Lyndon Existing Conditions Report

Lyndon Design Guidelines

Town of Lyndon, Vermont

Table of Contents

Section 1

Introduction

This Existing Conditions Report characterizes the existing conditions of the commercial areas of Lyndon, Vermont, including the village and the gateway corridors. This report will serve as a foundation for the creation of Design Guidelines for these areas. Following a discussion of existing conditions, recommendations for inclusion in the Design Guidelines are provided.

Design Guidelines are meant to foster and maintain a vibrant economy by supporting development that respects the existing characteristics of a town and creating a pedestrian scaled walkable environment, where appropriate.

Lyndon's Town Plan discusses community character and expresses concern that parts of Vermont Routes 5, 114 and 122 detract from Lyndon's beautiful setting and small town appeal.[1] Specific goals for maintaining and achieving community character include upholding community values and characteristics that make Lyndon unique such as its walkability, natural beauty and small-town charm; protecting and promoting historic resources; expanding and promoting walkability; and beautifying the gateways into Town. This Existing Conditions Reports identifies characteristics of Lyndon that both make it a unique community and detract from its character. Based on these existing conditions, Design Guidelines can then be developed to help the Town produce positive tangible (and intangible) results related to the goals specified in the Town Plan.

Rather than divide the report by the existing zoning districts, which are subject to change, the discussion will focus on two main overlay districts: the village center as one area and the radiating commercial corridors, also known as Gateways, as another. This report will provide a discussion of the existing architecture, signage, lighting, parking and site layout, pedestrian access, and streetscape features along the various roadways included in these two main overlay districts. Representative photographs are included. Additionally, included in this discussion are photographs annotated to discuss recommended or not recommended design elements.

[1] *Lyndon Town PLan, December 22, 2008 (revised February 9, 2015), https://www.lyndonvt.org/LyndonTownPlan_Adopted02_09_2015.pdf (accessed May 10, 2019).*

During the field study and in this report, the following features were considered for discussion:

Architecture

Style, Height, Materials, Scale, Massing, Fenestration, Details (e.g. awnings)

Signage

Location, Style, Materials

1.1 Methodology

The Town of Lyndon seeks to develop Design Review Guidelines in order to encourage compact development and redevelopment within the Village and surrounding commercial areas, while creating the ability to ensure that development is compatible in appearance with the historic character of the village. Design Guidelines can give developers parameters for their proposals, and the Town wants to prevent the Gateways from developing into sprawling corridors that are only focused on vehicular access. Lyndon seeks simplicity and clarity in design guidelines.

VHB Preservation Planners reviewed the existing zoning bylaws prior to a conference call with the Planning Commission on January 30, 2019. Next, VHB and the Planning Commission met in Lyndon on March 2, 2019 for discussion, a site walk, and a driving tour of Lyndon. Following the discussion, VHB and three Planning Commission members walked the village commercial area to discuss existing site conditions. Outside of the village, the corridors are not walkable, so the group drove in order to conduct the site visit. Discussions and observations focused on streetscape elements, building design, successful and unsuccessful examples of recent development, concerns, and the current zoning bylaws. VHB photographed the corridors following the group meeting.

Site Design & Parking

Building location, Curb cuts, Access, Parking Orientation, Utilities Placement

Pedestrian Access

Crosswalks, Accessibility (e.g. ramps to buildings)

Streetscape

Green Strips, Lighting, Tress, Street Furniture, Utility Wires

Using observations and feedback/discussion from the Planning Commission, VHB wrote the existing conditions report. In order to allow the design guidelines to stand the test of time, even with changing zoning districts, this report proposes two Design Overly Districts. These Design Overlay Districts are presented in this report as 1) Village and 2) Gateway Corridors. They do not include residential properties, as the Planning Commission is focusing on creating guidelines for commercial growth only at this time. However, residential design guidelines could be added in at another time.

The above characteristics are discussed as relevant to each section. When discussing development and design, the term “compatible” refers to new design that does not clash with the existing development in terms of height, massing, materials, site layout, and style. For instance, a strip mall development set back from the road with a parking lot in front would not be compatible with village development where most of the buildings front the sidewalk and cars are parked on the street. Varying architectural styles can be compatible with each other in a village setting provided that they maintain connections to each other such as windows and doors at the sidewalk level, similar heights and setbacks, and appropriate materials for the buildings’ respective styles.

Following the discussion of the existing conditions, the report provides general and select specific recommendations that can be incorporated into the future design guidelines.

1.2 Overview of Lyndon

The Town of Lyndon, Vermont is located in a rural area in northern Caledonia County. A population of almost 6,000 people resides in the approximate 36 square miles. The Town of Lyndon includes several unincorporated villages—Lyndon Corner, Lyndon Center, and East Lyndon—and one incorporated village, Lyndonville, which was established in 1866 and currently contains a designated Village Center. Lyndonville serves as the municipal and commercial core of Lyndon, while Lyndon Center to the west is the home of Lyndon Institute and Northern Vermont University's Lyndon campus.

Lyndon is nicknamed the "**Covered Bridge Capital of the Northeast Kingdom**" because of the many intact covered bridges that cross the Passumpsic River, which is found just to the west of Lyndonville, and its various tributaries radiating east and west.

Lyndonville's location within the Passumpsic River valley is framed by gently rolling hills to the east and west of the downtown. While Lyndonville's proximity to the river has offered many agricultural and recreational opportunities, it has also created problems with flooding. Lyndon and Lyndonville have a number of Special Flood Hazard Areas, FEMA-designated "flood prone streets," and properties that repeatedly flood. Major flooding events in 2002 and 2011 raised water levels beyond the 100-year flood plain, particularly in the major intersection of Routes 5, 114 and 112, and along Route 5 south of the village.

Most people reach Lyndonville from exits 23 and 24 of Interstate 91, which runs through the center of Lyndon Town and is just west of Lyndonville. Several other major thoroughfares radiate in each direction from Lyndonville: Route 5 to the north and south, Route 114 to the northeast, and Route 122 to the northwest. Traveling away from Lyndonville, development along these corridors becomes sparser, with residential, commercial and industrial development widely interspersed amid undeveloped woodland and agricultural fields.

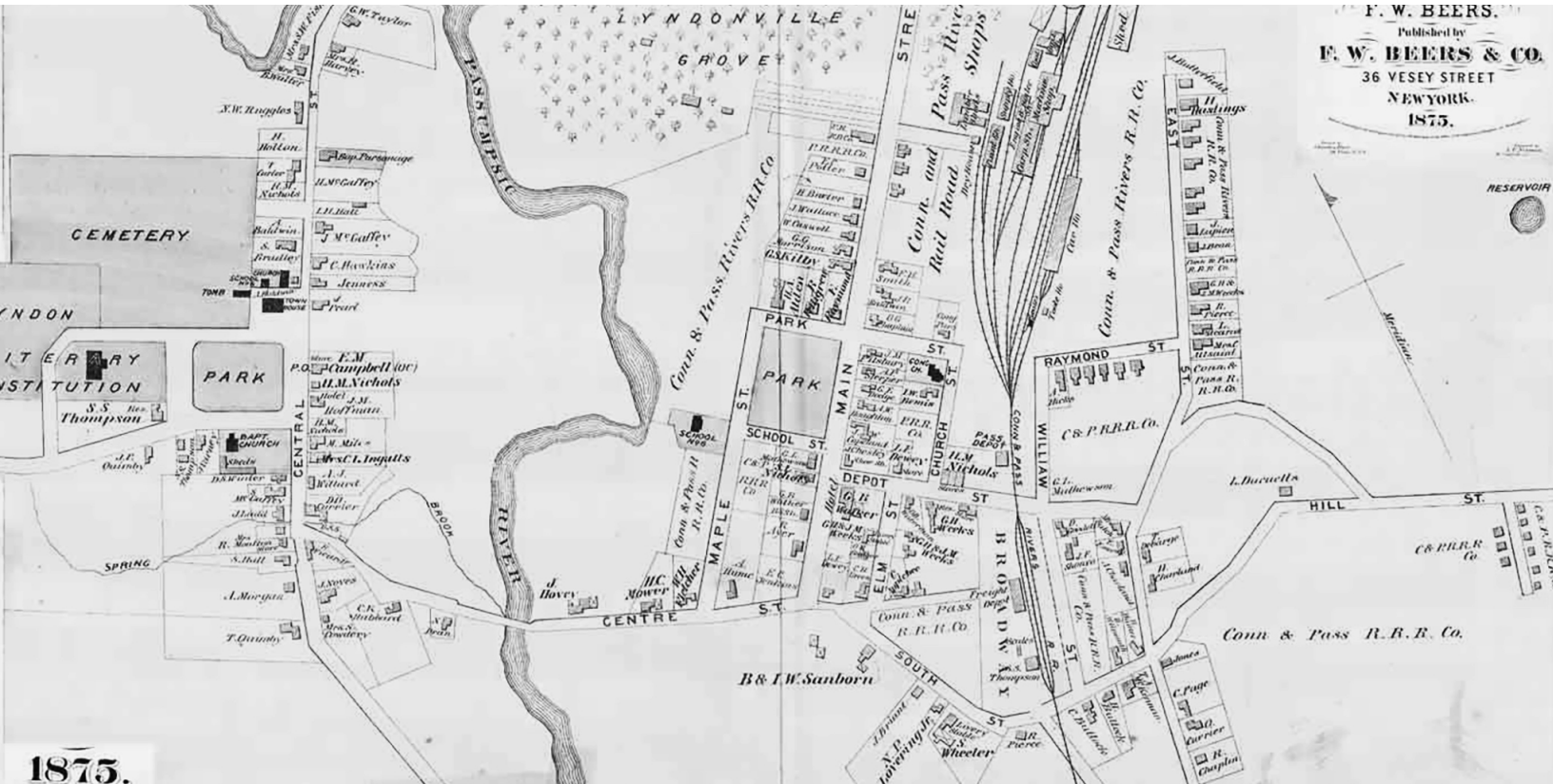
[2] *Designated Village Center is a State designation from the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development. It supports local revitalization efforts across the state by providing technical assistance and state funding to help designate municipalities build strong communities. Benefits include state tax credits, priority assistance for state grants, priority consideration for State Building and General Services, and neighborhood development area (NDA) eligibility. https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/designation-programs/village-centers (accessed May 10, 2019).*

