

**Orono Comprehensive Planning Committee
November 12, 2013 Public Forum
Jane E Haskell, facilitator**

Economy

- What kind of business do you want to target? (Give example of product, service, etc.)
- What is light industry? (Definition needed)
- Does heavy industry require zoning changes?
- Retail economy
- Is there a committee seeking business to come to Orono? (Need information from OEDC)
- Information portal for town? (Promote the link)
- Difficult to start business due to state regulations. How to help people? (What are liaisons?)
- Compatible/incompatibilities - are they discussed?
- Time frame for Gig U?

Economy (18 comment cards)

(Most comments pertained to 'almost there' or 'needs lots of work')

- 7 Yes
- 7 Almost there with some changes
- 4 Needs lots of work
- I'd be willing to do [xxx xxx] help. Wendall Tremblay rectitude constant. Old Town canoe. L.L. Bean
- Start up money=tax money?
- Explore concept of establishing "free trade zone" status in given area. May add unique status for Orono. Light industry draw/ importing and distribution. Marker space - work with local agriculture and University of Maine Agriculture Department to focus on cooking/baking, etc. Don't give "grant" monies from town to each start up. Offer them space at no cost in co-work area which is equipped by town monies. B. Bass
- Consideration of incompatible uses before they come back to haunt us. OECD partnership seems a good plus Meg Fergusson

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- Is there any consideration for light industry at the Kelly Road Park and then out on the EDZ? Marketing and recruitments needs money investment.
- Make town hot spots for areas connected to Big Gig. Importance of website and clear dissemination of information to the public. Jenny Shemwell
- More work is needed to make out techparks more competitive. Advertise the advantages: access to UMaine student/faculty labs. Paul Melrose
- Keep young people here after graduation.
- Need entrepreneurial put in place. Training then feel that entrepreneurial could run more shops downtown. Tailor, shoe repair, accountant, small shops. Claudia Zont
- Delighted at the variety of options for promoting growth and development of small and new businesses here in Orono.
- How is Orono marketed to potential businesses/corporations that may want to move operations here? Brain Drain is a good concept to be focusing on. Efforts can be made to draw people/former students back in addition to keeping them here directly after graduation.
- Possibly propose ways to advertise to bring businesses to Orono. What is the plan to attract "light industry"? Innovative businesses?
- Streamlining home business office based applications is long overdue. Thank you. No mention of targeting healthcare business. Orono is aging! Healthcare in general, senior support, hospice care, in-home health care, physical/occupational therapy business. Would be attractive for Orono commons patrons, candidates, too (Get into bed with Eastern Maine Medical Center).
- Today's BDN talked about the importance of having integrated "portal" (website) providing one place for potential entrepreneurs to find relevant information. What steps have we taken/do we to plan to take to provide this? Perhaps we could do a regional portal in cooperation with Bangor and Old Town. As a Library worker, I encourage you to include in your marketing the resources of Fogler Library (business and science/engineering references): good information for people writing business plans, applying for grants. Also the resources of Cooperative Extension and other University departments. Lisa Feldman
- Michele Goldman

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Flip chart transcription & Comment card incorporation**Families**

- VRO newer developments only? Grandfathered blocks?
- High density housing costs less
 - Talk to people with families to see what they want.
 - Families want smaller homes, smaller lots.
- People want to live here-cannot find suitable homes
- How much room is there in “the purple area” (VRO)?
- How compare with Old Town in population decline?
- ‘Victim of success’ - retired faculty stay
- What are plans for town owned properties?
- Is there a way to work with the University to build family neighborhood/housing?
- Graduate Student Senate talking about how to work with Orono
- What does affordable housing mean?
 - For work force?
 - Affordable Housing Tax Incentive District (Rules?)
 - Think about secondary market
- Why not extend the walk-able districts? (Large number of bikers, walkers, alternative transportation)
- Is there incentive Town can give to renovations to make housing suitable/valuable so more will stay?
- Extend walkable areas (Webster, No Main, College Avenue)
- Same faculty move to school size (survey new faculty why they chose where they live?)
- Walkable distance
 - lots of people will always have no place to walk.
 - Needs to cover places like Dirigo
 - Needs to apply to everyone
 - Amenities - go to where homes are and supply amenities - like walkable areas.
- Wanted to come back to Orono- couldn’t find housing- smaller lots will encourage families to locate.
- Affordable housing-what is 120% of median- give example.

