



**Vermont Downtown Action Team Report**

# **Brattleboro, Vermont**



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## 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 in 2011 or the spring floods of 2011. Charrettes were held from August 2013 through February 2014 in Brattleboro, Barre, Brandon, Northfield, Waterbury, Waitsfield, Warren, and Wilmington. 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
- 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
- Leigh Minor Nagy, Minorbird Retail Consulting
- Margie Johnson, Shop Talk

## 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 assets and qualities a community possesses 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 the downtown. For Brattleboro, the market analysis is an update to one completed two years ago that takes into account the economic recovery underway and changed conditions in downtown Brattleboro.

- **Design, planning and preservation** – to protect and enhance the physical appearance and function of the downtown. For Brattleboro, this also includes an assessment of parking policy, lot maintenance, and opportunities to ensure that existing parking resources are utilized in an efficient manner.
- **Branding and marketing** – to aid the community in communicating its unique promotional messages in a compelling, consistent and effective way, and finally. Since Brattleboro has an aggressive existing branding program this was not addressed in the V-DAT study.
- **Implementation strategies** – to ensure the recommendations of the plan include a road map to turn them into reality including organizational capacity and recommendations.

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 is hoped to lead to successful implementation.

### 1.3 Acknowledgements

The Vermont Downtown Action Team [V-DAT] Brattleboro 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

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

The Town of Brattleboro

Building a Better Brattleboro

Special thanks to all the participants during the V-DAT charrette that occurred on September 9-11, 2013.

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 Brattleboro. 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/planning/resiliency#vdat](http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/opportunities/planning/resiliency#vdat) or call (802) 828-5229.

## **1.4 Introduction to Brattleboro**

### **1.4.1 Downtown Profile**

Brattleboro is one of the larger communities in Vermont with a population of 12,500. However, Brattleboro is not a City, it is a town governed by a Board of Selectmen. Brattleboro is a “gateway” to Vermont from Massachusetts and a cross-roads connecting New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Vermont. Located along the Connecticut River, downtown Brattleboro feels more “urban” than most other Vermont communities with three and four story buildings, bustling street traffic, and an abundance of shops and restaurants.

Often cited as a livable community and resembling a college town, Brattleboro is home to several significant downtown attractions including one of the largest Co-op markets in the state, the Latchis Theatre and Hotel, The Robert H Gibson River Garden and the Brattleboro Museum and Art Center.

With three exits on Interstate 91, Brattleboro has experienced some corridor sprawl with an assortment of strip malls, quick service restaurants, and hotel/motels. Large format big-box stores predominate just across the river in New Hampshire. This is common of Connecticut River communities in Vermont as New Hampshire has less restrictive regulations on big box stores and no sales tax.

### **1.4.2 Catastrophic Events**

Brattleboro has suffered from a number of events over the past several years that have negatively impacted the community. Spring floods in 2011 flooded West Brattleboro and a large fire gutted the Brooks House in 2012, a prominent mixed-use building on the 100% corner of downtown. The fire took out numerous residential units and retail locations in a prime location. Tropical Storm Irene flooded many businesses along Flat Street and caused major damage to the Latchis in 2011. Two traffic fatalities and two murders in downtown have also negatively impacted the community.

### **1.4.3 Recovery**

To date, much has happened in Brattleboro to recover. The Brooks House is due to become home to the Community College of Vermont, which will bring students into the heart of downtown. The Latchis Hotel and Theater has reopened and is expected to unveil renovations to its art deco main theatre in the summer of 2014. A new restaurant has opened along the Connecticut River, and the Co-op has significantly expanded. Plans are underway for a significant creative economy space in downtown. The Town has also deployed wayfinding signs directing visitors from the Interstate into downtown.



#### **1.4.4 Identified Issues and Desired Outcomes**

The following are the issues identified by community stakeholders during the assessment visit. All of these issues cannot necessarily be addressed in detail by the V-DAT team but have been referenced throughout the remainder of the report.

- Reorganization of staff and budget of Building a Better Brattleboro (BaBB)
- The River Garden - use and ownership
- Added Market Rate upper floor housing
- Funding resources outside of the BID district for rebuilding Brattleboro
- Increased foot traffic in downtown particularly along side streets
- Rezoning in downtown and just beyond
- Better inclusion of riverfront as attraction to the city
- Assessment of parking resources

With these desires in mind, the V-DAT team conducted the following:

- Created a conceptual Downtown Master Plan that identifies the following: infill opportunities, parking reconfiguration, streetscape where necessary, connectivity to the Connecticut River, links between downtown and adjacent neighborhoods, and a more cohesive downtown overall.
- Façade Plans to document improvements needed to buildings in downtown.
- Parking analysis of conditions in downtown.
- Update to the market study conducted in 2010.
- A proposed organizational plan for Building a Better Brattleboro.





## Vermont Downtown Action Team Report

# Retail Market Study

## 2.0 Retail Market Study

This section of the report updates the findings of the 2010 market study report using the same trade areas identified through the zip code analysis conducted three years ago. Key differences between the 2010 study (that was using data in the depth of the recession) and now are highlighted throughout this section. Overall this section is designed to help BaBB and downtown businesses retain existing and target new customers. Additionally, the findings inform some of the physical recommendations that come later in this report.

This chapter is divided into three sections:

**Section 2.1** is a distillation of the community input gathered in a series of one-on-one interviews conducted and a public input session. This section describes the assets, opportunities, and challenges as described by community leaders and other stakeholders. This input is the “unvarnished” input provided by community stakeholders.

**Section 2.2** presents the retail market analysis that shows the market potential for the retail trade areas. This information is based on the most recent data available and is a reliable source for understanding overall market patterns.

**Section 2.4** This section concludes with some key opportunities for retail that could be used to both enhance existing businesses and recruit additional businesses to the community and provides summary data for retail market opportunities, explores the potential for other uses such as residential and office development as well.

### 2.1 Community Input

#### 2.1.1 Strengths

- The community has rallied behind the large project of renovating the Brooks House and is supporting ongoing work of the Latchis Hotel and Theatre. This is critically important for downtown.
- New signage has been installed to direct people to downtown.
- The uniqueness of the stores is a real asset. The opinion is that foot traffic has been amazing, but people have not been spending their money.
- Work on downtown infrastructure continues including new sidewalks and mast arms.
- The health and vitality of downtown is on an upswing. Many out of state people are coming through the downtown through all summer.
- Superior cultural attractions cluster in downtown from the Brattleboro Music Center to the Vermont to the Brattleboro Museum and Art Center, the Latchis Theatre, and the New England Youth Theatre.
- Great festivals such as the Strolling of the Heifers and the Literary Festival to name a few.
- Brattleboro continues its good branding effort.

### **2.1.2 Challenges and Opportunities**

- The overall parking issues in downtown need to be better understood. There are 1000 parking spaces in the town – utilization rate was very high. The community added 200 spaces in the transportation center but it is currently underutilized.
- Trash and loitering are issues in parts of downtown
- Many upper floor spaces in Brattleboro are occupied; there is probably an opportunity to enhance the tenant mix of upper floor space.
- The truck traffic on Main Street is at times overwhelming. This traffic is counter to the goal of attract people downtown and having people on foot.
- Concerns among many about the impact of closing Vermont Yankee on employment in Brattleboro.

### **2.1.3 Wants and Needs**

- There is an overall issue of housing availability, particularly with entry-level housing. Even with more high-end units a pro-forma for Brattleboro Waterfront on waterfront housing failed in the past. Could Brattleboro have a mix of income based-private market rate housing?
- A long-range goal is to have Brattleboro capitalize on the beautiful views to the Connecticut River turning its face on the river rather than its back.
- An ongoing goal is to complete a bicycle network along the Connecticut River through downtown.
- Although the community has the River Garden, it does not have a “living room:” an area in which we want you to hang out.
- There is a strong desire to have the Whetstone Brook cleaned and beautified.
- Great opportunity for redevelopment along Flat Street.

## **2.2 Market Analysis Update**

This portion of the study will explore the market for downtown Brattleboro. There are many different models for defining a market. Radial studies simply take a location and draw a radius from it. This approach is difficult for locales like Brattleboro where both the Interstate and the Connecticut River create ways to enhance or inhibit traffic to downtown. Drive time studies, while sometimes useful, are also problematic for communities like Brattleboro for the same reasons mentioned above and because the interstate drives traffic to and away from Brattleboro.

Consequently, the 2010 study for Brattleboro used a zip code approach as its tool for analyzing a trade area. This approach has its own advantages and disadvantages. The strengths of a zip code survey include the following: local merchants have “skin in the game” as they are tracking customers on a first hand basis, visitor traffic can be identified which no other methodology will account for, local customer shopping patterns can be evaluated, customer browsing can be studied by looking at a visitor zip code that appears in multiple shops, and a host of detailed comparisons can be drawn.



Zip code surveys have their own limitations in that the zip code geography can sometimes be fairly large and stretch beyond the typical market boundaries or include areas that do not relate to the community. With these limitations in mind, it is the only technique that correlates easily with customer traffic collected by merchants. The zip codes are used to then define a primary and secondary trade area for the community from which a whole host of demographic data can be gleaned.

The customer zip code surveys were conducted in October of 2010. Retail businesses and restaurants in the Town of Brattleboro graciously participated in the zip code survey of their customers. Merchants were provided with a form to record customer zip codes and asked to keep the log for all customers during the weeklong period.

### 2.2.1 Zip Code Results

The results of the zip code survey are listed below:

- The survey was held in October 2010. While this is a relatively busy time of year with the foliage season, the trade areas will still accurately reflect the *local* market.
- 23 businesses participated in the survey.
- Participants recorded 1,912 customer visits.
- 443 Unique American Zip Codes passed through Brattleboro during the survey period, indicating a very high breadth of visiting customers coming through downtown.
- 41 Unique States, the District of Columbia, 4 Canadian provinces, 7 additional foreign countries, and 2 military installations were represented in the survey, which reiterates the breadth of Brattleboro's customer base during this particular week.

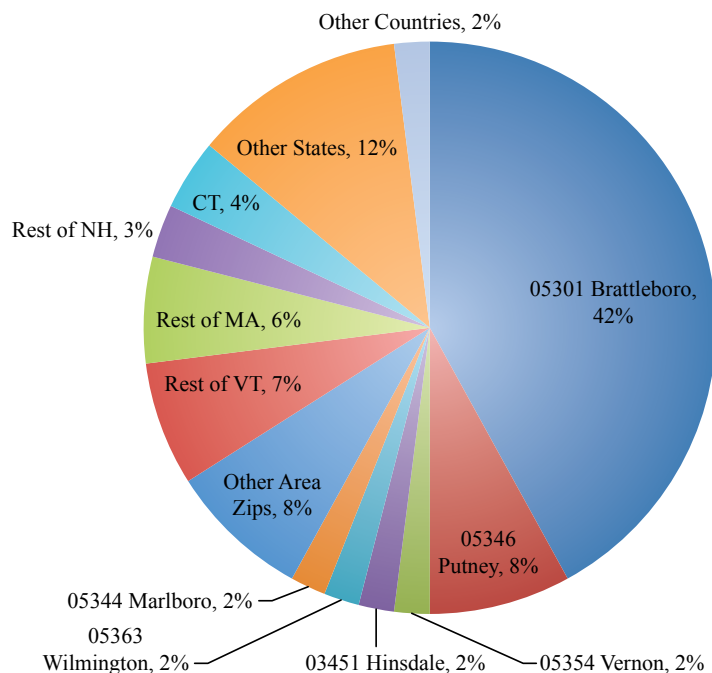


Figure 1 indicates the percentage of customer visits by zip code and can be summarized as follows:

Figure 1: 2010 Percentage of Visits by Zip Code

- Forty-two percent, or roughly two-fifths, of recorded customers came from Brattleboro 05301.
- Putney 05346 represented the next highest local customer visits with eight percent of recorded visits.
- Other area zip codes represented a combined sixteen percent of total customer visits. These included Vernon 05354, Hinsdale 03451, Wilmington 05363, Marlboro 05344, all at two percent of visitors each, and other zip codes.
- Excluding the aforementioned zip codes, the rest of Vermont represented an additional seven percent of recorded customer visits.
- The rest of Massachusetts, the rest of New Hampshire, and Connecticut comprised six percent, three percent, and four percent, respectively, for a combined thirteen percent of all recorded customer visits.
- American visitors from outside of Vermont, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Connecticut accounted for twelve percent of recorded visits, and two percent of customers came from outside of the US.