1.3 History of Lyndon

Lyndon was chartered in 1780 and settlement commenced in 1788, with six or seven families living in Lyndon by the time that the town was officially organized in 1791. Following the establishment of the town, settlement in Lyndon rapidly increased: by 1800, the population was 542 and by 1810, the population had almost doubled to 1,092 residents. By 1840, agriculture was Lyndon's primary economic engine supporting its population of 1,753 people.

In 1866, the railroad shops of the Connecticut and Passumpsic Rivers Railroad were built to the east of the established villages of Lyndon Corners and Lyndon Center, resulting in the establishment of the new village of Lyndonville, the first (and only) railroad village in Vermont.

The new village was holistically designed with stores, institutions and residential neighborhoods being constructed with the help of funding from the railroad the west of the rail yard. Lyndonville quickly became a major railroad center in the region for passenger and freight traffic, although only two of the former rail buildings remain today. The prosperity of Lyndonville during the late-nineteenth century due to the railroad is still reflected in the stately homes constructed around Bandstand Park for railroad officials, the founding of Lyndon Institute in 1867, and examples of Italianate commercial architecture such as the Mathewson Block built in 1869. As Lyndonville became the hub of the town's commercial and industrial activity, other villages such as Lyndon Center and Lyndon Corners remained largely residential.



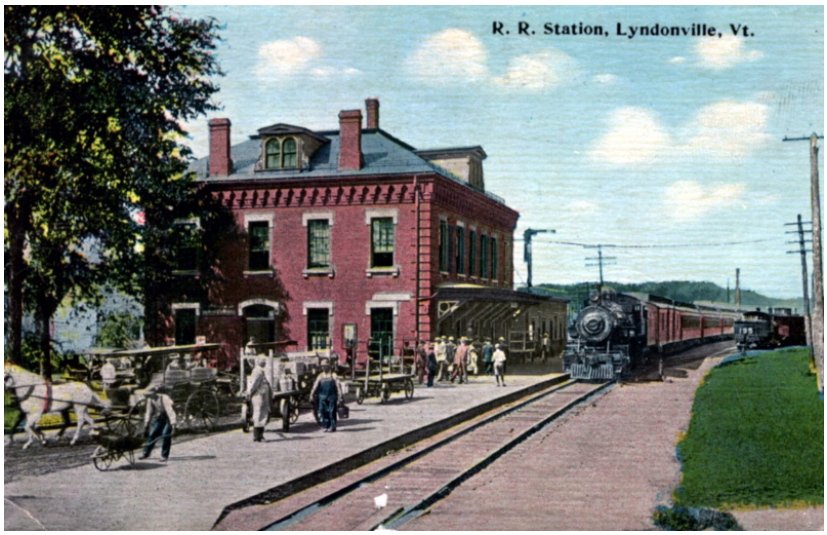
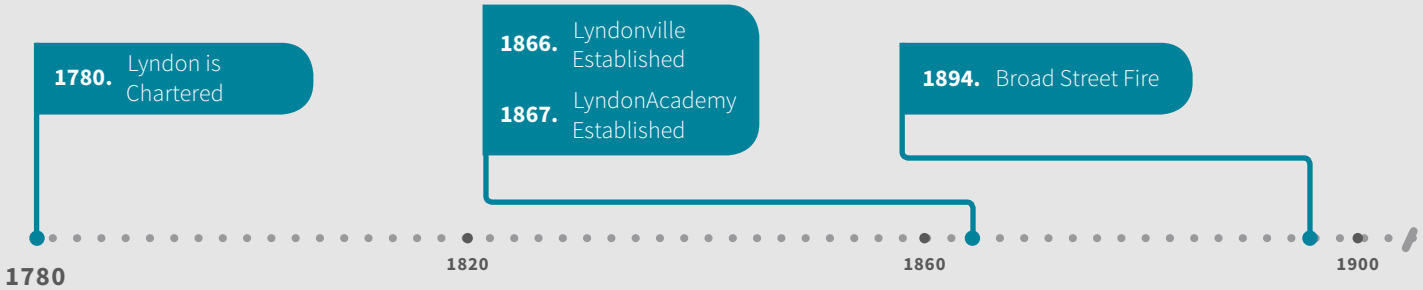


Photo courtesy of UVM Landscape Change and the Annie Foster Stone Postcard Collection, LS10374

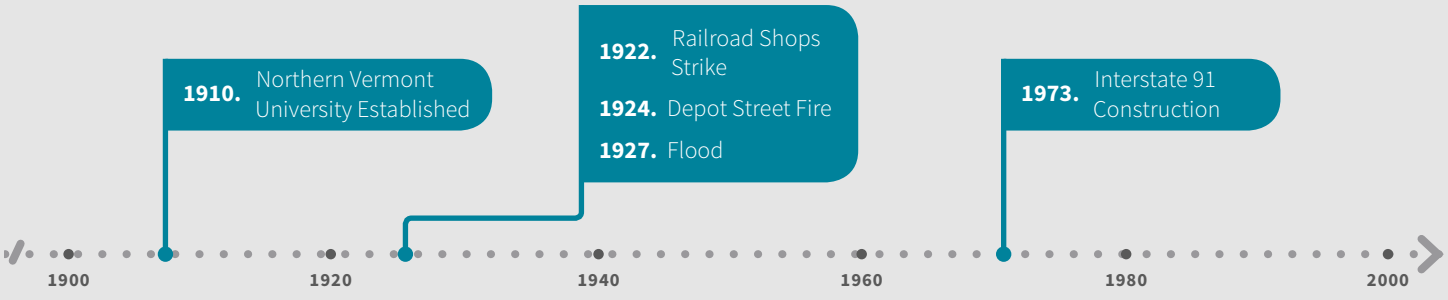
Unfortunately, the boon brought by the railroad would not last as Lyndonville faced a number of challenges beginning in the late-nineteenth century. In 1894, a fire swept down Broad Street in downtown Lyndonville, destroying most of the buildings in its path. In 1922, workers at the railroad shops went on strike, marking the beginning of the end of Lyndonville's years as a prosperous rail center. A second major downtown fire in 1924 destroyed half of Depot Street, and the flood of 1927 affected much of the town, washing away bridges and railroad tracks and destroying homes. Lyndonville's commercial core was rebuilt following the second fire, although the newer buildings were only two stories high instead of three stories high.

