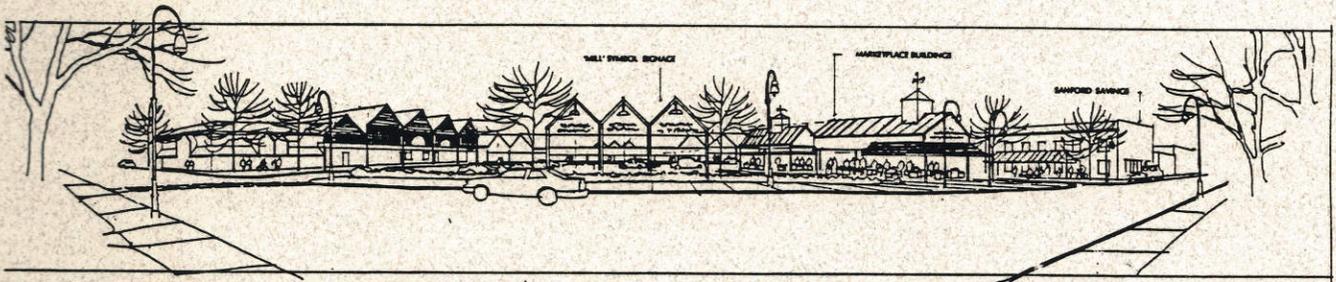


Recommended Improvement Strategies
Downtown Sanford Market Study



SANFORD, MAINE

December 1995

Prepared By: Planning Decisions Inc.

In Association With: Terrance J. DeWan and Associates



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**PLANNING
DECISIONS**

Research & Planning

**RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES
DOWNTOWN SANFORD MARKET STUDY
SANFORD CDBG QUALITY MAIN STREET PROJECT**

Prepared for:

**The Downtown Sanford Task Force
and
The Town of Sanford**

Prepared by:

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South Portland, Maine**

In association with

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December 1995

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SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past year, the Town and the Downtown Sanford Task Force have begun to look at ways to revitalize downtown's role as an economic center. This effort received a boost in 1994 when the Town applied for and received a Quality Main Street (QMS) grant from the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development. The grant enabled the community to analyze downtown and develop a program for revitalizing downtown Sanford. This action plan summarizes the findings of that work, establishes objectives for the revitalization effort, and sets forth a detailed strategy for carrying out the revitalization program.

The downtown revitalization strategy contained in this action plan establishes a coordinated program for reinvigorating the economy of downtown Sanford. The strategy includes four interrelated components:

- Organizational Strategies
- Strategies Relating to Design and the Physical Environment of Downtown
- Marketing and Promotional Strategies
- Economic Revitalization Strategies

The underlying precept of the overall strategy is that the community, working together and incrementally over time, must address all four of these components if the downtown revitalization program is to be successful in the long run. There is great temptation to focus on just one or two areas, but attention to all four components is vital to the effort.

The overall strategy is based upon a long-term commitment to working to improve downtown Sanford. The program envisions that a large number of separate but interrelated activities will occur over a number of years, each building on the others to fundamentally change the way the downtown functions. This is not an easy mission, but it is one that Sanford can achieve.

SECTION II. SUMMARY OF THE MARKET ANALYSIS

A. *The Sanford Trade Area*

Sanford functions as the retail and service center for an 8-town primary trade area, including Sanford/Springvale, Shapleigh, Newfield, Acton, Lebanon, Alfred, Waterboro, and Lyman. Sanford businesses typically draw 75% to 80% of their customers from this area. It appears that downtown businesses rely even more heavily on this trade area for their customer base than do the Sanford shopping centers. It is important to note that downtown workers and downtown businesses are an important part of the customer base for downtown.

B. *Characteristics of the Trade Area*

The Sanford Trade Area has approximately 40,500 residents and has experienced significant growth over the past 15 years, although this has slowed in the 1990's.

Income within the trade area is relatively high. The estimated median household income in 1994 was approximately \$31,900. In 1990, the U.S. Census reported that the median income of the trade area was almost 10% higher than the statewide median but lower than the York County median. The large percentage of households with middle incomes generates significant retail spending potential from the trade area population.

C. Retail Expenditure Potential

The residents of the trade area, together with seasonal residents and tourists, generate significant retail spending potential, much of which is already captured by Sanford businesses.

- **Convenience Goods Potential** - The in town Sanford population generates approximately \$20,000,000 per year in retail potential for convenience goods (groceries, health and beauty aids, prescription drugs, hardware, etc.), much of it from supermarket sales. This category offers some limited market supports for downtown revitalization.
- **Comparison Goods Potential** - The trade area population generates \$58,000,000 to \$60,000,000 of retail sales potential for comparison goods (apparel, furniture, jewelry, gifts, etc.). While much of this potential is absorbed by department stores and other general merchandise stores, it also provides the market supports for specialty stores.
- **Restaurant Potential** - The trade area generates approximately \$27,500,000 in spending potential in restaurants, bars, and similar establishments.
- **Current Retail Performance** - Existing Sanford businesses capture a relatively high market share of available retail spending. With the new Wal-Mart, approximately 80% of comparison goods sales are captured by Sanford merchants.

D. Characteristics of Downtown Sanford

Downtown Sanford contains approximately 285,000 square feet of nonresidential floor space, of which approximately 82% is occupied. Approximately 36% of this occupied space is used for retail purposes. The majority of the retail space (55%) is used for comparison goods, while just over 30% is used by food and beverage uses with the balance in convenience retail goods.

Downtown Sanford currently fills four distinct but interrelated economic roles:

- The downtown serves as a retail center focusing primarily on specialty comparison goods with some limited convenience goods.
- The downtown also serves as a major service center, providing a range of financial, legal, personal and government services.

- In addition to these roles, the downtown functions as a social and entertainment center for the surrounding region.
- Downtown also is a unique residential center.

E. Existing Shopping Patterns

While consumers in the Sanford Trade Area report doing most of their shopping for day-to-day needs with trade area merchants, a significant group reports traveling out of the trade area for certain types of comparison goods. This is most common for apparel and shoes and gifts and jewelry, but also occurs for other specialty goods.

It appears that prior to the opening of the Sanford Wal-Mart in 1993, a significant share of the comparison goods potential was leaking out to other retail centers. The new Wal-Mart is capturing a percentage of these sales, keeping dollars within the community. At the same time, it appears to be impacting some small retailers.

F. Market Supports for Downtown Revitalization

Realistically, the market supports for a revitalized retail district in downtown Sanford are limited. At the same time, there are selected opportunities that can be used to support downtown activities.

- **Convenience Goods** - The market supports offered by convenience goods are quite limited. Large scale grocery operations are not compatible with downtown. The market is probably saturated in terms of hardware and drug stores. There do appear to be some limited opportunities in specialty foods and in fresh bakery goods. At the same time, it is important to recognize that retaining the existing convenience goods stores is important to the downtown.
- **Comparison Goods** - The market analysis suggests that there is some leakage of comparison goods spending potential out of the Sanford Trade Area. A major component of this leakage is in specialty goods. While this is a very competitive market segment and the success of independents is spotty, the market analysis suggests that \$3 to \$5 million in additional sales may be able to be retained in Sanford.

The available offerings in a number of merchandise areas are limited. These provide opportunities for supporting downtown revitalization and include:

- high quality antiques
- good quality bakery
- specialty books
- crafts and gifts

- quality used clothing
- carpets and floor coverings
- electronic goods
- art supplies/framing
- fish and seafood
- musical instruments
- specialty tapes and CD's
- sporting goods
- specialty furniture

Given the competitive environment, capitalizing on these opportunities will require a well-run operation with creative marketing. In many areas, relocation of an existing business to downtown may represent the best opportunity.

- **Restaurants** - Downtown plays an important role within the trade area as a place where people go out to eat. At the same time, the range of offerings in sit-down restaurants is limited, resulting in many consumers leaving Sanford for their dining out. The potential exists for capturing a larger share of the area's restaurant spending in downtown Sanford through a broader range of restaurant offerings.

SECTION III. ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Successful downtowns are more than a collection of individual businesses located in close proximity to one another. A key element of success is creating a downtown that functions as an interrelated business center. By that we mean an area that is recognized by consumers as a "place" rather than as just individual businesses. This requires coordination and cooperation among downtown businesses, and for this to happen some form of downtown organization is necessary.

A. *Organizational Issues*

Until very recently, downtown Sanford had no organization that could speak directly for downtown interests, coordinate downtown activities, or generate interest in the downtown. The recent formation of *Discover Downtown Sanford* as a result of the downtown planning effort begins to create the organizational capacity necessary for a successful downtown revitalization effort.

