



A Vision for Route One South



INTRODUCTION

The Vision Plan is an effort by the Freeport Economic Development Corporation (FEDC) to assist the Town in ensuring that the future development of the area between Exit 19 and the Yarmouth Town Line proceeds with thoughtful planning and coordination.

The Freeport Town Council encouraged the creation of FEDC and charged it to find ways to diversify the commercial tax base to make the Town less dependent upon retail development. In order to accomplish this task, a strategy was developed with the support and input of the local community. During its first year, FEDC held a series of meetings with citizens to develop a strategic plan. The Vision Plan for Route One South is the culmination of this strategy.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Freeport Comprehensive Plan identified several issues that deal specifically with the development of Route One South. Now that utilities have been extended, new development has started throughout the area, and more is inevitable. The Comprehensive Plan recommends the Town: "to find alternative approaches which will encourage local businesses which serve local residents and/or are conducted by local residents, and to provide appropriate locations for future commercial growth which will increase employment opportunities."

"During the 1980's, the focus of new commercial development was in the area between Desert Road and Mallet Drive...New expansion will most likely locate along Route One and, when public utilities are extended southward from Desert Road, expansion will occur in that area. The challenge of the 1990's will be to assure that future development of this diverse commercial area is carefully managed so that potential harmful impacts area minimized and the area is a commercial and visual asset to the Town

The Land Use section of this Plan specifically

addresses the issues of strip commercial development and suggest a variety of strategies to prevent it. They include limits on points of access, encouragement of clustering, design concepts, landscaping concepts and sign and lighting suggestions. In addition, the Transportation section addresses strategies for intersection improvements and development of a plan for sidewalks or paths along Route One."

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VISION: DESIGN CHARRETTE

Following the completion of TJD&A's Phase One of the Route One South Study, the Freeport Economic Development Committee embarked an ambitious plan to create a vision for land use and development. In order to make the vision as democratic and far-reaching as possible, a Design Charrette was held on May 1, 1999 to familiarize Freeport stakeholders (residents, business owners, review boards, etc.) with the Route One South Master Planning process. This was planned as an opportunity to solicit input that would lead to a vision for the future of the commercial properties and the character of the Route One corridor.

Participants were given a basic overview of existing zoning policies, recent Town work on zoning ordinance and performance standards, and ongoing planning efforts. A slide show of Route One South, seen from both the air and the ground, was used to refresh memories of the natural and man-made landscape along the corridor.

Each participant was assigned to a topic group (Architecture, Site Planning, and Public Landscape/ROW) to discuss the 'pros and cons' of existing patterns of development. The groups developed goals and objectives for each topic which would become the foundation for the long-term plan.

Each discussion group also sketched a conceptual development pattern for Route One South. In diagrammatic form these plans suggested how the land might be developed in the future, taking into

account access and circulation, open space, trails and connections, building areas, relationship between parcels, existing land uses, image and identity.

A common pattern between all the groups was the identification of three distinct 'zones' of development:



Hospitality District

- The Hospitality District – the northern end near Exit 19
- The Central Core – the land in the vicinity of HealthSource
- The Southerly Gateway – the vicinity of South Freeport Road and the Big Indian.



Central Core



Southern Gateway

Many specific suggestions and themes came out of the design charrette process:

- People expected that development will continue to occur with increasing frequency as a result of the availability of public utilities and the proximity to downtown.
- The present zoning ordinance is adequate to deal with the type of uses that would be welcome within the study area, since it allows for a diversity of commercial activity.
- The Town should develop a vision to promote orderly patterns of growth that will contribute to a cohesive, planned appearance to this important gateway into the community.

The Appendix contains minutes from each of the reporting groups and a list of attendees at the Charrette.

INTRODUCTION TO THE VISION

The Vision Plan for Route One South is a look to the future. However, it is not a master plan in the traditional sense. Its purpose is to set a tone and scale for the quality of development that is anticipated to occur. FEDC is not planning to act in the capacity of a developer, i.e., it will not be purchasing properties and putting up buildings. With proper understanding, it should be invaluable in ongoing discussions with the Planning Board, Town Council, property owners, developers, local residents, and others who have a long-term interest in the Town.

The vision as depicted in the illustrations will never happen exactly as shown. The most important components of this document are the land planning and design principles that were used to give the vision a recognizable form. By following these principles, FEDC believes that the area can be developed over the next several decades into an attractive employment and hospitality center that enriches Freeport's commercial tax base while strengthening its natural character.

