



EPA Livability Solutions Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Technical Assistance 2012-2013

Technical Memorandum

prepared for
Village of Hyde Park, VT

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Hyde Park, VT

I. Background

As part of a grant funded by the U.S. EPA's Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities program, the Village of Hyde Park was selected to receive technical assistance from the Project for Public Spaces, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping communities create and sustain great public spaces, streets, and neighborhoods.

PPS worked with the Village of Hyde Park to organize two public workshops on March 25th and 26th, which focused on how to build on existing community assets and improve underperforming places in order to create a more sustainable, vibrant, and livable Village and surrounding region. In particular, the second workshop focused on the Main Street area of the Village of Hyde Park, including how to attract more people to the street, increase pedestrian activity, and enhance the vibrancy of the area.

Through these workshops, PPS trained local staff and the citizens who participated in the workshop in four tools. Our hope is that these exercises were helpful in identifying some initial goals, issues, and challenges relevant to the project; we also suggest that you consider other ways to use these exercises in future projects to help you engage citizens and community leaders. The tools include:

- Power of 10 exercise, in which participants rank within a specific community or designated area the best places, places in need of improvement, and underperforming places, as a means to identifying assets, opportunities, and weaknesses.
- A Connectivity and Barriers exercise, in which participants identify needed improvements (pedestrian, bicycle, automobile) to existing street infrastructure, new connections that are needed for the various modes, and barriers that create challenges for people getting around the community, such as an unsafe intersection crossing or poorly maintained sidewalk.

- Walk-it Audit, in which participants evaluate the walking experience of a block or several blocks, noting barriers, opportunities for improvement, and existing destinations along the way.
- Place Audit, in which participants evaluate a specific site, such as a corner or small park, in order to identify opportunities for improvements.

This report summarizes feedback from the public workshops, which were attended by 45 people, as well as recommendations on next steps for the Village of Hyde Park.

From our time in the Village and the surrounding region, we believe that you have all of the necessary ingredients to realize your goals of a more vibrant, walkable, and sustainable community. You have an abundance of assets within the Village, including a rich stock of historic buildings, an intact and charming Main Street, and numerous outdoor hiking and bicycling amenities. You're well-situated near several major resorts that are now working to attract visitors year round. Your assets extend to the people and institutions within the community – Village residents are passionate about the future of Hyde Park, and despite your small size, you have institutions like the Community Collaborative, Community Circle, and the Hyde Park Village Improvement Association, which have been working for decades to improve your community. This memo seeks to build on some of the work you have already started to initiate – such as the addition of new benches to the lawn in front of the Courthouse on the Village's Main Street to foster more public space – by focusing on concrete, largely small-scale actions you can take to make Hyde Park and your Main Street in particular an even greater place to live and visit.



Intersection of Depot, Eden, and Main Streets



Church and Main Street intersection

II. Introduction to Placemaking: Creating Great Places and Communities

Great Places & Great Regions are more than the sum of their parts. The Power of 10 is a concept PPS uses to start off the Placemaking process.

What makes places or a street great?

Simply put, a great place is one offering a variety of things to do in one spot - a place that is more than just the sum of its parts. These things can be very simple - a place to sit, a playground to play in, a garden to enjoy, art to touch, music to hear, food to eat, history to experience, and people to meet.

A downtown park is good. A park with a fountain, a playground, and a popcorn vendor is better. A library next to the park is even better, more so if the library featured storytelling hours for children and exhibits on local history in the park. If there's a sidewalk café nearby, a bus stop, a bike trail, and an ice cream parlor, that combination of sites and activities is what makes a place great.

If a downtown village had ten places that were great places, then there would be a critical mass - a series of destinations that residents and visitors alike could enjoy. If a city or town could boast ten great

destinations (a vibrant downtown, a lively neighborhood, a great park, an active riverfront) then every resident would have access to outstanding public spaces within walking distance of their own homes. That's the sort of goal we should set for all villages and cities if we are serious about enhancing quality of life in our communities.

If a region linked its towns and cities together, with a focus on great destinations, active downtowns and welcoming natural features serving as connections, it could be the basis for a new paradigm of regional development that sweeps away the destructive pattern of more freeways, big box retail, and cookie-cutter subdivisions.

The Power of Ten and Placemaking approach gives people something tangible to strive for and helps them visualize what it takes to make their community great. It's the Placemakers' role to encourage everyone to think about what's special in their communities. How many quality places are located nearby, and how are they connected? Are there places that should be more meaningful, but aren't? Answering these questions can help residents and stakeholders determine - both individually and collectively - where they need to focus their energies.

The Placemaking Process

The Placemaking process allows diverse constituencies to identify how a public space or a street can be reshaped to make it a welcoming, well-functioning and attractive place for people. This approach is based on a belief that it is not enough to simply develop design ideas or regulations and rules to improve or develop a place. Improvements need to reflect community values and needs. A public involvement process that defines and responds to community conditions and needs from the outset is one of the most critical factors in achieving a public space that is truly vital to its community.

Thus, Placemaking, must begin with a thorough understanding of the dynamics, desires, and conditions within a community. It involves looking at, listening to, and asking questions of the people in a community about their problems and aspirations, then working with them to create a vision around the places they view as important to community life and to their daily experience.

Qualities of Great Places, Streets, and Communities

In studying how public spaces are used, PPS has distilled the qualities that make up a great place into the following four basic ingredients:



The principles of placemaking

ACTIVITIES AND USES

Homegrown activities act as the glue of their communities, drawing people to them for companionship and relaxation. Examples might be a farmers' market, a playground, a library, or a sidewalk café. A healthy variety of such uses will attract a variety of people and keep a downtown lively at all times of day. The Village of Hyde Park is already working to achieve this goal in its downtown, through community events such as a farmers' market and an annual ice cream social.

ACCESS AND LINKAGE

Places should be visible to people and easy to access. People need to see that there is something to do and that others have been enticed to enter a space. If the street is too dangerous for older people and children to cross, the place won't be used. Linkages are opportunities to

connect different elements so that they create a people-friendly environment that encourages interaction. For example, if the children's reading room in the library is located so that it is next to a garden and a coffee shop is nearby, more activity will occur than if these facilities were located separately. On the microlevel, if a bench, a wastebasket and a drinking fountain are placed separately, with no connection to each other each, they may receive very limited use, or even be abused. However, when they are arranged together along with other amenities, such as a coffee cart or newsstand, they will naturally bring people together.

