

The 1990 Update
of
The Richmond Comprehensive Plan

Prepared for:

The Citizens of the Town of Richmond, Maine
and
Their Elected and Appointed Officials

Town Participation Coordinated
by
The Richmond Planning Advisory Committee

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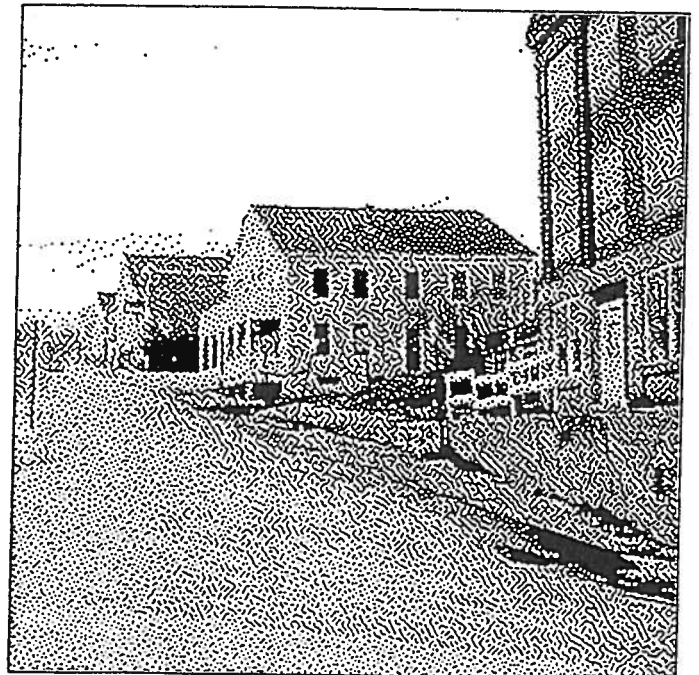
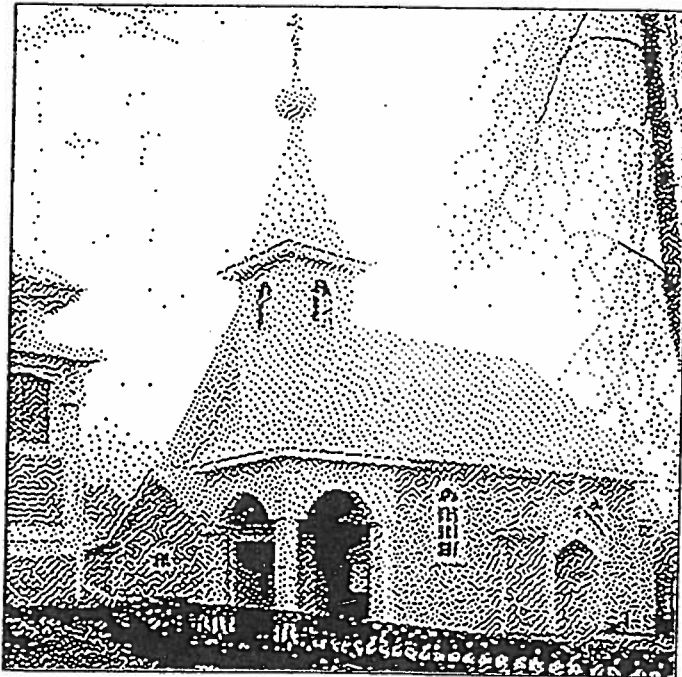
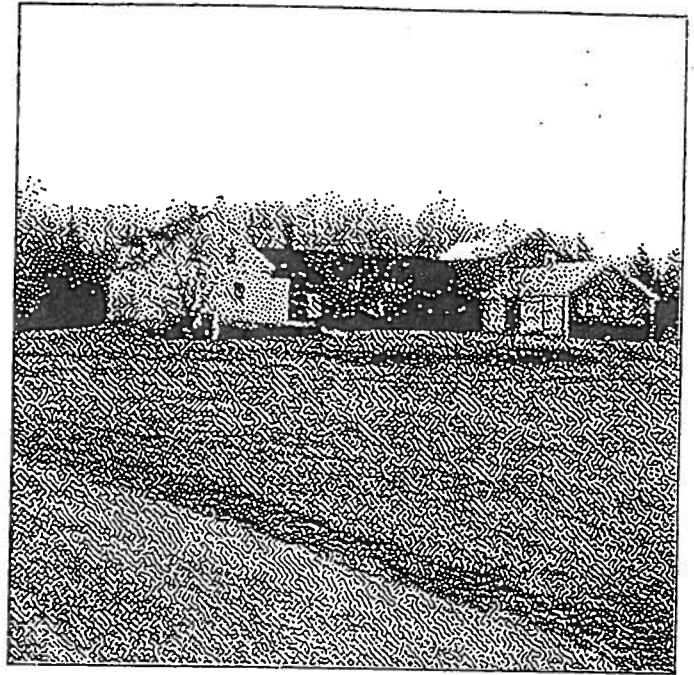
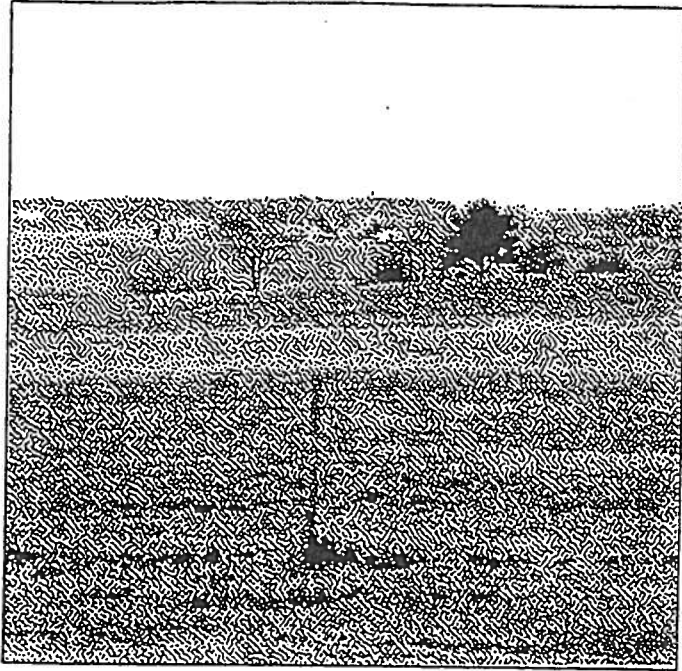
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106 Main Street
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As Adopted by the Town Meeting
February 27, 1991



1990 UPDATE

RICHMOND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Market Decisions, Inc.
Terrence J. DeWan & Associates

Foreword

What you have before you here is the summation of twenty-eight months of very hard work by a group of over one hundred twenty dedicated and concerned citizens of Richmond. During this process, we held over forty committee meetings and community forums, many lasting late into the night. The issues were thoroughly discussed, often involving heated and passionate debate, until consensus was finally reached. We hope that this document, designed to serve as the Town's roadmap through the year 2000, is an accurate summary of your feelings and your neighbors' feelings and of the issues and opportunities facing all of us.