ROUTE ONE SOUTH PLANS

Working with representatives from FEDC, TJD&A developed a series of land use scenarios for each of the three districts within the corridor. A prototype land use was assigned to each property or groups of properties, following the themes that were expressed at the Design Charrette.

A computerized map was developed by TJD&A and used to generate a series of three-dimensional models of the corridor. C. Michael Lewis, a Portland illustrator and designer, produced one view of each of the three districts to show how the principles could be applied. Many existing buildings were included in the illustrations for reference purposes to give the public some familiar landmarks to relate to.

ROUTE ONE: GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Route One is the common thread that links all three segments described below. The vision for the

area contains a number of recommendations that should apply universally between the Yarmouth Town Line and Exit 19.

Route One: Public Infrastructure

- Route One should continue to provide a single travel lane in each direction, with a center turning lane in built-up areas as determined by further traffic study.
- Future improvements to Route One should include the construction of a paved shoulder (with a minimum width of four feet) designed to accommodate on-road bicyclists.
- Construct a multi-purpose pathway within or adjacent to the Right-of-way for pedestrians and inexperienced cyclists.
- Install trees, flowering shrubs, perennials, ornamental grasses, and other landscape features to create a boulevard feeling the length of Route One. With proper planning, this esplanade can be an effective and attractive buffer to separate the pathway from moving traffic.
- Provide pedestrian rest areas every 300–500' to encourage more walking for all segments of the population.
- Fill in roadside ditches to facilitate the installation of pathways and landscaping. This will require a coordinated system of underground storm drains, culverts, and curbing as required for drainage.

Route One Frontage

These recommendations apply to the properties that abut the roadway.

- Maintain the existing patterns of open space, small scale buildings, and buildings placed close to Route One.
- Encourage a high level of architectural quality for the buildings that will be most visible from Route One.
- Encourage owners of abutting properties to coordinate their development plans wherever possible with respect to curb cuts, access, lighting, stormwater management, parking, and pedestrian amenities.

- Preserve existing wetlands and significant stands of trees to maintain the natural character of the landscape and serve as a visual break between nodes of development.

C-1 Zone

The C-1 (Commercial 1) Zone extends the length of the study area along the west side of Route One. It is a relatively narrow strip of land with great exposure to Interstate 95.

- Preserve and re-use historic homes and barns wherever practicable.
- Encourage abutting lot-owners to coordinate development and/or expansion plans. Where possible, development should be organized around landscaped parking courtyards.
- Encourage parking at the rear or sides of buildings to minimize the amount of paving that is visible from the road. Parking that is located on the Interstate 95 side of the properties on the west side of Route One should provide berms, fencing, and/or landscaping to
- Wherever possible, maintain existing stands of vegetation facing Interstate 95 to provide screening from the highway.
- Encourage a consistently high level of architecture design on all new building facades, including those facing Interstate-95.
- Many of the shallow lots in the zone may be suitable for small retail shops, service-related uses, or specialty shops. Encourage clusters of similar uses.

Pedestrian / Bicycle Improvements

Photosimulation have been developed to illustrate some of the recommended improvements along Route One.

- The Town should develop plans for a multi-purpose pathway with a minimum width of eight feet along the entire length of Route One. This pathway can be a link in the proposed East Coast Greenway between Florida and Canada, as well as an important transportation corridor for local residents.



Typical existing conditions along Route One.



Photosimulation of recommended improvements to the pedestrian environment.

Photosimulation: Terrence J. DeWan & Associates

- Careful attention to detail in high pedestrian use areas.
- Provide some opportunity for rest every 300-500 feet to encourage a wide range of ability groups to use the pathway.
- Provide a rich palette of landscaping to separate pathway from Route One and parking lots. Landscaping should be designed with native, low-maintenance plant materials that offer four seasons of enjoyment.
- Paved shoulders should be incorporated into any improvements for Route One to provide a safe opportunity for advanced bicyclists.
- Improvement plans should include the replacement of roadside ditches with structural storm drainage.

- Develop an off-road pathway in the buffer zone that separates the commercial uses along Route One from the nearby residential districts. In several places a pathway already exists along the former NET utility easement and is used for cross-country skiing. In other places, the pathway would have to be included as part of coordinated development plans. With proper planning, this could be an exciting adjunct to both the commercial and residential land uses on either side.