COMFORT AND IMAGE

Places should welcome resident and visitors with well-designed amenities, such as seating, shade trees, bike racks, and bulletin boards. Good management that keeps sidewalks clean and paint

from peeling off buildings helps to make a downtown feel welcoming and safe. Good details can tantalize—they signal that someone took the time and energy to design amenities that respond to the unique needs of local people.

SOCIALITY

A sociable place is one where people want to go to observe the passing scene, meet friends, and interact with a wide range of people that are different from themselves. Farmers' markets are a typical example of a sociable place, and research shows that people have four and a half times more social interactions in a public market versus a supermarket. Sociability is achieved by working together with the unique, local assets that can be found in all communities, and then combining the above ingredients to make a great place.

Unique Considerations for Rural Communities

Rural areas function as systems - not as one hierarchical unit like a tree with an anchoring trunk and connecting branches, but more like a forest of trees with overlapping canopies and intertwined roots. In urban areas, the "forest" is denser and easier to perceive as an integrated entity. The connecting "root systems" that make up rural communities spread out over much more space, making it harder to clearly define their boundaries and relationships. But the connections are no less real. Farms depend on villages, which depend on each other, which then depend on small cities.

Everyone knows what a city or a suburban town looks like, but rural life resists quick stereotyping. Compounding this is that in rural America, it is far more necessary for life to adapt to the local environment and realities: how families deal with water for instance, is very different in the high

desert of New Mexico versus the verdant hills of northern Vermont. In cities and in suburbia, the economics of large scale development allow us to overpower nature, bring water into cities, reshape mountains and watercourses, and bring all ranges of food into our homes at all seasons. In rural America, the definition of community is much more closely tied to the confines of the landscape, and residents more closely embrace local realities.

It was clear from the workshops and our time in Hyde Park that residents of the Village understand their connections to and interrelationships with nearby places and towns such as Morrisville, Johnson and Stowe, and regional destinations such as Jay Peak and Smugglers Notch. This is not just an emotional attachment; Hyde Park depends on these surrounding communities for employment, shopping, supplies and attracting customers to their own services. Hyde Park is defined regionally as a 'bedroom community' – more than 60 percent of its

residents work outside of the community. In short, Hyde Park would be incomplete socially, economically and spiritually if there were no links to its surrounding places.

A key consideration for Hyde Park is its role in this larger regional context. The Village is interested in encouraging more employment, opportunities, and services to locate within it, while still continuing to maintain its small town character. What can the Village offer not just to its own residents, but to the residents and visitors of these nearby places and communities? The 'Power of 10' concept of having a critical mass of great places and things to do is a means to helping answer that question.

III. Findings & Observations

This section summarizes key findings from the workshops and site visit relevant to the Village of Hyde Park's goals of creating a more sustainable, vibrant, and livable Village and surrounding region, as well as a more lively, pedestrian friendly Main Street.

Finding #1 – Workshop participants expressed a desire to make the Village of Hyde Park and especially its Main Street more vibrant – with more things to do and more people on the street – while still maintaining its small town, local character.

Workshop participants recognized that to make the Village's Main Street more vibrant, it needs to have more things to do and places to frequent. Specific needs that came up included a desire for a restaurant that serves dinner and more public gathering spaces (discussed in a finding below) that could serve to attract both locals and tourists. Target tourist demographics that were raised included people staying at nearby

resorts, bicyclists, and Canadians visiting for shopping and leisure. Lamoille County overall is working to attract more four-season visitors to the region by expanding beyond its traditional ski market to offering warmer weather activities like bicycling, hiking, kayaking, and rafting. The Village's outdoor amenities, such as the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, complement this regional marketing strategy.

Finding #2 - The Village of Hyde Park has many assets and special places, but too many of these are not well-publicized or capitalized on, and even the Village itself is not well-signed for those traveling on the state highway.



P.H. Edwards

Throughout the two workshops, as well as our visit overall, we were exposed to many unique places and assets in the Village and its surrounding area. These include numerous historic buildings (Governor's House, Opera House, Second Congregation Church, P.H. Edwards, etc.) and beautiful outdoor amenities (the riverfront, Moss Woods, Ten Bends, etc.). As a state-designated Village Center, Hyde Park has the opportunity to tap resources and funding that build upon these assets, including tax credits for historic property upgrades, façade improvements, and priority consideration for certain grant programs, among other benefits.



Courthouse

However, it seemed clear that there is a lack of awareness – even among locals – about the existence or significance of some of these important places in the community. Many of these assets were also not legible to local folks and/or visitors. In fact, the very existence of the Village is not well-marked for people passing by on Route 15, beyond the inclusion of one sign noting the Village's name.

For tourists, many of whom are likely in the area for other purposes – such as visiting the local resorts – the first hurdle to visiting the Village is the lack of compelling signage on Route 15/100, which bypasses the Village. Many people driving on this road likely do not notice the standard Vermont Department of Transportation (VTrans) sign with the Village's name on it, and even if they do, the sign does not offer any compelling information about why someone should turn off the road to visit the Village.. There are six roads from Route 15 that lead into the Village's Main Street, but only one of these has a sign with the Village's name, and then there are no other visual cues on the road signaling interesting destinations just a short drive down those turnoffs.

Once a visitor arrives in the Village, he or she is greeted by a lovely set of historic streets and buildings, but no information

about the significance of the place, its buildings, its amenities, etc. Since there are few commercial establishments on Main Street, a visitor would have few things to do in the Village right now, other than admiring some of your beautiful historic properties from the street.

Finding #3 - There is a lack of public places for people to gather outside on Main Street



Library

The Village lacks a 'green' that is a feature of many small New England towns, and workshop participants noted a lack of places for people to hang out and gather together, such as a park or plaza. The elementary school does have a playground with a seating area, but this is not visible from the

street. The opera house, library, and court house have benches; however, they are disconnected from the street. Public spaces are important in helping to build community and to give people more places to go and things to do.

Finding #4 - Several intersections and streets in the Village present challenges for pedestrians and speeding is perceived to be a problem on some streets.