While the creation of *Discover Downtown Sanford* is a key step, important organizational issues remain as to how the fledgling organization will develop support for and involvement in the organization, locate the necessary staff support for its activities, and develop the needed financial support.

In addition to the limited organizational capacity of *Discover Downtown Sanford*, the new organization will need to forge a working relationship with the Sanford Chamber of Commerce that is charged with coordinating the community's business development efforts. At the same time, it

is important to recognize that the interests of the two organizations may diverge on certain topics.

B. Organization Opportunities

The current focus on the revitalization of the downtown business districts creates an important opportunity for *Discover Downtown Sanford* to build a solid, growing organization that can lead the efforts to revitalize downtown and become the spokesperson for downtown interests. At the same time, the opportunity exists for the Town, the Chamber, and *Discover Downtown Sanford* to forge a working relationship that clearly identifies the roles and responsibilities of each group.

SECTION IV. DESIGN ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Successful revitalization also depends on creating an environment that is inviting and comfortable for customers and downtown workers and visitors. This includes areas such as traffic, parking, and the overall appearance of the district.

A. Design Issues

As part of the downtown analysis, customers who use downtown as well as shoppers throughout the trade area were interviewed about their shopping patterns and perceptions of downtown. These surveys identified a number of design-related issues and concerns:

1. Downtown Image

Consumers within the Sanford Trade Area do not have a strong image of downtown Sanford and many appear to view downtown as blah. They describe downtown as uninviting and dull.

2. Downtown's Geographic Limits

When one talks about downtown Sanford, there appears to be no clear or widely held definition of what area is encompassed within downtown Sanford. Some consumers appear to think of downtown Sanford as including both the Shop 'n Save and the area extending southward along Main Street. This lack of a clear image of what constitutes downtown creates significant barriers when it comes to marketing downtown as a business district.

3. Pedestrian Movement

While downtown Sanford has a well-established system of sidewalks and crosswalks, some issues remain about pedestrian movement within downtown. Area of concern appear to be:

- movement across Main Street throughout the downtown,

- movement between Main Street and the stores in the Mid Town Mall.

4. Perception of Safety

A number of consumers report concerns about safety within the downtown area. While these concerns do not appear to significantly deter use of downtown, they do contribute to downtown's image problem.

B. Design Opportunities

The downtown revitalization effort creates the opportunity to begin to address these issues. First and foremost of these is the opportunity to create a strong, positive image of downtown Sanford among consumers through design improvements that create a focal point for the downtown and establish the geographic limits of the business district.

At the same time, the opportunity exists to undertake simple improvements to the sidewalk and crosswalk network to make pedestrian movement through downtown easier and safer.

In conjunction with other activities, the opportunity exists to begin to change the image of the safety of downtown Sanford to make consumers feel more comfortable in downtown Sanford.

SECTION V. MARKETING AND PROMOTION ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The third component of downtown revitalization involves the marketing and promotion of downtown and its businesses.

A. Marketing and Promotion Issues

During the course of the downtown study, a number of issues arose dealing with the marketing and promotion of downtown Sanford.

A major issue involves consumers' awareness of downtown as a business district. It appears that a significant group of consumers has limited awareness of the range of goods and services available in downtown. As importantly, consumers appear to think of downtown in terms of particular stores or businesses when they do consider downtown.

People who work in or near downtown are an important source of customers for many downtown businesses. However, little focus is placed on encouraging this group to do more of their business in downtown.

B. Marketing and Promotion Opportunities

A number of key opportunities appear to exist for the marketing and promotion component of the downtown revitalization program. Primary among these is the opportunity to make trade area consumers aware of downtown as a business district with a wide range of quality goods and services. In the long term, this is probably a key element of a successful revitalization program.

At the same time, downtown has the opportunity to market itself directly to segments of the overall market that have a greater potential of becoming downtown shoppers. A major group of potential customers is the people who work in or near downtown, including people in downtown offices, hospital employees, and workers at the manufacturing businesses on the fringe of downtown. Attracting these groups of consumers to downtown should be viewed as a major opportunity.

Other Sanford workers represent something of an untapped market for many downtown businesses. Many of these people currently pass through Sanford on a daily basis, making efforts at encouraging them to "stop and shop" an important opportunity.

SECTION VI. ECONOMIC ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Successful downtown revitalization requires that a clear economic role for downtown be established based upon market opportunities and a program to capitalize on those opportunities.

A. Economic Issues

The market analysis conducted in conjunction with the downtown revitalization effort examined the economic functioning of downtown Sanford. The following summarizes the findings of that analysis.

Downtown Sanford and the businesses located within downtown face a number of key economic issues:

1. The Sanford Trade Area

Sanford draws on a trade area that includes Sanford/Springvale and seven outlying communities (Shapleigh, Newfield, Acton, Lebanon, Alfred, Waterboro, and Lyman). This trade area has a population of approximately 40,000 year-round residents. While the area experienced substantial growth during the 1980's, that trend has slowed during the 1990's. Household income within the trade area is relatively high by Maine standards with a high percentage of blue collar wage earners. While this area provides a solid base for Sanford businesses, it does create a limit on the retail spending potential available to Sanford residents.

2. Competitive Environment

Sanford exists within a very competitive retail environment. For downtown businesses, there is strong competition within Sanford/Springvale in both the convenience goods and comparison goods categories. As importantly, the size of the trade area is limited by strong community retail centers in Biddeford/Saco and in Rochester, New Hampshire, and by major regional shopping centers in the Portsmouth/Newington and South Portland areas. The growth of ancillary "big box" retail uses near these regional centers increases the competition for comparison goods sales.

3. Decentralized Retail Pattern

Over the years, Sanford has developed a relatively decentralized pattern within its nonshopping center retail community. Retail uses have spread down Main Street and into other outlying locations. This makes it difficult to have a critical mass of retail outlets necessary to attract consumers except on an individual store-by-store basis. More importantly, it creates an image that there is little or no retail activity in the built-up areas of Sanford when, in fact, there still remains a solid core of specialty retail businesses.

4. Limited Outside Market Supports

Sanford's geographic position limits its ability to draw on sources of market support other than its year-round population. While the trade area has some seasonal housing, it is not a major source of retail potential. Its geographic location also makes it difficult for Sanford to tap the large flow of tourists through York County. The combination of factors suggests that the market supports for business growth in downtown Sanford must come primarily from capturing a larger share of the spending generated by residents of the trade area.

B. Economic Opportunities

The market analysis suggests that there are three areas of opportunity which can be utilized to support expanded economic activity in downtown Sanford:

1. Convenience Retail

Downtown's location astride Route 109 and in the heart of the built-up area of Sanford means that a larger percentage of the trade area's population live or work near downtown or pass through downtown on their way to other destinations. While downtown currently plays an important role as a convenience center (hardware, variety store, video rentals, banks, etc.), some opportunity appears to exist to expand downtown's role in this area.

2. Specialty, Comparison Retail

Comparison goods dominate the current retail uses in downtown. In spite of this, the

consumer does not perceive downtown Sanford as a specialty retail center. At the same time, downtown offers the best opportunity within Sanford to create the critical mass of specialty goods needed to be competitive within the regional environment, especially for middle and upper income households. A focus of the Town's program should be on attracting additional specialty businesses into downtown to broaden the range of offerings available.

While most categories of comparison goods are available within the Sanford Trade Area, the following store types should be targeted for downtown to expand the range of merchandise available. In some areas, this may require working to encourage an existing store to relocate into the downtown:

- **High Quality Antiques** - There are numerous dealers of antiques and other collectables spread throughout York County. The potential exists to create an "antiques center or mall" that involves a number of dealers displaying their wares in a common facility. This approach has been successful in other areas but relies on creating a critical mass to attract buyers.
- **Specialty Foods** - Downtown already has a core of specialty food retailers, including Dunkin' Donuts, the health food store, meat market, etc. The community should work to build on this base by attracting additional specialty food operations such as a good quality bakery offering breads, cakes, and similar items and a fish and seafood market.
- **Specialty Books** - The opening of the used book store has begun to tap this market but additional opportunities for a bookstore focusing on specialty markets (i.e., religious, self-help, etc.) appear to exist.
- **Crafts and Gifts** - The Sanford market has limited offerings in the areas of locally made crafts, gifts, and collectables. While the area supports a number of craftspeople, no organized market exists for these goods. Downtown offers an attractive location for this type of operation.
- **Quality Used Clothing** - There is no outlet for the sale of good quality used clothing in the area. This has been a growth sector of the apparel market focusing both on children's and adult clothing. Operations such as My Sister's Closet in South Portland or Forget-Me-Nots in Cape Elizabeth have developed solid businesses around the resale of quality used clothing. The Sanford market appears to be well suited to this type of business and there is little or no competition.
- **Household Goods** - While the Sanford area offers a variety of household goods such as carpeting, floor covering, lighting, and similar fixtures, most are located in nonretail environments. The community should encourage businesses dealing in these types of items to consider locating in downtown to create the critical mass that draws consumers to explore these offerings.