### 2.2.2 Trade Area Definition

The number of visits provides an overall view of customer origin. A more accurate way to evaluate a local customer's loyalty to the market is placing customer visits in the context of the population of each zip code. This corrects for zip codes that have exceedingly large or small populations that might skew the market penetration data.

By this measure, the primary and secondary trade areas for the community can be established. The primary trade area is the geography where the most loyal and frequent customers to Brattleboro reside. The secondary trade area represents an area where Brattleboro businesses can rely on local customers but to a lesser degree. To establish the trade areas, a table is created to show customer visits per thousand residents. Each zip code population is taken, and then the number of visits from that zip code is calculated. Figure 2 shows customer visits per 1,000 people for each of the highest representative visits to the participating merchants in 2010. For Brattleboro, two zip codes with populations of less than 1000 show a very high visitation rate that actually exceed that of Brattleboro itself: Marlboro and West Halifax. Small variations in customer visits from sparsely populated zip codes can change their position in the trade area. However, these geographies also seldom have major retail developments that would compete with the strength of a market like Brattleboro.

Zip Code	Place	State	2009 Pop.	Visits	Visits Per 1,000
05344	Marlboro	VT	281	30	106.76
05358	West Halifax	VT	153	11	71.90
05301	Brattleboro	VT	16,444	833	50.66
05346	Putney	VT	5,213	151	28.97
05354	Wernon	VT	2,133	48	22.50
03443	Chesterfield	NH	645	14	21.71
05345	Newfane	VT	1,704	28	16.43
05353	Townshend	VT	998	16	16.03
03466	West Chesterfield	NH	1,153	17	14.74
05363	Wilmington	VT	2,263	31	13.70
05343	Jamaica	VT	893	11	12.32
05341	Hinsdale	NH	4,082	36	8.82
01301	Greenfield	MA	18,482	21	1.14
03431	Keene	NH	24,769	23	0.93
Primary Trade Area					
Secondary Trade Area					

Figure 2: Customer Visits per Thousand People

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 Brattleboro's case this division is fairly clear. Marlboro 05344, West Halifax 05358, and Brattleboro 05301 each produced over fifty customer visits per thousand residents, which clearly distinguishes these locales as the primary trade area. The secondary trade area, however, has a larger range from Putney 05346's twenty-

nine visits per thousand down to Jamaica 05343's twelve visits per thousand. This breadth shows the impact of Brattleboro as an attracting market for the surrounding rural area. The clear break comes with Keene, which should not be counted as part of Brattleboro's trade area even though the visits from this zip code are high when compared with other places.

### **2.2.3 Trade Area Demographic Data**

According to Neilson, the three zip code primary trade area permanent population was estimated to be 16,272 in the 2010 study and actually exceeded that estimation slightly (16,884) after the census data was released by zip code in 2013. From 2000 to 2010, the primary trade area experienced a small – almost one percent – period of growth. Projections for 2018, predict slight population decline with the 2013 estimate at 16,553 and another 3% loss in population by 2018 to 16,087.

The eight zip codes in the secondary trade area follow similar patterns. The population in 2010 was 15,357 according to the census (a nearly 3% increase since 2000). But, the current year estimate shows a slight decline to 15,296, which is expected to continue through 2018 to 15,228. Median age for the primary and secondary trade area is 45.0 and 45.9, respectively, which is quite older than both Vermont at 41.5 and 36.8 for the US. There is definitely a correlation with the older base of residents and the predicted decline in population.

Some very interesting data emerges with income levels. Brattleboro acts much like any "central city" or "urban core" with a primary median household income of only \$40,793 compared with \$53,422 for VT and \$52,762 for the US. The secondary trade area, however, is much more "on par" with state and national figures with a median household income of \$51,115. In the primary trade area one in every three households earns under \$25,000 per year while 40% of the households earn over \$50,000 per year.

## **2.3 Retail Market Analysis**

Brattleboro is a retail center serving the primary zip code markets of Marlboro, West Halifax, and Brattleboro. In this section the Brattleboro market will be examined to identify potential opportunities for new or expanded stores, by examining the local population showing retail market potential based on what residents of Brattleboro spend compared with what stores in Brattleboro sell. This will allow the community to assess what kind of additional stores types might be attracted to Brattleboro and will help individual existing businesses understand how they might diversify product lines based on the local customer traffic. Both 2010 and 2013 data will be examined to see what differences may have emerged over the three-year period.

### **2.3.1 Retail Market Potential in the Trade Areas**

Retail market potential 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. The two zip code trade area that includes Brattleboro has a significant inflow of spending. Local customers in the two zip codes cannot support the overall retail in Brattleboro, however this is not the case for all retail categories.

Such an analysis is not an exact science. In some cases, large leakage in certain categories may indicate that money is being spent elsewhere (drug store purchases at a Wal-Mart 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.

As indicated in “Figure 3: Retail Stores” on page 18, the primary trade area selected store sales equaled \$313 million while consumers in the two zip codes spent \$265 million. As a result, the Brattleboro primary trade area is gaining \$47 million annually. In 2010 this number was much different with sales equaling \$375 million and spending at \$233.6. The key indicator here is that the primary trade area lost retail in the three years while consumers were actually spending more.

The secondary trade area increased sales from \$154.6 million in 2010 to \$168 million in 2013. The secondary market remains similar in consumer spending at \$264 million compared with \$233 million in 2010.

This marked change between 2010 and 2013 can be attributed to several things. First, a loss of sales in the primary trade area would decrease its retail base. Second, expansion of retail development in places like Hinsdale and Keene has pulled additional dollars away from Brattleboro. Third, a change in reporting methodology with Nielson could be skewing the numbers in a way that is difficult to decipher.

### **2.3.2 Detailed Retail Market Opportunity Tables**

Section 2.3.1 explores the retail trade patterns in aggregate, the tables on the following pages explore the individual retail categories where Brattleboro is leaking and gaining sales in the primary and secondary trade areas in 2013. 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. While market support for a category may be one indicator of success, there are many factors (location, business plan and financing, customer service, product selection) that can contribute to the failure of a retail enterprise. Please note that some categories are subsets of larger categories.

As mentioned before, Brattleboro is gaining sales overall but leaking sales in certain key categories that are suitable for downtown locations. These details are shown on the table on the following two pages. The source for this information is Neilson Inc. Neilson uses a complex allocation model to assign sales across a larger geography so smaller geographies often have sales reflected from businesses that are nearby but not within zip code. Consequently, a percentage of certain store type sales may be allocated to the trade areas from adjacent geographies.

<b>Retail Stores</b>	<b>2013 Demand (Consumer Expenditures)</b>	<b>2013 Supply (Retail Sales)</b>	<b>Opportunity Gap/Surplus</b>	<b>2013 Demand (Consumer Expenditures)</b>	<b>2013 Supply (Retail Sales)</b>	<b>Opportunity Gap/Surplus</b>
Total Retail Sales Incl Eating and Drinking Places	265,034,824	312,579,218	(47,544,394)	264,415,478	168,410,622	96,004,856
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers-441	41,725,896	69,185,976	(27,460,080)	44,390,313	17,150,072	27,240,241
Automotive Dealers-4411	32,512,418	58,374,588	(25,862,170)	34,090,849	12,969,375	21,121,474
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers-4412	5,278,238	0	5,278,238	6,335,416	1,934,001	4,401,415
Automotive Parts/Accsrs, Tire Stores-4413	3,935,240	10,811,388	(6,876,148)	3,964,048	2,246,696	1,717,352
Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores-442	5,797,988	6,496,549	(698,561)	5,498,489	1,751,301	3,747,188
Furniture Stores-4421	3,019,656	321,208	2,698,448	2,843,295	690,332	2,152,963
Home Furnishing Stores-4422	2,778,332	6,175,341	(3,397,009)	2,655,194	1,060,969	1,594,225
Electronics and Appliance Stores-443	5,312,703	7,649,392	(2,336,689)	5,459,526	4,425,122	1,034,404
Appliances, TVs, Electronics Stores-44311	4,068,319	6,826,246	(2,757,927)	4,108,122	4,290,244	(182,122)
Household Appliances Stores-443111	735,758	3,662,627	(2,926,869)	728,209	0	728,209
Radio, Television, Electronics Stores-443112	3,332,561	3,163,619	168,942	3,379,913	4,290,244	(910,331)
Computer and Software Stores-44312	1,085,573	823,146	262,427	1,195,007	134,878	1,060,129
Camera and Photographic Equipment Stores-44313	158,811	0	158,811	156,397	0	156,397
Building Material, Garden Equip Stores -444	26,329,737	10,419,996	15,909,741	26,594,599	31,306,747	(4,712,148)
Building Material and Supply Dealers-4441	23,690,804	10,362,443	13,328,361	23,834,256	30,558,557	(6,724,301)
Home Centers-44411	9,629,637	7,723,410	1,906,227	9,579,103	20,748,722	(11,169,619)
Paint and Wallpaper Stores-44412	391,617	0	391,617	399,884	0	399,884
Hardware Stores-44413	2,297,045	0	2,297,045	2,301,241	0	2,301,241
Other Building Materials Dealers-44419	11,372,505	2,639,033	8,733,472	11,554,028	9,809,835	1,744,193
Building Materials, Lumberyards-444191	4,386,938	1,031,865	3,355,073	4,427,462	3,835,642	591,820

Figure 3: Retail Stores



Retail Stores	2013 Demand (Consumer Expenditures)	2013 Supply (Retail Sales)	Opportunity Gap/Surplus	2013 Demand (Consumer Expenditures)	2013 Supply (Retail Sales)	Opportunity Gap/Surplus
Lawn, Garden Equipment, Supplies Stores-4442	2,638,933	57,553	2,581,380	2,760,343	748,190	2,012,153
Outdoor Power Equipment Stores-44421	429,959	57,553	372,406	495,012	748,190	(253,178)
Nursery and Garden Centers-44422	2,208,974	0	2,208,974	2,265,331	0	2,265,331
Food and Beverage Stores-445	34,832,170	53,960,735	(19,128,565)	33,376,447	29,015,073	4,361,374
Grocery Stores-4451	30,322,641	52,550,725	(22,228,084)	28,995,271	27,708,590	1,286,681
Supermarkets, Grocery (Ex Conv) Stores-44511	28,788,602	52,316,075	(23,527,473)	27,527,063	27,708,590	(181,527)
Convenience Stores-44512	1,534,039	234,650	1,299,389	1,468,208	0	1,468,208
Specialty Food Stores-4452	2,518,168	1,326,146	1,192,022	2,403,423	1,283,611	1,119,812
Beer, Wine and Liquor Stores-4453	1,991,361	83,864	1,907,497	1,977,753	22,872	1,954,881
Health and Personal Care Stores-446	16,236,167	22,711,571	(6,475,404)	15,316,952	8,644,930	6,672,022
Pharmacies and Drug Stores-44611	12,971,838	22,711,571	(9,739,733)	12,214,818	8,644,930	3,569,888
Cosmetics, Beauty Supplies, Perfume Stores-44612	1,153,881	0	1,153,881	1,082,310	0	1,082,310
Optical Goods Stores-44613	643,064	0	643,064	639,334	0	639,334
Other Health and Personal Care Stores-44619	1,467,384	0	1,467,384	1,380,490	0	1,380,490
Gasoline Stations-447	26,843,025	40,718,087	(13,875,062)	26,978,107	11,223,412	15,754,695
Gasoline Stations With Conv Stores-44711	19,785,171	15,533,630	4,251,541	19,746,919	4,729,791	15,017,128
Other Gasoline Stations-44719	7,057,854	25,184,457	(18,126,603)	7,231,188	6,493,621	737,567
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores-448	12,662,669	5,614,594	7,048,075	12,521,059	1,974,202	10,546,857
Clothing Stores-4481	9,676,302	4,495,312	5,180,990	9,542,802	392,878	9,149,924
Men's Clothing Stores-44811	542,178	475,366	66,812	556,620	0	556,620
Women's Clothing Stores-44812	2,268,173	914,157	1,354,016	2,213,602	39,747	2,173,855
Childrens, Infants Clothing Stores-44813	526,798	500,193	26,605	506,363	83,365	422,998
Family Clothing Stores-44814	5,015,462	2,605,596	2,409,866	4,965,488	268,812	4,696,676
Clothing Accessories Stores-44815	416,641	0	416,641	412,470	0	412,470
Other Clothing Stores-44819	907,050	0	907,050	888,259	954	887,305
Shoe Stores-4482	1,496,159	883,268	612,891	1,421,275	0	1,421,275
Jewelry, Luggage, Leather Goods Stores-4483	1,490,208	236,014	1,254,194	1,556,982	1,581,324	(24,342)
Jewelry Stores-44831	1,375,113	236,014	1,139,099	1,442,205	1,011,486	430,719
Luggage and Leather Goods Stores-44832	115,095	0	115,095	114,777	569,838	(455,061)

