

1946 ARTHUR COMEY "DEVELOPMENT PLAN OF YORK VILLAGE"
REPORT & "ULTIMATE" SITE PLAN
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REPORT ON
THE DEVELOPMENT OF YORK VILLAGE, MAINE
TO THE
YORK GARDEN CLUB

BY
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York Village center was once convenient, charming if not beautiful, and safe. Today it is inconvenient, ugly and to a degree dangerous. Are we of this generation, with all our "progress" and technical inventions to admit that we cannot contrive so simple an area as this village center? Why have we not done so? In earlier days people were more ready to work together to a common purpose. They perceived the need of a convenient village center, and in so contriving they at the same time achieved a simple but effective harmony, arising largely from that singularity of purpose. Today we see the result of later forgetting of that common purpose. Each has worked for his own immediate gain and achieved it, with little or no attention to his neighbors. No building harmonizes with any other, and few have any claim to attractiveness in themselves. And when the automobile brought new volumes of travel, new speeds, and with them new dangers, nothing was done about it beyond marking a few lines on the old horse-and-buggy roadways and posting a hopeful police officer at the worse spots. You all know the tangled traffic, difficulty of crossing the street on foot, and hardly any place to park your car.

And yet, even today the solution is quite simple. It need not be achieved at once by a single burst of activity, but may be brought about over a series of years, accomplishing those improvements most easily brought about and those remedying the most glaring defects first. If only a plan is followed, each move will dovetail with those that preceded it and produce a cumulative effect which in the end will restore York Village center to convenience, charm and safety. Furthermore the plan herewith presented should not be looked upon as fixed and final,--it is only a first approximate sketch to be refined and moulded as it is carried out so as to fit the needs exactly. Without such a plan chaos will continue, little benefit will ever be achieved and new mistakes will be made. Business and summer activities will go elsewhere.

The plan presented should, therefore, be thought of as an ultimate plan, attempting to meet the needs for years to come. It divides naturally into two parts -- appearance and traffic provisions.

York Village center can again be made attractive if its individual buildings are brought into harmony. This does not require tearing them down, but does involve modifying their fronts at least, as for example, by overcoating in an appropriate style. Whether we like modern architecture or not, it does not fit the genius of this place. York's main business is serving the summer visitors and tourists. Aside from the attraction of climate, ocean, shore and natural landscape, it is the charm of old New England that pleases. York Village can regain and perpetuate that charm. At its north end, the town hall and old jail, and in all directions the older white houses, press close to the newer structures erected in the center itself. Some of these, such as the garage, are not out of keeping.

To illustrate what can be done, the accompanying sketch shows the largest group, the buildings on the northeast side of the center, brought into harmony by designing colonial brick facades with wooden or stone trim, connected by screen-walls pierced by openings for pedestrians to the projected parking space in the rear. Needless to say, the two large electricity polls and wires in the center should at the same time be removed, and the wires either brought to the buildings from the rear; or better, underground. This is by no means an unreasonable contribution for the utility company to make, for it has a very great stake in the future of the community.

Trees, chiefly elms, were formerly an important factor in the charm of York Village. A number of fine trees still remain and should be cherished, or if they die, be replaced. At each of the entrances to the center, tree growth should be retained and further developed where trees are missing.

York Village is fortunate in that it is not penetrated by a major through traffic route. On the other hand, however, much traffic goes around it, local traffic must of necessity enter it, -- and the secondary route U.S. 1a, which is the major access route to York Harbor and York Beach, will doubtless continue to pass through the village center.

The State Highway Commission's traffic count, taken July 12 to 15 of this year, at the request of the Selectmen as a background for this report, reveals that the 24-hour daily average traffic for the week on Main Street at the Bank is 6,101 cars; that the highest hour, from 5 to 6 on Sunday, is 746 cars; Saturday 632 cars; and on a week-day, 479 cars. Their counts are appended to this report. The accompanying map supplied by them shows traffic on all roads passing through the center.

It is clear that a first requisite of the ultimate traffic plan is to provide space for two lanes of moving vehicles in each direction for the length of Main Street. This the plan presented herewith does.

Second, -- wherever practical, space for cars parked parallel to the curb should be provided and marked off. This the plan does by moving the sidewalks back onto private property. This small loss of land, which is really a loss in depth only, as the frontage -- a new improved frontage, -- is retained, is the price that must be paid to keep the center abreast of modern needs created by modern inventions, notably the automobile. The plan will provide an ultimate space for 61 cars parked along the highways, and for a liberal-sized bus stop in each direction.