History of Lyndon Timeline



Despite these setbacks, Lyndon maintained its reputation as an educational center, home to the Lyndon Institute founded in 1867 and Northern Vermont University, formerly Lyndon State College which was established as the Lyndon Normal School in 1910. With the rise of automobile culture in the mid-twentieth century, Lyndonville grew beyond the village core and the construction of Interstate 91 in 1973 spurred development along Route 5 to the south of Lyndonville. While the interstate was generally beneficial as it made Lyndon less isolated, it resulted in relatively rapid and sprawling development that was not necessarily compatible with the former unique, "small town charm" of Lyndon.

Today, Lyndon is growing- its population increased by 500 people between 2000 and 2010. The area is increasingly become a tourist and outdoor recreation center due to the expansion of Burke Mountain in nearby Burke and Kingdom Trails in Burke and Lyndon. There is an anticipated increase in new development along Route 5 between downtown Lyndonville and the interstate, and newer infill development has occurred along North Main Street. Current municipal initiatives being undertaking by the town include re-writing the zoning ordinance, pursuing downtown designation and enhanced wayfinding for Lyndonville, and various efforts to encourage pedestrian and bicycle accessibility and safety through the Bike and Ped Advisory Committee.




RED STUDEBAKER
Mobilgas
CAFE


1924


c. 1930


c. 1940

Section 2

Existing Conditions

2.1 Village Commercial

The Village of Lyndonville is relatively intact, historically. It is well served by a handful of cafes and restaurants, a library, a post office, a handful of retail stores, a grocery store, a gym, and residences. The main core of the village is found along Broad Street, Depot Street and Main Street, anchored by the railroad buildings on the south near the intersection of Hill Street and Bandstand Park on the north. To the north of Bandstand Park, approximately one-half mile of relatively dense, mixed-use development is located along North Main Street. These segments of town compose the Village for the purposes of this discussion.

Memorial Park sits between the railroad tracks and Broad Street to the east. Residential streets run in a semi-grid to the core. Railroad tracks parallel Broad Street. The village commercial district has an overall feel of brick commercial building blocks with windows at the streetscape/pedestrian level, with most buildings accessible by sidewalk. The streetscape changed in 1894 and 1924 due to Depot Street fires. See the difference in the 1924 v. 1930 v. 1940 photos. Anchoring the T-intersection of Depot Street and Main Street is the 1869 Mathewson block.

1924 photo Courtesy of UVM Landscape Change and Penobscot Marine Museum, LS21241
c. 1930 photo Courtesy of UVM Landscape Change and Penobscot Marine Museum, LS21242
c. 1940 photo Courtesy of UVM Landscape Change and East Burke Club-George Hayes, LS13998

2.1.1 Depot Street

Overview + Architecture

A review of historic images shows that Depot Street has always been a wide street, without very many trees, and the intersection at Broad Street and Depot Street has always been wide. The architecture has changed due to fire and demolition, but significant buildings remain including the Mathewson block (101 Main Street), Cobleigh Public Library (14 Depot Street), the 1927 Darling Inn Apartments (76 Depot Street), and the 1897 block (32 Depot Street). Historically, the streetscape consisted of three to four-story buildings lining the streets with awnings, fronted by sidewalks, and sparse tree cover. Today the buildings are one to three stories, still fronted by sidewalks with sparse tree cover. Significant historic buildings have been lost as a result of fire and demolition such as the bank, the opera house, and the railroad station.

Depot Street is lined with primarily Colonial Revival style, two to four-story brick commercial blocks with windows and entrances at pedestrian level. Some openings have been altered or covered with plywood. The building blocks front Depot Street, which is very wide, and cars park diagonally on both sides of the street. Broad concrete sidewalks with concrete curbs separate the buildings and the parking spaces but lack green strips. Light posts/utility poles, sign posts, and young trees are spaced along the Depot Street sidewalks. Visually, Lyndon benefits from underground utility wires on Broad Street and Depot Street. The corner of Depot Street and Main Street is anchored by the library and the White Market (128 Main Street and 29 Depot Street).

Intersection at Depot and Broad Streets. This view shows that the commercial blocks in town are mostly two-stories, with some taller exceptions. The streets are wide. Wires are underground. There is very little vegetation in the village core. This intersection is not pedestrian friendly.

The 1927 Darling Inn Apartments, 76 Depot Street.

1869 Matthewson Block, 101 Main Street.

1897 Block, 32 Depot Street.

This Colonial Revival building on Depot Street has multiple storefronts, large windows, pedestrian access, and varying signage.

The building heights vary, but a water table—or differentiation between the 1st and 2nd stories—connect the building blocks, as do the windows at pedestrian level.

While this building, at 4 stories, is taller than others on Depot Street, it maintains storefronts with pedestrian access, and the watertable above the first story ties into that of its neighboring buildings (see photos above and below). It also retains architectural details such as window rhythm and a cornice.

Pedestrian Access + Parking

Pedestrians access Depot Street businesses either via sidewalk-level entrances, ramps located in front of the buildings, or a set of steps into the retail spaces. Not all entrances are fully accessible. On some buildings, pedestrian access has been altered from its historic appearance. For instance, the 1897 block formerly had a corner entrance, which is now blocked by green plywood. Additionally, pedestrian access has been altered on the market building. Pedestrians can no longer enter into the brick building from Depot Street; rather, they can enter off Main Street or from the 1.5-story building connected to the brick market building. Windows have been infilled with glass block, which provides some visual interest to the otherwise solid brick wall at this corner.

Sidewalks are wide, but access to businesses vary throughout the Village, as seen in these photos below. The bottom left photo shows the glass block infill on the White Market.

The Main Street sidewalk adjacent to the White Market is problematic as it is not delineated, cars park on it, and it creates a point of conflict between vehicles and pedestrians.

A point of confusion for pedestrians is the corner of Depot Street and Main Street at the White Market. Because the original store entrance was relocated from Depot Street to Main Street, there is a large expanse of brick wall on Depot Street. Additionally, cars park over the sidewalk on Main Street, creating a conflict point for pedestrians and vehicles, and creating an unfriendly village environment. And, the loss of this space detracts from a unique feature of the White Market building: it's painted signs on the Main Street side of the building.

Parking in the village is oriented diagonally along Depot Street and parallel along side streets. There is a parking lot next to the Asia Restaurant (133 Depot Street), just past the intersection with Broad Street and Depot Street, but it is unclear if it is public parking or private parking.

A noted problem in the Village is the winter parking ban, which does not allow street parking from November to April, even if weather conditions are clear and no snow plowing is needed. This causes residents to create their own parking spaces on lawns or other inappropriate parking locations.

When cars park along the west side of the White Market, the unique sign is hidden from view.

Parking adjacent to the Asia restaurant was unclear.

This photo shows two different signs on the same building: The realtor sign fits with the building, whereas the subway sign is out of scale and detracts from the ca. 1930 architecture.

Signage

In general, businesses in the village do not have a unified approach to signage. They include hanging signs, decal signs on windows, signs covering transoms, and signs on awnings. Internally lit and scrolling, digital signs are not permitted, but some have been erected anyway.

Materials

Materials can address siding, awnings, and doors, among other items. Brick and clapboard are most prominent in the village center and are historically appropriate materials. Vinyl, T-111, and aluminum siding are modern materials and thus are not compatible with the historic setting. Even new buildings should be compatible with their historic neighbors in order to create a more cohesive village appearance; thus, materials should reference those of the adjacent historic buildings. New materials such as cement board (HardiePlank, for example) or steel can be successfully integrated when designed correctly. Doors at street level on a main thoroughfare have an impact on historic buildings and the overall feeling of a street. There are examples

The photo on the left shows an original wood door surrounded by vinyl siding. Vinyl siding is not a recommended material as it detracts from the historic integrity of a building and its surrounding environment.

of incompatible doors (stock steel doors), which may mimic original wood doors (or not), but over time become rusted and dented. New doors often replace the entire door frame, removing original materials. A compromise is an all-glass door which has a more neutral appearance and therefore does not detract from the historic qualities of its building.