Retail Stores	2013 Demand (Consumer Expenditures)	2013 Supply (Retail Sales)	Opportunity Gap/Surplus	2013 Demand (Consumer Expenditures)	2013 Supply (Retail Sales)	Opportunity Gap/Surplus
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, Music Stores-451	4,839,521	5,444,005	(604,484)	5,075,336	2,374,450	2,700,886
Sportng Goods, Hobby, Musical Inst Stores-4511	3,541,152	5,139,709	(1,598,557)	3,603,018	2,306,452	1,296,566
Sporting Goods Stores-45111	1,944,769	4,796,051	(2,851,282)	1,945,157	2,160,218	(215,061)
Hobby, Toys and Games Stores-45112	832,121	176,581	655,540	924,905	57,521	867,384
Sew/Needlework/Piece Goods Stores-45113	363,401	37,839	325,562	352,318	60,541	291,777
Musical Instrument and Supplies Stores-45114	400,861	129,238	271,623	380,638	28,172	352,466
Book, Periodical and Music Stores-4512	1,298,369	304,296	994,073	1,472,318	67,998	1,404,320
Book Stores and News Dealers-45121	1,062,143	215,323	846,820	1,240,140	67,998	1,172,142
Book Stores-451211	972,168	215,323	756,845	1,148,160	67,998	1,080,162
News Dealers and Newsstands-451212	89,975	0	89,975	91,980	0	91,980
Prerecorded Tapes, CDs, Record Stores-45122	236,226	88,973	147,253	232,178	0	232,178
General Merchandise Stores-452	34,858,825	3,345,856	31,512,969	33,938,484	390,859	33,547,625
Department Stores Excl Leased Depts-4521	14,006,537	2,722,990	11,283,547	13,713,437	27,524	13,685,913
Other General Merchandise Stores-4529	20,852,288	622,866	20,229,422	20,225,047	363,335	19,861,712
Miscellaneous Store Retailers-453	7,735,279	12,422,804	(4,687,525)	7,707,726	3,494,018	4,213,708
Florists-4531	326,793	1,260,924	(934,131)	337,180	1,939,886	(1,602,706)
Office Supplies, Stationery, Gift Stores-4532	2,285,144	6,589,714	(4,304,570)	2,338,655	306,269	2,032,386
Office Supplies and Stationery Stores-45321	1,278,701	6,236,372	(4,957,671)	1,320,820	0	1,320,820
Gift, Novelty and Souvenir Stores-45322	1,006,443	353,342	653,101	1,017,835	306,269	711,566
Used Merchandise Stores-4533	700,263	310,991	389,272	717,918	114,380	603,538
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers-4539	4,423,079	4,261,175	161,904	4,313,973	1,133,483	3,180,490
Non-Store Retailers-454	20,828,605	14,928,038	5,900,567	20,780,109	40,828,678	(20,048,569)
Foodservice and Drinking Places-722	27,032,239	59,681,615	(32,649,376)	26,778,331	15,831,758	10,946,573
Full-Service Restaurants-7221	12,437,819	27,124,437	(14,686,618)	12,354,908	14,541,830	(2,186,922)
Limited-Service Eating Places-7222	11,192,241	24,266,493	(13,074,252)	11,057,701	613,006	10,444,695
Special Foodservices-7223	2,168,283	7,196,593	(5,028,310)	2,143,493	520,623	1,622,870
Drinking Places -Alcoholic Beverages-7224	1,233,896	1,094,092	139,804	1,222,229	156,299	1,065,930

## **2.4 Key Market Conclusions and Opportunities**

### **2.4.1 Observations**

The biggest challenge for downtown Brattleboro is a slowly declining population and income levels, which lag that of the surrounding area. In spite of these challenges, Brattleboro remains a market that attracts sales from visitors and from outside of its primary trade area. This strength will allow downtown to continue to grow as a destination for residents (local and regional) and visitors to Vermont from across the nation.

- Since 2010 Brattleboro has seen spending recover from the “deep days” of the recession. However, sales have declined overall. The increased spending is a good indicator that potential demand will increase with continued marketing.
- Regionally, the leaking sales of nearly \$100 million and higher income levels indicate a strategy for Brattleboro to shore up the market in the immediate surrounding area. This points to a marketing strategy within the three state area around Brattleboro.
- Consequently, leakage opportunities and cluster opportunities remain strong (especially with the regional and visitor market)

### **2.4.2 Current Business Opportunities**

The retail market potential for Brattleboro 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 possible retail store type in no way ensures the 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” retail opportunities in downtown Brattleboro. They are as follows:

- **Specialty Food Stores:** The Co-op provides a food anchor in downtown Brattleboro that is among the best attractions for downtown in the region for regular customers. Specialty food that clusters around this strong asset can be successful if they differentiate from the offerings at the Co-op, market to visitors as well as locals, and offer high customer service and product diversity.
- **Personal Care Stores:** Brattleboro already has a small cluster of personal care stores in downtown but additional supporting personal care stores such as bath, cosmetics, and day spas could be a complementary use for downtown. Local leakage shows support for these store types.
- **Restaurants:** While Brattleboro already has a strong restaurant sales inflow, restaurants are cluster type businesses where more restaurants allow for a more vibrant dining scene. Restaurants in Downtown Brattleboro can succeed if they capitalize on niche dining and are appealing to locals and visitors.
- **Additional specialty retail:** Many other highly specialized retailers can be successful in downtown or existing retailers can expand their offerings, clothing in particular.

### 2.4.3 Residential Opportunities

Although this study is not a detailed housing analysis, input from stakeholders, on the ground observation, and examination of the housing data for the area indicates that downtown Brattleboro has the potential for additional residential development. Mixed use development that includes ground floor retail or office uses with upper story housing are a growing trend nationally. These unit types prove to be particularly successful in historic downtowns with easy access to local dining options, recreation, and nearby universities.

Upper floor housing units are more popular with two important segments of the population. The first is the young professional who desires upstairs living close to dining, shopping, and recreation. The second is the active empty nester who desires the same living arrangement. The opportunity for this use does not require a "market study" but rather a developer willing to create a product that is attractive to this demographic.

Redevelopment of the Brooks house to accommodate market rate housing will set the pace for future residential redevelopment of upper floors in downtown but challenges in the market remain:

- Because of population decline, the vacancy rate of housing will increase from 6.4% to 9.3% by 2018.
- Most of this vacancy is expected to occur in rental units which could convert to owner occupied units
- The income to mortgage payment ratio in Brattleboro INCREASES the closer you get to downtown: 28% in a 5 min drive time 24% in a 20 min drive time.
- Historically the national median home price has been 2.6 times the median income. In Brattleboro the median home price is 4.9 times the income.
- Brattleboro is doing proactive things to bridge the affordability gap on housing for those of lesser means.
- There MUST be a companion, ongoing, and pro-active strategy to help bridge the gap for people of greater means: entrepreneurs, young professionals, second career empty nesters, etc. There are creative models nationally: Paducah, KY has a program to attract artists to the community; Artspace.org. Minneapolis is constructing housing exclusively for artists, and Brattleboro could explore expanding the role and mission of the Windham and Windsor Housing Trust to include market rate housing in downtown perhaps not simply for artists but for a wide array of entrepreneurs.

#### **2.4.4 Other Opportunities and Conclusions**

- Co-working space for entrepreneurs, micro businesses (including retail), and even consultants is a fast growing trend. Brattleboro has a time-tested product in the Cotton Mill project managed by the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC). Expansion of such a model into buildings downtown could be a logical next step for the BDCC, BaBB, and the Town.
- Investors come to a community that has a plan, has demonstrated commitment to that plan through public infrastructure, and stand ready to partner with the private sector to see a project come to fruition. The public private partnership is alive and thriving in communities big and small; Brattleboro should explore what kind of incentives, infrastructure, and other tools it will bring to the table to work with the investment community. Suggestions for these are outlined in the recommendations portion of the report.







## Vermont Downtown Action Team Report

# Physical Plan

## 3.0 Physical Improvement Strategy

### 3.1 Introduction and Background

Brattleboro has numerous initiatives underway and is moving in a positive direction enhancing the physical environment of downtown. The following assessment represents a snapshot of key considerations to establish a foundation for the physical recommendations of this plan, as they relate to the public realm and development/redevelopment.

Brattleboro's greatest assets are the Connecticut River and the Whetstone Brook and their associated valleys, rock outcroppings, trail networks (existing and planned) and resultant topography allowing for tremendous views throughout downtown. Access to the waterways and incorporation into the downtown experience could be enhanced, however. Public spaces including the Whetstone Brook Overlook (adjacent to the Co-op), Pliny Park, Main Street and planned spaces associated with the renovation of Brooks House contribute to a vibrant public realm. There is the opportunity to build upon these public spaces and create an open space network. Additionally, the compact development patterns and juxtaposition of building forms and rock outcroppings work with the waterways and public spaces to create a dramatic backdrop for a exciting downtown. As new development and redevelopment continues, emphasis should be placed on building upon this compact development pattern and using development to better connect to the waterways, strengthen downtown edges with positive activity (such as the Flat Street corridor) and engage the public realm.

Already, efforts to activate public spaces are quite successful and include "pop-up" restaurants in the parking lots along Flat Street, interactive public art ("What are you grateful for?" boards), sidewalk art and an effective seasonal planter pot program along Main Street. These current activities should be the foundation for expanded efforts along the waterfronts, adjacent to River Garden, along Main Street and in conjunction with new development as downtown continues to revitalize. Additionally, there is a desire to broaden and build upon the use of sustainable practices such as those already underway like the rain gardens in the co-op parking lot. Opportunities also exist to incorporate flow-through planters, additional rain gardens, native planting, edible landscapes and re-use of existing buildings. Continuing to build a compact and walk-able downtown is, perhaps, one of the most significant sustainable impacts that can be made.

