkages between the various community assets within or adjacent to the area.** The surrounding open spaces, the school, the post office, the fire station, and the various eating and shopping opportunities are all treated as separate entities rather than being connected through the Village Center. By providing connections between these facilities, one can draw people into the Village core rather than dispersing them to each individual site.
2. **The dominance of vehicular traffic over pedestrian access.** The area is characterized by a wide, heavily traveled Fort Smallwood Road, and a major, bustling intersection as Fort Smallwood meets Bar Harbor Road and Riviera Drive, and turns westward toward Baltimore. The lack of sidewalks through much of the area, as well as any significant streetscape elements to buffer the pedestrian from passing traffic all act to discourage any pedestrian activity in the area. Since a vital, lively Village Center relies on active street-related uses, the lack of pedestrian connections presents a significant barrier to achieving the desired type of setting.
3. **The lack of strong community focal points.** While the area does contain several significant public facilities, including a post office, a library, a fire station that provides a small public meeting space on its second floor, and a nearby elementary school, none of these facilities serve as a strong attraction for widespread community use. A focal point facility, such as a multigenerational recreation/community center, would provide an excellent destination point for community activities, gatherings, and other related purposes.
4. **Commercial areas in need of physical improvement.** Many of the commercial areas along Ft. Smallwood Road are in need of upgrade in order to enhance their appearance as well as the overall appearance of the area. Visual problems include: the lack of sufficient streetscaping to soften the appearance of these centers from the adjoining roads; the “sea” of parking in front of the stores; the wide array of signs in various sizes and conditions; and the prevalence of curb cuts creating both visual and safety problems along Fort Smallwood Road.
5. **The dominance of the intersection with its accompanying congestion.** The intersection at the heart of the proposed Village Center is currently dominated by multiple traffic lights and congestion. It serves as both a functional and visual focus for the area. As such, these aspects of the intersection must be addressed in order to reduce its negative impact on the Village Center. Ways to encourage a smoother flow of traffic and to enhance the visual character of the intersection need to be explored.

Proposed Village Center Concept

The concept plan developed for the Riviera Village Center focuses on improving the existing commercial core in order to encourage development of a community asset for the Riviera area. The concept explored opportunities for encouraging greater community use of the area, including

Figure 3 page 95

issues of pedestrian and vehicular access, parking location and treatment, open space linkages, streetscape improvements and overall visual enhancement (see Figures 4 and 5).

1. **Village Entrances:** To create the intimate pedestrian scale of a Village Center, with a clear sense of arriving at a special place, careful consideration was given to the location and character of village entrances. Analysis of walking distances, land use, zoning and open space led to the recommendation of two well defined-Village Center entry points along Fort Smallwood Road and on Bar Harbor Road and Riviera Drive.
 - a. *The Fort Smallwood Road south entrance* is located at the junction of Sunset Park and the commercial zoning at Fort Smallwood Road. This location is south of Kenton Road on the west side, and Cottage Grove Drive on the east side of Fort Smallwood Road. The Concept Plan indicates the eventual removal of an industrial use on the West Side of Fort Smallwood Road, as incompatible with the Village Center concept, and the incorporation of this lot into Sunset Park. The “Main Street” streetscape would begin at this point, marked by a special feature such as a pedestrian shelter that would be mirrored across Fort Smallwood within the public right-of-way (see Figures 6 and 7 for the concept plan detail, and the illustrative plan detail).
 - b. *The Fort Smallwood Road east entrance* occurs at the beginning of the commercial zoning on the north side of Fort Smallwood Road upon arrival from the east. This location would be marked with the same special features as the south entrance, with the beginning of the “Main Street” streetscape on the north side of the road. The south side of the road would be characterized by continuation of a park-like landscape from the bridge over Stony Creek and to the start of “Main Street” (see Figures 8 and 9 for the concept plan detail, and the illustrative plan detail).
 - c. *The Riviera Drive entrance* is located at the intersection of Garden Road and Laurel Road on Riviera Drive. Garden and Laurel Roads are part of the park-like streetscape system described under Open Space below. The Riviera Drive entrance will be the northern terminus of a scaled-down version of the “Main Street” streetscape. Entry feature structures will mark this location within the public right-of-way (see Figures 10 and 11 for the concept plan detail, and the illustrative plan detail).
 - d. *The Bar Harbor Road entrance* is just west of the Creekview Court and Johnson Road intersection with Bar Harbor Road and is located just east, on both sides of Bar Harbor Road. It includes the Rock Creek Park play field parking lot entrance. This gateway will incorporate two entry features, similar to those discussed above for the other entrances (see Figures 12 and 13 for the concept plan detail, and the illustrative plan detail)
2. **Village Core:** The core area of the Riviera Beach Village Center comprises a system of open spaces, streetscape and roadway improvements, as well as a concentration of civic and institutional uses that include the following: (see Figures 14 and 15 for village core illustrative plan and aerial view).
 - a. *Village Green:* The central block (containing the Riviera Fire Station, the McDonald’s restaurant, and a bar) has a history of community use including the yearly Riviera Carnival on Fire Station property. Bounded by Fort Smallwood Road on the east and north, Cloverhill Road on the West, and Rugby Road on the south, the land is currently owned by the Volunteer Fire Association and McDonald’s, and is zoned for commercial use. The plan recommends that this block have no additional commercial expansion, and