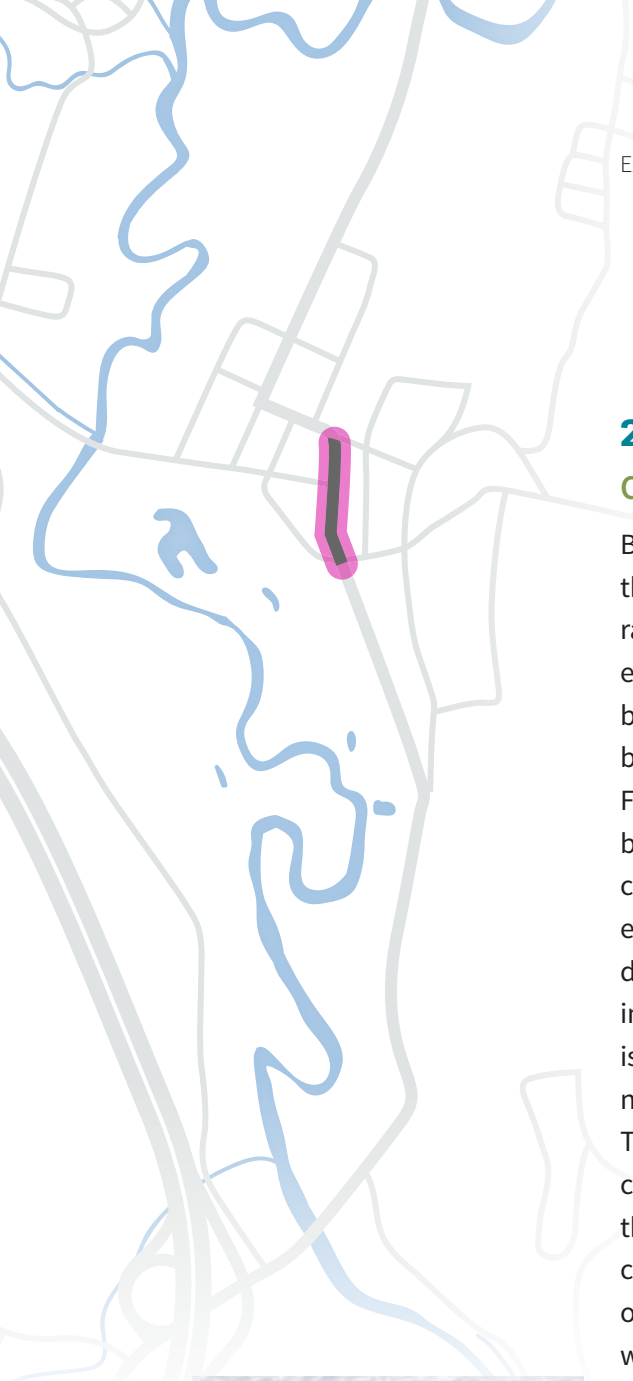
Fabric awnings are appropriate, whereas plastic awnings are inappropriate, as plastic is not a material that references historic architecture. Some signs look permanent, while others have a more temporary look to them (e.g. decals on windows or banners on transoms). A common visual detraction on Depot Street is seeing that the upper portions of storefront windows or the transoms over doors and windows that have been covered with plywood, T-111 siding, or other incompatible materials. This takes away from the historic character of the buildings and the Village as a whole.

Avoid awnings made from plastic materials.

Fabric awnings are recommended.

There are a variety of doors throughout the Village Commercial area. Metal doors are often incompatible (two examples are to the right). A visible transom, as seen on the left, is a feature of historic buildings worth preserving.

The door and transom to the right show a modern glass door, which can be seen as a compromise between historic and inappropriate modern doors, like those above. However, in this example, siding and sign cover the transom, taking away from the historic character of the opening.



2.1.2 Broad Street

Overview + Architecture

Broad Street in the Village Commercial District is located between the intersections of Hill Street and South Street. A parking lot and railroad-related buildings are just north of the intersection, on the east side of Broad Street. To the west is Norrie Park with residences behind it. The residences in this area are 1.5-2.5 story gable front buildings, most with porches. Just north of this is the Cumberland Farms gas station (957 Broad Street, constructed 2014). The new building demolished three villages homes, adding incompatible commercial development and a large expanse of pavement, essentially at the southern entrance to the Village Commercial district. The Cumberland Farms gas station is an example of incompatible commercial development, as the convenience store is set back from the street with the large gas canopy in front that is not related to the characteristics of the residential village setting. This development replaced three 1.5 story village homes, which contributed to the pedestrian streetscape and to the character of the village. A more compatible plan would have been to place the canopy behind the gable roof convenience store. Across the street on the east side of Broad Street is a large expanse of pavement where the former Cumberland Farms gas station was located just to the north of the former Bag Balm building (930 Broad Street).

Looking south down the railroad tracks through Memorial Park.

Broad Street includes a range of building ages and styles such as the historic railroad freight house and other railroad related buildings, the 1960s post office (1025 Broad Street), the 2014 Cumberland Farms gas station, the late 20th century State Farm building (prev. Community National Bank, 1033 Broad Street), late-nineteenth century dwellings, and Memorial Park (1012 Broad Street) set between Broad Street and William Street. Railroad tracks run through the park, which is filled with trees, greenspace, memorials, and benches. A small 1-story octagonal shaped information building and a bus stop are located at the southwest corner of the park, adjacent to the Freight House.

Pedestrian Access + Parking

Defined pedestrian access is located on the west side of Broad Street only. Pedestrians are left without safe access to the east side of Broad Street which accommodates parking but no sidewalk. There are some crosswalks, but they land on the east side which has no sidewalk. Access to Memorial Park is not well defined. Cars park diagonally on both sides of Broad Street. The recent median installation helps to direct traffic but does not provide much relief for anyone crossing the street and trying to get to his/her car from the west side. Parking in front of the freight house and to the south of the freight house is haphazard and, due to lack of curbing, there is the potential for vehicular and pedestrian conflict.

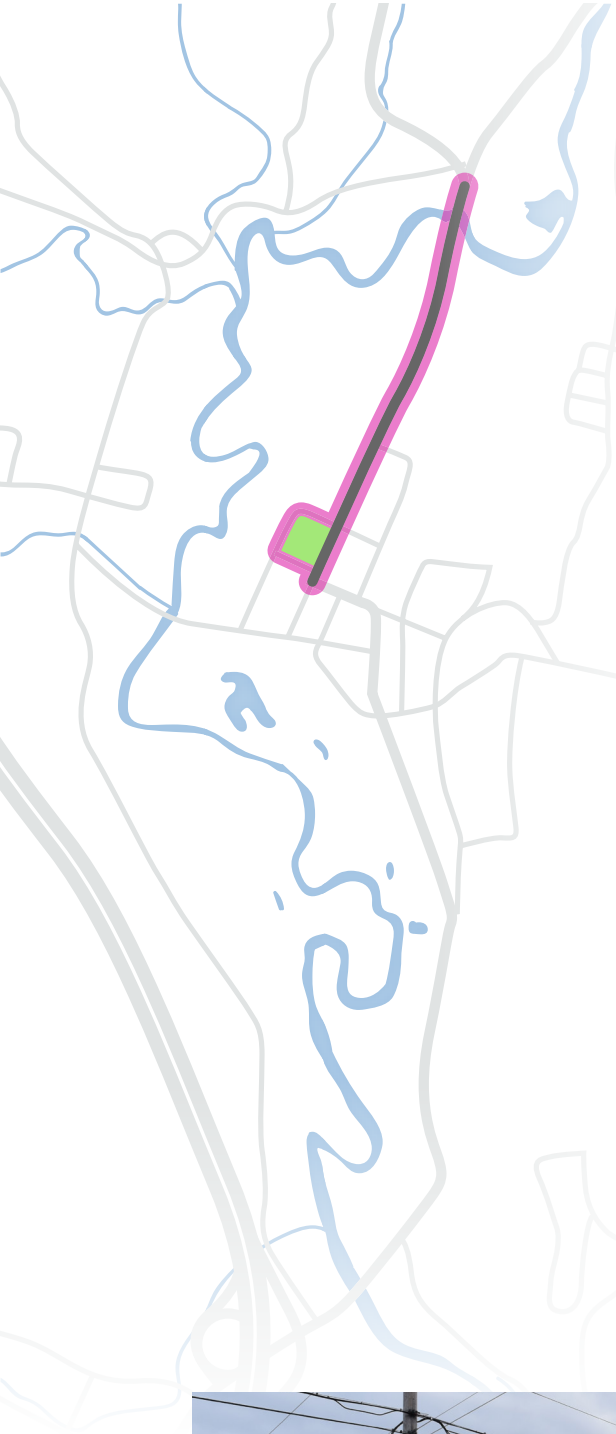
Signage

Signage on Broad Street in the village is limited, although the two that stand out are those for the State Farm building and the Cumberland Farms gas station. Both are fluorescent lit signs, though the Cumberland Farms sign is less obtrusive and lower to the ground. Illuminated, scrolling signs are prohibited in the Zoning Bylaws (16.6.3).