The committee would like to take this opportunity to thank Mark Eyerman of Market Decisions, Inc., for his professionalism, leadership, experience, vision, and ability to listen. Certainly Mark is the best in his field. We feel very fortunate to have had his guidance. He transformed an almost impossible task into a wonderful learning experience and a most enjoyable process. Thank you, Mark.

Our thanks also to Terry DeWan of Terrence J. DeWan & Associates for his work in researching and developing the wonderful and useful series of maps which are essential for a clear understanding of the concepts and resources around which the Plan is built. Our thanks, too, to Mark's and Terry's co-workers, who put in many hours of work and deserve recognition.

Finally, our thanks to all the people of Richmond who took the time to participate in the process. The character and strength of our Town is best shown by this willingness of many to volunteer countless hours for the benefit of all. The challenge now is to carry this enthusiasm for our town forward and to work hard to implement the shared vision expressed in this document.

John A. Robbins, Jr., Chairman
Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee
and Richmond Planning Board

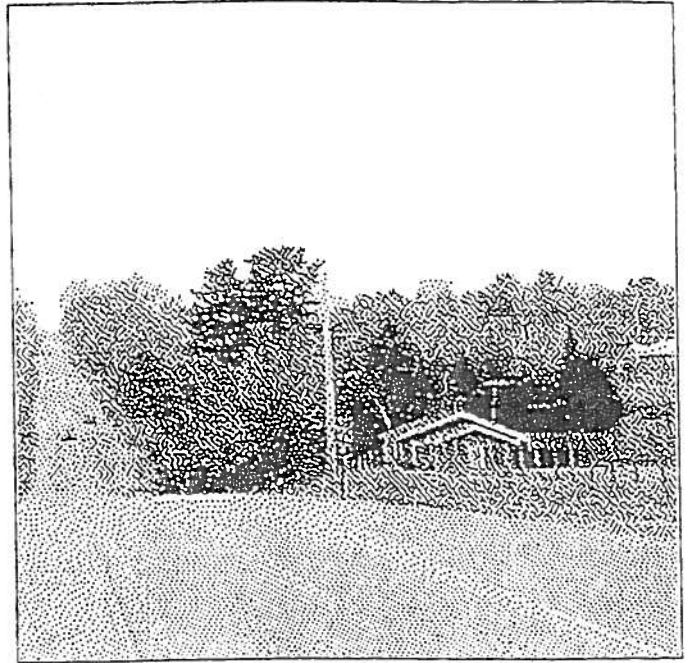
Table of Contents

Richmond Comprehensive Plan

	Part A. Background	1
Section 1	Introduction	2
Section 2	Community Character	5
	Part B. Community Goals and Policies	7
Section 3	Community Goals	8
Section 4	Opportunities and Constraints	15
Section 5	Affordable Housing Goals and Strategies	20
Section 6	Community Policies	28
Section 7	Land Use Policies	40
	Part C. Implementation	49
Section 8	Implementation Strategies	50
Section 9	Capital Investment Strategy	59
Section 10	Regional and State Coordination	66
	Part D. Inventory and Analysis	69
Section 11	Regional Environment	70
Section 12	Demographic Trends	75
Section 13	Existing Land Use Patterns	83
Section 14	Land Use and Development Trends	90
Section 15	Updated Community Survey Results	95
Section 16	Economic Trends	102
Section 17	Transportation	107
Section 18	Public Facilities and Services	114
Section 19	Fiscal Capacity	129
Section 20	Housing	133
Section 21	Natural Resources	144
Section 22	Marine Resources	172
Section 23	Cultural Resources	175
	Part E. Appendices	
Appendix A	Detailed Community Survey Results	
Appendix B	Soils Information	

Figure 1	Opportunities and Constraints Map	16
Figure 2	Land Use Designations	48
Figure 3	Regional Setting	71
Figure 4	Population Change	76
Figure 5	Land Use Changes Map	94
Figure 6	Utility Plan	120
Figure 7	Soils Map	124
Figure 8	Natural Resources Constraints Map	171
Table 1	Population Changes 1970-1987	72
Table 2	Average Annual Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment by Labor Market Area	73
Table 3	Age Distribution of Year-Round Richmond Population	79
Table 4	Comparative Age Distribution - 1980	80
Table 5	Comparative Socioeconomic Characteristics - 1980	81
Table 6	Richmond Community Survey - Profile of Respondents	96
Table 7	Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment - Augusta LMA	104
Table 8	Average Annual Daily Traffic Volumes at Selected Locations 1973 - 1988	109
Table 9	School Enrollment in Richmond Schools	126
Table 10	Total Expenditures - All Funds	132
Table 11	Housing Stock in 1980	137
Table 12	Housing Additions Since 1980	138
Table 13	Housing Inflation	139
Table 14	Home Prices	140
Table 15	Affordable Housing Defined	141
Table 16	Subsidized Rental Housing	142
Table 17	Richmond Housing Study - Rooms and Households	143
Table 18	Forest Suitability of Richmond Soils	153
Table 19	Summary of Deer Harvest	164
Table 20	Wetland Types and Rating for Waterfowl	165

Part A



BACKGROUND

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|-----------|---------------------|
| Section 1 | Introduction |
| Section 2 | Community Character |

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

A. The Role of the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is a guide for managing the change that a community undergoes. The Plan serves many functions. It is an expression of the community's vision of its future. It is a guide to making the many public and private decisions that determine Richmond's future. It is a source of basic information about the natural resources and built environment of the community. Finally, it is the legal foundation of the Town's land use controls.