Design Guidelines

There are a number of good models to look at in writing and illustrating design guidelines to address some of the issues discussed below. In recent years Falmouth has developed guidelines which have been very successful in setting the standard for consistent quality in all aspects of Site Plan applications before the Town. Yarmouth has just recently completed design guidelines for their section of Route One. Brunswick will be completing guidelines for the Cook's Corner business district in the coming months. Windham is beginning the process for Route 302 in North Windham.

- The Town should develop design guidelines for Route One to address architectural design, site planning, landscaping, signage, and lighting.
- Encourage the use of New England vernacular architecture throughout Route One South.
- Discourage franchise styles that have no relevance to architectural traditions of Maine.
- Integrate signage into the architecture with attention to materials, design, detailing, and lighting.
- Site buildings to preserve important site features (wetlands, significant trees, key views) while contributing to an overall sense of harmony along Route One.
- Use attractive lighting fixtures that relate to the style and detailing of the buildings. Use minimum light levels necessary for visibility and safety.

NORTHERN GATEWAY: THE HOSPITALITY DISTRICT

Hospitality: Land Uses and Design

- Capitalize on the visibility, location, and current uses to emphasize the hospitality industry (motels, restaurants, tourist services) in this section of Route One. The goal of this section of Route One is to develop greater diversity in the types of accommodations and restaurants that are developed to appeal to a broad cross-section of the public.



The gateway into Freeport at Exit 19

- If the Planning Board approves the pending application, the Dutch Village Motel will be replaced with a proposed restaurant. The existing cottages are a local landmark, and one of the last of a series of roadside cottage-style motels that were once popular along Route One. The Town should encourage the new owners to retain several of the cottages and incorporate them into the landscape design for the new use as a way of recognizing the cultural history of Freeport.
- Emphasize pedestrians in Route One



Development patterns along Route One within the hospitality district. Establish strong pedestrian connections between buildings and links into Freeport village.

improvements. Interconnections between restaurants, motels, and other uses should be strongly encouraged to promote walking and reduce the number of trips entering Route One.

- Allow shared parking for retail and hospitality uses to minimize the need for excessively large paved areas. Parking should be located at the rear or side of commercial uses wherever possible by siting the buildings as close to Route One as possible.
- Maintain a strong wooded buffer between the commercial uses along Route One and the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Gateway Treatment

The first impressions of Route One South will be important if people coming off the Interstate or traveling through the area are going to be attracted in search of accommodations or dining.

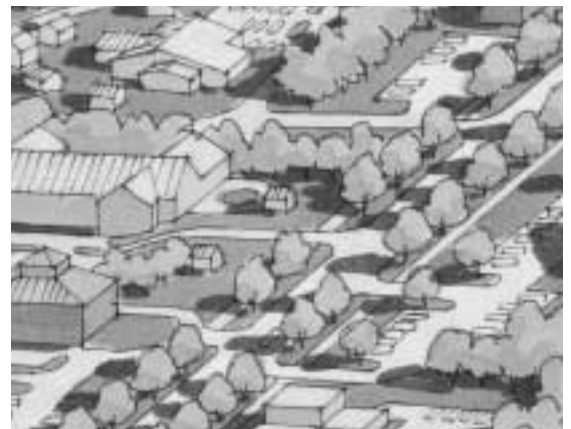
- Emphasize the start of the Route One South commercial district by a distinctive landscape treatment. As illustrated on the drawings, this

should include new street tree plantings, attractive gateway signage, lighting, pedestrian walkways, and other features which draw they eye past the corner and down the road to the south.

- The architecture in this gateway zone should be carefully designed to be eye-catching without being pretentious. The design guidelines recommended above should address specifics architectural treatments for gateway locations. The redevelopment of the corner will be key in setting the proper tone for Route One South.
- Other visitor amenities might include trolley stops, an information center, artwork, and small parks.

Potential Zone Adjustment

- Study the potential of deepening the C-1 Zone toward Stage Coach Road to provide greater depth for commercial development on Route One.
- If the zone is adjusted, is should follow wetlands near Stage Coach Road to afford protection the residential neighborhood.