Families (19 comment cards)

Flip chart transcription & Comment card incorporation**(Most comments pertained to almost there or needs lots of work)**

- 6 Yes
- 7 Almost there with some changes
- 5 Needs lots of work
- 1 Didn't specify

- Don't reduce MDR zone size. Where are the housing developments going to be built in Orono? No cluster building. No University managed housing. Less young household less tax money spent.
- Explore "town purchase" of Lane Construction land as develop as signature cluster-type development. Can we interconnect many of the dead end developments to facilitate walking between (e.g. Webster, Spencer, Park, etc.) B. Bass
- Concern about incompatible uses to draw families- if the town becomes known as industrial town people may not find it appealing. Zone subdivisions in LDR to all multifamily or smaller property or square footage. Because part of the "sell" of Orono to families is the extensive trails systems-need to consider those areas outside of in town district. Housing in the LDR should also be under consideration as a draw- is there enough room in the town area? Move the transition of LDR along to more residential
- Extend overlay area further down Main Street along North Main and College Ave.
- Increase watch within reach. Explore - co-housing for town owned property. Get away from Hartland cookie cutter development. High old standard. Creative housing - community building having amenities. Jenny Shemwell
- Develop housing with nice community amenities - explore types of housing - not always big houses with lots of bathrooms.
- Advertising reasons to move to Orono: Schools/ Farmer's Market, UMaine, Land Trust, Bike Club, High taxes offset by natural gas savings.
- Our taxes are too high; I pay 5k in taxes for single home
- Reduce street width requirements. Towns should subsidize subdivision utility infrastructure- sewer, water and roads. Urban infill- tie the dead end streets off Main Street together. Shep Sheppard
- Please with the University to find a joint plan for housing that is needed. Nancy Prisk
- Would the new University management properties in discussion generate property tax revenue for the town or would it be exempt? Is

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there the ability to do a hybrid of this? RSU 26 should be encouraged to participate in this process.

- Help for families to upkeep in town housing. Parents of students need to realize they cannot purchase these traditional homes for their kids.
- Extend natural gas options/to offset tax burden and utilities. Take a lesson from Hampden. They built a first class/state of the art High school and now it is the major draw for families moving to the area from out of town. Plan for new schools has got to be in any legit plan to attract families. Schools + Taxes = Families. Asa Adams and the high school are both unattractive to families due to facility quality. Bangor's Mount Hope neighborhood is ugly- but it's all young families we could create something similar. A quarry isn't going to attract anyone! It's just not good for the town.
- Work force housing isn't easily financeable. Consider cluster development allowances.
- Decrease lot size seems like a bad way to attract more families. If the problem is that Glenburn is growing then perhaps it would be better to make the environment more like Glenburn. I'm especially opposed to giving subsidies to developers.
- 1) What could we do to encourage philanthropic entrepreneurs to develop something like the land trust for reclaiming student housing for family use? Something like a revolving loan fund. My observation is that UMaine parents buy up lower priced older homes, fill them with student-children and their friends without long-term plans for the property after these students graduate. At this point, before property is too deteriorated, it can be reclaimed; families of modest means would need low-interest loans to do needed renovations. 2) I am mindful that some of our current student neighbors may become the budding entrepreneurs who later settle in Orono and start business- let's work to help integrate them into the community while they are still students. 3) What about a detailed survey of University junior faculty and professional staff as why they chose to live elsewhere? 4) What about working with UMaine on more affordable family housing for faculty/students/staff -more people get used to living here they are more likely to stay. 5) Really like ideas on cluster design and use of both formal/informal open spaces, recreation and extension of traditional neighborhood design. Lisa Feldman
- Michele Goldman