The Comprehensive Plan is not a zoning ordinance, nor is it a law of any kind. To the contrary, the Plan is an advisory document, a collective expression of the community's goals for the future and an identification of the policies and programs necessary to move Richmond in the direction of its goals. In the broadest sense, it is a road map that should be used by the Town's elected and appointed officials to steer Richmond on an agreed-upon course. In a narrow sense, it serves as the legal basis for any land use regulations adopted by the Town since they must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

B. The State Growth Management Law

The Maine Legislature adopted the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act in 1988. The act requires that each municipality in the State, except those under the jurisdiction of the Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC), develop a local growth management program that guides the future growth of that community. The local growth management program must be consistent with State and regional goals and with the State's coastal policies.

Under the act, the local growth management program consists of two parts:

1. The preparation and adoption of a comprehensive plan by the Town. This plan must comply with State requirements and must be reviewed by State and regional agencies prior to its final adoption.
2. The preparation and adoption of an implementation program that is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and carries out the goals and policies set forth in the Plan. This program must also be reviewed by State and regional agencies.

The State law requires that Richmond complete step 1 of the process, the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan, by January 1, 1991. This update of the Town's Comprehensive Plan has been prepared to fulfill that requirement.

C. Past Planning Activities

This 1990 update of the Richmond Comprehensive Plan is the second generation of plans for the community. The initial Comprehensive Plan was prepared by the Richmond Planning Board in 1973. The Planning Board was assisted in that task by a group of students from the School of General and Interdisciplinary Studies (SCOGIS) at the University of Maine at Portland-Gorham (now the University of Southern Maine).

The 1973 Comprehensive Plan provided an historical look at the Town of Richmond, an inventory of Richmond in 1973 including public facilities, community services, utilities, education, industry and business, and residential uses and an analysis of the Town's natural resources. The Plan also contained a view of Richmond's future presented through a series of goals for the community. The Plan proposed that the Planning Board should review the entire plan every five years and resubmit it to the Town for reconsideration to assure that it be kept current.

The 1973 Plan has served as the basis of the Town's land use regulations since its adoption. While individual regulations and programs have been adopted, reviewed or undertaken since 1973, no comprehensive review of the Plan has occurred.

D. The Planning Process

The June 1987 Town Meeting authorized expending funds to prepare an Update of the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Board was formally charged with this function and solicited proposals from consulting firms to assist the Town in this endeavor. The Planning Board recommended that the Town hire Market Decisions, Inc., of South Portland in conjunction with Terrence J. DeWan & Associates for the task. The selectmen concurred and awarded a contract for Phase 1 of the work to Market Decisions, Inc. During discussions of the contract, it was apparent to both parties that the funding approved at the 1987 Town Meeting was not adequate to do a top quality job. With this in mind, the Town entered into a phased contract with the intention of seeking additional funds at the 1988 Town Meeting to allow work on the project to be completed.

The Planning Board, after consultation with selectmen, the Town Manager and several prominent community leaders, selected an advisory committee to assist the Planning Board in the process of updating the Plan. The committee was chosen to represent a broad cross-section of the community including landowners, businessmen, conservationists, and the general public. The committee began meeting in March of 1988. A key element in the updating of the Plan has been an effort to involve the residents of the Town in the process to the greatest extent possible. To foster community involvement, meetings of the advisory committee were open to the public. In addition, the committee held a series of Community Forums to which the public was invited.

The committee also conducted a survey of every household in Richmond. The results of the survey are reported in Section 15.

At the 1988 Town Meeting, the voters approved additional funding to continue working on the update. In the fall of 1988, Richmond became eligible for State financial assistance under the Growth Management Law. The local funding approved by Town Meeting was used to match a State grant to allow the Town to complete work on the Update of the Comprehensive Plan.

Since early 1989, the members of the advisory committee and other interested citizens have met regularly to assist Market Decisions and Terrence J. DeWan & Associates in preparing the update. The group provided extensive input on both the inventory sections and on the goals and policies that are contained in the Plan. In many cases, the contents of the Plan reflect compromises that resulted from lengthy and sometimes heated discussion about the future of Richmond. But in every case, the goals and recommendations reflect a deep love for and concern about the Town of Richmond and its future.

SECTION 2. COMMUNITY CHARACTER

The physical setting of a community and its cultural history play important roles in determining the character of a town and the land use issues facing that community. Therefore, it is important that we understand the physical and cultural roots of Richmond as we think about and plan for its future.

Richmond is located on the west bank of the Kennebec River 12 miles north of the center of the City of Bath and approximately 17 miles down river from Augusta, the State capital. While Richmond lies approximately 23 miles from the Atlantic, the Kennebec was and still is navigable from Richmond to the sea. Richmond's location on the Kennebec has played a major role in the history of the Town.

While the area that is now Richmond was first settled in the early 1700's, Richmond as a municipal entity did not exist until 1823 when it separated from Bowdoinham. The population of Richmond at that time was approximately 850. Up to this point, Richmond was primarily an agricultural community.

The 1830's saw Richmond develop as a major shipbuilding center, a role it would continue for approximately 70 years. With this new industrial base, Richmond experienced rapid growth almost doubling in population by 1840. During the middle of the nineteenth century, Richmond developed into a vibrant urban center. Shipbuilding remained strong throughout the 1850's, 1860's and into the 1870's. By 1860, the population of Richmond stood at over 2,700, an increase of over 300% in under 40 years. However, the advent of steam power resulted in the gradual decline of the shipbuilding industry.

The shipbuilding era (1830's-1870's) gave Richmond the physical form that continues substantially unchanged to this day. The Town developed as an urban village with an industrialized waterfront, commercial center and supporting residential neighborhoods. This village served as the market center for a large rural countryside.

The demise of the shipbuilding industry brought Richmond's growth to a halt. Population began to decline somewhat. The Town experienced a second economic surge in the late 19th century with the expansion of the ice industry. The Kennebec River became a major source of ice for populations up and down the Atlantic Coast. In 1886-1887, there were 60 icehouses along the river between Bath and Augusta. These buildings, used to store the cut ice until it was shipped in the spring and summer months, were as much as 700 feet long and 30 feet high. The ice industry resulted in many seasonal workers coming to Richmond to work during the winter ice-cutting season.

Iceboro, on the Kennebec north of the village, developed during the ice era. The community had its own railroad station, post office and general store. However, technological progress soon undid the ice industry as mechanical refrigeration began to appear. By the early

years of the twentieth century, ice harvesting had become a thing of the past. Today, little remains of the Iceboro settlement.

The twentieth century saw Richmond enter a period of stagnation. The demise of the shipbuilding and ice industries eroded the Town's economic base. The population of the community declined to 2,049 by the turn of the century and continued to fall through World War I reaching a low of 1,724 in 1920. Richmond became primarily a market town providing services to the surrounding agricultural countryside.