Intersection of Depot, Eden, and Main Streets

Workshop participants expressed a desire to see the pedestrian friendliness of several streets and intersections in the Village improved in order to make it safer and easier for people to walk. Many of these streets lack sidewalks. These include:

- The roundabout at the intersection of Church Street and Route 15
- Depot Street North (going south from the elementary school)
- Church Street (going north from Main Street to the roundabout)
- Johnson Street extension
- East Main Street to Centerville Road
- Route 15 (going from the Village offices to the Lamoille Union Middle and High School)
- West Main Street/Black Farm Road (going from the Village' Main Street to the Lamoille Union Middle and High School)
- Eden Street

Several people also raised concerns about speeding vehicles on Depot Street near the elementary school. Because of the street's incline, motorists are challenged with limited sightlines when heading north on the street just before the school, which makes this section even more dangerous to have speeding occur. The intersection at Depot, Eden, and Main Streets bordering the school was deemed particularly unsafe for pedestrians.

Finding #5 - There is a desire and multiple opportunities to enhance bicycling and trail opportunities in the region



Site of future trailhead for the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail

There were several existing, planned, or potential trails and bicycling routes that were mentioned as local assets by workshop participants, including the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, Ten Bends, Moss Woods, the riverfront, and some private properties (Ray Chauvin and Jeff Millers' properties). These

trails and outdoor amenities represent an opportunity to attract hikers and bicyclists to the Village.

Finding #6 – Making the Village of Hyde Park stronger and more vital requires collaboration across the region

There was recognition during the workshops that to succeed, the Village cannot act alone or see itself as a competitor with local towns and villages. Instead, the Village needs to collaborate regionally on strategies that attract more tourists, residents, and businesses to the area. At the same time, workshop participants also talked about the need for the Village to assess and build on its unique assets – such as its historic buildings and Main Street, as well as outdoor amenities - as a means to attracting people to its downtown. Having a clear sense about why someone would want to visit the Village, and enough places and activities to sustain a visit for one or two days for different types of target audiences is an important exercise.



Rhinebeck, NY

IV. Recommendations

To succeed, a small town or village needs to capitalize on all of its strengths, as well as to collaborate regionally with its neighbors, in order become the kind of thriving place that serves both local residents and visitors. A community's public realm - its streets, institutions, and other public spaces – plays a vital role in this area. Great streets and public space attract people to them, they enhance businesses and other private development, and they serve as the 'public face' of a community.

This section focuses on recommendations to further the goals we heard both the Village of Hyde Park staff and residents articulate, including:

- Attracting more people, including both residents and visitors, to Main Street in the Village and other local destinations

- Making Main Street more walkable and vibrant
- Improving the pedestrian safety and accessibility of other streets in the Village

1. Create a Gateway street into town to welcome and attract people to the Village



Burlington, VT

A 'gateway' is street that serves as the entry to a location, such as a town. The Village should consider creating a gateway street from the roundabout on the Route 15 down Church Street. Gateway features would accomplish multiple goals, including helping to raise the profile of the Village for visitors traveling along the state highway, setting the tone for the character of the Village

as people enter it, and creating attractive, visual interest for those traveling along the gateway street. Small-scaled gateway features, such as banners on street poles, median landscaping, and colorful or unique pavement treatments, can enhance both the attractiveness of a street and help to calm traffic by attracting drivers' attention.

The gateway treatments could start at the roundabout, with appropriate and compelling signage that directs people to the Village. As drivers proceed down Church Street, design treatments – such as those mentioned above – would signal their entry into a small village, where slower travel speeds are appropriate. As they enter into the Main Street area, additional signage could direct them to key destinations.



Church and Main Street intersection

2. Make the intersection of Church and Main Street a 'town square'

As the center of the Village's Main Street and as the intersection through which most visitors enter the Village, this location could serve as a more bustling, vibrant 'hub' in town. Layering in amenities and activities onto the street corners at this intersection will attract people, create street life, slow down cars, and pique the interest of visitors traveling through the area.



South Orange, NJ

To make Church and Main Street a center of street activity, consider:

- Working with the library to activate the space outside it, such as through a book kiosk, tables and chairs for an outdoor 'reading room' on the lawn, book-related public art, etc.



Reading room, Bryant Park, New York, NY

- Working with the Courthouse to activate the lawn in front of its building, potentially with tables and chairs to create a public 'green.' If this is not feasible, consider other places to create a small plaza or pocket park on this corner, such as in front of the library or by transforming one of the parking spaces on the corner into a 'parklet.'
- Making this intersection a multi-modal hub, by providing bicycle racks and potentially designating it as a bus pullover location.

- Implementing streetscape improvements that enhance the attractiveness and functionality of the street for all people, including additional landscaping and trees, lighting, benches, public art, trash cans, repaired curbs and curb cuts, and decorative crosswalks.



Philadelphia, PA



Better Block. South Dallas

3. Create a 'wayfinding' system of signage in the Village to help people learn about and navigate to key destinations



Dobbs Ferry, NY

As discussed in the Findings section of this report, it is clear that the Village has an abundance of great places to visit and things to do. However, there is also a lack of awareness about many of these places. Wayfinding systems are signage that help people learn about the locations in an area, including how to get to them.

The Village could benefit from three types of wayfinding signs:

- Signs that provide an overview about the amenities and destinations in the Village, designated on a map. This type of sign could be placed at the corner of Church and Main Street (potentially in front of the library), at the eventual trailhead for the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, and in any other key locations where visitors are likely to congregate or enter into the Village.
- Signs that provide information about a building or destination. In particular, the Village would benefit from having on-street signage about some of the historical buildings along Main Street, since these are one of your main assets.
- Signs that help people navigate to destinations, especially ones that are less visible, such as Moss Woods.

4. Create a great walking environment on Main Street

With some small additions, Main Street could become a more enticing place to walk. The challenge you face is that there are not many features to keep pedestrians' interest along sections of the street, since the buildings are set back from the street and there is not much activity visible in the first floor of these buildings.



