

# **Town of Pittsfield Comprehensive Plan Update Implementation Strategies and Goals Summary of Findings and Recommendations Approved 01/02/2007**

***Introduction: This document should be reviewed as a planning tool to guide the Town in its development during the next ten years. One hundred thirteen (113) strategies are listed with estimated timelines for completion. Strategies will be completed as town resources provide. Each year through the budget process, the Town prioritizes the use of town resources taking into consideration the economy, statutory requirements, available finances and staffing. Each year by September 30<sup>th</sup>, the Town Council shall review the Implementation Strategies and Goals to determine which projects will be proposed for the budget for the next year.***

## **Rural and Natural Resource Findings and Recommendations**

### **Agriculture**

#### Summary:

Pittsfield has grown apart from agricultural and rural awareness, which contributes to wasteful use of rural land and a lack of understanding of the natural resources. As a minority of the population base, the rural area has not had a strong voice on the Town Council in recent memory. There is no civic group or town committee which concerns itself with resource protection or rural interest.

#### Policies:

The town should establish a conservation commission which will be charged with increasing public awareness and appreciation of farming, forestry, open space, rural issues and monitoring rural land use trends. The committee shall consist of seven members selected for their interest

and knowledge of rural and natural resources. A member from each the Planning Board and the Town Council will be included on the committee.

Strategies:

The Town Council shall appoint a Conservation Commission and maintain its membership.

Timeline: 1-5 years

Summary:

Pittsfield's most productive farmland should be preserved for agricultural use. There is no incentive in place to preserve rural land as open space. Farmland is often sold to help pay bills, taxes and retirement. Development is often located on good farmland which is forever lost for agricultural use. A variety of tools should be developed to preserve the town's productive farmland. The current minimum lot size of one acre should be maintained because large lot zoning often wastes land.

Policies:

The town will assess active farmland at its market rate as per state law.

The town will establish an Agricultural Protection District covering land area in the range of 1000 to 2000 acres. Development not related to agriculture in this district will be strictly limited. Land selected for the district should have prime farm soils and land practical for farming. Other important considerations include whether the land is used for agriculture and the willingness of the property owner.

The town should discourage development on productive farmland by offering education and incentives to act in the public interest rather than prohibiting development in these areas.

The town should encourage the establishment of a Development Rights Purchase program.

Strategies:

The Tax assessor will continue the current practice of assessing active farmland and agriculture.

Timeline: On-going

The Town will maintain its current Agricultural District Designation in the Zoning Ordinance.

Timeline: On-going

The Conservation Commission and the Ordinance Revision Committee will continue to identify and implement appropriate strategies to encourage farmland preservation.

Timeline: On-going

The Conservation Commission will work with private, regional, state, and federal programs which provide conservation easements and similar programs to interest local farmers to make use of these programs.

Timeline: On-going

#### Summary:

Commercial agriculture is an important part of the local economy and should be valued appropriately. The agricultural contribution to our economy is often undervalued. Agriculture depends upon a local and regional infrastructure including, feeds stores and equipment sales and service. The future of farming is dependent upon many factors including: market demands and prices, land availability, farm infrastructure, taxes, new market opportunities, and real estate land pressures.

#### Policies:

The town will consider agriculture infrastructure a critical part of its economic base. Agricultural operations will be supported to the same extent as other businesses are with economic development resources.

The town recognizes the importance of prime farm soils as a precious and limited resource which needs to be preserved for future generations.

#### Strategies:

The Pittsfield Development Corporation will incorporate commercial agricultural into its commercial and industrial development efforts. The Committee will work with the Conservation Commission to identify and implement strategies to promote farming and related activities. Grants, tax credits, conservation easements new business promotion and financial assistance will be explored as possible measures to assist agriculture.

Timeline: 1-5 years

## **Forestry**

### Summary:

The town-owned forest especially the lot abutting Sibley Pond should be managed for sustainable harvests, ecological health and low impact recreation.

Timber harvesting practices are adequately regulated by the state. Landowners often do not effectively manage and harvest their forest holdings. The town should promote wise management practices to ensure the health of our forest and to offer landowners a better financial return.

### Policies:

The town shall manage town forest for sustainable yields and promote low impact recreation on the land.

The town should not regulate timber harvesting but encourage landowners to manage their woodlots well.

The town should report violations of the state timber harvesting laws to the state.

### Strategies:

The town should use a professional management plan to harvest town forest.

Timeline: 1-5 years

The Conservation Commission will promote the use of wise harvest practices through a variety of public outreach methods.

Timeline: On-going

The Building Inspector and other town officials will promptly report violations of the state timber harvesting regulations.

Timeline: On-going

## **Gravel Pits**

### Summary:

The gravel pits in town are secure and there are no environmental concerns.

Policies:

The town will make sure that the gravel pit along Peltoma Avenue aquifer is gated to prevent dumping.

Strategies:

The Building Inspector shall monitor the condition of a gravel pit along Peltoma Avenue to make sure it is kept free of debris and illegal dumping.