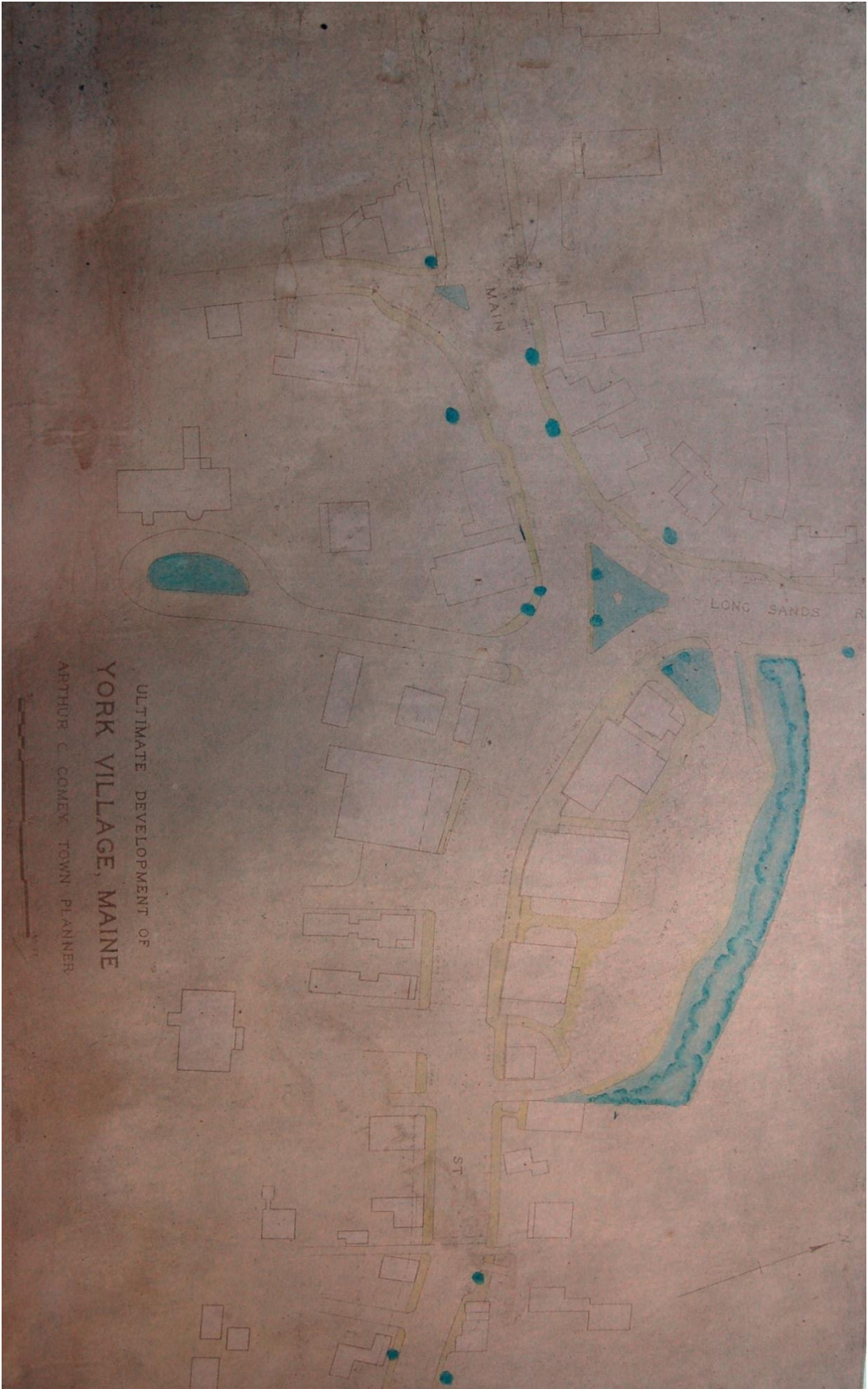
Long before all these spaces are provided, -- in fact at the very outset, -- need will be felt for additional parking close to the principal group of stores. This the plan provides in the form of a large double parking lot for 42 cars running behind the stores on the northeast side of the center, with vehicular entrances at each end, and pedestrian entrances between the store building, as previously described. As this parking lot will be at a lower level than Main Street, it will also promote the use of the basements of the stores between it and Main Street, wherever and whenever that proves advantageous.

Only one building interferes with the complete development of the plan; a small one-story wooden store, comparatively recently constructed, on the north side of Main Street at the east end of the village. Here a building line should be established so that when a modern store building is erected it may

conform to the other buildings in the center. Likewise a building line on the opposite side of Main Street will bring about conformity whenever the dwellings there are replaced by stores.

For pedestrian safety marked crosswalks are indicated. It may be found necessary to install traffic lights to bring all vehicular traffic to a standstill while pedestrians have the right-of-way. No other lights are indicated for the present, as Long Sands Road traffic is only 45% of Main Street. Neither is one way traffic on the sides of the triangle at the mouth of Long Sands Road indicated -- though it may later be tried out if developing conditions seem to warrant. At the four entrances to the center signs should be maintained as indicated -- with some such wording as "Business District" or "Village" and "Slow." Enforcement of safety, traffic, and parking regulations should then be reduced to a minimum of policing.

In these ways York Village center may be made to serve its purpose effectively and attractively during the years to come.



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YORK VILLAGE, MAINE
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