



Welcome to
Fryeburg
MAINE
The Oldest Town In Oxford County

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN RECREATION ECONOMY for RURAL COMMUNITIES Fryeburg, Maine

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PLAN CONTEXT

Fryeburg, Maine was one of ten towns across the nation selected to receive planning assistance through the inaugural round of the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities program. Sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the USDA Forest Service, and the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC), the program is helping communities develop action plans to revitalize their downtowns through outdoor recreation.

Over the course of a year and a half, a local Steering Committee worked with a Planning Assistance Team made up of planning consultants and federal and state agency partners to assess opportunities and challenges, set goals to strengthen Fryeburg's recreation economy and invigorate its downtown, and convene a virtual public workshop in October 2020. Fryeburg's community action plan was developed through a grassroots collaborative process starting at the workshop and continuing in follow-up meetings focused on refining the plan and identifying implementation resources.

The plan documents the workshop process and community feedback and sets out a set of specific actions—complete with initial steps and time-frames, lead and support roles, and measures of success—to guide recreation economy development in Fryeburg over the next two to three years.

[Link to the plan](#)

RECREATION ECONOMY for RURAL COMMUNITIES

FRYEBURG COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

Goal 1 – Brand Identity: Develop a brand identity for Fryeburg that connects, promotes, and sustains the region's unique natural, recreational, cultural, and historical assets.

- Action 1.1: Create a guidance document for the development of a Fryeburg brand identity.
- Action 1.2: Compile an inventory and map of all nature-based recreational, cultural, and historic assets in Fryeburg.
- Action 1.3: Plan, fund, and create a marketing plan that reflects the history, culture, and community character of Fryeburg.

Goal 3 – Sense of Place: Make Fryeburg's Main Street a vibrant community center that attracts residents and visitors, supports businesses, and is grounded in the region's rural character.

- Action 3.1: Investigate a comprehensive downtown revitalization program, gather input from the community, and identify and prioritize initial projects.
- Action 3.2: Assess and initiate cleanup of the abandoned gas station site downtown.
- Action 3.3: Hold 1-2 events downtown that will engage local residents and build momentum behind revitalization, possibly including the Mountain Film Fest.
- Action 3.4: Make progress toward a municipal septic system to remove barriers to entry for new businesses.

Goal 2 – Connectivity: Improve physical connectivity among Fryeburg's Main Street, recreational assets, and other key destinations for people walking, cycling, paddling, and driving.

- Action 2.1: Revive town committees by launching a campaign to fill working groups to implement connectivity and accessibility projects.
- Action 2.2: Develop and nurture private landowner relationships to improve land access and support stewardship and management.
- Action 2.3: Celebrate the newly installed sidewalk that connects downtown and Jockey Cap with a Jockey Cap volunteer clean-up event, ribbon cutting, and bike rodeo.

Goal 4 – Business Development: Start and grow businesses that support the outdoor recreation sector, particularly in underutilized spaces downtown.

- Action 4.1: Conduct a feasibility or market analysis to identify types of businesses that would contribute to the growing outdoor recreation sector and would thrive in Fryeburg
- Action 4.2: Identify the underutilized spaces downtown and in adjacent areas where outdoor recreation businesses could locate the investments needed to make those spaces usable.
- Action 4.3: Develop community-based events and activities to engage residents in outdoor recreation.

[Link to the complete plan](#)

THE LOCAL STEERING COMMITTEE

Rick Buzzell, Recreation Director, Town of Fryeburg
Holly Foster, Secretary, Fryeburg Business Association
Katie Haley, Town Manager, Town of Fryeburg
Erin P. Mayo, Head of School, Fryeburg Academy

Kelsey Pelton, Economic & Environmental Specialist, Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission
Paul Schumacher, Executive Director, Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission

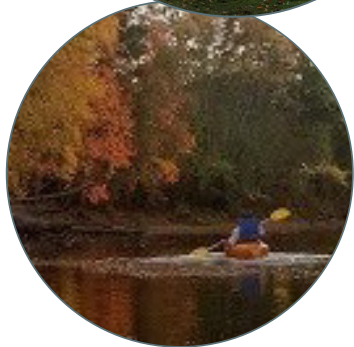


**Northern Border
Regional Commission**

THE OPPORTUNITY

Between the Saco River, the White Mountain National Forest, Jockey Cap, the Mountain Division Rail Trail, the scenic roads, and more, Fryeburg is a paradise for outdoors enthusiasts of all kinds. In recent years, the community has taken steps to expand recreational amenities and programming, and it has become clear that outdoor recreation could become a larger contributor to the region's economy.

The Town of Fryeburg applied to the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities program (website below) in order to seize this opportunity and establish itself as a hub for outdoor recreation in New England. The community is seeking to sustainably grow tourism to the town and nearby natural areas, create jobs and build local wealth, energize its downtown, and preserve its small-town character and quality of life.



RECREATION ECONOMY *for* RURAL COMMUNITIES

Fryeburg, Maine

THE WORKSHOP

The capstone event of the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities program, the virtual workshop took place from October 26-30, 2020. Almost 50 people registered for the gathering, including a broad cross-section of Fryeburg Town leadership, local business owners, conservation and outdoor recreation advocates, and other residents. The group also included federal and state partners from the EPA, Forest Service, NBRC, National Park Service, Economic Development Administration, Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation, Maine Office of Tourism, Maine Downtown Center, Maine Community Foundation, and more. The plan documents the process and outcomes of the event.

Over six interactive work sessions, participants engaged in a series of activities to map out a community action plan to strengthen Fryeburg's recreation economy and revitalize its downtown. The workshop kicked off with an introductory presentation setting the context, taking participants

on a virtual tour of Fryeburg with Town Manager Katie Haley, outlining the potential benefits of a strong recreation economy, conducting several brief visioning exercises, and sharing inspirational success stories from Carolann Ouelette, director of the Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation, and Paul Schumacher, executive director of the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission.

In subsequent sessions, participants worked together to solidify the goals of the workshop and the action plan (below), identify Fryeburg's assets and challenges, brainstorm potential actions to capitalize on the assets and address the challenges, prioritize the most impactful and urgent actions, and chart out the details needed to implement each one.



ACTION ROADMAP

At the heart of the community action plan are a set of detailed action tables providing all the information necessary for implementation. For each high-priority action (listed on back page), a description, initial steps and time-frames, lead and support roles, measures of success, and needed resources and possible sources are listed.

The plan concludes with in-depth appendices documenting the feedback gathered at the workshop, listing workshop participants, and providing a compendium of funding and technical assistance resources and reference publications and examples organized by topic.

To learn more: Contact Katie Haley, Fryeburg Town Manager, townmanager@fryeburgmaine.org

WORKSHOP GOALS

- 1. Brand Identity:** Develop a brand identity for Fryeburg that connects, promotes, and sustains the region's unique natural, recreational, cultural, and historical assets.

2. Connectivity & Accessibility: Improve physical connectivity among Fryeburg's Main Street, recreational assets, and other key destinations for people walking, cycling, paddling, and driving.
- 3. Sense of Place:** Make Fryeburg's Main Street a vibrant community center that attracts residents and visitors, supports businesses, and is grounded in the region's rural character.

4. Business Development: Start and grow businesses that support the outdoor recreation sector, particularly in underutilized spaces downtown.

EPA Recreation Economy for Rural Communities website:
<https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/recreation-economy-rural-communities>

[Link to the complete plan](#)