The area around Exit 19 should be treated as a gateway into Freeport

CENTRAL CORE: OFFICE AND EMPLOYMENT DISTRICT

Hillside Office Parks

- The Vision Plan calls for the development of a series of interconnected office and light industrial buildings on the hillside above Route One, centered around the existing



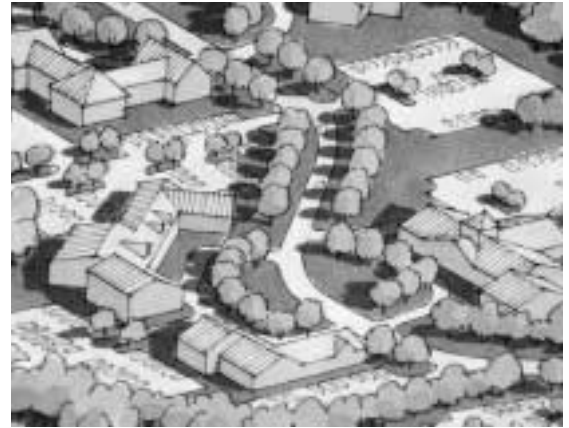
Possible infill development above HealthSource.

HealthSource headquarters.

- Development will be naturally constrained by topography, wetlands, and shallow ledge. The Vision Plan encourages the development of smaller, multi-level buildings designed to fit the environment. Wholesale changes to the natural character of the landscape should be avoided.
- All new development should be characterized by a high levels of architectural quality and site planning to create distinctive employment areas and useable outdoor spaces.
- The design of window patterns, rooflines, building surfaces, lighting, and other details should all be considered for their possible impact on Route One.
- Parking lots and buildings should be terraced into the hillsides to minimize alteration of topography and loss of trees.
- Abutting landowners should cooperatively plan



The Central Core district should work around existing ponds, wetlands, and steep slopes.



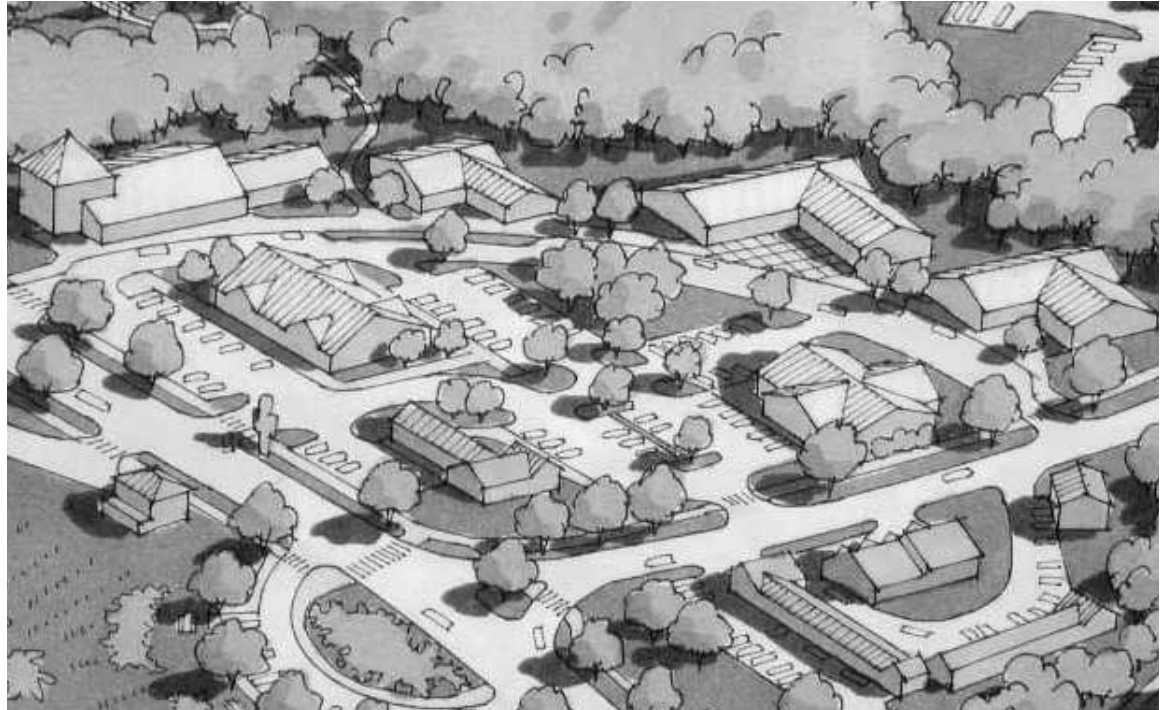
New roadways should follow the topography of the hillside. Development should be arranged in campus-like quadrangles.

for shared facilities wherever possible – e.g., stormwater management, access roads, buffer zones, etc.

