



# Northfield AREA-WIDE PLAN

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Town of Northfield, VT

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## **Acknowledgments**

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A Steering Committee of stakeholders provided direction to the project team which helped to form the findings and recommendations contained in this plan.

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# INTRODUCTION **1**

# 1 INTRODUCTION

This area-wide plan for Northfield provides a guide and vision for economic revitalization of vacant and underutilized sites in the downtown area. The plan provides information and analysis on environmental and market conditions that is intended to assist economic development partners identify the opportunities and challenges presented by conditions in the downtown area. The plan also presents a vision for redevelopment of a key cluster of parcels in the downtown area as well as implementation steps that will assist the Town and its partners realize a transformation in the area.

Redevelopment of the key sites will be a public-private partnership between the Town, regional and state agencies that can access financial tools and assistance that will help stimulate new private investment in the area and private sector players. Mitigation of brownfield environmental conditions will be a big step toward reinvestment in the community and the encouragement of a more healthy, economically vibrant and attractive village center.

*Northfield's Depot Square looking east at the Mayo Building.*



## What is an Area Wide Plan?

A brownfield area wide plan (AWP) is specifically targeted to address areas affected by one or more brownfield sites. The objective of the program is to provide assistance to communities to provide the research necessary for brownfield assessment, cleanup and reuse. The core elements of an area wide plan are described by the USEPA as follows:

- Collecting information and identifying community priorities related to brownfields cleanup and near-and long-term revitalization;
- Evaluating existing environmental conditions; local market potential, and needed infrastructure improvements;
- Developing strategies for brownfield site cleanup and reuse;
- Identifying resource or leveraging opportunities to help implement the plans, including specific strategies for public and private sector investments and improvements necessary to help with cleanup and area revitalization.

## What is a Brownfield?

The EPA defines a brownfield as ‘...a property, the expansion, redevelopment or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant...’ In practice, brownfield sites are under-utilized or vacant properties and may have contamination related to past or current land use. They may include buildings that have asbestos materials or lead-based paint or lightly contaminated urban soils, but could also include more complex contamination issues warranting more intensive management. However, in nearly all cases, brownfield sites are developable in some manner.

## Relationship with Other Planning Efforts

This plan is consistent with and builds on a number of previous planning initiatives for Northfield including:

**The Vermont Downtown Action Team (V-DAT) Report, 2014.** The V-DAT conducted community planning and economic development charrettes to assist communities

# 1 INTRODUCTION

adversely affected by Tropical Storm Irene. This area wide plan complements and expands upon the recommendations contained in the V-DAT report for Northfield. Several aspects of the V-DAT plan dovetail with this plan, including: a focus on public improvements and revitalization of the Depot Square area; strengthening connections, physical and well as political and economic, between downtown Northfield and Norwich University; and establishment of a park along Water Street at the Dog River which reinforces the redevelopment concepts of this plan.

**Northfield Town Plan, 2014.** The Northfield Town Plan guides future development for the town. One of the priorities of the Town Master Plan includes the revitalization of the village center district as an economic development priority for the Town.

**Designated Village Center, 2010.** Northfield's downtown is a designated Village Center which provides numerous benefits to the town in terms of technical assistance from the state and financial incentives to bring additional public and private investment to support Northfield's village revitalization efforts. The Village Center was designated in 2010 and renewed in 2015.

This Northfield Area Wide Plan is intended to be an implementation oriented 'road-map' for new public and private investments that can help revitalize Northfield. In this manner, the plan is more specific than the Town Plan, providing site specific information and conceptual plans that can assist in promoting capital projects, development and redevelopment of sites with new, or expanded, economic uses.

## Project Objectives

There are several goals for this plan:

- Advance the assessment, cleanup and redevelopment of brownfield sites;
- Promote economic development of underutilized properties;
- Identify public improvements that can spur reinvestment in the area;
- Provide implementable market-based options for reuse and redevelopment of specific brownfield sites.

This area wide plan recognizes that implementation will be a public-private partnership between the Town, other public agencies and private sector developers, business owners and entrepreneurs. Specific public infrastructure investments are identified that are intended to create a more attractive environment for private investment. The conceptual redevelopment plans provide a vision and direction for future infill development on specific sites. The conceptual plans provide an illustrative site layout with new buildings, sidewalks, parking and other features that can help both landowners and the Town focus on how a site may be utilized in the future. In addition, information contained in the market study and brownfield analysis provides useful information for the Town, land owners and prospective developers as they make decisions about capital improvements or redevelopment efforts.

## Planning Area Context

Northfield is a community of 6,207 persons (2010 Census) located within a valley in the foothills of the Green Mountains in central Vermont. Depot Square, at the heart of Northfield, is approximately 10 miles south of the center of Montpelier, Vermont's capital city. The community grew up around the Dog River, which drains the valley and flows northward to the Winooski River near Montpelier. Originally settled in four distinct villages (South Village, Center Village, Factory Village and the Falls), with the arrival of the railroad in the 1840s, Factory Village (named for



*Historic image of Northfield's Main Street.*

# 1 INTRODUCTION

the woolen mill located there) and its associated Depot Square grew in prominence and became the hub of local activity. In 1855, Depot Square and its environs was incorporated as the Village of Northfield. In 2014, the Town and Village of Northfield were merged into one entity, the Town of Northfield.

Like many Vermont towns, the economy of Northfield through the 19th and 20th centuries was tied to resource based industries: farming, saw mills, grist mills, woolen mills, and later stone quarrying and finishing, and textile mills, all supported by the railroad which arrived in the mid-1800s. The imprint of these early industries can be observed today in Northfield, along the rivers where mills or remnant mill structures are located, and in the Depot Square area, where the historic train depot (passenger service is no longer provided to Northfield) is situated at the head of Depot Square; former railyards west of the railroad line have been re-purposed for commercial, residential and municipal uses; and the foundations of historic granite sheds can be discerned at the southern end of Freight Yard Way.

In 1886, **Norwich University** was relocated to Northfield from Norwich, Vermont after a fire destroyed the academy. A group of citizens bid to have the university locate in Northfield. The gambit of those citizens would pay off well for Northfield over time, as the private military college would grow from four teachers and 14 students in 1886 to an academic staff of 112 and over 2,100 undergraduates and 1,300 post graduates today. Norwich University is located on 1200 acres of land approximately one-half mile south of Depot Square. The university is the largest employer in Northfield.



*Norwich University, the country's oldest private military college is located in Northfield.*

Northfield is also home to **Cabot Hosiery Mills, Inc.** the maker of the iconic Vermont brand ‘Darn Tough’ socks. The story of Cabot Hosiery Mills is an inspiration in this era of declining US manufacturing and globalization. Established in 1978, Cabot Hosiery Mills made socks for various retail brands. In the 1990’s however, stores started shifting production overseas to save money. Realizing it was not possible to compete with labor costs overseas, owner Ric Cabot turned to making high quality socks of his own brand and selling directly to retailers. The Darn Tough brand was launched in 2004, and appealed to outdoor enthusiasts and consumers looking for authentic and locally made goods. The company, on the brink of closing 12 years ago, is now going strong and expanding (*Source: ‘How to be Darn Tough,’ Boston Globe, April 21, 2016*). The annual sock sale at the factory is an event which brings visitors from far and wide to Northfield for two weekends in November.



*Northfield is home to Cabot Mills, manufacturer of the iconic Darn Tough brand of outdoor socks.*

Norwich University and Cabot Hosiery Mills are clearly bright spots in this small town economy and there are other positive trends as well. Northfield is an emerging outdoor recreation center, with a significant mountain bicycling destination at the **Shaw Outdoor Center** and the Northfield Village Forest. In addition, the Dog River is an excellent fly-fishing destination, noted as one of the best rivers for brown trout fishing in Vermont. (<http://www.perfectflystore.com/wdogr.html>).

At the same time, there have been significant economic dislocations caused by Tropical Storm Irene and a shifting economy which have brought about job losses and have taken a toll on the economic well-being of Northfield. The flooding caused by Tropical Storm Irene in 2011 drove out Wall-Goldfinger, a high end furniture manufacturer that relocated to Randolph, Vermont. The storm was followed by a string of closures in 2015: Comfort Colors, another Northfield institution, was purchased by a global clothing company, which shuttered the Northfield operation; Northfield Wood Products, a long-standing manufacturing operation on Freight Yard Way, also closed in 2015; and Northfield Savings Bank (NSB) moved its corporate headquarters from Main Street at Depot Square in downtown Northfield, to nearby Berlin. While NSB will maintain a retail bank in town, many jobs left the downtown with the move.

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Figure 1: Northfield Area Wide Plan Project Area

## Project Area Description

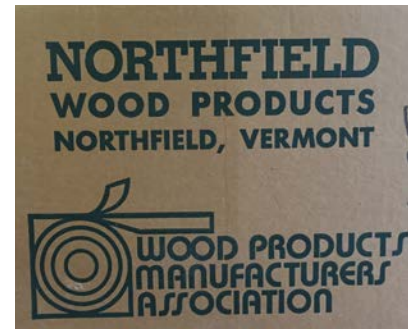
The Northfield Area Wide Plan project area consists of 120 parcels. The project area is traversed by Vermont Route 12 (South Main Street and North Main Street), the Dog River, and side streets including Wall Street, East Street, and Depot Square. The Project Area was selected to closely mimic the designated Village Center, while also including commercial properties to the north (as far north as the Former Bean Chevrolet property at 470 North Main), as well as the Village Industrial zones of the Nantanna Mill and Freight Yard Way properties. The Northfield Municipal offices, library, historical society, and emergency services are also located within the project area. Lastly, the project area contains the heart of Northfield Village – the Northfield Common – an attractive central green with a fountain that hosts the Northfield Farmers Market.

## Selected Sites

Six sites within the larger project area were selected by Steering Committee for focused existing conditions analysis and further conceptual planning and design regarding potential redevelopment scenarios. These sites are clustered within the Depot Square area (The NSB/Mayo Block and the East Street/Gateway area) and several sites along Freight Yard Way south of Wall Street. (These sites are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 Conceptual Plans).

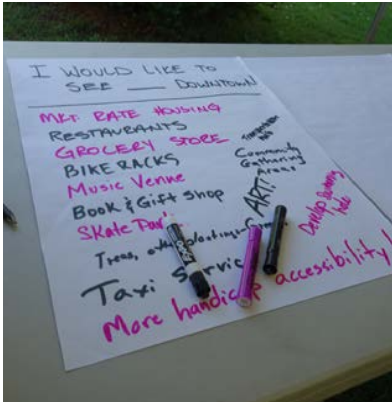
These sites were selected by Steering Committee members using ranked criteria including the following:

- Brownfield/Environmental Factors
- Property Size
- Proximity to the Village Center
- Landowner Receptivity
- V-DAT Report Concurrence
- Town Plan Concurrence
- Additional Resource Availability (for project implementation)
- Potential to catalyze additional investment



*Northfield Wood Products on Freight Yard Way had been manufacturing a variety of wood products since World War II.*

# 1 INTRODUCTION



*Above: Comments posted during Night on the Common*

## Public Engagement

The area wide plan was developed through a broad public involvement process that included meetings with a Steering Committee, public forums, and stakeholder meetings, described below:

### Steering Committee Meetings

The Northfield Economic Development Committee provided direction and served as the Steering Committee for this planning effort. A series of Steering Committee meetings were held in April through September 2016 to review existing conditions, consider market opportunities and provide direction on redevelopment concepts. After reviewing existing conditions information and considering other planning efforts in Northfield, the Steering Committee identified specific sites that would be considered in more detail through the conceptual redevelopment planning effort. In addition to providing feedback on the plans, the Steering Committee also sponsored and planned public outreach events for this planning effort, including stakeholder meetings and the Northfield Night on the Common described below.



*Public review of conceptual redevelopment plans during Night on the Common*

## Stakeholder Meetings

The design team toured the properties, met with property owner representatives, spoke with community members and business representatives to gain an understanding of the local real estate market, trends, and recent initiatives that have been undertaken in Northfield. Information gained through these interviews was critical in the evolution of redevelopment concepts for specific properties.

## Northfield Night on the Common

In order to engage the broadest possible community input, a public forum on the area wide plan, Northfield Night on the Common, was held on July 19th from 4 to 7 pm in collaboration with the Northfield Farmer's Market. A tent was set up on the town common and members of the design team, representatives from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development were able to engage with members of the community one-on-one to discuss the plans in an 'open house' setting. This was followed by a formal presentation with a question and answer period.

In addition to the area wide plan, the Northfield Community Development Network, the Water Street Park planners and the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission also had tables at the Night on the Common to present their on-going work which has relevance with the area wide plan. Taken together, the synergy of the related planning efforts and public outreach was very positive. Northfield residents were able to learn about multiple efforts underway within the relaxed and attractive setting of the Farmers Market. People who are hard to get to traditional public presentations, like families with young children and younger people (i.e., millennials) participated in the Night on the Common. The public left comment cards, notes on the plan, comments on large format sheets and oral comments. The plans were also displayed at Town Hall following the Night on the Common. Feedback on the plan is summarized in Appendix A.



*Above: Night on the Common poster*

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# EXISTING CONDITIONS **2**

## 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

An existing conditions inventory and analysis assessment was performed of all properties within the project area with specific focus on historical land use on the potential brownfield properties.

Information was gathered, retained and managed within a project informational geo-database and geographic information system (GIS). The intent is that the project GIS and geo-database will serve the Stakeholders for years to come.

Proper collection and management of the data enabled better use of the information for mapping and analysis. The design of the database provides the user with the ability to refer to all current and historic land use data and supporting files to every historic and existing structure found to be of interest. The database was designed with the following principles in mind:

- Facilitate data collection and entry
- Provide easy access to all data
- Be expandable to allow for Stakeholders to import additional datasets
- Store use related data from multiple sources (such as Manning's Directory and the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps)
- Provide the ability to spatially display data
- Enable use and contamination analysis and summaries
- To be a relational database
- All data whether created by Stone or gathered from another source have associated FGDC metadata.

The following sections summarizes components of the existing conditions assessment.

### Land Uses

According to the 2014 Northfield Town Plan Zoning Map, the study area is predominantly zoned Business and Village Industrial. Residential A and B zones make up the balance of the study area. Land use within the Business zone is largely commercial with retail, restaurants, and service-oriented businesses. The Village Industrial zone includes municipal emergency services (fire, ambulance, and police), light manufacturing, and service businesses.

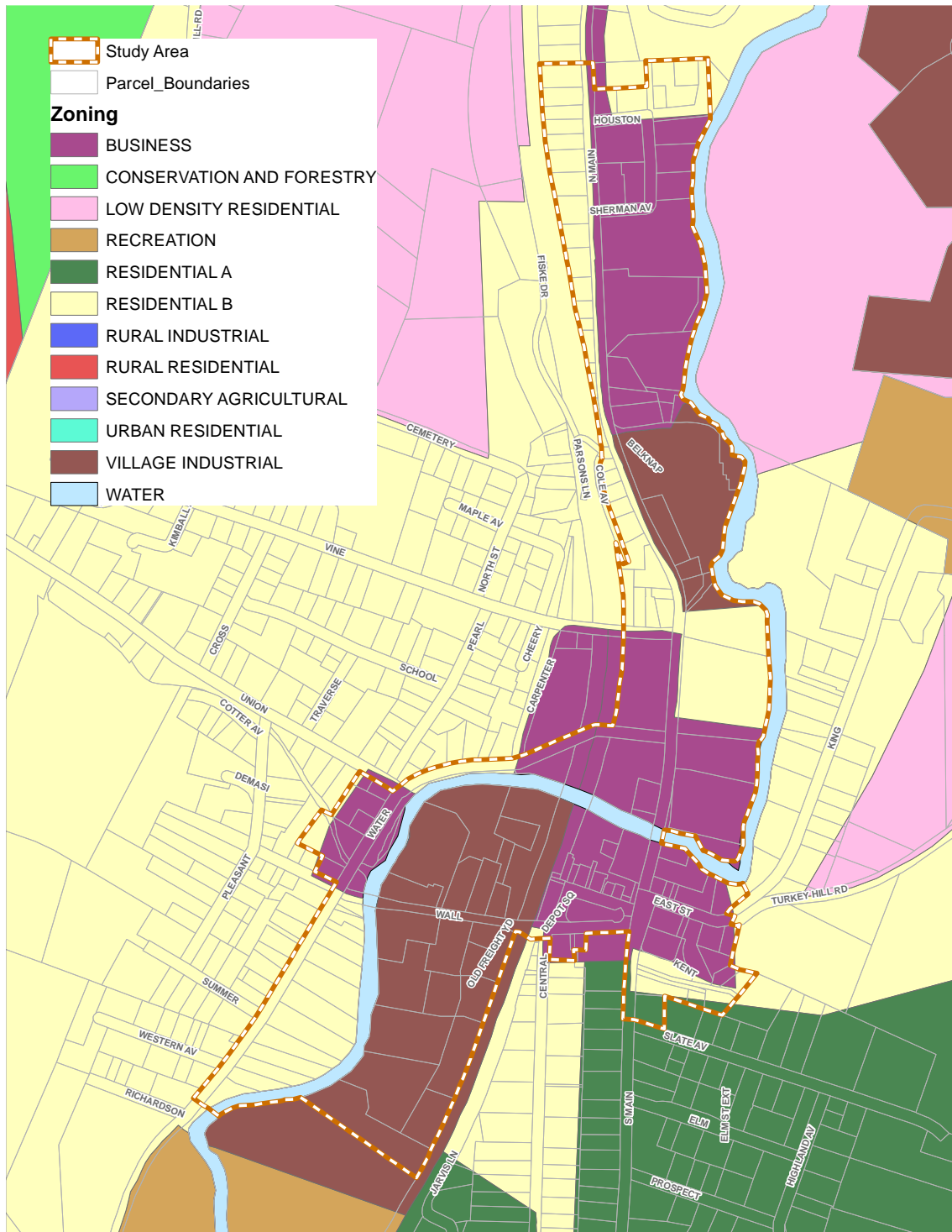


Figure 2: Northfield Zoning, Northfield Town Plan, 2014

## 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Historic Resources

Northfield Village includes a resource that is listed with the National Register of Historic Places: the former Central Vermont Railroad Depot building, currently occupied by Merchants Bank and situated at the western end of the Northfield Common. There are no other state or federally listed historic resources in the project area.

### Natural Setting

Early industry of Northfield took advantage of water power provided by the Dog River resulting in extensive development of the river's flood plain and armoring of its banks. Today, much of Northfield Village resides within the 100-year flood zone or the designated river corridor.

