



Vermont Downtown Action Team Report
August 1, 2014

Northfield, Vermont

Contents

1.0 Introduction	5
1.1 The Vermont Downtown Action Team (V-DAT)	6
1.2 Process	6
1.3 Acknowledgements	7
1.4 Introduction to Northfield	8
2.0 Retail Market Study	11
2.1 Market Definition	12
2.2 Trade Area Demographics	14
2.3 Retail Market Analysis	16
2.4 Key Market Opportunities	18
3.0 Physical Plan	19
3.1 Introduction	20
3.2 Assessment	20
3.3 Physical Plan Overview	22
3.4 Improving the Public Realm: Resiliency and Public Infrastructure	24
3.5 Polishing Up a Great Downtown: Private Sector Improvements	38
3.6 Listing of Resiliency and Green Techniques In Implementing the Recommendations	45
4.0 Marketing Northfield	47
4.1 Background	48
4.2 Brand Attributes	48
4.3 First Step Recommendations	51
4.4 Next Step Recommendations	52
4.5 Long Term Recommendations	55
5.0 Market Opportunities	57
5.1 Background	58
5.2 First Step Recommendations	58
5.3 Next Step Recommendations	59
5.4 Long Term Recommendations	60
6.0 Building Connections	61
6.1 Background	62
6.2 First Step Recommendations	62
6.3 Next Step Recommendations	63
6.4 Long Term Recommendations	64
7.0 Funding and Implementation	65
7.1 Funding	66
7.2 Implementation Strategy and Action Plan	70
8.0 Appendices	73



Vermont Downtown Action Team Report

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Vermont Downtown Action Team (V-DAT)

The Vermont Downtown Action Team (V-DAT) was selected by the State of Vermont, Department of Housing and Community Development, Vermont Downtown Program in May 2013 to conduct community planning and economic development charrettes for eight communities adversely affected by Tropical Storm Irene or the spring floods of 2012. The project team held design workshops from August through April 2014 in Waterbury, Brattleboro, Brandon, Northfield, Wilmington, Waitsfield, Warren, and Barre. The V-DAT was comprised of experts in architecture, planning, landscape architecture, historic preservation, economic development, organizational structure, engineering and community branding.

The V-DAT team was customized for each community but included:

- Tripp Muldrow, Team Leader, Arnett Muldrow & Associates
- David Boehm, Engineering Ventures
- Heather Fontaine, Arnold & Scangus Architects
- Stephanie Francis, SouthCoast Consulting
- Tom McGilloway, Mahan Rykiel Associates
- Ben Muldrow, Arnett Muldrow & Associates
- Leigh Minor Nagy, Minorbird Retail Consulting
- Stacy Pair, SouthCoast Consulting
- Laz Scangus, Arnold & Scangus Architects
- Nate Scott, Mahan Rykiel Associates
- Randy Wilson, Community Design Solutions
- Leanne Tingay, State of Vermont, Housing and Community Development, Vermont Downtown Program
- Richard Amore, State of Vermont, Housing and Community Development, Vermont Downtown Program

1.2 Process

The V-DAT planning charrettes operate on three key tenants: utilizing an asset based approach, addressing the community in a holistic manner, and conducting the exercise in a public forum. First, an asset based planning approach builds upon the unique attributes and qualities in a community without trying to make them into some place they are not. Ultimately, this ensures that the plan will be authentic in its nature and affordable in its execution. Second the holistic approach utilized in the V-DAT charrette includes varying degrees of emphasis on four components:

- Market Analysis – To understand the economic development factors affecting a community.
- Design, planning and preservation – To protect and enhance the physical appearance and function of the community
- Branding and marketing – To aid the community in communicating its unique promotional messages in a compelling, consistent and effective way.
- Implementation strategies – To ensure the recommendations of the plan include a road map to turn them into reality

However, it is the participatory nature of the planning exercise that makes them maximally effective. Since the plans are created on-site within a three-day time period with input from the communities' citizens, the charrette ensures a level of community-wide buy-in and enthusiasm that leads to an unprecedented level of implementation.

1.3 Acknowledgements

The Vermont Downtown Action Team [V-DAT] Northfield plan would not be possible without the support, expertise and input from the following people and organizations.

State of Vermont, Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

Noelle Mackay, Commissioner of the Department of Housing and Community Development

Jennifer Hollar, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Housing and Community Development

The Town of Northfield

Michele Braun, Planning and Zoning Administrator

Northfield V-DAT Advisory Committee

Special thanks to all the participants during the V-DAT charrette that occurred on April 7-9, 2014

Project Funding and Support

This project was supported by funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery. The plan was prepared as a cooperative effort of the State of Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development, the Division of Community Planning and Revitalization and the Town of Northfield. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the official views or policy of HUD or the State of Vermont. For more information on the Vermont Downtown Action Team [V-DAT] program, please visit http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/opportunities/revitalization/V-DAT or call (802) 828-5229.

1.4 Introduction to Northfield

1.4.1 Community Profile

Northfield, Vermont is a community of 6,207 people (2010 Census) located in the heart of Vermont's Green Mountains. Home to Norwich University, the oldest private military college in the United States, Northfield is an easy ten-mile drive from Montpelier, the state's capital, and three hours from either Boston or Montreal. Until 2014, the municipal government of Northfield consisted of two elected boards: a Board of Town Selectmen elected by all eligible Town voters and a Board of Village Trustees elected only by voters residing in the Village. On July 1, 2014 the Town of Northfield and Northfield Village completed a merger to be the Town of Northfield with a new full-time Town Manager.

Northfield is home to six covered bridges and the Dog River, a popular fly-fishing destination. The town also has nine churches, three banks, one grocery store, nine restaurants and one bakery among other thriving commercial businesses like [Cabot Hosiery Mills, Inc.](#) Northfield is also home to [Norwich University](#), the nation's oldest private military college.

Annual local events include the [Northfield Labor Day Celebration](#) and the art show showcasing the region's artists sponsored by the [Paine Mountain Arts Council](#).

1.4.2 Catastrophic Event(s)

On August 28, 2011, Tropical Storm Irene dropped over 6 inches of rain in 12 hours in Northfield, VT. The peak stage height for the Dog River at the gage in Northfield Falls was 17.26', or more than nine feet above flood stage. Peak discharge was 23,500 cubic feet per second (cfs), whereas the mean flow rate for the Dog River is just 103 cfs. More than eighty homes in the Water Street neighborhood were badly flooded, experiencing up to four feet of water in the first floor. More than a dozen homeowners volunteered for the FEMA buyout program. Kenyon's Hardware store property lost significant portions of streambank behind the building, and the community is concerned about the potential for future damage in this area.

1.4.3 Recovery

To date, Northfield has done significant recovery work. The Common Plan developed in 2006 is currently undergoing phase-two work. Additionally, buy-outs of homes on Water Street are close to completion and demolition was completed in 2014. Significant streetscape improvements were completed along the Depot Square replacing asphalt sidewalks with concrete, new curbing, and ADA accessibility. Norwich University funded the purchase of a new ladder truck for the fire department.

1.4.4 Identified Needs

Northfield stakeholders identified the following specific needs for the V-DAT project team to address:

- Design concept for Water Street River Front Park
- Assistance with facades and building reuse in locations not yet occupied
- Support and Guidelines for creating a better connection along South Main Street between Town Common and Norwich University
- Attracting students and visitors from Norwich University into the Downtown
- Establish and facilitate connections to Norwich University and recreational assets in the community
- Streetscape improvements and building improvements to East Street across from Northfield Common
- Community branding and marketing
- Organizational Plan to assist in the formation of a downtown organization and steps to becoming a designated downtown
- Community wayfinding signs and gateways
- A market study for downtown identifying potential market opportunities



Vermont Downtown Action Team Report

Retail Market Study

2.0 Retail Market Study

This section of the report presents the findings retail market research for Northfield and sets the stage for further analysis that can be used to recruit business, help existing businesses target customers, and implement the accompanying marketing and recruitment strategy in [Chapter 3.0](#) of this report. The goal of this retail market study is to show community stakeholders and potential investors how to capitalize on potential retail trade and to leverage investments that will sustain the Northfield community.

Chapter 2 is divided into four sections:

[Section 2.1](#) describes the market definition based on zip code survey work completed by businesses in the community. It also provides insight into Northfield's trade area demographics and presents market data related to Northfield's primary and secondary trade areas.

[Section 2.2](#) provides demographic profiles of Northfield's primary trade area.

[Section 2.3](#) presents the retail market analysis that shows the amount of retail sales "leaking" from Northfield's primary and secondary trade areas. This information is based on the most recent data available and is a reliable source for understanding overall market patterns. This section concludes with some key opportunities for retail that could be used to both enhance existing businesses and recruit additional businesses to the Northfield community.

[Section 2.4](#) summarizes Northfield's current retail environment, and describes market characteristics and trends that form the basis of the recommendations presented in [Chapter 3.0](#).

2.1 Market Definition

Unlike radial and drive time studies that use arbitrarily chosen boundaries for customer trade zones, the market definition exercise for Northfield is based on zip code survey work completed by cooperating merchants. Zip code surveys have their own limitations, as a zip code geography can be fairly large and stretch beyond typical market boundaries. However, it is the only technique that correlates clearly with customer traffic collected by merchants. Recorded zip codes are used to define primary and secondary trade areas, which are then analyzed in terms of demographics and economic activity.

Ten local community retail businesses graciously participated in the zip code survey of their customers in March of 2014. Of the businesses, eight were retailers and two were dining establishments. Merchants were provided with a form to record customer zip codes and asked to keep the log for all customers during a seven-day period.

2.1.1 Zip Code Results

The results of the zip code survey are presented in [Figure 1](#) and summarized as follows:

In all, area businesses recorded 828 individual customer visits from 41 unique American zip codes representing 10 states.

The 05663 (Northfield) zip code had the most visits of any zip codes with 61% of customers coming from this geographic area.

Norwich Students who also reside in the 05663 zip code were recorded separately. Students represented 19% of the customer visits.

In total, local residents and students accounted for 80% of the customer visits to local shops and restaurants.

Visitors from the neighboring zip codes Roxbury 05669, Montpelier 05602, Barre 05641, Moretown 05660, Randolph 05060 and Williamstown 05679 accounted for an additional 14% of the customers.

Customers from the rest of Vermont accounted for 4% of visits and those from other states accounted for 2%.

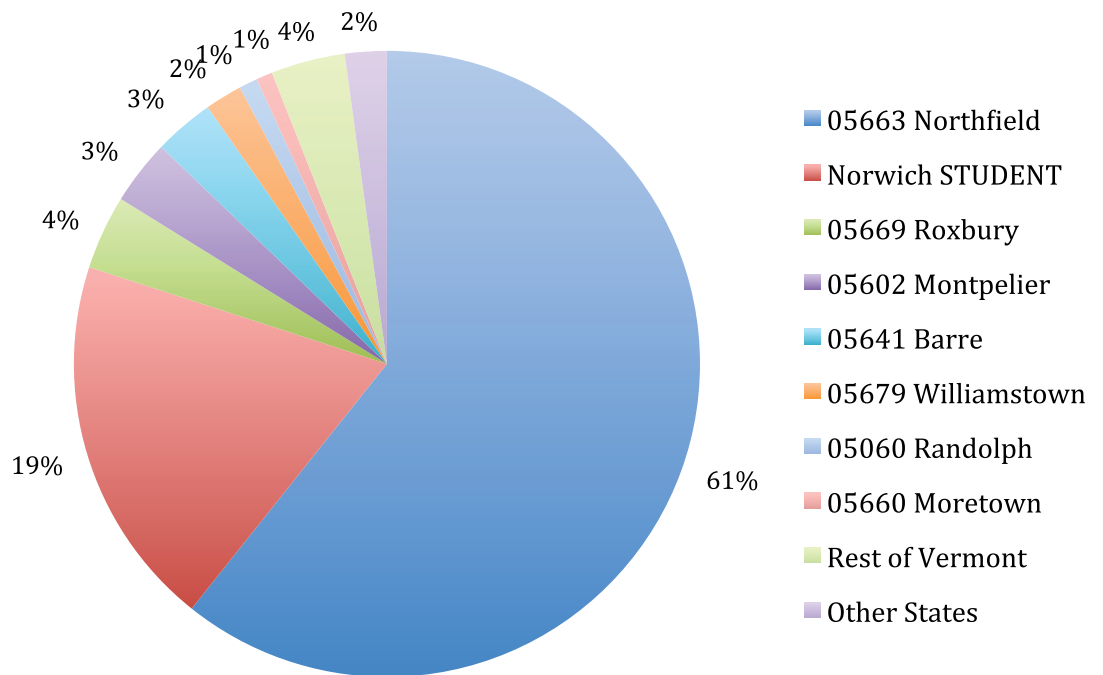


Figure 1: Customer Visits to Participating Businesses by Zip Code.

2.1.2 Trade Area Definition

Although the number of visits provides an overall view of customer origin, a more accurate way to evaluate customer loyalty is to frame customer visits in the context of the population of each zip code. This method corrects for zip codes that have exceedingly large or small populations that might skew the market penetration data. The primary trade area (PTA) is the geography where the most loyal and frequent customers to community businesses reside. The secondary trade area represents an area where area businesses can rely on customers, but to a lesser degree.

Figure 2 shows customer visits per thousand residents, showing an index allows for an equal comparison of market penetration per zip code. It shows customer visits per thousand people for each of the highest representative visits to Northfield.

Zip Code	Area	2013 Pop Est	Visits	Visits/1000 Pop
05663	Northfield	4,590	498	108.50
05663	Norwich STUDENT	2,300	161	70.00
05669	Roxbury	464	32	68.97
05679	Williamstown	3,243	16	4.93
05660	Moretown	1,789	7	3.91
05602	Montpelier	11,935	28	2.35
05060	Randolph	4,549	8	1.76
05641	Barre	16,686	26	1.56

Figure 2: Customer visits per 1,000 population.