Rhinebeck, NY

People are more likely to enjoy walking along a street when there are frequent, varied things for them to look at. These could include the wayfinding signage mentioned in the previous recommendation,



Courthouse

small public art installations, streetscape features like landscaping or benches, etc. Especially along the stretch of Main Street that includes business establishments, work with property owners to make their facades and the sidewalk frontage as compelling to pedestrians as possible. Features such as awnings, pedestrian-scaled sandwich boards or signage, sidewalk seating, displays in store windows, and water bowls for dogs all help to create visual interest and to encourage people to stop along their walk.

5. Create more public gathering spaces in the Village and activate them with events

Without a main square or green in your downtown, there is no natural location for people to gather together for events or



Buffalo, NY

just on a weekly basis. Public spaces are important in helping to build community and in creating things for people to do. Fortunately, you do have several green spaces that could be easily transformed to function as the Village's main public space.



Montpelier, VT



Rowe, MA

These include:

- The lawns in front of the library, Court house, and/or the Sheriff's building, which could all serve as community gathering spaces with some additional amenities, such as benches, tables and chairs, signage, and paths. We understand that the Village has already ordered benches for installation on the south side of Main Street in front of the Courthouse and Sheriff's building, funded by a grant from the Lamoille Valley Fit and Healthy Council, which is a great first step in transforming this space into a public gathering place.
- The area in front of the Opera House.
- The space behind the elementary school, which already serves as a community park.

In addition to improving one or more of these spaces to make it a public gathering place, the Village should consider activating these spaces with some programming and events. Public events help to raise the profile of places in your area, create more things to do, and to build community. Think about creating a calendar of events so that there is regularly occurring programming on a monthly basis that attracts a diverse range of target audiences; this could include such events as a 'screen on the green,' a beer

garden, live music, an art show, family story time, yoga or other exercise, or games.

6. Make pedestrian safety improvements on key streets and at intersections in the Village

Workshop participants noted the need to add or improve the sidewalks on several streets in the Village that help to connect key destinations together, and that help residents to access Main Street, as well as the need to improve the safety of several intersections for pedestrian crossing. (See Appendix E for a map illustrating proposed sidewalk and bike infrastructure improvements from the workshop. These include:

- **Improving the intersection of Depot, Eden, and Main Streets.** Especially given the location of the elementary school at this intersection, this intersection needs to function better for pedestrians. The turning radii on Eden Street, as it approaches Main Street, could be shrunk in order to discourage fast turns by vehicles; this could be accomplished by building out the curb, or by simply painting a sharper turning radius in the street, accented by a series of planters or bollards. The crosswalks at this intersection could be re-painted

to make them more prominent, and the median on Main Street could be planted with trees and and/or flowers to make it seem more robust. A redesign of this intersection could also consider extending this median further west, which would shorten the pedestrian crossing distance from the corner of Depot and Main Street across to the school, although this change would also



University Place, WA

cut off vehicle travel from Depot to Eden Street.

- **The roundabout at Route 15 and Church Street.** There were a few workshop participants who suggested pedestrian improvements at this intersection. However, since there are no sidewalks leading up to the roundabout, it could be challenging to make the case that there

should be pedestrian improvements at the roundabout alone. We would recommend more in-depth conversation with residents about the desire and need for pedestrian infrastructure leading up to and at this roundabout; if this is a priority, then the Village will need to make the case to VTrans about this need. In addition, we noticed that the street lanes curve as they approach the roundabout, which can encourage fast turns by cars. One potential remedy, if this is a problem, is to consider narrowing or moving back the splitter islands, coupled with bumping out the curbs that border the lanes as they approach the roundabout. Together, these changes would ensure the travel lanes hit the roundabout at more of a right angle, which will encourage them to slow down going into their turns.

- **Considering extending the sidewalks** on Church Street further north of Main Street The sidewalk is intermittent in



Montpelier, VT

this location – it exists for a block, then disappears, for example. Having continuous sidewalk, even just on one side of the street (such as the eastern side), would help connect residents along this corridor to the Main Street.

- **Improve the crossing from the high school across** Route 15 to Black Farm Road and the trail that leads to Main Street in the Village. This is another location where a more in-depth assessment about the needs and benefits of pedestrian improvements in this location should be conducted. It does appear that there is room for a sidewalk on the north side of Route 15 leading from the high school entrance to Black Farm Road, and then a crosswalk at this location could be evaluated with VTrans. Before a request is made, however, outreach should be conducted with students and staff at the high school and middle school in order to assess how many people currently walk along this path, as well as how many people would be likely to use this path if the infrastructure was improved.

7. Create more opportunities for eating and drinking, as well as other commercial activity, along Main Street.

There is currently only one eating establishment on Main Street – Sweet Crunch Bake Shop, which closes before dinner. In order to create more eating or drinking establishments, consider:

- Opportunities for seasonal establishments, such as an ice cream or food concession stand in the former gas station adjacent to the Opera House in the summertime.



Littleton, CO

- Establishments that will attract local residents as well as local visitors staying in other towns.



Portable pizza oven

As a first step, we recommend investigating opportunities to foster small, entrepreneurial, low overhead businesses through 'Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper' (LQC) strategies, such as allowing food stands and outdoor carts (for food or the selling of crafts or other products). The Village can play a key role in not just legalizing such establishments, but in actively encouraging them by helping to negotiate spaces and logistics, as well as actively promoting this opportunity locally. As an example of local government supporting local pop-up retail, in Washington, DC, the Office of Planning launched a

'Temporary Urbanism' program in 2010 to help transform vacant storefronts or spaces in the city into temporary retail shops for local entrepreneurs to exhibit and sell their work. For more information, see: <http://dc.gov/DC/Planning/Across+the+City/O%20t%20h%20e%20r%20+C%20i%20t%20y%20w%20i%20d%20e%20+I%20n%20i%20t%20i%20a%20v%20e%20s/Temporary+Urbanism+Initiative>

In addition to eating and drinking establishments, workshop participants also suggested a need for more commercial activity in town, which could occur by converting large historic structures such as the P.H. Edwards into a series of shops, or a mixed use space with room for shops, galleries, work space, etc. LQC businesses could also connect to Village strengths and assets, such as its history, historical buildings, and outdoor attractions, which are discussed in the next recommendation. This would help serve a target audience and to solidify the Village's niche in this area. For example, an emphasis on local biking opportunities and trails could be supported by a seasonal bike rental business.