According to the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, a river corridors encompass the area of land surrounding a river that provides for the meandering floodplain, and the riparian functions necessary to restore and maintain the naturally stable or least erosive form of a river, thereby minimizing erosion hazards over time. Lands within and immediately abutting a river corridor are at higher risk to fluvial erosion. Giving rivers room to move is critical in avoiding the stream armoring and berming measures used to protect within-corridor development that so often leads to increases in erosion upstream and downstream and adversely affects public safety, riparian landowners, and river ecosystems.

A flood zone refers to inundation flooding with the 100 Year Flood Zone being the portion of the watershed that is inundated during a 100 Year Flood (1% chance of occurring annually). The proposed Water Street River Park is being designed to provide additional storage for flood waters thereby contracting the flood zone through the Village. Further information related to the Water Street River Park and Flood Control project can be found here: <http://waterstretriverpark.zohosites.com/>

### Infrastructure

According to the Northfield Water & Sewer Department, the Northfield Water System provides high-quality water to 4,000

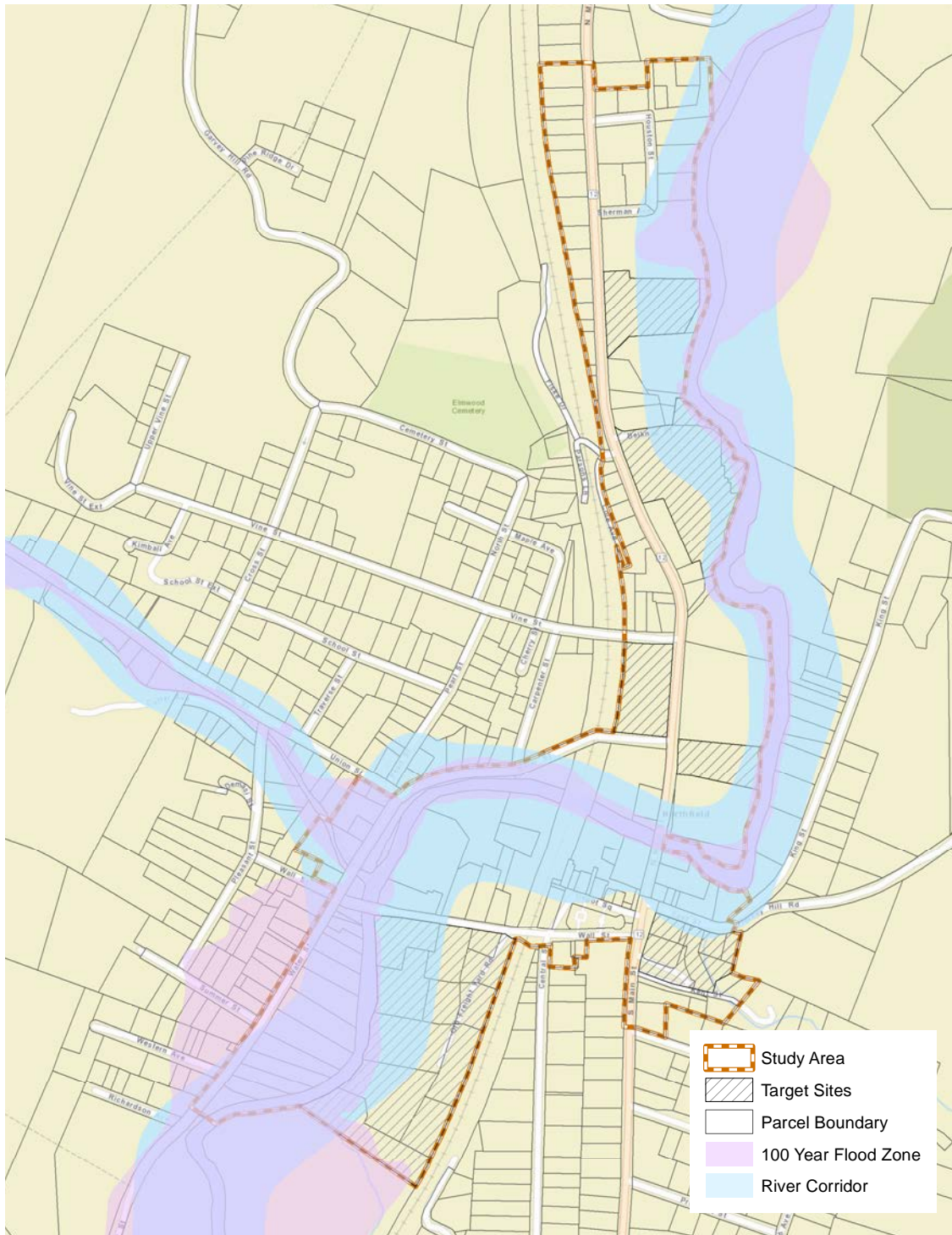


Figure 3: Natural Setting, Flood Corridor and Inundation Zones

## 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

residents in Northfield. The water meets all state and federal standards. Approximately 400,000 gallons are produced each day and delivered through 25 miles of water mains. The system has a storage capacity of 1.5 million gallons and pumps approximately 10 million gallons per month. The department is working diligently to remove areas of low flow and replace old lines.

The Northfield Wastewater System includes collection and treatment of waste to 3500 Northfield residents. The system was designed to be able to handle 1,000,000 gallons of waste water per day. In peak season, when Norwich is in session, the plant treats average 500,000 gallons of wastewater per day; in off-peak season, the plant treats 350,000 per day.

The department reports having had success in eliminating stormwater contributions to the sanitary sewer. The one remaining combined sewer overflow (CSO) line resides along East Street and receives stormwater from the Turkey Hill and Kent Hill systems.

### Environmental Conditions

To evaluate environmental conditions that may inhibit redevelopment within or adjacent to the Project Area, Stone performed a thorough assessment of past and current use and regulatory status through review of multiple sources, including:

- Historic Maps, including Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps and other available historic resources
- VT DEC Site Management Section (SMS) Hazardous Site, Underground Storage Tank, and Brownfield Site Files
- State and Federal Environmental Databases, including VT DEC's hazardous waste sites, Brownfield sites, and permitted UST facilities and Federal Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation Limitation Act (CERCLA) and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) facilities.

Findings from review of these sources were contained, managed, and merged within the project GIS for each property within the project area.



Figure 4: Municipal Infrastructure – Storm and Sanitary Sewers, Water

## 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Historical Land Use

Northfield Village rose to prominence in central Vermont with the creation of the Vermont Central Railroad – which called Northfield its first home until moving headquarters to St. Albans in 1860s. Northfield’s early economies can be described as boom-bust with early businesses centered on the railroad and water power resources located in close proximity to the Village Center. Early industries included woolen mills, slate and granite quarrying and manufacturing, and wood working. In 1886, the faculty and student body of Norwich University arrived in Northfield. Initially consisting of four professors and

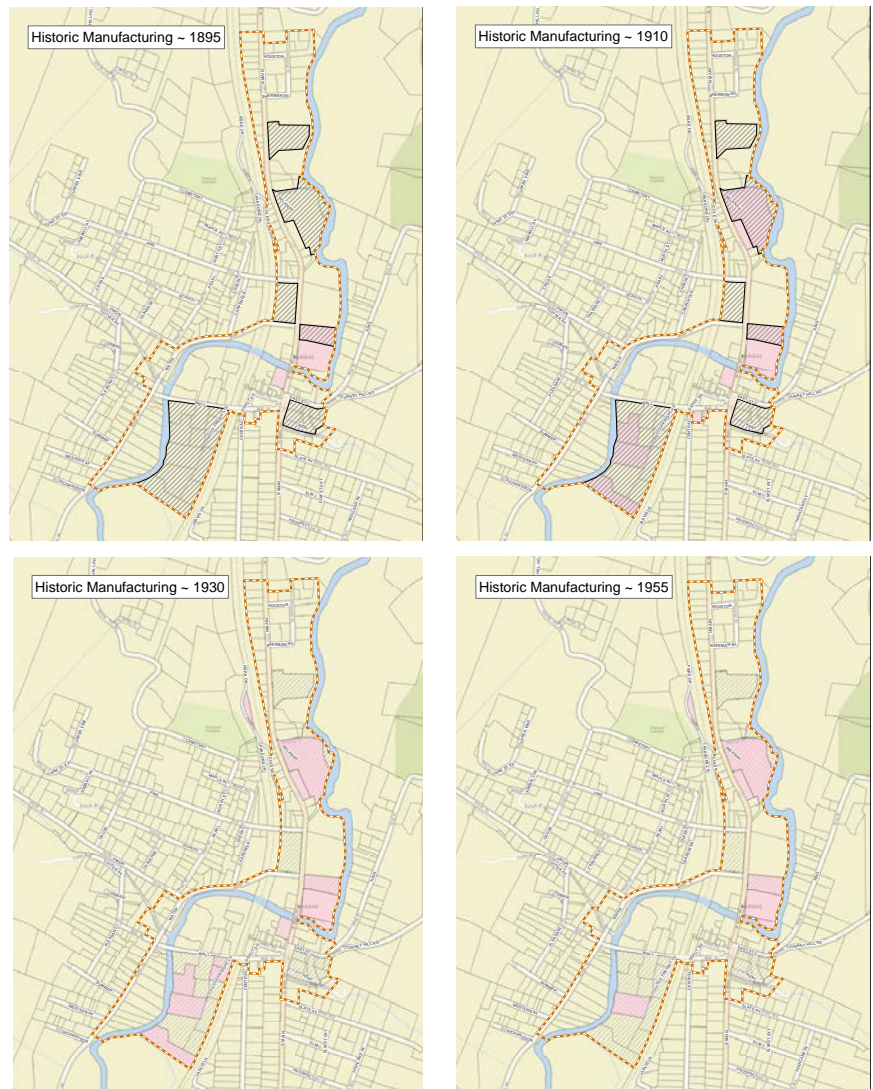


Figure 5: Historical Manufacturing 1895-1955

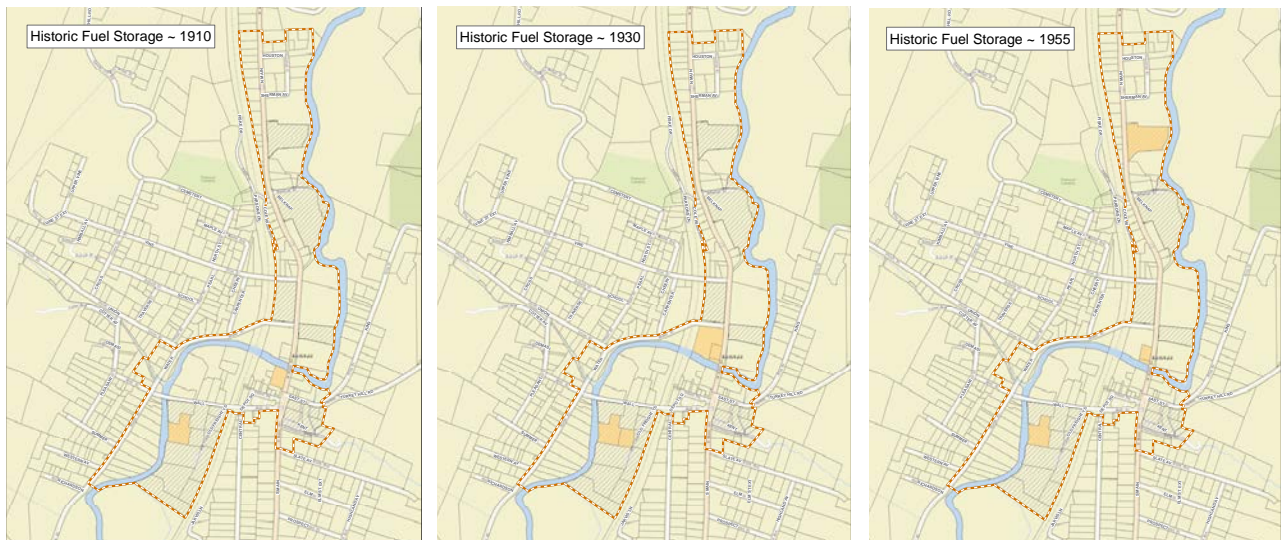


Figure 6: Historical Fuel Storage Facilities 1910-1955

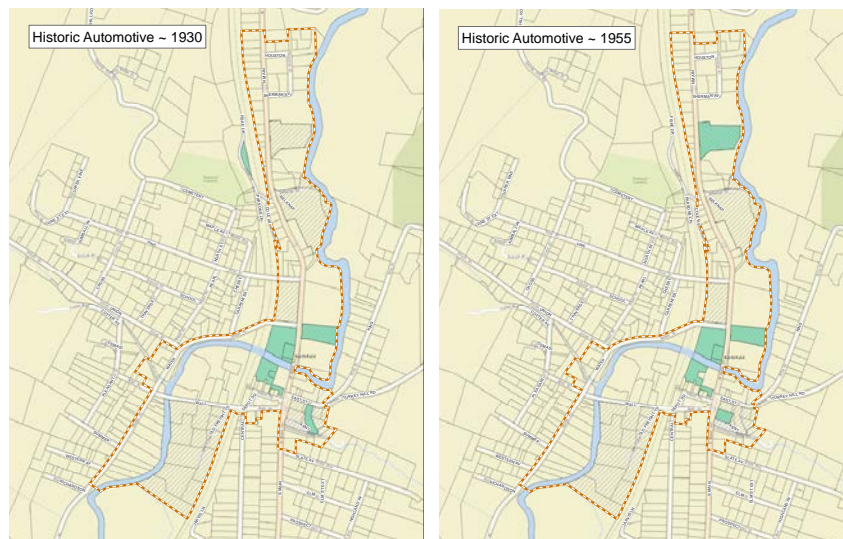


Figure 7: Historical Automotive Repair Facilities 1930-1955

fourteen students, Norwich University is now the single largest employer in the Town.

The following maps depict historic land uses for the primary historic industries in Northfield between the years of 1885 and 2016.

## 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Managed Environmental Sites

According to the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), there are or have been a total of 31 environmentally managed properties (Hazardous Sites, UST Operators, Spills, Brownfields, RCRA Generators) within the project area.

Of the ten hazardous waste sites within the project area, four have been assigned a Sites Management Activities Completed or a No Further Action Planned designation by DEC. The remaining six active hazardous waste sites are presented in Table 1, below. Stone performed file reviews of each of the DEC listed hazardous waste sites (Active and Closed) positioned within and adjacent to the project area to determine the current status, likelihood for adversely affecting development within the Village, and data gaps.

Other managed environmental sites within the Project Area include eight hazardous waste generators, four permitted underground storage tank facilities, a salvage yard, and a brownfield site. The one brownfield site is the former Drown property, located at the southern end of the Freight Yard.

*Table 1: Active Hazardous Waste Sites within the Project Area.*

Site Name	Address	Contaminant Source	Priority
Dollar General	11 North Main Street	Manufacturing, UST (unknown)	Low
Nantanna Mill	7 Belknap	Unidentified sheen on Dog River	Medium
Drown Property	11 Wall Street	Manufacturing, auto repair	Low
Rabbit Hollow	127 North Main Street	UST – Heating Fuel	Low
Merchants Bank	2 North Main St.	Unknown; Site was formerly a print shop and granite shed	Low
Northfield Gulf (Champlain Farms)	73 North Main Street	UST – Gasoline	Medium

*Source: Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Abbreviations: UST – underground storage tank*



Figure 8: Managed Environmental Sites, Northfield Village

## 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Potential Brownfield Sites

As defined by US EPA, brownfields are “real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Cleaning up and reinvesting in these properties protects the environment, reduces blight, and takes development pressures off green spaces and working lands.”

Using professional knowledge and US EPA Industry Sector Notebooks, Stone has assigned potential contaminants of concern for historic land uses in Table 2, below. Several of the properties identified to have had historic land uses of environmental concern have experienced documented releases of hazardous or petroleum materials and have been under the management of DEC as hazardous waste sites or spill sites. Even for those without a documented release, follow-up assessment should consider the likelihood for these materials to be present on the specific site that had the associated historical use through a Phase II ESA.

Due to the age of many of the buildings within the Project Area, there is potential for hazardous building materials such as asbestos containing materials, lead based paint, or poly

Table 2: Potential Contaminants of Concern by Industry Type

Industry Type	Petroleum	Chlorinated Solvents	PCBs	Metals	PAHs	Herbicides/ Pesticides
Automotive Service	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Fuel Storage	✓				✓	
Blacksmith / Coal				✓	✓	
Dry Cleaning	✓	✓				
Machining	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Manufacturing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Painting / Printing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Railroad	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Other	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Source: Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Abbreviations: UST – underground storage tank

chlorinated biphenyl (PCB) contaminated caulks and glazes to be present. In addition, universal wastes, such as fluorescent light bulbs or thermometers containing mercury, may also be present. These materials should be managed properly prior to any redevelopment or renovations of these buildings to prevent an unintended release and an unacceptable risk of exposure to site users or workers.

### Key Brownfield Sites

Through a review of historic and current land use, the project team, DEC, CVRPC, ACCD, Northfield municipal staff, and Steering Committee members identified six potential brownfield sites, encompassing a total of 23 parcels, within the study area to evaluate for selecting properties to undergo further assessment. These sites are summarized in Table 3, below.

The following sections further describe the qualities and environmental condition of each of the potential brownfield properties.

Table 3: Key Brownfield Sites

Site Name	Address(es)	Description
Mayo & Northfield Savings Block, East Street	7 South Main Street	Mayo Building (retail,
	33 South Main Street	NSB Building
	51 South Main Street	Town Office + Parking
	33 South Main Street	NSB Parking Lot/White Building
	52 East Street	Fmr Police Station/CVPS Bldg.
	52 East Street	Parking
	33 South Main Street	NSB Parking
	12 East Street (?)	Gravel lot
	29 East Street	New Life Community Church, et al.,
	21 East Street	Cornerstone Pub
	17 East Street	brewery space, et al.

## 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Table 3: Key Brownfield Sites (cont.)

Site Name	Address(es)	Description
	9 East Street	Subway Restaurant, et al
	28 North Main	Guest House
	38 North Main	Office and apartments
Freightyard Way Parcels	173 Wall Street	Stoddard Enterprises
	141 Wall Street	Gillespie Fuels
	117 Wall Street	NAPA Auto Parts
	13 Wall Street	Car Wash and vacant lease
	57 Freight Yard Way	Freight house (Norwich NUARI)
	13 Wall Street	mini storage
	13 Wall Street	vacant
	116 Freightyard Way	Northfield Wood Products
	116 Freightyard Way	RH Associates building
	11 Wall Street	vacant
	11 Wall Street	vacant
	11 Wall Street	vacant, southern end of site
Comfort Colors	127 North Main Street	Vacant, former t-shirt manufacturer
Nantanna Mill	7 Belknap Street	Commercial, industrial, storage, automotive repair
Bean Chevrolet	470 North Main Street	Storage, former automotive retailer and repair
Cetrangolo	110 North Main Street	Northern half of Dollar General lot, vacant. Former retail gasoline and stone manufacturer.