Figure 4 on page 27 provides a diagrammatic overview of the open spaces in Downtown Brattleboro. These open spaces form the foundation of a more detailed "Figure 5: Illustrative Master Plan" on page 28 that details both public and private sector improvements that could occur throughout downtown. The success of implementing this illustrative master plan will hinge on a partnership of a variety of entities including Building a Better Brattleboro, the Town of Brattleboro, the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation, and the Chamber of Commerce. The plan is designed as a visual guide, is subject to review and change based on circumstances, but does provide a framework to guide public improvements so they can maximize private investment that will add to the quality of life in downtown Brattleboro. More detailed descriptions of the recommendations in Figure 5 can be found in sections 3.2 and 3.3 of this chapter.



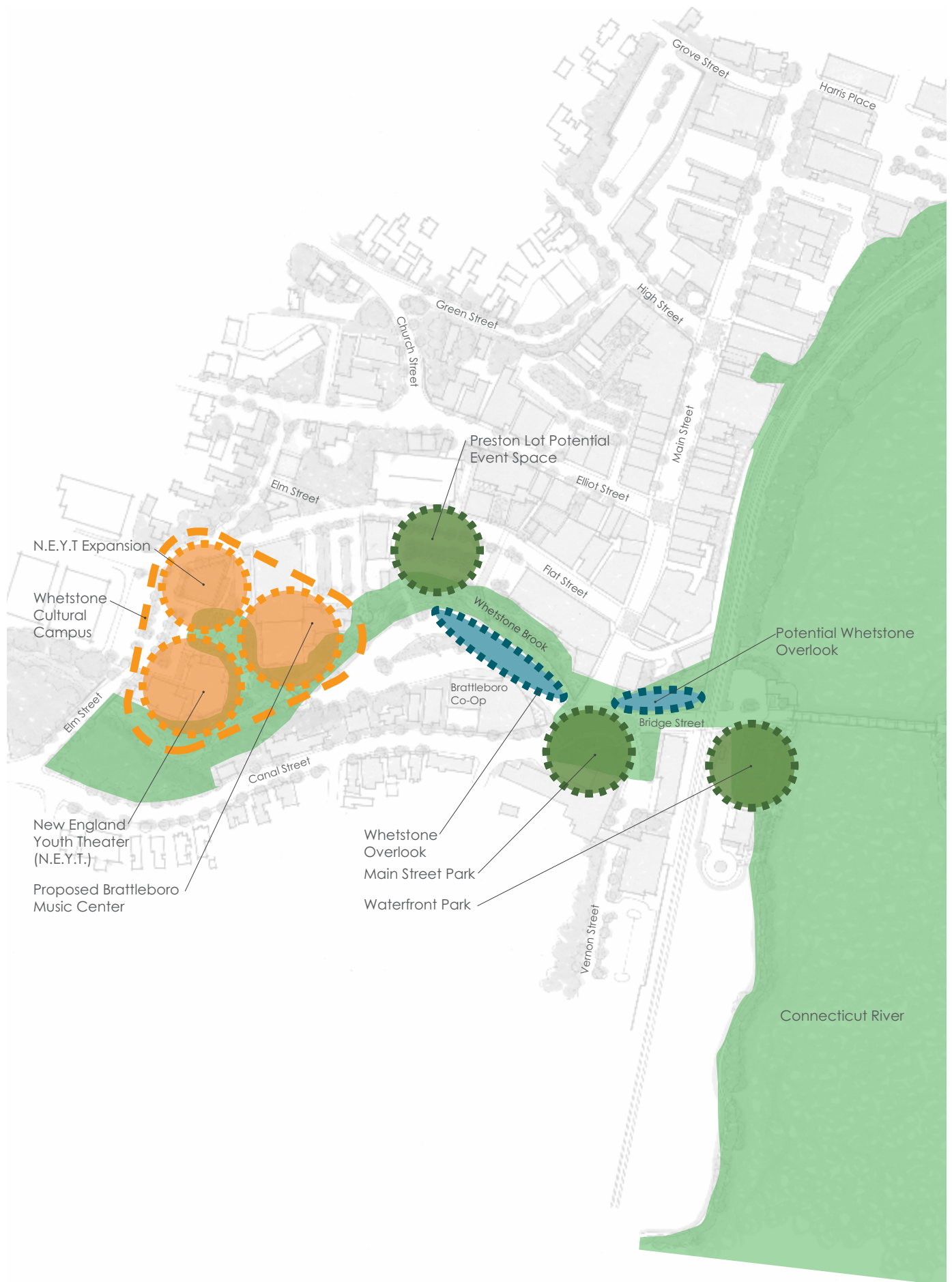


Figure 4: Open Space Framework



Figure 5: Illustrative Master Plan



## 3.2 Public Realm

This section explores the Public Realm of Brattleboro including parking, trail connections, open spaces, open space at the River Garden, streetscape improvements, the Connecticut River Waterfront, interaction with Whetstone Brook, open space use around Brooks House, and sustainability practices.

### 3.2.1 Parking Strategies

A variety of parking issues are of concern to Brattleboro stakeholders and in the absence of a multi-day parking turnover study this report cannot definitively define that there is an adequate supply of parking. Input and observation clearly show that certain on-street parking areas do fill as does the Harmony Lot. However, the Brattleboro Transportation Center (parking garage) is seldom (if ever) fully occupied and other lots downtown are underutilized. While the efforts of the VDAT charrette considered parking among the many topics of concern, this study cannot fully address parking. A comprehensive parking study should, therefore, be developed for downtown. The parking study might, at a minimum, include the following:

- Education that parking is not about the management of cars; rather it is about the management of people and that a poor environment hurts downtown businesses more than parking difficulties.
- Downtown should encourage customers to “park once”, turning visitors into pedestrians.
- Study parking and pricing strategies that strive for 80-90% occupancy levels for on-street parking, ensuring availability of convenient visitor spaces. Consider variable pricing that includes higher pricing for prime locations during peak hours, this is currently not happening.
- Consider pricing, not time limits, to ensure turn-over so that customers can park as long as they like, provided they are willing to pay for it.
- Think through extending meter hours into the evening.
- Take into account convenience and aesthetics of parking. As parking resources are examined, consider how improvements to downtown walkability, streetscapes, street crossings and lighting can enhance the pedestrian experience between parking resources and destinations.
- Consider incentives (i.e. lower pricing) to customer who utilize more remote parking resources.
- Examine opportunities to provide better signage identification at public parking resources and wayfinding for visitors.
- Contemplate giving the parking deck at the Brattleboro Transportation Center a name that is more obvious to visitors for a public parking resource.
- Brattleboro should consistently and clearly mark some meters – i.e. at the post office – as quick stop meters. Meters could be color coded for length of stay, and possibly more distributed for more regular turnover.
- Brattleboro should begin replacing the old technology meters with either pay stations or smart meters. Currently, the meters and lots need coins or a special local parking card. This might be an issue for tourists/visitors (and locals) who may wish to use a credit card. Many communities find that the convenience of a debit/credit card will allow for a higher parking rate.

- The V-DAT team worked with the Town of Brattleboro to evaluate the condition of all of the off-street parking resources in downtown. The following is a summary of the findings.
- Harris Lot – northeast – 55 spaces – poor to good. This lot is not curbed but well utilized. The lot could use crack sealing then an overlay along with curbing. The Town should coordinate with the owner of the private home on east end of lot during improvements. The adjoining telephone company also has an underutilized lot that might expand parking through a lease arrangement.
- High Grove Lot – northwest – 135 spaces – very good condition. This lot is granite curbed with a long central island. The retaining wall appears to be in good condition. One section of the sidewalk is heaved above the curb and could be a trip spot. Formerly, there was another means of egress from this lot to Main Street between the Masonic Temple and the adjoining church. Snow lights are located here referring overnight parking to the parking garage.
- Elm St Lot – is an overflow from the garage when needed for snow parking. Further up High Street is street parking with no meters but indicated as 2 hour parking. Tires are marked and checked for the two-hour limit by the parking enforcement staff.
- Spring Lot – central west – 28 spaces. This lot is in poor to good condition and could use crack repair, some granite curb resetting, and overlay. It is a little known lot that could have more signage. The Brattleboro Transit Center has essentially replaced this lot. The adjoining Fire Station may expand here in time and/or the adjoining subsidized housing could use this space. An old path/stair up to Church Street is no longer present.
- Elm Street Lot – southwest – 40 spaces. This lot is in very good condition with granite curbing. This lot was redone after having been flooded during Irene. Some Co-op employees park here.
- Preston Lot – southeast short term – 65 spaces. This lot is in pretty good condition and has had and needs some localized spot repair and crack repair, overlay. The adjoining pressed asphalt/brick look walkway to pedestrian bridge could use new painted surface.
- Depot Street Lot – southeast small lot by Bridge and Train Station – 17 spaces. This lot is in very good condition.
- Brattleboro Transportation Center Parking Garage. The garage is in good shape, although the steel could use painting and will require more maintenance than it seems to be getting. These hybrid steel frames can be an issue in this climate if not well maintained. New LED lighting on daylight indicators has been installed based on input from Efficiency VT program. The Town should provide some incentive to park here such as 2 hour free parking during prime shopping times and should contemplate ways to make this garage more visible. This garage could also be a place where the Town could charge for overnight parking.

- Harmony Lot – central short-term – 107 spaces. This important and highly used lot needs significant work. The edge conditions here are mostly poor. Accumulated overlays have reached curb height in many/most areas. Sloped granite curbs have settled and moved. The islands are poor with tree roots exposed. This lot is also a gathering place and concerts have been held here against the retaining wall. This lot needs a complete renovation that would include removing the asphalt, re-stabilizing the base, and laying a new surface. When completed, landscape architectural options should be considered to enhance the lot. This lot has some leased lighting at the entry by the utility company. The typical decorative street lighting on Elliot Street has not yet been utilized in this lot. The lot has a former stairway from Lower Green Street that is longer here. Importantly, there is some evidence of slope failure from Lower Green Street, high above this lot. The Town's Public Works is keeping an eye on this issue.
- Several concepts have been developed showing the conversion of the Harmony Lot to a permanent park or green space. The V-DAT advises against this, as the Harmony Lot is an important central parking resource. There is the opportunity, however, to formalize this space as an event space where it can be converted to a park space occasionally or even regularly during the warm months. The space has "good bones" that lends itself to an event space. These qualities include good spatial enclosure, multiple points of access and tall canopy trees for shade while not obstructing views into and out of the space. Enhancements to the Harmony Lot should consider the following:
  - Maintain the tall canopy trees within the center of the lot. As these trees decline, replace with canopy trees rather than small ornamental trees.
  - As paving is replaced, consider use of permeable paving for parking stalls.
  - Provide wayfinding signage to the lot and accent pedestrian gateways into the space with seasonal color.
  - Continue to activate the Harmony Lot with interactive public art installations such as the "What are you grateful for?" blackboards.
  - Provide colorful umbrella tables and seating in small gathering areas throughout the lot where space allows.
  - Open up views to the lot from Green Street through selective pruning and clearing of vegetation.

**First Steps:** Prune, clear vegetation along edge of Green Street to open views to Harmony Lot

**First Steps:** Continue to promote interactive art installations.

**Next Steps:** Prepare design plans for maintenance enhancements to lot and explore feasibility of use of permeable paving in parking stalls.

**Long Term:** Implement enhancements to Harmony Lot.



Figure 6: Parking Strategies

### 3.2.2 Regional Trail Connections

Continue efforts to connect the West River Trail and Fort Hill Branch Trail through downtown Brattleboro along one or both of two potential routes (“Figure 7: Regional Trail Network” on page 34 and “Figure 8: Regional Trail Network (Alternative Alignments)” on page 35). Regardless of the route, it will be important to provide multiple connections into the downtown area along the length of the trail as well as signage directing trail users to the attractions downtown. Where the trail interfaces with key places, such as the proposed Waterfront Park (described below) and Whetstone Brook, integrate the trail design with the designs for these places and provide informational signage for the places and downtown. There is also potential to provide a stair connection from this trail to River Garden.