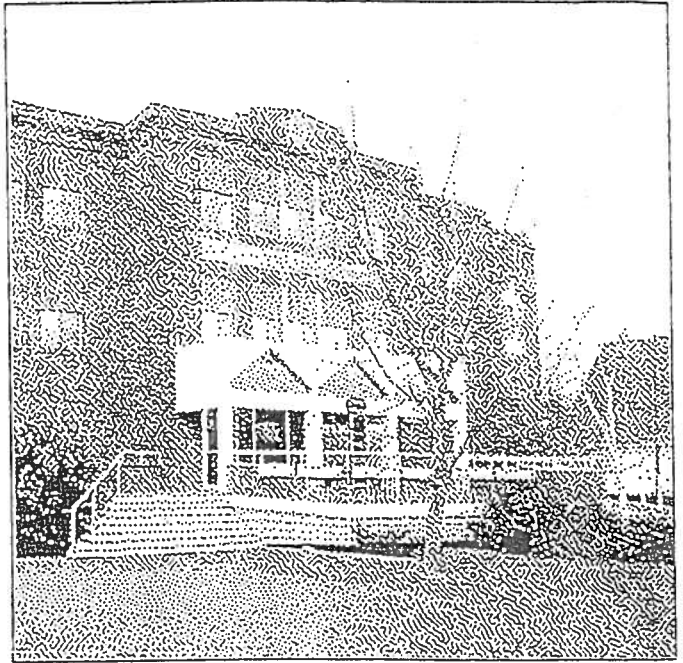
During the 1920's, 1930's and 1940's the Town experienced slow population growth reaching over 2,200 in 1950. This growth occurred without substantial changes in the character of the community.

Between 1950 and 1970, the population of Richmond was stable and the community saw little change. The location of the shoe shop on the fringe of the village provided a new economic base for the community. At the same time, the growth of the use of private automobiles slowly began to erode the Town's role as a commercial center as residents could now take advantage of shopping opportunities in larger communities. A new dimension was added to the cultural character of Richmond during this period with the immigration of a significant eastern European population to the Town. This group generated a new ethnic flavor and resulted in the establishment of a number of new social and religious groups.

The 1970's brought about a new era for Richmond. After decades of stability, the Town began to experience significant residential growth. During the decade, Richmond's population grew from 2,168 to 2,627, an increase of over 20%. While some of this growth was located in or near the village, much of it began to occur at scattered locations throughout the rural sections of the community. Perhaps as importantly, Richmond entered the commuter era in which the Town increasingly became a bedroom community for people working in Bath, Brunswick or Augusta. By 1980, less than half of the Town's work force was employed in Richmond. The construction of I-95 through the Town inescapably linked Richmond more firmly with both the Augusta and Bath-Brunswick areas.

The decade of the 1980's has seen a continuation of the trends that developed during the 1970's. The Town has continued to experience a substantial amount of residential development, primarily small scale projects and lot-by-lot growth scattered along existing roads throughout the Town. This continuing pattern of the conversion of rural land to residential use has impacted the character of the outlying sections of Richmond. At the same time, the growth of shopping opportunities in both the Bath/Brunswick/Topsham area and the Augusta area has depressed demand for local commercial services.

Part B



COMMUNITY GOALS AND POLICIES

Section 3	Community Goals
Section 4	Opportunities and Constraints
Section 5	Affordable Housing Goals and Strategies
Section 6	Community Policies
Section 7	Land Use Policies

SECTION 3. COMMUNITY GOALS

These general goals outline a basic philosophy of what Richmond is and should be in the future. Taken as a whole, these goals establish a vision of what the residents of Richmond want the Town to be and the values that it should embody. These goals are intended to provide a general policy framework on which to base the recommendations of this Plan.

A. General Growth and Development Goals

Work to maintain the **small town character** of Richmond with its desirability and ability for people to walk within the community.

Assure that new residential and nonresidential development is in keeping with the established character of the Town including the rural, **small town feeling**, scale of buildings and neighborliness.

Guide the growth of Richmond so that it preserves the important values of the community including its heritage, historical values, diversity of population and natural resources.

Assure that the policies and regulations of the Town recognize the private property rights of landowners while promoting the public good.

Recognize that there are different values and lifestyles among the residents of Richmond and that this diversity of opinion is worthwhile so long as it does not polarize the community.

Assure that the policies and regulations of the Town recognize that new development creates impacts on the community, and that the developers should be responsible for paying for the costs of improvements to public facilities needed to serve the project.

B. Natural Resource and Environmental Goals

Actively promote an understanding of the special problems of development in the Pleasant Pond watershed and the need for improvement of the Pond's water quality by working with the **Cobbossee Watershed District** and neighboring towns.

Protect the quality and quantity of the groundwater to assure the availability of water supply for private wells.

Assure that areas subject to development such as wetlands, significant wildlife habitat, the areas adjacent to rivers, streams and ponds, floodplains, unique natural areas and areas with

steep slopes which have critical or important natural resource value are protected from misuse which damages their resource value or creates public safety or health concerns.

Foster an understanding by the community of the Town's natural resources, the limitations that they impose, and of the environmental issues facing the Town and Region.

Protect the quality of the Town's rivers and streams by reviewing activities in the shoreland area which may degrade the water quality, flood protection value, wildlife habitat or visual environment and controlling these activities where appropriate.

In light of the large areas of the Town with marginal soil conditions, the Town should assure that new developments which utilize on-site sewage disposal can safely dispose of these wastes over the long term to protect both the ground and surface waters of the Town.

Encourage the owners of existing buildings with on-site sewage disposal systems in marginal soils, particularly those in the densely settled Village area, to connect to the public sewerage system if feasible.

Control development to protect critical wildlife habitat including deer yards and eagle nesting sites while protecting the landowners' rights.

Encourage private landowners and the Town to undertake efforts to plant trees and landscape their properties to buffer adjoining uses and enhance the visual environment.

C. Open Space and Recreation Goals

Work to preserve the undeveloped Kennebec River frontage for open space and recreational uses.

Encourage the development of a harbor management program in conjunction with the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to control moorings and boat access to the Kennebec River.

Upgrade pedestrian and visual access to Pleasant Pond, the Kennebec River and the Town's other rivers and streams.

Encourage the protection and preservation of the open, rural character of the outlying portions of Richmond while protecting landowners, property rights and land values.

Encourage private land owners to maintain controlled access to open land for hunting, fishing and other low-intensity recreational activities while encouraging users of private land to be responsible visitors.