8. Capitalize on the Village's unique assets, including its historic properties and its array of hiking and biking amenities, as well as your institutional assets, in order to create a critical mass of great places and things to do..



Burlington, VT

By emphasizing and marketing these assets, the Village could help to attract more visitors, especially tourists that are already staying at nearby resorts.

To take advantage of the Village's historic buildings – such as the Opera House, the Governor's House, etc. – consider implementing a series of historic signage, guided and 'do-it-yourself' tours (which could be marketed online and through the signage), and some seasonal events

that discuss the history of the area (such as lecture, a play at the Opera House, a re-enactment, a fair, etc.)

To capitalize on the Village's hiking and biking amenities, create maps and information both on-site and online to help market these locations to potential visitors. Explore opportunities to make these trails welcoming and accessible to visitors – are the trailheads well-marked? Are there picnic tables and parking at them? Are the trails well-maintained? With the building of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, there are several opportunities to make sure the trail is well-connected to the Village and that it will be safe for people to cross Depot Street, which cuts through the trail. Workshop suggestions included instituting some traffic calming measures around the trail on Depot Street, as well as creating signage and good pedestrian infrastructure that connects the trail to Main Street. Instituting some parking along Main Street for the trail, whether that is at the elementary school or somewhere nearby, will also help to connect the two.

Workshop participants also discussed exploring additional opportunities for mountain biking trails on two privately-held properties – a horse farm on the north side of Route 100 at East Main Street and a large lot

north of Route 100 just west of Centerville Road - as well as expanded walking trails in Moss Woods.

Next Steps

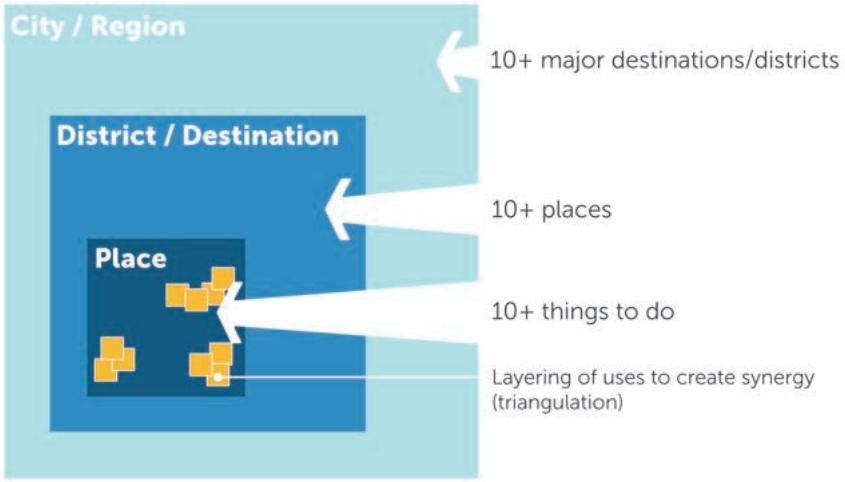
Fortunately, you have a plethora of community leaders and institutions who are already invested in helping to further the goals referenced in this report, including the Community Collaborative run by the library, Community Circle, the Hyde Park Village Improvement Association, Village Board of Trustees, the Hyde Park Selectboard, the Lamoille Valley Regional Planning Commision, the Lamoille Economic Development Corporation, and the Lamoille Valley Chamber of Commerce. We hope that this report will be shared with those organizations and agencies, and would suggest that you discuss with these entities:

- How to prioritize recommendations included in this memo for the Village
- Roles and actions that these institutions and their leaders can take to help support the Village's goals of becoming more vibrant, walkable, and sustainable, including ways they can help further specific recommendations included in this memo

Appendices

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Power of 10



Place level: a place has the power to attract if there are several (ten, for example) things to do, such as eating, drinking, reading, browsing, playing a game, looking at art, and so on. Such places draw people, create energy, and are the settings for the community to come together.

Destination / district level: A great destination, like a Main Street, would ideally have up to ten of these places.

Regional / city level: At the regional or citywide level, there could be ten of these dynamic destinations that attract people and economic activity.



Power of 10

A Tool for Initiating the Placemaking Process

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PPS is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating and sustaining public places that build communities. We provide technical assistance, education, and research through programs in parks, plazas and central squares; buildings and civic architecture; transportation; and public markets.

Since our founding in 1975, we have worked in over 3,000 communities in the United States and around the world, helping people to grow their public spaces into vital community places.



419 Lafayette Street
Seventh Floor
New York, NY 10003
212.620.5660
www.pps.org

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Identify Destinations

1. Come to agreement on what are the five or more most important destinations in the region (the area roughly defined by the towns your group represents). Destinations might include: Main streets, scenic areas, natural resources, parks, health care resources, community centers, civic, cultural and educational institutions, tourist attractions, agricultural destinations, etc.

2. List other "opportunity destinations," which are regionally important, but are falling short of what they could be.

3. Do these top five destinations tell you anything about your region's identity and what makes it unique? Are there common characteristics these places share?

Strengthening Your Destination

Focusing on **one** of your top 5, think about ways to maximize the value of this destination and enhance it as a regional resource.

Name your destination: _____

USES & ACTIVITIES

What additional uses and activities could be clustered ("triangulated") with this destination to improve it?

SOCIALITY

What group activities could be supported here? e.g. space for childrens activities, programs, cultural events, education, hobbies, etc.)

COMFORT & IMAGE

What enhancements would make it more comfortable, more inviting, or give it stronger identity?

ACCESS & LINKAGES

Are there ways to increase its regional importance by improving physical and programmatic connections to other attractions nearby?

What Makes a Great Place?



PPS is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating and sustaining public places that build communities. We provide technical assistance, education, and research through programs in parks, plazas and central squares; buildings and civic architecture; transportation; and public markets. Since our founding in 1975, we have worked in over 2,500 communities in the United States and around the world, helping people to grow their public spaces into vital community places.