Timeline: On-going

## **Sibley Pond**

Summary:

The status of the water quality of Sibley Pond is unknown and testing should be done to determine if remedial actions need to be taken. The Old Route 2 roadbed near the pond is deteriorating and may be causing erosion. It should not be designed for a boat launch due to its poor condition.

Policies:

The town should cooperate with the Sibley Pond and Carrabassett Stream Association in monitoring water quality and to make sure that land activities surrounding the water ways are conducted in an environmental safe manner.

The town shall make sure that the Old Route 2 roadbed does not erode into Sibley Pond and it can be used as an infrequent boat launch site.

Strategies:

The town will manage its timber holding adjacent to Sibley Pond in a manner to prevent erosion.

Timeline: 1-5 years

The Conservation Commission will cooperate with the Sibley Pond and Carrabassett Association on water quality testing and projects to improve water quality.

Timeline: On-going

The Conservation Commission will develop a plan to maintain and repair the Old Route 2 roadbed.

Timeline: 1-5 years

## **Wetlands**

### Summary:

The Canaan Bog is a valuable natural resource and is used for low impact recreation. Some have expressed interest in preserving the bog through a land trust or similar method. All of our wetlands provide a multiple of environmental benefits and should be protected. State and federal regulations for wetlands should be followed. Options should be offered to fill small wetlands especially those in designated growth areas for commercial and industrial uses.

### Policies:

The town will zone the shoreland around nonforested wetlands of 10 or more acres as resource protection.

The town will advocate for changes in state and federal regulations to allow for the development of small wetlands with little environmental value located in commercial growth areas.

### Strategies:

The town will continue to zone wetlands greater than 10 acres as resource protection.

Timeline: On-going

The Town Council will advocate for flexible alternatives dealing with small wetlands in designated commercial growth districts.

Timeline: On-going

## **Flood Hazard Areas**

### Summary:

Structural development should be discouraged in the flood hazard areas. The flood maps are often difficult to interpret and reconcile with local maps. A flood hazard plan should be developed.

**Policies:**

The town will develop a flood hazard mitigation plan in cooperation with the County and seek more user friendly maps.

**Strategies:**

The Town Manager will cooperate with the County to develop a flood hazard mitigation plan.

Timeline: 1-5 years

## **Sebasticook River**

**Summary:**

Water quality has improved due to water treatment in Hartland. However pollution continues to occur when Sebasticook lake is drained. Algal growth occurs at the Burnham Dam impoundment due to poor coordination of the lake water release. The river is a critical resource for both Pittsfield and the region.

Chromium pollution is a problem for the river. Fishing is popular especially on Douglas Pond. However, consumption of fish should be limited due to contaminants.

A linear park along the river and improved boat launch sites would be a terrific asset for the community Existing boat sites at Pinnacle Park, Manson Park and the portage trail at the Burnham Dam should be maintained and improved. Opportunities to acquire land along the river should also be considered whenever the opportunity arises.

The West Branch of Farnham Brook has experienced low oxygen readings mostly from combined sewer overflows and past problems with manure storage.

**Policies:**

The town supports the creation of a Sebasticook River Watershed Commission. The Commission should involve all communities and be responsible for monitoring water quality and advocating for improvements.

The town will encourage residents to learn more about the river as an ecological system

The town is proud of its association with the Sebasticook River and welcome opportunities to incorporate safe and appropriate river activities in the Egg Festival and similar celebrations.

The town wishes to encourage non-motorized boating on the Sebasticook River and catch and release fishing.

The town should work toward the development of a linear park along one or both sides of the river. Opportunities to acquire land and take advantage of donations and private efforts should be encouraged.

The town should continue to separate stormwater drainage from the sewer system as resources allow.

Strategies:

The Conservation Commission will contact neighboring river front communities and initiate discussions about the creation of a watershed commission.

Timeline: 1-5 years

The Town will encourage SAD # 53, MCI and area colleges to use the river as a learning laboratory.

Timeline: On-going

The Town will encourage the Egg Festival Committee to continue to include river-based activities.

Timeline: On-going

River boat access along the river, including Pinnacle Park, will be improved.

Timeline: 1-5 years

The Conservation Commission and the Town Council will continue to work on the creation of a linear river park.

Timeline: On-going

The town will continue to address combined sewer overflows and pursue funding whenever opportunities arise.

Timeline: On-going

# Cultural Resource Findings and Recommendations

## Historic Preservation

### Summary:

Historic buildings and sites especially those listed on the National Register of Historic places should be marked with a plaque. The town's charm and historic character should be utilized in its economic development efforts. A walking tour with development of the museum, should be considered.

### Policies:

The town recognizes the importance of buildings and sites of historical significance and will assist the Pittsfield Historical Society to further develop historic listings. Three North Lancey Street, Flint Reed's office and the Pittsfield Community Theater should be considered for placement on the National register of Historic Places.

### Strategies:

The Historical Society shall approach landowners to discuss the desirability of applying to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Historical Society shall work with owners of historic properties to place a historic plaque on their buildings.

Timeline: 1-5 years

The Historical Society will develop promotional strategies including publications, contest, and workshops to foster interest in the identification and preservation of historic places.