- **Railroad Alignment:** This alignment extends along the west side of the railroad behind the Main Street businesses and behind the residential neighborhood to the north of downtown.
- **Wantastiquet Drive Alignment:** This alignment extends behind the Main Street businesses then ties into Wantastiquet Drive through the residential neighborhoods.

**First Steps:** Continue to explore feasibility of alternate routes and continue discussions with the Railroad.

**Next Steps:** Implement less complicated trail segments.

**Long Term:** Implement more complicated trail segments, particularly those segments adjacent to the railroad.



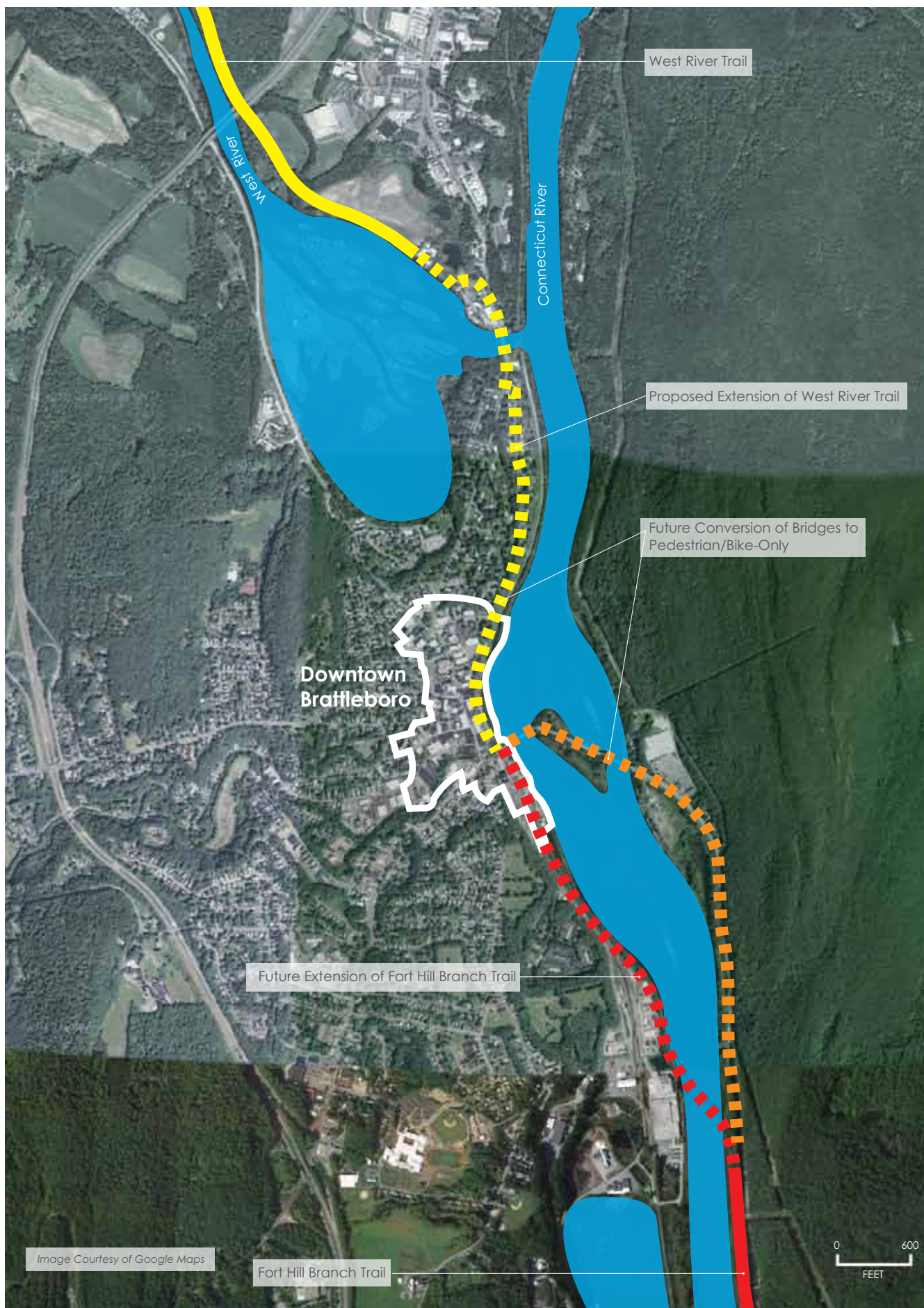


Figure 7: Regional Trail Network



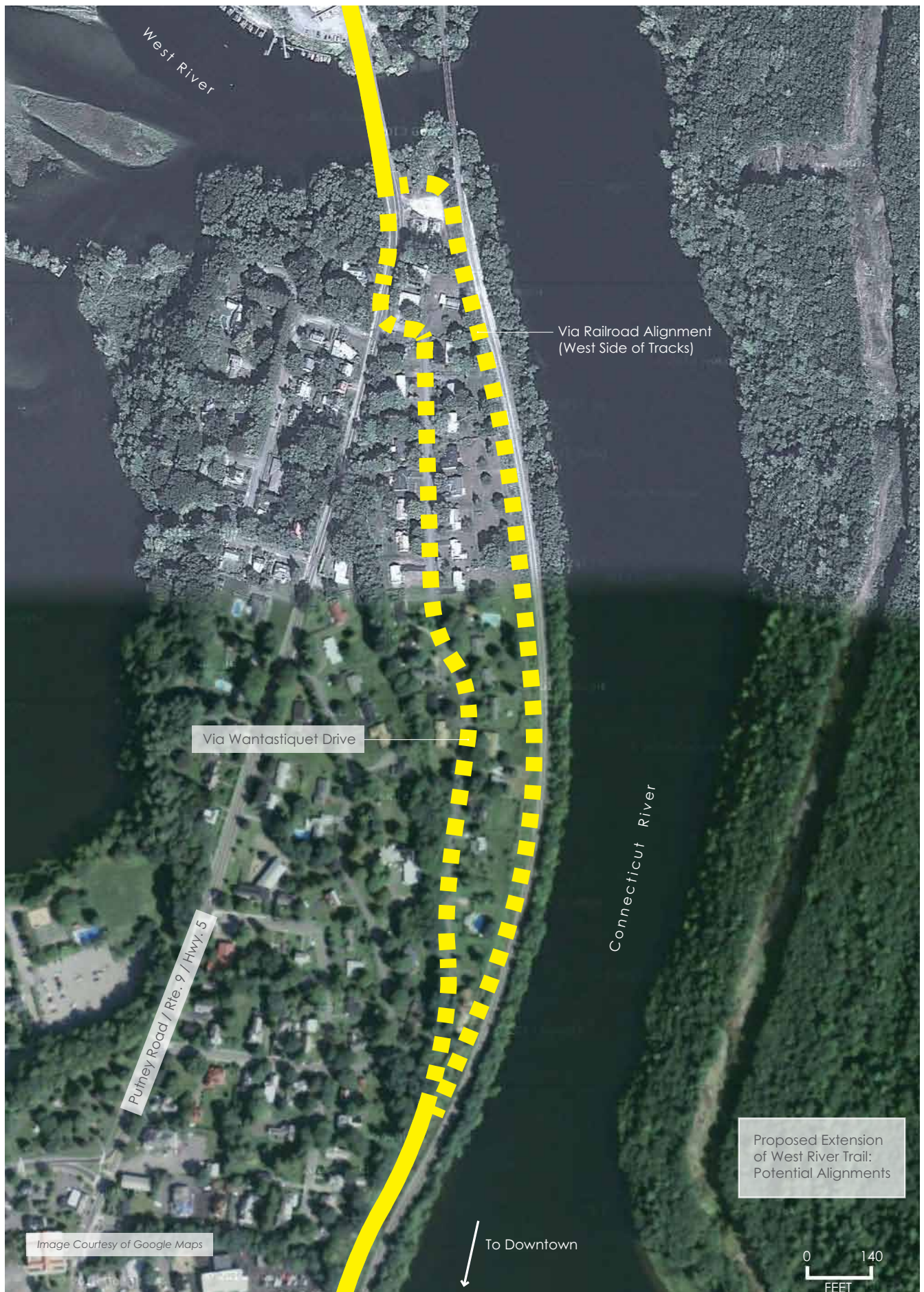


Figure 8: Regional Trail Network (Alternative Alignments)

### 3.2.3 River Garden Courtyard and Deck

The River Garden deck is an underutilized public space that offers spectacular views to the Connecticut River. There is an opportunity to enhance this outdoor space through expansion and coordination with enhancements to the adjacent Renaissance Fine Jewelers. Enhancements are illustrated in “Figure 9: River Garden Enhancements” on page 37 and illustrate a modest deck expansion behind the River Garden (Phase I) and additional deck expansion behind the jewelry store (Phase II). Enhancements could include:

- Preservation of existing trees, pruned to open views to river.
- Outdoor moveable umbrella tables in front of River Garden along Main Street to enhance the visual appeal of the entrance and to create a gathering place.
- Expanded terraced deck areas in the rear to expand capacity and take advantage of views to the river.
- Overhead string lights to help animate the space at night
- Potential easement to allow pedestrian access to the outdoor deck through alley between and possible wayfinding signage directing people to the rear deck area Renaissance Fine Jewelers and Gallery in the Woods (in coordination with property owners).
- Potential stair connection down to the proposed trail along the railroad.

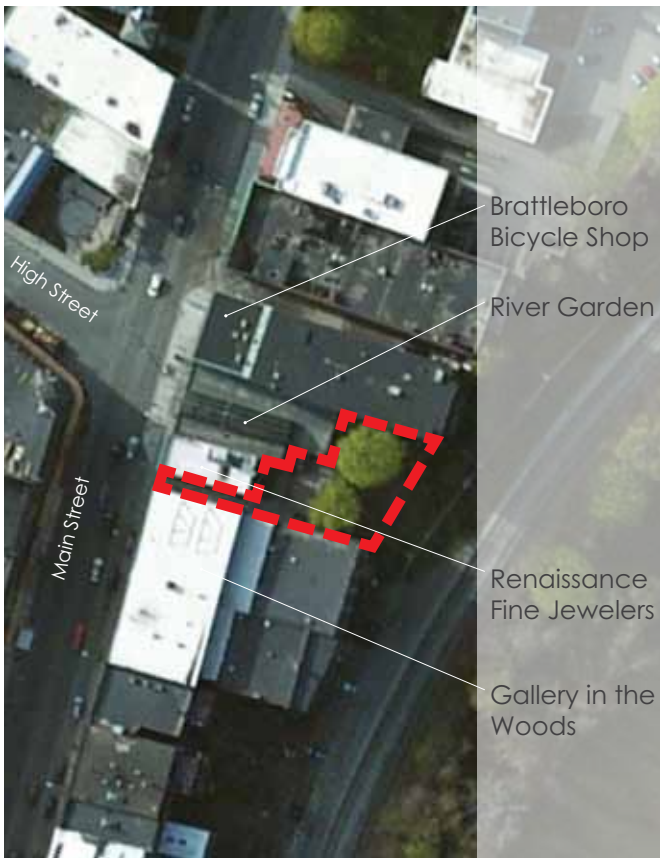
**First Steps:** Prune lower limbs from trees behind the River Garden to open views to the Connecticut River.

**First Steps:** Provide umbrella tables along the Main Street sidewalk area in front of River Garden.

**Next Steps:** Work with adjacent property owners to explore easement allowing pedestrian access to River Garden through alley.