- **Electronic Goods and Supplies** - Downtowns have remained attractive locations for dealers of electronic goods and for businesses servicing these products. This market sector is becoming increasingly competitive with the entry of firms such as Lechmere's and State Street into the Maine market. However, independent businesses targeted at specialty markets, including service and repair, can still prosper. A focus of the community should be on attracting existing businesses from within the trade area to relocate into downtown.
- **Sporting Goods** - The trade area currently supports a number of stores offering various types of sporting goods. While there is limited market for additional retail space, a focus should be on attracting these existing businesses into downtown Sanford.
- **Specialty Furniture** - The sale of specialty furniture, including unfinished furniture and locally made items, is a potential role for downtown. As with a number of other types of goods discussed in this section, a number of retail outlets exist but they are generally in scattered locations with limited retail potential. An effort should be directed at encouraging the relocation of these operations to the downtown.
- **Framing and Art Supplies** - The crafters' outlet at Marden's center meets many of the needs in this market segment. A limited unmet demand exists for art supplies and services such as framing.
- **Musical Instruments** - The local area has little or no availability of musical instruments. The surrounding areas such as Rochester, Biddeford/Saco, and Greater Portland are however well served. In spite of this competition, a market the size of Sanford's should be able to support a musical instrument business.

3. **Restaurants**

Downtown plays an important role within the trade area as a place where people go out to eat. At the same time, the range of offerings in sit-down restaurants is limited, resulting in many consumers leaving Sanford for their dining out. The potential exists for capturing a larger share of the area's restaurant spending in downtown Sanford through a broader range of restaurant offerings.

SECTION VII. THE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLAN

Downtown Sanford, as with many older downtown districts, has both strengths and weaknesses. This downtown revitalization strategy establishes a coordinated program for reinvigorating the economy of downtown Sanford. The strategy includes four interrelated components:

- Organizational Strategies

- Strategies Relating to Design and the Physical Environment of Downtown
- Marketing and Promotional Strategies
- Economic Revitalization Strategies

The underlying precept of the overall strategy is that the community, working together and incrementally over time, must address all four of these components if the downtown revitalization program is to be successful in the long run. There is great temptation to focus on just one or two areas, but attention to all four components is vital to the effort.

The overall strategy is based upon a long-term commitment to working to improve downtown Sanford. The program envisions that a large number of separate but interrelated activities will occur over a number of years, each building on the others to fundamentally change the way the downtown functions. This is not an easy mission, but it is one that Sanford can achieve.

A. *Downtown's Economic Role*

At one point, downtown Sanford was the retail and service center for the region. Over the past decades, personal mobility and the growth of outlying shopping centers have significantly eroded this role. Today, the downtown functions both as a "convenience commercial center" meeting some of the day-to-day needs of residents of the Sanford area and as a "limited specialty retail and service center" for a larger trade area.

This downtown revitalization strategy is built on three future economic roles for downtown:

- Maintaining and even expanding downtown's role as a "convenience commercial center" that meets the day-to-day needs of local residents and downtown workers.
- Expanding downtown's role as a "specialty retail and service center" by capturing a larger percentage of spending generated by the year-round population, especially middle and upper income households, of the Sanford Trade Area.
- Expanding downtown Sanford's role as an office and service center.

None of these roles by itself creates the necessary market supports for a revitalized downtown. But in combination, these roles offer opportunities to support an economically viable downtown business district. The strategies set forth in this section establish a program to capitalize on these opportunities.

B. *Organizational Strategies*

Successful downtown revitalization requires that a wide range of activities occur over a sustained period. While Town staff can play some role in this, the overall revitalization strategy is built on the recognition that there is a need for a downtown organization that can champion

downtown and coordinate the revitalization program. *Discover Downtown Sanford* has already begun to play this role and this program proposes that the ability of the organization to serve this function be strengthened and expanded.

1. Organizational Objectives

To this end, the following organizational objectives are established:

OBJECTIVE #1 - Expand the number of business people and downtown property owners actively involved in the Discover Downtown Sanford organization.

OBJECTIVE #2 - Develop an ongoing source of funding to support the administrative activities of Discover Downtown Sanford to allow its role and functions to expand.

2. Organizational Work Plan

To accomplish these organizational objectives, *Discover Downtown Sanford*, with assistance from the Town, will need to undertake the following short-term activities:

- ***Organizational Development Program*** - By January 1, 1996, the Executive Committee of *Discover Downtown Sanford* should develop a mission statement explaining the purpose of the organization, formally establish membership types and fees, and develop a program for soliciting membership in the organization. Immediately after the holiday season, the group should undertake an aggressive campaign to recruit additional members with a focus on downtown businesses, downtown property owners, and key people with an interest in downtown Sanford.
- ***Committee Operations*** - By January 1, 1996, each Committee should be operational with a full complement of active members and a clearly defined work program for the coming year using the activities identified in this strategy as the basis of those work plans. The Executive Committee should establish a clear statement of purpose for each of these standing committees based upon this overall strategy.
- ***Contacts with New Businesses*** - The Membership and Development Committee should establish a program for contacting new businesses in the downtown, property owners, and other downtown interests. Consideration should be given to a joint activity with the Town such as a business visitation program in which a representative of *Discover Downtown Sanford* and a representative of the Town formally call on new downtown interests to make them welcome, let them know they are important to the community and downtown, and solicit their involvement in *Discover Downtown Sanford* and the revitalization program.

- ***Administrative Funding*** - By January 1, 1996, the Executive Committee should develop a budget for supporting core administrative functions of the organization and a program for raising the necessary funds. In early 1996 the Executive Committee, in conjunction with the Membership and Development Committee, should undertake a program to raise the funds called for in the budget.
- ***Liaison with Other Organizations*** - During 1996, the Executive Committee should establish working relationships with organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and develop a program for maintaining and enhancing these relationships.

Over the long term, the organizational component will focus on maintaining and expanding the organizational capacity of ***Discover Downtown Sanford***. As downtown revitalization moves forward, it is highly likely that the level of administrative support will need to grow.

C. ***Design Strategies***

1. ***Design Objectives***

The second component of the downtown revitalization program involves creating an environment in the district that is attractive and in which the customer feels comfortable and safe. The design component will require close coordination between ***Discover Downtown Sanford*** and the Town of Sanford. The Design/Economic Restructuring Committee should be responsible for coordinating the activities of this component.

The design objectives for revitalizing downtown Sanford are:

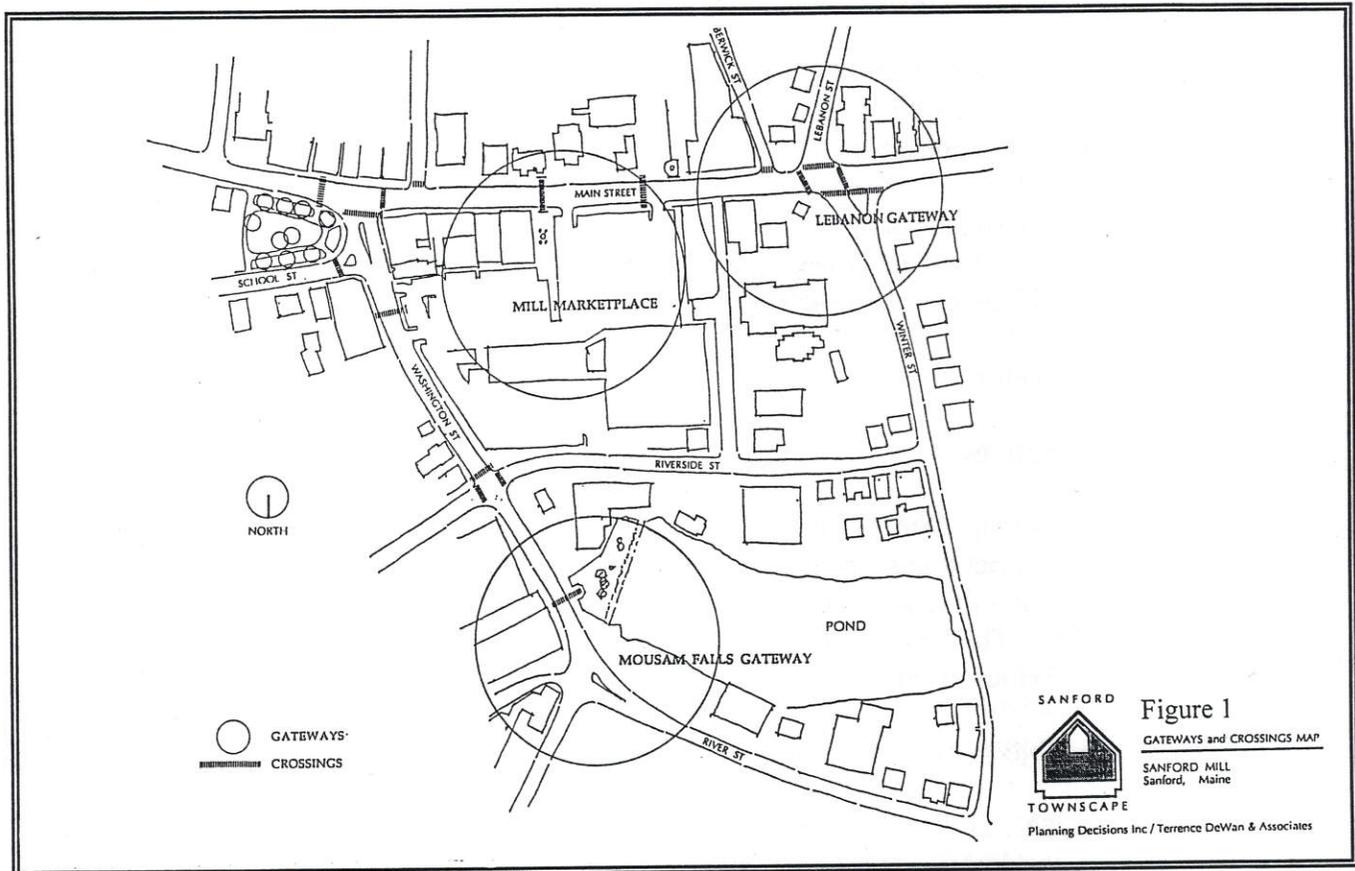
OBJECTIVE #3 - Create a distinctive visual environment in the downtown which identifies it as a unique high-quality commercial district.

