

Southern Maine Partnership for Sustainable Development
Knowledge Sharing Session #1– February 13, 2012 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.
Lee Community Hall, Wishcamper Center, Muskie School of Public Service-USM

Placemaking in Our Region

Strengthening investment in our city, town and village centers to sustain a region

The February 13 Placemaking session is an opportunity to share some of the work being done in southern Maine with participants in our HUD project Partnership and other interested parties .

Projects are happening at multiple scales in small towns, the central city, and major transportation corridors. A signature effort, the Maine Model Town Project in Standish, sponsored by GrowSmart Maine, worked with Standish to establish a vision for its town center and then Standish adopted a zoning code (form-based code) to ensure the vision is realized. Form-based codes, an approach to zoning that allows more flexible and integrated land development patterns, models the traditional New England community. Standish set the precedent in Maine for form-based codes with other communities pursuing this approach.

Both Windham and Falmouth are exploring ways to better incorporate their highway strips into the community and GrowSmart Maine is currently developing suggested model practices for addressing the issues of highway strips.

The city of Portland is undertaking new efforts to redevelop arterial corridor neighborhoods, transportation nodes and “Corners.” The Partnership’s December meeting at Pepperell Mill in Biddeford included tours and descriptions of a number of efforts there including mill redevelopment and a thriving arts and culture initiative.

These inter-related projects and tools are aimed at strengthening community centers and offer the building blocks of sustainable prosperity from fields and farms to downtown business districts. We’ll see brief overviews of the range of these efforts and the role of form-based codes, presented by leading advisors in our own region who are assisting these communities.

The main session will last approximately 90 minutes. There will be a following discussion for those with further interest about how the wide range of organizations in the Partnership are (or will be further) involved in placemaking for our region to promote investment in communities of opportunity and regional sustainability.