Timeline: 1-5 years

The Historical Society will develop a self-guided historic tour of historic sites in the downtown area.

Timeline: 1-5 years

## **General Design Guideline**

### Summary:

Pittsfield's diversity of building styles is an appealing feature of the community. New development other than single family homes should be reviewed for design compatibility within the neighborhood in which they are to be located. Design guidelines covering landscaping, building design, environmental protection, signs and other exterior elements should be developed.

### Policies:

The town should incorporate design review for all permit applications beyond single family homes.

Sign regulations shall be developed to address the following: home business signs should be limited to one small unlighted sign, and only one sign should be allowed per property. The town should strictly enforce its sign regulations.

### Strategies:

A set of design guidelines will be incorporated into the site review process to make sure that buildings are designed to be compatible with their surroundings.

Timeline: On-going

Sign regulations for residential districts will be developed.

Timeline: On-going

The Building Inspector shall be authorized to require illegal signs to be removed.

Timeline: On-going

## **Critical Gateways and First Impressions**

### Summary:

Signs welcoming people into Pittsfield should be placed on all major road entrances into the town. Signs should also direct people to the downtown. A cohesive sign theme would help to improve the image of Pittsfield's business environment.

The view of the Maine Central Institute from the northbound lane of I-95 is an attractive gateway into town. This view should be preserved and perhaps a sign should be placed on I-95 to showcase this view.

The northbound entrance to the downtown area along the railroad tracks creates a poor impression on travelers. A smoother railroad crossing and landscaping with the rail right-of-way would be beneficial. The area surrounding the railroad track which is visible from Main Street should be included in the town's beautification plans.

**Policies:**

The town should create attractive gateways into the community by placing signs at all the major road entrances into the community. A sign design should be selected to portray the community's vision. The priority area should be the Somerset Plaza area.

Zoning and subdivision regulations shall require multi-business development to incorporate a coordinated sign and landscaping theme.

It is the policy of the town to review any land use within the viewshed of MCI from I-95 and prevent any tall or unsightly development from detracting from the view.

It is the policy of the town to improve the appearance of the railroad crossing and rail right-of-way in the downtown area.

**Strategies:**

The town shall appoint a Gateway Sign Committee and task them to develop gateway signs for the community. The town shall seek funding from grants and other sources to install the signs.

Timeline: 1-5 years

The town shall submit grant request to MDOT's gateway program to fund the sign program.

Timeline: 1-5 years

The Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances shall maintain regulations to address signs and landscaping for commercial developments.

Timeline: On-going

The Ordinance Revision Committee shall maintain a Scenic Overlook Overlay District to protect the MCI viewshed.

Timeline: On-going

The town will maintain the outer railroad right-of-way it purchased to improve the appearance of Main Street.

Timeline: On-going

The town will maintain a dialogue with the Maine Central Railroad about improving the condition of the railroad crossing and participating in the development of an attractive entrance to the downtown.

Timeline: On-going

## **Archeological Resources**

### Summary:

Pittsfield's land area includes the confluence of two rivers and an esker, suitable conditions for both prehistoric and historic settlements. Areas along waterways have significant potential for archeological resource recovery. Seven sites were found recently upstream of the Burnham dam during FERC relicensing procedures. Potential archeological sites within the esker may have been compromised due to the extensive amount of gravel removal in the past. An exhaustive survey of archeological sites has not been conducted.

### Policies:

It is the policy of the town to prevent disturbance of archeological resources by regulating development in the Archeological Resource Potential Zone and denying permits to applicants who cannot demonstrate that their proposed developments will protect potential resources.

### Strategies:

Develop and maintain a map of potential archeological resources areas based upon existing surveys and data from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission

Timeline: 1-5 years

Maintain in the Site Review and Subdivision Ordinances provisions that require an applicant to identify and protect archeological resources whenever the development occurs within an archeological sensitive area.

Timeline: On-going

## **Community Attractiveness**

### **Summary:**

Pittsfield's tree-lined streets are critical to its beauty. A tree planting and maintenance program should be developed to ensure healthy trees for future generations. Somerset Avenue should be a priority for the tree planting program.

Mill Pond is an attractive focal point for the community and should be further beautified and appreciated.

The town junk yard ordinance is an effective tool for regulating the appearance and operation of junkyards. The ordinance needs to be enforced to make sure that nuisances are not created.

Maintaining the exterior appearance of buildings, while the responsibility of landowners, impacts the beauty and quality of life of the entire community. Continued efforts through KVCAP and other housing grant and rehab programs should be used to improve the housing stock.

### **Policies:**

It is the policy of the town to maintain a healthy streetscape plan in built-up areas of the town and to develop a tree planting program. Somerset Avenue should be a priority for the tree planting program.

It is the policy of the town to preserve and enhance the natural beauty of Mill Pond and to consider visual access to the pond in future development applications.

It is the policy of the town to actively enforce the junkyard ordinance to eliminate nuisances and maintain an attractive community.

It is the policy of the town to continue to pursue community development efforts geared toward neighborhood revitalization and to work closely with KVCAP and other housing advocacy groups.