Student Housing/ Neighborhood Preservation

- Start with conversation
 - “what do we want to look like”
 - Create an image.
 - Rather than it being remedial
 - Then Town has platform to stand on.
- Important for students to become part of the community
- Students need to be given responsibility - treated like adults
- Some students who move off campus will stay
- The more we engage students quickly and make them feel welcome it will benefit the town.
- Address and enforce problems (see below). If do we address them, we love to have students.
 - Noise ordinance-(similar to what is used in Tuscon, Arizona)
 - Trash Ordinance
 - Traffic Ordinance
- Owners who do not take care of property and live there (decline, trash, abandoned properties, excessive parking, declined landscape)
- Feel a sense of community in Orono and Old Town - important that people talk to each other- when problems arise or not.
- There are lots of cars
- Transportation and parking is an issue
- Prefer a large development
- What does it cost the town to have large development?
(Infrastructure, police, etc.) (Code, fire)
- Is the assumption that a large development pulls students?
- Do students, University administration, sit on CPC?
 - Difficult for town to address issues without University.
 - Should the University administration be on Orono’s **committee s**?
- Have seen an increase in unit occupancy at one development. Can self manage with rules.
- Gated communities without gates.
- Revenues from developments
- What percent of rentals to non-rental to other communities in Maine?
- Conditions of rentals are “horrible.”
- Local owners of a complex who can and answer questions

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- Segregation into a large development is not healthy
- Empty nest old folks are a way to integrate students: “owner occupied with student rentals.”
- Issue is not student housing- it is the quality of housing, ‘bad’ landlords- work toward decent student housing with local control.
- System for student control onsite?

Student Housing/ Neighborhood Preservation (17 comment cards)
(Narrative comments pertained to almost there or needs lots of work)

5 Yes

8 Almost there with some changes

3 Needs lots of work

1 Didn't specify

- Student housing concept is not the way to go. Parents want to buy homes for their children to live in. We need to enforce rules and regulations proactively. On one hand we want students to find Orono a good place to live after school and on the other hand, we act like they are the Great [unclean??].
- Not too much enforcement. Legal and [xxx] too much. Incentives what we want- return to single family housing? Jenny Shemwell
- The Grove may not be built to code. Major structural problems may be present. Investigation is needed!!
- Is there a potential conflict with limiting the number of student housing units (implies there are some) vs the “village TIF,” concept which requires owner occupied. Definitely include University senior administration staff into this process- i.e. what are their needs and concerns? B. Bass
- One student house in a neighborhood is one too many. Poor code enforcement regarding excessive students in home and paying registration fees.
- 1) Has committee talked to area realtors to see why so many formerly family homes are converted to student housing? Do they target the market? Are there barriers to non-student buyers? What are they? 2) How to positively engage students in the Orono community? Currently the University requires ‘First Years’ to do a token stint of community service-purely pro-forma. Could we work with the University to improve opportunities for service learning? Can the town work harder to provide internships for university students- e.g.

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Maintaining town website, helping staff committees like this, working with school or OVA on projects, community gardens, etc. 3)

Restorative justice. When I worked at UMaine Student Legal Service we had a diversion program for noise/minor criminal offenses.

Someone who pulled a false alarm had to work at the firehouse, washing trucks, etc. Could we try something like this as far as

disorderly students? 4) Talk to successful property managers (Stanley Lovitsky who supervises rental property next door. Does a

superb job at recruiting tenants and communicating expectation to them. Lisa Feldman

- There is a need to take advantage of students in multi student houses. Purchase these homes and recondition them.
- Consider that owner occupied rentals is a lot different than other rentals as a business Claudia Lowd
- What is the process of informing Dean of Students of student related property disturbances? Does this impact the student code of conduct?
- Utilize student skills and knowledge let the community help guide them. Students need a community to be apart of. Hilary Godin, President of Sustainability Education and Ecological Design student organization at UMaine 207-756-5291, hilary.godin@maine.edu); Contact me if I can be of any help to any one....committee/ residents - feel free). SEED aims to connect UMaine to the surrounding community.
- Define what we want Orono to be like and look like. The discussion on Families was excellent! Let's get this image in place- workable and alterative and welcoming community. Stronger regulations that can be and will be enforced but let's welcome students who do conform they can be excellent additions to out community. Nancy Prisk
- This is a student- based town because of the mere fact that the university is here. Students should be encouraged to advocate for their rights in housing- [xxxx xxxx] as Orono has them in place. Mixing the students into all areas can be vitalizing versus negative. Grow the collaboration don't segregate it. Meg Fergusson