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Figure 5 page 98

Figures 6, 7, 8, 9 – page 99

Figures 10, 11, 12, 13 – page 100

Figures 14 & 15 – page 101

that it be reconfigured to allow for a diagonal walk with buffer plantings, a gazebo and a small green to improve the appearance of the area and to accommodate and encourage pedestrian activity. The block, as rendered in the plan, maintains the existing amount of parking; however, a portion of the parking on Fire Station land, that is currently leased to McDonalds for overflow parking, has been proposed to be renovated as a structural lawn/parking area for the same temporary use. This will allow the area to look green when vacant, but can accommodate parking on an occasional basis. The existing, dangerous McDonald's drive with access off Fort Smallwood Road has been closed and re-routed off Cloverhill Road (see Figures 16 and 17 for the aerial concept plan detail and illustrative plan detail).

- b. *Traffic Circle/Roundabout:* Central to the village core is the existing 90-degree turn of Fort Smallwood Road at its intersection with Riviera Drive and Bar Harbor Road. This intersection has periodic traffic backups. The plan recommends the creation of a traffic roundabout. The northeast corner of the intersection is a privately owned parcel. Utilizing this parcel, the plan shows a single 20' wide lane with a 70' outside radius, a 4'-8" bike lane, and 8' wide sidewalks with an additional 4' for street trees. This roundabout allows for a 100' diameter center circle that can contain a public monument or flagpole (see Figure 18). The roundabout can be created with little impact to the adjacent properties and would represent both a traffic improvement and civic amenity (see Figure 16 for concept plan detail and aerial view).
 - c. *Rugby Road Extension:* Rugby Road currently ends at Fort Smallwood Road at a signalized intersection. The plan recommends the extension of Rugby as an arc from Fort Smallwood to the northeast, connecting with Bar Harbor Road east of the CVS. This road will help ease traffic pressure on the roundabout as well as create access for a new residential neighborhood adjacent to the Village Core (see figures 16 and 19 for concept plan detail and illustrative plan detail).
 - d. *Civic & Institutional Uses:* The plan recommends the retention and concentration of civic and institutional uses in the Village Core. The U.S. Post Office and Riviera Volunteer Fire Station are retained and enhanced. The Plan further recommends that a multigenerational community center be located just north and east of the new Rugby Road and Fort Smallwood Road intersection. The community center should allow for an entrance at the new intersection. This clustering of public uses in the Village Core strengthens its attraction as a community asset and enhances the level of activity in the Core (see Figures 16 and 19 for concept plan detail and illustrative plan details and Figures 20 and 21 for visualization of Rugby Road before and after showing the U.S. Post Office, community green, fire station and new multi-generational community center).
3. **Village Neighborhoods:** The Village neighborhoods are linked to the Village Core and "Main Street, yet buffered from any negative intrusions between commercial and residential

Figures 16 & 17 – page 103

Figure 18 – page 104

Figure 19 – page 105

Figure 20 & 21- page 106

uses. Linkages have been increased through the emphasis of park-like streetscape amenities connecting to the Main Street Streetscape at key locations. In addition, the creation of several architectural focal points at the proposed new commercial buildings facing on the Main Street can strengthen the visual connections to the Village core. The diagonal walk and Village Green more directly link the Cloverhill Road neighborhood to the Riviera Drive neighborhood. Buffers on commercial lots are recommended at all locations where commercial uses are adjacent to, or are across the street from, residential uses (see Figures 4, 5 and 15 for concept plan and illustrative plan and aerial view).