- Development patterns should result in attractive, campus-like environments, using buildings, circulation paths, and natural features as the basic building blocks.
- Natural resources on the hillside (ponds, streams, wetlands, special vegetation areas) should be preserved wherever possible to retain the natural characteristics of Route One South.

Roadway Improvements

- Future development should minimize the number of new curb cuts along Route One through the use of shared driveways, improvements to existing roads, and the creation of a new roadway parallel to Route One.
- An interconnected roadway system is envisioned throughout the Central Core district. Additional planning will be required to locate the optimal location for this roadway and determine how it could be made to serve the various parcels on the hillside.
- Property owners should coordinate their development plans with abutting landowners to facilitate future interconnections and other shared facilities.
- New roadways should be laid out to follow the natural topography wherever possible.
- Roadways, parking lots, and drop-offs will be



The intersection of Route One and South Freeport Road has the potential to become a small village to serve the needs of local residents as well as visitors to Freeport.

key elements in creating the campus approach described above. Planning for these facilities should be a concerted effort involving traffic and civil engineers, landscape architects, hydrologists, wetland scientists, and other design professionals.

THE SOUTHERN GATEWAY

This part of Route One South is envisioned as a small-scale pedestrian-oriented village that can provide goods and services for the residents of this part of Freeport as well as passing visitors. Many of the elements are already in place: shops, a deli, a residentially-scaled motel, and small office buildings. With the construction of the YMCA and approval of a major expansion at the Freeport Inn, the visibility of the area was heightened.

South Freeport Road / Route One Intersection

- Create a small village center at the intersection, with abundant green space, plantings, small shops, and outdoor activity areas.
- Encourage the development of small scale shops, restaurants, and other services to meet the needs of the local population.

- Buildings should be arranged in informal groupings to create interesting spaces.
- Develop a system of village-scale roads to provide an internal connection(s) between the South Freeport Road and Route One.
- Preserve the Freeport Big Indian as a local landmark, a focal point that gives the area a unique identity.
- Install pathways along the roads to facilitate access from nearby residential areas, offices, and the YMCA.



Development of the triangle of land opposite the YMCA should reinforce the pedestrian scale of the gateway.

South Freeport Triangle Professional Buildings

There are several large tracts of land near the intersection of Route One and South Freeport Road which may be suited for a small scale professional office park, set in a well landscaped environment. The description below pertains to the land in the triangle bounded by Route One, South Freeport Road, and Old South Freeport Road.

- Any development on the site should feature pedestrian connections to the nearby commercial uses, the YMCA, and the neighborhood residential areas
- The existing trees on the property should be preserved to maintain the character of the site and provide shade and visual interest.
- The main access for the property should be off Old South Freeport Road, avoiding any additional curb cuts on Route One.
- The grade change between the level plateau (buildable area) and Route One should be preserved as a buffer.
- Buildings should be oriented to the surrounding roads to reinforce the neighborhood patterns while taking advantage of the views of White Mountains.
- The architecture should feature well-detailed forms with focal points at prominent corners.

White Mountain Overlook

- Public improvements to this areas should include a small rest stop and picnic area opposite South Freeport Road.
- This presents an opportunity for interpretive /



A small overlook/rest stop to take advantage of the view to the White Mountains.

promotional signage about the many natural, cultural, and economic features of Freeport for visitors from the south.

- The rest area should be tied in to the pedestrian walkways with well-marked crosswalks.

Professional Office Park

The other location where may be suitable for office development is just north of the existing development at the intersection. This large tract of land is relatively flat and wooded, with a series of interconnected wetland fingers throughout.



A professional office park, screened from Route One, adjacent to the gateway village.

- A thorough site analysis will be required to delineate wetlands, significant vegetation, and land that is suitable for development.
- Initial evaluations would suggest that the land would best be developed as pods the avoid wetlands and minimize site disturbance.
- The woods adjacent to Route One should be preserved to maintain the separation between the Gateway South and the Central Core districts.
- The number of entrances along Route One should be limited to one if possible.
- The office park should consist of two or three story buildings set back from Route One, with strong pedestrian connection to the commercial core to the south.
- Considerable attention to be given to common open spaces, preservation of natural features, and other site amenities.
- Given the proximity of the land to the interstate, the other professional offices in the area, and downtown Freeport, it may also be suitable for apartments aimed at young professionals.