It is the policy of the town to continue to use its own Housing Improvement Revolving Loan program to offer low interest loans to qualified residents in need of housing rehabilitation.

### **Strategies:**

The Town Council will continue to fund a tree maintenance program.

Timeline: On-going

The town will develop a tree planting and streetscape program in cooperation with local civic groups, citizens and the area schools.

Timeline: On-going

The Town Council will encourage civic groups such as the Garden Club to sponsor an annual landscaping contest around Mill Pond.

Timeline: On-going

The Planning Board will develop visual enhancement standards for the Mill Pond.

Timeline: 1-5 years

The Building Inspector will actively enforce the junkyard ordinance.

Timeline: On-going

The Town Manager will work closely with KVCAP to promote housing rehab projects within the town.

Timeline: On-going

The Town Manager will maintain the Housing Improvement Revolving Loan Fund in sound working condition.

Timeline: On-going

## **Library**

### **Summary:**

The Pittsfield Public Library is located in a historic building which will require On-going maintenance and improvement in order to meet contemporary library demands.

### **Policies:**

It is the policy of the town to regard the library as a valuable resource. The historic structure should be adequately maintained and new technology and services should be added to meet user needs.

Strategies:

The town should adequately support the needs of the library including capital improvements to the building.

Timeline: On-going

## **Depot House Museum and Caboose**

Summary:

The museum and caboose are listed on the National Register and the Historical Society would like to enhance the museum exhibits and improve the building.

Policies:

It is the policy of the town to continue to support the museum and caboose and to facilitate the recruitment and organization of volunteers to manage the museum.

Strategies:

The town will continue to support the museum and to appropriate funds to maintain the facility including capital improvements.

Timeline: On-going

## **The Arts**

Summary:

The arrival of the Bossov Ballet Theater offers the community a catalyst to develop a Pittsfield Arts Council to expand offers for performances, arts and educational programs.

Policies:

It is the policy of the town to support the establishment of a Pittsfield Arts Council.

Strategies:

The Town Council will promote the formation of the Pittsfield Arts Council in cooperation with the Bossov Ballet Theater and the Maine Commission for the Arts

Timeline: On-going

## **Communication**

### Summary:

Town news coverage is limited since the local weekly newspaper ceased publication. Currently town news is covered primarily in the Bangor Daily News.

### Policies:

It is the policy of the town to actively promote strong communication about municipal events and news including the timely publication of the annual town report.

### Strategies:

The Town manager shall make sure that the town report is published on a timely basis and distributed to citizens.

Timeline:     On-going

The Town Manager and the Town Council shall encourage newspapers to provide adequate coverage of municipal affairs and will seek other opportunities to inform citizens through other mediums.

Timeline:     On-going

## **Recreational Resource Findings and Recommendations**

### **Facility, Program and Volunteer Coordination**

#### Summary:

Existing community gymnasiums are not fully utilized and there is a lack of volunteers to run recreational programs. Recreation programs are sometimes poorly advertised.

#### Policies:

It is the policy of the town to find creative ways to maximize the use of existing recreational facilities before constructing new ones.

It is the policy of the town to facilitate communication of recreation programs and to encourage volunteers to run recreation activities.

Strategies:

The town will maintain a current recreational brochure describing local recreational programs and distribute it widely throughout the community.

Timeline: On-going

The town's recreation director shall coordinate recreation activities at various facilities in the community including SAD #53 to maximize public use. A strategy to promote more volunteers shall be developed with the assistance from the Town Manager and the Town Council.

Timeline: On-going

## **Town Parks**

Summary:

Town parks provide a number of recreational opportunities for residents. However, evening use is sometimes a problem at Hathorn Park and Manson Park. Access to Douglas Pond at Pinnacle park should be improved.

Policies:

It is the policy of the town to support healthy after school and evening activities, especially for teenagers, and to explore creative ways of making such activities affordable for both users and taxpayers.

Strategies:

The Recreation Director and the Town Manager shall monitor evening use at the parks to develop strategies as needed to address vandalism and park lighting.

Timeline: On-going

## **Pittsfield Community Theater**

Summary:

The theater located in a historic structure may be the only town-owned theater in the country. It is used mostly as a movie theater, however, it is suitable for live dramas and other types of performances. The theater is self supported from ticket sales and is a popular venue in the community.

Policies:

It is the policy of the town to maintain efficient and quality operation of the theater and to allow for rental opportunities.

Strategies:

The Theater Committee shall continue to efficiently operate the theater and will seek appropriate rental income.

Timeline: On-going

## **Swimming Pool**

Summary:

The town's outdoor pool is over 46 years old and needs to be replaced.

Policies:

The Town shall develop a plan to replace the existing outdoor pool and will provide citizens with an opportunity to discuss the cost and benefits of a replacement swimming pool.

Strategies:

The Town Council will develop a number of pool replacement options and present them to the public for consideration.

Timeline: 1-5 years

## **Non-team and Organized Outdoor Sports Activities**

Summary:

Organized sports programs at the Pee -Wee level is strong. However, there is a lack of programs for teenagers. There is a shortage of soccer fields and the town lacks any sort of outdoor activity club or group.