Materials

The buildings are clad in wood, brick and vinyl. Wood and brick are compatible materials with the historic setting, whereas vinyl is not.

This sign stands out in the Village Commercial District as incompatible due to its height, digital screen, and plastic material.



2.1.3 The Park and North Main

Overview + Architecture

Bandstand Park is approximately 3 acres of land surrounded by North Main Street, Maple Street, and Park Avenue. Large, 2.5-story Queen Anne homes on Park Avenue face east to the park; these homes were constructed ca. 1897 by the railroad and were designed by Lambert Packard (1832-1906), a prominent architect in northern Vermont (Packard was born in Coventry, VT). Bandstand Park is filled with large trees, benches, a gazebo, and a fountain. The fountain was purchased in 1885 from New York State. There are no formal pathways through the Park, and no sidewalks around the edge of the park. Cars park on the north, west, and south sides of the park.

North Main Street continues north from Depot Street. At the beginning of North Main Street is the Village Park on the west side and the White Market and residences on the east side. North Main Street has a mixture of commercial, residential, and municipal buildings. North Main Street's most noticeable feature is the repetitive row of two to 2.5-story, gable-front rooflines lining the roadway, particularly on the west side; closer to the VT 122/114 intersection, 1.5 to two-story buildings are more common. Many of the buildings along Main Street have one or two-story porches

and are set close to the sidewalk. Many of these buildings have been altered in fenestration (doors/windows) and the original clapboard has been covered or replaced with vinyl siding. Originally single-family homes, most have been converted to apartments and/or mixed-use buildings. Most of the buildings have multiple additions extending back into their lots, a common Vermont trend. A former church also serves as a community center (337 Main Street). To the west of North Main Street is Powers Park and the Passumpsic River. Powers Park, a 25-acre parcel, contains the public pool, bathhouse, tennis courts, a playground, a rental pavilion, and green space. The cohesive village feeling starts to get lost when properties are further back from the road and there are not sidewalks in front of the buildings.

On the east side of North Main Street, modern infill is present including the Lyndonville Fire Department building (316 Main Street), the laundromat (600 Main Street), and the gas station (590 Main Street). These businesses tend to be set further back than the residences on the west side. The fire department and the laundromat are examples of new development that attempts to reflect the historic building styles on the street, as they have gable front rooflines.

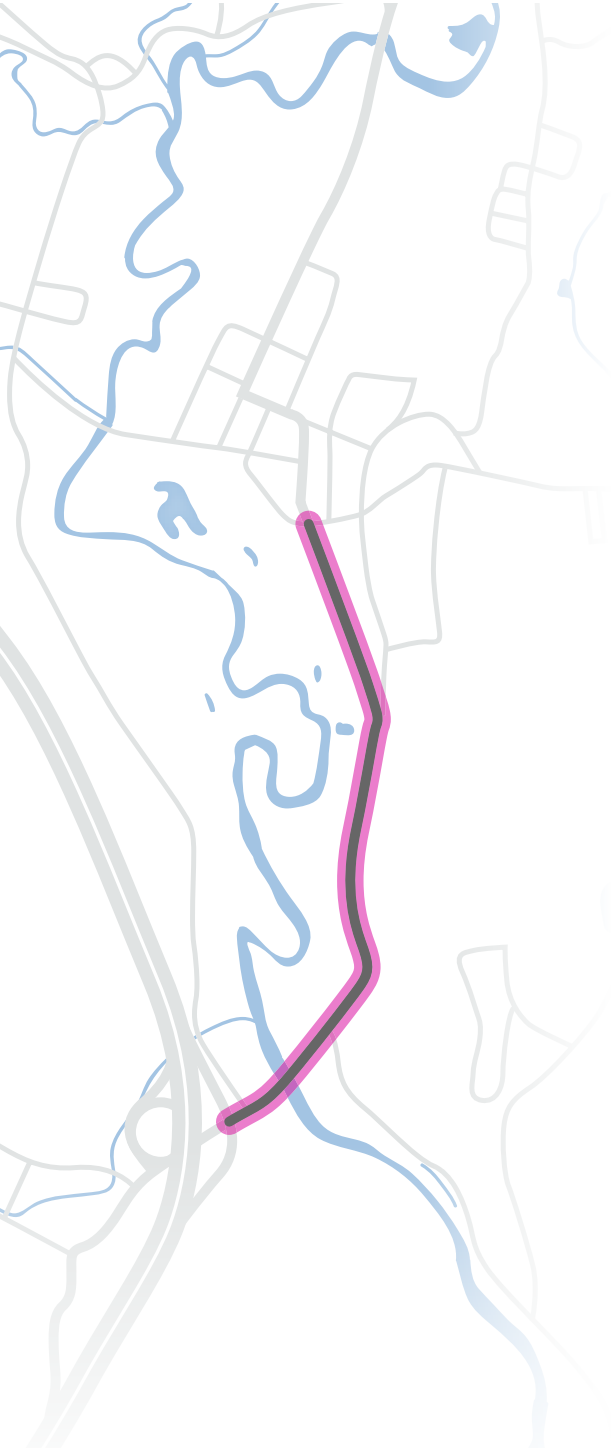
Telephone poles and utility wires run the length of the street; poles are located in the green strip between the sidewalk and the roadway. There are few trees throughout this corridor.

Looking southwest on Main Street shows repeating gable roof lines, a common characteristic of New England villages.

Gable front buildings with front porches, set close to the sidewalk characterize the look and feel of Main Street.

The new fire department building imitates the historic buildings with its gable front roofline. It is setback from the roadway due to required access for fire trucks.

The new commercial building (600 Main Street) maintains the gable roofline of nearby buildings.



2.2 Commercial Gateways

The commercial corridors into the village of Lyndonville, also known as the Gateways, are important to the economy and vitality of Lyndon. These Gateways set the stage for a visitor's experience of Lyndon because they are so heavily trafficked. Route 5 South contains most of the day to day shopping needs of residents and is the primary access into Lyndonville and to Burke beyond from Interstate 91. The other corridors are much more rural and less developed. This section includes observations about the following areas: Route 5 North, Route 5 South, Route 114 East, and Route 122 West. Note that Route 5 North, Route 114 East, and Route 122 West are not densely developed, and are summarized rather than separated into subsections.

2.2.1 Route 5 South Corridor

Overview + Architecture

The Route 5 South corridor, locally addressed as Broad Street, is located between the exit/on ramp from I-91 North heading into the village at its south end and the South Street/Hill Street intersection with Route 5 at the north end. The Village commercial district continues north from there. Route 5 South is characterized primarily by strip shopping malls, individual buildings, and a lack of visual cohesion. Route 5 South contains restaurants, fast food chains, gas stations, pharmacies, a grocery store, an auto supply store, auto repair shops, banks, gift shops/unique retailers, and other commercial businesses such as farm/yard, hardware, and furniture stores.

There are a few older homes throughout the route (see image below), most of which are located north of Dollar General (164

Broad Street) until the intersection of Boston Street and Broad Street, with a few scattered further north. The majority of recent buildings are 1-story in height, set back from the road with parking between the buildings and the roadway. Rooflines vary (gable, flat, shed, hipped, gambrel, false front), as do materials which typically include clapboard, vinyl and metal.

A noticeable stretch of new commercial buildings includes the Mobil gas station (78 Broad Street), McDonalds (110 Broad Street), and Dollar General. Further north, Rite Aid (412 Broad Street) and Kinney Drugs (407 Broad Street) occupy new buildings across the street from one another.