OBJECTIVE #4 - Improve the public's perception of pedestrian safety and convenience in the downtown.

OBJECTIVE #5 - Improve the management of on- and off-street parking.

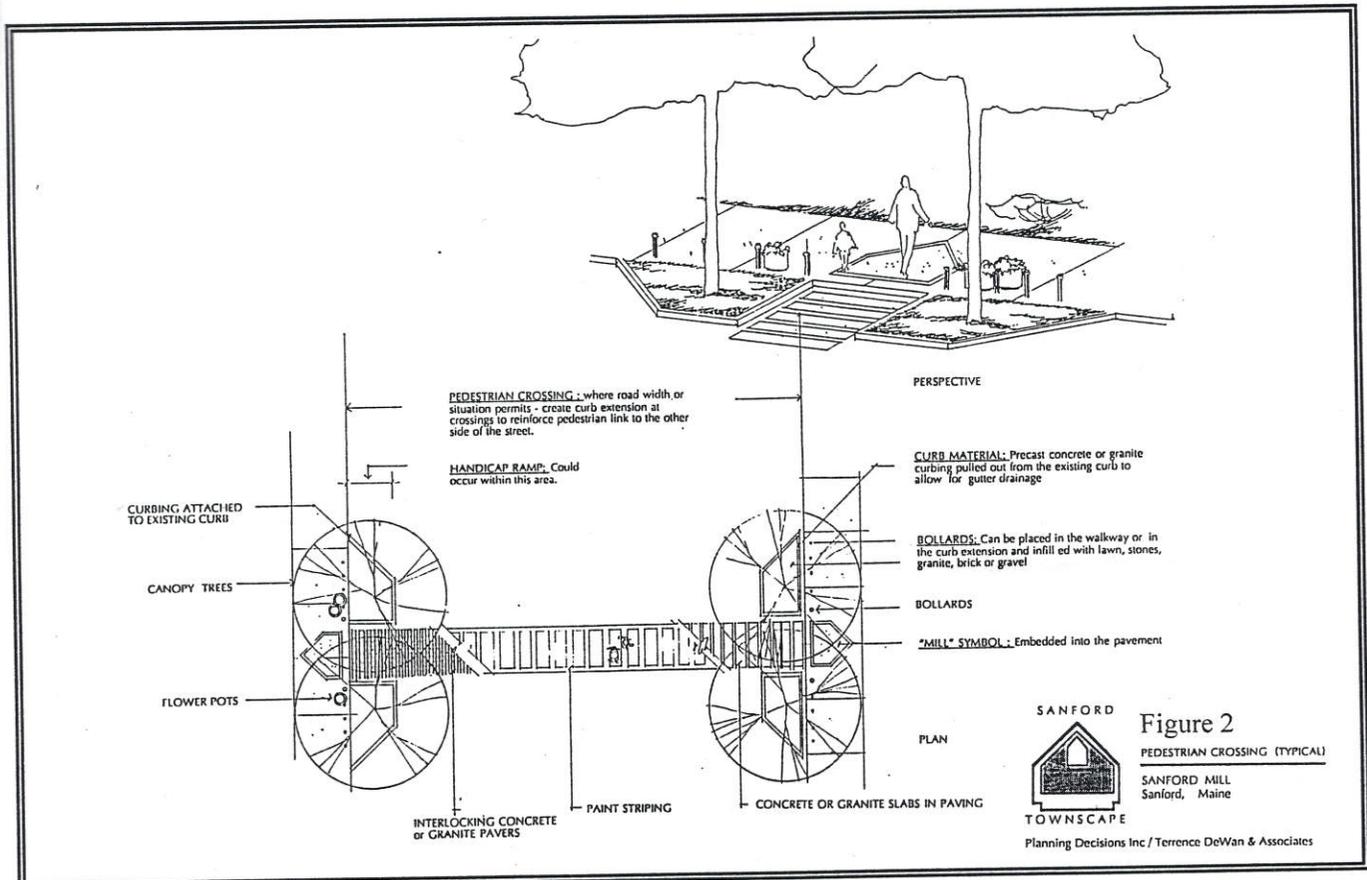
2. Work Plan

To accomplish these objectives, *Discover Downtown Sanford* and the Town will need to undertake the following short-term activities (see Figure 1) within the next year:



- **Parking Management** - The Design/Economic Restructuring Committee should work with the Town and Police Department to develop an improved program of parking management in the downtown area. This program should address the following areas:
 1. Improved enforcement of on-street parking regulations to assure that these spaces are available for customer parking.
 2. Improved management of the off-street parking at the Mid Town lot to assure that the best “customer parking” is available for use by customers.

- Pedestrian Crosswalks** - The Town should reconstruct the major crosswalks in the downtown to increase the perception of safety and convenience. A possible design for the revised crosswalks is shown in Figure 2. In conjunction with this effort, the Town and *Discover Downtown Sanford* should undertake an educational and enforcement program dealing with motorists yielding to pedestrians within crosswalks.



- Image Enhancement** - The Design/Economic Restructuring Committee should work with the Town to develop a comprehensive program to enhance the image of downtown Sanford as a quality shopping district that appeals to middle and upper income consumers. This program should focus on three areas:

1. Creation of a downtown focal point - Downtown currently lacks a strong sense of place or identity. The geographic center of downtown is the parking lot of the Mid Town Mall. The Design/Economic Restructuring Committee should work with the Town and downtown property owners to develop a "market" building on the east side of Main Street between the Sanford Institution for Savings and Home Vision Video to serve as a center for downtown activities. This facility should provide information about downtown and downtown activities, be a permanent home for the farmers'