### Bean Chevrolet, 470 North Main Street

The Bean Chevrolet property, located at 470 North Main Street, consists of a 3.45 acre lot owned by the Bean family. The property is within the commercial zone north of the Village center. The property has been used for automotive sales and service since 1940. Retail gasoline sales occurred on the property as early as 1940.

Exterior areas of the site include open grassy areas, and trees along the Dog River, which marks the eastern boundary of the property. Ancillary buildings include a former dairy barn and equipment storage barn.



*Bean Chevrolet, 470 Main Street*

Based on the past land use for retail gasoline, as well as automotive sales and service, potential areas of concern include:

- Presence of hazardous building materials (e.g., asbestos, lead based paint)
- Spills of automotive fluids or solvents in the service area resulting in contaminated soil, soil gas, or groundwater.
- Possible presence of former underground storage tanks containing petroleum and/or hydraulic fluid (for lifts).
- Potential for impact to indoor air quality through vapor intrusion.
- Presence of hazardous or petroleum materials stored in containers on Site.

### Nantanna Mill, 7 Belknap Street

The Nantanna Mill property, located along Belknap Street, is a 3.38 acre property owned by College Town Industrial Park. The site is currently used for automotive repair, storage, and light manufacturing. The site was first developed in 1919 as a saw mill, which continued until it was destroyed during the flood of 1927. A woolen mill operated at the site from 1927 through at least the 1960s. Starting in 1976, the site was the home of WallGoldfinger – manufacturers of high-end office furniture. WallGoldfinger relocated its operation to Randolph, Vermont in 2011 following the flooding from Tropical Storm Irene.

The Nantanna Mill site is currently a managed hazardous waste site with the DEC due to the discovery of a petroleum sheen on the adjacent Dog River. Site investigation of the Nantanna Mill did not reveal the source of the contamination.

## 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS



*Nantanna Mill, 7 Belknap Street*

Based on past use of the site for various manufacturing processes, potential areas of concern include:

- Presence of hazardous building materials
- Spills of automotive fluids or solvents associated with the current automotive service use
- Possible presence of leaky underground storage tanks containing petroleum.
- Potential for impact to indoor air quality through vapor intrusion.

### Comfort Colors, 127 North Main Street

The former Comfort Colors property consists of a 2.0 acre commercial lot owned by Barry Chouinard located between North Main Street and the railroad. The most recent use of the site (up to 2015) included light manufacturing. Comfort Colors performed dyeing of prepared clothing. Historically, the property included a two-family residential dwelling and was traversed by a rail spur providing rail access to the Cross Brothers Granite and Cetrangolo Granite shops located in the approximate location of 108 North Main Street. The site is



*Comfort Colors, 127 North Main Street*

listed as a permitted underground storage tank facility due to a 12,000-gallon UST containing #2 fuel oil.

Based on past use of the site and adjacent rail line, potential areas of concern include:

- Potential presence of contamination related to the adjacent rail and former rail spur.
- Presence of an out-of-service 12,000 gallon UST.
- Potential presence of hazardous building materials.

### Infill at 110 Main Street

The vacant property located at 110 Main Street consists of a 1.3 acre property owned by the Cetrangolo Finishing Works. The site is situated immediately north of the recently developed Dollar General store (108 Main Street). According to local residents and historic documentation, the site was initially developed as part of the Paine Woolen Mill and was formerly a portion of the Cross Brothers Granite manufacturing facility and later Cetrangolo Finishing Works (granite manufacturing). Rail spurs formerly extended onto the property. More recently, the site was the location of a retail gasoline station.

Based on the past use of the site for manufacturing and retail gasoline sales, potential areas of concern include:

## 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS



*110 Main Street*

- Possible surface soil contamination related to over 100 years of industrial use
- Potential prior use of solvents for memorial stenciling
- Potential prior use of lead shot for shot blasting
- Possible presence of rail maintenance contaminants (pesticides, creosote)
- Past use of solvents, cutting fluids and metals for machining
- Possible petroleum contamination related to past land use for retail gasoline sales

### Mayo/Northfield Savings Bank Block, East Street Properties

The Northfield Savings Bank/Mayo Building Block and East Street properties were assessed together by the project team due to their crucial role in Northfield Village. This potential brownfield “site” includes fourteen unique parcels owned by nine property owners. The site includes retail businesses along East and Main Street, residential apartments, and parking areas. Based on historic documentation, past uses of environmental significance on the site included black smithing (1885), carriage manufacturer (~1897), steam laundry (~1919), automotive repair (~1926-1962), an electric utility (1949 to ~1960s), and adjacent to a former retail gasoline station (in the current location of the Northfield Town Office).



*Northfield Savings Bank/ Mayo Block*

Based on historical site uses including light manufacturing, black smithing, automotive repair, and the former Village Electric Department, as well as its location downgradient of a former retail gasoline station, potential areas of concern include:

- Possible presence of hazardous building materials in several site buildings.
- Migration of petroleum contamination via groundwater or soil gas from a potential upgradient source onto the site
- Potential releases of chlorinated or petroleum solvents related to past use of the property for automotive service and a laundry
- Possible presence of PCBs in site soil related to the past use of the site for storage of electrical transformers.

### Freight Yard Way Properties

The Freight Yard Way properties consist of twelve parcels located along Wall Street and Freight Yard Way in the western edge of the project area that are owned by three owners: MJM Properties (10 parcels), Korrow Real Estate, LLC (141 Wall Street, and Peter D'Amico (117 Wall Street). Current commercial businesses include Gillespie Fuels, NAPA Auto Parts, TDS Telecom, a car wash, RH Associates, Norwich University's NUARI (Norwich University Applied Research Institutes) Center, a mini-storage facility, a former wood

## 2 EXISTING CONDITIONS



*Freight Yard Way*

manufacturing facility (Northfield Wood Products), and vacant land. Historically, the site included the Canadian National Railway freight yard and rail car repair terminal, as well as a granite manufacturer, saw mill, coal storage, automotive repair, and a cannery.

Environmental investigations have been performed on several of the parcels, including the former Stoddard Enterprises property (173 Wall Street; currently TDS Telecom), the former Northfield Fuels property (current mini storage), and Gillespie Fuels (141 Wall Street); each of these properties have been assigned a Sites Management Activities Completed designation with notices to the Town of Northfield land records, indicating that contamination remains on each site, but does not present a risk to human health given the current use. In addition, a Phase I ESA was performed by the current owner for the former Drown property, located at the south end of the rail yard. As part of this Phase I ESA, surface soil sampling and analysis was performed and indicated the presence of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and metals soils at concentrations that are greater than relevant regulatory criteria. Additional findings from the Phase I ESA were not assessed at the time.



*Freight Yard Way*

Based on the past uses of the site for manufacturing, railroad transport and maintenance, bulk petroleum storage, automotive repair, automotive salvage, storage of petroleum or hazardous materials, and coal storage, potential areas of concern include:

- Contaminated surface soil by arsenic and PAHs has been confirmed from prior environmental investigation of the southernmost portion of the site; it is unknown whether these contaminants are present site-wide. Surface soil contamination by dioxin and PAHs is present below the asphalt parking area of the former Stoddard Enterprises property.
- Potential for known surface soil contamination or other releases to impact soil gas or groundwater is unknown.
- Remnants of the former automotive service facility and Pelaggi Granite company buildings remains. It is unknown whether contamination from past operations within these buildings has impacted the concrete slab foundations.

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# MARKET ASSESMENT **3**

### 3 MARKET ASSESSMENT

#### Executive Summary

Several of the major points addressed in the market study are summarized below:

The market analysis and feasibility assessment were completed to focus on redevelopment and new development opportunities on several parcels in Northfield Village. Specifically, the feasibility assessment focused on four sites:

- Northfield Savings/Mayo Block;
- East Street Block;
- 'Gateway' Block; and
- Freight Yard Way Area

In each instance the market component of the study used findings regarding Northfield's broader market opportunity - and focused those findings on uses that have potential for the selected sites.

#### Overview

While the recession of the latter 2000s has had lasting impacts on Vermont and Northfield, it is apparent that the broad economy is now in a slow growth mode and that there are 'points of light' and growth in several industries.

In Northfield Village, the relocation of the Northfield Savings Bank central facility created a loss in the community, but



*Depot Square with sunset over the Green Mountains.*

the village continues to show potential in several areas. In particular we note solid employment increases in: Non-Durable Manufacturing (often food processing); Professional and Business Services; Education & Health Care Services; and Leisure & Hospitality (despite a clear lack of tourism infrastructure in Northfield). Further, the presence of Norwich University gives the community a level of economic stability not common in Vermont’s small communities.

Northfield Village services a geographic market area with a population of approximately 8,000 persons. While relatively little absolute growth has occurred in recent years, there are clearly demographic dynamics occurring; specifically, a substantial increase in newly retired/empty next and younger households.

## Retail

A detailed analysis of Northfield’s retail dynamics indicates that there are retail potentials in categories that are consistent with a small village commercial area and consistent with findings from the VDAT study several years prior. We note that enhancement of the village and the community’s ‘lifestyle’ will be critical to attract new Northfield residents. The retail categories with potential are as follows:

- Home Furnishings;
- Lawn & Garden Supply
- Beer/Wine and Liquor;
- Sporting Goods; and
- Eating & Drinking Establishments

## Residential

The study indicates two areas of potential for residential development in Northfield:

- Housing for younger singles and couples -- this might include traditional apartment units; live/work spaces and starter ownership housing; and
- Traditional ownership housing oriented toward households that now commute to Northfield.

### 3 MARKET ASSESSMENT

#### Employment

Although not on a major scale, employment trends point to the need for office space in Northfield Village, with an emphasis on smaller office space for individual proprietors and small firms.

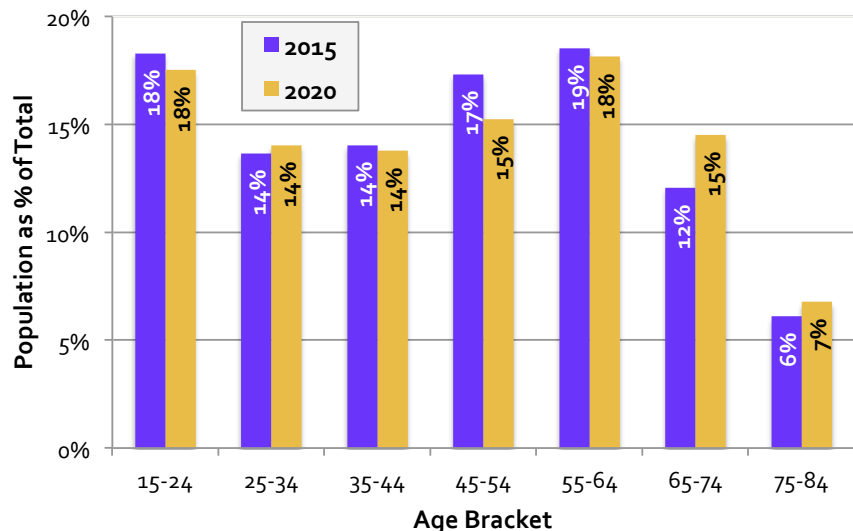
#### Lodging

Northfield’s lack of a hotel facility is a *significant* deficit for the community. Specifically, the town is not positioned to capture its fair share of Vermont’s tourism activity. Moreover, many of Northfield’s visitors (Norwich University events; casual tourists, business visitors) must now seek overnight accommodations out of town. As a result, a number of Northfield’s business establishments are losing out on potential tourism expenditures.

#### Introduction

A market assessment for Northfield was prepared by Doug Kennedy Advisors (DKA) as part of the planning process. The market assessment looks at the state, the region, the Northfield Village area or Census Designated Place (CDP) which generally includes the Depot Square Village Center and the urbanized surrounding area. The market assessment provides guidance

Population Distribution by Age: Current/Projected:  
Region (2015 – 2020)



to the planning team in considering new uses and activities for underutilized parcels in the planning area, including parcels in the Depot Square area and along Freight Yard Way.

The major findings of the market assessment are summarized below:

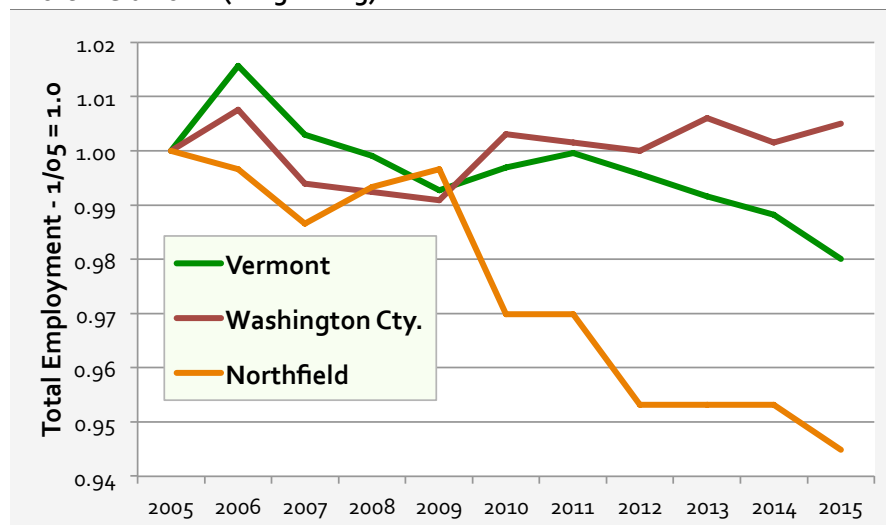
### Population Trends

Northfield area’s population can best be described as relatively stable during recent years, with no substantial change projected for the next five years. The local data is consistent with recent trends in housing permits – virtually no new housing development has occurred in recent years.

While total population remains stable, the demographics of aging are creating substantial market dynamics in the Northfield area.

- Significant, positive growth will occur among persons aged 65 to 84 years; in large part, this reflects the aging of the ‘baby boom.’ While the total population of the market area is projected to remain essentially stable between 2015 and 2020, the number of persons aged 62 years or more will increase by 11.2 percent.

**Indexed Employment Trends: Vermont; Washington County; Northfield Town (2005 – 2015)**



### 3 MARKET ASSESSMENT

- Although less pronounced, the number of persons aged 25 to 34 years will increase over the next five years, a positive indicator for new household creation and consumer expenditures.

#### Employment

There are 97 businesses in the study area employing 853 persons. By far, the most important single industry in the study area is Educational Services (40 percent of total employment); if Norwich University's full employment level (550+/- employees) were to be included, the significance of Educational Services would be even greater. Finance and Insurance at 12% and retail trade at 13% are other sources of employment in the study area, this reflects the village center character of the study area. It should be noted that Cabot Hosiery is not included in the study area employment totals (170+ employees) in Table 4, so that under-emphasizes the significance of manufacturing to the local economy as a whole.

In looking at employment trends in Vermont, Washington County and Northfield since 2005, Vermont and Washington County have stabilized since the recession and/or made some economic gains, while Northfield has experienced real employment loss in recent years. Without question, the loss of Northfield Savings Bank employment was a significant blow to the community. Vermont employment is slightly below its 2005 level; Washington County is slightly above its 2005 level; and Northfield Town has lost employment since 2005, with 2015 employment 94.5% of the year 2005 level.

Employment trends within the Washington County region indicate a positive trend in the recent years in the following industries:

***Construction (up 15.8% between 2010 and 2015):*** The construction industry is showing employment gains as a reflection of an up-tick in development activity in the county.

***Manufacturing: Non-Durable (up 10.0% between 2010 and 2015):*** This is a bright spot for Vermont as a whole and potentially for the Northfield area; the 'local food' trend is providing a boost to non-durable manufacturing as many food processors are finding a market in the state.

Table 4: Study Area Businesses and Employment

	Number of Businesses/ Operations	Employment	Employment as % of Total
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	1	1	0.1%
Mining	1	2	0.2%
Utilities	0	1	0.1%
Construction	6	14	1.6%
Manufacturing	3	83	9.7%
Wholesale Trade	2	26	3.0%
<b>Retail Trade</b>	11	112	13.1%
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	1	4	0.5%
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	0	0	0.0%
Electronics & Appliance Stores	1	3	0.4%
Bldg Material & Garden Equipment & Supplies Dealers	2	6	0.7%
Food & Beverage Stores	1	8	0.9%
Health & Personal Care Stores	1	5	0.6%
Gasoline Stations	1	7	0.8%
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	1	3	0.4%
Sport Goods, Hobby, Book, & Music Stores	2	2	0.2%
General Merchandise Stores	0	2	0.2%
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	1	4	0.5%
Nonstore Retailers	1	68	8.0%
Transportation & Warehousing	0	3	0.4%
Information	3	28	3.3%
<b>Finance &amp; Insurance</b>	6	106	12.4%
Central Bank/Credit Intermediation & Related Activities	4	103	12.1%
Securities, Commodity Contracts & Other Financial	0	0	0.0%
Insurance Carriers & Related Activities; Funds, Trusts &	2	4	0.5%
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	2	3	0.4%
<b>Professional, Scientific &amp; Tech Services</b>	3	17	2.0%
Legal Services	1	2	0.2%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	1	1	0.1%
Administrative & Support & Waste Management & Remediation	1	3	0.4%
Educational Services	6	339	39.7%
Health Care & Social Assistance	2	21	2.5%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	1	5	0.6%
<b>Accommodation &amp; Food Services</b>	5	38	4.5%
Accommodation	1	3	0.4%
Food Services & Drinking Places	4	35	4.1%
<b>Other Services (except Public Administration)</b>	11	27	3.2%
Automotive Repair & Maintenance	2	4	0.5%
Public Administration	4	23	2.7%
Unclassified	2	2	0.2%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>853</b>	
<b>No Activity in NAICS Category</b>			

### 3 MARKET ASSESSMENT

*Professional and Business Services (up 47.6% between 2010 and 2015):* As the service economy expands, so do Professional and Business Services. This growth also reflects the ‘work at home’ trend. Growth in this category is clearly a plus for the downtown, which can provide attractive office locations and potentially a co-working space.