Policies:

It is the policy of the town to work in cooperation with the schools and provide a variety of sports activities for children involved in both official school teams and noncompetitive programs.

It is the policy of the town to encourage residents to enjoy a variety of outdoor recreational activities.

Strategies:

The recreation director will seek to provide a wide range of sports programs for all age groups and will identify additional year-round recreation opportunities.

Timeline: On-going

The Recreation Director and the Town Manager shall develop a plan to construct additional soccer fields.

Timeline: 6-10 years

## **Sibley Pond Access**

Summary:

An unofficial public boat access site to Sibley Pond is located on the Old Route 2 roadbed. It is an unimproved site and lacks adequate sight distance to the west across the Route 2 bridge. The site is adequate for canoe and small boats.

Policies:

It is the policy of the town to work with the Department of Conservation to develop an improved boat access site onto Sibley Pond.

Strategies:

The Town Manager and the Conservation Commission should advocate to the Department of Conservation to locate a boat access site onto Sibley Pond.

Timeline: On-going

## **Recreational Trail System**

Summary:

The Driftbusters Snowmobile Club does an excellent job of maintaining a snowmobile trail network and fostering responsible use of public and private land. A separate cross-country ski trail is also maintained at Manson Park

Walking and bike riding takes place along many of town sidewalks and streets especially in the downtown and surrounding residential neighborhoods. Bicycling along Somerset Avenue, Main

Street and Hartland Avenue need to be improved. A fixed length fitness trail in Manson Park would be a desirable amenity.

**Policies:**

It is the policy of the town to support the Driftbusters Snowmobile Club.

It is the policy of the town to encourage walking and bicycling as alternative modes of transport and healthy activities.

**Strategies:**

The Town Council will continue to turn over a portion of State reimbursement of snowmobile taxes and registrations to the Driftbusters Snowmobile Club.

Timeline: On-going

The Conservation Commission and the Planning Board shall periodically assess the town's recreational trail network especially for walking, bicycling, and other similar recreational activities to determine if improvements are needed to meet public demands.

Timeline: On-going

## **Community Center**

**Summary:**

A community center would be a positive asset for the community providing many recreational, social and cultural opportunities. The recreation section of the comprehensive plan details a preliminary outline of the cost and attributes of the community center. The location of an indoor pool to replace the town's existing outdoor pool is included as an option for the center.

**Policies:**

It is the policy of the town to design and build a community center in keeping with the scale, size and financial resources of the town.

**Strategies:**

A Community Center Development Committee shall develop a plan for the community center including cost estimates, long-term maintenance cost and possible funding strategies. A phase build-out plan and provisions of a replacement pool should be incorporated into the plan.

Timeline: 1-5 years

## **Housing Findings and Recommendations**

### **Discouraging Residential Sprawl**

**Summary:**

During the 1980's a total of 75% of new housing was located in the urban portion of the town. The trend since 1990 has shifted toward rural single family homes. The town has very attractive in town residential neighborhoods which could again attract new housing development for households of different sizes and incomes.

**Policies:**

It is the policy of the town to target 75% of new housing to occur in the built-up portions of the town served by public water and sewer.

It is the policy of the town to continue to encourage the availability of a variety of housing options in the urban area to a mix of households and income ranges.

**Strategies:**

Apply for Community Development Block Grants and other funding to make water and sewer rates affordable in the urban neighborhoods.

Timeline: On-going

Continue to work with KVCAP to rehab existing urban homes.

Timeline: On-going

Continue to make the Town Revolving Loan Fund available for housing rehab.

Timeline: On-going

The Community Center Development Committee shall make downtown and surrounding areas a priority for the replacement pool and community center to maximize pedestrian traffic from the urban area.

Timeline: 1-5 years

The Town Manager and the Tax Assessor shall continue to investigate the feasibility of a homestead tax credit to encourage households to move into existing urban housing and make needed repairs.

Timeline: On-going

## **Housing Conditions**

### Summary:

When the Town is eligible, the town has aggressively pursued housing rehabilitation programs to improve its older housing stock. The town has also adopted a building code to make sure new construction is constructed to minimum standards.

### Policies:

It is the policy of the town to work with housing organizations to obtain housing assistance funds.

It is the policy of the town to protect the safety of its residents by maintaining building and safety codes and providing adequate code enforcement services.

### Strategies:

The Town Manager shall seek available housing grant opportunities to improve the housing stock.

Timeline: On-going

The Town Council shall maintain an adequate Building Inspector budget to effectively administer town codes, address nuisance conditions and protect public safety.

Timeline: On-going

## **Housing Type and Affordability**

### Summary:

The town has a diverse housing stock including both urban and rural neighborhoods. There is a lack of rental housing and affordable housing remains an on-going concern for some households. The town needs to be aware of future trends especially the housing needs of an aging population.

Policies:

It is the policy of the town to continue to encourage the development of affordable housing, and community styled developments.

It is the policy of the town to encourage the rehabilitation of the older housing stock.

It is the policy of the town to work toward minimizing the property tax and sewer and water rates.