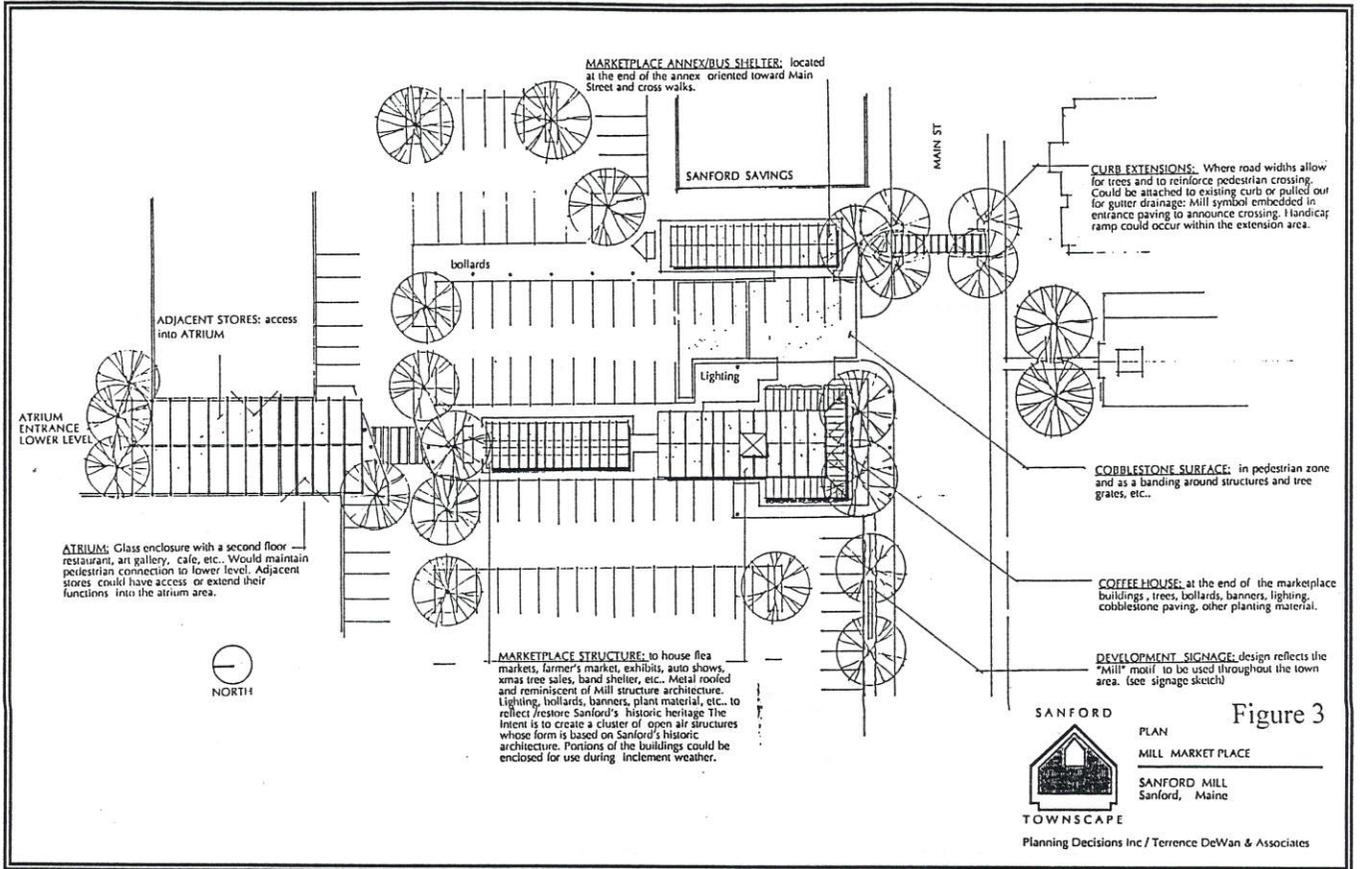


Figure 3

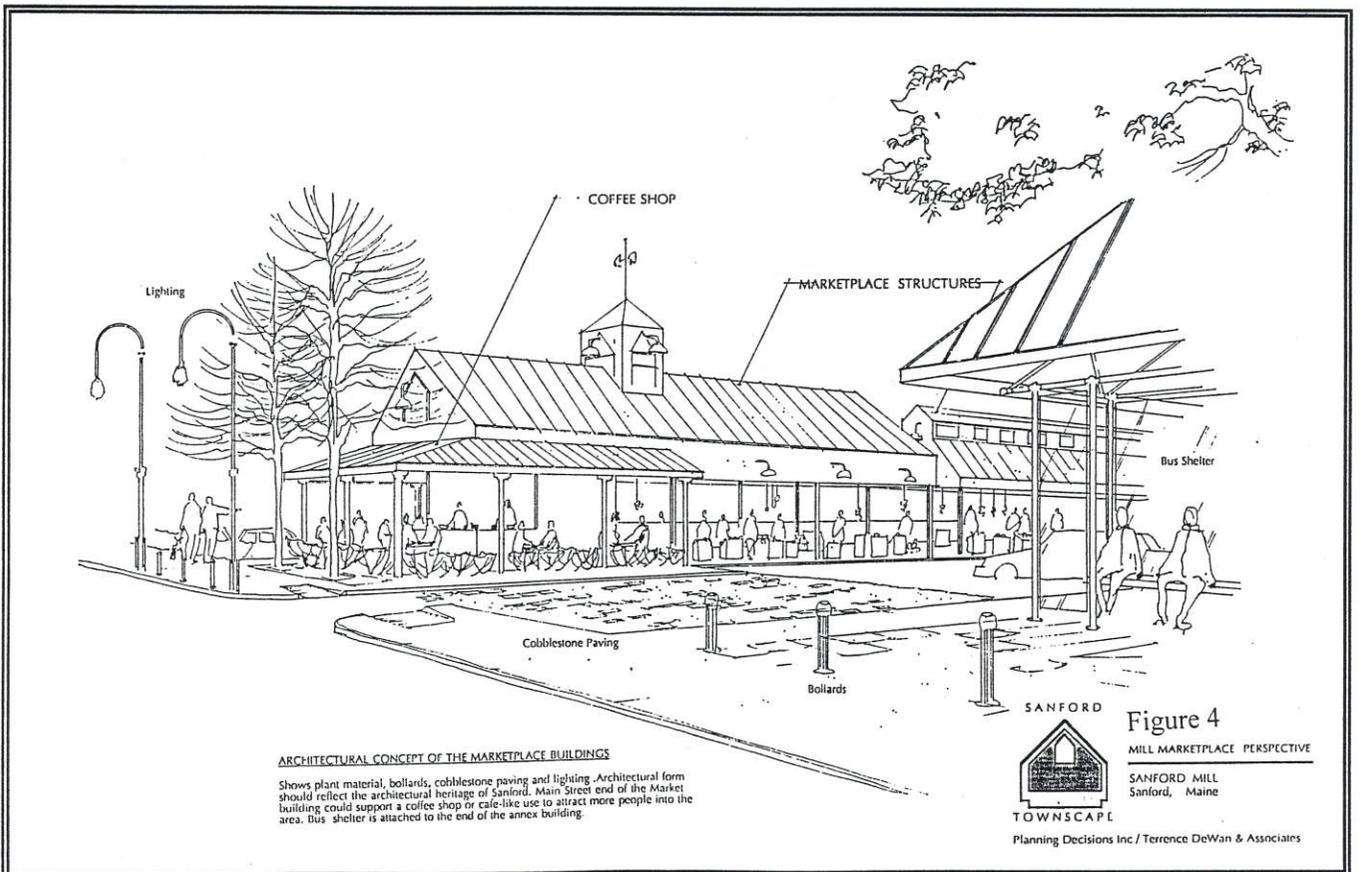


Figure 4

ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPT OF THE MARKETPLACE BUILDINGS

Shows plant material, bollards, cobblestone paving and lighting. Architectural form should reflect the architectural heritage of Sanford. Main Street end of the Market building could support a coffee shop or cafe-like use to attract more people into the area. Bus shelter is attached to the end of the annex building.

market and other similar activities, and serve as a center for other downtown activities and promotions. Figures 3 and 4 provide a conceptual idea of what such a "market" might look like.

2. Downtown gateways - The Town and *Discover Downtown Sanford* should work together to create attractive gateways to the downtown at the following locations:

- Winter/Lebanon/Main Intersection
- Main between Roberts and Washington
- Washington at the Mousam River

These gateways should be visually distinctive and allow customers and visitors to recognize that they are entering a distinctive place. The gateways should include appropriate signage and visual elements that are consistent with the other downtown improvements. A conceptual design for the Mousam Falls Gateway is shown in Figures 5 and 6, while Figure 7 shows possible signage that should be incorporated into both of the areas. Figures 8, 9, and 10 show a possible treatment for the Main/Lebanon Streets Gateway.