Determining the primary and secondary trade areas can sometimes be more “art” than science. At times, significant breaks in customer visits are not obvious. In the case of Northfield, the division is clear. With approximately 109 visits per thousand residents, Northfield 05663, Norwich Students, and Roxbury emerge as the “most loyal” zip codes for area businesses and are thus identified as the primary trade area.

Two zip codes, Williamstown 05679 and Moretown 05660 comprise the secondary trade area but are so low in customer loyalty that they aren’t included in further study.

2.2 Trade Area Demographics

In 2013, the population for Northfield’s primary trade area is estimated to be 7,354 including Norwich students. The population grew by 7.5% between 2000 and 2010. Anecdotally, much of that growth is attributed to Norwich student body increases. Since 2010, growth in the community has been much slower at less than 1% between 2010 and 2013. By 2018, the population will increase by about .8% to 7,413.

As with many college communities and unlike many Vermont communities the median age for Northfield is 30.7. This compares to a 41.5 median age for Vermont and a 37.2 median age for the United States. Of course, this median age represents a population that is transient since the great majority of Norwich college students will move away after finishing school.

The median household income for the primary trade area is \$56,136. This income level exceeds that of Vermont at \$52,997 and the United States at \$53,046.

2.2.1 Market Segmentation

Market segmentation is a way to summarize demographic information in easy to understand categories. The market segmentation illustrated for Northfield’s primary trade area uses Claritas PRIZM® data. PRIZM® defines every U.S. household in terms of sixty-six demographic and behavioral types to help determine lifestyles, purchasing behaviors, and preferences of the customer base.

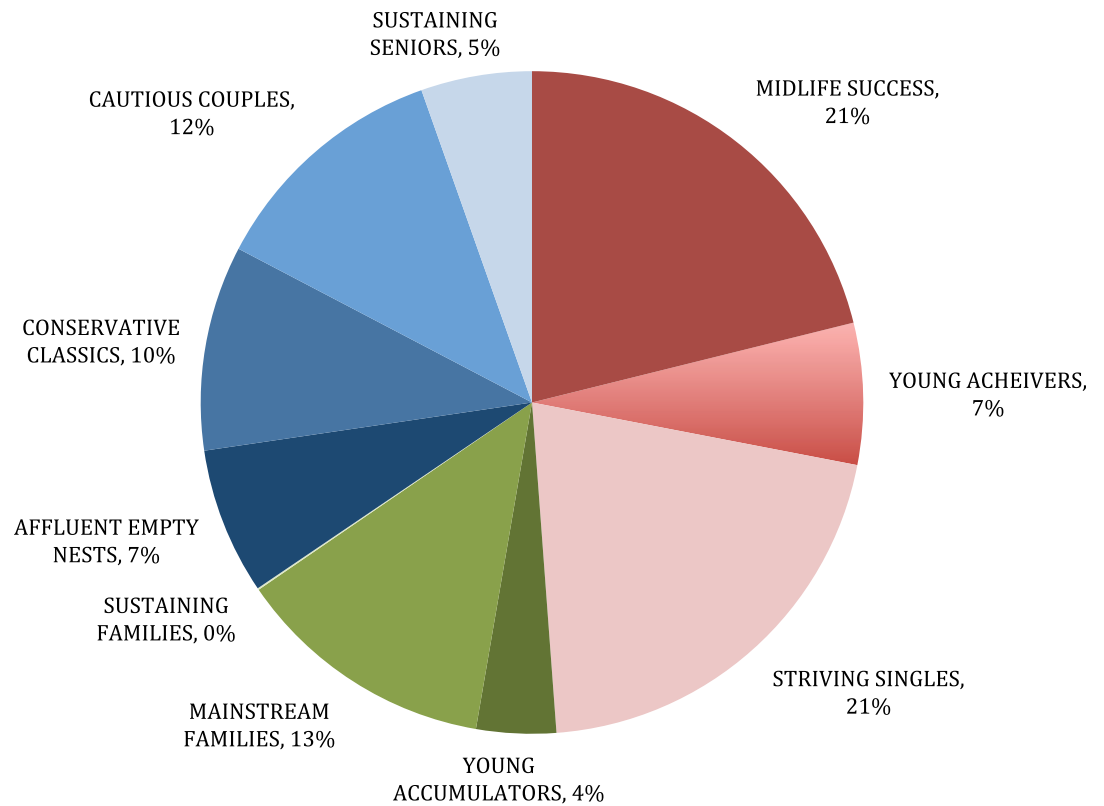


Figure 3: Primary Trade Area PRIZM Lifestage Segmentation (Source: Nielsen Claritas, Inc.).

In the case of Northfield, the primary trade area's share of the PRIZM Lifestage categories is heavily skewed to "Younger Years" categorizing 49% of the households (as shown in red shades in Figure 3). Younger years are households that typically do not have children in the home. The large percentage of "Striving Singles" can easily be misinterpreted. College students frequently fall in this category because their earnings do not register with the market segmentation methodology.

"Family Life" shown in green represents 17% of the households. These are households with kids in the home and the vast majority of them are middle income.

"Mature Years" are shown in blue represent 34% of the households in the Northfield/Roxbury zip codes. Typically these are households where the kids have left the home. Many households include retirees. For Northfield, half of these households are relatively affluent (17% of the total) while the other half (17% of the total) may struggle to make ends meet.

2.2.2 Key Observations

- Based on an even more detailed look at market segmentation, a majority of households in the Northfield primary trade area enjoy outdoor activities including outdoor recreation. This reflects a strong opportunity to create Northfield as an outdoor recreation destination as identified in the community input.
- Households in the primary trade area are relatively evenly split between high and medium socioeconomic status with a relatively low population in a low economic situation.
- Students, while skewing the population younger and appearing to have less income do represent a great opportunity for Northfield. The data in the zip code survey disputes the comment that students "do not shop" in Northfield as nearly one in every five customer visits was from a student.

2.3 Retail Market Analysis

Northfield is a retail center serving the primary market defined and described above. In this section the Northfield market will be examined to identify potential opportunities for new or expanded stores by examining “retail leakage.” This will allow the community to assess what kind of additional stores might be attracted to Northfield and will help individual existing businesses understand how they might diversify product lines.

Retail Stores	2013 Demand (Consumer Expenditures)	2013 Supply (Retail Sales)	Opportunity Gap/Surplus
Total Retail Sales Incl Eating and Drinking Places	162,098,157	116,644,498	45,453,659
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers-441	31,738,703	678,252	31,060,451
Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores-442	2,930,969	126,159	2,804,810
Electronics and Appliance Stores-443	4,071,599	4,080,936	(9,337)
Building Material, Garden Equip Stores -444	13,954,593	14,329,409	(374,816)
Food and Beverage Stores-445	18,624,863	10,305,496	8,319,367
Health and Personal Care Stores-446	7,348,243	5,974,887	1,373,356
Pharmacies and Drug Stores-44611	5,853,657	5,964,866	(111,209)
Cosmetics, Beauty Supplies, Perfume Stores-44612	505,329	0	505,329
Optical Goods Stores-44613	330,014	0	330,014
Other Health and Personal Care Stores-44619	659,243	10,021	649,222
Gasoline Stations-447	16,027,893	14,952,731	1,075,162
Gasoline Stations With Conv Stores-44711	11,785,489	14,952,731	(3,167,242)
Other Gasoline Stations-44719	4,242,404	0	4,242,404
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores-448	7,762,055	401,849	7,360,206
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, Music Stores-451	4,269,451	586,800	3,682,651
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical Inst Stores-4511	2,348,879	410,013	1,938,866
Book, Periodical and Music Stores-4512	1,920,572	176,787	1,743,785
General Merchandise Stores-452	19,541,815	493,652	19,048,163
Miscellaneous Store Retailers-453	4,906,294	177,860	4,728,434
Florists-4531	173,477	0	173,477
Office Supplies, Stationery, Gift Stores-4532	1,592,209	0	1,592,209
Used Merchandise Stores-4533	569,241	0	569,241
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers-4539	2,571,367	177,860	2,393,507
Foodservice and Drinking Places-722	16,982,527	2,862,779	14,119,748
Full-Service Restaurants-7221	7,950,863	2,090,468	5,860,395
Limited-Service Eating Places-7222	6,820,153	675,536	6,144,617
Special Foodservices-7223	1,318,908	0	1,318,908
Drinking Places -Alcoholic Beverages-7224	892,603	96,775	795,828

Figure 4: Retail Sales Gap for Northfield primary trade area. Source: Neilson Claritas.

2.3.1 Retail Leakage in the Trade Areas

Retail leakage refers to the difference between the retail expenditures by residents living in a particular area and the retail sales produced by the stores located in the same area. If desired products are not available within that area, consumers will travel to other places or use different methods to obtain those products. Consequently, the dollars spent outside of the area are said to be “leaking.” If a community is a major retail center with a variety of stores it will be “attracting” rather than “leaking” retail sales. Even large communities may see leakage in certain retail categories while some small communities may be attractors in categories. Northfield is a leaking community in most retail categories.

Such an analysis is not an exact science. In some cases large outflow may indicate that money is being spent elsewhere (drug store purchases at a big box store or apparel purchases through the internet). It is important to note that this analysis accounts best for retail categories where households (rather than businesses) are essentially the only consumer groups. For example, lumberyards may have business sales that are not accounted for in consumer expenditures. Stores such as jewelry shops and clothing stores are more accurately analyzed using this technique.

The leakage study for Northfield is a “snapshot” in time. Consequently, there are factors that point to this being a more conservative look at retail potential depending on what factors are examined. Population growth, even though it is modest, means that there will be more customers in the future resulting in greater demand for retail.

A second factor making this study more conservative is that the leakage study only examines the market demand of the geographies defined as the primary trade area identified for Northfield. A successful store model might capture from beyond the defined primary trade geography and could foster a strong visitor market as well.

With these conservative factors in mind (meaning our numbers represent “minimum” potential and not “maximum” potential) the primary trade area selected store sales equaled \$116.6 million. Consumers in the same area demonstrate spending capacity of \$162.1 million in the same store types. Therefore, the primary trade area is leaking \$45.5 million in sales annually.

2.3.2 Detailed Retail Market Opportunity Tables

This section explores the retail trade patterns in greater detail. The tables on the following pages explore the individual retail categories where Northfield is leaking and gaining sales. This data should be used as an overall guide to retail market potential and should not substitute for detailed market research on the part of any business wishing to open in the area.

Please note that some categories are subsets of larger categories. The green column represents the consumer demand in the Northfield trade areas. The purple column represents the store sales for retailers in the trade areas. The blue column indicates the retail opportunity gaps and retail surpluses in each category. Red numbers indicate an inflow of dollars and black numbers indicate market leakage.

2.4 Key Market Opportunities

The retail market potential for Northfield combines many different facets of the data gathered above. Not simply a collection of numbers, retail markets depend on both quantitative and qualitative information. Moreover, just because there is retail market potential for a potential retail store type in no way ensures that success of that store type in the community. There are many reasons why a business might succeed or fail and the retail market is but one of those factors. However, this does provide a synopsis guide for the “best potential” opportunities in Northfield. These market opportunities are as follows:

Dining

The primary trade area is currently doing leaking \$14.1 million in dining sales. Northfield already has several successful dining establishments but does have the opportunity to capitalize on the leaking restaurant sales to fill in the gaps or provide for expansion of an existing establishment.

Food-Related Retail

The primary trade area is leaking \$8.3 million annually in food store sales. While this sales amount is not enough to support another full-line grocer, it could provide an opportunity for the existing grocery store to expand or for specialty food stores to augment existing offerings in Northfield.

Sporting Goods

Northfield leaks a substantial sum of \$1.9 million in sporting good stores. With the recreational opportunities in the community and the presence of Norwich University students, this could be a good opportunity to expand lines in existing stores or for a new store.

Clothing/Clothing Accessories Cluster

As with most small communities, the primary trade area for Northfield is leaking significant sales in clothing stores (\$7.4 million). This trend will likely remain strong as clothing stores tend to cluster in much larger markets. However, it does present an opportunity for small specialty stores that might fit in the walk-able area of downtown.

Furniture and Home Furnishings

The primary trade area is leaking \$2.8 million in the furniture/home furnishings category. This also represents an opportunity for a specialty home accessory store.

General Merchandise

The current market is leaking over \$19 million annually in this category. While this number is far away from the threshold of a big box store such as Wal-Mart and may not be reflecting the sales of the relatively new Dollar General store, it does show additional demand in this category,

Specialty Retail

Miscellaneous store leakage equals \$4.7 million a year showing an way for specialized retail categories to capture some of the lost sales in general merchandise in stores such as office supplies and gifts.



Vermont Downtown Action Team Report

Physical Plan

3.0 Physical Plan

3.1 Introduction

As a result of pre-charrette coordination and stakeholder input during the April 2014 charrette, the V-DAT team identified a series of physical recommendations in conjunction with market, branding and organization strategies discussed throughout this master plan report. The physical recommendations are divided out among public realm enhancements, development/redevelopment sites and building-specific project categories. These are identified and described throughout this section of the report, and it is noted where coordination among project categories may be required.

3.2 Assessment

From a physical standpoint, the following issues and opportunities need to be addressed. These are identified in [Figure 5: Context Diagram on page 21](#).