Promote the retention of the agricultural industry in Richmond by assuring the "right-to-farm" and reviewing and controlling incompatible uses in farming areas as necessary.

Work to direct the use of off-road motorized recreational vehicles away from developed areas and into appropriate areas through designation of trails and education of young people.

Encourage the reservation of land which is highly suited for agricultural use for uses which do not destroy its agricultural suitability.

Explore approaches to reducing the property tax burden on the owners of active farmland and managed forest land.

Protect the scenic quality of Richmond with particular emphasis on the riverfront, rural roadscapes and areas with exceptional visual value.

Encourage the development of a master plan for the long-term acquisition, where appropriate to meet Town needs, and use of land and rights-of-way owned by the Town such as the Town Forest and Town Landing.

Work to develop a system of footpaths and trails which link the Town's open space and recreational areas into a continuous network.

Encourage private landowners to protect important wildlife and fisheries habitats without infringing on the landowners' use of the property.

Develop recreational facilities to meet the needs of Richmond residents such as ball fields, play areas, walking paths and cross-country ski trails.

Encourage the preservation and sound management of the publicly and privately owned forest resources in Richmond.

Promote the use of land trusts and other land conservation approaches for meeting the Town's open space and natural resource goals.

D. Residential Goals

Work to guide residential growth into those areas of the Town where it can best be accommodated and serviced while discouraging it in areas not well suited for development.

Utilize innovative techniques such as clustering and transfer of development rights to guide residential development away from agricultural land, roadside and sensitive natural resource areas.

Protect the roadscape by requiring new development to be sensitive to the visual environment.

Promote a wide variety of housing opportunities, including affordable housing, to meet the needs of various types of households and various income levels while assuring that the community's housing is decent and safe.

Match the density of new residential development in rural areas with the natural carrying capacity of the land to support development without environmental damage.

Consider allowing moderate density residential uses of a "village character" in designated areas in which adequate water and sewer service are available or planned.

Encourage the owners of property within the historic village area to carry out construction or renovations in a manner which conforms to the overall character of the district.

Support the provision of sufficient housing to meet the needs of the Town's older residents and special needs groups.

E. Commercial Goals

Encourage and promote a variety of commercial uses within the I-95 intersection area and near and along the Route 197 and 201 corridors.

Promote small scale, local commercial uses which provide job opportunities for local residents and supply needed goods and services to the community.

Create standards and adequate review procedures for new commercial development to assure that the project is of a high quality, protects the environment and neighboring properties, provides for safe access and promotes the visual environment of Richmond.

Promote and encourage responsible commercial facilities to broaden the employment and revenue base of the Town of Richmond.

F. Industrial Development Goals

Encourage the location of small, clean light industrial and service uses in designated areas near the I-95 interchange and other locations to promote job opportunities for local residents and expand the tax base.

Create "good neighbor standards" to assure that industrial uses are positive members of the community, protect the environment and neighboring properties, provide safe access and promote the visual environment of Richmond.

Strictly control large "industrial type" uses within the historic portion of the Village.

G. Village Goals

Reinforce the historical character of the Village by assuring that the architectural character and setting of buildings are maintained and that new buildings are compatible with the district.

Reinforce Main Street as a Village scale shopping area which meets the day-to-day needs of the Greater Richmond Community.

Work to develop a cooperative approach to meet the need for improved off-street parking to serve the commercial and public uses along Main Street in a way which is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

Promote the upgrading of the public water, sewerage and storm drainage systems to provide good quality service and fire protection.

Promote the "Village" character as a compact settlement serving the needs of its residents.

Promote the concept of the Village as a pedestrian environment by improving the sidewalk system and providing other pedestrian ways as needed.

Encourage private property owners to upgrade the physical condition and appearance of their property through assistance and support.

Promote a pedestrian shopping environment on Main Street by working with Village business people and property owners to provide necessary improvements and adequate parking.

Establish the geographical limits of the Village and work to establish a greenbelt around it to maintain its identity.

H. Public Utilities Goals

Encourage the Richmond Utility District to work cooperatively with the Town of Dresden to protect the aquifer which serves as the Town's water supply.

Promote the upgrading of the sewerage system and the separation of combined sanitary and storm sewers to improve water quality in the Kennebec River.

Work with the Richmond Utilities District to develop a long-term plan for upgrading and possibly expanding the capacity of the sewer and water systems to allow specific types of new development in specific areas with the beneficiaries paying their share of the cost of the improvements with preference given to projects which provide affordable housing.

I. Community Services and Facility Goals

Resist efforts to designate Route 197 as an alternative tourist route to the coast.

Develop long-range solutions for the disposal of all types of wastes.

Provide adequate space to meet the needs of Town government in a convenient, central location.

Nominate the original Fort Richmond site for designation as a National Landmark Historical Site and explore its possible acquisition and development as a historic site.

Encourage the preservation of the Maine Central Railroad right-of-way as a contiguous entity for possible future use and actively participate in any discussions about the future use of this corridor.

Promote an understanding of the history of the Town of Richmond and work to recognize the key elements of its past, including historical buildings and structures, stone walls, and sites of former industrial facilities.

Explore common concerns with neighboring towns and work towards intermunicipal solutions where this is in the Town's interest.

Encourage municipal and community programs which minimize the generation of solid waste and promote the recycling of the waste that is produced to the maximum extent feasible.

Actively promote public understanding and participation in all aspects of the community including education, cultural institutions and municipal affairs.

Seek to involve the youth of the community in the planning for the future of Richmond.

Promote a broad based sense of community pride which seeks to unite the various elements of the Town.

Support the development and growth of a broad range of cultural activities and institutions which enhance the lives of the residents of the Richmond area.

Promote the concept of a community educational system which allows both young people and adults to excel in their chosen areas of interest through a school system that emphasizes educational achievement for the entire community.

Encourage the development of activities and facilities to provide recreational and cultural opportunities for the young people of the community.

SECTION 4. OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

The Town of Richmond is a complex patchwork of opportunities and constraints, some very obvious, some quite subtle. The descriptions of public facilities in Section 18, natural systems in Section 21, marine resources in Section 22, cultural resources in Section 23, and other sections of the Comprehensive Plan, provide the Town with an understanding of the physical components of the landscape.

This section provides a summary of the resource components of the plan, while looking upon the Town as an integrated natural system. The Opportunities and Constraints Map (Figure 1) is a collection of patterns that begins to describe where opportunities for future growth lie and where natural constraints need to be avoided.