**Long Term:** Design and implement deck expansion and potential connection to trail below.





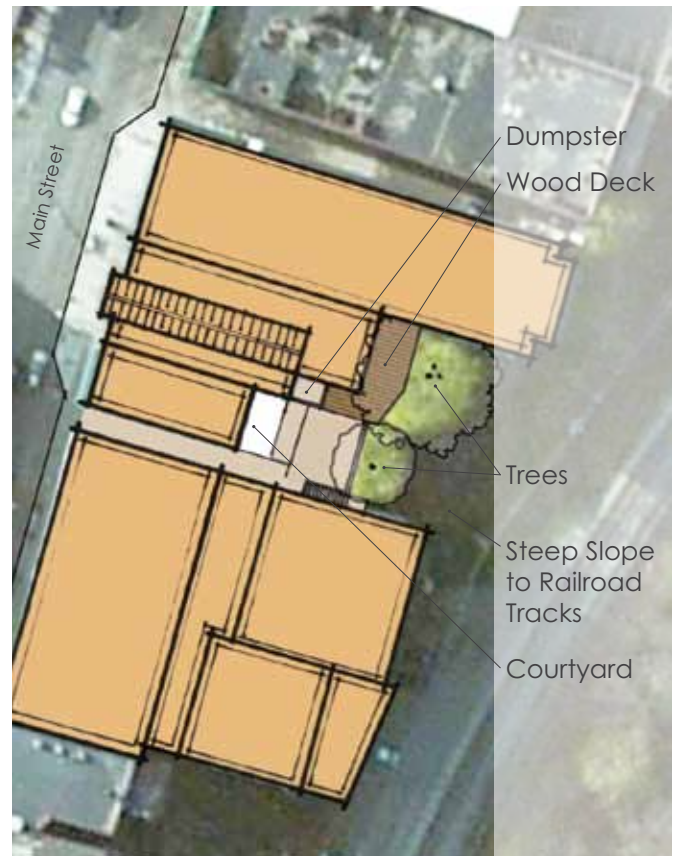
Study Area



Existing Conditions



Study Area



Existing Conditions





### **River Overlook: Existing Conditions**

Brattleboro benefits from dramatic views to the Connecticut River. However, in many instances like this one, significant undergrowth prevents clear views to the river and the spaces that could accommodate viewing areas have not been designed to enhance that viewing experience.



### **River Overlook: Proposed Conditions**

By limbing up lower branches of the trees (NOT cutting down trees) dramatic views to the river through the trees are created. Additionally, by installing brick pavers on the bare concrete, the area is made more appealing and functions like a small plaza.

### 3.2.4 New bridge linking Preston Parking to Co-op

There is the potential to connect the Preston Parking Lot with the co-op parking area to provide alternative access to the co-op while reducing traffic congestion at the Main/Bridge/Canal intersection. Should a vehicular bridge connection be feasible, the bridge should be wide enough to include a sidewalk.

**Next Steps:** Explore feasibility of bridge connection.

**Long Term:** Design and implement bridge connection.

### 3.2.5 Main Street Streetscape and Intersection improvements:

The east side of Main Street has been upgraded with new streetscape amenities. As the east-side streetscape improvements are developed, consideration should be given to the following:

- Expanded tree wells. The current tree wells are quite small and while the narrow sidewalks limit the width of the tree well, tree wells can be extended parallel to the street to provide more planting area. The linear tree wells can be open soil or portions could be covered with a cobble (but not on compacted soil) to allow foot traffic. Alternatively, other methods can be explored such as the use of structural soil or structural soil cells (such as Silva Cell from [www.deeprooot.com](http://www.deeprooot.com)) to allow for compaction and sidewalk pavement over top a portion of the tree well.
- Intersection enhancements: Consider intersection enhancements along Main Street at Bridge, Flat, Elliott and High Streets, with an emphasis on pedestrian safety. These enhancements could include special paving (stamped concrete or asphalt) within the intersection zone and/or more pronounced crosswalks. Many of these intersections are already designated with white striping, however, a stamped pavement within the intersection could be more pronounced and in keeping with the character of the community. Crosswalk markings could continue to be marked with white striping, however, consideration should be given to bolder “piano key” markings and wider crosswalks to make them more visually prominent. In particular, the intersection at Main, Bridge and Canal Streets could be enhanced to provide more visibility to pedestrians, provide more clarity and better connect the adjacent open spaces. Refer to “Figure 10: Bridge Street Intersection and Waterfront” on page 40.
- First Steps: Complete Main Street streetscape enhancements (with longer tree wells) and bolder Temporary curb extensions (bump-outs) or “parklets”. Wood deck platforms can be constructed to create temporary bump-outs or parklets in place of one or two parallel parking spaces at various locations along Main Street to provide additional area for outdoor seating, merchandise display or seasonal planter pots. During the colder months, the platforms can be removed and the area returned to parking. Refer to “Figure 11: Parklet Concept” on page 41 This approach is more economical than permanent curb extensions and provides more flexibility as the locations can change as needed and on-street parking is not lost permanently.
- Crosswalk markings.





Figure 10: Bridge Street Intersection and Waterfront





Existing Conditions



Potential Platform and Planters to Extend Sidewalk Area on a Seasonal Basis

Proposed Parklet



Precedent (Charles Street Parklet, Baltimore MD)

Figure 11: Parklet Concept

**First Steps:** Experiment with one parklet along Main Street and evaluate its success.

**Next Steps:** Expand parklet program at various locations along Main Street and, potentially, along other downtown streets.

**Next Steps:** Design and implement enhancements at Main, Bridge and Canal Street intersection.

**Long Term:** Design and implement intersection enhancements at other locations along Main Street.

### 3.2.6 Waterfront Area

Downtown Brattleboro is located at a wide point in the Connecticut River, affording dramatic views of the river valley to the north and south. Currently, however, the waterfront area does not capitalize on river, with the exception of the Whetstone Station Restaurant and Brewery. Once the bridge at Bridge Street is converted to a pedestrian and bicycle bridge, this area could be enhanced as a significant open space amenity and gateway to downtown. Additionally, the waterfront could offer a memorable gateway for visitors arriving by train.

The current waterfront park area was capped with more soil than necessary, resulting in a mound that obstructs views to the River and limits flexibility of how the park space can be used. Following are recommendations to consider for enhancing the waterfront area over the long-term, as illustrated in “Figure 10: Bridge Street Intersection and Waterfront” on page 40:

- Lower the grade to create a flatter area and stronger visual connection to the river.
- Prune existing trees and selectively remove vegetation that blocks views (and replace with lower vegetation) along the river edge.
- Design the waterfront park to accommodate a variety of use areas that allow for different activities. Use areas may include a plaza and gathering area near Bridge Street comprised of a combination of special paving and deck overlook; special seasonal planting; a flexible lawn area and additional deck platforms and river overlooks.
- The overall design should be coordinated with the reuse of the building on the site and the trail connection described earlier so that the entire waterfront is integrated.

**First Steps:** Promote and build support for the waterfront area.

**First Steps:** Selectively prune existing vegetation to open views to the river.

**Next Steps:** Develop detail design drawings for the park in conjunction with plans for the reuse of the building on site.

**Long Term:** Implement Waterfront Park.

### 3.2.7 Whetstone Brook Overlooks

The Whetstone Brook is a tremendous but underutilized asset through the heart of downtown. Rock outcrops, rapids and building foundations combine to create memorable views throughout the brook corridor, particularly between the pedestrian bridge and the outfall at the Connecticut River. There are several opportunities to celebrate the Whetstone and provide more opportunities for residents and visitors to experience it as a destination or while conducting daily business around it. These areas include the edges west of the Main Street Bridge, the area along Bridge Street south of the Main Street Bridge and along the railroad right-of-way and future trail connection. The following recommendations should be considered for the Whetstone Brook:

- Clear inappropriate vegetation along the edges to open up views to the brook. In many cases, this would just involve pruning lower limbs so that tree canopies remain, while views beneath the canopies are opened. In other instances, dense invasive vegetation might be replaced with low native shrubs that allow for views overtop.
- Replace utilitarian fencing along Bridge Street and near the railroad (where the future trail would pass) with ornamental fencing similar to that used on the Main Street Bridge or along the promenade adjacent to the co-op.
- Consider murals focusing on history or the arts on select portions of retaining wall along the Whetstone.
- Consider downlighting of murals and/or walls, rock outcrops and rapids to draw attention to the brook in the evening. Lighting is a relatively inexpensive way to make a significant visual impact.
- Consider lighting underneath the Main Street Bridge to focus more attention on the Whetstone and the bridge crossing itself. This lighting could be done creatively as part of an art installation.

**First Steps:** Clear and prune inappropriate vegetation along the Whetstone to make it more visible.

**Next Steps:** Implement pilot program for murals and lighting along each side of the Main Street Bridge.

**Long Term:** Implement new railings along Bridge Street and integrate aesthetic railings, lighting and interpretive signage as part of the future trail project along the railroad right of way.

**Long Term:** Expand mural and lighting programs if successful.





Figure 12: Whetstone Cultural Campus





### **Whetstone Brook: Existing Conditions**

The Whetstone Brook that meanders through downtown is a unique and significant asset that needs to be highlighted by every means possible. Current conditions feature blank concrete walls and no accent lighting and minimal environmental lighting.



### **Whetstone Brook: Proposed Conditions 01**

At the sidewalk level, install additional vintage light poles to illuminate the general environment. On the blank concrete walls, consider painting artistic murals. Install accent down lighting at regular intervals on the walls to create drama and attract attention to the brook, especially at nighttime.



### **Whetstone Brook: Proposed Conditions 02**

This rendering merely shows the previous recommendations as dusk approaches.



### **Whetstone Brook: Proposed Conditions 03**

As nighttime approaches, the accent lighting begins to be more prominent.





#### **Whetstone Brook: Proposed Conditions 04**

In addition to the down lighting to accentuate the wall and any artwork, include spotlighting on the falls to highlight this natural water feature.



#### **Whetstone Brook: Proposed Conditions 05**

If so desired, the down lighting could feature different colors to add drama and variety.

### 3.2.8 Brooks House Open Space

Several open spaces and gathering spaces are planned as part of the Brooks House Renovation. As detailed design plans are developed for this space, consider enhancements that maintain the vehicular and pedestrian connection to the Harmony Lot from High Street, but designed as “shared space.” That is, the paving and detailing should emphasize the connection as a pedestrian space that also allows for vehicular access, rather than a design that emphasizes the vehicle over the pedestrian.

**First Steps:** Refine site plans to emphasize “shared space” for vehicular/pedestrian link to High Street.

**Next Steps:** Implement site enhancements with completion of Brooks House Renovation

**Long Term:** Work with Brooks House to regularly program the outdoor spaces.

### 3.2.9 General Enhancements and Sustainable Practices

Several components of the projects described above include general enhancements and/or sustainable practices that can be utilized anywhere and not just as part of the projects above. These include:

- Enhanced views – pruning and clearing of inappropriate vegetation to open views to downtown architecture, Whetstone Brook, the Connecticut River and the mountains. Refer to “Figure 13: View Enhancement Opportunities” on page 50
- Parklets – temporary sidewalk extensions, as illustrated in “Figure 11: Parklet Concept” on page 41, provide inexpensive ways to temporarily provide additional sidewalk area for outdoor dining, merchandise displays, public art or seasonal planters and can be utilized on any street with parallel parking without sacrificing parking spaces the entire year. They are flexible enough to experiment to determine which locations are the most successful. There are numerous resources online dealing with the design and regulation of parklets.
- Accent Lighting – accent lighting can be used in addition to street and pedestrian lighting to enhance perceptions of safety and to accent unique architectural or natural features. In addition to the recommendations described for the Whetstone Brook Overlooks, there is an opportunity to uplight (or downlight) the tall retaining wall at the Brattleboro Transportation Center to increase the sense of safety while highlighting the aesthetic qualities of the stonewall.
- Crosswalks – crosswalks should not only be located at major intersections, but also at intersections of access drives and roadways. Crosswalk markings should be bold and highly visible to send a clear signal that downtown is a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- Interpretive Signing – interpretive signage can be used throughout downtown to highlight history, the arts and sustainable practices.