*Leisure and Hospitality Services (up 19.4% between 2010 and 2015):* Vermont’s travel industry has rebounded since a low point in 2009. Northfield, however is not currently positioned to take advantage of this market. In 2013, Vermont is estimated to have attracted 15.1 million ‘visitor nights.’ Washington County attracted 8.4 percent of those visitor nights, or 1.26 million visitor nights (*Vermont Tourism Data Center*). Based on a review of Meals/Room tax receipts, it is estimated that Northfield Town attracted only 3.1 percent of Washington County’s tourism activity. As such it is estimated that the study area attracts approximately 39,500 tourists on an annual basis. We note that this is a small absolute value; an indicator that tourism/travel is not currently significant to Northfield’s economy.

In summary, like many Vermont communities, Northfield has not seen substantial growth in recent years. The combination of the severe recession of the 2000s, Vermont’s aging demographics and Northfield’s role in the regional economy have all been factors. However, there are clearly signs that Northfield is attractive attention and that if momentum builds, the village could begin to thrive again.

## Residential Market Trends and Implications

### Housing Construction and Pricing

Northfield has experienced minimal new housing development in recent years. Essentially no multi-family units have been constructed and very few single-family homes (1 to 2 units per year since 2012) have been constructed.

Seasonal/vacation housing is not a significant factor in Northfield. Year 2014 data indicates that seasonal/vacation housing accounts for only 3.4 percent of the town’s housing

stock: this compares to 12.4 percent of total housing stock at the Washington County level and 15.3 percent of total housing stock at the statewide level.

Overall, pricing for Northfield housing is toward the low end of the regional scale, making this a relatively affordable town for households seeking housing in central Vermont. This could be an attraction for persons employed in the Montpelier/Barre area.

Northfield's demographic trends are reflective of broader trends throughout the northeast; a significant increase in the 55 to 74 years population and increases in the number of younger households (Millennials). In the instance of older households. Real estate professionals note that 'empty nesters' tend to account for the majority of demand on Vermont's smaller communities.

While Vermont's housing market is clearly differentiated from broader US trends, it is apparent that both Millennials and Empty Nesters are showing an increased interest in living in built-up locations, with a focus on easy access to services, places to eat and public interaction. We note the following:

- There is a significant portion of the *Baby Boomer* generation that is opting to go to the cities, and this is the beginning of a long-term trend.
- The *Empty Nesters* whose children have grown-up and gone to college or work are downsizing by selling their suburban homes and moving into apartments is old news; the magnitude of this trend is what is surprising developers.

Industry experts indicate that future projects will likely have a unit mix that includes more two-bedroom and three-bedroom units to attract renters ages 55 and older. Additionally, Millennials tend to prefer one-bedroom apartments, whereas Boomers favor multiple-bedroom units, to accommodate a home office and/or visiting children and grandchildren. Though the two cohorts enjoy amenities such as swimming pools, workout rooms, Wi-Fi, and dog parks, Millennials are more likely to want more social attractions, such as TV lounges, bars, and such, according to Zillow.com. The Boomers, conversely, according to the website, prefer more luxurious

### 3 MARKET ASSESSMENT

trappings, such as state of the art kitchens, high-end bathrooms, and walk-in closets.

Although Northfield has experienced limited new residential development in recent years, it would appear that several forces are in place that could result in renewed activity:

- Potential programmatic expansion at Norwich University, the town’s major employer;
- An increase in village commercial, retail and eating/ drinking activity that could make the community more attractive to households seeking a community with ‘lifestyle’ and ‘activity.’

Growing awareness of Northfield’s recreational potential, a critical consideration for both younger households and empty nesters.

#### Observations

*Northfield offers an attractive small-town environment with local employment, cultural attractions and recreational opportunities.*

Northfield Village offers a number of attributes that are viewed as positives by a segment of the housing market:



***Small Town Environment:*** Vermonters clearly favor a small town atmosphere; moreover, appreciation of smaller communities has become a broader trend in the US.

***Security:*** The ability to move freely about without security concerns is unknown for most US residents; Northfield offers this critical lifestyle attribute;

***Culture:*** Colleges/Universities are known for offering culture, recreation and diversity to small communities, typically far in excess of features that the community can offer in its own right. The presence of Norwich University provides Northfield with economic stability and enhances the range of activities for its residents;

***Employment Opportunities:*** In contrast with many of Vermont's smaller towns, Northfield offers significant, local employment opportunities; Norwich University, Cabot Hosiery and other local employers offer a range of employment including diverse occupational opportunities – our conversations make it clear that there is ongoing and planned expansion of employment opportunity in the community. We note that, in many instances, workers commute to Northfield for these positions; there is potential to induce a number of these workers to move to the community;

***Recreation:*** Northfield offers recreation opportunities that are directly linked to the village area. These include: mountain biking hiking; cross-country skiing; river based recreation as well as facilities and programs offered by the Northfield Recreation Committee. The presence of these opportunities already draws visitors to the community and makes the town more attractive to potential residents who seek recreation 'in their backyard.'

***Demographic Changes:*** Northfield is clearly not experiencing strong population growth, but the combination of an increase in new/young households and aging households will create demand for new and/or redeveloped housing in this market. While young/forming households are likely to be seeking rental or 'starter' ownership housing, older households are often looking to 'simplify,' both by decreasing housing maintenance demands and cutting housing related expenses.

### 3 MARKET ASSESSMENT

***Affordability:*** It is significant to note that pricing in Northfield’s ownership and rental markets is relatively affordable by Vermont standards, particularly for households that have been dealing with housing costs in the Barre/Montpelier market. As such, potential residents can get ‘more for the dollar’ in Northfield.

#### Summary & Potentials

From a community perspective, it is clear that Northfield would benefit from renewed residential development and the addition of new households to the town’s population. Moreover, the presence of significant/growing employers that already attract many commuters translates to clear potential for attractive new households. Our observations indicate that many of the community characteristics that would attract these households are already in place, but that increased commercial activity (retail, dining/drinking) in the village and the further development/marketing of surrounding recreational opportunities would be sufficient to begin to attract these households to the community. It is also significant to note that Northfield High school is highly rated within the state.

From a perspective of the selected redevelopment sites – we see residential potentials as follows:

**Northfield Savings Bank/Mayo/ East Street Block:** This is an urbanized site with potential for infill or redevelopment only. As such, residential use should be focused on upper story rental apartment development.

**Freight Yard Way:** In its current form, this site is oriented toward commercial and light industrial use; in both instances, these uses can be viewed as incompatible with residential development. However, this site is within easy walking distance of the village core and offers a connection to the Riverwalk and the potential for the future Riverwalk connection to downtown and Norwich University. The future Water Street Park is just across the river.

Given these factors, we feel that residential use should be a consideration on the southerly portion of the site. This could take several forms, including:

- Traditional rental housing;
- Townhouse/ condominium ownership housing;
- A more creative live/work format.

Any residential use of the southerly portion of the site would have to be planned so as to minimize conflict with industrial uses. However, we note that potential residents in a live/work housing format often choose to be close to the sights and sounds of an active economy.

### Retail Gap Assessment

The retail gap analysis is a simple comparison of demand and sales that can serve as a means of identifying opportunities for new retail businesses within a defined area. For purposes of analysis, we completed two gap assessments:

- A comparison of demand generated by the region with current sales in the market area; and
- A comparison of demand generated by the market area with current sales in the market area.

While the first calculation compares a larger area (region) with a smaller area (market area), the magnitude of the resultant 'gaps' is a basis for identifying the region's retail shortcoming. In the second assessment (demand in the market area and current sales in the market area) the calculations show direct shortcomings for a known population group. While the calculation of the region / market area gaps is not an 'apples to apples' comparison, it does provide a broad view of retail potentials in the Northfield area.

The demand, sales and resultant gap figures are shown in Table 2.1 on the following page. In both instances, positive 'gaps' with relevance to the downtown area have been **highlighted in blue**. Deficits – instances in which sales exceed demand – are shown in **red** type. In addition, in the instances where there is a 'positive gap,' the gap is expressed as a percent of total demand – providing an indication of the significance of the gap to the market.

An assessment of Northfield's current retail situation from demand and supply perspectives indicates that there is potential for growth in the following retail categories. For each

### 3 MARKET ASSESSMENT

Table 5: Retail Gap Analysis

	Region<->Market				Market<->Market			
	Region Demand	Market Sales	'Gap'	Gap as % of Demand	Market Demand	Market Sales	'Gap'	Gap as % of Demand
<b>Motor Vehicle &amp; Parts Dealers</b>	\$133.55	\$53.35	\$80.20	60%	\$20.39	\$53.35	-\$32.96	
Automobile Dealers	\$110.12	\$52.01	\$58.10	53%	\$16.71	\$52.01	-\$35.31	
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	\$14.05	\$0.18	\$13.87	99%	\$2.25	\$0.18	\$2.07	92%
Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores	\$9.38	\$1.16	\$8.23	88%	\$1.43	\$1.16	\$0.27	19%
<b>Furniture &amp; Home Furnishings Stores</b>	\$22.55	\$1.58	\$20.97	93%	\$3.47	\$1.58	\$1.89	54%
Furniture Stores	\$10.79	\$0.88	\$9.91	92%	\$1.62	\$0.88	\$0.73	45%
Home Furnishings Stores	\$11.71	\$0.69	\$11.02	94%	\$1.81	\$0.69	\$1.12	62%
<b>Electronics &amp; Appliance Stores</b>	\$22.66	\$1.94	\$20.72	91%	\$3.45	\$1.94	\$1.51	44%
<b>Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. &amp; Supply Stores</b>	\$28.45	\$2.51	\$25.94	91%	\$4.51	\$2.51	\$2.00	44%
Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers	\$21.70	\$2.50	\$19.20	88%	\$3.44	\$2.50	\$0.94	27%
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	\$6.73	\$0.00	\$6.73	100%	\$1.05	\$0.00	\$1.05	100%
<b>Food &amp; Beverage Stores</b>	\$113.24	\$32.83	\$80.40	71%	\$17.38	\$32.83	-\$15.45	
Grocery Stores	\$98.13	\$32.52	\$65.61	67%	\$14.78	\$32.52	-\$17.74	
Specialty Food Stores	\$7.63	\$0.00	\$7.63	100%	\$1.15	\$0.00	\$1.15	100%
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	\$7.10	\$0.00	\$7.10	100%	\$1.07	\$0.00	\$1.07	100%
<b>Health &amp; Personal Care Stores</b>	\$30.98	\$5.02	\$25.97	84%	\$4.75	\$5.02	-\$0.27	
<b>Gasoline Stations</b>	\$46.59	\$15.57	\$31.02	67%	\$7.43	\$15.57	-\$8.14	
<b>Clothing &amp; Clothing Accessories Stores</b>	\$40.10	\$1.56	\$38.54	96%	\$6.06	\$1.56	\$4.50	74%
Clothing Stores	\$30.08	\$1.06	\$29.02	96%	\$4.50	\$1.06	\$3.44	77%
Shoe Stores	\$6.39	\$0.49	\$5.89	92%	\$0.95	\$0.49	\$0.46	48%
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	\$3.57	\$0.00	\$3.57	100%	\$0.55	\$0.00	\$0.55	100%
<b>Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book &amp; Music Stores</b>	\$19.13	\$2.43	\$16.69	87%	\$2.96	\$2.43	\$0.53	18%
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instr Stores	\$17.41	\$2.10	\$15.32	88%	\$2.68	\$2.10	\$0.59	22%
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	\$1.68	\$0.34	\$1.35	80%	\$0.25	\$0.34	-\$0.08	
<b>General Merchandise Stores</b>	\$57.97	\$29.37	\$28.60	49%	\$8.78	\$29.37	-\$20.59	
Department Stores Excluding Leased Depts.	\$41.20	\$27.50	\$13.70	33%	\$6.20	\$27.50	-\$21.31	
Other General Merchandise Stores	\$16.70	\$1.87	\$14.83	89%	\$2.52	\$1.87	\$0.65	26%
<b>Miscellaneous Store Retailers</b>	\$17.84	\$6.12	\$11.72	66%	\$2.76	\$6.12	-\$3.37	
Florists	\$1.36	\$0.46	\$0.90	66%	\$0.21	\$0.46	-\$0.25	
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	\$4.55	\$2.72	\$1.83	40%	\$0.70	\$2.72	-\$2.02	
Used Merchandise Stores	\$1.74	\$0.09	\$1.64	95%	\$0.26	\$0.09	\$0.17	64%
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$10.17	\$2.85	\$7.32	72%	\$1.56	\$2.85	-\$1.29	
<b>Nonstore Retailers</b>	\$26.01	\$13.31	\$12.70	49%	\$3.97	\$13.31	-\$9.34	
Electronic Shopping & Mail-Order Houses	\$19.83	\$0.00	\$19.83	100%	\$3.01	\$0.00	\$3.01	100%
Vending Machine Operators	\$0.64	\$0.00	\$0.64	100%	\$0.10	\$0.00	\$0.10	100%
Direct Selling Establishments	\$5.54	\$13.31	-\$7.77		\$0.87	\$13.31	-\$12.44	
<b>Food Services &amp; Drinking Places</b>	\$61.23	\$6.85	\$54.38	89%	\$9.77	\$6.85	\$2.92	30%
Full-Service Restaurants	\$39.06	\$3.33	\$35.73	91%	\$5.88	\$3.33	\$2.55	43%
Limited-Service Eating Places	\$18.92	\$3.36	\$15.56	82%	\$2.85	\$3.36	-\$0.51	
Special Food Services	\$1.32	\$0.00	\$1.32	100%	\$0.20	\$0.00	\$0.20	100%
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	\$1.29	\$0.16	\$1.13	88%	\$0.19	\$0.16	\$0.03	18%

retail segment that emerges after comparing retail sales and household expenditures, an assessment regarding ‘fit’ within the village center planning area is noted in italics:

**Home Furnishings:** A number of northern New England downtowns have developed clusters of stores in this category in recent years. Higher end merchandise appeals to both area residents and tourists and, particularly if located in combination, can create a destination appeal.

*Home furnishings would be a difficult market of entry for a single, smaller retail operation, as this category is most effective with multiple stores. However, a retailer with a specialized product or service not found elsewhere in the region could be a destination in its own right.*

**Electronics & Appliance Stores:** This would be appropriate use in a larger downtown, but competing with ‘big box’ electronics makes this a difficult category for a smaller operator.

*Electronics & Appliance Stores is not a good ‘fit’ for Northfield Village. We do not recommend an entry in this area.*

**Lawn and Garden Equipment:** This a retail use that would be appropriate for the Freight Yard Way area.

*Lawn and Garden Equipment: This is clearly a use that could work within the Study Area.*

**Beer, Wine and Liquor Stores:** Clearly an appropriate use for a village area.

*A retailer focused on wine, craft beers and spirits would be a good addition to the village and, if properly targeted to the market, could realize success.*

**Clothing:** Although this category shows a significant gap between demand and supply, it is well noted that clothing retailing has suffered in Vermont’s downtown and villages. Simply put, individual retailers face tremendous competition from clusters of clothiers in shopping centers and malls and internet shopping.

### 3 MARKET ASSESSMENT

*Given Northfield Village's relative isolation from other retail shopping concentrations, it is conceivable that a women's clothier could find success in the village. However success would depend on a specialized mix of products.*

**Sporting Goods Stores:** This is an appropriate use in the downtown area.

*Given the success of the Bike Express, it is apparent that there is demand for sporting goods in the village. Moreover, additional sporting goods retailers would be a complement to Northfield's effort to promote its recreational opportunities. Biking, hiking, kayaking, fishing, etc. are all potential areas of demand.*

**Food Service and Drinking Places:** Vermont's most successful downtowns and villages host a variety of restaurants and drinking places, typically clustered within a 'walkable' area in the core commercial area. With a substantial portion of eating dollars spent at restaurants, consumers are constantly on the lookout for variety, and greatly appreciate the opportunity to window shop a number of potential places to eat within a small area. The success of the Cornerstone Pub is clear evidence of the demand for high quality eating/drinking places.

*Northfield Village currently lacks a restaurant cluster. The 'Market Area' comparison shows a \$2.55 million gap in this category; at a typical per square foot sales level of \$585, this translates to 4,400 +/- square feet of retail. Northfield Village lacks sufficient variety and quality in the food service sector to either attract regional visitors or to attract tourism. This is clearly a sector that could be improved.*

### Lodging

Current travel trends and demographic factors point to a strong future for the Vermont lodging industry in coming years. While Northfield's lack of a hotel facility is surprising from several perspectives:

- The community has access to I-89, one of Vermont's major travel corridors;
- The village and surrounding town are picturesque and highly consistent with the typical tourist's perspective on Vermont;

- The community hosts a university that generates significant visitation as well as other business and academic activity.
- In light of these factors, the potential for developing a lodging facility in Northfield deserves attention. While a full feasibility assessment is beyond the scope of this study, we have explored several factors that are relevant to the lodging market.
- Nationally, the US lodging industry is currently at a high point, with occupancy levels, room rates on the increase and hotel values on an upward curve.

The Vermont lodging industry continues to be very strong, with REVPAR growth of 8.0%. It was the strongest growth rate in the New England region, and follows on 2012 when it also finished with the strongest rate of growth at 7.7%. In addition to a very strong winter for skiing, the state also likely benefited from Canadian travelers encouraged by the exchange rate and by a decline in supply.

The 'typical' Vermont leisure traveler is older (55+ years) and based in the northeast or Mid- Atlantic states. Further, many of these travelers are on driving trips, often moving through several sections of the state. Regional demographics make it clear that this group is already large and growing at a strong rate.



*The Northfield Common during the Farmers Market.*

### 3 MARKET ASSESSMENT

#### Conclusions

Current travel trends and demographic factors point to a solid future for the Vermont lodging industry in coming years. Vermont easy driving access and mix of landscapes, history and small towns is attractive to older (Empty Nest/Baby Boomer) travelers. While Northfield does not have a reputation as one of Vermont’s major travel attractions, it is apparent that the community’s location with respect to the regional highway network puts it in a position to tap into a growing market.

With no current direct competition and the presence of a major, stable institution (Norwich University) we feel that hoteliers could be drawn to assess the feasibility of a lodging property on the community.

While the availability of sufficient building, parking and other space are critical factors—as are access and visibility – it is apparent that a lodging property located within walking distance of the Depot Square village core would contribute significantly to the viability of retail, restaurant and other businesses. Further study would be required, however, to determine if this is a viable use.



# CONCEPTUAL PLANS **4**

## 4 CONCEPTUAL PLANS

Conceptual redevelopment plans were prepared for selected sites within Northfield. The primary characteristics of these sites are summarized as follows:



**Northfield Savings Bank (NSB)/ Mayo Block (above):** This site is located at the very heart of the Depot Square village center. With the recent relocation of the NSB corporate headquarters Berlin has left this building as a large vacancy in the heart of downtown. The Mayo Block is the iconic anchor of the Depot Square area.