- a. *Residential Infill:* A new neighborhood has been proposed adjacent to the Village Core. This single-family area is planned at a density of five dwelling units per acre. The plan shows a traditional grid of streets, with dwelling entrances facing the street and garages off rear alleys. A “zero lot line” type of lot layout will allow for more useful residential yards. A small green (see Open Space discussion below) has been recommended at the terminus of a new street. This focal space will serve as a transition to, and entry for, the forest conservation area that forms the southern edge of this new neighborhood (see Figures 16 and 19).
4. **Open Space:** There are several categories of existing open space in the Riviera Village area. The plan recommends visual and functional linkages to emphasize and integrate the existing open space into the neighborhoods, the Village Core and the Main Street. New street extensions and pedestrian streetscapes have been used to accomplish this (see Figures 4, 5 and 15 for concept plan, illustrative plan and aerial view).
- a. *Public Parks:* The plan integrates two existing public parks, Sunset Park and Rock Creek Park, into the Village concept (see Figures 23 and 24 for illustrative plan details).
 - b. *Public Right-of-Way to Park:* A public right-of-way from Stony Creek Bridge is shown as an upgraded park with multi use trail from the bridge to the “Main Street” on the South Side of Fort Smallwood Road. In this same location north of Fort Smallwood Road, there are wetlands on private property next to the right-of-way. The plan shows this area as a public viewing dock with a small parking area to allow for views of both the wetlands and Stony Creek. This may require some purchase of private property. This overlook is shown on the plan north of the intersection of Granada Road and Fort Smallwood Road (see Figure 25 for the illustrative plan detail).
 - c. *Private Parks:* Two private parks, with extensive recreation facilities, have been connected to the communities open space system through a park-like network of streets (see Figures 26, and 27 for illustrative plan details).
 - d. *Forest Conservation Area:* The forest conservation area dedicated as part of the Johnson Road single family subdivision is given both visual and physical access on the plan through the extension of Rugby Road east of Fort Smallwood Road. The proposed community center would be located directly across the Rugby Road Extension from the forest conservation area (see Figure 28 for illustrative plan detail).
 - e. *Gardens:* A public garden has been located as part of the proposed community center, adjacent to the Main Street. This garden is shown with a trellised area adjacent to the north wall of the community center and a central lawn with perennial borders along the north and east edges of the garden. An evergreen hedge buffers the CVS to the north and the community center parking to the east. The garden is open to the widened Main Street

Figure 22 – page 108

Figure 23, 24 – page 109

Figures 25 & 26 – page 110

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Figures 28 & 29 – page 112

- streetscape along Fort Smallwood Road (see Figures 16 and 17 for concept plan detail and illustrative plan detail).
- f. *Public & Private Greens:* Several greens have been proposed in both public and private areas. “Greens” are well-defined, small open spaces delineated by walks at their edges. They are typically contained by buildings and structured plantings. (see Figure 4 for proposed green locations in the Riviera Village Center plan) A private green is recommended as a linkage between the Fort Smallwood Road Main Street and the end of Kenwood Road. This green will serve as a focal green space for this part of the commercial infill along the Main Street. In addition, a system of public greens is recommended as part of the Village Core (see Village Core description above). A Private green is also recommended as part of the new residential neighborhood east of the Rugby Road Extension (see figures 29, 30 and 31) for private and public greens).
5. **Streetscapes:** Streetscape improvements are a key element of the plan. Several different categories of streetscape improvements are recommended. These include:
- a. *Village Walkways:* Within the Main Street commercial area, the plan recommends the creation of a network of Village walkways. These walkways should be made of brick, and would be defined by a curb on the streetside and buildings or evergreen hedges on the opposite side. Street trees, benches, signage and street lighting should be coordinated to unify all walkways. The commercial buildings should face directly on the sidewalk with primary entrances and window walls (see Figures 4, 32 and 33 for concept plan and village walks in main street visualization).
 - b. *Park link Streetscape:* A network of beautifully landscaped, park-like streetscapes is proposed to improve both visual and pedestrian connections between the various open spaces, the Main Street commercial area and the neighborhoods. These streetscapes would include exposed aggregate sidewalks, lighting, signage, street trees and benches unique to these corridors. (see Figures 4, 20 and 21 for concept plan and visualizations park link streetscape)
6. **Main Street Commercial Infill:** The Main Street commercial areas are characterized by traditional “Main Street” types of development. Building placement, building design, parking area design, and street closures and buffers are utilized to create this type of “place” (see Figures 34 and 35 for concept plan and aerial view of commercial infill).
- a. *Building Placement:* As described in the Village Walkways section above, the commercial buildings are located directly adjacent to the village walks, with primary entrances and window walls facing on these walks (see Figure 33).
 - b. *Building Design:* To create the appropriate village scale, the commercial buildings should be constructed of brick where possible. While most commercial buildings will have only a ground floor, the building design should feature tall walls with implied second story fenestration to create the scale of two story 19th Century “Main Street” commercial structures (see figure 33).
 - c. *Parking Area Design:* On-street parallel parking should be encouraged, wherever possible, in the Main Street commercial areas. On-site parking lots should provide cross-lot easements and should be located to the sides and rear of the commercial buildings. Larger parking areas should be laid out with the main drives designed as streetscapes with lighting, street trees and walks (see figure 35).