Examples of newer buildings that appear to have given consideration to the historic architecture of Lyndon include the Lyndon Buffet (626 Broad Street) and the Passumpsic Savings Bank (62 Broad Street). These buildings have smaller massing that standard new development, multiple roof gables, and windows at the pedestrian level. The Irving gas station (12 Broad Street) at the intersection of Route 5 and Red Village Road includes a gable-roof store building, which is more respective of the town's architecture than a standard, flat-roof convenience store.

This restaurant building reflects the connected architecture found throughout Lyndon with its varying rooflines and appearing as an assemblage of smaller buildings.

This gas station convenience store has a gable roof, which is more appropriate than a flat roof. The canopy is set to the side, not in front of the store.

Pedestrian Access + Parking

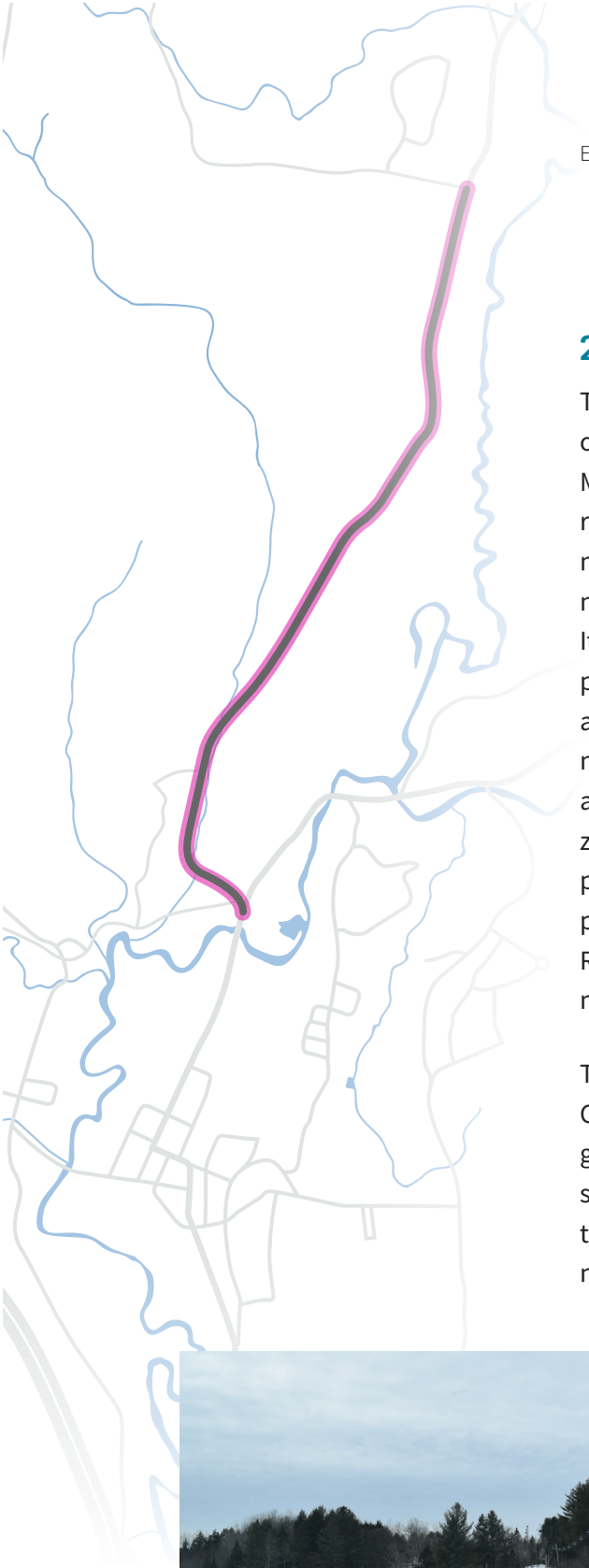
A drive down Route 5 South shows that the corridor was developed with a focus on vehicular access rather than pedestrian access. This is evident by a lack of sidewalks and curbing, expanses of pavement, and sparse landscaping. Rite Aid and Kinney Drugs have more intentional curb cuts than other retailers, with greenspace separating the parking lots and the roadway, though neither are pedestrian friendly.

Signage

Signs along this corridor vary as well: wood and painted, backlit, plastic, and metal. Most of the signs are lower to the ground, at car level. While the signage is not overly obtrusive, the lack of visual cohesion along this corridor is more a result of inconsistent curbing and landscaping, as well as the varying setbacks of the buildings to accommodate various-sized parking lots in front of the buildings.

Examples of signage that is larger and irrespective of Lyndon's character include: McDonalds (110 Broad Street), Mobil (78 Broad Street), Dollar General (164 Broad Street), Kinney Drugs (407 Broad Street), Rite Aid (412 Broad Street), Dentist (626 Broad Street), and Lyndonville TrueValue Hardware (583 Broad Street). However, Dollar General took the place of Ace Hardware, whose signage and parking were in the same place. Kinney Drugs was constructed in the past 10 years.

The Rite Aid building has a prominent entrance, accessible from more than one side of the building and a band of windows at pedestrian level. Parking occupies the majority of the lot. The sign is set in a median and low to the ground, though still large and lacking character.



2.2.2 Route 5 North Corridor

The Route 5 North corridor leaves Lyndon Village at the intersection of Route 5 / Route 122 / Route 114, where the former LynnBurke Motel is located, and, for the purposes of the existing conditions report, ends at the intersection with Egypt Road. Route 5 North is much less developed than Route 5 South. This rural highway does not have sidewalks and is very clearly separate from the village. It contains agricultural, industrial, commercial and residential properties on relatively large, individual lots. Businesses are diverse and include a used car retailer, an auto repair business, a U-Haul neighborhood dealer, boarding stables, dog boarding, childcare, and industrial uses such as a Northern Gas Transport station. While zoned commercial, the corridor includes agricultural and residential properties such as the Lyndon Heights development. Open space punctuated by sparse development characterizes this corridor. Residences dot the landscape, most set back from the road, which is much different than the village setting.

There is not a unifying building type throughout this corridor. Commercial buildings vary in size and style and include one-story gable front buildings, one-story eaves front buildings, one-story shed roof buildings and a large, gambrel-roof barn converted to a fitness center. Residential properties date from the late-nineteenth to the late-twentieth century.

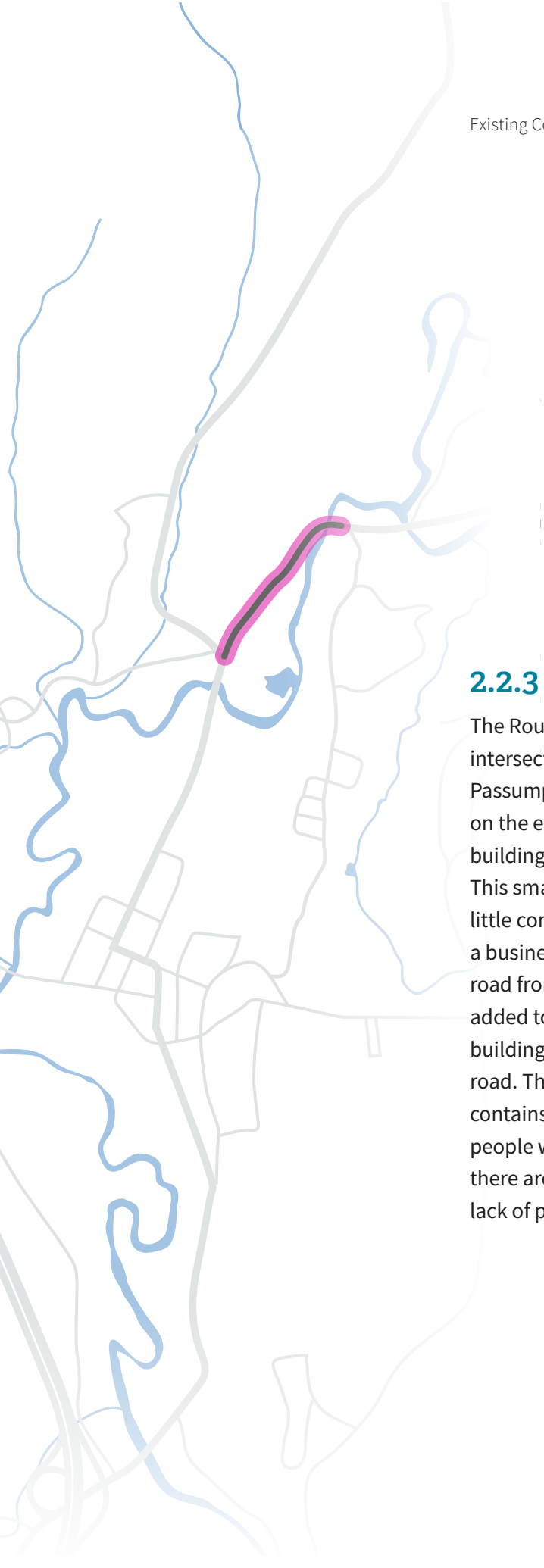
Looking north on Route 5 after the intersection with Routes 122 and 114.