The Opportunities and Constraints map is intended to show, in a general manner, those areas of Richmond which are relatively unconstrained by natural factors and those in which there may be natural resource constraints which need to be considered in the land use planning of the Town and by private landowners. This map has been compiled by overlaying all of the resource data collected in the natural resource inventory of the Town (see Part D).

The following points should be considered in using this map to formulate land use policies for the Town:

- **Interrelationships:** By making a composite of the earlier resource mapping it becomes evident that many areas in Town have multiple resource values, making them prime candidates for conservation efforts. For example, the area around Umberhind Marsh contains wetlands, hydric soils, defined water bodies, upland fringes, deer wintering areas, and scenic corridors.
- **Conflicts and Value Judgments:** The Opportunities and Constraints Map calls attention to many inherent land use conflicts that the Town will have to deal with in the context of the Comprehensive Plan. Prime farm and forest land tend to be deep, well drained, and also ideally suited for on-site disposal and home construction. View corridors, waterfronts, and other visually sensitive areas are also prime locations for houses. The railroad right-of-way paralleling the Kennebec River would make an ideal recreational trail corridor if not used for transportation purposes.
- **Level of Confidence:** The information presented on all the resource maps and the Opportunities and Constraints Map is suitable for looking at gross patterns at a town-wide scale. The data is not refined enough to support land use decisions for individual parcels. During the course of the natural resource inventory it became evident that similar data from different sources was often in conflict, e.g., location of wetlands, the value of various habitats.

- **Discovery and Refinement:** Natural resource studies that may be conducted in the future by the Town, Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, private developers, university groups, or others will undoubtedly discover more rare plants and archaeological sites as attention is focussed on individual properties. Any proposed development that may affect wetlands, deer wintering areas, hydric soils, or other resources will need to refine the boundaries that are presently shown on the maps. All the resource maps should be updated as additional information is collected.
- **Changing Nature of Certain Resources:** The boundaries of some physical features, such as slopes and major watercourses, should not change appreciably over the next generation. Other resources will change -- either by natural causes or man's intervention -- and the Town should be prepared to act accordingly. The location of deer wintering areas will vary from year to year, depending upon the size of the herd, the snow cover, logging activity, and other natural factors. Some land that is presently an upland forest may technically be classified as wetland if the trees that draw water from the soil are removed. Vistas that are open can be lost in a short time without proper vegetation management.
- **Sensitivity:** It has been the policy of agencies concerned with critical habitats not to show exact locations of rare or endangered flora or fauna. Any notation on the resource mapping is of necessity general in nature and designed to serve as a "red flag" to indicate the possible occurrence within a given area and the need for additional investigation. The Nature Conservancy and the Critical Areas Program of the Maine State Planning Office can supply additional information on specific sites as the need arises.
- **Regulatory Climate:** One of the reasons that the Comprehensive Plan is necessary is the changing regulatory climate at both the State and federal level. The understanding of wetlands, for example, has evolved greatly over the past few years, prompted by a greater appreciation of their value and consequent concerns for their protection. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection and the Army Corps of Engineers are continuing to study the issues related to wetland definition.
- **Overcoming Constraints:** The ratings given apply to "typical" development patterns, which may best be described as 1½ acre house lots in the rural parts of Richmond. Some constraints, e.g., steep slopes or areas of visual sensitivity, can be overcome or moderated through sensitive site planning and design. The constraints related to the capability of the soil to accept septic waste can be overcome within the sewer and water service area, i.e., Richmond Village.

The purpose of the Opportunities and Constraints map is to identify those areas where landowners and the Town should be aware that one or more significant elements of the natural landscape may be present. To accomplish this, the map uses "flags" to identify areas. The flags should be thought of as an indicator that important natural resources may be present in that area

and that before any development or land use change is undertaken, an on-site analysis should be conducted to determine the actual natural resource conditions.

This map has been compiled by overlaying all the resource data collected in the natural resource inventory. As the overlay is developed, patterns start to emerge. Many areas in Richmond have multiple resource values which begin to show up as darker shades on the map. The map generalizes the opportunities and constraints into four major categories, labeled very severe constraints (red flags), severe constraints (pink flags), moderate constraints (other flags), and areas with few or no constraints (white areas).

Red Flags are potential areas of critical environmental concern that need protection due to the sensitivity of the resource. These resources are currently protected by state or federal laws. As a matter of policy, the red flagged areas should be viewed by landowners and the Town as being off limits to development due to the inherent risks to public health and safety or the environment. Included in this category are:

- High value wetlands
- Open bodies of water
- Land within the 100-year floodplain
- Areas with slopes greater than 25%
- Land within the right-of-way of Interstate 95

Pink Flags are potential areas of important natural resources where development should be carefully managed to avoid potential problems related to human health and safety and the environment. A pink flag is meant to be a warning signal, to alert the planning board members and landowners that there is the potential for environmental degradation. Some of the areas within this category may prove to be red flag areas with further study. The hydric soils, for example, may actually be wetlands even though the resource maps have not identified them as such. Included in this category are:

- Low value, dispersed wetlands
- Hydric soils that have not been classified as wetlands
- Areas with slopes between 15 and 25%

Other Flags represent potential areas that are either culturally defined or are established to provide a buffer around a more significant resource. If possible, development should be minimized within these areas, but limited amounts of home building, road construction, and other forms of development may be possible with proper controls. Included in this category are:

- The Pleasant Pond watershed
- Upland fringes around wetlands and water bodies
- Deer wintering areas
- Prime farmland soils
- Prime woodlot productivity soils

The White Areas constitute the remainder of the Town. From a natural resources viewpoint, they represent the areas with the least number of constraints to development. The soils have moderate to high potential for on-site disposal. The topography is in the 3-15% range, assuring proper drainage and avoiding the steeper slopes. Wetlands and critical wildlife habitats have been avoided. While the white areas represent the best opportunities for community development, proposals will still need to have site specific natural resource inventories and detailed soils investigations.

The Opportunities and Constraints Map is therefore a key factor in determining what the future use of land in Richmond should be and how growth and development should be guided. This map, taken in conjunction with the community goals, provides the basis for policies which are set forth in the following three sections. The policies try to guide growth away from areas with constraints and toward those areas best suited for development from both a cultural and natural resources standpoint.