**East Street (above):** This is a prime block in the center of downtown that is prime for streetscape improvements and infill development that would add vitality to the downtown.

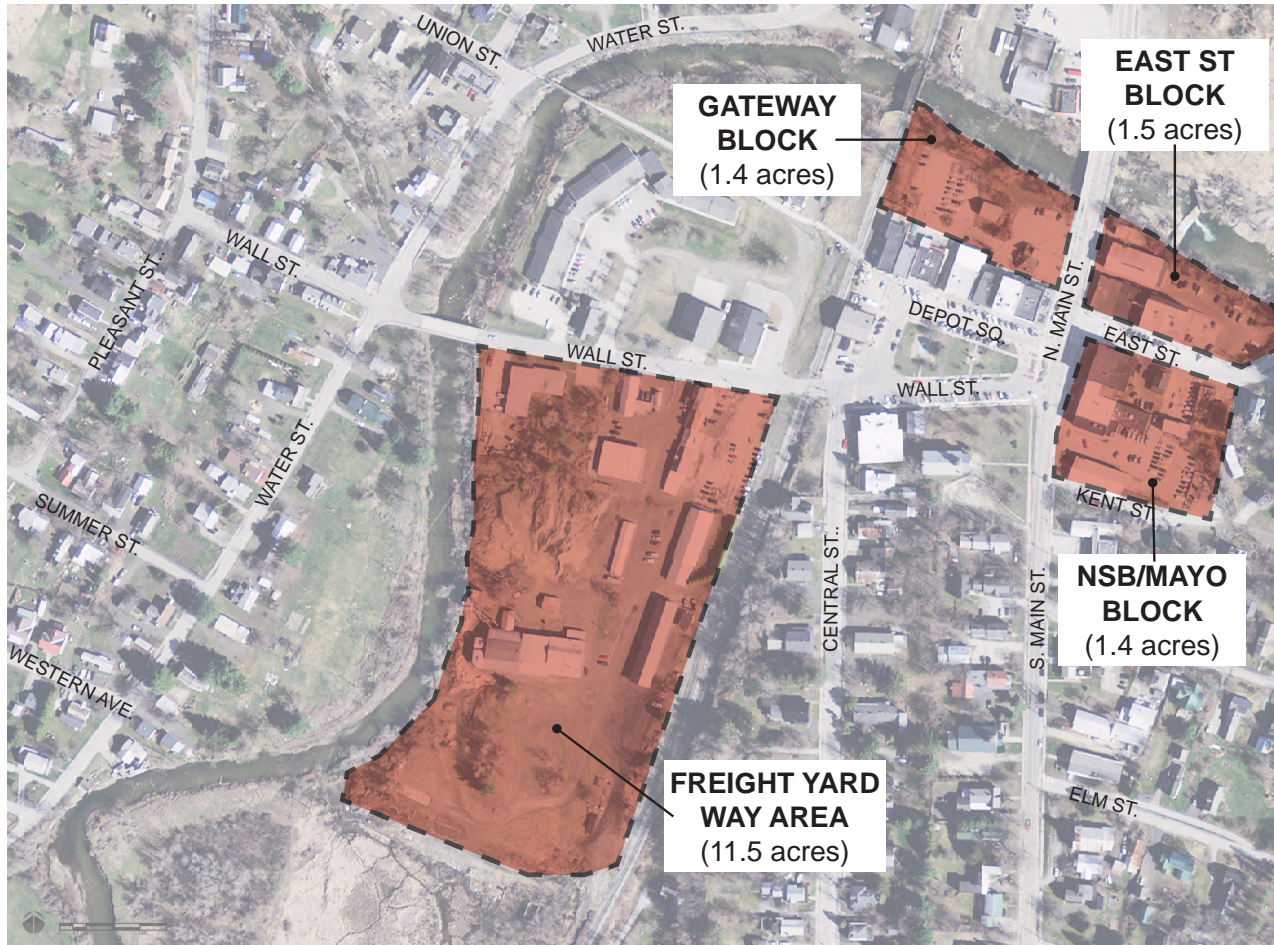


Figure 9: Selected Redevelopment Sites



**Gateway Block (above):** This is an underutilized site with river frontage on Main Street. This site is a gateway to the village center and abuts a municipal parking lot.



# NORTHFIELD AREA-WIDE PLAN

Figure 10: Conceptual Redevelopment Plan

## 4 CONCEPTUAL PLANS



**Freight Yard Way Area (above):** This is a remnant railroad yard that is centrally located within the village center adjoining the Depot Square area and in-town neighborhoods. The site has river frontage along the west side and several undeveloped parcels.

### Description of the Conceptual Redevelopment Plans

The conceptual plans are intended to consider how selected sites may be enhanced or redeveloped to revitalize Northfield. The plans provide a vision for a vibrant village center that is a place where people can live, work, shop, visit and come together for community and social events. The plan provides a focus on walkability and pedestrian vitality while allowing for convenient parking to serve businesses and residences.

The conceptual plans provide a sense of what is possible on selected sites in terms of new development, parking, and improved streetscapes and amenities. Taken collectively the plan provides a development framework for a long-term revitalization of the area. It will take many years for the amount of development shown in the plans to be absorbed..

The conceptual plans reflect the following qualities:

**Reconnecting to the River.** The primary organizing concept for the plans is reconnecting Northfield with the river. A key element of this is a Riverwalk which provides public access and green space within the village center. The Riverwalk would

attract people to the downtown and add value to properties and create a more livable area for existing and future residents. The Riverwalk has the opportunity to provide a range of experiences along its length, including a walking path, spaces for seating and enjoyment of the scenery, and possibly spaces for small social gatherings.

**Pedestrian Orientation.** The configuration of buildings, parking and green space create a rich pedestrian environment and complement the traditional pedestrian orientation of Depot Square. New development is organized to create attractive streetscapes, pedestrian linkages and gathering spaces.

**Mix of Uses.** The plans incorporate a mixture of retail, residential, employment and an option for an in-town boutique hotel to provide both economic and social vitality in the downtown. The addition of downtown residential uses adds more activity in the evenings and supports downtown retail businesses. A complement of downtown workers also supports the retail businesses during the week.

**Enhanced Streetscapes.** Enhanced streetscapes along Main Street, East Street, Wall Street and Freight Yard Way will improve the pedestrian environment and overall character of the downtown.

**Parking.** Convenient parking for new customers is provided internally within the block, beneath buildings where feasible and along streets. Northfield has a pool of municipal parking around Depot Square and in a lot behind the retail shops and this helps to create a traditional 'park and walk' environment in the downtown and an attractive pedestrian environment.

## 4 CONCEPTUAL PLANS

### Description of the Conceptual Redevelopment Alternatives

#### Northfield Savings Bank / Mayo Block

The conceptual plan for this site demolishes the two 'out buildings' behind the main structures to create a better parking layout. The NSB building seems to be best suited for continued commercial uses. NSB will maintain a retail bank on the ground floor of the Main Street building. NSB officials have indicated that it is important for them to maintain a presence in Northfield as it is their namesake community. Based on conversations with NSB it is anticipated that the rear addition to this building will be renovated for commercial office uses. The structure does not lend itself readily to reconfiguration for residential uses.

The plan envisions a rear addition to the Mayo Building which extends from the main building and is oriented to East Street.

#### Northfield Savings Bank/ Mayo Block

- Remove small buildings and improve parking layout
- Addition to Mayo Building and pocket park
- Streetscape improvements on Main Street



Figure 11: Northfield Savings Bank/ Mayo Block Area Detail



*Sketch perspective of East Street and the Mayo Block.*

This building is anticipated to remain commercial/retail on the ground level with upper story residential. The addition would provide an additional 2500 square feet of retail/commercial space and 11 residential units, depending on the mix of bedrooms.

As described in the market assessment a downtown hotel would be an attractive possibility for the downtown. A hotel situated in the downtown can use the shops and restaurants located around it for amenities, rather than providing these facilities within the hotel. The Mayo building and addition would be one possibility for a downtown hotel in a historic building. It is anticipated that 50 rooms could be accommodated in the renovated and expanded Mayo building. An off-site arrangement for parking would be required.

Streetscape improvements along Main Street, in keeping with the other improvements around Depot Square would create a more attractive downtown environment. Along Main Street, space for street trees, as well as improved sidewalks and lighting, should be incorporated into the Main Street enhancements.

## 4 CONCEPTUAL PLANS



*Sketch perspective looking west on East Street with infill development and streetscape improvements.*

### East Street

The main idea on East Street is to provide streetscape enhancements to create an attractive downtown destination. A broader sidewalk on the north side of the street which enjoys a sunny south-facing aspect, would be ideal for sidewalk dining and merchandise displays. The streetscape improvements should include street trees in addition to new sidewalks and lighting. The V-DAT Report recommended creating a 'canopy' using overhead string lights which would create a festive atmosphere on East Street which would complement recent developments here with the Cornerstone Pub and the brewery. A pedestrian bump-out should be created in front of Subway connecting across East Street. The intersection configuration including two west-bound lanes on East Street should be reconsidered in favor of one lane and additional space for pedestrians.

One additional mixed-use infill building, on the site of an old movie theater, could be accommodated along East Street. Due to the sloping grade of the site, parking could be accommodated beneath this building. It is anticipated that 3,000 square feet of retail space on the ground floor and 12 units on the upper floors could be accommodated within this new structure.



*Before and after images of streetscape improvements on East Street.*

## 4 CONCEPTUAL PLANS



*Sketch perspective looking north on Main Street with infill development on the 'Gateway' site.*

### Gateway

The gateway block is located at the north entry to the downtown. This site location on Main Street with river frontage makes it a prime site for redevelopment. The commercial parcel adjoins a municipal parking lot west of this site. A new mixed-use building which is oriented to Main Street and the river, with parking behind, would be an attractive addition to the downtown. Ground floor retail with a terrace oriented to the river (and accommodating the Riverwalk) would make this property an attractive asset to the downtown. It is estimated that 21 residential units could be accommodated on upper floors. The space could also be used for commercial uses.

A downtown hotel could also be accommodated on this site. With an orientation to the river this could be a desirable location for lodging. With a larger 10,000 square foot building foot print and a four story building, it is estimated that 70 guest rooms could be accommodated on a hotel at this location.

Streetscape enhancements along Main Street including sidewalks, street trees, lighting and enhanced crosswalks should be constructed. Streetscape enhancements should allow for a crossing of the Riverwalk (discussed below) and create a visual gateway to the Depot Square area.

**East Street**

- Streetscape improvements, lighting, street trees
- Change 90 degree parking to parallel to create broad sidewalk on south side for outdoor dining
- Use string lighting and textured pavement for festival street ambiance
- Street trees and intersection curb extensions
- Mixed-use infill building and pedestrian walkway



Figure 12: East Street Area Detail



**Gateway Block**

- Redevelop Gateway parcel with new mixed-use building with orientation to the river
- Place parking behind building
- Create a Gateway at the bridge with streetscape, enhanced pedestrian crossing and landscape improvements
- Relocate legion building for better parking configuration
- Create attractive green infrastructure improvements to capture stormwater and add landscaping

Figure 13: Gateway Block Area Detail

## 4 CONCEPTUAL PLANS



*Sketch perspective of the new development on Freight Yard Way.*

### Freight Yard Way

This area is anticipated to resume its role as a hub of employment close to the downtown, incorporating an interesting mix of historic and new buildings. The overall organization of this site includes an improved roadway spine with parking and streetscape amenities including street trees, sidewalks, and lighting, in its current configuration. The roadway improvements include a generous turn-around space for large trucks. A Riverwalk path along the river frontage and connected to Freight Yard way with pedestrian walkways would provide an attractive amenity for new uses and activities in this area. New infill buildings, oriented to Freight Yard Way and the river open space at the southern end of the site and on the 'ledge lot' would create a cluster of employment activity in



**Freight Yard Way**

- Improve streetscape with sidewalks, street trees and lighting
- New infill development and rehabilitation of Northfield Wood Products building create an interesting mix of old and new
- New uses include service/maker enterprises and live/work
- Riverwalk continues along riverfront. Establish attractive green infrastructure systems to absorb and treat stormwater
- Open space connection from freight Yard Way to Riverwalk

**Riverwalk Connections**

- Long term connection to Norwich University

Figure 14: Freight Yard Way Area Detail

a very attractive setting close to downtown, the river and Norwich University.

The airy open volumes of the Northfield Wood Products building could be renovated to be an attractive location for a range of commercial uses, from office space to small-scale ‘maker’ enterprises or artisan uses. This plan assumes maintaining the core volume of this building, removing the side wings and adding

## 4 CONCEPTUAL PLANS

parking. New buildings at the southern end of Freight Yard Way could be designed to reference the historic granite shed architecture of the area. On the 'ledge lot' construction is challenging due to site conditions, new buildings were fitted around the base of the parking area on a ledge terrace. On Wall Street, the building currently owned by TDS could be expanded for commercial uses. The buildings along Wall Street between Freight Yard Way and the railroad tracks are assumed to be renovated for retail or office uses. Alternatively, should additional parking be needed for the downtown, this site would provide one option for a close-in pool of parking to support additional density around Depot Square. The need for downtown parking should be assessed as part of a separate study.

Another opportunity identified in the market assessment is the use of Freight Yard Way, particularly the south end, for residential use. Housing types suited to a light industrial setting, such as 'live-work' housing may be an attractive opportunity to provide a different housing model than is offered by the market at this time. At this time the landowner is wary of this idea, as residential is perceived as a threat to established commercial / light industrial uses in the area. The plan should conform with the landowners wishes, but it is mentioned as an opportunity, and the concerns may be able to be addressed thorough building design or other means.

*View down Freight Yard Way with the Northfield Wood Products Building (right) and the old Engine House (left) which has been renovated for new uses.*



Streetscape improvements, sidewalks and street trees, to improve the walking environment along Wall Street should be undertaken. Wall Street is an important connection provide linkages between the Water Street Neighborhood, senior housing, Freight Yard Way, and Depot Square.

**Riverwalk.** A Riverwalk along the Dog River through the downtown area is recommended as a key improvement and organizing element of the plan for downtown area. A Riverwalk that provides an open space amenity, a reconnection between the Town and its riverfront and is closely tied into the uses and activities of Northfield's downtown can bring more people downtown and provide another reason to visit Depot Square. The Riverwalk also provides an attractive transportation connection that can encourage walking and bicycling in Northfield, and perhaps skiing and snowshoeing in the winter. Within the Depot Square area, the central portion of the Riverwalk, from Wall Street to Main Street would traverse publicly owned property. Along Freight Yard Way the Riverwalk could provide an important attraction for new development in this area. The Riverwalk could be the core of a pedestrian and bicycle system that connects to major destinations in Northfield. Extensions of the Riverwalk to Norwich University and toward Northfield Falls should be evaluated. A connection to Shaw Outdoor Center from Depot Square and the Riverwalk may also be a valuable component of the larger pedestrian and bicycle network in Northfield.

**Common Area Enhancements.** Refinements to the Northfield Common that improve the pedestrian environment at the west end of the common, and landscape enhancements, as discussed in the V-DAT report to open the space by removing shrubs and limbing up trees, as well as adding moveable seating, would polish up an enormous community asset. In the future it would be nice to add street trees and landscaping along the streetscape near the storefronts facing the common.

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Table 6: Conceptual Development Program

<b>Mayo Addition (4 Stories)</b>		
Retail (Ground Level)	2,600	s.f.
Apartments (Levels 2 to 4)	11	units
Subtotal Mayo Addition	10,700	s.f.
<b>East Street Infill (4 Stories)</b>		
Commercial (Ground Level)	3,100	s.f.
Apartments (Levels 2 to 4)	12	units
Parking (lot)	25	spaces
Parking (beneath building)	10	spaces
Subtotal East St. Infill	12,400	s.f.
<b>Gateway (4 Stories)</b>		
Commercial (Ground Level)	5,250	s.f.
Apartments (Levels 2 to 4)	21	units
Subtotal Gateway	18,250	s.f.
<b>Gateway Hotel Option (4 Stories)</b>		
Hotel	70	rooms
Subtotal Gateway	40,000	s.f.
<b>Freight Yard Way</b>		
Rehabilitated Space	16,000	s.f.
New Commercial (1.5 stories)	36,900	s.f.
Parking (lot)	260	spaces
Parking (on-street)	27	spaces
Total New and Rehabilitated	52,900	s.f.
<b>Riverwalk</b>		
Wall St. to Depot Sq.	1,513	l.f.
Park/Open Space	2.0	acres
Freight Yard Area	1,062	l.f.

## Public Comments on the Conceptual Plans

The public comments received on the plans during the Night on the Common were very positive. The concept of a Riverwalk was strongly supported. Opportunities for improved walking in general, both along the river front and through improved sidewalks connecting to neighborhoods was important to people. Several people spoke about their desire to walk more. Better connections (for example between the Water Street neighborhood and Norwich), nicer places to walk (along the river), and more things to walk to (attractions in the downtown, connections to the municipal park and pool) were mentioned often. Generally speaking, people would like to see more uses and activities in the downtown area and additional housing was mentioned often. The idea of a co-workign space, a ;maker space, and a downtown hotel was supported too. Maintaining the ability for large trucks to maneuver along Freight Yard Way was mentioned as well. A compilation of public comments appears in Appendix A.



## 4 CONCEPTUAL PLANS

### Feasibility Assessment of the Conceptual Plans

As presented the Northfield AWP plan contains five individual conceptual development scenarios:

1. Northfield Savings/Mayo Block;
2. East Street Block;
3. 'Gateway' Block;
4. Freight Yard Lot;
5. Riverwalk.

Each of the plan elements includes several actions, including: Demolition, Site Development/Preparation; New Building Construction; Landscape elements. With the exception of the Riverwalk plan, all would result in creation of new/redeveloped commercial building space. The overall plan is presented in Figure 10.

**Northfield Savings /Mayo Block** - the plan includes demolition of 2,140 sq. ft. of building space now located behind the Mayo Block to create improved parking and circulation. A mixed use addition to the east side of the Mayo Block would create over 10,000 new sq. ft. of mixed use multi-story building space with frontage on East Street.

**Potential** - in the context of proposed improvements and additions to East Street, the most appropriate use of first floor space (2,675 gross sq. ft.) in the new structure would be retail, consumer services or eating/drinking space. Consistent with strong residential demand and the current use of the Mayo Block, upper levels could best be marketed as rental residential.