- “Connect the dots”: Safer and more attractive physical connections need to be provided among the Dog River Corridor, the Common/downtown core, the University and the surrounding neighborhoods. There is currently a lot of pedestrian activity between the University and downtown, however, sidewalks are in poor repair along Central Street (a heavily used pedestrian route) and sidewalks are missing along sections of South Main Street. Additionally, there are not sidewalks along Wall Street, connecting the riverfront with the downtown core.
- There are opportunities to better connect Norwich with downtown along the Dog River Corridor. Informal pathways exist today; these should be enhanced.
- The Town of Northfield is currently transforming the devastated properties along Water Street into a new park. There is an opportunity to use this as an opportunity to enhance the riparian environment of the Dog River, provide neighborhood and town-wide recreation/education opportunities, provide a stronger visual presence for the Dog River and provide a community gathering space.
- Friends of the Winooski have already implemented enhanced riparian buffers along the Dog River; however, many gaps remain with little or no buffer.
- Recent development of the Dollar General demonstrates the effectiveness of thoughtful design criteria. Existing development and vacant properties along North Main could be enhanced to improve the gateway approach into downtown.
- Numerous vibrant businesses exist within the downtown core, which could be made significantly more inviting to potential clients, diners, and shoppers by improving their exterior appearance.
- The older buildings comprising the downtown core are limited in terms of ADA accessibility.
- Several improvements have been implemented within and around the Common. Additional consideration should be given to how to take better advantage of this space and enhance the level of activity downtown.

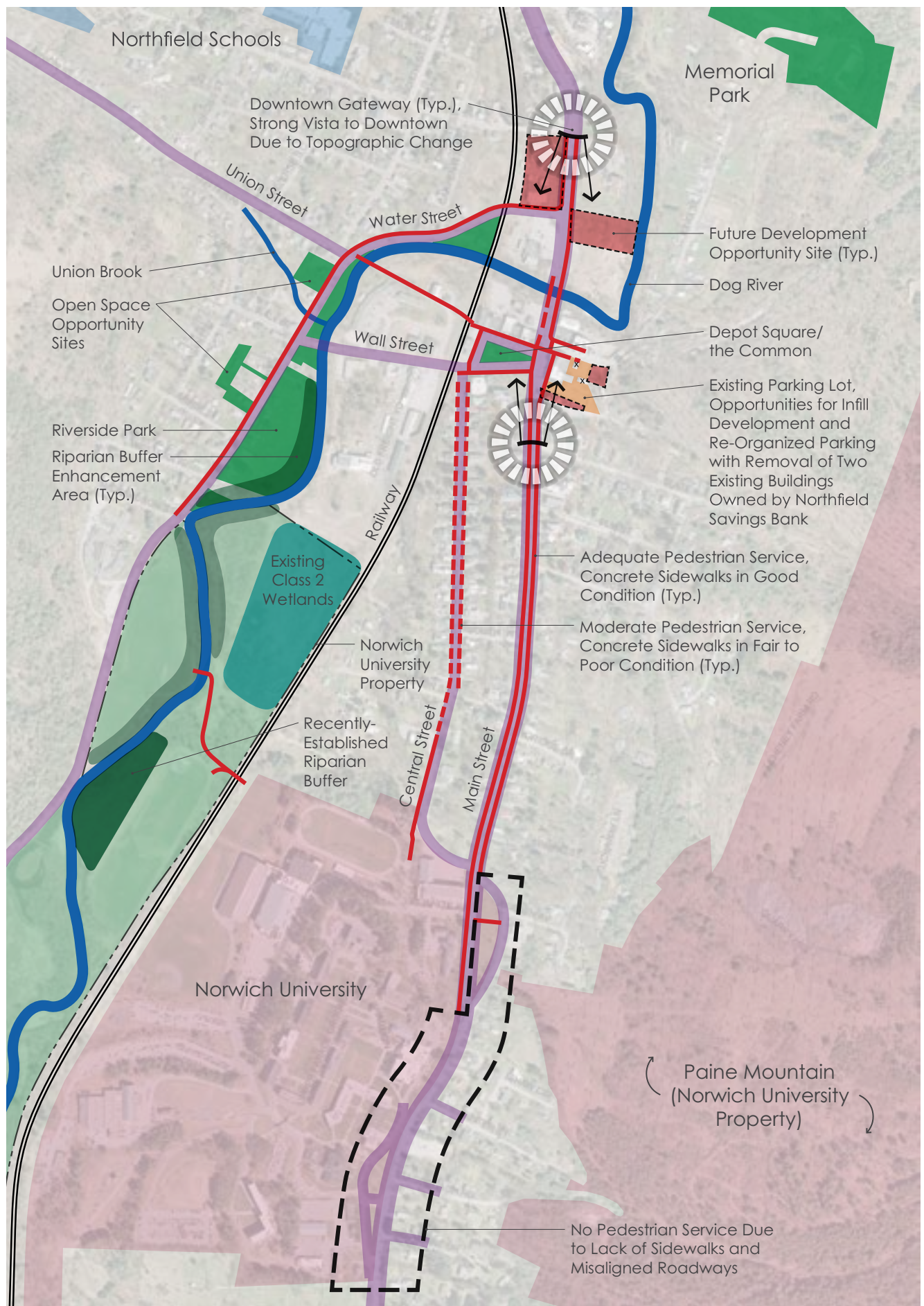


Figure 5: Context Diagram

3.3 Physical Plan Overview

As an overview to the physical component of the plan, the following is a description of the primary goals as well as a general description of the overall master plan. Specific projects within the master plan are then further described in later sections of this chapter. Refer to [Figure 6: Illustrative Master Plan on page 23](#).

3.3.1 Physical Planning and Design Goals

- Enhance the desirability of living downtown.
- Identify projects, strategies and enhancements that are realistic for Northfield to achieve.
- Enhance and expand the open space network and connections among significant open spaces.
- Reinforce the connections between the downtown core and the Norwich University campus.
- Enhance pedestrian safety throughout the downtown core and between the downtown core and adjacent neighborhoods and districts.
- Enhance ADA accommodations throughout the downtown core.
- Enhance the aesthetic appeal of existing buildings and any new infill development.
- Activate the downtown core with appropriate uses and by providing flexibility and accommodations for existing and new events/programming.
- Incorporate sustainable practices that improve the health of the Dog River and resiliency of Northfield.

3.3.2 Master Plan Summary

The primary components of the master plan are illustrated in [Figure 5: Context Diagram on page 21](#) and [Figure 6: Illustrative Master Plan on page 23](#). Recommendations are organized around four primary geographic areas including the Gateway Areas (gateways leading into downtown); the Downtown Core, the Dog River Corridor and the Norwich University Area.

- **Gateway Areas:** The gateway areas include the north gateway into downtown in the vicinity of Vine and Main Streets and the south gateway in the vicinity of Slate Avenue and Main Street. The V-DAT team focused its recommendations on the north gateway area where infill development and existing business enhancement opportunities, coupled with streetscape enhancements could energize this approach into downtown.
- **Downtown Core:** The downtown core is the Depot Square area, Common and East Street area of downtown. The downtown core is well defined with a strong sense of place. Strategies here focus on minor enhancements to the Common (building upon work done to date), creation of a unique district along East Street, infill development opportunities in place of underutilized properties behind the Mayo Building. Additionally, strategies include façade enhancements for several businesses on Depot Square and East Street as well as improved ADA access for older buildings within the core.
- **Dog River Corridor:** This area includes the portion of the Dog River corridor south of Wall Street and includes the proposed park along Water Street where a significant amount of flood devastation occurred, proposed community gardens and neighborhood open space within the Water Street neighborhood, environmental enhancements, pathway connections between downtown and Norwich University and streetscape enhancements along Wall Street, better linking the new park with the Common.
- **Norwich University Area:** This area includes the neighborhood between the University and downtown core, centered on Central Street and the Norwich frontage along South Main Street. Norwich University is implementing its master plan; however, there are opportunities to enhance physical connections between the University and downtown (in addition to programmatic and branding connections described later in this report). These enhancements include improved pedestrian access and safety along South Main Street and sidewalk improvements/repair along Central Street.

These recommendations and strategies are identified and described in more detail in the following sections.



Figure 6: Illustrative Master Plan

3.4 Improving the Public Realm: Resiliency and Public Infrastructure

A number of public realm enhancements are proposed throughout the study area as introduced above. These are described below in more detail and identified in Figure 6: Illustrative Master Plan on page 23.

3.4.1 North Gateway Area Main Street Streetscape:

The north gateway into downtown (along Main Street) occurs in the vicinity of Vine Street, where the curvature of the road and topographic change create a distinct entrance into the downtown area. Similarly, the south gateway occurs in the vicinity of Slate Avenue where the change in road alignment and topography creates a distinct entrance from the south. The downtown core sets in a slight valley, lower than the approach from both directions, providing for a strong sense of arrival.

In the vicinity of the north gateway, there are several development opportunity sites that could significantly enhance the gateway experience. Conversely, if not developed sensitively, these sites could detract from the gateway. These development opportunities are described later in this report under Section 3.5, Polishing Up a Great Downtown: Private Sector Improvements, however, public realm enhancements should be considered in conjunction with these opportunity sites in the form of streetscape enhancements. Northfield recently implemented streetscape and pedestrian safety enhancements along Main Street and Depot Square, in the vicinity of the Northfield Common. These streetscape enhancements should extend northward to Vine Street (or further) and should include ornamental lighting, banners, enhanced sidewalk paving (where needed) and crosswalks and street trees. Street trees on the west side of Main Street along the Barry T. Chouinard property frontage and exposed rock out-croppings on the east side already set the stage for further enhancements. Additional tree plantings along the True Value/Kenyon's and Dollar General frontages will help to provide continuity of the streetscape. The "before/after" photo rendering in Figures 8 and 9 illustrates the potential for these streetscape enhancements.



Figure 7: Northern Gateway:
Existing Conditions

This view is taken looking south along Highway 12/Main Street just past its intersection with Water Street. In recent years, quality infill construction has taken place on the left side of the highway with a very contextually appropriate Dollar General Store. However, on the right side of the highway there is a lack of edge definition that could frame views to the downtown.



Figure 8: Northern Gateway:
Existing Conditions

In the area where snow is currently piled in the corner of the Ace Hardware property it is this new landscape buffer zone is strongly recommended. The precedent for this approach exists less than a block north of this location where copious tree plantings create a strong edge to the roadway. The presence of these trees, accompanied by vintage light poles similar to those being installed in Depot Square with branded banners, would simultaneously create a strong edge, frame views toward downtown, and foreshadow arrival to downtown. Finally, the inclusion of a trailblazer/gateway sign component of a comprehensive, community-wide wayfinding signage system (discussed later in the report) would provide clear orientation to the traveler.

Specific considerations include:

- As sidewalks and driveways into properties are repaved, ensure that the sidewalk pavement continues across the driveway apron so that the pedestrian zone is prominent and visible to motorists.
- Streetscape enhancements should be coordinated with site enhancements for True Value/Kenyon's as described in [Section 3.5](#).
- The Town of Northfield should work with the owners of the Gulf station to the south of True Value/Kenyon's to encourage planting islands and street trees to limit the expanse of curb cuts.
- Street trees on the west side of the street (no overhead utilities) should be high canopied trees that allow visibility beneath the canopies to storefronts. On the east side (overhead utilities), the Town should work with property owners to get easements for higher canopied trees set back behind the overhead lines where possible. Additionally, lower ornamental trees can be used under the utility lines, provided they are placed so as not to block important views.
- Ornamental lighting should utilize the same fixtures as used around the Common.
- Banners should incorporate branding for both the Town of Northfield and Norwich University as described later in [Chapter 4.0](#) of this report.



Figure 9: Example of paving to show pedestrian zone.

First Steps: Coordinate with property owners to make sure private site planning efforts allow for streetscape enhancements.

Next Steps: Design and implement streetscape enhancements for Main Street from the downtown core to Vine Street.

Long Term: Extend streetscape enhancements north of Vine Street.

3.4.2 Downtown Core – The Common Enhancements:

Many enhancements have been incorporated around the Common, particularly with the recent streetscape enhancements along Depot Square. Additional minor public realm enhancements for the Common should be considered that could make a significant positive impact, particularly in conjunction with adjacent façade enhancements and building accessibility enhancements as described in [Section 3.5](#) of this chapter. These include:

- Ensure clear sightlines through the Common by keeping trees limbed up, removing any shrubs or ornamental trees that block views and avoiding the planting of these in the future.
- Activate the space on a daily basis by providing moveable tables and chairs.



Figure 10: Examples of moveable tables and chairs.

Moveable furniture provides maximum flexibility by allowing park users to sit alone, in groups, in sun or in shade. The Common is a tremendous asset to downtown; more opportunities should be provided to better utilize it throughout the year. If there are concerns of theft, chairs and tables can be secured with long locked cables that still allow movability within a certain distance. Ideally, the tables and chairs would only be secured overnight to ensure maximum flexibility.

First Steps: Limb trees and remove any shrubs/trees that block visibility.

First Steps: Start by experimenting with a limited number of tables and chairs to test the popularity and feasibility.

Long Term: Expand the program by adding additional tables and chairs.

3.4.3 Downtown Core – East Street Improvements:

East Street, between Main Street and the King Street/Turkey Hill Road intersection, offers the potential to become a unique destination in downtown with the existing Paine Mountain Brewing and the potential for additional restaurant venues with new infill development (as described in [Section 3.5](#)). Public realm enhancements to consider (in addition to façade treatments described in [Section 3.5](#)) include streetscape improvements, lighting, and temporary outdoor dining areas or “parklets”. Specific enhancements include:

- Create a street “canopy” using overhead string lights. Coordinate with building owners to secure string lights (alternatively, secure to utility poles if available or with new ornamental poles).
- Close a couple of parallel parking spaces temporarily during warmer months to expand the sidewalk area and create “parklets” for outdoor dining. Ideally, a raised platform should be used to create a surface flush with the sidewalk and planters or bollards and chains can be used to define the boundaries of the space, separating it from traffic. There are numerous guidelines from various communities available for creating parklets. These are available online and can be found by searching “parklets.”