Route 5 is sparsely populated with commercial businesses, including this garage that hosts a fleet of vehicles.

Buildings on Route 5 are set back from the road and are a mix of agricultural and industrial buildings.

A typical building on Route 5 is set back from the road, metal clad, shallow gable roof.

Approaching the intersection of Route 5 / Route 122 / Route 114.



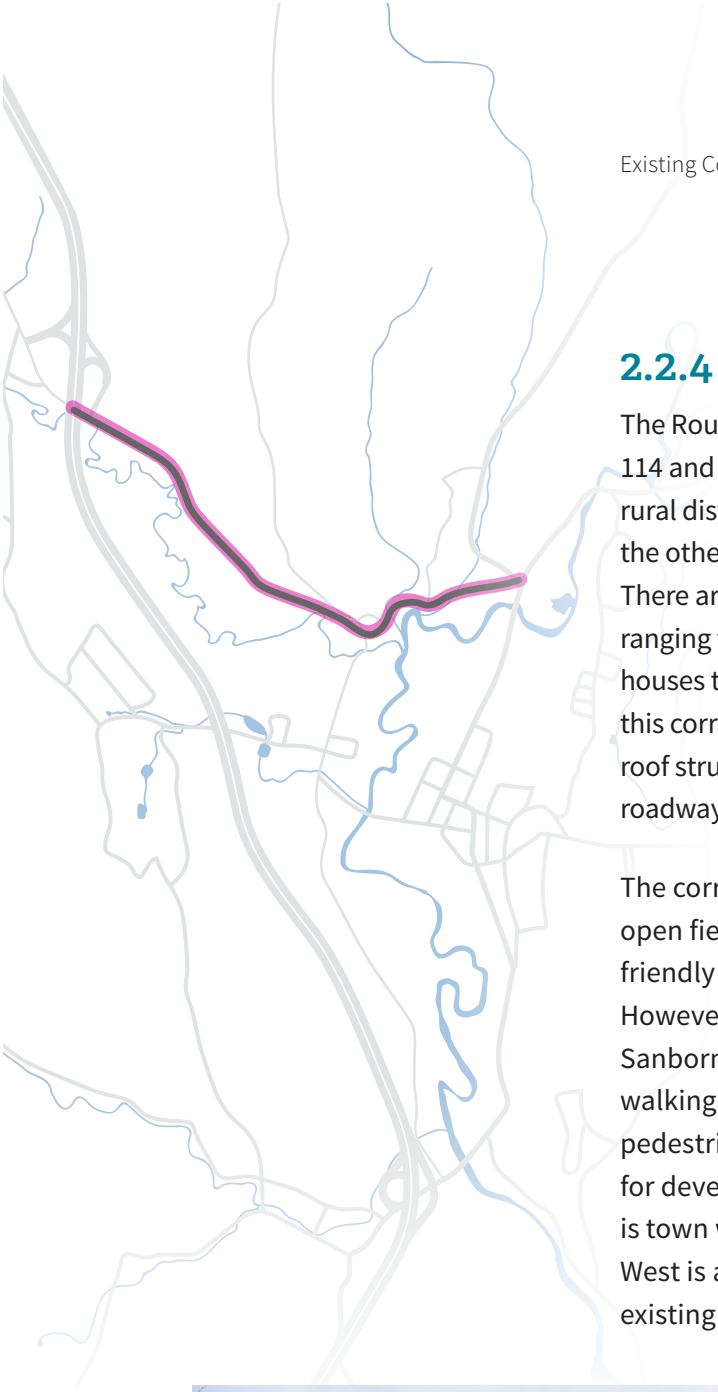
2.2.3 Route 114 East Corridor

The Route 114 corridor is considered from the Route 5/122/114 intersection east until the former town garage just over the Passumpsic River on the west side and just before Pinehurst Drive on the east side. The town salt shed site includes 1-story gable roof buildings. The area on the west side of the river will become a park. This small stretch of road contains residential properties and very little commercial development. At the main intersection there is a business that displays model homes which line the curve in the road from Route 5 to Route 114. Additional model homes have been added to this property in the past 10 years. There is a 1.5 story building (former residence, now commercial) on the east side of the road. This area is not pedestrian friendly as it lacks a sidewalk and contains a narrow shoulder, even though during this field study, people were seen walking on the side of the road. Considering that there are plans to develop a park to the east along Route 114, the lack of pedestrian accessibility should be addressed.

On Route 122 at the intersection with Route 5 (left), Route 114 (veering left), and Main Street (right). A row of model homes sits here.

Traveling east on Route 114 to the main intersection.

On Route 114, looking to the intersection with Main Street, Route 122, and Route 5. The empty LynBurke Motel sits in the background.



2.2.4 Route 122 West Corridor

The Route 122 West corridor spans the intersection of Route 5 / 122 / 114 and continues to the underpass of I-91, after which it becomes a rural district. Route 122 includes more industrial development than the other corridors, and it is zoned mixed industrial/commercial. There are residential properties scattered throughout the corridor, ranging from the late 19th century to the late 20th century, from houses to mobile homes. A common building type throughout this corridor can be classified as industrial: 1-story, shallow gable roof structures with metal cladding, most often set back from the roadway, with parking between the building and the road.

The corridor itself is rural with views of the surrounding hills and open fields plentiful throughout. The roadway is not pedestrian-friendly due to a lack of sidewalks and narrow shoulders. However, the section of Route 122 from Center Street to the Sanborn Covered Bridge is a designated “Paths Around Lyndon” walking route known as “Stevens Loop;” therefore, the lack of safe pedestrian accessibility should be addressed. There is potential for development along the north side of Route 122 West, as there is town water and sewer available. The south side of Route 122 West is a flood plain, and therefore new development is limited by existing Flood Hazard Regulations in the Town Zoning Bylaws.

Route 122, looking east.

Storage units on Route 122 have metal siding and gable rooflines, typical of buildings on this road.

This garage is set back from the roadway, but also has metal siding and a gable roof.

This commercial building follows the design of others on Route 122: set back from the roadway, parking in front, no curb delineation. Its windows make it more inviting than a metal box without windows.

Section 3

Recommendations

The Design Guidelines can include the following structure. Wording can be pulled from this Existing Conditions Report, with more specific language added where necessary.

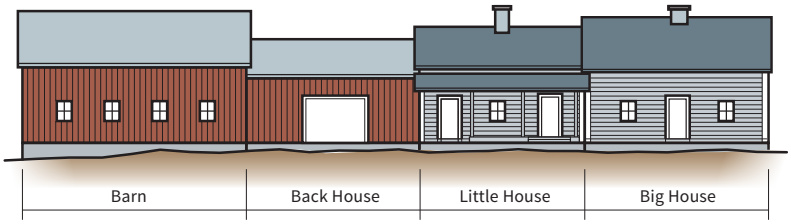
- Goals & Principles or Purpose
- Map of Design District Overlays
- Architecture
  - » Scale/Massing/Proportions
  - » Height
  - » Materials
  - » Fenestration
- Site Planning
  - » Parking
  - » Curb Cuts
  - » Pedestrian Access
- Signage
  - » Type, height, materials
- Street Design
  - » Lighting
  - » Sidewalks
  - » Street Furniture

To simplify the creation of design guidelines and to present it as a more manageable task, we recommend employing two design district overlays: one for a Village Commercial and one for the Commercial Gateways. The Village Commercial Design Overlay District will be more focused on infill development and on the maintenance, rehabilitation and redevelopment of existing building stock. The Commercial Gateways have opportunities for smart infill redevelopment as well as new development. Some recommendations apply to both districts.