SECTION 5. AFFORDABLE HOUSING GOALS AND STRATEGIES

A. Introduction

Affordable housing is one of the most critical issues facing Maine today. No longer are those who have traditionally been social service recipients the only ones to need housing assistance. Today the growing crisis affects people throughout the state, young families and older people, low and moderate income households, individuals and businesses. In southern and coastal Maine, housing sales prices have skyrocketed over the last six years, increasing in some areas by 200%. In other areas prices have not climbed quite as quickly, but the high cost of housing relative to wages continues to limit the choices people have for decent, affordable places to live.

There are many concerns which make housing, especially its affordability and availability, an important consideration for communities. Some of these include:

1. The character of a community is threatened when the people who grow up there are forced to move away because they can't afford to live there. The availability and affordability of housing determines who gets to live in the town.
2. Businesses and industry may have difficulty recruiting and retaining employees.
3. The quality of life of individual residents is adversely affected when, unable to afford better housing, they are forced to live in substandard, overcrowded and unsafe conditions.
4. Individual towns may have difficulty providing essential services (such as fire or police protection, education, etc.) if the people who provide such services can't afford to live there.

B. The Affordable Housing Situation in Richmond

Section 20 provides a detailed look at Richmond's housing stock, the cost of housing in the community, and the current housing situation.

The State Department of Economic and Community Development defines affordable housing as either rental housing in which total costs (rent, insurance, utilities) do not exceed 30% of the income of a low income household (defined as a household with less than 80% of the town median income); or moderate income household (80% to 150% of median household income); or owner housing in which total costs (mortgage, taxes, utilities, insurance) do not exceed 28% of the income of a low or moderate income household.

Using this yardstick, a low income household (with income less than 80% of median household income) in Richmond in 1989 (income about \$16,600 or less, according to the National Planning Data Corporation) could afford an apartment with a maximum rent of about \$365 (utilities excluded), or a new home costing under \$35,000. A moderate income household (\$16,000 to \$31,000) could afford an apartment with a rent between \$365 and \$700 a month excluding utilities or a home costing between \$34,000 and \$72,000.

There are few homes or apartments around at price levels affordable to low income households. Moderate income households, particularly those at the upper end of the range, have a wider choice of housing. The median sales price of housing in Richmond in 1989 was \$69,950. Looking at the first quartile -- the bottom quarter of houses sold -- the price goes down to \$50,000.

With the cost of a house lot running from \$15,000 to \$30,000, it is difficult to buy a lot and build a new affordable house.

C. Affordable Housing Goal

The goal of the Town of Richmond with respect to affordable housing is that at least 10% of the dwelling units created in Richmond over the next 5 years should be affordable for low or moderate income households.

The Housing Inventory and Analysis shows that Richmond is a town with only moderate housing cost problems at present, compared to neighboring towns. Still, applying 1980 Census ratios to current households, it can be roughly estimated that 200 - 300 low income households in Richmond currently experience serious problems in either paying their rent or mortgage or in maintaining decent living conditions. Richmond is growing and changing, and cost problems for this group are expected to worsen in the years ahead. At a minimum, the Town should plan to encourage the development of at least 25 new affordable units in the coming 5 years. There are several actions which could be taken in the present to help accomplish this goal.

D. Affordable Housing Guidelines

To address the issue of affordable housing, the following guidelines should be used to guide the planning for affordable housing in the future:

- proposed strategies should ensure a diversity of housing types
- the strategies should encourage home ownership opportunities
- the strategies should focus on small scale activities which can be blended into the existing development pattern of the community

- the strategies should emphasize efforts which make use of volunteers and self-help activities.

E. Affordable Housing Strategy

Manufactured housing units on individual residential lots are a key component of the Town's housing stock and offer affordable housing opportunities for moderate income households. The Town should continue to allow well-designed residentially appearing manufactured homes to be placed on individual residential lots throughout the community.

Four additional opportunities exist for improving the supply of affordable housing, particularly for lower income households:

- 1) The rehabilitation of the Meadowbrook Mobile Home Park on Southard Street Extension;
- 2) Promoting accessory apartments in existing commercial and residential structures within the village center;
- 3) Assisting individuals to rehabilitate their own homes in Richmond; and
- 4) Providing incentives to developers of new, small scale housing development to include affordable housing within their projects provided that the site is served by public water and sewerage.

Opportunity #1: Meadowbrook Park

Meadowbrook Park is a 30 - 32 acre parcel with 38 mobile homes and one two-family house. Tenants own their own homes and rent the land. The park has city water and sewer facilities. The park does provide a form of affordable housing. However, there are serious problems with living conditions and the infrastructure within the park.

The water main into the park is only 2 inches in diameter; a 5 inch diameter main would be preferable for fire safety. Many of the homes within it are old, pre-1976 mobile homes. Some are in poor condition. There are no trees or shrubs to buffer and offer privacy between homes, a portion of the road is narrow and rough, and in general there are few amenities.

There has been some expression of interest in improving the park. This past year the owner sponsored a "fix-up" competition, judged by the local garden club, with the winning home getting three months' free rent, second place two months, and third place one month. The owner of the park felt the competition had positive results and plans to make it an annual event.

Unfortunately, the major improvements required both to the park itself and by way of replacement mobile homes cannot be performed by the private sector alone without causing major displacement to current tenants. This would result in elimination of at least most of the 38 affordable housing units. Therefore, in order to preserve these units as affordable housing and at the same time make the necessary improvements, this plan recommends that a public/private partnership be established.

Such an arrangement offers the Town of Richmond an opportunity to accomplish several goals: to preserve an existing supply of affordable housing; to improve living conditions for the tenants at a current location of affordable housing; and to do so at a site already dedicated to mobile homes, near downtown services.

It is in the Town's interest for the park to be upgraded so that it becomes an economically viable entity, providing a stable neighborhood setting and reliable tax contribution, in short, an area of Town of which everyone can be proud.

To accomplish this, the Town should facilitate a partnership between the owner and residents to develop a park revitalization plan. In order for such an effort to succeed and for the Town to participate with the project, a commitment and cooperative spirit by both the owner and residents must be identifiable.

The following activities are envisioned:

1. Identify and gain commitments from various public and private financing programs to help address existing problems in the park including the infrastructure, rehabilitation and/or replacement of mobile homes and park beautification. One goal to be attained under the plan would be the removal and retirement of deficient pre-1976 mobile homes.

There are various agencies which would need to be explored to assist in the implementation of this project. They include the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, the Maine State Housing Authority, Farmers Home Administration, Coastal Enterprises Incorporated, and Coastal Economic Development. A CDBG application sponsored by the Town is an example of the type of public funding necessary for successful implementation of the project.