Figures 30 & 31 – page 114

Figures 32 & 33 – page 115

Figure 34 & 35 – page 116

- d. **Road Closures & Relocations:** The Plan recommends the closing or relocation of two short segments of roads: (1) a one-block section of Johnson Road between Fort Smallwood Road and Winston Road to allow more effective use of the adjoining commercial property and to reduce commercial traffic impact on the adjacent neighborhood on Winston Road (see Figures 36 and 37 for Illustrative Plan detail and concept Plan detail); and (2) the relocation of the Carroll Road entrance on Fort Smallwood Road which would intersect with Meadow Road to create a more attractive residential neighborhood entry and to allow for consolidation of commercial properties along Fort Smallwood Road. This relocation will allow for better buffering for the adjacent residential neighborhood as well as the extension of the village walks along Fort Smallwood Road (see figures 38 and 39).
7. **Bike Lane:** A bike lane is planned for Fort Smallwood Road. This facility is planned to be at least 3' in width. The bike lane will be incorporated into the proposed Roundabout (see Village Core discussion above as well as Figure 4, Concept Plan for proposed bike lane location).

The Mountain Road Commercial Corridor

The Mountain Road Commercial Corridor is a key access point into and through the Pasadena area. As such, it plays a strong role in defining the image of the area for those passing along its length. Unfortunately, this image is spotty since much of the Mountain Road commercial corridor contains older strip shopping centers that reflect a shabby and run-down appearance that influences the image of the entire corridor. The Pasadena Small Area Planning Committee determined the need for the establishment of a set of general design guidelines that would both visually and functionally improve and enhance the Mountain Road Commercial Corridor.

Existing Conditions

A mix of commercial structures from various periods, as well as sections of single-family residential homes characterizes the Mountain Road corridor. Several older stretches of the road feature wood frame (formerly residential) structures from the early 20th Century that have been converted to commercial use. These structures tend to sit close to the road and are at varying levels of maintenance.

These same areas include older warehouse types of buildings also set close to the road. These older sections of Mountain Road recall the former agricultural character of this area. The area also contains several vacant structures and marginal business. Freestanding commercial buildings, mixed in with small strip commercial structures, characterize the remainder of Mountain Road. The eastern end of the corridor, between the intersection of Magothy Beach Road and the intersection of MD 100, is characterized by vacant or underutilized land, with newer shopping centers on the south side of Mountain Road facing smaller single-family homes on the north. A new commercial complex is planned at the intersection of MD 100.

The Mountain Road corridor contains a mix of commercial and residential uses and design approaches. As a result, the impression of the corridor to the traveler is of a road that has grown

Figures 36, 37, 38, 39 - 118

in a piecemeal fashion over time with few design controls. Looking at the following factors, the experience of traveling along Mountain Road can be viewed as such:

1. **Streetscape Quality:** The first impression of Mountain Road is that of a continuous strip commercial corridor, (see Figure 40) lacking sidewalks, medians, or planting buffers that would soften its appearance, hide the massive parking lots, or provide safe and attractive pedestrian access:
 - a. *Buffers:* Currently, most of the shopping areas provide no buffering between the road and their parking areas. Planted buffers are important for several reasons: they provide a continuous visual element for travelers that ties together the corridor in a visually pleasing way; they hide the “sea of parking” in front of many strip centers; and they offer some measure of protection for pedestrians by separating them from the rapidly moving vehicles along Mountain Road.
 - b. *Sidewalks and bikeways:* The lack of adequate and safe sidewalks and bike lanes along Mountain Road represents a significant problem. At present, those who wish to walk or bike are in danger from vehicles traveling along the corridor, driving in parking lots, or pulling out of/into parking lots. Consequently, one sees very few pedestrians, and even fewer bikers, along the corridor. The installation of sidewalks with attractive paving, specially demarcated crosswalks, and bike lanes, in conjunction with other enhanced streetscaping elements, would encourage walking and biking, and might reduce the “stop and go” traffic into and out of each shopping center.
 - c. *Medians:* In places where Mountain Road is wide enough to accommodate them, planted medians in the middle of the road would make the road more attractive, introduce a “boulevard” appearance and help calm traffic by making the corridor look less like a highway.
 - d. *Lighting:* The existing lighting is more compatible with a highway location than a shopping area that encourages slower traffic and pedestrian activity. Lighting should be more attractive and at a comfortable pedestrian scale.
2. **Setbacks:** Building setbacks are varied and provide a somewhat chaotic appearance. While many of the more recent shopping centers present wide setbacks, to allow for large parking areas in the front of the stores, older strip centers are quite close to the street, allowing for parking of only one or two rows of cars in front of the shops.
3. **Parking:** Parked and moving cars are now the dominant visual elements along Mountain Road. Most of the existing parking lots do not contain elements like planting islands, which might soften their appearance and make them somewhat more attractive. In addition, current parking lot designs present safety problems for those parking and walking to the stores, given the lack of pedestrian walkways through the lots. The large number of existing curb cuts and the lack of clarity regarding shopping center entrances and exits also present a safety problem.
4. **Signs and Utility Lines:** Two of the most visually intrusive elements along Mountain Road are signs and utility lines. Signs are placed at all heights, and are found in all sizes, styles, colors, and locations. This variation, rather than allowing each store to be noticed, results in visual chaos, so that the traveler perceives a blur of signs, rather than noticing any one of