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Place Game

Place Performance Evaluation A Tool for Initiating the Placemaking Process

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SITE #: _____ Date: _____

Rate the Place:

COMFORT & IMAGE	POOR	GOOD	
Overall attractiveness	1	2	3 4
Feeling of safety	1	2	3 4
Cleanliness/Quality of Maintenance	1	2	3 4
Comfort of places to sit	1	2	3 4

Comments/Notes:

ACCESS & LINKAGES	POOR	GOOD	
Visibility from a distance	1	2	3 4
Ease in walking to the place	1	2	3 4
Transit access	1	2	3 4
Clarity of information/signage	1	2	3 4

Comments/Notes:

USES & ACTIVITIES	POOR	GOOD	
Mix of stores/services	1	2	3 4
Frequency of community events/activities	1	2	3 4
Overall busy-ness of area	1	2	3 4
Economic vitality	1	2	3 4

Comments/Notes:

SOCIALITY	POOR	GOOD	
Number of people in groups	1	2	3 4
Evidence of volunteerism	1	2	3 4
Sense of pride and ownership	1	2	3 4
Presence of children and seniors	1	2	3 4

Comments/Notes:



Identify Opportunities

1. What do you like best about this place?
2. List things that you would do to improve this place that could be done right away and that wouldn't cost a lot:
3. What changes would you make in the long term that would have the biggest impact?
4. Ask someone who is in the "place" what they like about it and what they would do to improve it. Their answer:
5. What local partnerships or local talent can you identify that could help implement some of your proposed improvements? Please be as specific as possible.

C. Walk-It Audit tool

Walk-It Audit

A Tool for Evaluating the Pedestrian Experience

This walking audit is designed to be conducted on-site by small groups of people. Each Walk-It audit covers a specific route that you evaluate walking to or from a destination in terms of access & linkages, comfort & image, uses & activities, and sociability.

As you participate in the Walk-It workshop pay close attention to the qualities of the public spaces, as well as the difficulties you encounter during your journey.

An area map is provided for you to use to find your way. Make comments and take additional notes about your journey!

Observational Guidelines

Think about the route in terms of the qualities and characteristics of your experience.

Feel free to draw on the map! Use your own symbols to mark site-specific issues and record your notes in the space around the map.

Remember to discuss them with your group and to make sure that someone is documenting your observations with a camera.

As you Walk-It

STOP at key points along the route and mark them on the map

LOOK around and evaluate each stopping place, taking photos of what the group finds important

LISTEN to others' opinions and share your own

RECORD your notes as symbols on the map and notes on the margins

Afterthoughts

After completing the Walk-It audit, meet with your group at a local venue to discuss your observations. Transfer and discuss each of the individual markings on your maps onto a larger one that represents the opinions of the whole group.

The map, along with key afterthought question, will give you a good sense of the specific problems, potential opportunities, and strategic steps to follow.



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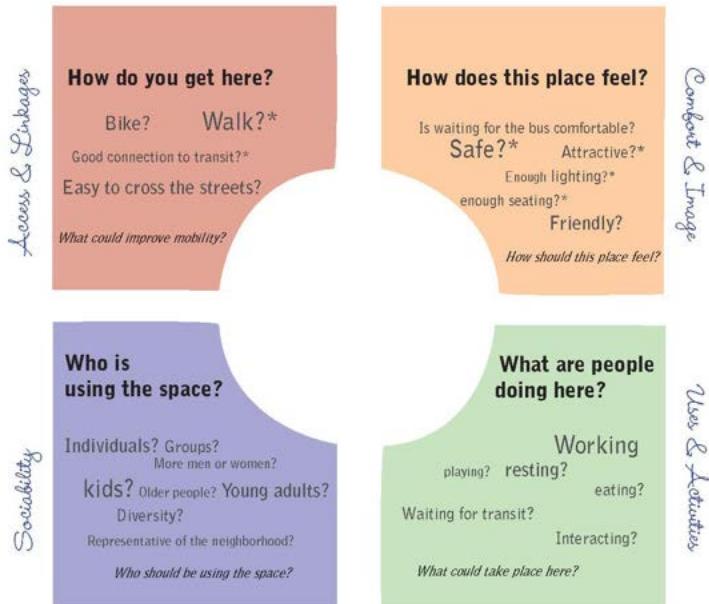
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Walk-It Audit

Qualities



Afterthoughts

- ▶ What are the most important destinations on the route (institutions, stores, ect.)?
- ▶ What are the most important public spaces on the route (parks, plaza, ect.)?
- ▶ Which are the spaces with potential, that are in need of improvement?
- ▶ What short-term, physical improvements do you recommend for each of these spaces?
- ▶ What are the barriers to both walking and experiencing the place? What are your ideas for dealing with the barriers and for improving your walking experience?
- ▶ How can the merchants, institutions, and/or agencies responsible for these destinations improve your walking experience?

D. Power of 10 Workshop Report

Below is a summary of results from the Power of 10 exercise conducted at the workshop on March 25th.

Best places

- Library (4 votes)
- Second Congregation Church (3)
- Elementary school (3)
- Village green/Lawn in front of the Court house (2)
- Opera house (2)
- Eden Street gardens
- Historic buildings
- Court house
- Rail trail
- Parish Hall
- Governor's House
- Sweet Crunch Bake Shop
- Cricket Hill

Places with potential/in need of improvement

- Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (4)
- P.H. Edwards (3)
- Moss woods (2)
- Johnson Street extension – opportunities for sidewalk (2)
- Court house area
- Left turn onto Centerville Road from Route 15
- Village gateway signs
- New business opportunities on Main Street (food, services, etc.)
- Opera house
- Parking at old bank
- School access to rail trail
- Septic fields for recreation
- Traffic calming on Depot street to welcome people to the Village
- Depot/Eden/Main Street intersection
- Large lot on northeast corner of Johnson Street Extension and Main Street (Private currently)
- Mountain biking at Ten Bends (Private currently)
- School
- Horse farm (Private currently) – mountain biking opportunities
- Large lot property (Private currently) – mountain biking opportunities

Barriers/underperforming

- Roundabout - lack of pedestrian access (2)
- Route 15 and Johnson St extension – crossing safety issues (2)
- Depot/Eden/Main St intersection unsafe (2)
- East Main Street Gateway
- Sidewalks on Church Ave
- Village facades
- Conversion to multi-family housing – losing village character
- High school and middle school too far away
- Zoning
- Ball fields not accessible
- Municipal water system
- Pedestrian access from High School to town offices
- St Teresa's
- Church Street
- Recreation Fields and Green River State Park
- North side of Main Street
- Parking