Figure 11: Example of overhead treatments to enhance the street.



Figure 13: Examples of outdoor events such as food truck rallies.

- Consider closing off the street occasionally for outdoor events such as brew festivals or food truck rally's.
- Consider long-term streetscape enhancements in conjunction with adjacent infill development (described in Section 3.3) to extend the environment already established in the downtown core. Streetscape enhancements should include ornamental lighting, poles for overhead string lights (if mounting to buildings not feasible for the long term), banners, street trees, flower pots and new sidewalk paving.

First Steps: Experiment with overhead string lights, connecting to existing buildings.

First Steps: Experiment with parklets and expanded outdoor dining areas, beginning simply by just closing off a couple of parking spaces, utilizing existing street surface, and defining area with planters.

First Steps: Experiment with closing off street for occasional festival/events.

Next Steps: Further develop parklet program utilizing raised platforms and custom planter/fencing/public art for use to define the perimeter.

Long Term: Design and implement streetscape enhancements.



Figure 12: Example of temporary parklet.

3.4.4 Dog River Corridor – Wall Street Streetscape Enhancements:

The proposed Riverside Park, described below in [Section 3.4.5](#), is only a short distance from the Common and the downtown core; however, it seems to be much further because of the undefined pedestrian environment along Wall Street. As Riverside Park is developed, it will be important to consider streetscape enhancements for Wall Street to create a stronger pedestrian link between Northfield's two most significant open spaces. A "before/after" photo rendering illustrates the potential for an improved streetscape below. Specific enhancements should consider the following:

- Provide a well-defined sidewalk along the south side street edge. If not possible to provide a curb, sidewalks can be flush with pavement but should be constructed of concrete and visibly different from road surface. This sidewalk treatment should extend across driveways and parking areas.
- Provide ornamental street lights to match those being used downtown.
- Provide Banners highlighting both the Town of Northfield and Norwich University branding as described in [Chapter 4.0](#)
- Provide street trees where possible along the north side of the street (no overhead utilities). On the south side, work with property owners to provide trees in as possible, set back from the utility lines. Utilize a mix of evergreen and deciduous trees to provide seasonal interest.



Figure 14: Wall Street Streetscape: Existing Conditions

This view is taken along Wall Street looking toward Depot Square with the new Police Station on the left. As mentioned, this streetscape suffers from both a lack of visual appeal and functional construction. From the standpoint of visual appeal, there is no clarification to where the roadway begins or ends. From the standpoint of functional construction, there are no sidewalks offering a sense of safety for the pedestrian, nor lane striping to clarify travel lanes for the motorist. Moreover, the lack of any vertical elements in the form of trees, signs, lights, etc. on either side of the road does nothing to frame views to the Square and likely contributes to faster-than-desired speeds by motorists.



Figure 15: Wall Street Streetscape: Proposed Conditions

The delineation of the roadway by virtue of the installation of sidewalks and lane striping clarifies both the roadway for the motorist and the safety zone for the pedestrian. By continuing the regular installation of the same cypress tree plantings found on Depot Square along Wall Street, the experience to be found at the Square is foreshadowed, the edge of the roadway is further defined, and views to the downtown are framed. The installation of vintage light poles similar to those being installed in Depot Square with branded banners would foreshadow arrival to the Square, the heart and soul of downtown. Finally, the inclusion of a trail-blazer/gateway sign component of a comprehensive, community-wide wayfinding signage system would provide clear orientation to the traveler.

Next Steps: Prepare streetscape design plans.

Long Term: Implement streetscape.



Figure 16: Participants in the park workshop.

3.4.5 Dog River Corridor – Riverside Park:

Northfield's plans to address the devastation along Water Street through the creation of a significant new park will provide Northfield with an outstanding recreational amenity that will enhance the livability and sustainability of the community. Building upon concepts developed by Norwich University Students, the

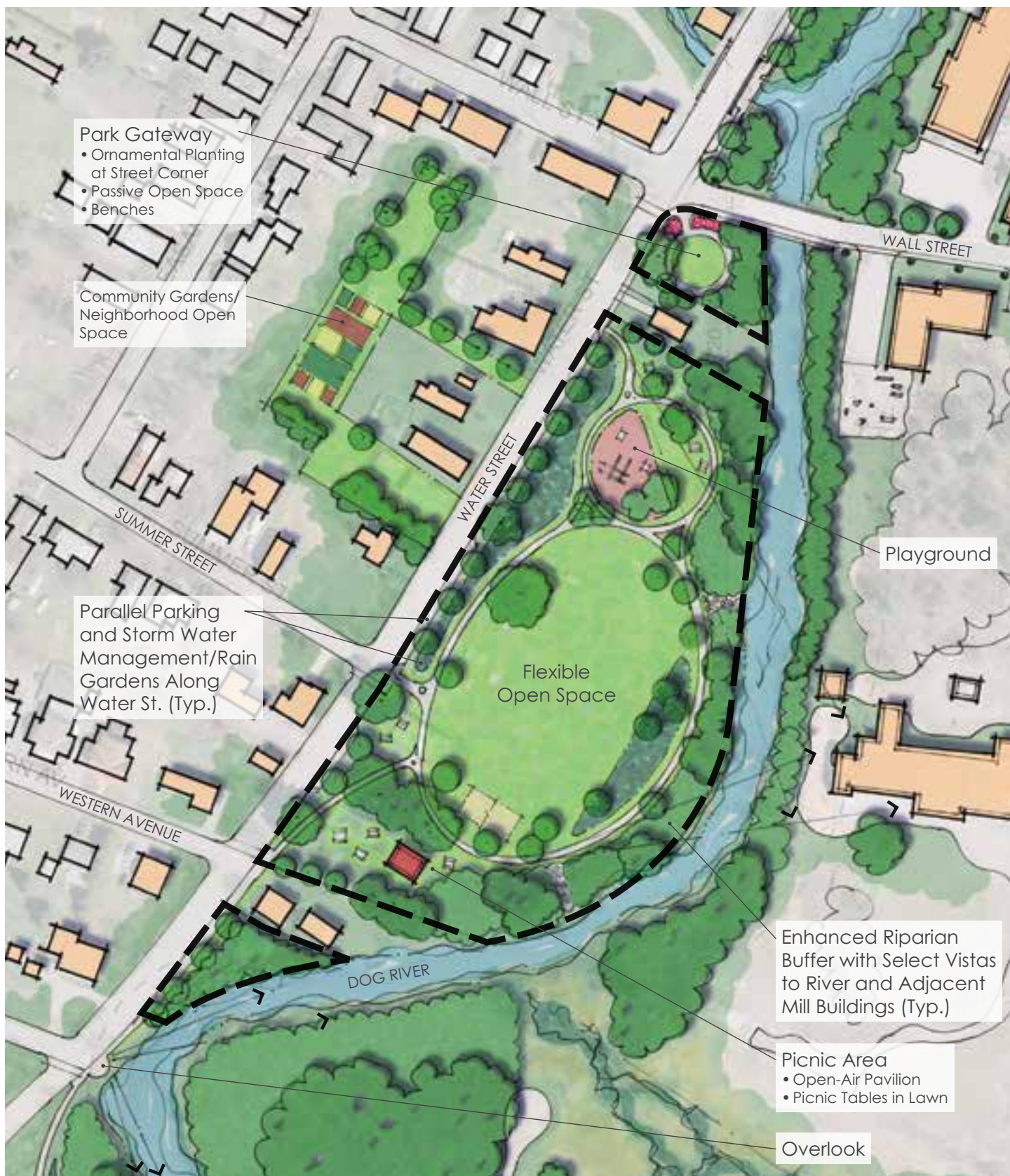


Figure 17: Riverside Park Illustrative Plan

V-DAT team conducted a park workshop with stakeholders whose input further guided the concept plan shown in Figure 6: Illustrative Master Plan on page 23 and Figure 17: Riverside Park Illustrative Plan on page 31.

During the park workshop, participants identified the following goals to consider in developing a park:

- Exemplify environmental sensitivity;
- Promote social gathering;
- Explore educational opportunities (natural environment, healthy eating, exercise);
- Protect and enhance the riparian buffer;
- Provide new plantings within the park;
- Accommodate users of all ages and abilities;
- Provide flexible use areas;
- Provide pedestrian/bike trails along the river and within the park;
- Provide playground, open-air pavilion, seating and picnicking areas and the appropriate amount of parking; and
- The park should NOT include a dog park.

Recognizing that a successful park will depend upon multiple partners, the stakeholder participants identified the following organizations and groups who should be considered as potential partners. Partnerships could take on a variety of forms, including funding partners, maintenance/service partners and events/programming partners.

Detailed meeting notes from the park workshop are provided in Appendix 1.

The above comments and those included in the appendices serve as the foundation for the park concept as illustrated in Figure 17: Riverside Park Illustrative Plan on page 31. The concept should consider the following elements:

- Consider a park gateway at the intersection of Wall Street and Water Street in the small portion of the park that is detached from the larger portion.

This gateway could include a small passive open space (defined by canopy trees), highly visible ornamental/seasonal planting, benches and a sidewalk connection along Water Street to the larger portion of the park to the south. Plantings should be comprised of high canopy trees or low shrubs, flowers, and groundcovers so as not to block views into the space.

- Provide a trail network through the park, along its perimeters. Provide a series of loops that allow for longer and shorter walks, while defining different use areas.
- Provide a large flexible open space in the center of the park, at its widest dimension, to accommodate events, passive play and “pick-up” games (as opposed to a designated sports field).
- Explore the option to include a playground and picnic tables in a well-defined “outdoor room” near the northern portion of the site. Care should be taken to preserve views to the former mill building across the Dog River upon entry into this portion of the park from Water Street.



Figure 18: Examples of uses for the flexible open space proposed for the center of the park.



Figure 19: Existing Conditions of the proposed "outdoor room."



Figure 20: Example of riparian buffer.



Figure 21: Example of bio-retention and rain gardens adjacent to parking areas.



Figure 22: Foundation and step stones from former houses in the flood plain.

- Explore the option to provide a picnic pavilion and additional picnic tables at the southern end of the park within the "outdoor room" defined by the existing evergreen trees. Consider a volleyball court within this space or adjacent to, within the southern end of the large flexible open space described above.
- Remove invasive Knotweed and provide a minimum 50' wide enhanced riparian buffer along the river's edge. Use plantings that include tall native trees grouped to frame views to the old mill building across the river and lower native plantings within the view corridors.
- Consider an overlook platform at the terminus of Richardson Avenue (1 block south of Western Avenue) to take advantage of long views of the river to the north and south.
- Accommodate parking with on-street parallel parking (perhaps using a different paving material, preferably permeable paving) along Water Street.
- Incorporate bio retention areas and rain gardens adjacent to the parallel parking and on the east side of the large flexible open space. These bio retention areas and rain gardens should be highly visible and serve as interpretive opportunities for visitors to the park.
- Incorporate meadow plantings or low mow areas where maintained lawn is not necessary.
- Provide interpretive signage that addresses environmental and cultural/historic elements of the site.
- Provide park identity signage at the northern and southern park entrances.
- Salvage stones from foundations and steps and incorporate into overall park design.
- Plan park in conjunction with potential community gardens and neighborhood open space described below.

First Steps: Using concept plan illustrated in this report, prepare detailed park design documents.

First Steps: Begin process of removing invasive Knotweed from the river's edge.

Next Steps: Implement park plan and begin programming park.

Long Term: Continue park programming and exploring ways to include in Labor Day Festival.

3.4.6 Dog River Corridor – Community Gardens and Neighborhood Open Space:

In conjunction with the development of Riverside Park, there is the opportunity to create neighborhood open space and community gardens within the now vacant lots on the west side of Water Street. The V-DAT team believes that community gardens would be more effective in lots such as these as opposed to locating them in Riverside Park and impacting the ability to create a large flexible open space. The open space and gardens should incorporate the following:

- Utilize ornamental fencing around the perimeter of the gardens (or black chain link at the very least) to create an attractive edge and to keep animals from the garden.
- For areas not utilized as community garden space, use tall canopy trees to define the pedestrian connections to Water Street and to distinguish the open space from adjacent private yards.
- Maintain visibility to Water Street.
- Provide identity signage and interpretive signage.

First Steps: Determine location for community garden and plant tall canopy trees around edges of remaining open space.

Next Steps: Design and implement the community garden.



Figure 23: Community garden examples.

3.4.7 Dog River Corridor – General Enhancements:

In addition to the enhancements described above, continue to build upon river corridor enhancements implemented by the Friends of the Winooski such as preservation of the Class 2 Wetlands to the southeast of Riverside Park and the recently established riparian buffer further to the south as shown in [Figure 5: Context Diagram on page 21](#) and [Figure 6: Illustrative Master Plan on page 23](#). Additional enhancements should include:

- Provide additional riparian buffers (minimum 50' in width) along remaining sections of the riverfront on both sides.
- Provide additional bio retention areas and rain gardens adjacent to the Norwich University Rugby Field.
- Provide a pathway connection between Riverside Park and Norwich University.
- Provide interpretive and way-finding signage along the pathway.

First Steps: Work with Norwich University to determine route for future pedestrian pathway connection.

Next Steps: Implement additional riparian buffers, bio retention and rain garden plantings.

Long Term: Implement pathway connection between Norwich University and Riverside Park.



Figure 24: Examples of interpretive signs and educational programs.

3.4.8 Norwich University Area – Pedestrian Safety Enhancements:

There is significant pedestrian traffic between Norwich University and the downtown core area along Central Street and Main Street. Additionally, there is a desire to enhance the downtown for Norwich students, faculty and staff, therefore, potentially increasing the amount of pedestrian traffic. With this in mind, pedestrian safety enhancements should be considered for this area. Along Central Street, these enhancements should focus on repairing the existing sidewalks to create even and consistent surfaces. More significant enhancements are required for South Main Street.