Figure 40 – page 120

them individually. Utility lines only add to the visual clutter along the corridor. Although these are typically difficult and very expensive to hide through undergrounding, it is possible to reduce their visual impact in several ways that will be discussed under recommended guidelines.

Proposed Mountain Road Design Guidelines

It is recommended that Mountain Road be improved as a suburban highway through the implementation of uniform building setbacks and alignments, as well as through consistent streetscape and signage standards. The following design guidelines are recommended for the Mountain Road Corridor:

1. **Building Siting and Design:** It is recommended that parking areas for the commercial strip centers be placed between the building and the streetscape, and that any new structures be arranged at right angles to the street. The buildings should create a consistent canopy design and profile for all pedestrian edges facing Mountain Road.
2. **Parking Lot Design:** Parking areas should have consolidated entry points and should allow for cross easements between lots and for continuous circulation along the fronts of the stores. All parking areas should be 60 feet in depth. In addition, these areas should be screened by 36"- high sheared, evergreen hedges, planted in 36"-wide planting strips between the parking lots and the Mountain Road streetscape. There should be internal planted islands within all parking areas containing large shade trees, installed at 28 to 32-foot heights. Fourteen feet of clear trunk to the lowest tree branches should be allowed to offer visibility to the stores. It is recommended that the planting of fewer and larger trees be planted to quickly establish shade and human scale, without blocking critical on-building signage.
3. **Signage:** Commercial signage standards should be adopted for the Mountain Road Corridor that will improve visual impacts and will be compatible with the adjacent residential areas. The County, in conjunction with the Pasadena Business Association should develop these standards. On-building signs should be placed on the lower edge of each building canopy. Ground-mounted signage should be located at consolidated parking lot entry points to identify clusters of businesses. These signs should have a solid masonry base, and should be not more than 40 inches in height, with an internally slit sign box allowing space for multiple business signs in a single, consistent sign style. This uniform system of signage will provide for clearer business identification, and will eliminate the chaotic and visually unattractive existing signage clutter.
4. **Sidewalks:** A minimum 5-foot wide sidewalk with upright curbs should be installed along the length of both sides of Mountain Road. All utility poles and highway signs should be located on the business side of the proposed sidewalks.

5. **Lighting:** Mountain Road should be lined with attractive highway lighting. All light poles should be placed on the business side of the sidewalk. Business owners should adopt a uniform family of lighting fixtures for both on-site parking and pedestrian areas.

6. **Overhead Utilities:** Overhead utilities follow Mountain Road. While unsightly, the cost of relocating or underground these structures are typically prohibitive. If such work is done at all, it usually occurs at the time that the road itself is being upgraded. Given these cost constraints, the design guidelines address ways to improve the appearance of the Mountain Road corridor while leaving the utility poles in place. For example, it is recommended that trees be placed between the commercial structures and the road edge to avoid power line interference while still creating a green view. It is also recommended that individual poles be shifted to allow for a continuous sidewalk and evergreen hedge along both sides of Mountain Road. Finally, the design guidelines propose that all utility wires currently strung from the poles to the commercial structures, and traversing parking and pedestrian areas, be undergrounded as these business centers are upgraded.

See Figures 41 and 42 for illustration of streetscape improvements and before and after visualizations of the Mountain Road Corridor design guidelines.

Figures 41, 42 – page 123