Best Places (Green)

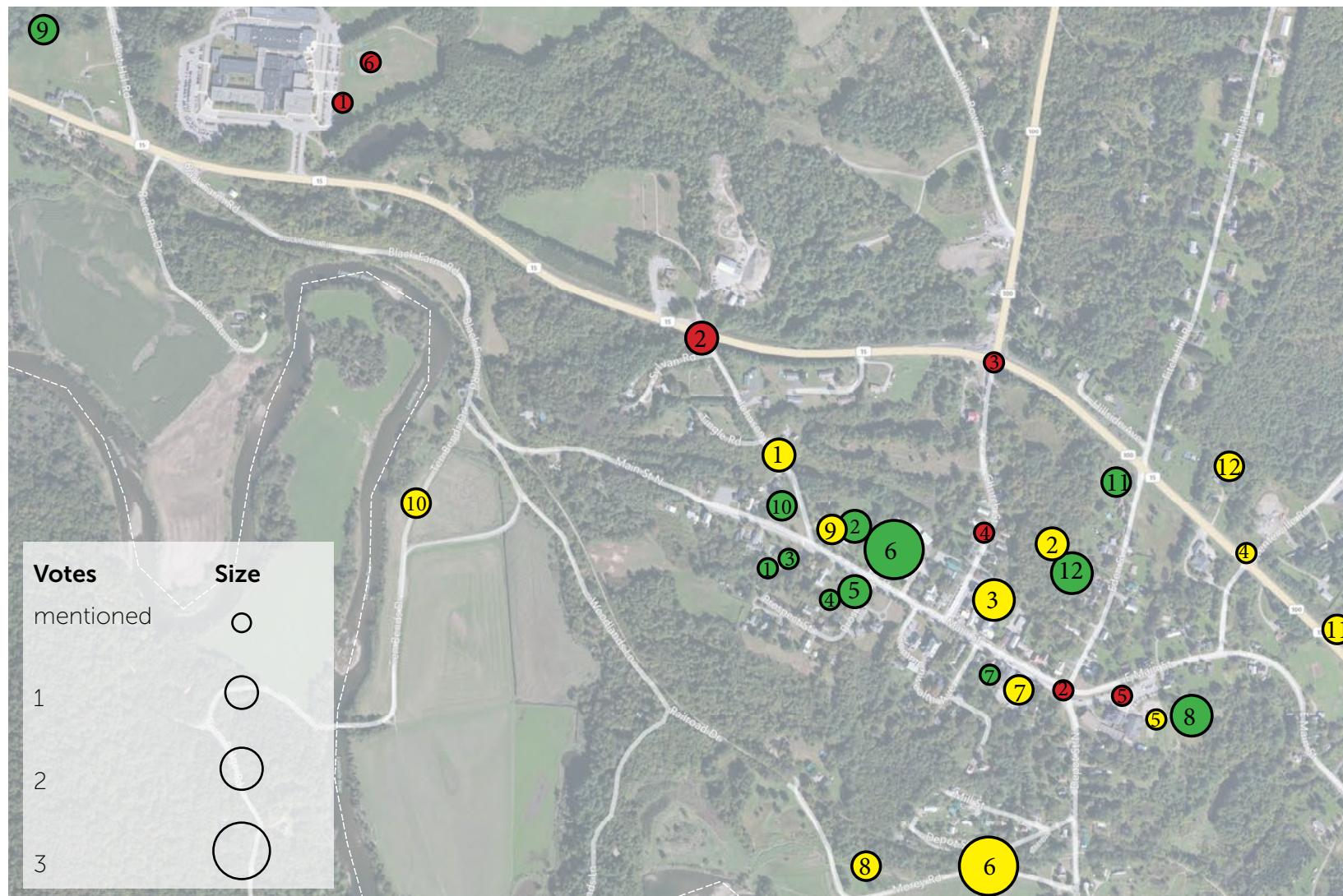
- 1-Second Congressional Church
- 2-Opera House
- 3-Governor's House
- 4- Court House
- 5-Court House Lawn
- 6-Library
- 7- Sweet Crunch Bake Shop
- 8-Elementary School
- 9-Cricket Hill - Lacrosse Field
- 10-Parish Hall
- 11-Eden Street Gardens
- 12-Moss Woods

Places with potential/in need of improvement (Yellow)