The existing sidewalk ends on the west side of South Main Street at the southern intersection with Crescent Avenue and extends into the campus via several flights of steps. This is the result of significant rock outcroppings immediately adjacent to the roadway, further to the south, leaving no room for a sidewalk. The sidewalk on the east side ends at the northern intersection of Crescent Avenue and does not extend any further to the south, as shown on [Figure 5: Context Diagram on page 21](#). Because the rock outcrops prevent the ability to create a sidewalk on the west side of South Main Street, consideration should be given to providing a sidewalk on the east side between the northern intersection of Crescent Avenue and the intersection with Park Avenue to the south, with two additional street crossings as shown on [Figure 27: Existing conditions at Norwich Campus opposite of Crescent Ave. on page 37](#), Potential Pedestrian Enhancements Along Main Street. The land on the east side of Main Street is relatively level and could accommodate a sidewalk. While requiring pedestrians to cross the roadway is not ideal, it is preferable to providing no sidewalk at all.

First Steps: Work with Norwich University, other property owners and VTRANS to explore feasibility of providing sidewalk along east side of street and additional crosswalks.

Next Steps: Implement sidewalk and crosswalks.



Figure 25: Existing conditions at Norwich Campus opposite of Crescent Ave.



Figure 26: Property along Main Street where sidewalk could be located.

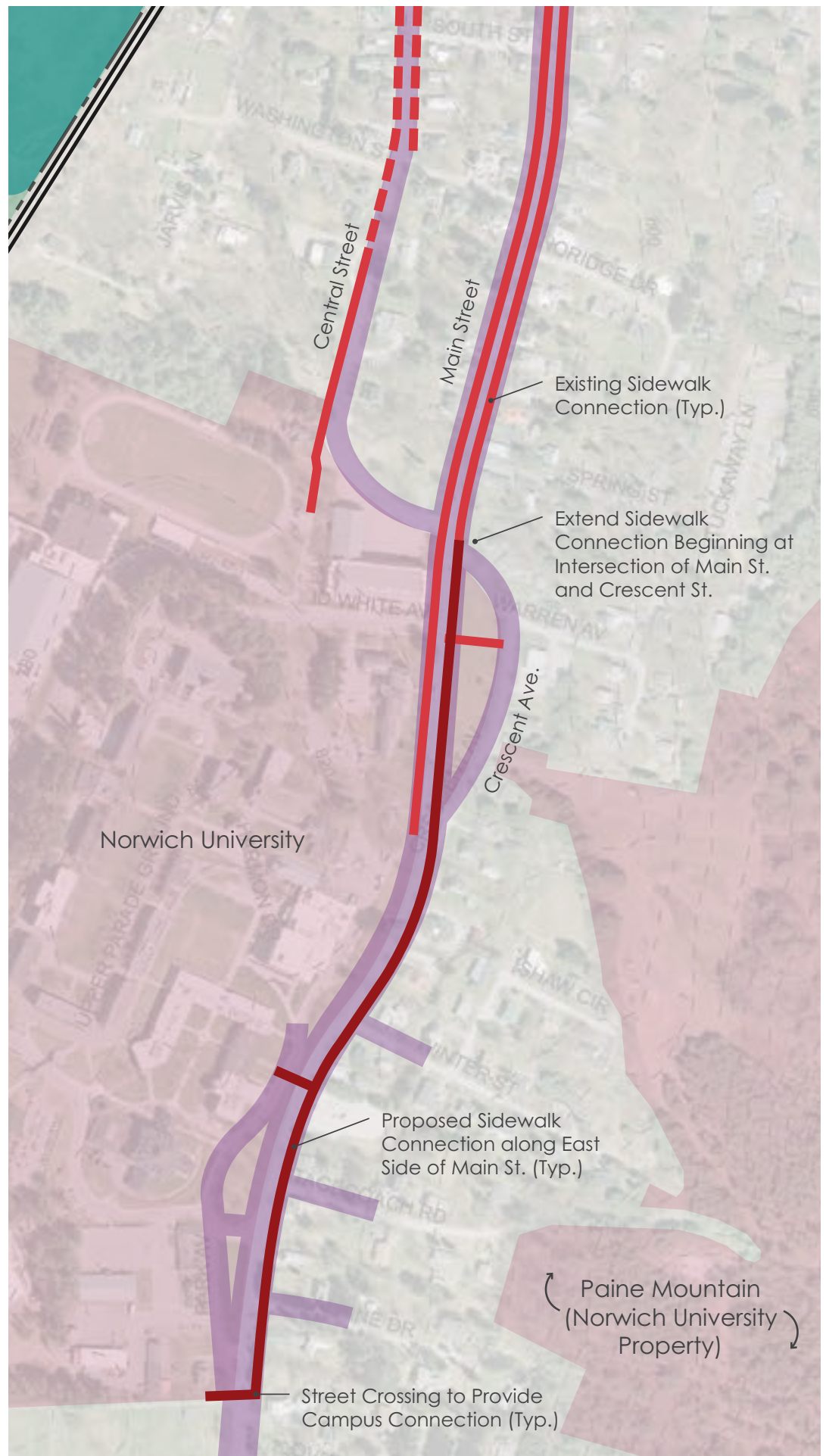


Figure 27: Existing conditions at Norwich Campus opposite of Crescent Ave.

3.5 Polishing Up a Great Downtown: Private Sector Improvements

While the majority of physical enhancements identified in this plan occur within the public realm, the public improvements are ultimately designed to set the stage for future investment for private sector investment in Northfield. This section profiles opportunities for new investment, building improvements, and potential development/redevelopment opportunities that will foster economic investment in Northfield.

3.5.1 Kenyon's True Value

The Friends of the Winooski and Town of Northfield have been working with Kenyon's True Value to explore reducing the amount of impervious surface and implementing rain gardens near the intersection of Water and Main Streets in addition to those implemented along the rear of the property, parallel to the railroad. There is an opportunity to proceed with this work while enhancing the gateway image (as described previously) as well as while enhancing the layout and efficiency of the parking lot as shown in [Figure 6: Illustrative Master Plan on page 23](#). As this work moves forward, the following should be considered:

- Reduce the width of the curb cuts using planting islands along Water Street and Main Street as much as possible while allowing for truck maneuverability through the site for deliveries and pick up.
- Provide tall canopy shade trees within the new planting islands along the perimeter of the proposed bio retention area to reinforce the Water Street and Main Street street edges (as part of the streetscape enhancements described previously).
- Reorganize and stripe the parking area, utilizing standard minimum dimensions for parking spaces (9' x 18') and drive aisles (24') to maximize the efficiency of the lot.
- Allow for future phased development of the building expansion (outside of the floodplain) as shown in [Figure 6 on page 23](#).



Figure 28: Kenyon's True Value: Existing Conditions

In addition to site improvements, Kenyon's True Value has the opportunity to expand on the site while improving the building façade to better face Main Street. The images and descriptions below detail this opportunity.

The faded, shingled faux-mansard roof structure “dates” the building and gives it a tired appearance. This dynamic is exacerbated by the multiple materials that are featured on the exterior that communicate a message that this building has been modified in many ways at many times in an ad hoc fashion without any sense of direction or cohesion.

The owner of Kenyon's True Value had already begun conversations with True Value's corporate franchise architect to investigate options for redesigning the exterior of their building to create an updated and unified appearance. The corporate design was not bad at all, but the proposed rendering herein is submitted as a way to make the corporate design even more stylistically current. The basic features of this approach include boxing out the entry area with slotted metal siding in a red finish to coordinate with True Value's corporate colors. This entry roof structure would receive the corporate signage system, “Kenyon's True Value,” and be illuminated by a series of gooseneck lights in galvanized finish. The balance of the faux-mansard roof structure would receive slotted metal siding in a warm gray color to serve as a backdrop to statuary signage that portrays the range of retail offerings within the store. For maintenance purposes, the vinyl siding would be removed. In its place a wainscot base of split-face CMU would be installed. Atop the CMU base would be brick panels (thin slices of brick affixed to a substrate like those used on the Dollar General store across the street) that would be mounted to the existing wall substrate. Finally, the striping of the parking lot would clarify both parking spaces and travel lanes.

First Steps: Design and implement the proposed rain garden area, allowing for the future streetscape enhancements described previously.

Next Steps: Complete the expansion and façade improvements to Kenyon's True Value.

Next Steps: Reorganize and stripe the parking lot in conjunction with façade improvements



Figure 29: Kenyon's True Value: Proposed Conditions

3.5.2 North Gateway Area – Future Development Opportunity Site:

There is a fairly significant vacant property on the east side of North Main Street between the Dollar General and the Gray Building on the site of the former mill site on the Dog River. While the V-DAT team was unable to explore development concepts for this site during the charrette, it should be preserved as a future opportunity, particularly for development that could complement the Gray Building uses and/or make those uses more viable. Whatever the development would be, it should be oriented to the street with parking to the side or rear, incorporating a high quality façade (as the Town required of the Dollar General). Ideally, the use would be 2-3 floors allowing a potential upper level connection with the Gray Building site and providing more of a scale impact for this gateway corridor.



Figure 30: Future Development Site.

3.5.3 Downtown Core – East Street Infill Development Opportunity

Another downtown infill opportunity occurs within the properties behind the Mayo Building and Town Hall. Currently this area is not utilized to the highest and best use and could be improved by removing the existing white building and the former police building. This would allow for a more efficient organization (and expansion) of the surface parking resources and development of infill development oriented to the East Street frontage, further enhancing that street as a unique district as described previously. Specific considerations include:

- After removal of the two existing buildings, “daylight” the existing spring which flows beneath the white house and parking lot, and provide some landscape buffer along its edges.
- Reorganize the parking, using the day-lighted spring as a boundary between two distinct surface parking areas.
- Create a 3 story infill building behind the Mayo Building and along the East Street street edge. Ideally, this would be a mixed use building with restaurant uses on the ground floor and residential or office space above.

First Steps: Demolish white building and former police building.

Next Steps: Reorganize parking layout and daylight spring.

Long Term: Develop infill building along East Street.

3.5.4 Paine Mountain Brewery

The Paine Mountain Brewery is a significant addition to downtown Northfield filling a niche that is much needed in the community. This storefront for the brewery is being renovated by the owner of the Knotty Shamrock who has done an outstanding job of designing a stunning entrance to the



Figure 31: Future Development Site.

adjacent building that houses a bustling bar and restaurant. The architecture of this building is quite simple and lacks any significant style or ornamentation. Moreover, any detail that might exist is denied by virtue of painting all trims white and the later addition of a vestibule that prevents views to the historic doors.

The adjacent Knotty Shamrock features a wonderful triadic color scheme of forest green, rust red and golden yellow. Since these two businesses will relate to each other, it makes sense to unify the adjacent storefront utilizing the same triadic color scheme on the entry to Paine Mountain Brewery. A new logo/sign was designed for Paine Mountain Brewery and it is suggested that this logo/sign be painted directly onto the brick. While it is recognized that this will be an on-going maintenance issue, the benefit of creating an artificial sense of age and texture outweighs the necessity to repaint the sign every five or so years. It is proposed that a number of gooseneck lights similar to those used on Knotty Shamrock be used here to illuminate the painted sign. The storefront cornice, display window framing and doors should be painted in one of the three triadic colors as shown. The green paint of the storefront trim has the added benefit of unifying the corporate color scheme of the BCK Real Estate business located in the left storefront.

Finally, the application of vinyl adhesive window signage utilizing the logo designed by the owner has the added benefit of identifying the business inside and introducing texture to the display windows without preventing views to the interior.



Figure 32: Paine Mountain Brewery: Existing Conditions



Figure 33: Paine Mountain Brewery: Proposed Conditions

3.5.5 Bicycle Express

The owner of Bicycle Express designed, fabricated, and installed a custom laser-cut sign featuring a green and blue color scheme that has become synonymous with their corporate identity. Regrettably, nothing else on the storefront or building is painted with these colors that would serve to unify the building components together. Moreover, this is exacerbated by the current trim color being a pale red that merely blends in with the adjacent red brick. Ironically, the adjacent storefront is occupied by a business called Trans-Video that also features a predominantly blue color scheme.

By painting the storefront cornice, bulkhead framing, supporting column, and adjacent doors blue both businesses color schemes become integrated with the building ornamentation. Moreover, by selecting a color that contrasts with the red brick, both the trim and the brick are highlighted. By painting the door to Bicycle Express their secondary green color, entrance to the respective businesses is clarified. The installation of gooseneck lights serves to illuminate the sign in a subtle and appropriate way (backlit lights are prohibited by local ordinance) at night. The application of vinyl adhesive signage in the form of bicycle tires serves to 'anchor' the bulkhead area to the ground and add visual interest to the bottom of the storefront. Finally, by mounting an actual bike to the upper façade creates a whimsical opportunity to utilize iconic signage to visually represent the nature of the interior business in a creative way.



Figure 34: Bicycle Express: Existing Conditions



Figure 35: Bicycle Express: Proposed Conditions

3.5.6 O'Maddi's Deli and Café and Depot Square Pizzeria

The building occupied by O'Maddi's Deli and Café and Depot Square Pizzeria is a remarkably intact historic structure in downtown Northfield. With a few minor modifications to the façade, this building can have an even stronger presence on Depot Square. The drawings below show the existing conditions and proposed changes to the buildings. Simple changes like new matching awnings can provide consistency while keeping the doors of each establishment a separate color preserves the independence of each restaurant. While the signage of each is similar, they provide each restaurant a different color scheme and allow for window signs. Gooseneck lights similar to those used at the Knotty Shamrock can provide lighting. The building itself is enhanced with green paint trim that highlights its architectural features. The new sidewalks installed on Depot Square provide the opportunity for outdoor dining and seating.