Downtown Improvements

- Surprise at how non-ambitious the plan is. No major investment.
- Can eminent domain be used to reclaim 'choice real estate'? (illegal)
- Could town use Stillwater River as a focal point? Get people here, recreation, drop money.
- Downtown constrained by Hasbrook Court
- Could use a grocery store, fresh food. Incentive for?
- Area behind the University Inn going down to river could be a restaurant? (Constraints?)
- What is it that people need in their economy? Match fund what we need.
- **Nothing to bring students downtown (café tables, green space, yoga studio...).**
 - Have something to attract students.
 - Wi-fi hangout
 - Need to translate outside space.
- "Catch" people rather than having them drive through.
 - Town has lost some of its beauty
 - Missing things to "captivate" people.
- Need innovation- infrastructure to bury lines- cost a lot.
- Why do Code Enforcement and Fire Department disagree on improvement issues?
- Under use of downtown. More fully utilize it, then expand to other areas.
- Transportation- multi-use (run, bike, ski, boat) the four seasons.
 - Then may stay to eat, etc.
- Paths dead-end (need walkable paths for kids **and** adults, and some need to be lit)
- Parking areas that are lit.
- New buildings- businesses on bottom and housing on top?
- What can the municipality do with shared use for new development?
Town/ University
- Foot bridge across the river (Webster to downtown)
- Bike racks are needed.

Downtown Improvements (19 comment cards)

(Narrative comments pertained to almost there or needs lots of work)

- 3 Yes
 - 8 Almost there with some changes
 - 4 Needs lots of work
 - 4 Didn't specify
- Green space, outdoor seating, café/coffee shop, university shop/town shop
 - How can we expand the Village/downtown area? Need more retail offerings along with restaurants. Need people living downtown.
 - Coordinate development and building of public facilities (parks, library, performing arts center, town hall, RSU fields, connected walking and biking infrastructure). Develop waterfront. Bridge over Stillwater. Transport hub, boats, skis, running), grocery store [xxx] higher density. Jenny Shemwell
 - We need a foot/bike bridge to connect downtown to the North Main/Penobscot Street area. It would make it easier for people in that part of town to walk or bike to downtown. Also need bike racks.
 - Keep downtown a business area. Until fully utilized. Do not allow commercial development of Stillwater River Side. Dave Flewelling
 - What do we need? How much is enough? is there a critical size?
 - No locally financing. What upgrade to Pine Street parking, that hasn't been done already? Where are these so called stores going? Too much traffic in Orono as it is. Why do we need more economic growth?
 - Food Co-Op! Michele Goldman
 - Grocery store. Downtown bypass for commuters?
 - Needs more beauty. Catchment needed. Improved usage of outdoor space-connect river to downtown. Improve coordination with code enforcement and fire especially what entrepreneurs can expect-currently feels highly restrictive with sprinkler regulations. Claudia Cowd
 - Need to think about destinations to draw people in:
 - Municipal: waterfront, trails, bikes, boat landing, plaza, commons

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- Businesses: co-op food, coffee house, art/old movies, art gallery with something.
- Bike racks a cheap addition.
- Expanding downtown across the river might be a way to increase the link to UMaine.
- What can we do to make people want to bring business here? Make space-pricing of business square footage readily available-put small business links on website, publish citizen ideas - what they want that would be available to potential entrepreneurs. Meg Fergusson
- I believe it would be wise to help shops and homeowners improve their properties. Grocery store-Co-op in Orono would be great for downtown. Riverfront restaurant.
- Some kind of major municipal infrastructure focused around the river. Act as a draw for people who might then buy goods. Incorporate green space with benches and Wi-Fi. How to get from new UCC building access easily across Main Street to “downtown” (i.e. tunnel). B.Bass
- If you are going to pay to fund parking, do yourself a favor and spend the extra money on developing a better means for public transportation. (Trolley street car, utilize rails, river, etc.) to decrease personal car transport/usage. Utilize river area on bridge build still structures across bridge. Use 85-95% of what area is already there and developed before development extends. Community garden. Open green space. Be more open to UMaine student organizations like SEED.
- 1) Better river access and design -landscape trails, pedestrian bridge from new Webster Point development and main land. Who owns land by river on Gavett's/ Methodist Church side-can we tie this together better? Rented kayak lockers at Webster Park? With dam removal river tourism development opportunities will expand. How are planning for this? 2) As far as downtown Bookstore/clothing store goes, have you talked to University bookstore? What are University long-term plans for this establishment? Rumor is that it is hanging on by a thread-are there opportunities for public/private partnership? 3) I really liked the idea of re-designing the Pine Street parking lot to make better use of rear of buildings. We could do the same thing with the parking lot by the old A & P (now Orono Pharmacy) 4) I agree with the remarks on underuse. (new expansion) Lisa Feldman