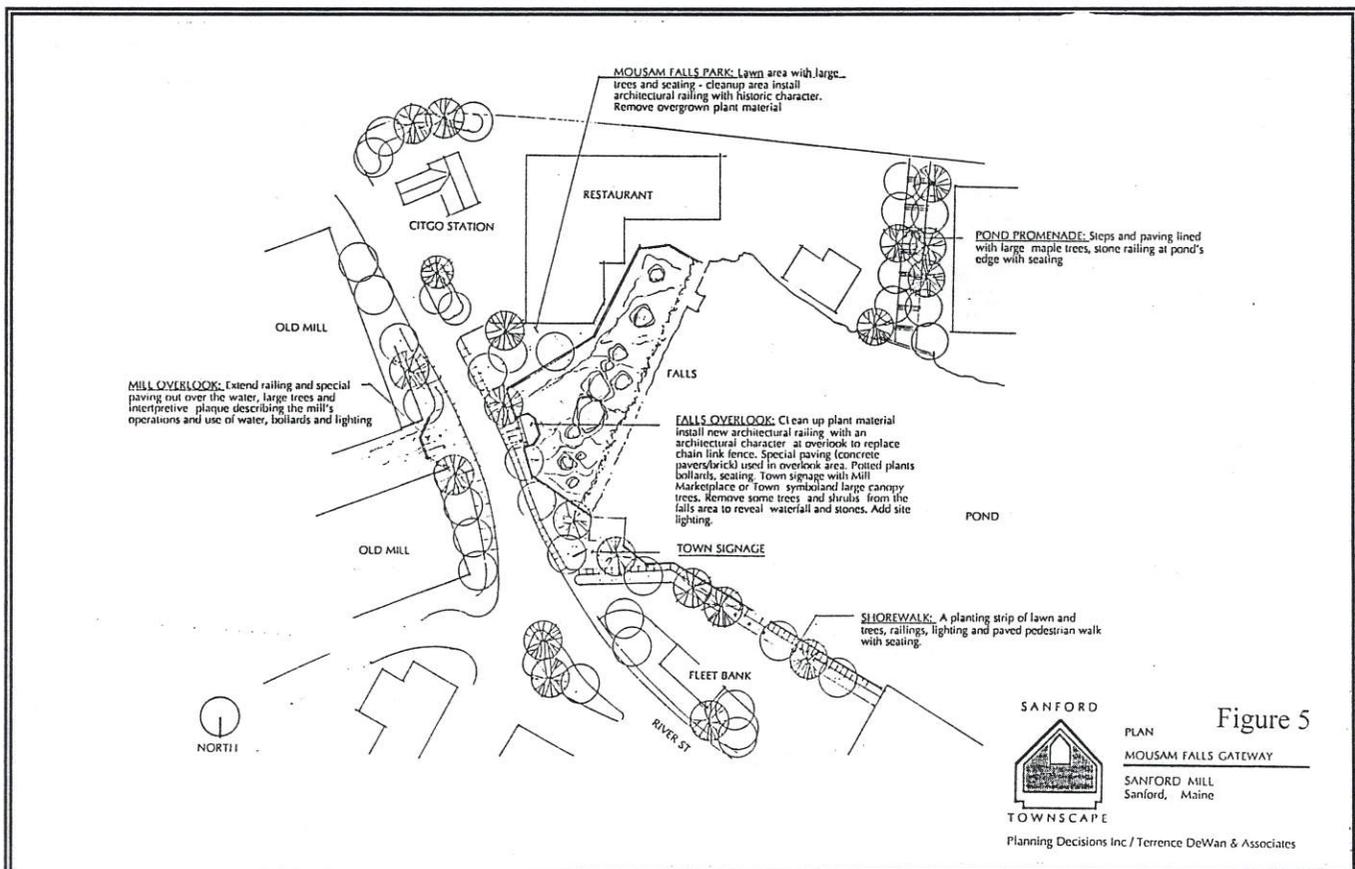


Figure 5

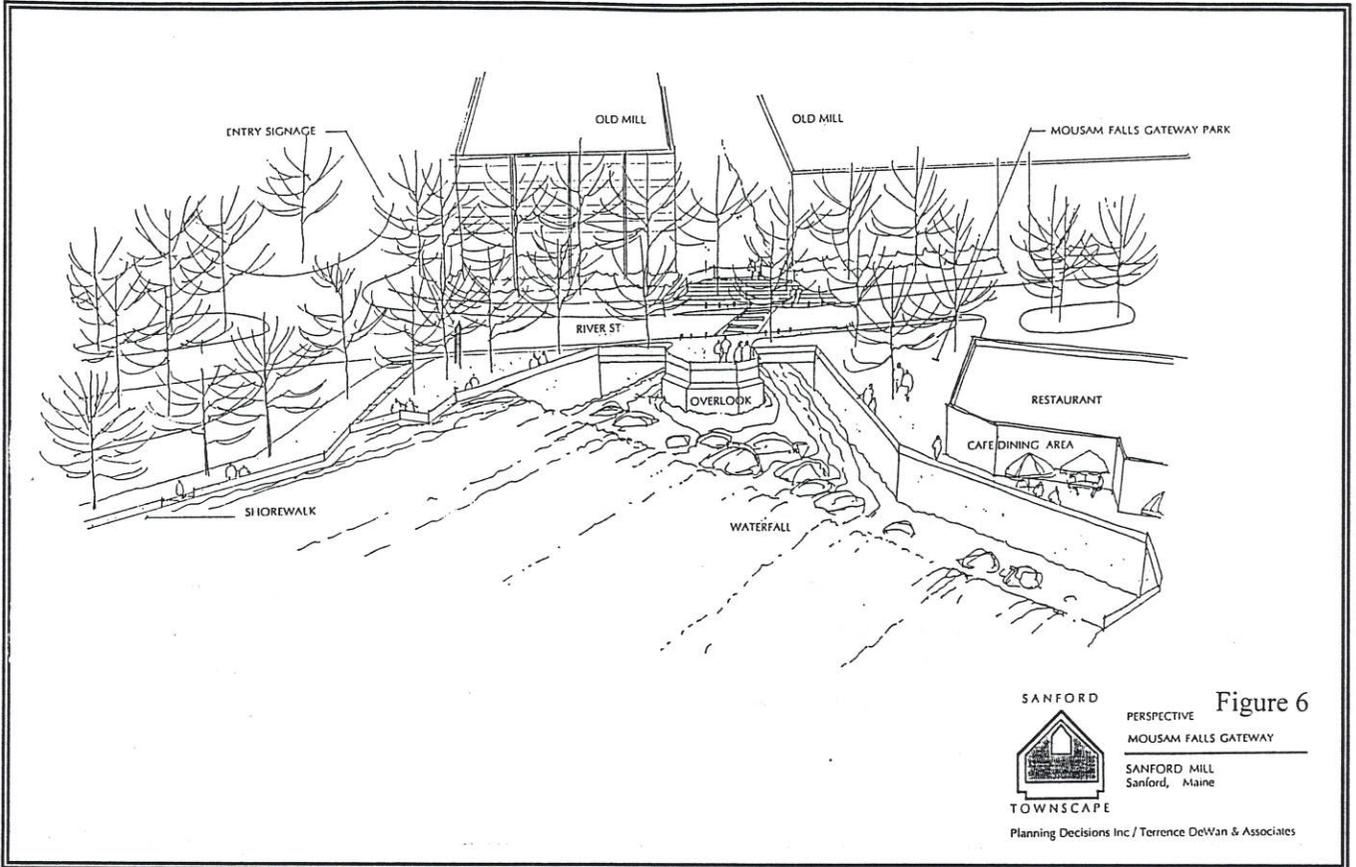
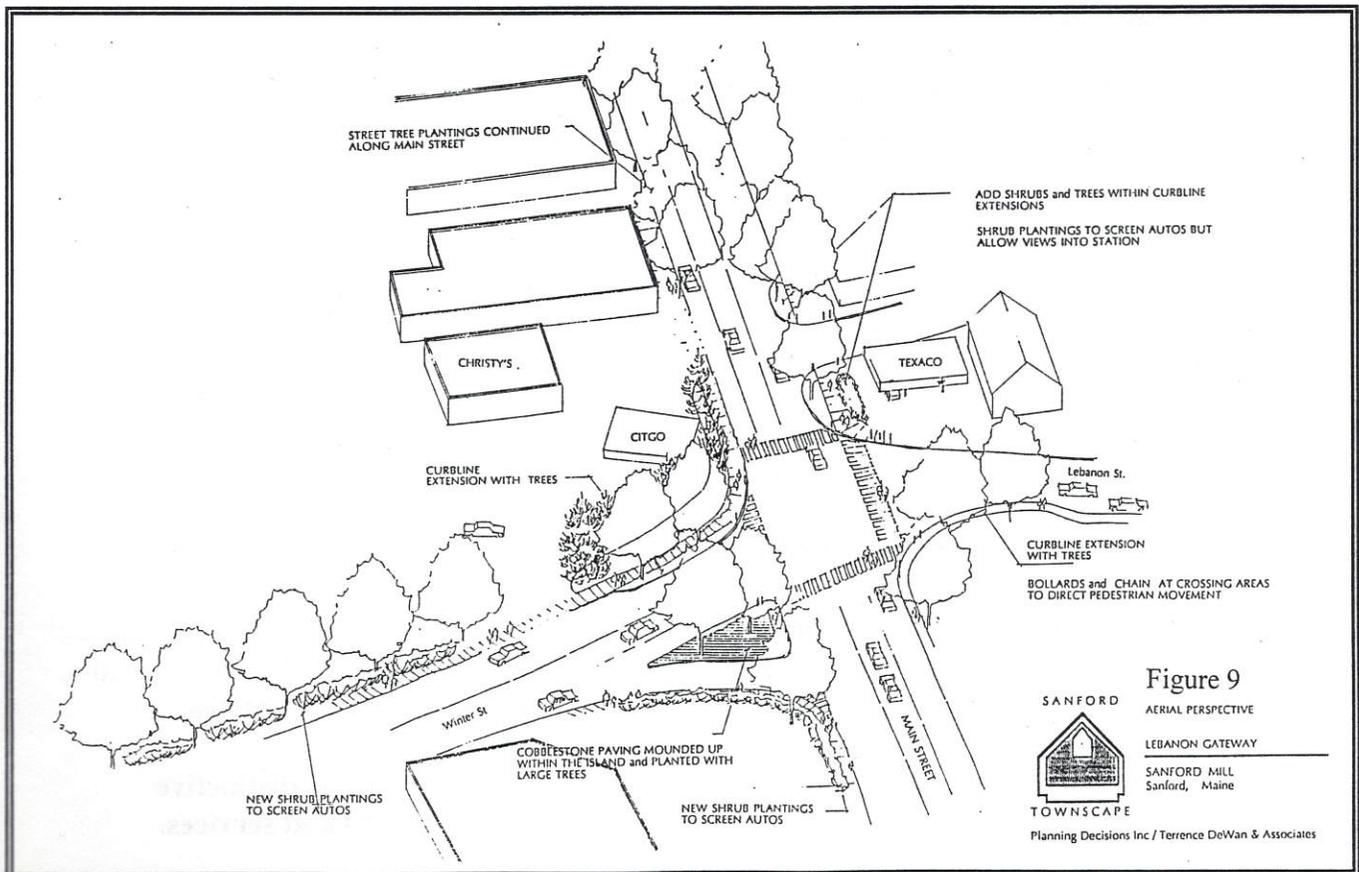
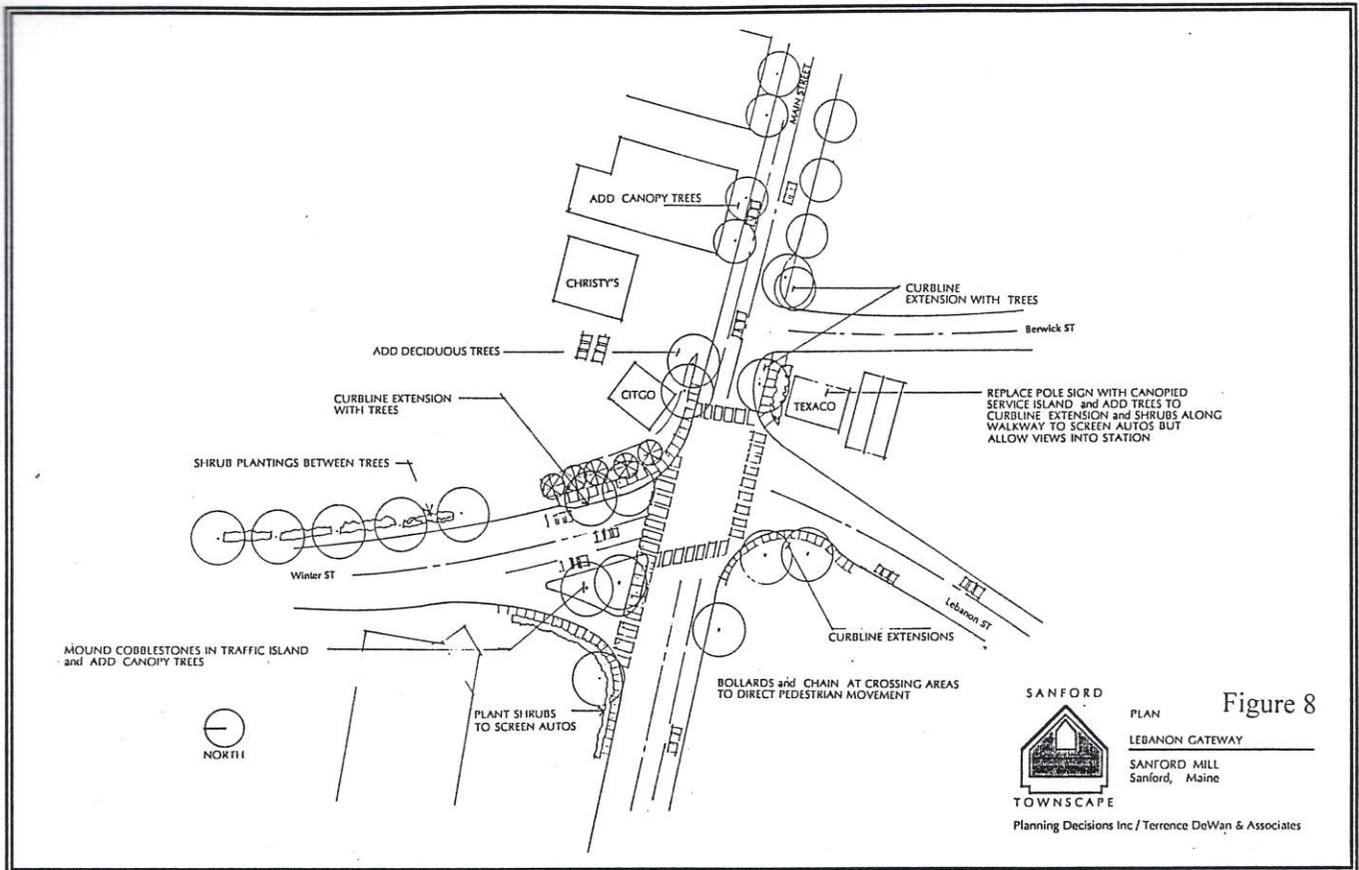
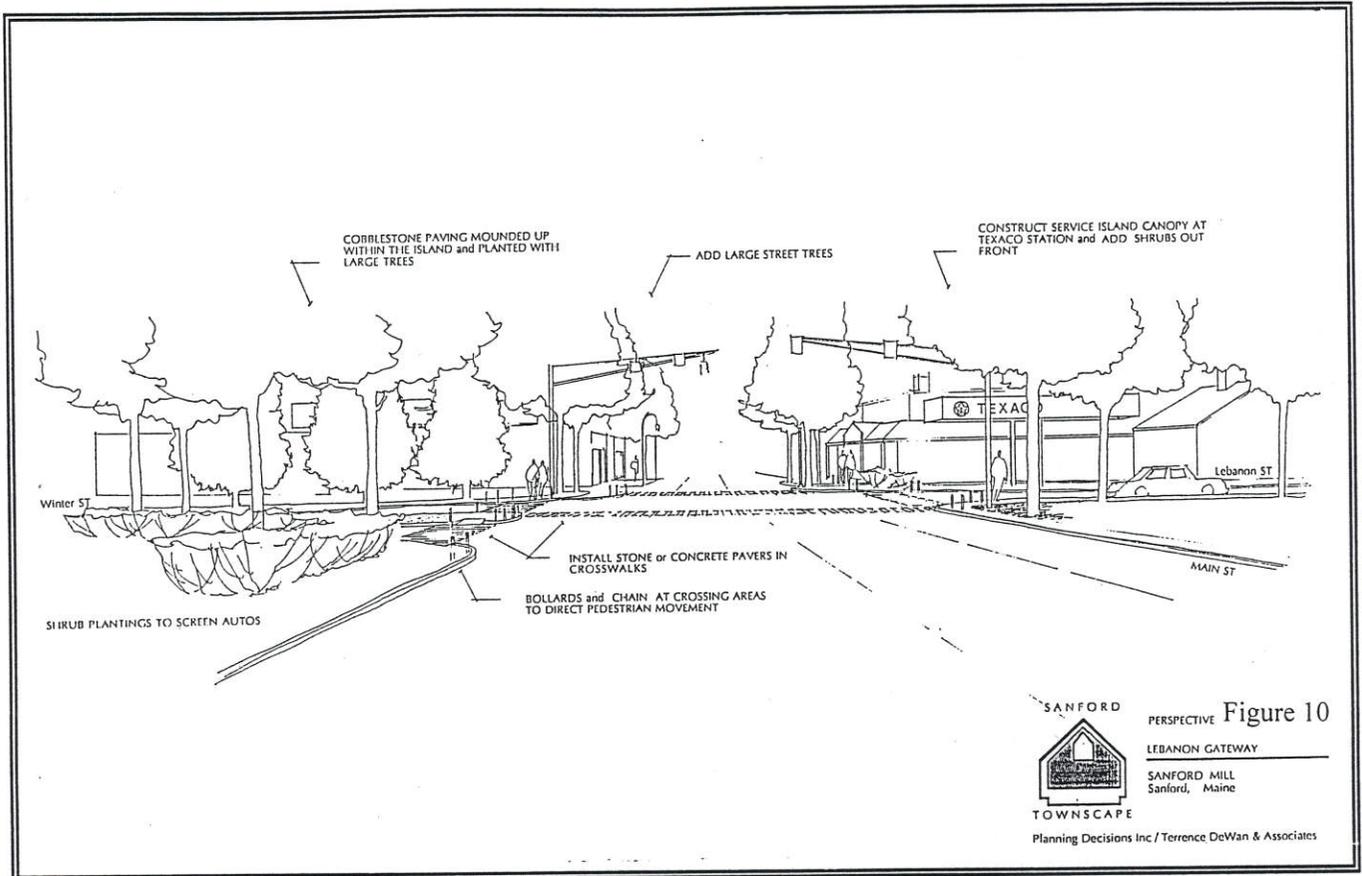


Figure 6



Figure 7





3. Public Safety

The Design/Economic Restructuring Committee should continue to work with the Sanford Police Department to improve the perception of safety in downtown.