Strategies:

The Town Council shall continue to support economic development initiatives designed to enhance the nonresidential tax base.

Timeline: On-going

The Town Manager and the Town Council shall continue to seek ways to maintain a competitive tax rate and to pursue grants whenever feasible to fund infrastructure.

Timeline: On-going

## **Quality Residential Neighborhoods**

Summary:

Many large older homes are popular for use as offices and other nonresidential activities. Residential neighborhoods require some level of protection from incompatible activities. Neighborhood design standards should be developed which address landscaping, pedestrian travel, street trees, and home occupations.

Policies:

It is the policy of the town to protect residential neighborhoods from incompatible commercial and industrial activities.

It is the policy of the town to encourage the turn-of-the-century appearance of the MCI area.

It is the policy of the town to continue beautification efforts and require that junk be stored out of sight.

It is the policy of the town to allow home occupations subject to reasonable performance standards.

It is the policy of the town to allow in-law apartments as a way to provide rental housing, address housing affordability and allow families to care for elder family relatives.

It is the policy of the town to maintain performance standards for mobile home parks and community-styled developments which include provisions for privacy, and landscaping.

Strategies:

The Building inspector shall aggressively enforce the junk ordinance.

Timeline: On-going

The Planning Board shall maintain its home occupation standards to allow for home business opportunities while protection residential neighborhoods.

Timeline: On-going

The Planning Board shall develop in-law apartments standards which allow for one unit to be attached to a single family dwelling.

Timeline: 1-5 years

The Planning Board shall maintain performance standards for its mobile home and community-styled development.

Timeline: On-going.

## **Transportation Findings and Recommendations**

### **Transportation System**

Summary:

Pittsfield contains an airport, rail line, interstate access, several state highways, and a well maintained local road system. Many urban streets have sidewalks. The challenge for the community is to continue its investment in a well-maintained road system. Pedestrian modes of transportation such as walking and bicycling are also important for the town.

Policies:

It is the policy of the town to consciously care for a safe and convenient intermodal transportation system, in which awareness, respect, and courtesy are fostered among all users.

It is the policy of the town to encourage the use of non-motorized transportation for local trips and car-pooling for out-of-town trips.

It is the policy of the town to encourage the siting of senior housing near services and to coordinate transportation services with available agencies.

Strategies:

The Town Council commits itself to promote a safe and convenient intermodal transportation system.

Timeline: On-going

The town will promote the use of bicycle and pedestrian amenities in the downtown and in new developments. The Ordinance Review Committee shall make appropriate changes in the Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances.

Timeline: 1-5 years

The Park and Ride Lot in the Somerset Plaza will be promoted in town and in regional publications.

Timeline: On-going

The Town Manager shall annually review the availability of transportation services available to seniors and low-income residents with providers.

Recommendations for changes shall be presented, in cooperation with the Town Council, to transportation providers as needed.

Timeline: Annually

## **Pedestrian Transportation**

Summary:

Pedestrian transportation is a priority for the town and a safe and well-maintained system of sidewalks and other travel ways should be maintained. Connections between the downtown and surrounding business, commercial and residential neighborhoods should be fostered to allow for

walking and bike travel. Safety features such as cross walks, signs, and traffic control should be designed and installed to make sure that pedestrians and automobiles can travel safely.

**Policies:**

It is the policy of the town to treat pedestrian transportation as an absolute priority for the town.

It is the policy of the town to support walking as good transportation and healthy exercise

It is the policy of the town to maintain a safe an attractive pedestrian network in the urban portions of the town.

It is the policy of the town to promote with regional and state transportation providers an increase in the availability of mass transportation especially for senior citizens and others without access to private cars.

**Strategies:**

The Town Council shall budget for sidewalk maintenance and expansion.

Timeline: On-going

The Town Manager shall continue to implement the Safe Route to School Grant Program and shall seek additional funds as they become available.

Timeline: On-going

The Ordinance Review Committee and the Planning Board shall maintain an adequate set of pedestrian standards for subdivisions and other new development. Provisions for bike lanes and trails shall be included.

Timeline: On-going

The Town Manager and the Town Council shall petition MDOT for the following improvements:

- Lower the speed limit on the Industrial Park Road.
- Install walk lights at the intersections of Main and Park streets and Hunnewell Avenue and Main Street.
- Install a cross walk between the Somerset Plaza and the Industrial Park.

Timeline: 1-5 years

The Planning Board shall maintain screening standards for parking lots to de-emphasize the placement of parking lots.

Timeline: On-going

The Town Manager and the Town Council shall support street tree planting especially in the urban portions of the town.

Timeline: On-going

## **Bicycling**

### Summary:

Bicycling should be promoted throughout the community. Appropriate features such as bike racks, bike travel lanes and signs should be installed in key areas especially in the urban areas.

### Policies:

It is the policy of the town to support bicycling as an encouraged means of transport, recreation and to remain vigilant over safety concerns, and to act as an advocate for Pittsfield's citizens to MDOT when needed.

It is the policy of the town to urge MDOT to repair the downtown rail crossing as a top priority.

### Strategies:

The town shall maintain an adequate supply of bike racks in the downtown especially at the library.