Figure 36: O'Maddi's Deli and Cafe and Depot Square Pizzeria: Existing Conditions



Figure 37: O'Maddi's Deli and Cafe and Depot Square Pizzeria: Proposed Conditions

3.5.7 Providing Disabled Accessibility in Northfield

Providing American's with Disabilities Act accessibility is a function of removing barriers that prevent those with mobility challenges from accessing buildings. Currently accessing many of the buildings in the downtown is difficult for those in wheelchairs. The figures below show ramping improvements that can take place on a series of buildings in the downtown to provide accessibility. In some cases funding may be available to aid in completing these improvements.



Figure 39: Existing and Proposed Accessibility for The Common Café



Figure 38: Existing and Proposed Accessibility for the Mayo Building



Figure 40: Existing and Proposed Accessibility for Law Offices and Working Wise

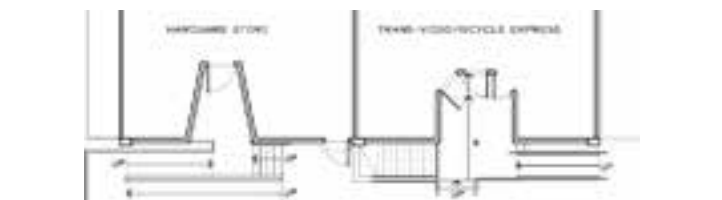


Figure 41: Existing and Proposed Accessibility for Fernandez Hardware, Trans-Video and Bike Express

3.6 Listing of Resiliency and Green Techniques In Implementing the Recommendations

Many of the recommendations for public and private improvements for Northfield involve a series of important techniques to provide green infrastructure and enhance resiliency in the case of a future flood event. While they are documented on a case-by-case basis above, they are also summarized below:

- Replacement of demolished Water Street housing with Riverside Park and Neighborhood Open Space/Community Gardens
- Establishment of riparian buffers on both sides along the Dog River within Riverside Park and between Riverside Park and Norwich University
- Incorporation of rain gardens and bio retention areas along Water Street, within Riverside Park and within the True Value/Kenyon's parking lot
- Daylighting of existing spring behind the Mayo Building
- Use of native and/or adapted trees and plant materials throughout
- Enhanced connections between Norwich University and downtown to encourage more downtown use by Norwich students, faculty and staff.



Vermont Downtown Action Team Report

Marketing Northfield

4.0 Telling Northfield's Story: Branding and Marketing Strategy

4.1 Background

Northfield has a rich history and plays a pivotal role as home to Norwich University. The community currently lacks a consistent brand identity that conveys the values and images that make Northfield important.

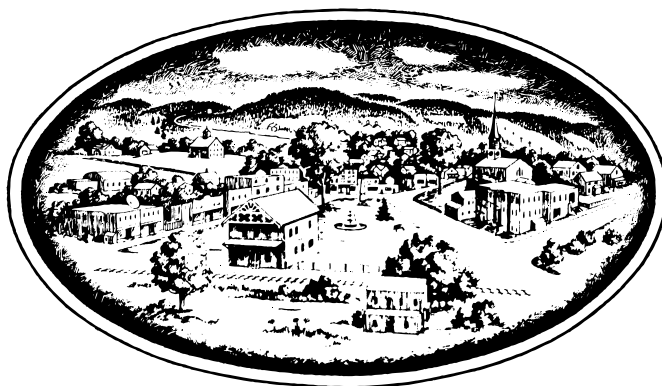
The following components of the identity system are presented along with a series of recommendations for Northfield to consider in implementing the system. There is not always a clear "roadmap" on implementing an identity system and the maturation of the system into a "brand" will take the efforts of the Town of Northfield and partners such as Go Northfield and Norwich University.

4.2 Brand Attributes

The brand attributes are "technical" in nature. They are the tools that the graphic artist uses to construct the tools to market the community. A detailed guide to using the brand system is included in Appendix 2 of this report: Northfield Branding Report and Style Guide. For Northfield the brand attributes are as follows:

- *Typefaces*: The two typefaces for Northfield are classic serif types with one being bolder than the other and used together to form the Northfield name.
- *Colors*: The colors for Northfield include a series of five very rich colors that use the colors of maroon and gold of Norwich University and add a blue, rich green, and grey color. The colors are well saturated and designed to imply warmth and depth.
- *Logo and Icon*: The logo for Northfield uses an excellent existing woodcut view of the town and can be incorporated into both formal and casual. In addition, a monogram has been developed that can be used in more iconic fashion in other marketing pieces.

NorthfieldTM
VERMONT



- *Tagline:* The tagline takes the mission of Norwich University, the use of the word North in the name of the town, and the outdoor recreation that is so prominent in the area. The following brand statement can be used as a whole or in parts to demonstrate the character of Northfield and the tagline:

To many, life is a road. A road worn smooth by all those who have traveled it before, always moving, but never progressing.

But to a special few, life is a trail, fresh cut through the greens and blues of beautiful surroundings. On this trail, it never matters which direction you head, you're always moving forward. Northfield, Vermont is on this trail, nestled by the waters of the scenic Dog River.

For nearly 200 years, leaders and heroes have traveled this trail on the grounds of Norwich University, the nation's oldest military college. At Norwich, students expect challenge, and achieve distinction.

These trails come together on the green of the common where we celebrate life in the Green Mountain State. We are an authentic community with a rich past, deep connections to the land around us, and a promising future ahead.

Come explore this trail, uncover our bridges, enjoy our river, and experience the warmth of our people.

We are Northfield, Vermont: find direction. explore life.

These brand attributes above form the foundation of the brand itself and can be used to deploy a series of marketing recommendations that follow.



FIND DIRECTION.

NorthfieldTM
VERMONT

EXPLORE LIFE.

4.3 First Step Recommendations

4.3.1 Adopt the Brand Statement and Brand System

A brand statement is different from a mission statement. A brand statement is an explanation of a place that should resonate with local residents (most importantly), visitors, and investors. The brand statement for Northfield explains its history, its present, and its outlook on the future. The brand statement is the foundation of the brand system that allows Northfield to deploy a versatile set of tools to market the community to residents, visitors, investors, and those wishing to live in the community. The system must have meaning to the community.

As mentioned a brand style guide is attached as a component to this report. It provides guidance on proper usage of the identity system, color specifications, at templates, ad concepts, a photo resource guide, and a copyright release allowing the client to modify and use the system as needs evolve.. Finally, a complete file system with all logos, ad templates, typefaces, and support graphics is included as part of the deliverables for this effort.

4.3.2 Implement the new logo and tagline on stationary for the Town.



The brand identity for the destination (Northfield) and the organizations such as the Town and Go Northfield are similar but have different and distinct uses. The Town of Northfield should consider reinforcing its identity system by adopting the new logo and typeface itself including letterhead, business cards, and ultimately a new web page design. The distinctive typefaces and color scheme will clearly show that the Town of Northfield is moving forward in the marketing efforts. Additional logos for partner organizations such as Go Northfield have been provided and should be implemented as well. Go Northfield organization can maintain as unique an identity as it wishes yet remain “in the family.”

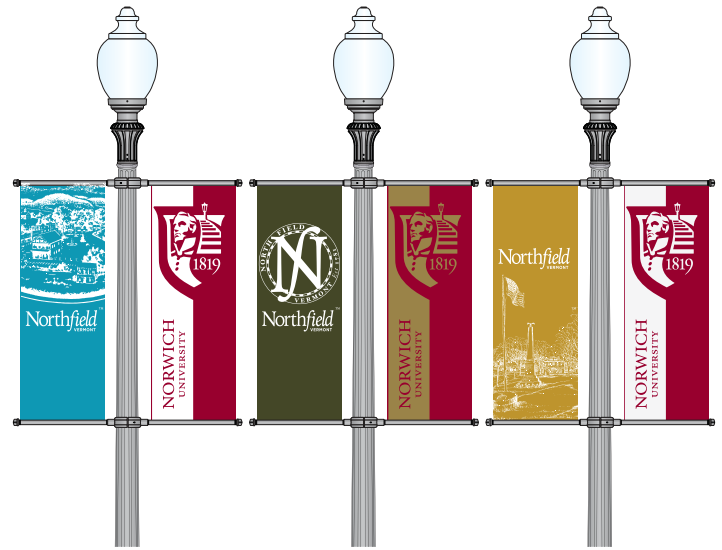
4.3.3 Implement the new logo and tagline on popular items.



Tee shirts, hats, and other collateral products might be explored for a 2015 roll out along with window clings and shopping bags for local retailers. Later implementation might work with local businesses to develop their own merchandise with the brand alongside Go Northfield.

4.3.4 Use Brand Identity on Banners

The brand system has designed banners highlighting the partnership relationship of Northfield and Norwich University. These banners should be installed throughout the community as a way to showcase the overall brand and celebrate this partnership and the successful merger of Town and Village. The banners are designed to be simple colors so as to create rhythm and consistency while accenting the uniqueness of the architecture of Northfield.



4.3.5 Have Go Northfield become the brand steward.

The brand resources provided to Northfield equip the community with a host of tools to implement the brand. Volunteers with Go Northfield can use many of these tools right away. Other parts of the brand system will require additional art production and design (additional ads, signs, event posters, etc.). For these, we recommend hiring an “on call” graphic production specialist to serve Go Northfield on an as needed basis. Keeping graphic elements consistent is imperative especially early in the implementation process and Go Northfield is ideally suited to serve that role.

4.3.6 Update Website with new Identity

The Town of Northfield can easily use the brand system to update its logo on the town website.

4.4 Next Step Recommendations

4.4.1 Consider branded items with Northfield monogram/icon.

As time progresses, Northfield could migrate the branding to the monogram look that is part of the overall system. Go Northfield could sell branded items with the monogram in stores in the community as a fundraiser for the organization.



4.4.2 Launch the Welcome Home effort branding initiative as the program evolves.

The “Welcome Home” initiative is discussed in greater detail in Recommendation 5.2.1 is an ongoing way to recruit people to live and invest in Northfield. This effort will require branding and marketing to be successful. The marketing effort should begin early as the program and grow with it. The following logo has been designed for the program and can be used to launch the initiative.





4.4.3 Implement brand extension on events like the Winter Carnival and Farmers Market.

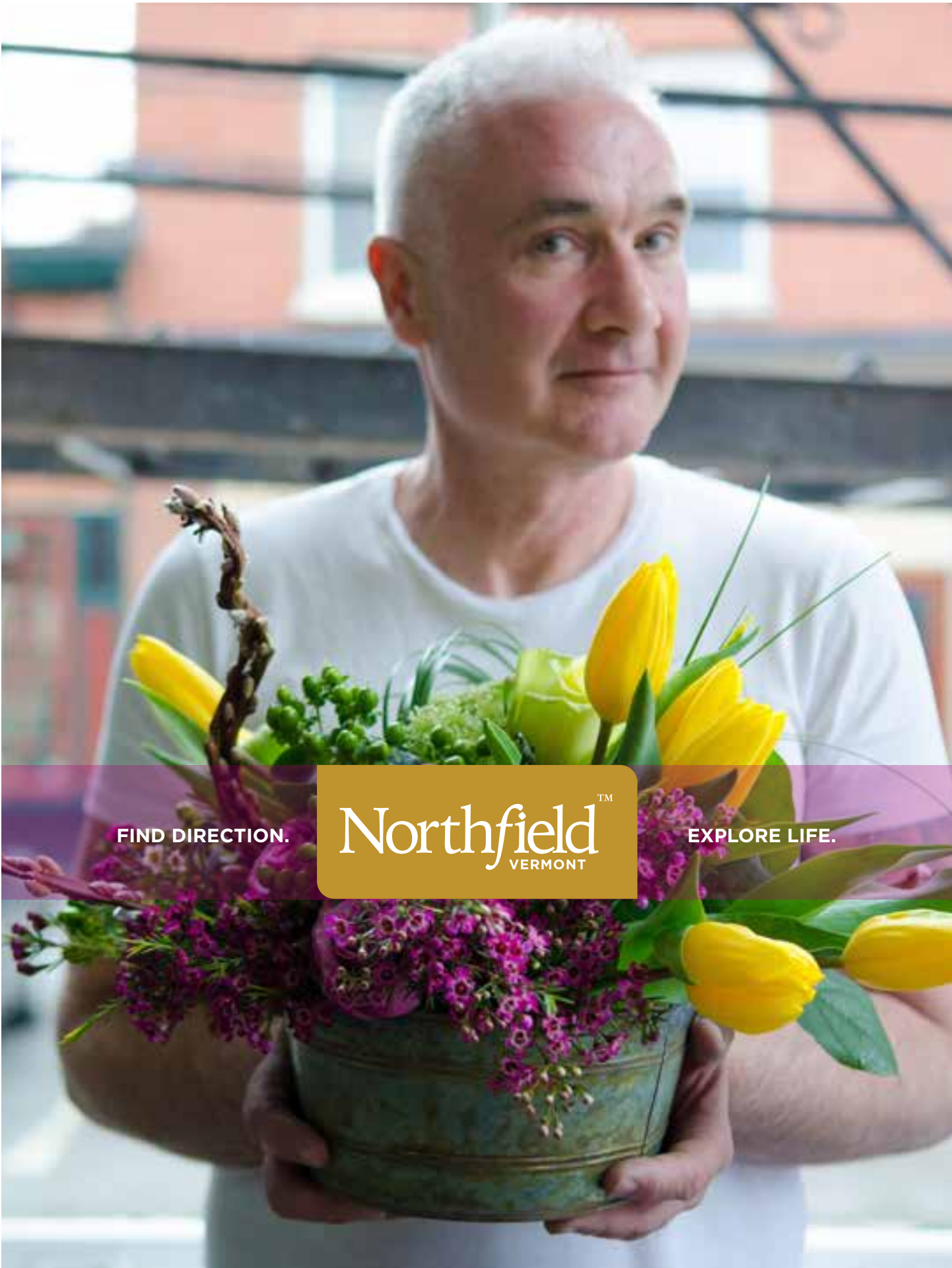
In addition to creating a brand for Northfield itself, the V-DAT team has created a series of logos for special events that occur throughout the year. The system includes logos for the Labor Day Celebration, the Winter Carnival, and the Northfield Farmer's Market. A logo for Northfield's Parks and Recreation department was developed to promote programs as well. These can be launched over time with each of the events.