A second potential for the combined Mayo Block/New Building could be use as a downtown hotel property.

**East Street Block** – the plan includes site demolition and preparation to improve parking and circulation as well as a new mixed-use building on the northerly side of East Street. The four story building would total approximately 12,350 gross sq. ft. of building space.

**Potential** – an improved East Street will be supportive of commercial use on the first floor (3,085 gross sq. ft.). Residential

rental units would be the most appropriate use on the building's upper levels.

**'Gateway' Block** – the plan involves demolition of the existing 1,850+/- sq. ft. building on the 'Gateway' site, Site demolition and improvement to create parking and circulation; and construction of a new, mixed-use commercial building, with a gross total of 21,000 sq. ft.

**Potential** - given the high visibility location, presence of nearby parking and location within the walking village area, the most appropriate use of the first level of this building (5,270 gross sq. ft.) would be commercial space, including retail and eating/drinking. Again, given the high visibility of this location, the primary use of upper levels of the building should be commercial office space, that can take advantage of the trend toward increased employment in Professional Services, Health and Education.

**Freight Yard Lot** – the plan calls for building demolitions totaling 11,150 sq. ft., a range of site improvements (Parking/Circulation, Green Space, Streetscape) and new building construction (Several Buildings) with gross building space of 55,350 sq. ft.

**Potentials** – the Freight Yard Lot encompasses a relatively large land area and could ultimately support several uses:

- **Retail/Commercial** – the northeastern portion of the site is directly adjacent to the village commercial core and, given pedestrian improvements to make this connection more apparent, can clearly support commercial/retail uses. A multi-story building in this portion of the site could support commercial office space.
- **Light Industry** – light industry, warehousing and allied uses are already established on this site and continue to be appropriate for the central and southern portions of the site. We note that Non-Durable Manufacturing (particularly food processing) is a growth industry in the area. As such, food processing or a food hub facility could be a viable use on the site.

## 4 CONCEPTUAL PLANS

- Residential – while light industry is the most obvious use for the central and southern portions of the site, we note that rental or ownership housing could have potential on the southernmost portion of the site. Given the location near the village and the nature of the site, residential use would likely occur in a relatively high density format (Live/Work Space, Stacked Apartments, Townhouse). Residential use of the site would entail careful planning to provide a buffer from trucking, etc. on other portions of the site. However, we note that persons attracted to live/work spaces often make the choice to locate in areas with high activity levels.

**Riverwalk** – the Riverwalk plan entails the construction of a walkway in three sections (Wall St. to Main St.; Freight Yard Way; East Street) along with associated green space. The cost of the project is estimated at approximately \$476,000.

**Potential** – while the Riverwalk project would not have a direct return from a commercial real estate perspective, we note several points from recent research on walkways/green space on commercial areas and resident lifestyles:

- Open spaces such as parks and recreation areas can have a positive effect on nearby residential property values, and can lead to proportionately higher property tax revenues for local governments.
- Property value research has shown a five percent increase in property values for houses within 500 feet of a park.
- Multiple studies indicate that property values for homes and businesses near parks/recreation areas are greater – with increases ranging from between 4% and 20% – when compared to properties not along trails.
- Park/Recreation areas lead to increased sales tax via spending by visitors.
- Studies have documented business volumes increasing by 30 percent or more following the initiation or redevelopment of adjacent park/recreation areas.

- Recent estimates indicate that overnight travelers to Vermont spend approximately \$166 daily for Lodging; Food & Beverage; Retail; Gas; etc.

## Plan Feasibility by Use

The individual plans include a number of options, and the potential for interchangeable use between buildings and redevelopment sites. As such, our conceptual feasibility assessment focuses on individual *uses* rather than the entirety of any site plan. This approach provides a view of the market/financial elements that need to be in place to make any rehabilitation or new development project feasible.

### Residential Rental Feasibility

A diverse year-round downtown population is acknowledged to be a critical element in revitalizing Northfield Village. Permanent downtown residents activate street life and create year-round demand for village goods and services. Northfield Village already supports ownership and rental residential uses and, based on observed occupancy levels in rental units, could support additional rental activity.

We note the following with respect to the potential village residential market:

- The regional housing market is on the upswing; ownership pricing throughout the state has increased over the past two years and there is upward pressure on residential rents. Northfield's rental vacancy rate has consistently been reported at less than three percent in recent years. A number of Vermont's more urbanized markets have seen increases in building permits in the past two years; this trend will inevitably make its way to Northfield;
- Northfield has processed minimal residential building permits in recent years. This strongly suggests that there is a pent-up market for new, higher quality residential product -- both from rental and ownership perspectives;
- While projections do not point to substantial growth in Northfield's total population, the dynamics of aging will result in new housing needs. Specifically:1) the number of households with heads aged 55 to 74 years will increase

## 4 CONCEPTUAL PLANS

dramatically during the next five to ten years. As noted above, a significant segment of this group will be seeking simplified housing options (e.g., rentals, condominiums) and many will be seeking a housing situation with easy access to village services; 2) an increase in the number of moderate income households with heads aged 25 to 44 years. These formative and 'move-up' households create a significant market for rentals and for smaller condominium units;

- Contacts in the area market report that there is an increase in 'market rate' apartment seekers who want to live in Northfield Village; and
- Any new or rehabilitated residential space within the targeted redevelopment sites offers; easy walking access to village services; easy walking distance to the Dog River (an a potential Riverwalk).

Overall, it appears that the new/rehabilitated residential space envisioned in the site redevelopment plans is best suited to rental housing. As such, our assessment of feasibility focuses on rental units.

### Rental Residential Feasibility Assessment

The following would be significant considerations in developing new rental residential units in the village. We made the following assumptions regarding rental residential development:

- **Project:** A project would most likely include studios and one bedroom units, with the majority being in one-bedroom configurations
- **Absorption:** DKA feels that a quality rental project could achieve absorption at a rate of 15 +/- units annually;
- **Rents:** A review of higher quality rental units in the Northfield market indicates that median rents for one-bedroom units are currently at \$900 per month, while median rents for two-bedroom units are currently at \$1,300 per month. Overall, net annual rents per square foot are in the \$13 to \$17 range.

A simplified pro-forma analysis was developed to evaluate the feasibility of new uses. It must be noted that there are many

unknowns in this analysis, as the plans are very conceptual at this point. Therefore, this analysis must be viewed as an order-of-magnitude assessment at this point in time.

The preliminary pro-forma analysis indicates that the project could reach positive cash flow in the 4th year and that a sale in the 6th year could result in a positive Internal Rate of Return (IRR). However, this would require net rents of \$990 for studio units and \$1,200 for one-bedroom units.

### **Retail**

Retailing is essential to the village experience. Moreover, it is apparent that a commercial building located in the core of the village could include retailing in order to activate the redevelopment and more broadly enhance Northfield. Building frontage on North Main, East of Depot Square is prime real estate for retailing in the village. It is clear that successful retailing must be highly targeted, particularly in a village setting.

The output of the retail gap analysis points to several retail categories that have potential for downtown (discussed on pages 52-55) and these should serve as a guide to leasing efforts.

### **Retail Feasibility Assessment**

The 5,270 +/- square feet of retail space shown in the mixed-use option for the 'Gateway Block' is a realistic goal for new retail space in the village. While retail leasing can be sporadic, the evidence suggests that it is reasonable to project 5,270 +/- square feet of absorption is possible over a 12 to 16 month period. Because the Northfield commercial real estate market is small -- with relatively few transactions -- there is no well-established 'market rate' for commercial space. As such, our analysis focuses on the rent that would need to be assessed in order to achieve feasibility.

A simplified pro-forma analysis was developed for a retail development. Again, *it is essential to note that the plans are very conceptual and myriad assumptions could be incorporated into any pro-forma, each of which would alter the outcome of the analysis.*

## 4 CONCEPTUAL PLANS

The preliminary pro-forma analysis indicates that the project could reach positive cash flow in the fourth year and that a sale in the sixth year could result in a positive IRR. However, this would require net retail rent of \$19 per sq. ft. It is assumed that the absorption rate for retail is 4,000 sq. ft. per year.

### Office Space

A similar analysis was completed for a hypothetical office development, in this instance based on the upper three levels of the 'Gateway Block' under the mixed-use scenario.

The pro-forma analysis indicates that the project could reach positive cash flow in the fourth year and that a sale in the sixth year could result in a positive IRR. However this would require net rental of \$18 per sq. ft.

### Hotel

Northfield's current lack of a hotel facility appears to be a market opportunity. Lacking a lodging facility with significant capacity, the town and village fall 'off the radar' for area travelers who tend to restrict their hotel business via reservation systems to known brands. An in-depth market study focused on lodging would need to determine if Northfield could support a small hotel; that question is beyond the scope of this study.

It is also important to note a hotel's potential contributions to the enhancement of the community, particularly if a facility were to be located within easy walking distance of the village, more specifically:

- An increase in 'people activity' in the village, creating new customers for downtown retailers, food services and service providers;
- Provision of a high-quality bed-base that would support meetings, conferences and other needs of Northfield businesses and particularly Norwich University;
- A significant boon to Northfield's efforts to attract tourism, with an emphasis on village attractions and events and the overall aesthetic quality of the community.

The following would be significant considerations in development a new lodging facility in the village:

- The facility should be on the smaller end of national flags' range of standard offerings -- likely in the 65 to 80 rooms range;
- Traditionally, downtown hotels incorporate a range of on-site services, including restaurants(s), gyms, room service, etc. that relate to 'full-service.' However, the likely scale of a Northfield facility would make these facilities difficult to finance and potentially difficult to operate on a profitable basis. However, it is possible to develop a 'full-service' hotel facility by incorporating other restaurants, shops, etc. in the village that are located within a *short* walking distance. While it would likely be too expensive to include all of these uses within the hotel, easy walking connections would make it seem that other uses are part of the hotel facility.

A hotel feasibility assessment (or pro-forma) is beyond the range of this assessment. However, we note that the current rate for mid-priced, flagged hotels in Vermont is approximately \$120 per night. A mid-summer rate is in the \$190 per night range.

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# IMPLEMENTATION **5**

## 5 IMPLEMENTATION

This section of the plan presents an outline of the steps necessary to implement the plan. It is important to recognize that this is a long-term undertaking, and that cleanup and revitalization of these sites will take many years and will require the efforts of many. Plan implementation will consist of a combination of public improvements, such as streetscape improvements and the Riverwalk, and private property investments made by the private sector. Implementation of the plan will be a public-private partnership between the Town, private landowners and other public agencies that provide resources to assist in cleanup and redevelopment tasks. The following section identifies the steps, likely partners and possible funding sources that would advance cleanup and reinvestment in the area.

### Partners in Plan Implementation

There are a number of organizations that will partner with the Town on the implementation of this plan. Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) can provide resources and technical assistance to assist the Town with necessary zoning and planning steps necessary to implement the plan. CVRPC also oversees brownfield remediation and bicycle and pedestrian planning and design, in collaboration with the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTTrans). DEC also supports water quality improvements such as green infrastructure improvements through grant programs. The Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) provides the gateway to several funding sources for both the Town and private landowners. The Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation (CVEDC) and the Northfield Community Development Network (NCDN) have an important role to play in marketing Northfield and providing pro-active local organizations to bring together private sector interests and the Town in advancing the revitalization in Northfield. The Town, CVEDC and NCDN should continue to play an active role in working with property and business owners, private development interests, downtown and economic stakeholders to guide capital and redevelopment projects to fruition.

Major stakeholders in Northfield, such as Norwich University, have a long-term stake in Northfield and should be engaged in efforts to revitalize the community. Continued outreach and collaboration

with important community institutions and businesses through the implementation process will be imperative for success.

## Major Steps in Project Implementation

Development of public facilities or private construction will go through the following major steps:

**Nuture and Strengthen Parterships.** The first critical step is to nurture partnerships between the Town and Norwich University and other major employers. A regular on-going dialogue on topics of mutual interest is critical.

**Planning and Feasibility.** The first step involves conceptual design and cost estimation for a particular project. There are many factors that are a part of this phase of a project, including site and market investigations, engineering and other technical considerations that will influence the project and its cost. During this phase a project conceptual design is developed in enough detail to allow reliable cost estimates. Depending on the cost a design may be modified to address concerns or a project may also be found to be infeasible. Part of the feasibility phase includes identification and securing sources of funding for a project.

**Design, Engineering and Permitting.** Once a project is designed to a level that impacts can be identified, a project sponsor must obtain necessary permits from regulatory agencies. This typically involves local and state level permits, but projects using federal funding must also comply with NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) requirements. Once permits are in hand, final project design and engineering may be completed.

**Construction.** Final plans are issued for bids by contractors and construction may commence. If project bids come in over budget the project design must be modified to conform to available funding.

**Brownfield Assessment and Cleanup.** Steps for identifying, developing a plan and remediating brownfield site issues occur in tandem with each phase of project design and development, depending on the conditions of the site. The brownfield process is detailed in the following Environmental Due Diligence and Remediation Section.

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### Environmental Due Diligence and Remediation

As part of the standard due diligence in preparation for a commercial real estate transaction, to avoid potential future environmental liability related to past land use, the developer should undergo “all appropriate inquiry” (AAI) as to the environmental status of the property. The Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (Phase I ESA), when performed in accordance with the current American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) standard practice (e.g., ASTM 13-1527), satisfies the AAI obligations under the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act (SBLR&BRA) amendment to the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA; 42 U.S.C. 103) and is designed to satisfy certain components required for the Innocent Landowner Defense under CERCLA. The objective of the Phase I ESA is to identify, by performing a review of relevant environmental databases, interviews with the landowner and managers, a review of historical land use documentation, and site inspection, any indications of a past or ongoing release or threat of release of hazardous or petroleum materials to the environment. As part of the Phase I ESA, it may be prudent to perform a visual inspection of the site buildings for suspected asbestos containing materials (ACM). Expected costs for a Phase I ESA for a collection of properties such as this can range between \$4,500 and \$8,000 and will typically be completed within one month to six weeks. Funding for performing a Phase I ESA is available through a competitive application process with CVRPC.

Depending on the findings of the Phase I ESA, further environmental assessment may be needed to evaluate whether any recognized environmental conditions (RECs) constitute an actual release of contaminants to the environment. If the Phase I ESA has identified RECs, the following steps should be undertaken to satisfy ongoing obligations for liability protection:

- Enroll the project in the VT DEC Brownfield Reuse Economic Liability Limitation Act (BRELLA) Program. The BRELLA Program allows for State liability relief in exchange for site cleanup. In doing so, participants have access to low interest or free loans for cleanup.
- Apply for funding for a Phase II ESA to the VT DEC Brownfield Response Program through a VT DEC Brownfield Program

Technical Assistant Grant or a Regional Planning Commission hazardous assessment grant. The timing for the application and required public comment period is one month.

- Perform the Phase II ESA to identify whether recognized environmental conditions from the Phase I ESA constitute a release of petroleum or hazardous materials to the environment.

To better to adhere to development timelines, consider collecting additional data to begin remedial cost estimation process during the Phase II ESA. For example, as spoiling of excess soils generated during the development of a site within a historic growth center will likely require management as solid wastes, characterization sampling can be performed as part of the Phase II ESA. Similarly, if volatile organic compounds are identified in site media during the Phase II ESA, pilot testing can be performed that would be sufficient for designing a vapor intrusion mitigation system for the new or existing buildings.

The expected costs for the Phase II ESA vary greatly depending on site conditions and how many RECs need to be assessed. Typically, a Phase II ESA for a moderately sized parcel or group of parcels can be expected to range between \$30,000 and \$75,000 and can require three to six months to complete if using a dynamic work strategy; slower (6-12 months) if using a traditional approach.

If a release of contamination is identified during the Phase II ESA, remediation may be necessary to achieve the redevelopment objectives for the property. If remediation is warranted, we recommend the following steps:

- Contact potential sources of funding for remedial work as soon as it is known that remediation may be necessary to inform them of the project.
- Retain a consultant to prepare Corrective Action Feasibility Investigation (CAFI) and Corrective Action Plan (CAP) remedial planning documents, as necessary. Costs for preparing these remedial planning documents are eligible under either EPA Brownfield Assessment funds or a Remediation Grant.

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To better leverage any cleanup grants or low-interest loans, remedial planning should occur thoughtfully and concurrently with site design; oftentimes, remedial installations can serve as final site improvements and are eligible expenses under these grant/loan programs. Furthermore, the consultant should engage with architects to ensure CAFI/CAP is compatible with proposed redevelopment and vice – versa. The typical costs for the CAFI/CAP can range between \$5,000 and \$12,000 depending on the severity of the contamination and will require two to four months the preparation of draft documents, regulatory review, public comment, and final documents.

Once a CAP has been finalized, the owner can apply to US EPA for a site-specific Clean-up Grant or to one of the State Revolving Loan Funds (RLF). The Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development and the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission each have active RLFs. The application to a holder of an RLF, which are received on a rolling basis, usually is turned around within one to two months subject to funds being available. Applications for US EPA Cleanup Grants are due in December of each year and are typically available to awardees within ten months of the application.

Once remedial funding is secured, remedial implementation should be staged to occur concurrently with other project demolition or construction activities. Requests for bids should include requisite contracting language as stipulated within the grant or loan guidelines.

### Action Steps

This section presents the specific steps recommended to implement this area wide plan. Each action step includes the following information:

**Timing:** This is an assessment when actions should be *initiated*. ‘Short term’ indicates the next two years (2017-2018) ‘Mid-term’ indicates initiation in three to five years (2019-2021). This acknowledges that not all action steps can be initiated at once, but can be phased in over a five-year period. Completion of each action will take longer.

**Leader:** This is the agency responsible for taking the lead on this action.

**Partners:** These are the identified public agency partners and private partners that will be involved in making decisions, funding or assisting in the implementation of the action. The partners are identified on page 86, 'Partners in Plan Implementation.'

**Funding:** Potential funding sources are identified. More information regarding funding sources, including eligibility, timing and contacts, can be found in the following section of this chapter. Most grant programs require a local match.

## 1.0 Build Partnerships

Revitalization in Northfield will be achieved through partnerships between the Town, public agencies and major private and institutional interests in Northfield. As the major employer and economic driver in Northfield, it is imperative that the Town and the university forge a strong partnership to work together on the economic revitalization of the Town. Other major interests, including Northfield Savings Bank (NSB) and possibly Cabot Hosiery may be engaged at some level in this partnership but the university is the most critical partner. This action was emphasized by the V-DAT Plan as well.