4. Maintenance of Public Facilities

The Design/Economic Restructuring Committee should continue to work with the Town's Director of Public Property to assure that the public areas of downtown are well maintained, clean, and present a positive image of the community. This should include establishing a system for downtown businesses to notify the Town when they notice problems.

D. Promotion and Marketing Strategies

1. Promotion and Marketing Objectives

The third component of the downtown revitalization program is an active program to market the downtown as a **quality** commercial area and to promote the individual businesses within downtown. To this end, the following promotion and marketing objectives are established:

OBJECTIVE #6 - Develop an image of downtown as a distinctive shopping and service district that offers quality products and services.

OBJECTIVE #7 - Create awareness with consumers living in the Sanford Trade Area of the range of goods and services available in downtown.

OBJECTIVE #8 - Increase the number of events and activities that attract people into downtown Sanford.

2. Promotion and Marketing Work Plan

The task of promoting and marketing downtown Sanford as a commercial district should be delegated to the Promotion Committee. This group should undertake the following activities in addition to assuming responsibility for ongoing marketing and promotion activities. In the next year, the Committee should address the following:

- ***Downtown Image*** - The Committee should refine the downtown logo and develop a related marketing theme that will be used by ***Discover Downtown Sanford*** and its members in promoting the downtown district. Consideration should be given to graphically simplifying the existing logo. It is important that the logo be used to project a "quality" image for the downtown.
- ***Promotion of the Range of Goods and Services Available in Downtown*** - The Promotion Committee should develop a directory of categories of goods and services that are available in downtown and where they can be found. The emphasis in the directory should be on the types of goods rather than on specific businesses. This information should then be used in joint advertising programs that focus on downtown as a commercial district.
- ***Special Events*** - The Promotion Committee should develop at least two special events to bring consumers into downtown and truly "discover downtown Sanford." One event should focus on the Christmas holiday season, while the other should occur during the summer. The objective of each event should be to bring consumers into downtown and provide them with the opportunity to experience various aspects of the downtown. These events should include musical events, food, and an opportunity to visit stores. Individual businesses should be encouraged to conduct their own promotions in conjunction with the overall event.
- ***Target Marketing*** - The Promotion Committee should develop a program for targeting specific segments of the overall market. This should build on existing activities of individual businesses and target groups of consumers with similar characteristics or interests. This might include:
 - Worker appreciation days in which people who work in or around downtown get special discounts.

- Hospital appreciation days to attract hospital employees to come downtown.
- Special promotions targeted at women during major sporting events such as the Super Bowl, Kentucky Derby, or NBA playoffs.
- ***Expanded Market Activity*** - The Promotion Committee should work to expand the farmers' market and to explore other similar activities (crafts market, flea market) that can complement downtown businesses.

Over the longer term (the next two to three years) the Committee should evaluate all promotional and marketing activities and determine which are effective and should be continued and which are not and should be discontinued. In addition, the Promotion Committee should continue to expand marketing activities including:

- ***Cross Shopping Promotions*** - The Committee should explore ways to encourage the customers of one downtown store to make additional purchases at other stores in the downtown district.
- ***Increased Special Events*** - The Promotion Committee should investigate expanding the number of specific events to approximately one per quarter (spring event, summer event, fall event, holiday celebration).
- ***Expanded Joint Promotion/Advertising Activities*** - The Promotion Committee should develop joint advertising activities that are designed to build customers' awareness of what can be found in downtown.

E. Economic Revitalization Strategies

1. Economic Revitalization Objectives

A key component of the downtown revitalization program is improving downtown's economic functioning through attracting more customers and spending into the district. To this end, the following economic revitalization objectives are established:

OBJECTIVE #9 - Maintain the existing core of stores in downtown and enhance their economic performance.

OBJECTIVE #10 - Expand the range of retail merchandise available in downtown Sanford with a focus on the gaps identified in the market analysis.

OBJECTIVE #11 - Enhance downtown's image as a place to do business.

OBJECTIVE #12 - Support the retention of existing non-retail uses and

the establishment of new uses which bring potential customers into downtown Sanford.

2. Economic Revitalization Work Plan

To accomplish these objectives, the *Discover Downtown Sanford* should undertake the following short-term activities over the next year:

- ***Business Assistance Program - Discover Downtown Sanford*** should serve as a liaison between downtown businesses and sources of business assistance. To accomplish this, the Design/Economic Restructuring Committee should:
 - Survey downtown business owners to determine their business assistance needs (i.e., cash flow management, personnel administration, TQM programs, etc.).
 - Work with the Town's Community Development Department to identify sources of business assistance and make members aware of these opportunities.
 - Publicize special business assistance programs that occur in the area.
 - Promote and sponsor training programs and similar activities of interest to downtown businesses.
 - Work with the Town of Sanford to establish a micro loan program to assist businesses that want to locate or expand in downtown.
- ***Business Environment*** - The Design/ Economic Restructuring Committee should work with the Town to enhance the business community's and the public's perception of the business environment in downtown. This should include regular meetings between the Executive Committee, the Town Administrator, and Selectmen to review downtown revitalization issues and the creation of a business visitation program in which a representative of the Town and a representative of *Discover Downtown Sanford* visit each downtown business on a regular basis to get firsthand information about business conditions and make businesses aware of their importance to the community. In addition, the Design/Economic Restructuring Committee should work with the Promotion Committee to create regular media coverage about the successes of *Discover Downtown Sanford* and individual downtown businesses. The goal of this effort should be to create a positive image of downtown Sanford as a place to do business. The information could focus on increased sales at a particular business, the level of activity surrounding certain periods (Christmas sales, etc.) or the success of promotional activities.
- ***Expansion of Existing Downtown Businesses*** - The Design/Economic Restructuring

Committee should work with existing downtown businesses to explore expanding the range of goods they offer to fill identified gaps in the retail mix.

- ***Recruitment of Businesses into Downtown*** - Over the long run, successful downtown revitalization will require that additional business activities occur in downtown. To encourage this, the Design/Economic Restructuring Committee should:
 - Develop information and materials that can be used in recruiting new businesses.
 - Identify businesses already in operation in the Sanford Trade Area that would be beneficial to be located in downtown.
 - Identify southern Maine businesses that have potential for establishing a branch location in Sanford.
 - Establish a program for personally contacting these prospects on a regular basis and encouraging them to locate in downtown Sanford.
- ***Establishment of New Businesses*** - A significant potential for business growth and retention in downtown is in the establishment of new start-up businesses in downtown or the purchase of existing businesses by new owners. A major role of the Design/Economic Restructuring Committee should be to identify potential entrepreneurs, encourage them to consider starting/buying a business in downtown, and work with them to secure financing, space, etc. While this is truly a long-term activity, the Committee should start work in this area during 1996.

Over the longer term, ***Discover Downtown Sanford*** will need to maintain the expanded level of economic revitalization activity. The Design/Economic Restructuring Committee will need to provide for repeating the short-term activities on a regular, recurring basis. In addition, the Committee should undertake the following initiatives over the next two to three years:

- ***Antiques Mall*** - The Design/Economic Restructuring Committee should explore the feasibility of establishing an antiques mall/center within the downtown area to serve as a tool for attracting consumers from a wider geographic area into Sanford. The focus of this facility should be on high quality items.
- ***Office Uses*** - The Design/Economic Restructuring Committee should work with the Planning Board to review the Town's land use regulations to assure that small scale office uses are encouraged to locate in or adjacent to the downtown area.