- Rain Gardens – rain gardens are highly effective and attractive ways of addressing storm water near the source, as demonstrated in the co-op parking lot. As site development projects occur, opportunities to incorporate rain gardens and bio-swales should be explored.
- Flow-Through Planters – for significant streetscape enhancement projects and where space allows, flow-through planters might be considered to divert and capture some storm water runoff along curb lines. These planters can be aesthetic as well as functional components of downtown streetscapes.
- Permeable Paving – permeable paving should be considered in large parking areas where the subsurface would allow for the appropriate level of percolation. Permeable paving could be used within the parking stall area, while drive aisles could utilize traditional asphalt or concrete paving.
- Edible Landscapes – wherever possible, the use of edible landscapes should be explored for aesthetic and functional purposes. These might take the form of at-grade planting beds or in raised planters where soils are questionable or may be perceived to be questionable.
- Bike Accommodations – bike accommodations such as covered bike parking and bike racks should continue to be incorporated throughout downtown, particularly within large public parking resources.
- Electric Car Charging Stations – charging stations should be considered for public parking lots throughout downtown. A pilot program might be considered for one area to test the success of the program before expanding to other locations.
- First Steps: Identify current design and planning initiatives where some of the above initiatives might be incorporated into the project.

**First Steps:** Pruning and clearing at key locations in downtown can occur anytime, with little cost, and could make a significant impact.

**Next Steps:** On-going implementation of the above practices.

**Long Term:** On-going implementation of the above practices.



Figure 13: View Enhancement Opportunities



### 3.3 Development/Redevelopment Sites

Most downtowns started with one and two story wooden structures facing graded dirt streets with wooden sidewalks. As downtowns grew and developed, brick multi-story structures were built. Sidewalks were improved sometimes constructed of stone, brick or concrete. Streets were also improved and with the advent of the automobile eventually paved. Downtown Brattleboro is not your typical Vermont Downtown. A majority of its buildings are three and four stories in height. A typical Vermont Downtown normally has buildings that are two to three stories high. Brattleboro also has a fine collection of period architecture starting with the Second Empire Brooks House (which is currently being restored) to the Art Deco Latchis Hotel and Theater to the Federal Style Renaissance Fine Jewelry Building. These historic buildings along with other downtown historic buildings give Brattleboro terrific “bones” to support a vital place. These buildings have wonderful detailing, from stone window headers and sills to brick cornices that have highly detailed brick patterns.



Brooks House



Latchis Hotel and Theater



Renaissance Fine Jewelry



Stone Heads and Sills, Detailed Brick Cornices



Detailed Brick Cornices



### 3.3.1 Clean and Repair Existing Buildings

In many downtowns, time has taken its toll on some of the buildings. Incompatible changes may have been made which have damaged, altered or hidden the beauty of these downtown buildings. In some cases, the buildings just have not been maintained. In general, people think that masonry buildings do not need maintenance. It is true that masonry buildings need less maintenance than a wood painted finished building, however, they still require maintenance. Much of the time they just need a "bath." Cleaning the exterior of these downtown buildings lets details that have been hidden by dirt, soot and grime over the years shine again. Cleaning gives the buildings a fresh face. If buildings are not maintained, then maintenance becomes rehabilitation which is much more expensive. "Maintenance is preservation."



Examples of Brick and Stone Buildings That Need A "Bath"



Brick that has Been Cleaned and Brick That Has Not



Examples of Split Brick Below Stone Header



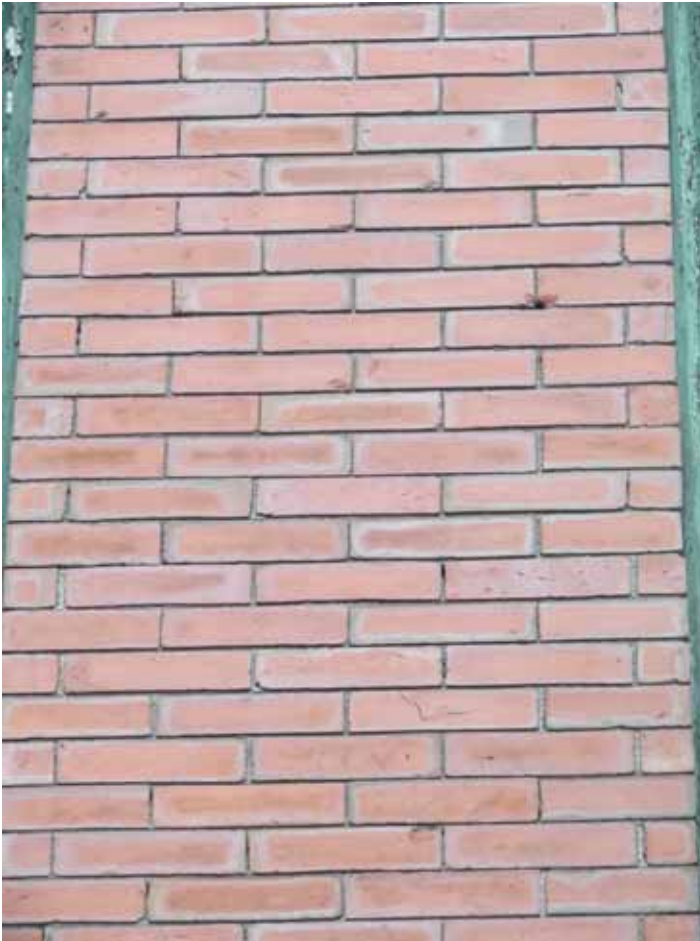
Examples of Spalled Brick

When bricks have been damaged and need to be replaced, new brick needs to match existing brick in size, density, texture and color. Existing bricks need to be cleaned first with a restoration cleaner to expose the brick's original color. This will allow for a more accurate match with the new brick



Examples of New Brick and Mortar Joints That Do Not Match Existing





Examples of Good Mortar Joints



Examples of Poor Repointing Matching existing

If existing mortar joints need to be repointed, the new joints need to match existing in color, tooling, texture and size, but most important is that the mortar needs to be weaker in strength than the brick. This allows for the brick to expand and contract. If the mortar was stronger than the brick then the brick may crack and/or spall.

#### Cleaning, Replacing and Repointing Existing Masonry

1. Clean existing brick and mortar joints using a restoration cleaner  
 Brick Cleaner:  
 101 Masonry Restorer, Diedrich Technologies  
 One Restore, Eaco Chem  
 Marble Cleaner:  
 910 Marbel Cleaner, Diedrich Technologies
2. Match new brick and mortar with existing
3. Replace damage brick and mortar
4. Repoint existing mortar joints
5. Clean new brick and joint work



### 3.3.2 Whetstone Cultural Campus

Current planning initiatives for expansion to the New England Youth Theater (NEYT) and development of the Brattleboro Music Center (BMC) provides an opportunity to create a dynamic district along the banks of the Whetstone Brook and to further activate the Flat Street corridor with positive uses. As plans for the NEYT and BMC progress, the following recommendations should be considered:

- Consider locating the new NEYT building expansion adjacent to Flat Street to create a prominent presence along the street.
- Incorporate windows in existing and proposed facades adjacent to the Whetstone Brook to take advantage of the wooded water corridor and to provide “eyes on the brook”; minimizing secluded areas conducive to undesirable behavior.
- Create a network of open spaces that provide outdoor event and gathering spaces while connecting the various buildings and programs throughout the campus.
- Work with the Co-op to explore feasibility and desirability of connecting the Whetstone Cultural Campus with the Co-op site with a second pedestrian bridge and pathway link to the first. This could allow for a short walking loop through the campus and around the Whetstone Brook. Additionally, because of the curvature of Flat Street, the NEYT and future BMC would be more visible from the brook side rather than from Flat Street. It should be noted that a second pedestrian bridge connection is of some concern to the co-op related to the potential for cultural campus visitors to park in the co-op parking lot. Agreements, restricted parking and enforcement will need to be worked out among the co-op, the NEYT, the BMC and the City in order for a second pedestrian bridge to be beneficial to all parties.
- Capitalize on opportunities to provide physical and visual access to the Whetstone Brook with pathway connections, decks and overlooks.
- Design surface parking areas so that they can become integral parts of the campus open space during special events.
- Consider use of rain gardens and permeable paving within surface parking areas.
- Provide definition to the existing Elm Street Parking Lot by providing a planting strip and street trees along the street edge. Similarly, as surface parking replaces the Tri Park Auto building, create a well-defined streetscape edge along this side of Elm Street.
- Emphasize use of tall canopy trees in open spaces to provide shade and define spaces while allowing for unobstructed views.

**First Steps:** Demolish Tri Park Auto building along Elm Street

**First Steps:** Explore feasibility and potential agreements regarding second pedestrian bridge connection among concerned parties (co-op, NEYT, BMC and City).

**Next Steps:** Develop detailed and/or conceptual design plans for the NEYT and BMC and coordinate with each other as plans are being developed.

**Long Term:** Implement NEYT expansion and BMC.

### 3.3.3 Flat Street Infill Development

There are two infill development opportunities being considered along Flat Street. These are important projects as they could further introduce additional positive uses along Flat Street while filling in an architectural “gap” along this street. For these properties north of Flat Street, there is an opportunity to create an upper floor connection to Elliott Street through the existing pocket park and create a courtyard between the development of both buildings. This courtyard space could serve as an exciting outdoor space and designed to reflect the warehouse/ industrial character of the adjacent buildings. Consideration should be given to overhead string lights, moveable tables and chairs, a potential fire pit to extend the season and places to display art.

**First Steps:** Explore feasibility of coordinated development among property owners.

**Long Term:** Design and implement infill development.

### 3.3.4 183 Main



Brattleboro is a community, which has turned its back on and not taken advantage of the possibilities of having the Connecticut River and White Mountains next to its downtown.

View of the Connecticut River and Mountains behind Downtown Brattleboro

The existing one story building is 60' x 170'. Its exterior walls are masonry bearing walls with steel columns at the interior supporting wood roof framing. The existing parapet walls at the roof are approximately 7 feet high.



Above: View of the Candle in the Night Building



View from the roof of the building to the White Mountains beyond  
This building appears feasible for either a second floor or rear deck.  
View of the Connecticut River and White Mountains from  
the Roof of Mocha Joe's & A Candle in the Night Bldg.



Brattleboro Bicycle Shop – Existing Façade



Brattleboro Bicycle Shop – Proposed Façade

The proposed apartments each would be approximately 30' x 65'. They could be constructed and have a view of the Connecticut River and the White Mountains. Further investigation is required to determine if structural reinforcing may be needed for the existing steel columns and wood roof framing. Sections of the existing parapet walls will need to be removed for windows.

Second floor option – Exterior brick walls are likely bearing – two longitudinal column lines are likely steel – current 1st floor and roof are wood frame. Roof characterized by 6' – 7' parapet on all sides. Remove rear parapet for east windows to river and view, and cut openings in north and south parapets for windows. May require column reinforcing, as well as reinforcing over east wall openings.

Deck – East foundation wall is substantial and appears in good shape. Bank is very steep. Utilize existing foundations, likely new diagonal supports and possibly extend cantilevers from within the building.

### 3.3.5 Brattleboro Bicycle Shop

This existing storefront has a number of pieces that do not work with each other. In addition, the existing tile is damaged and unappealing. This does not properly project the thriving business inside. The existing awning is dirty and faded. The awning is not compatible with the existing storefront. It visually obscures the entrance, making it non-inviting.

Remove the existing fixed fabric awning and replace it with a projecting canopy. This is more compatible with the existing storefront and provides protection from rain and snow for the customers and does not obscure the entrance. The projecting canopy during the summer will prevent sun glare on the storefront display windows, making the merchandise more visible. Replacing the existing damaged tile with simple panels will add to the storefront and minimize future maintenance. To complete this transformation, a horizontal sign above the projecting canopy will be more visible. These proposed improvements would visually tie the storefront together and produce a more attractive final product that will appeal to customers.