4.4.4 Recommendation: Launch Individual Business Marketing

While there are frequently incentives available to recruit businesses and investors to a community, there are fewer opportunities to assist existing businesses. Furthermore, many independent businesses end up cutting marketing when the market takes a downturn. The economic development initiative for Northfield alongside Go Northfield should contemplate launching a matching grant program that would provide a direct way to alleviate the cost of marketing Northfield businesses, incent those that aren't marketing to begin the effort, and create a more coordinated image of Northfield through deployment of the brand identity.

This technique also provides a more savvy way to deploy a marketing image than the traditional ad co-op program. Traditionally, if a community wanted to do co-operative advertising, a staff member or volunteers would go "hat-in-hand" to collect a share amount from participating businesses to appear in a cooperative ad that would include business card size ads arranged around some sort of logo or symbol. The result is the purchase of a full-page ad without the companion impact of purchasing such an ad. This alternative approach allows for Go Northfield to create micro marketing grants to businesses that use the Northfield brand concept and tagline. The pilot funding for the project should be five thousand dollars. The program would follow these steps and parameters:

- Go Northfield, alongside its partners, issues a statement that a pilot marketing grant program is being launched (perhaps a meeting is held to present the program).
- The funding for the initial year would be limited so the program is a first come first serve effort (this will hopefully motivate participation).
- Businesses would get a fifty-fifty match of any marketing program that employs the Northfield brand. Print ads would follow the templates provided by Go Northfield while web based ads would also include the brand identity.
- Go Northfield would develop an administrative and reimbursement policy for the grant.
- The business is responsible for ensuring that a copy of the ad (or recording) is saved for the archive.
- The program would need to be closely evaluated to determine its effectiveness and tweaked as it continues beyond the pilot year.



FIND DIRECTION.

NorthfieldTM
VERMONT

EXPLORE LIFE.



4.4.5 Implement new gateway signs.

The community cited gateway signs as one of the top priorities for Northfield to announce entry into the community and provide a fresh look to the Town. The branding provides an excellent platform to deploy this initiative. The concept of a covered bridge is used in the design of the gateway using materials that will weather well and work in the vernacular of the community. The base of the sign could be stone mimicking the stone found throughout the community and frequently as the base of a covered bridge. The sign face itself would be sawn wood with the logo featured prominently. The top of the sign could be corrugated metal with downlighting to illuminate the sign at night. The concept sign is shown below.

4.5 Long Term Recommendations

4.5.1 Begin Implementing Wayfinding Sign System



Wayfinding signs are likely to be a multi-year project with many different goals and objectives. Northfield should pursue funding for wayfinding as a critical need to direct visitors to the amenities throughout the community. The sign system designed as part of the branding package identifies primary and secondary trailblazers for vehicles, signs directing visitors to public parking, and pedestrian oriented signs. The pedestrian signs are designed to be casually implemented signs that direct visitors to additional shopping, dining, parks, and gathering spots in Northfield.

Components of a wayfinding system would include the following:

Trailblazers – Trailblazers are the directing signs leading motorists to the main attractions in the area. These should have between three and four locations per sign and should carry motorists from gateway to parking lot. Colors can be used to distinguish between different districts and can become smaller as the scale and speed of the roadway narrows. These Trailblazers including cattail sculptures, thus blurring the line between signage and public art.

Building Markers – the markers can be either wall mounted or monument style and denote important landmarks in the downtown district.

Parking Signage – Identifying parking is important in creating a parking system in downtown. Visitors are more likely to walk a block or two to shop if the signage system leads them directly to a public parking lot and tell them how to proceed. The parking markers can be by themselves or as attachments to trailblazer signs.

Information Kiosk – The final piece of the plan is the informational kiosk, which serves as the transition point for vehicular traffic to pedestrian traffic. These kiosks should be located at major public parking lots and should include a map and the shopping & dining guide, along with the walking tour brochures.

Host an Annual Marketing Summit.

Each year, the Town of Northfield and its partner organizations should host a marketing summit to share marketing initiatives, coordinate placement of marketing materials, and refine marketing as needed. This summit will allow each organization to clearly know their role in marketing Northfield, explore stronger partnerships, and refine marketing material as needed. One approach for this summit would be to issue a request for proposals from media to provide competitive bids for ad placement.



Vermont Downtown Action Team Report

Market Opportunities

5.0 Building the Economic Base for Northfield: Market Opportunities

5.1 Background

Northfield has demonstrated its commitment to economic development by funding initiatives to promote the economic well being of the community. This represents a significant commitment of the part of the Town and a new way of thinking for the community. As Northfield looks to the future of its economic health, it should seek to have one of Vermont's most innovative programs to attract businesses and families to invest in the community.

5.2 First Step Recommendations

5.2.1 Share findings of retail market study with key partners (Regional ED, Planning, Investors, University).

One of the simplest (and yet often overlooked) components of any planning effort is the important role of simply communicating to various stakeholders that a plan exists. This effort takes ongoing discussions, engagement of partners, and community champions to see the plan through. The retail market study component of the plan, in particular, is an important tool to let potential businesses know about the retail health of the community and the potential to invest in expanding or starting a business.

5.2.2 Inventory vacant space.

Another early step is to take stock of empty or underutilized space in the community. This will become even more important as Northfield Savings Bank explores occupancy of space they may vacate when moving to Berlin. Other spaces are often overlooked (particularly upper floor space used for storage). Knowing what is available is key to attracting investors.

5.2.3 Explore expanded grocery store based on market data.

The data for Northfield clearly indicates the potential for expanded grocery selection. The newly opened Falls General Store will help fill this gap. Northfield should engage in discussion with local investors and existing grocers about expansion opportunities.

5.2.4 Explore incubator/co-working/accelerator space in partnership with Norwich University.

Creating an innovative incubator/co-working/accelerator space represents one of the most important opportunities for Northfield for several reasons. First, Northfield is easily accessible to the Montpelier/Barre market and not far from Chittenden County providing businesses easy access to larger nearby markets. Second, Northfield is an affordable alternative to both Montpelier and Chittenden County that offers a small town quality of life. Third, many incubators/co-working spaces partner with institutions of higher learning representing a truly unique opportunity for Norwich University to have a role in the effort. Fourth, and perhaps

most importantly, there is space downtown to create such an environment that could start small and expand over time.

Technically, each of the terms incubator, co-working, accelerator terms mean slightly different things. Northfield should explore the best match for the community.

An “accelerator” is a very structured program where businesses are selected to enter the space and have a prescribed period of time—essentially a curriculum—and they have a limited amount of time in the program. An accelerator will take equity in the companies that participate, and those companies are working towards specific goals (getting product to a certain point, etc.—basically, trying to get to the point where they can get funding). Usually such a space is backed with a degree of venture capital.

An incubator typically doesn’t have a firm timeline, and it’s designed to connect startup companies with advisors in business, product development, marketing, etc. to try to help those companies grow their businesses. These spaces frequently partner with Universities to provide the advisory role.

Lastly, the concept of a co-working space, which is basically a low-cost space where many companies can work together and feed off each other’s energy and expertise. A co-working space doesn’t necessarily have outside advisors participating in the programs they offer though some do engage with local Universities to play a role.

The key to the success of any of these spaces in Northfield will be a downtown location with good proximity to the shops and restaurants in the community. These spaces are immensely “elastic” in that they can start very small and grow over time.

5.3 Next Step Recommendations

5.3.1 Launch the “Welcome Home” initiative effort to attract more families.

The market data indicates that families with children in the home represent a small proportion of the households in Northfield. Attracting these households could greatly enhance the economic well being of the community by rounding out the demographic profile, enhancing the educational opportunities for children, and bringing entrepreneurs to the community. The Welcome Home initiative is designed to be a growing partnership among many stakeholders to welcome people to Northfield. It could begin with a program as simple as providing a welcome gift from merchants to people moving to town as depicted in [Section 4.4.5](#).

Over time, the program could expand to provide more substantial incentives that will be discussed in the sections that follow.

5.3.2 Encourage food trucks during market days to enhance dining options.

Food trucks represent a great opportunity to explore the success of potential restaurant concepts in a community. They can reinforce existing events and provide a gathering place for the community. Northfield already has a tradition of “mobile food” at the corner of Kenyon’s True Value on some days. In the future the community could host food trucks adjacent to the Common.

5.3.3 Explore a “third place” gathering spot, coffeehouse.

Many communities have a casual gathering place for people and certainly the Knotty Shamrock does serve that role for many. An additional place such as a coffeehouse or small performance space could be a welcome addition to downtown. The market data clearly indicates demand for additional food services in the community.

5.4 Long Term Recommendations

5.4.1 Expand the “Welcome Home” effort to provide restoration and/or down payment assistance for housing through ED fund and partners.

The natural progression of the Welcome Home effort is to begin to infuse it with a degree of capital to help those moving to Northfield in a more meaningful way. This program may offer restoration allowances, down payment assistance, or grant money to those committed to investing in Northfield as a place to live. Typically such programs have a minimum requirement for a resident to remain in place to receive the funds.

5.4.2 Explore an Employer Assisted Housing program with Norwich University and other employers as an additional component of the “Welcome Home” effort.

Many major businesses offer incentives to have residents live near where they work. Historically Norwich University actually required professors to live in Northfield. While that practice is no longer in effect, the University and other businesses in town could offer similar incentive to those described in [Section 5.4.1](#) above to employees.

5.4.3 Consider a “Good Neighbor” lending program for teachers, public servants etc.

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) offers a Good Neighbor Next Door program that provides housing assistance for public servants in Revitalization Areas. While Northfield may not qualify for such a designation, it could emulate the program and explore ways to provide financial assistance to these professionals.



Vermont Downtown Action Team Report

Building Connections

6.0 Building Connections: Organizational Strategies for Northfield

6.1 Background

All community revitalization programs should adhere, in some way, to the basic Main Street Four Point Approach. That approach is concentrating on Organization, Design, Promotion and Economic Development as four equal prongs of a successful work plan. The Organization aspect of that includes the board of directors, staff, volunteers and committees that make, oversee and execute the work plans of a revitalization effort.

The time is right for Northfield to enter into a new era of economic growth using this basic but effective strategy. Northfield should forge a strong partnership of the reorganized Town Government, Go Northfield, community commissions and boards, Norwich University, and private sector entities such as Northfield Savings Bank (among others). The participation of each will be essential to the success of this plan.

6.2 First Step Recommendations

6.2.1 Convene regular Economic Development discussion meetings between Town and University.

Both the Town of Northfield and Norwich University have a vested interest in seeing economic development success in the community. Moreover, some of the recommendations in this report ranging from sidewalk connections to a partnership co-working space will require regular communication between both entities.

6.2.2 Join the International Town/Gown Association to foster stronger partnership between Norwich and the Town.

The International Town/Gown Association <http://www.itgau.org> is the clearinghouse for best practices among colleges and universities and the cities and towns that they call home. The organization hosts an annual conference, provides a wealth of resources and research, and fosters ongoing partnerships between communities and institutions of higher learning.

6.2.3 Explore downtown designation.

Downtown designation in Vermont provides special benefits to communities through technical support, incentives for property owners and the municipality, and grant assistance. The program places requirements on a community to report on progress, have staff to support the local program, and stay active in the Vermont Downtown Programs. Northfield should explore downtown designation as a way to further enhance the role that Go Northfield and the Town of Northfield will play in the future economic health of the community's commercial core.

6.2.4 Mobilize partner organizations to take on key components of this plan.

Ongoing discussions with Norwich University, Go Northfield, community commissions, businesses, and investors will be critical to the success of this plan. The Town of Northfield should stay engaged with these partners as the plan moves forward.

6.3 Next Step Recommendations

6.3.1 Become a designated downtown.

The hope is that by examining the benefits of becoming a designated downtown in short term, Northfield will reach that designation in the coming few years.

6.3.2 Create a formal town/gown commission to explore ways for the two entities to foster stronger partnerships and investments.

Many college/university communities have a formal town/gown committee that meets on a regular basis. Such committees have taken on topics such as housing issues, joint venture projects, and regular cooperation and marketing. The goal is that the informal relationship that begins in the first step recommendations of this section evolves into a solidified relationship.

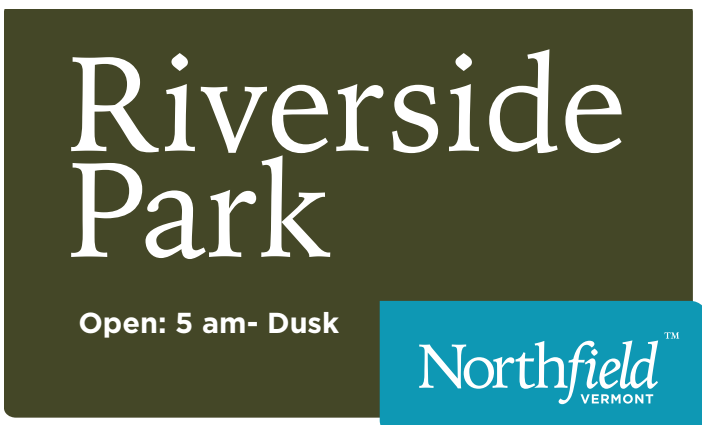
6.3.3 Create a riverfront committee to provide educational signage and programs about the river system.