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- Part of new Credit Union building should be a shared space, Town/Univeristy, for community gatherings, art, music, etc., part of the new downtown central! N. Prisk

Food-based Economy

- Zoning in town has decreased acreage for food growing (if convert to small lots decrease in food production will increase)
- Not either / or (farm or small house lots)
- Can small animals be in town? (Ducks, chickens, etc.)
- Orono can be a food hub from Crown of Maine
- Farmer market options (downtown, technology park, covered, warehouse, be a draw).
- Zoning on Kelley RD adjacent to interstate?
- Value added business on west side?
- Regional farm center plus local Farmers market
- Students world support and be involved in Farmers Market effort
- Godfrey Drive also underutilized
- Value added on Godfrey?
- Farmer Market does not have to be “with” value added
- How can downtown capture on the Farmer Market trade?
- Farmer’s Market need to be downtown/ food and socialization
- School parking lots underutilized
- Farmer’s Market would be a public development not privately develop (eminent domain)
- Farmer’s Market was an improvement to downtown.

Food-based Economy (20 comment cards)

(Narrative comments pertained to almost there or needs lots of work)

- 9 Yes
 - 4 Almost there with some changes
 - 1 Needs lots of work
 - 6 Didn’t specify
-
- Covered Farmers market Jenny Shemwell
 - Regional Market in future; farmer’s market expansion Dave Flewelling
 - Too much development
 - Food co-op, permanent farmers’ market Michele Goldman
 - Farmer’s market, maybe at Pine Street extension; don’t take farmer’s market out of town - Byer’s Manufacturing? Claudia Lowd

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- Research WACA's shared kitchen in Bucksport Industrial Park. Locate roofed facility at west side or near the Boy Scout property on Kelly Road is a good idea due to proximity to I-95.
- Green roof gardens, big farmers' Market Yes! In downtown; community gardens; permaculture training. Yes, UMaine students are so in!! Hilary Godin (President of Sustainability Education and Ecological Design (SEED) student organization at UMaine 207-756-5291, hilary.godin@maine.edu)
- Some great ideas circulated-seems like this may be a great potential. Increase potential of LDR and F+A for agriculture and sustainable practices combined with smaller and more concentrated residential development. Unsustainable activities should be minimized. Downtown farmer's market should be a definite.
- Farmer's markets, when placed strategically, become evolved into community centers where other businesses tend to grow into knowing the people will visit and purchase. Mike Costello
- Support value added concept for food. Does the Farmers market pay anything to the town for the use of town parking lot?
- Advantage of I-95 accessed Market is - could create major regional draw. Disadvantage is that this would take away people from downtown. How about Byer Mfg as covered farmers' market? B. Bass
- 1) I would like to see a year round location for Farmer's Market adjacent to downtown - to help bring people downtown. Geoff Gordon says they like being at Steam Plant by river. Could we sweeten the deal for them by working on a site with better amenities? 2) I really like the idea of a food incubator. If we could establish one, could we think toward having some kinds of food-themed events, like monthly mini-expos; something that might (in conjunction with the Farmers' Market) bring people downtown? These expos could include not just food for sale, and tasting, but all kinds of information, organizational booths, information about gardening and food processing. 3) Maybe the vacant lot near Rose's and adjacent gully would be a good space for downtown farmers' market? Lisa Feldman
- Farmers' Market need town support/approval/space; hold onto agricultural land; support a food-based economy and education. N. Prisk