### 3.3.6 Crosby Block

Downtown Brattleboro plays host to some extremely handsome historic buildings. However, due to the preponderance of heavy traffic many of the buildings are covered with soot and appear “tired.” This building shows evidence of dirt and grime on the brick and precast elements. Additionally, some inappropriate treatments have occurred in the transom area of the two storefronts featured in this photo.

It is strongly recommended that the masonry be cleaned with a chemical cleaner (e.g. ProSoCo SureKlean) and a low-pressure water rinse. The two middle bays above illustrate the difference that cleaning the brick and precast could make. Additionally, it is recommended that the transom areas of the two storefronts be revealed or reconstructed as shown.



Crosby Block Building: Existing Conditions



Crosby Block Building: Proposed Conditions



### 3.3.7 Market Block

At some point in the life of this building, a third floor dance studio was added. As a result, the 'mansard' siding area is taller than it should be proportionally to the first two floors. Additionally, the copper parapet is taller than normal to conceal a sloped roof. The second floor brick is in desperate need of cleaning and in some

cases, masonry tuck-pointing. Finally, the first floor features well-detailed storefront systems, but the paint scheme does nothing to highlight the significance of these architectural features.

Begin by staining the metal parapet a dark bronze color to visually 'stop' the building. Remove the asbestos siding from the mansard third story roof area and install replication slate shingles similar to those used on the Brattleboro Food Co-op building. Construct mansard window dormers around the third floor windows and paint all the trim and fascia a rich, dark green to contrast with the brick and slate. Clean the upper façade brick and repair all upper floor windows. Finally repaint the first floor storefront systems dark bronze and green to create accent colors in contrast to the red brick.



Market Block Building: Existing Conditions



Market Block Building: Proposed Conditions







## Vermont Downtown Action Team Report

# Organization & Funding

## 4.0 Organizational and Funding Plan

### 4.1 Organization

All Main Street programs should adhere, in some way, to the basic Main Street Four Point Approach. That is working 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, dedicated staff, volunteers and committees that make, oversee and execute the work plans of the Main Street program. Sometimes different approaches are used – each unique to a community's personality and character.

In Brattleboro's case, the fact that there is already a Downtown Improvement District in place shows a great amount of dedication and desire, by the city, property owners and business owners of Brattleboro, to have a healthy downtown district. There are examples all across the country of healthy, successful Improvement Districts. Most of these began small and grew their facilities and programs. Brattleboro has a very good start with a strong merchants group and support of the Town of Brattleboro.

Our recommendation for Brattleboro would be to look at a long-term plan and begin to consolidate services in the downtown district under the Downtown Improvement District canopy. This can be a very successful partnership with the private sector and the municipality. Some of the services that could be consolidated would include but not be limited to:

- Full time Downtown Manager/Downtown Improvement District Director. This person would not only have oversight of the work plans of the Building a Better Brattleboro (BaBB) board of directors, but also interface with the Town of Brattleboro officials as well as workers assigned to the BaBB district. BaBB has hired a part-time manager within the past six months and this position will serve this goal well.
- Management and maintenance of the parking enterprise program. This could (and should) be a money making venture for the BaBB organization. The funds from the parking resources would go back into maintenance and security for the parking garage and surrounding area.
- Sidewalk and public space cleanliness and maintenance. Right now, the Town of Brattleboro, allocates certain funds for cleaning and maintenance of sidewalks and public spaces. Under this long-term model, the funds and responsibility would shift to the Downtown Improvement District director.
- Plantings. Oversight of planting and maintenance of vegetation and trees in the BaBB corridor would be part of the annual work plan of the BaBB board of directors.
- Creation of and administration of several retail and community events throughout the year.

The board of directors of BaBB should represent the partnership of the Downtown Improvement District and Building a Better Brattleboro, with input from both the public and private sector. Representatives of both entities should reside on the board and the committees of BaBB.

Eventually, the Downtown Improvement District would have a much stronger role in the execution of downtown priorities under the Executive Director. The district manager would aim to have supporting staff that would include an Events and Public Relations Manager and a Facilities Manager (this person would oversee the parking garage and any maintenance and cleaning projects in the district).

Under this scenario the Downtown Improvement District under BaBB's leadership would be responsible for reporting back to the town its activities on at least an annual basis. The report should include the following:

1. A list of current board and committee members. These should be listed separately by board members and committees. Include business or affiliation, mailing addresses, email address and phone numbers. Include rotation schedule of members and officers.
2. Vision and Mission Statements
3. Current board approved work plan—it should include board and committee goals, objectives, and activities. The work plan should also include the tasks needed to complete each activity, timelines, budgets, and specific responsibilities. Include a summary of active projects under each committee (Organization/ Board, Design, Promotion and Economic Development).
4. A list of those goals from the work plans that have been accomplished within the past year.
5. A list of incentive programs and their use over the year (Façade Grant, Low Interest Loans, Retail Counseling, Cooperative Advertising, etc.)
6. By-Laws, if any changes
7. Financial reports as presented at annual board meeting.
8. A copy of any Membership Brochure, along with membership fee structure and information
9. Attach current salary and benefit information for all paid staff. Written job description and quarterly evaluation summaries of Executive Director
10. A list of trainings that Director, board members or committee members attended in the past year. Include names of participants.
11. Letters of support from active partners of the program, who are not represented on the board. These letters of support may be from Chamber, County, Elected Officials or Businesses, to name just a few.

In addition to this data, BaBB as the Downtown Improvement District Coordinator should submit the following:

- Net and gross new jobs
- Jobs retained
- Net and gross new businesses
- Businesses retained
- Businesses lost
- Jobs lost
- Number of building rehab and new construction projects (please track each category separately), and total project cost (include federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credits used)
- Number of public capital improvement projects, and total project cost



- Number of new housing units created, and number that are affordable housing
- Annual operating budget.
- Total public dollars reinvested into DID district (include in kind services from town, county, state; salary and benefits for DID staff; Improvements done to publically owned buildings or properties; Federal grant dollars; etc.)
- Total private dollars reinvested into DID district (donations of services or products from private sector; foundation or private dollars donated; improvements done to privately owned properties; membership dollars; dollars made from festivals or events; etc.)

## 4.2 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.

### 4.2.1 Parking Improvements (Recommended in Section 3.2.1)

**VHCB** – SerVermont, Americorps volunteers or NCCC volunteer corps can be utilized for community projects benefiting the public such as tree planting, bed revitalization, streetscaping and green parking lot development.

**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.

**Vermont State Transportation Improvement Program** - 4 year physical and fiscal plan for Vermont Transportation. Communities can request inclusion of way-finding signage programs.

### 4.2.2 Regional Trail Connections (Recommended in Section 3.2.2)

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

**Vermont Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation** – Land and Water Conservation Fund 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.

**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.

**The Conservation Alliance** – Consortium of large outdoor retailers funding wild-life 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.

#### **4.2.3 River Garden and Terrace (Recommended in Section 3.2.3)**

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

**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.

**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.

#### **4.2.4 New Bridge Linking Preston Parking Co-Op and Main Street Streetscape and Intersection Improvements (Recommended in Section 3.2.4 and Section 3.2.5)**

**Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development** – Downtown Transportation Funds can be used for lighting,

**Vermont Agency of Transportation** – Transportation Alternatives 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).

**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.

**Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development** – Downtown Transportation Funds supports public capital improvements like new sidewalks, lighting and other pedestrian and streetscape improvements

**US Department of Transportation – Safe Routes to Schools Grants** – for sidewalk enhancement and construction and bike paths around school perimeters. Likely to be refunded in the 2014/2015 budget cycle.

#### **4.2.5 Brooks House Enhancements (Recommended in Section 3.2.8)**

While this project is already using a wealth of funding sources, some additional sources may help the outdoor spaces surrounding the Brooks House.

**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.

#### **4.2.6 General Enhancements and Sustainable Practices (Recommended in Section 3.2.9)**

Federal Resources for Sustainable Rural Communities Guide

[http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/pdf/federal\\_resources\\_rural.pdf](http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/pdf/federal_resources_rural.pdf)





## Vermont Downtown Action Team Report

## Implementation

## **5.0 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 largely 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.

Brattleboro has clearly demonstrated its resiliency through many difficult challenges. Its downtown remains one of the most dynamic in the United States and future improvements can only make it better.

Strategies	First Steps 2014/2015	Next Steps 2015/2016	Long Term 2016-2020	Goals
<b>Seizing the Market: Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Market to the surrounding region.</li> <li>Complete a market housing study for downtown.</li> <li>Pursue personal care, specialty food, and additional dining opportunities in downtown.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support additional market rate housing in downtown Brattleboro.</li> <li>Implement co-working space in downtown Brattleboro.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Goal of recruiting three to four new restaurants in downtown.</li> <li>Target additional personal care stores downtown.</li> </ul>	Downtown Brattleboro will continue to succeed as a multi-use downtown with shopping, offices, and increased residential units.
<b>Public Realm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore feasibility of alternate trail routes downtown.</li> <li>Prune limbs behind river garden.</li> <li>Provide Umbrella tables in front of River Garden.</li> <li>Main Street streetscape enhancements per report.</li> <li>Experiment with parklets.</li> <li>Promote support for waterfront redevelopment.</li> <li>Create ongoing pruning/clearing program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement trail segments per report.</li> <li>Explore easement allowing alley access to River Garden.</li> <li>Explore feasibility of bridge between Flat St. and Brattleboro Co-Op.</li> <li>Expand parklet program.</li> <li>Develop detail designs for Waterfront park.</li> <li>Lighting program for Whetstone park.</li> <li>Consider public realm improvements in conjunction with Brooks House</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement trail segments along railroad.</li> <li>Implement deck expansion and trail connection from River Garden to RR.</li> <li>Implement bridge Between Flat St and Co-Op.</li> <li>Implement enhancements at Main bridge and canal.</li> <li>Intersection enhancements at other intersections along Main.</li> <li>Implement Waterfront park.</li> <li>New railings along Bridge Street.</li> </ul>	Downtown Brattleboro will continue its work to improve the public realm, better identify and market downtown parking resources, better connect to Whetstone Brook and the Connecticut River.
<b>Parking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parking maintenance strategy</li> <li>Implement capital budget for parking improvements</li> <li>Light parking deck</li> <li>Wayfinding signs for parking</li> <li>Conduct Parking Master Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider incentives to use remote parking</li> <li>Contemplate unified parking meters that accept debit cards</li> <li>Refurbish Harris lot</li> <li>Revitalize Harmony lot</li> <li>Preston lot- minor repairs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repair Spring Lot.</li> <li>Continue to add technology to parking including apps and pay by phone meters.</li> </ul>	Downtown Brattleboro will implement a rational, short, medium, and long term improvement plan for parking in downtown.
<b>Private Sector Investment Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue implementation of whetstone cultural campus</li> <li>Discuss possibility of 2nd pedestrian bridge</li> <li>Continue dialogue of Flat street infill development</li> <li>Clean facades</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed design plans for New England Youth Theatre and Brattleboro Music Center.</li> <li>Work in concert with Flat Street infill to coordinate public realm improvements and encourage sensitive infill.</li> <li>Continue to work with private property owners to encourage on site expansion, residential upper floor units, and increased density sensitive to the Town.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement New England Youth Theater expansion and Brattleboro Music Center.</li> <li>Complete infill along Flat Street.</li> </ul>	Private sector investments will round out the offerings of downtown, foster increased tax base, and provide for increasing foot traffic in downtown.
<b>Organization and Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hire full time director</li> <li>Create a façade Clean and Paint grant program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine Downtown Improvement District structure.</li> <li>Look at potentially combining some downtown district city services, with management and maintenance of the parking garage with DID oversight.</li> <li>Provide annual report of works for the organization.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hire a DID Executive Director, a parking manager and a clean and safe team.</li> </ul>	Building a Better Brattleboro will evolve into a partner organization responsible for the day-to-day management of downtown.