2. Design of a financial investment commitment to the project by the park owner. This package might include cash and/or loans to be targeted for infrastructure and beautification costs.
3. Negotiation of an agreement to provide for the eventual purchase and ownership of the park by the occupants of the park. A primary consideration and objective here is the promotion of home ownership to foster the long-term maintenance of the park. Absentee ownership often leads to ineffective management and maintenance. Ownership of the

park by residents both strengthens their home ownership equity and provides the incentive for long-term upkeep of the park.

4. Consideration of Town financial support for the project. No doubt some limited financial involvement by the Town and/or Richmond Utility District will be necessary in order to leverage other public and private commitments. Such Town support should be limited to the installation of two fire hydrants and possible contribution to the installation of the new water line. The Town might also consider accepting the upgraded roads in the park.

A local church or civic group could also be of great assistance and/or might be able to play the role of facilitator for the project.

Opportunity #2: Rental and Ownership Options in the Village

The following recommendations address the promotion of quality, affordable housing in the village area. The overall objective of these recommendations is to create a diversified residential community of owners and renters within the village which addresses the community's affordable housing needs and which strengthens the downtown retail market.

The focus of these recommendations is on the immediate vicinity of the Main Street corridor. The emphasis is on the utilization of existing unoccupied space in commercial buildings, such as the upper stories of buildings on Main Street. Adequate parking is felt to be critical for the commercial and residential success of the village. To encourage the use of these buildings for affordable housing, the Town should:

1. Relax zoning ordinances for the immediate vicinity of the Main Street corridor regarding the minimum lot size and the number of parking spaces required per residential unit when such units, or a percentage of multiple units being created, will contribute to the Town's affordable housing stock, will utilize existing unoccupied commercial building space and will not adversely impact downtown parking capacity.
2. Encourage town-owned off-street parking to serve the Main Street corridor by use of existing Town land and/or the purchase of additional land.
3. In the spirit of public/private partnerships, create a nonprofit community development corporation for the receipt and distribution of tax-deductible contributions for the improvement and limited expansion of the affordable housing stock within existing structures in the immediate vicinity of the Main Street corridor. Contributions could be in the form of cash or building materials and be distributed through volunteer and self-help programs.
4. Encourage ongoing discussion of "resident-owner association" forms of ownership within the immediate vicinity of the Main Street corridor, especially of residential units.

5. Permit limited accessory apartments in single-family homes in the village providing that apartments do not have a separate entrance, are created within the existing structure, and preserve the historical integrity of the building.

Opportunity #3: Self-help Housing

A self-help housing program is envisioned as a way to formally organize the kind of community mutual assistance that happened naturally in close knit small towns in the past, but is too often lost today. The program would organize people to buy and renovate substandard existing housing in Richmond. Dilapidated properties would be completely renovated and made into livable, pleasant homes in keeping with Richmond's existing small town character. Older houses would be saved instead of falling into ruin and necessitating the construction of more new houses.

A self-help affordable housing program to renovate existing houses would take advantage of locally available skills in carpentry, plumbing, electrical work, landscaping, and design. It would be in keeping with local and Maine community traditions. It would help people help themselves. It would encourage home ownership and provide a model for working on one's own home which would be educational for Richmond youth, who could be involved in the project. Last but not least, the program would cost the Town next to nothing and generate increased property tax dollars from higher valued residences in the future.

How would a self-help housing project work?

A coordinator would manage the project. The coordinator could be a small committee including representatives from local churches and civic groups, individuals with an interest in Richmond's housing, etc. Perhaps the existing Community Development Board could be involved, or members of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee. The coordinator would organize selection of a house and beneficiaries, funding, skilled trainers, plans for the renovation and materials. Criteria for participating in the program and what each participant would give and receive back would need to be clearly spelled out. Participants having their houses renovated would need to be evaluated thoroughly, professionally and fairly in terms of their financial situation and capabilities and commitment.

Ideal beneficiaries would be young, able-bodied people who can afford to buy a run-down house, who have some basic building skills, and who cannot afford a house that is in decent shape. Candidates must be willing to work extremely hard on their own houses and then be willing to donate labor to others' houses, so that labor and skills would flow from completed projects to those in process. People with skills would need to be recruited and to agree to contribute a specified amount of time to the project. These skilled people could be partially repaid with the volunteer labor once the self-help house was renovated. For instance, someone with skills and an old house in need of a few repairs might help the self-help project, and later people from the self-help project would work to help the old house owner put in a new kitchen

or bathroom. A local plumber or carpenter could provide training and supervision in return for volunteer time as a plumber's or a carpenter's assistant.

Industrial arts classes at Richmond High School are taught some building and trades skills, and currently are sent to Augusta for practical training. Working on renovating a house could teach students a great deal, and the completely refurbished house would be a source of pride and inspiration to local students.

Volunteer construction help could be organized for local residents who already own a house but cannot do the work needed themselves, such as the elderly. Perhaps some elderly people with large houses could provide free housing for a couple of people in the self-help project while their house was being renovated in return for repairs, painting, etc. from the project in the future.

Houses to be renovated should be small and simple. The eventual home owner would pay for materials. Funding assistance from Maine State Housing Authority, the Community Development Corp., or the Mid Coast Coalition for Affordable Housing should be explored. Donations and discounts for materials from merchants in return for publicity and large volume purchases could be explored. Volunteers could help prepare bids and donations for the materials. Lumber can be purchased at reasonable prices from local saw mills and hardwoods from similar small outfits.

Critical factors for a successful self-help housing project include: simplicity (no bureaucracy, keep it informal), meticulous organization and planning and modest goals -- if we could renovate one simple house a year, that would be a significant dent in Richmond's affordable housing needs, improve the appearance of the Town, and be a big achievement. A large enough group of participants to develop a sense of community, make construction fun and complete projects in a reasonable time period would be important. Too few people would accentuate the inevitable burn-out when rebuilding an entire house.

Most important to the success of a self-help housing project would be a spirit of mutual help and support for our neighbors and a feeling of community pride in the small Town of Richmond.

Opportunity #4: Inclusionary Housing

The Town should create a density bonus program for the developers of residential projects in Richmond. Under this approach, the Town would allow more units to be built on a parcel if a percentage of the units were affordable to low and moderate income households. This bonus would be designed to apply only to small scale projects which are served by public water and sewerage.

The goal of this program is to create affordable housing opportunities as part of mixed-income projects. Therefore, the greatest bonus should be given to projects in which only a portion of the dwelling units are affordable units.