The Dog River provides an excellent resource to educate citizens about the complex relationship between communities and the water. Northfield's flooding with Tropical Storm Irene demonstrates the fragile relationship of man and nature. As the community re-examines and reinvents the way it interacts with the Dog River, a committee should be formed to provide

information and education to citizens (especially young people) about these efforts to preserve the river and the community that surrounds it.

6.3.4 Continue to fund Economic Development programming.

The Town of Northfield committed \$100,000 to economic development programming in the 2014 budget. It is hoped that ongoing economic success will encourage the Select Board to continue funding economic development efforts in coming years. The success of any economic development effort is ongoing support from the community.



6.4 Long Term Recommendations

6.4.1 Contemplate a full time economic development position led by a commission.

Over time, Northfield may want to contemplate a full time director of development for the community to shepherd projects, promote the community, and work on development initiatives. This position may work in tandem with a Downtown Designation organization.

6.4.2 Consider joint venture projects and programs with Norwich University.

The relationship between a University and its hometown can range from being adversaries to being partners. Fortunately for Northfield, the former has never been the norm. Over time, Northfield and Norwich should continue to seek ways to foster stronger partnerships for the health of the Town and the University



Vermont Downtown Action Team Report

Funding and Implementation

7.0 Funding and Implementation

7.1 Funding

The funding strategy for each phase of every project will be as customized as the project itself. There are many mechanisms available to municipalities such as bond issuance, ad valorem tax relegation, state line-item budget requests, and others that are not discussed here. Additionally, there are other means for private financing such as historic tax credits, new market tax credits, independent investors, and private bank loans. Organizations may choose to utilize fund-raising tools such as crowd sourcing (also used in private development), events, memberships and donations. The list below offers some private and public grant options that can be considered when putting together a finance package for the V-DAT recommendations. In most cases, they are a part of the project not the complete monetary source.

7.1.1 North Gateway Area Main Streetscape (Recommendation 3.4.1)

Vermont Agency of Transportation – Transportation Alternatives and Bike/Ped Funding Program funding for sidewalks, bike paths, trails

US Department of Transportation – National Scenic By-ways can be used for improvement to a scenic byway that will enhance access to an area for the purpose of recreation; development of tourist information to the public (such as biking info and maps on scenic byways).

7.1.2 Downtown Core – The Common Enhancements (Recommendation 3.4.2)

Vermont Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation – Land and Water Conservation Fund (State distribution of Federal funds) can be used to create parks and open spaces, protect wilderness and forests, and provide outdoor recreational opportunities.

Nature Sacred – Open Spaces, Sacred Places National Awards Initiative for projects that demonstrate the healing power of nature.

America's Great Outdoors Initiative – Priority of the Obama Administration to use increasing amounts of the Land and Water Conservation Fund administered by states to enhance community spaces and urban parks. Grants should be available in 2014 or 2015.

Public Art Resource Project – Does not provide funding but has vast resources and innovative funding strategies for public art. Also includes a directory of public artists.

National Endowment of the Arts – Our Town – For creative placemaking projects that contribute to the livability of communities and place art at their core.

7.1.3 Downtown Core – East Street Improvements (Recommendation 3.4.3)

Clif Bar Family Foundation – Small Grants are designed to fund organizations or specific projects which can be related to enhancing outdoor activities.

Ben and Jerry's Foundation – Vermont Community Action Team Grant Program for enhancement of Vermont communities especially those with underserved populations.

7.1.4 Dog River Corridor – Wall Street Streetscape Enhancements (Recommendation 3.4.4)

Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program – Trees for Local Communities Cost-Share Program for developing and implementing urban and community forestry programs.

ACTrees – TD Tree Days grants for community tree planting in TD Bank communities

ACTrees – Neighborwoods Grants for local organizations to make communities healthier, cleaner and greener.

American Forests – Global ReLeaf grants provide private dollars to support reforestation efforts on public lands.

7.1.5 Dog River Corridor – Riverside Park (Recommendation 3.4.5)

Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery Grants Second Round – Grant request in process.

Vermont Arts Council – Project Grants – To support art activities that enhance the quality of life for Vermont's citizens, attract visitors, and help stimulate local economies.

National Endowment of the Arts – Art Works – Supports the creation of art that meets the highest standards of excellence, public engagement with diverse and excellent art, lifelong learning in the arts, and the strengthening of communities through the arts

New England Foundation for the Arts – New England States Touring Grant – Provide funding for presenting high quality artists with innovative that creatively bring the arts to communities and underserved populations in New England

7.1.6 Dog River Corridor – Community Gardens and Neighborhood Open Space (Recommendation 3.4.5)

Scotts-Miracle Gro – GRO1000 Grassroots Grants – Intended to help foster community spirit and public service for edible gardens, flower gardens and public green spaces.

Captain Planet Foundation Grants – To promote and support high-quality educational programs that enable children and youth to understand and appreciate our world through learning experiences that engage them in active, hands-on projects to improve the environment in their schools and communities. Focus on green space and food production.

National Gardening Association – Mantis Tiller Award – For community gardens that improve access to fresh food and/or serve as interactive educational tools for the community.

Vermont Community Garden Network – SEED and GROW grants – for school and community garden and compost projects.

7.1.7 Dog River Corridor – General Enhancements (Recommendation 3.4.7)

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Flood Mitigation Programs – The Corps holds an annual conference to disclose the types of mitigation grant programs. This year's program was October 27-30, 2014 in Colorado. Information on grants for mitigation programs should be readily available on the website after the conference including special information delivered at the conference.

7.1.8 Norwich University Area – Pedestrian Safety Enhancements (Recommendation 3.4.8)

Vermont Department of Forest Parks and Recreation – Vermont Recreational Trails Program can be used to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail related facilities.

The Conservation Alliance – Consortium of large outdoor retailers funding wildlife conservation projects including trailways and waterways under or seeking to be in permanent protection.

PeopleForBikes – Community Grant Program – provides funding for important and influential projects that leverage federal funding and build momentum for bicycling in communities across the U.S.

American Hiking Society – National Trails Fund – grants program for building and protecting hiking trails.

Polaris – T.R.A.I.L.S. Grant Program – Funds can be used by organizations for trail development and maintenance projects, safety and education initiatives, lobbying and other projects to increase and maintain land access.

7.1.9 Polishing Up a Great Downtown: Private Sector Improvements (Recommendation 3.5)

United States Department of Agriculture – Community Facility Grants – To assist in the development of essential community facilities in rural areas and towns of up to 20,000 in population

Neighborworks Rural Initiative – Focuses on building the capacity of rural community development organizations in the areas of housing and economic development (Central Vermont Community LandTrust participates)

Wells Fargo Homeownership Grant Program – For construction and rehabilitation of owner occupied homes.

Citi Foundation – Neighborhood Revitalization Program seeks successful redevelopment models for investment.

Low Income Investment Fund – Capital for Healthy Families and Communities affordable housing initiative includes green financing.

Opp. Finance Network – A national network of community lending institutions that invest in opportunities to benefit low income and low-wealth people in the US. (Community Capital of Vermont is a member and helped Next Chapter Bookstore)

Enterprise – Multi Family and Commercial Real Estate provides community development based financing through Bellwether Enterprise.

Enterprise – HUD Capacity Building Section 4 Grants – for capacity building and initiation of community development organizations.

HUD's – Rental Assistance Demonstration Programs – allows proven financing tools to be applied to at risk public and assisted housing.

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) – Building Sustainable Communities program assistance is customizable to each community.

7.1.10 Resiliency, Green Techniques and Planning (Recommendation 3.6)

Federal Resources for Sustainable Rural Communities Guide

http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/pdf/federal_resources_rural.pdf

The Bush Foundation – Community Innovation Grants – Grants support communities to use problem-solving processes that lead to more effective, equitable and sustainable solutions

Orten Family Foundation – Heart and Soul Initiative is for long-term community engagement planning. In addition to selective grants the Foundation has many on-line resources.

7.2 Implementation Strategy and Action Plan

The attached “Strategy Board” summarizes all of the projects and recommendations included in this plan. The board is a working document for benchmarking and ongoing evaluation of the implementation process. The strategy board summarizes all of the recommendations of the plan into one sheet of paper.

The projects are divided into three time frames. The first series of projects are demonstration projects that should begin in the coming two years 2014-2015. For the most part, these are simple projects that will be highly visible, have significant impact and should be completed within the first year after the plan is adopted. The second set of projects is labeled “next steps.” Some of these are more advanced projects while others are continuations of projects that began during the demonstration period. The next step projects should be completed within the second to fourth year of the plan. The final series of projects are long-term or plan completion projects. While this category remains partially empty, many of the projects begun in the next steps phase will not be completed until later. Over time this category will continue to fill up as priorities evolve. Each timeframe for the strategy board might also represent the ongoing fulfillment of steps taken in earlier time frames.

The strategy board and its recommendations represent a “living document.” As time goes by and implementation proceeds, some priorities will shift while other ones will arise. The implementation strategy board should be evaluated periodically, no less than annually. This evaluation process will allow for finished tasks to be indicated on the board, for responsibilities to be shifted between parties, and for time frames to be adjusted for individual projects.

Each of the plan strategies and visions are outlined in the strategy board. It is important to remember the ultimate planning, development, and marketing strategies that each project supports. Of course, each of these strategies is linked with one another, but failure to achieve any one goal does not negate the ability to achieve others.

Northfield has embarked on an aggressive but prudent path forward to foster economic success. The community is on the cusp of continued evolution while taking care to preserve its unique character.

Strategies	First Steps 2014–2015	Next Steps 2015–2017	Long Term 2017–On	Goals
Building the Economic Base for Northfield: Development Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share findings of retail market study with key partners (Regional ED, Planning, Investors, University). ED Inventory vacant space. ED Explore expanded grocery store based on market data. ED Create a business retention program. ED Explore incubator/co-working space in partnership with Norwich University. ED 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch the "Welcome Home" marketing effort to attract more families. GO Explore a "third place" gathering spot, art gallery, coffeehouse. ED Hold farmers market on night that complements other regional markets. GO Encourage food trucks during market days to enhance dining options. GO Contemplate negotiated discounts at local merchants for new residents. GO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide restoration and/or down payment assistance for housing through ED fund and partners. ED Explore an Employer Assisted Housing program with Norwich University and other employers. ED Consider a "Be a Good Neighbor" lending program for teachers, public servants etc. ED Attract more dinner dining options. ED 	Northfield, Vermont will have one of Vermont's most innovative programs to attract businesses and families to invest in the community.
Improving the Public Realm: Resiliency and Public Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contemplate outdoor dining on parking spots temporarily during warmer months. Town Fund and design streetscape improvements for East Street and Main. Town Implement improvements to Riverside Park per recommendations in the report. Town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement streetscape on East Street and Main. Town Design streetscape improvements at Northern Gateway including trees and streetlights. Town Consider moveable chairs in Town Common during warmer months. Town Design streetscape Improvements to Wall Street connecting downtown to Riverside Park. Town Consider community gardens in other vacant lots along Water Street. Rotary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve sidewalk connections form Norwich University to downtown Northfield. Town Complete streetscape improvements at Northern Gateway. Town Complete streetscape improvements to Wall Street. Town Continue ongoing floodway and floodplain mitigation efforts including contouring, hydrologic studies, and diversion strategies. Town 	Leading with its recently completed streetscape improvements and Riverfront Park, Northfield will continue to refine and improve the public realm of the community remaining mindful of its riverfront location and resiliency from future floods.
Polishing up a Great Downtown: Private Sector Improvement Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with property owners along Depot Square to improve facades. ED Contemplate new facade and parking improvements to Kenyon's True Value. Private Sector Encourage growth of Paine Mountain Brewing into expanded location. Private Sector Work in partnership with private property owners to make sure buildings are ADA accessible with new streetscape improvements. Town Promote Vermont Village Center designation benefits. GO/ED 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contemplate local funding program for facade improvements. ED Work with True Value corporate and river conservation partners to implement improvements to Kenyon's. Public/Private Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider infill development on key parcels in downtown particularly on East Street and on former Nantana Mill site and other areas north of downtown. ED 	New investment will come to Northfield alongside private sector improvements to existing businesses.
Building Connections: Organizational Strategies for Northfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share report with consolidated leadership of the newly merged Town and Village. ED Convene regular ED discussion meetings between Town and University. ED Join the International Town/Gown Association to foster stronger partnership between Norwich and the Town. ED Explore downtown designation. GO Mobilize partner organizations to take on key components of this plan. GO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Become a designated downtown. Town Create a formal town/gown commission to explore ways for the two entities to foster stronger partnerships and investments. Town Create a waterfront committee to provide educational signage and programs about the river system. CC Hold an annual "Progress Summit" to mark successes and evaluate programmatic issues for coming year. ED/GO Continue to fund Economic Development programming. Town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contemplate a full time economic development position led by a commission. Town Consider joint venture projects and programs with Norwich University. ED 	As a newly merged Town, Northfield will engage with key partners including Go Northfield, Norwich University, and many others to become a proactive leader in the development of the community.
Telling Northfield's Story: Branding and Marketing Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt the Brand Statement for Northfield. Town Implement the new logo and tagline on stationary for the Town. Town Implement the new logo and tagline on popular items. GO Have Go Northfield become the brand steward. GO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider branded items with Northfield monogram/icon. GO Implement brand extension on events like the Winter Carnival and Farmers Market. GO Launch the Welcome Home effort branding initiative as the program evolves. GO Implement new gateway signs. GO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement wayfinding sign system. Town Implement seasonally changing banners. GO Implement regional marketing initiative. ED 	Northfield will tell its positive story to build community pride, market to potential residents, visitors, and investors.

ED = Economic Development

GO = GO Northfield

CC = Conservation Commission



Vermont Downtown Action Team Report

Appendices