Timeline: On-going

The town shall make appropriate design provisions in its road standards to allow for bicycling along the shoulders of rural roads. MDOT should also be approached to make sure that road shoulders are paved along state roads.

Timeline: On-going

Bicycle lanes should be installed along the following roads: Main, Park, Somerset, Hunnewell, Grove, South, North Main, and Industrial Park.

Timeline: 1-5 years

The Town Manager shall work with interested parties to develop a plan to improve the southbound approach to Main and Park Street. Specific items that need to be addressed are signs, lane stripping and traffic calming measures.

Timeline: 1-5 years

The Town Council shall petition MDOT to improve the down town rail crossing.

Timeline: 1-5 years

## **Rail and Port Facilities**

### Summary:

Currently the rail line through town only carries freight but the town wishes to remain in a position to resume passenger service as the need arises. The town is interested in making sure the rail line is well maintained and road crossings have the appropriate safety signs and other devices.

### Policies:

It is the policy of the town to support the continued viability of the Maine Central Railroad line and maintain the depot area and surrounding land for potential resumption of passenger service.

It is the policy of the town to support the purchase of the abandoned northbound rail right-of-way for utility and recreational use.

### Strategies:

The Town Manager and the Town Council shall maintain in close communication with the Maine Central Railroad.

Timeline: On-line

The Town Manager shall continue to work on the abandoned rail right-of-way to make sure that town has clear title to the property for recreation and other use.

Timeline: On-going

## **Airport**

### Summary:

The Pittsfield airport is an important asset for the town and region. A new master airport plan has been completed and is being implemented.

### Policies:

It is the policy of the town to support the implementation of the Airport master plan.

It is the policy of the town to maintain an airport overlay district over and along sides the airport to make sure that the airport has adequate land and protection to continue operation.

### Strategies:

The Town Council shall budget adequate funds to implement the airport master plan.

Timeline: On-going

The Planning Board shall maintain an airport overlay district to ensure its future operation.

Timeline: On-going

## **Road Maintenance**

### Summary:

The municipal road system needs to be constantly maintained to keep roads in safe condition. An effective and adequately funded road budget should be a priority for the town.

### Policies:

It is the policy of the town to continue the current practice of emphasizing preventive maintenance, coordinated road/utility upgrades, and taking advantage of cost-effective opportunities in its road management policy.

It is the policy of the town to continue its neighborhood integrated road and utility upgrade programs as funding opportunities are available.

### Strategies:

The Town Council and the Town Manager shall maintain a well planned and a cost-effective road program.

Timeline: On-going

The Town Council shall implement a neighborhood-based community infrastructure program with CDBG Grant funds when available.

Timeline: On-going

## **Access Management**

### Summary:

The Maine Department of Transportation has developed new traffic access control regulations for all state arterial collector and state aid roads. Municipalities must adopt their own provisions for local roads. Pittsfield has traffic access provisions in the Subdivision and Site Review Ordinances.

### Policies:

It is the policy of the town to manage traffic access to public roads to maintain safety and the efficient flow of traffic.

### Strategies:

The Planning Board and the Ordinance Review Committee shall maintain the town 's existing traffic access provisions in the Subdivision and Site Review ordinances. Recommendations to improve these standards shall be considered based upon new development trends and traffic problems.

Timeline: On-going

## **Economic Resource Findings and Recommendations**

### **Community Prioritization and Dedicated Staff Time**

#### Summary:

The town has made economic development a priority to improve the tax base and to increase employment opportunities. A considerable amount of municipal staff time and effort has been used to implement the current economic development strategy. Staff time also included obtaining and administering a number of grant programs for economic and community development.

Policies:

It is the policy of the town to make economic development a priority.

It is the policy of the town to pursue grant funds whenever feasible to implement economic and community development projects.

It is the policy of the town to make the most effective use of the economic development loan fund.

Strategies:

The Town Manager and the Town Council should make sure that adequate time is spent on economic development activities. The use of volunteer committees should be used whenever possible.

Timeline: On-going

The Town Council and Town Manager shall identify appropriate grant programs to further the town's economic development strategy in the most effective manner.

Timeline: On-going

## **Pittsfield Tomorrow Economic Vision**

Summary:

The economic vision for the town is to be a regional employment center with strong retail and cultural sectors. The community's housing, social and cultural assets are key components of our economic vision. The quality of life of our citizens is also a critical part of the long term economic vitality of the town.

Policies:

It is the policy of the town to encourage new businesses that diversify the employment base.

It is the policy of the town to encourage locally-owned businesses to thrive and grow.

It is the policy of the town to continue to have available Small Business Development Center services local businesses.

It is the policy of the town to develop a variety of strategies for the redevelopment of vacant retail and commercial space in town.

It is the policy of the town to encourage a strong retail sector.

It is the policy of the town to maintain a clear economic vision and to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of these policies.

Strategies:

The Town Manager and the Town Council shall explore the feasibility of conducting a market analysis/study of the region to identify appropriate areas for growth.

Timeline: 1-5 years

The Town Manager shall work with KVCOG and the SBDC to make sure that business-planning services are available to local businesses.

