

**Downtown Board**  
**Application and Issues Summary**  
January 23, 2023

This supplement to the agenda is intended to highlight issues, focus the discussion, and promote consistent and efficient decisions.

**Community Planning and Revitalization (staffing the meeting)**

**Richard Amore**, Planning and Outreach Manager

**Chris Cochran**, Director

**Jacob Hemmerick**, Planning and Policy Manager

**Gary Holloway**, Downtown Program Manager

**Amy Tomasso**, Planning Coordinator

**Jenni Lavoie**, Grants and Contracts Administrator

**Meeting Guests**

**Town of Cabot:** Brittany Butler, Zoning Administrator

**Town of Springfield:** Jeff Mobus, Town Manager; Jessica Martin, Springfield on the Move

**Town of Hardwick:** David Upson, Town Manager, Sharin Cornish, Town & Downtown Partnership; Heather Carrington, Carrington Community Development Services

**Town of Middlebury:** Jennifer Murray, Director of Planning & Zoning

**Town of Colchester:** Cathyann LaRose, Director of Planning & Zoning

**Village Center Designation**

The village center designation program recognizes and encourages local efforts to revitalize Vermont's traditional villages. Once designated, the community receives priority consideration for state grants and other resources. Commercial property owners are eligible for tax credits to support building improvements.

*"Village Center means a traditional center of the community, typically comprised of a cohesive core of residential, civic, religious, and commercial buildings, arranged along a main street and intersecting streets. Industrial uses may be found within or immediately adjacent to these centers." The application guidelines document further states "the boundary should be drawn around the center or core of the village including its traditional anchor points such as the post office, commercial buildings, town hall, churches and other public buildings that typically comprise the center of a village."*

---

**Renewal Applications (2) – Consent Agenda Items**

1. **Town of Londonderry – [Londonderry Village](#)**  
The town submitted a complete renewal application. There are no proposed changes to the [designated boundary](#).

**Recommendation:** Approve application and renew designation

2. **Town of Londonderry – [South Londonderry Village](#)**  
The town submitted a complete renewal application. There are no proposed changes to the [designated boundary](#).

**Recommendation:** Approve application and renew designation

**New Application (1)**

1. **Town of Cabot** – [Cabot Village](#)

Originally designated in January 2014 and de-designated in July 2022 due to the town plan requirement on designation. Cabot is re-applying for village center designation and requesting the addition of five additional properties including the Cabot Creamery, one additional commercial property, two residential properties, and the recreation fields.

The proposed boundary runs along Main Street, and includes the town offices, the Cabot school, United Church, Masonic Hall, post office, general store, hardware store, fire station, historical society, village common, senior center, Cabot Creamery, recreation fields, small businesses, multifamily and single-family residences. The town worked with staff to define the boundary that meets statutory definition and submitted a map that meets the program's requirements.

**Recommendation:** Approve application and award designation

## Downtown Designation

Downtown designation recognizes and supports the commitment of local leaders to revitalize historic downtowns and the strengthen Vermont's communities. The state supports the designated community with variety of benefits, training and tools that work together to increase the health and vitality of the district.

*"Downtown" means the traditional central business district of a community that has served as the focus of socio-economic interaction in the community, characterized by a cohesive core of commercial and mixed use buildings, some of which may contain mixed use spaces, often interspersed with civic, religious, residential, and industrial buildings and public spaces, typically arranged along a main street and intersecting side streets that are within walking distance for residents who live within and surrounding the core and that are served by public infrastructure such as sidewalks and public transit. Downtowns are typically larger in scale than village centers and are characterized by a development pattern that is consistent with smart growth principles.*

### Renewal Application (1):

1. [Town of Springfield](#)

**Summary:** Springfield received Downtown Designation in 2000, one of the first communities to receive the distinction, and last renewed in 2014. The Town worked with staff on the application to ensure all program requirements are met and to offer any recommendations. The application is complete, no boundary changes proposed, and it meets all the program's requirements. The community will provide a short presentation to the Board summarizing their accomplishments in the last 8 years.

**Recommendation:** Approve renewal

### New Application (1):

1. [Town of Hardwick](#)

**Summary:** Hardwick was originally designated as a Village Center in 2003 and is now requesting consideration for Downtown Designation. The town worked with staff on the application to ensure the standards of the program were met and to create a boundary which meets the statutory definition. The town is expanding the current Designated Village Center boundary to include properties that are mostly within the Central Business District and/or State Registered Historic District and 5-minute walking distance from the center of the village center. The boundary meets the statutory definition of a downtown and provides opportunities for future development and improvements to existing infrastructure and public spaces. The application is complete, and all requirements have been met.

**Recommendation:** Approve designation

## Neighborhood Development Area Designation

The neighborhood development area designation encourages municipalities and/or developers to plan for new and infill housing in the area within walking distance of its designated downtown, village center, new town center, or within its designated growth center and incentivizes needed housing, further supporting the commercial establishments in the designated centers. Areas eligible for designation must be within a neighborhood planning area defined as an area surrounding an existing designated area, extending a 1/4 mile from village centers and new town centers, a 1/2 mile from downtowns and encompasses the areas contained within a designated growth center.

### **New Applications (1)**

#### **1. Town of Middlebury**

Application materials from the Town are complete. See town application and staff findings [here](#).

This application proposes boundaries beyond the planning area, requiring that at least 80% and no fewer than 7 members of the Downtown Board reviewing the NDA agree that boundary meets criteria (A)-(D) in the application.

The Downtown Board's motion must acknowledge the extension. Note that the proposed map has been modified to limit extensions beyond the green lines. These areas were found to be unserved by existing or planned sidewalks along major arterials but may be considered for extension upon amendment or renewal.

Middlebury currently has a Municipal Planning Grant from the Department of Housing & Community Development for active transportation planning. Staff finds that the proposed Neighborhood Development Area meets the requirements for designation.

**Recommendation:** Approve the Neighborhood Development Area application submitted by the Town acknowledging the NDA extends beyond the planning area and meet the established criteria for an extension.

### **New Town Center Designation**

New Town Center Designation is for communities without a traditional downtown and recognizes areas planned to develop a walkable community center.

*"New town center" means the area planned for or developing as a community's central business district, composed of compact, pedestrian-friendly, multistory, and mixed-use development that is characteristic of a traditional downtown, supported by planned or existing urban infrastructure, including curbed streets with sidewalks and on-street parking, stormwater treatment, sanitary sewers and public water supply.*

---

### **Renewal Applications - Continuation & Suspension of Benefits (1)**

#### **1. [Town of Colchester](#)**

Request letter submitted by Town.

Board process and policy states that if the renewal date is missed, the designation continues for an additional 6 months with the program benefits suspended. If no renewal application is received after the 6-month suspension the Downtown Board will withdraw designation. Once designation is withdrawn, a community may submit a new application for designation at any time.

**Recommendation:** Approve motion to continue the new town center designation renewal no more than six months (and no later than 8/28/23) and suspend benefits.