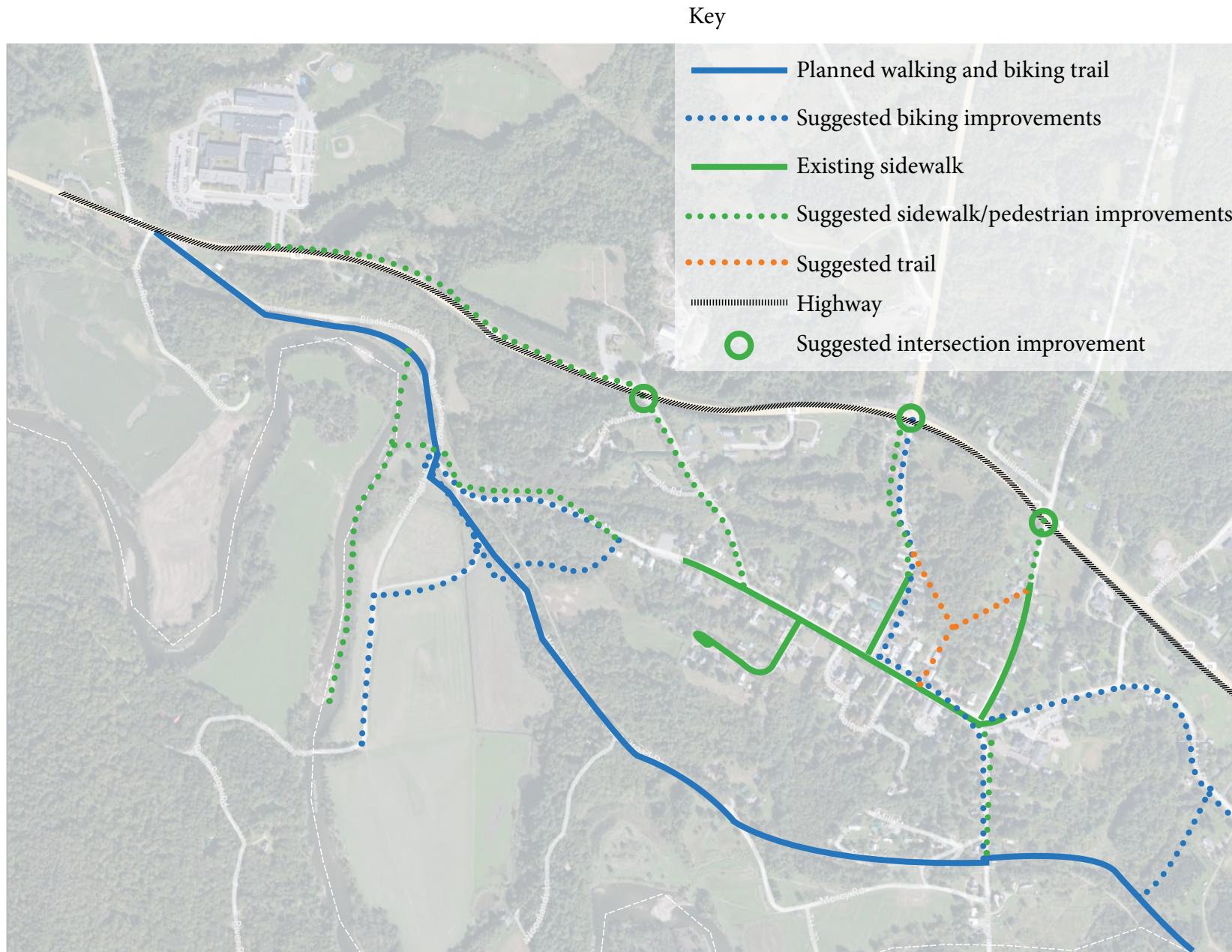
- 1-Sidewalk opportunity
- 2-Moss Woods
- 3-P.H. Edwards
- 4-Left Turn onto Centerville from RT 15
- 5-School access to Rail Trail
- 6-Rail Trail
- 7-Parking at Old Bank
- 8-Septic Fields for Recreation
- 9-Large Lot
- 10-Ten Bends for Mountain Biking
- 11-Horse Farm (for mountain biking)
- 12-Large Property

Underperforming (Red)

- 1- Middle School too far from Village
- 2-Major intersection: Safety concern
- 3-Roundabout: Lack of Pedestrian Access
- 4-Poor Sidewalk Condition
- 5-East Main Street Gateway
- 6-Ball Fields (not accessible to Village)



E. Connectivity Workshop Report



F. Place Audits Workshop Report

Elementary School Site

Best:

Historic building
Views
Trails in back
Playground
Hosts community activities

Low cost improvements:

Green space to separate building/parking
Improve crosswalks – signs, different material
Turn hillside in back for use as amphitheater
Gateway signs to school
Gravel paths to make connections around building
Signage along trails behind the building
Family movie night with inflatable screen
Shade and more seating
Wood fired pizza oven night

Long term improvements:

Skate rink in back fields
Improve alignment of Depot/Main/Eden
Sidewalk/parking lot redesign – bury power line, off site parking
Dedicated gym – not shared with cafeteria
Develop area in back into a park or garden with info on history of building

Local partners:

Next 100 Years Committee
Master gardeners
Johnson Studio Center
Community professionals (carpenters, engineers, architects)
Local business groups (like VT Business Roundtable)
Lamoille Economic Development Corp
Chamber of Commerce
Lamoille County Prevention Partnership/
Lamoille Valley Fit and Healthy Council

Church and Main Street Site

Best:

Historic buildings
Lawn in front of the library with benches
Green space
Parking availability
Stop sign at intersection – slows people down

Short term changes:

Redesign crosswalks to be squared off
Banners on street poles
Garbage cans
Outdoor benches, tables, bike rack
Signage: historic markers, wayfinding
Book exchange kiosk outside of library
Clean up sidewalks
Pavement markings for a bus pullover
Drainage within the right of way
Makeovers for facades
Traffic calming

Long term changes

Streetscape improvements – raise crosswalks, traffic calming, wayfinding signage, trees, lights, benches, street poles, garbage cans

Public art

Improvements to Fred's

Gazebo for gatherings, music (Chamber Players)

Garden tours/house tours

Public rest room

Partners

Library, Schools, Congregation Church, Select Board, Trustees, Court house, Local businesses, Regional planning staff, CCTA

G. Walk-It Audits Workshop Report

Group 1 (from Second Congregation Church to the School)

Most important destinations:

2 churches
Library
Opera house
Sweet Crunch Bake Shop
School

P.H. Edwards

Public spaces:

Courthouse
Courthouse lawn
Sheriff's lawn
Opera House lawn
Governor's Inn lawn

Improvements to make:

Lawns: Pocket parks, Landscaping to hide parking at Sheriff's – develop a lawn to draw people into this space

Opera House: Create a gathering space here with outdoor space, sense of entry, sculpture, clock

Façade improvements: Fred's, Sweet Crunch, Chase's Market, Al's

P.H. Edwards: Develop an interior mall or mixed use/loft space/gallery

Fred's

Former gas station: Ice cream stand? Restaurant? Should interact with the Opera House

White/red Wheelwright house: Opportunity for commercial – bistro, restaurant

General street improvements: Diagonal parking?, traffic calming, bike lane

Lighting: Antique look, Create effect/mood

Architecture: Latticework, Signage

Church St/Main Intersection: Pedestrian friendly, Traffic calming, Visual gateway

Tree plantings: Long term goal is to frame architecture; old Elms

Merchants: Pedestrian hangouts, Awnings, Façade restorations

Group 2 (School to the Rail Trailhead)

Important destinations

School
Rail trailhead
Gateway to town

Public spaces and opportunities

Trailhead
Vacant lot partway down on left
Trail crossing

Short term opportunities

Kiosk sign
Warning for trail crossing
Crosswalk warning at school
Directional sign to trailhead
Temporary rumble strips in approaching trailhead and school

Barriers

Trail crossing
Main St/Depot/Eden intersection at school