**Action 1.1: Engage Norwich University in economic development planning and strategy efforts.**

**Timing:** Short-term

**Leader:** Town of Northfield

**Partners:** Norwich University

**Funding:** N/A

**Steps:**

1. Establish a forum that meets on a regular basis for discussions between the Town and Norwich University on topics of mutual interest.

**Discussion:** A regular dialogue between the university administration and Town leadership should be established to discuss topics of mutual interest in Northfield. Over time, this partnership may evolve into a more formalized entity, with

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appointed staff or a larger committee that pursues joint ventures such as marketing, capital improvements or development projects. The Town should periodically reach out to other major interests in Northfield as well.

### 2.0 Planning and Regulatory Changes

In order to attract new economic investment in downtown properties there are some regulatory changes that are necessary to facilitate the type of development envisioned in this plan. These ideas would be explored further in the Municipal Plan update (the current municipal plan expires in 2019). We would expect these actions to follow the plan update.

**Action 2.1: Develop a Downtown Parking Assessment and Strategy**

**Timing:** Mid- term

**Leader:** Town of Northfield

**Partners:** CVRPC, ACCD

**Funding:** Municipal Planning Grant

**Steps:**

1. Apply for a Municipal Planning Grant to prepare a Downtown Parking Assessment and Strategy
2. Make any regulatory changes recommended in the parking strategy

**Discussion:** Traditional pedestrian-oriented downtown districts are organized around pools of parking where patrons park their cars once and then walk around to various destinations within the district. This works most efficiently where there are pools of municipal parking, both on-street and within lots, conveniently located in the downtown, and easily accessible by foot to core destinations. By contrast, the typical zoning requirement of on-site parking creates a more suburban auto-oriented 'strip' development pattern resulting in low-density buildings isolated by surface parking lots. That pattern of development is less conducive to pedestrian use and generally not desirable in a traditional downtown.

Many downtowns, Northfield included, have a hybrid mixture of municipal parking and private lots serving certain properties or businesses. Northfield is fortunate that on-site parking lots

have not negatively impacted the pattern of development in the Depot Square area. The requirement that developers provide on-site parking is not a policy that supports traditional, pedestrian-oriented downtown districts. At the same time, downtowns must provide parking that is convenient for its patrons in a manner that supports and fosters foot traffic. This requires planning to identify the characteristics of the parking supply and demand in a particular downtown and provide a plan for addressing parking needs and management.

Northfield should prepare a parking assessment and strategy for the downtown that:

- Identifies the utilization of existing parking in the downtown;
- Projects future parking demand using appropriate criteria including internal capture from linked walking trips between downtown businesses and the employment of acceptable parking utilization rates;
- If additional parking would be necessary to accommodate future growth, the parking study should identify possible areas for future municipal parking; and
- Provide recommendations for zoning changes and policies to manage downtown parking.

**Action 2.2: Develop Downtown Zoning Regulations that Support Desired Village Center Development Patterns**

**Timing:** Mid- term  
**Leader:** Town of Northfield  
**Partners:** CVRPC, ACCD  
**Funding:** Municipal Planning Grant  
**Steps:**

1. Apply for a Municipal Planning Grant to prepare Downtown Zoning.
2. Adopt recommended zoning changes.

**Discussion:** To attract reinvestment downtown, zoning for the downtown area should be refined to encourage higher-density, compact, mixed-use development patterns that reflect the traditional patterns of Vermont’s village centers. The downtown zoning may employ a traditional or form-based approach. Zoning that reflects the desired pattern of development should be in place to in order to reduce risk and uncertainty for potential developers.

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### **Action 2.3: Consider Incorporating Freight Yard Way into Northfield's Designated Village Center**

**Timing:** Mid- term  
**Leader:** Town of Northfield  
**Partners:** CVRPC, ACCD  
**Funding:** Municipal Planning Grant  
**Steps:**

1. Consider an Amendment to the Depot Square Designated Village Center

**Discussion:** Designated Village Centers in Vermont enjoy many benefits including assistance and priorities for funding programs that assist downtown revitalization. At the present time the Freight Yard Way area is not included within Northfield's Designated Village Center, yet it is strategically located within village center, an easy walk to the Common, and holds the opportunity to reinforce economic activity within the Depot Square area with the addition of new employees and business patrons to the area. The Town should consider an amendment to incorporate Freight Yard Way into its Designated Village Center.

### **Action 2.4: Consider a Neighborhood Development Area Designation for the Village Center Area**

**Timing:** Mid- term  
**Leader:** Town of Northfield  
**Partners:** CVRPC, ACCD  
**Funding:** Municipal Planning Grant  
**Steps:**

1. Work with CVRPC and ACCD to understand the eligibility and benefits of a Neighborhood Development Area designation for Northfield.
2. Apply for a NDA designation.

**Discussion:** The NDA designation is intended to encourage new and infill housing within walking distance of the designated Village Center. For Northfield, this designation would extend one-quarter mile from the designated village center. The benefits of this designation include exemption from Act 250 for qualified 'mixed-income' projects and certain reductions in fees. There are a number of guidelines, such as minimum densities and other design considerations that Northfield would need to adhere to for



Figure 15: Riverwalk Conceptual Section

a NDA designation. The determination of whether to pursue this designation may naturally flow from the Municipal Plan update.

### 3.0 Riverwalk

**Action 3.1: Create a Riverwalk in Downtown Northfield.**  
**Timing:** Short-term  
**Leader:** Town of Northfield  
**Partners:** CVRPC, VTrans, ACCD, DEC, USEPA Brownfields  
**Funding:** Transportation Alternatives or Bike and Pedestrian Programs (scoping, design and construction), Recreational Trails Program (construction), Ecosystem Restoration Grant (green infrastructure design and construction), Land and Water Conservation Fund (open space and recreation facilities associated with the Riverwalk), (Brownfield Assessment (assessment), Brownfield Cleanup / Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) (if necessary)

**Steps:**

1. Prepare a scoping study for a Riverwalk in the downtown.
2. Secure funding for design and construction.

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**Discussion:** The Town should work with the CVRPC to submit an application to VTrans' Bike and Pedestrian or Transportation Alternatives Program to prepare a scoping study for the downtown Riverwalk as conceptually identified in this study. The scoping study will include a public engagement process and should work with involved landowners to determine a conceptual design, alignment, cost and phasing of the Riverwalk from Freight Yard Way to Main Street. Sources of funding for design and construction should be identified in the study. The Riverwalk should include options for open space improvements, river access and connections to activities and destinations along its path. It is recommended that, in addition to engineering expertise, the design team that prepares the scoping and design plans include a landscape architect with experience in recreational paths, trails and park design.

**Action 3.2: Study future extensions of the Riverwalk to Norwich University and Northfield Falls**

**Timing:** Mid-term

**Leader:** Town of Northfield

**Partners:** CVRPC, VTrans, ACCD

**Funding:** Transportation Alternatives or Bike and Pedestrian Programs (scoping)

**Steps:**

1. Identify the alignment of future segments of the Riverwalk.

**Discussion:** The Town should confer with the CVRPC to identify whether this step may be completed as part of a separate study or incorporated into the downtown Riverwalk study at a lesser level of detail. The study should look at options to connect to Norwich University and Northfield Falls taking into consideration property ownership, important destinations, barriers, opportunities, resources and other relevant planning factors. Once the alignment of these segments are generally identified, scoping studies and funding of various phases of this project can be undertaken, as described above.

### 4.0 Streetscape Improvements

**Action 4.1 Develop Streetscape Improvements for East Street**

**Timing:** Mid-term

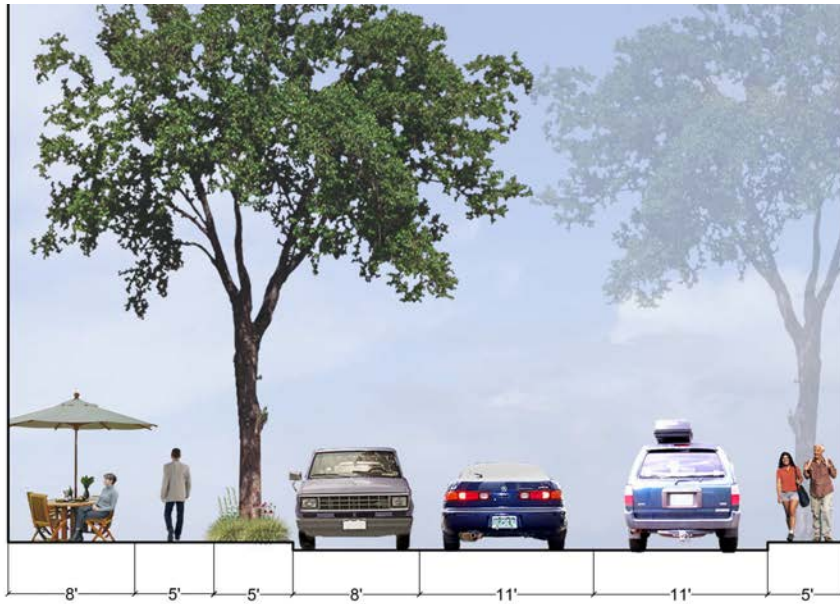


Figure 16: East St. Conceptual Section

**Leader:** Town of Northfield  
**Partners:** CVRPC, VTrans, ACCD  
**Funding:** Bicycle and Pedestrian Program or Transportation Alternatives (design and construction)

**Steps:**

1. Prepare plans for East Street Streetscape improvements.
2. Secure funding for design and construction.

**Discussion:** Conceptual plans for improvements to East Street have been developed. The conceptual design should be refined to create a more attractive pedestrian and streetscape environment. More specifically, the following modifications are recommended:

- Modification of the parking from 90 degree to parallel parking to enable a broader sidewalk on the north side of the street.
- Removal of a right turn lane at Main Street and replacement with a pedestrian curb extension
- Provision for street trees and lighting that would create a more attractive environment for pedestrian life

It is recommended that, in addition to engineering expertise, the design team that prepares the final construction documents include a landscape architect with experience in downtown streetscape design.

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*The streetscape of Main Street north of East Street is a gateway and should be improved.*

### **Action 4.2: Develop Streetscape Improvements for Main Street**

**Timing:** Mid-term

**Leader:** Town of Northfield

**Partners:** CVRPC, VTrans, ACCD

**Funding:** Bicycle and Pedestrian Program or  
Transportation Alternatives (scoping, design and  
construction)

#### **Steps:**

1. Secure funding for design and construction of streetscape improvements on Main Street from East Street to Kent Street.
2. Prepare plans for Main Street Streetscape Improvements from the bridge to East Street.
3. Secure funding for design and construction.

**Discussion:** Final design plans for Main Street have been prepared as a part of the common area improvements, however the segment of Main Street between the bridge and East Street have not been prepared. A scoping study for these improvements should be prepared and advanced for funding for final design and construction.



*Wall Street should be improved with sidewalks and street trees.*

#### **Action 4.3: Develop Streetscape Improvements for Wall Street**

**Timing:** Mid- term  
**Leader:** Town of Northfield  
**Partners:** CVRPC, VTrans, ACCD  
**Funding:** Bicycle and Pedestrian Program or Transportation Alternatives (design and construction)

#### **Steps:**

1. Prepare plans for Wall Street streetscape improvements from the bridge to the Common.
2. Secure funding for design and construction.

**Discussion:** Wall Street is an important pedestrian connection in downtown which links the common area to Freight Yard Way, the Water Street neighborhood and the future Water Street Park. It is also the location of a senior housing complex. A scoping study should be prepared for pedestrian improvements to Wall Street. It is recommended that, in addition to engineering expertise, the design team that prepares the final construction documents include a landscape architect with experience in downtown streetscape design.

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*With greater intensity of use, Freight Yard Way will need to be improved.*

### **Action 4.4: Develop Streetscape Improvements for Freight Yard Way**

**Timing:** Mid- term

**Leader:** Town of Northfield

**Partners:** CVRPC, VTrans, ACCD

**Funding:** Bicycle and Pedestrian Program or Transportation Alternatives (design and construction)

#### **Steps:**

1. Prepare plans for Freight Yard Way Streetscape Improvements.
2. Secure funding for design and construction.

**Discussion:** Freight Yard Way is currently a private street, however, if this area becomes a major hub of employment the Town may wish to incorporate this street into the municipal system. Although this may involve additional costs in terms of maintenance, if street improvements would help to attract economic development to the site, this investment may be worth the cost. This should be evaluated by the Town and may involve a cost-sharing or maintenance agreement between the Town and the property owners.

## 5.0 New Development

### Action 5.1 Explore Options for Infill Development in Depot Square and Freight Yard Way

**Timing:** Short-term to Long-term  
**Leader:** CVEDC, NCDN, Town of Northfield  
**Partners:** ACCD, CVRPC, DEC  
**Funding:** Downtown and Village Center Tax Credits, State Historic Preservation Grants, Federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credits, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Brownfield Assessment (assessment), Brownfield Cleanup / Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) (if necessary), Northfield RLF

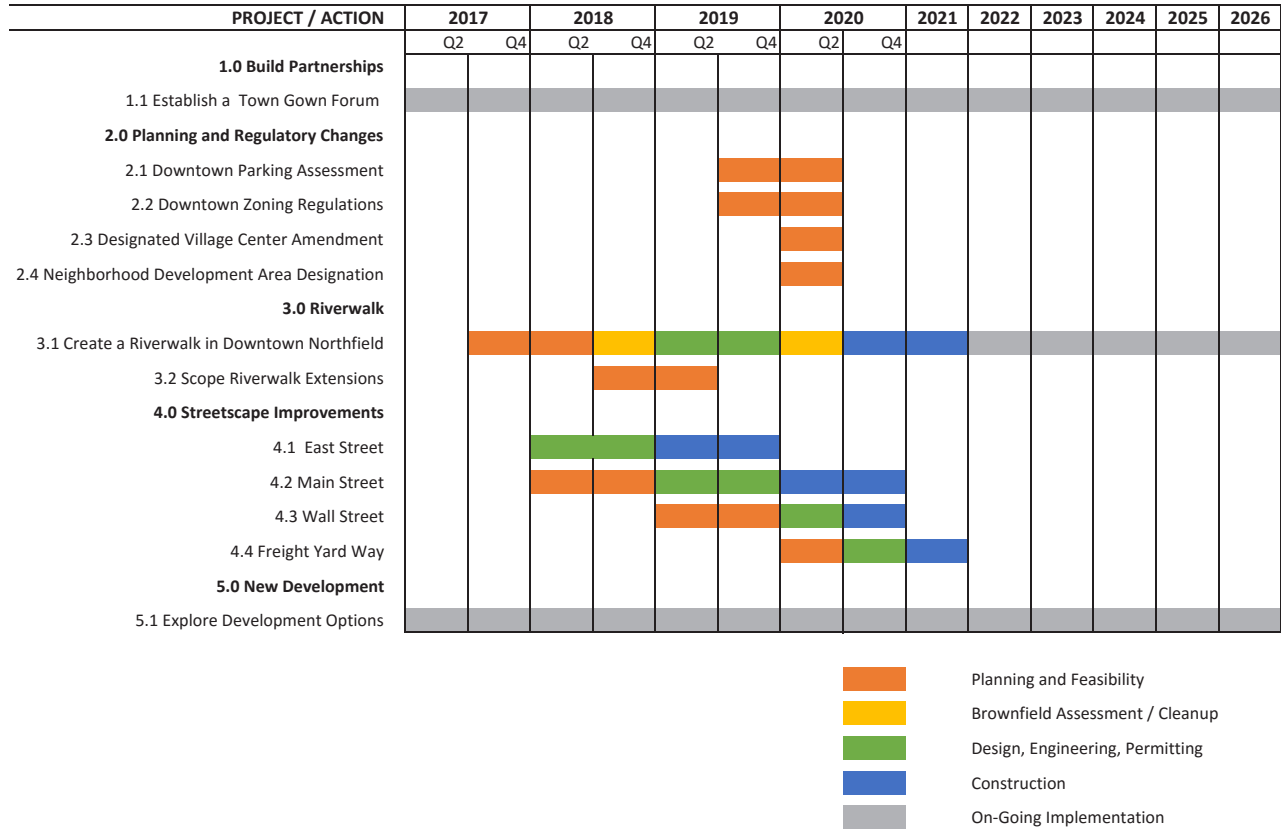
#### Steps:

1. Investigate the possibility of a co-working space in Northfield.
2. Prepare market studies if applicable.
3. Reach out to developers and landowners regarding infill development options and potential resources.
4. Consider acquisition of key properties.
5. Perform due dilligence (Phase I ESA) and enter BRELLA prior to purchase.
6. Complete ongoing obligations (Phase II ESA and site clean up) as appropriate.

**Discussion:** Redevelopment of underutilized sites will be successful through the combined efforts of the public and private sectors. Initially there may be some market work that should be undertaken, such as consideration of a co-working space, maker-space and the market for lodging. CVEDC, NCDN and the Town should act as an intermediary to reach out to developers regarding potential projects and public agencies that may be able to provide funding for capital improvements that would provide an incentive for new development, redevelopment or renovation of buildings in Northfield for new uses. There are many paths that may result in new private investment in Northfield, it is impossible to anticipate exactly how it may unfold (case studies from Barre and St. Albans can be found in Appendix B). At this point, getting regulatory tools ready, providing public improvements and establishing an entity to bring together potential partners for development is an important first step.

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Table 7: Implementation Timeline



## Timeline for Redevelopment

Table 7 provides a summary of expected implementation timelines for the actions described above. The timeline identifies timing for major phases of a project’s development, including Planning and Feasibility; Design Engineering and Permitting; Construction; and Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup, as described above. These timelines are estimated on typical project implementation paths, but may be shorter or longer depending on opportunities for funding or complications encountered along the way.

## Potential Funding Sources

### Town of Northfield Programs

The following lists tools that the Town of Northfield has available, or has potentially available, to encourage economic investment

in town. It is important for the Town to provide leadership with respect to encouraging investment in Northfield.

### **Revolving Loan Fund (RLF)**

The Town has in the past operated a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) to provide assistance to local business owners. RLFs typically provide an additional source of funding to businesses that are looking to expand or relocate to a community. This helps to support the local economy and tax base. This fund has not been active in recent years; the Town could consider activating this as an incentive to existing and potential business owners.

### **Tax Stabilization**

The Town has pursued a tax stabilization initiative which would offer property owners of commercial and multi-family properties stabilized municipal taxes for a period of time (pursuant to policies developed by the Town). Tax stabilization is intended to encourage private owners to invest in their properties and expand the Town's tax base and level of employment. Tax stabilization is applied to new investment and would not affect taxes on existing buildings or properties. A local tax stabilization program needs to be approved by two-thirds of the Town's voters. In 2016, Northfield placed a tax stabilization proposal on the ballot but it failed to get a two-thirds majority by a very narrow margin.