Additionally, the design guidelines should incorporate photographs of recommended or not recommended examples, sketches, and maps. Photographs from the existing conditions report can be used as needed. The following lists of recommendations should be illustrated with photographs or sketches. The documents listed in the Resources section below have relevant language and diagrams that could be duplicated in design guidelines.

3.1 General (Applies to both Village Commercial & Commercial Gateways)

- New development should consider sharing parking with adjacent properties and should maintain or enhance pedestrian travel ways and circulation.
- Parking should be developed in the least impactful manner, meaning required spaces are reduced in number, when possible.
- Large buildings may be designed as an assemblage of smaller forms or connected architecture – think big house, little house, back house, barn.



- The primary entry to a building should be on the front façade, facing the street, but buildings should also be accessible from rear parking, where possible.
- Parking lots should be divided by landscaping in order to disguise the vast spread of asphalt.
- New development should include curbing and minimal curb cuts in order to direct traffic and to aid in pedestrian safety.
- Lighting should address safety and use concerns and should face downward to limit light pollution.
- New development should have sidewalks for the length of the property in order to promote a safe pedestrian environment.
- Develop new sidewalks and crosswalks and, where feasible, include bump outs to aid pedestrians in street crossing and to calm traffic.
- Utilities, trash services and recycling services should be located at the rear of a building and screened from public view. Utilities on a rooftop should be screened, or utilities should be ground mounted in order to be the least visually obtrusive.
- Coordinate with the Bike and Ped Advisory Committee to integrate additional pathways and trails into the village.
- Consider revising the Winter Parking Ban to be less restrictive.

Some approaches recently adopted by other Vermont towns include: a reduced geographic area where it applies (i.e. just the downtown core); a shorter time that it is enacted (e.g. December 1–March 31); the use of a town-wide alert system (e.g. Nixle) to enact a parking ban only when needed; and offering multiple options for easily accessible and free parking during winter parking bans. Please see the Resources section for more information.

3.2 Village Commercial

- New development (new buildings or additions) should maintain the existing setback patterns of the street, whether historically commercial or residential.
- Infill development should be considered. Infill should maintain existing architectural character and setback patterns, site design, massing, and height of adjacent buildings. There should be an organized façade with a rhythm of openings.
- Any infill development should design parking to be on the side or at the rear of the new and existing buildings.
- Alterations to buildings should elect to use compatible materials: brick or wood in most cases.
- Buildings should maintain the existing fenestration patterns at pedestrian levels.
- Signage should be more uniform (e.g. actual signs and not just decals on windows). Internally lit, digital, scrolling signs should not be permitted. When business owners or property owners want to install a new sign, it should comply with sign guidelines.
- Transoms should remain exposed or be reinstated.
- Building designs should have a roof overhang, roof parapet, and a cornice in order to connect with the historic architecture of the village.
- The corner of Depot and Main at the White Market should be more clearly defined and used as a pedestrian plaza, rather than parking.
- Sidewalks should extend around the entire Village Park. Consider making Park Avenue one way to allow for parking, vehicular access, and sidewalks.
- Improve crosswalks and pedestrian access. Add bumpouts for traffic calming purposes.

- Streetscape elements may vary from street to street, but consider planning for and installing green strips and trees or using alternative materials instead of grass. Consider enacting a tree ordinance (see References section). Enlist a Tree Warden or Arborist.
- Human scale architecture refers to windows, doors, and details scaled for use and ease of human buildings. Monolithic surfaces and synthetic materials are less compatible with the vibrant character of the village.
- Commercial uses should occupy the first floor of buildings with residential units on the upper floors.
- Incorporate entrance details, and transitions between store openings and the sidewalk (awnings, for example).
- Provide sidewalk seating, trash and recycling cans, and bicycle racks.
- General sidewalk improvements and a reduction in the number of curb cuts should be explored.

3.3 Commercial Gateways

While there are not historic districts in these areas, visual cohesion creates a sense of place in an area and creates a welcoming environment for residents and travelers alike. The following recommendations provide general guidance for each of the Gateways and can be incorporated into design guidelines.

- New construction should maintain and highlight the visual cohesion of the corridor through site design and building massing.
- Older shopping plazas where the storefront is set far back from the road, with a large parking lot between the building and the road, can benefit from developing the front of the lot in order to create shared shopping and parking opportunities, as well as defining a visual corridor.
- New development should consider sustainable and flood resilient design.
- New development in the corridors should reflect the rural surroundings and architecture including gable rooflines and wood siding. Design should avoid concrete or metal boxes.

- Limit the use of large signs and do not allow signs with scrolling digital text or images.
- Define entrances and exits to businesses for the goal of directing traffic.
- Screen vehicle fleets from view.
- Provide building types/massing/fenestration examples or diagrams for both the Village and Gateway districts.
- New developments should include parking on the side of a building, not in front.
- Install medians where possible.
- Preserve the natural topography of the site.

Section 4

Next Steps

The Existing Conditions Report is the first phase of a two-phase process to create Design Guidelines for Lyndonville. Once the Existing Conditions Report is reviewed and accepted by the Planning Commission, the next step will be to use this report to expand the Design Guidelines outline into an official document. It does not need to be an overly complicated document; simplicity and clarity is best for all involved.

VHB recommends the following next steps in this process:

- Existing Conditions Report to be reviewed and accepted by Planning Commission
- Apply for a grant to write the official Design Guidelines document based on the Existing Conditions Report. Funds available to Designated Village Centers may be available for this project.

Other topics to explore, which are related to the development of Design Review Guidelines, include the following:

- Take steps to become Designated Downtown. A design control district is one of the ways to meet the requirements for the Designated Downtown district. A Designated Downtown benefits from being eligible to tax credits and grant programs, the ability to lower speed limits for traffic calming, and is exempt from Act 250 permit fees and reduced criteria for the downtown, among other benefits.
- Take advantage of the Certified Local Government program. Becoming a Certified Local Government would help Lyndon conduct a survey of historic buildings and complete a National Register Historic District nomination for the village. These activities, in turn, would allow property owners in the village to take advantage of grants, funds, and tax credits available to historic properties.

Section 5

Examples of Design Guidelines

Design Guidelines for Manchester's Commercial and Historic Districts, March 2001

- http://vnrc.org/wp-content/uploads/typo3/Publications/designguidelines_full_doc.pdf

Georgia South Village Core Strategic Plan, November 2009

- Not available online

Town of Bennington, Vermont Planned Commercial District: Design Standards

- www.benningtonplanningandpermits.com/includes/pdfs/pds.pdf

White River Junction Design Guidelines, September 2001

- https://vt-hartford.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/228/White-River-Junction-Design-Review-Guidelines-PDF?bidId=

Winter Parking Ban examples

- Nixle website, a town-wide alert system used by Winooski and Burlington: http://www.nixle.com/
- Burlington policy: https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/Police/Winter-Parking
- Montpelier policy: https://www.montpelier-vt.org/807/Winter-Parking-Ban
- Winooski policy: https://vt-winooski.civicplus.com/154/Find-and-Pay-for-Parking; and https://vt-winooski.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/1108/WinterBanMap"

5.1 Resources

Design Tool Kit, Vermont Designated Downtowns and Village Centers, Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, https://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accdnew/files/documents/CD/CPR/CPR-Planning-Design-Toolkit.pdf (accessed May 10, 2019).

Tree Ordinances, Vermont Natural Resources Council, http://vnrc.org/resources/community-planning-toolbox/tools/tree-ordinances/ (accessed May 27, 2019). See St. Johnsbury's Tree Ordinance for an example: http://vnrc.org/resources/community-planning-toolbox/case-studies/tree-ordinances-st-johnsbury/.

Vermont Interstate Interchange: Planning and Development Design Guidelines, Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs, June 2004, https://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accdnew/files/documents/CD/CPR/DHCD-Planning-Interchange-Development-Design-Guidelines.pdf (accessed May 10, 2019). Begin on page 20 for "Tailoring Guidelines to the Vermont Context." This section has direct language applicable to Lyndon.

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This project was funded by the Municipal Planning Grant program, administered by the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development.