Timeline: On-going

The Town Manager and the Town Council shall maintain a written Tax Increment Financing policy.

Timeline: On-going

The Economic Development Committee shall annually review the effectiveness of their activities and report to the Town Council.

Timeline: Annually

## **Service Sector**

Summary:

The town has a healthy mix of service providers especially in health care and hospital services.

Policies:

It is the policy of the town to appreciate its many service businesses and to encourage the hospital's role as a regional health center.

Strategies:

The Economic Development Committee shall continue to support the hospital's activities and expansion plans.

Timeline: On-going

## **Industrial Sector**

### Summary:

The town has a strong industrial base. The Industrial Park has been successful and efforts to expand the park should be pursued.

### Policies:

It is the policy of the town to maintain open communication with large and small industrial operations in the town.

It is the policy of the town to continue the development of the industrial park into at least five additional lots.

It is the policy of the town to have the industrial park designated as a Pine Tree Zone to enhance development.

It is the policy of the town to promote the industrial park for a variety of activities.

### Strategies:

The Economic Development Committee shall work cooperatively with local businesses and participate in local and regional economic development activities.

Timeline: On-going

The Economic Development Committee shall work to expand the park and to enhance the visibility of the park with appropriate signs and other measures.

Timeline: 1-5 years

The Economic Development Committee shall retain Pine Tree Zone status for the park and shall explore other opportunities to expand and enhance the town's industrial sector.

Timeline: 1-5 years

## **Retail Sector**

### Summary:

The town's two major retail areas are the downtown and Somerset Plaza. Other retail locations are scattered throughout the community. Retail competition is located in Waterville, Newport and Bangor.

**Policies:**

It is the policy of the town to support the downtown and the Somerset Plaza as its two primary retail areas.

It is the policy of the town to play an active role in promoting local retail businesses.

**Strategies:**

The Economic Development Committee and the Planning Board shall develop creative zoning strategies designed to enhance and promote additional retail investment and improvement in the downtown and Somerset Plaza.

Timeline: 1-5 years

The Town Manager and the Economic Development Committee shall identify grant funding to improve the retail sector when available.

Timeline: On-going

The Planning Board shall maintain the downtown and Somerset Plaza area as the primary zones for retail operations.

Timeline: On-going

## **Financial Resource Findings and Recommendations**

### **Financial Condition**

**Summary:**

The town is in good financial condition with low debt and sound financial management. The town has been very aggressive and successful at obtaining grants for infrastructure and economic development.

**Policies:**

It is the policy of the town to continue to manage its finances carefully to the maximize benefit of taxpayers.

It is the policy to maintain a lean budget to keep tax rates as competitive as possible.

Strategies:

The Town Manager and the Town Council shall continue to manage town finances wisely.

Timeline: On-going

## **Capital Improvement Budgeting**

Summary:

The town has in the past budgeted \$300,000 annually for capital improvements. This level of investment has been inadequate to address road improvements and large capital items such as a new municipal pool.

Policies:

It is the policy of the town to maintain an adequate level of capital improvement funding to address municipal needs.

Strategies:

The Town Manager and the Town Council shall appropriate funds for capital improvements in a way that is cost effective for taxpayers. Funding sources such as grants and loans shall be identified for capital projects based upon long term cost savings and municipal needs.

Timeline: Annually

## **Tax Base**

Summary:

The town has a solid tax base but seeks to expand commercial development.

Policies:

It is the policy of the town to aggressively pursue commercial activities to the community.

Strategies:

The Economic Development Committee shall continue to seek new and expanded commercial development.

Timeline: On-going

## **Household Income Distribution**

### **Summary:**

Most households in town are in the moderate income bracket. Property taxes are a burden for many households which limits investments in new services and facilities.

### **Policies:**

It is the policy of the town to recognize the limitation of the property tax and explore creative sources of municipal financing.

### **Strategies:**

The Town Council shall monitor state tax reform and municipal revenue initiatives and support measures which will be beneficial to the town.

Timeline: On-going

The Town Manager and the Town Council shall identify grant funds whenever possible to finance infrastructure projects.

Timeline: On-going.

## **Communication with Taxpayers**

### **Summary:**

The Town Charter requires that the Town Annual Report be published every June 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **Policies:**

It is the policy of the town to publish the Annual Report by June 30<sup>th</sup> each year.

### **Strategies:**

The Town Manager shall make sure that the Annual Report is published by June 30<sup>th</sup> each year.

Timeline: Annually

**Town of Pittsfield  
Comprehensive Plan Update  
Implementation Strategies and Goals  
Summary of Findings and Recommendations  
Approved 01/02/2007**

*Note: This document should be reviewed as a planning tool to guide the Town in its development during the next ten years. One hundred thirteen (113) strategies are listed with estimated timelines for completion. Strategies will be completed as town resources provide. Each year through the budget process, the Town prioritizes the use of town resources taking into consideration the economy, statutory requirements, available finances and staffing. Each year by September 30<sup>th</sup>, the Town Council shall review the Implementation Strategies and Goals to determine which projects will be proposed for the budget for the next year.*