### **Downtown Improvement District**

A Downtown Improvement District (DID) is a potential source of funds for the downtown. A Downtown Improvement District is a geographical area within which additional tax dollars are raised and spent for the benefit of the properties and businesses located within that area. The boundaries would need to be drawn for Northfield, however, it may make sense to utilize the boundaries of Northfield's Designated Village Center. DIDs typically collect taxes from property owners within the designated district to use on improvements that will enhance the district as a whole and improve the business climate. Improvements may include streetscape improvements, special lighting or displays, maintenance, wayfinding signage, public art, etc. A proposal for a DID would need to be placed on the ballot by the Board of Selectmen and approved by the Town voters.

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### Brownfield Remediation and Cleanup

#### EPA Assessment Grants

Hazardous and Petroleum Assessment Grants are available to the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VT DEC) and either municipal or regional planning organizations/commissions through an application process from the US EPA Region I Brownfield Program. As of September 1, 2016 there are six regional planning commissions that hold active Brownfield Assessment Grants, including CVRPC. Assessment Grants provide funds for site assessment to discern the presence, degree, nature and extent of contamination at sites and to perform remedial planning, as necessary. As part of the grant co-operative agreement, each grantee will form a Brownfield Steering Committee that review applications from interested property owners on a rolling enrollment basis. Specific Targeted Brownfield Assessment grants are also available directly from US EPA to assess individual properties that may require a higher level of assessment.

Range: Up to \$200,000 per parcel  
Deadline: Open for sub-grantees. RPC Applications for grant cycle begins each fall with a due date for applications in mid-December. Awards typically are announced around June 1st.  
Contact: Patricia Coppolino, Program Manager  
VT DEC Brownfield Response Program  
Email: patricia.coppolino@state.vt.us  
Contact: Gail Aloisio, Planner  
CVRPC  
Email: aloisio@cvregion.com  
Website: <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/epa-targeted-brownfields-assessment-program-brownfields-and-land-revitalization-new>  
VT DEC:  
<http://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/contaminated-sites/brownfields>  
CVRPC:  
<http://centralvtplanning.org/programs/brownfields/>

#### US EPA Revolving Loan Fund Program

Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) grants enable states or political subdivisions (counties or regional commissions) to make low

interest loans to carryout cleanup activities at brownfield properties. RLF funds are provided as low interest loans to private entities with access or control of a brownfield or as a sub grant to state, municipal or nonprofit landowners. RLF sub-grants are available up to \$200,000 per site and require a 20% match in money spent, labor, materials, or services for eligible costs. A select property can receive multiple RLF sub-grants from different RLFs. RLFs can also be paired with cleanup grants (also available up to \$200,000). The recipient may request a waiver on the cost share based on hardship. Vermont currently has four active RLFs: ACCD, Windham Regional Commission, Northwest Regional Planning Commission, and Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission.

Range: Up to \$1,000,000 per parcel  
 Deadline: Open for sub-grantees.  
 Contact: Brett Long  
 Agency of Commerce and Community Development  
 Email: [brett.long@vermont.gov](mailto:brett.long@vermont.gov)  
 Website: <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/types-brownfields-grant-funding#tab-2>

### Cleanup Grants

Cleanup grants provide funding for a grant recipient to carry out cleanup activities at brownfield sites. An eligible entity may apply for up to \$200,000 per parcel. Due to budget limitations, no entity can apply for funding cleanup activities at more than three sites. These funds may be used to address sites contaminated by petroleum and hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants (including hazardous substances co-mingled with petroleum). Cleanup grants require a 20 percent cost share, which may be in the form of contribution of money, labor, materials, or services, and must be for eligible and allowable costs (the match must equal 20 percent of the amount of funding provided by EPA and cannot include administrative costs). A cleanup grant applicant may request a waiver of the 20 percent cost share requirement based on hardship. An applicant must own the site for which it is requesting funding at time of application. The performance period for these grants is three years.

Range: Grants are capped at \$200,000 per parcel  
 Eligibility: Municipalities, non-profit organizations and private developers

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Deadline: Mid-January  
Contact: Frank Gardner  
Email: [gardner.frank@epa.gov](mailto:gardner.frank@epa.gov)  
Website: <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/types-brownfields-grant-funding>

### **Brownfield Revitalization Fund Loan Program**

Loans for remediation of brownfield sites. The funds are made available to Vermont by the EPA and eligible applicants can be private developers, non-profits, and municipalities. Funds are primarily to be used for cleanup, however they can be used to perform site assessment or characterization.

Range: Loans are capped at \$200,000  
Eligibility: Municipalities, non-profit organizations and private developers.  
Deadline: Rolling  
Contact: Brett Long  
Email: [brett.long@vermont.gov](mailto:brett.long@vermont.gov)  
Website: [http://www.accd.vermont.gov/business/relocate\\_expand/capital/brownfields](http://www.accd.vermont.gov/business/relocate_expand/capital/brownfields)  
<http://www.veda.org/financing-options/other-financing-option/brownfields-revitalization-fund/>

### **Economic Development**

#### **Downtown and Village Center Tax Credit Program**

State investment tax credit for qualified historic rehabilitation, façade, code and technology upgrades for properties constructed before 1983 located within a Designated Downtown or Village Center.

Range: 10 – 50% of eligible expenditures  
Eligibility: Properties within Designated Downtown of Village Center  
Deadline: Annually in July  
Contact: Caitlin Corkins  
Email: [caitlin.corkins@vermont.gov](mailto:caitlin.corkins@vermont.gov)  
Website: [http://accd.vermont.gov/strong\\_communities/opportunities/funding/downtown\\_village\\_tax\\_credit](http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/opportunities/funding/downtown_village_tax_credit)

### Community Development Block Grant Program – Planning Grants

Federal grants for community development planning, downtown planning studies, project development planning for individual buildings. Projects must potentially benefit people with low to moderate incomes and/or eliminate slums and blight.

**Range:** \$3,000 minimum – \$30,000 or \$40,000 maximum; \$30,000 maximum for single municipality planning grants; \$40,000 maximum allowed for regional applications. A 25% match of cash or cash-in-kind goods or services is required for all Planning Grants.

**Eligibility:** Municipalities for eligible municipal projects and/or may apply on behalf of organizations and private owners for projects with community benefit.

**Deadlines:** Open application with funding decisions made throughout the year

**Contact:** Department of Economic, Housing & Community Development

**E-mail:** [josh.hanford@vermont.gov](mailto:josh.hanford@vermont.gov)

**Website:** <http://www.accd.vermont.gov>

### Community Development Block Grant Program – Implementation Grants

Federal grants for projects that involve economic development, housing, public facilities, and public services that will have direct benefit for persons of low and moderate income, eliminate slums or blight, or address an urgent need. Projects supporting normal municipal functions are not eligible. Projects in municipal facilities are eligible if they meet the benefit requirement.

**Range:** \$50,000 minimum - \$300,000 or \$1,000,000 maximum \$300,000 maximum for community public facility projects (i.e. community centers, senior centers, day care centers, etc.) and public services projects.

**Eligibility:** Municipalities for eligible municipal projects and/or may apply on behalf of organizations and private owners for projects with community benefit.

## 5 IMPLEMENTATION

Deadlines: Open application with funding decisions made throughout the year  
Contact: Department of Economic, Housing & Community Development  
E-mail: [josh.hanford@vermont.gov](mailto:josh.hanford@vermont.gov)  
Website: <http://www.accd.vermont.gov>

### **Federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit Program**

Federal investment tax credit for 20% of the rehabilitation costs (including labor, materials and architects or other consultant fees) for income-producing buildings listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Range: 20% of eligible expenditures  
Eligibility: Owners of income-producing historic buildings  
Deadline: Rolling application deadline; file application before construction  
Contact: Caitlin Corkins  
Email: [caitlin.corkins@vermont.gov](mailto:caitlin.corkins@vermont.gov)  
Website: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm>

### **State Historic Preservation Grants**

State 50:50 matching grants for the repair and restoration of historic buildings listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in Vermont.

Range: \$1,000 - \$20,000  
Eligibility: Municipalities and non-profit organizations  
Deadline: Annually in October  
Contact: Caitlin Corkins  
Email: [caitlin.corkins@vermont.gov](mailto:caitlin.corkins@vermont.gov)  
Website: [http://www.accd.vermont.gov/strong\\_communities/preservation/grants/historic\\_preservation](http://www.accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/preservation/grants/historic_preservation)

## Transportation Infrastructure

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Grants**

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Program is administered by VTTrans and provides funding for scoping, design and construction of bicycle

and pedestrian facilities, including sidewalks, improved pedestrian crossings, lighting, shared use paths, etc.

Range:	No minimum or maximum cost. Local match of 50% for scoping and 20% for construction is required.
Eligibility:	Municipalities, RPCs, schools districts, transit agencies
Deadline:	Annually in July
Contact:	Jon Kaplan
Email:	<a href="mailto:jon.kaplan@vermont.gov">jon.kaplan@vermont.gov</a>
Website:	<a href="http://vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/local-projects/bike-ped">http://vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/local-projects/bike-ped</a>

### Transportation Alternatives Program

The TAP provides grant funding for scoping, design and construction of on and off-road facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists and other non-motorized forms of transportation, including sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian and bicycle signals, lighting and other safety and accessibility related infrastructure, environmental remediation related to transportation, community improvement related to transportation, Safe Routes to School programs.

Range:	Up to \$300,000
Eligibility:	Municipalities, RPCs, school districts
Deadline:	Annually in October
Contact:	Scott Robertson
Email:	<a href="mailto:scott.robertson@vermont.gov">scott.robertson@vermont.gov</a>
Website:	<a href="http://vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/local-projects/transport-alt">http://vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/local-projects/transport-alt</a>

### Conservation, Recreation and Cultural Improvements

#### Ecosystem Restoration Grant Program

These grants are enabled under Vermont's Clean Water Initiative and fund scoping, planning, feasibility and design, project implementation, and river corridor easements. Projects that are identified in previous scoping projects, Tactical Basin Plans, associated river corridor plans or stormwater master plans and employ green infrastructure are favored.

## 5 IMPLEMENTATION

Range: Up to \$400,000 (FY 2017)  
Eligibility: Municipalities, regional organizations, non-profits, state agencies  
Deadline: Annually in October  
Contact: David Pasco  
Email: david.pasco@vermont.gov  
Website: <http://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/cwi/grants>

### Land and Water Conservation Fund

LWC funds are administered by the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) for the acquisition of land for parks and public outdoor recreation, or development of new facilities and/or renovation of existing facilities for outdoor recreation.

Range: Not specified. A 50% local match is required  
Eligibility: Municipalities and state agencies  
Deadline: Pre-Application in October; Full application in December  
Contact: Jessica Savage  
Email: jessica.savage@vermont.gov  
Website: <http://fpr.vermont.gov/recreation/grants/lwcf>

### Recreational Trails Program Grants

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a federally funded program of the Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), administered at the State level to help states develop and maintain recreational trails, trail-related facilities and trailheads. Both motorized and non-motorized trail projects may qualify for RTP funds.

Range: up to \$50,000  
Eligibility: Municipalities, other governmental entities, and non-profit organizations  
Deadline: Pre-applications are due December 1; Full applications due February 1  
Contact: Sherry Smecker Winnie, Vermont Forests, Park and Recreation  
Email: sherry.winnie@vermont.gov  
Website: <http://fpr.vermont.gov/recreation/grants/rtp>

### Community Facility Loans and Grants

Federal USDA Rural Development loans and grants to assist rural communities develop or improve essential community facilities, including theaters, community centers, museums, libraries, adult and childcare centers, and municipal buildings. Funds may be used for acquisition, construction or improvements to buildings and equipment.

- Range: Grants up to \$50,000 or 75% of the project cost, whichever is less. Grant applicants must show financial need. A larger than 25 percent match for grants may be required based on the applicant's service area population and income level (see list on website). Loans have no \$ limit and 100% financing can be provided. Interest rates are long term and fixed rates based on municipal bond rates.
- Eligibility: Non-profit corporations and public bodies serving communities of less than 20,000 population (see list on website).
- Deadlines: Ongoing, but contact appropriate Rural Development office early in project development.
- Contact: USDA Rural Development
- Website: [http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/HAD-CF\\_Grants.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/HAD-CF_Grants.html).

### Cultural Facilities Grant Program

The cultural facilities grant program is administered by the Vermont Arts Council in conjunction with the Vermont Historical Society, and the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. The purpose of the program is to enhance or expand the capacity of an existing building to provide cultural programming. The program awards grants on a competitive basis to nonprofit organizations and municipalities to make improvements to community facilities that provide cultural activities for the public.

- Range: \$1,000 - \$30,000 and require a 1:1 match. The matching funds must be either cash, or 50% cash and 50% in-kind.
- Contact: Sonia Rae, Artist and Community Services Manager, Vermont Arts Council
- Email: [srae@vermontartscouncil.org](mailto:srae@vermontartscouncil.org)
- Website: <http://www.vermontartscouncil.org>

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# APPENDIX

# A

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**Northfield AWP  
Northfield Night on the Common  
Compilation of Public Comments  
July 19, 2016**

**Comments**

- How do we implement this?
- Recreation Theme: Bike path connect parks and to pool?
- Funding options: Taxpayer impact
- Grant opportunities?
- Would the hotel include convention space?
- We need to identify what can be implemented in the short term.
- Water Street Park questions
- Could there be an AMTRAK stop here?

**Other plan comments:**

- Maybe the hotel could go in the Gray Building?
- We like to walk everywhere – the downtown needs more attractions
- Likes the Riverwalk – lives in Water Street neighborhood and works at Norwich – would like to walk, but no direct walking route
- How soon can you build the Riverwalk? We need more places to walk!

**Map Comments:**

- Remove point in river for flood protection (+3)
- Freight Yard Way needs to be wide enough for tractor trailer trucks
- Freight Yard Way needs a turnaround for trucks
- Eliminate Napa Auto Parts building for street?
- Close connection through car wash parking lot

**I would like to see \_\_\_\_\_ downtown:**

- Market Rate Housing
- Restaurants
- Grocery Store
- Bike Racks
- Music Venue (+2)
- Book and Gift Shop

- Skate Park
- Tree and other plantings – more green!
- Taxi Service
- More handicap accessibility!
- Bike walking path
- Dog Park
- Transportation hub
- Community gathering areas
- ART!
- Develop swimming hole
- Walking and/or bike path access

## Comment Cards

“We need a large supermarket.

We need more restaurants. We need the restaurants to advertise deals (RCT. Com restaurant.com). If the food is good people will come back and tell others. A CICI’s all you can eat pizza, salad, soup, drinks, etc.”

- “
- small grocery store w/produce similar to Falls General Store
  - Make north side of Common 2-way and turn Wall Street into grass to connect to Church property
  - Sidewalks to west side of river
  - Improved sidewalks on all village streets”

“Riverwalk looks great. Perhaps an interim use for #4 mixed-use could be open space or playfield instead of housing.”

“Looks like a great plan! Love the idea of using the space by the river more!”

“I would love for Northfield to have more community space and for it to be more pedestrian-friendly. More decent housing would be good too.”

“There is a 2-year waiting period to move into senior housing in Northfield. Let’s add housing for seniors.”

“Interesting idea – lodging downtown! Enhanced use of NSB building”

- “
- Path along the river for walks and biking
  - Natural playground on Water Street
  - More shops on Depot Square that are more inviting
  - New design for Common with more space and grass “

# APPENDIX

# B

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## Overview

Things are looking up in the Granite City. Since 2011, almost \$20M in public investment in the downtown spurred \$45M in private investment that has brought 24 new businesses, reduced vacancy rates by 8%, increased commercial rental rates by \$6-10 dollars a square foot and attracted over 350 jobs. This investment also includes major streetscape and public infrastructure improvements, construction of City Place, a new State office building with commercial/retail spaces on the ground floor, and rehabilitation of several prominent downtown blocks with the help of federal and state tax credits. Support from multiple state agencies including the State Designation Programs administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Agency of Transportation have been an important source of funding, helping to leverage other public and private money to make this renaissance possible.

## The Challenge

After multiple years of economic decline in downtown Barre, the City was struggling with empty store fronts, low commercial rents and declining property values. Turning things around took time and didn't come without challenges. The City had spent a decade investing heavily in the creative/tourist economy without results. According to Mike Miller, the City's former Director of Planning, "We needed to better understand our strengths and weaknesses. Barre is never going to be Stowe, but what Barre has is plenty of water and sewer capacity, industrial activity, highway access, and a great stock of historic buildings with affordable rental office space." With those things in mind, a group of municipal officials and stakeholders identified three major goals to help jump-start revitalization: bring 500 new workers to Barre over five years by improving the city's image with investments in public infrastructure and marketing; recruit businesses and services to meet the needs of local residents; and modernize Barre's existing industrial assets to attract entrepreneurs and new start-up businesses.

## The Solution

A Designated Downtown since 2000, Barre took advantage of a number of grant and tax incentive programs that give priority to projects in communities within the State Designation Program. Work began with updates to the City's municipal plan and zoning bylaws and the creation of Downtown Conceptual Plan – all supported by the State's Municipal Planning Grants. The next step was finding funding to implement the plan and make the infrastructure improvements that support economic development. A combination of \$140,000 in Downtown Transportation Grants and over \$15M in federal funding administered through the Agency of Transportation supported Barre's "Big Dig" – a multi-year effort to revitalize Main Street and City Hall Park. Finally, the City was able to relocate 200 state employees to a new office building in the heart of downtown. "Technical support through the State's Designation Program helped us plan projects, identify funding sources and leverage public investment," said Steve MacKenzie, Barre's City Manager. "We continue get great support from the Agency of Commerce including initiatives like the Vermont Downtown Action Team that helped us develop a downtown master plan and re-brand and market the community in the wake of the 2011 floods. This year, the City is working to make a number of changes to protect our infrastructure investments, economy and business from future floods with the help of the Vermont Economic Resiliency Initiative."

## The Result

In just the past five years, the resume of accomplishments in Barre is impressive, including:

- Completion of the "Big Dig" which included the replacement of 100-year old water and sewer lines, plus sidewalk and lighting improvements and new paving, parking and signage. This effort was supported by a combination of federal, state and local funds.
- Construction of "City Place" a new 80,000 square foot building in the heart of downtown with state office space as well as ground floor commercial space for a new restaurant and commercial tenants.
- Secure state and federal tax credits to rehabilitate a dozen historic buildings on Barre's Main Street, including the 1904 Blanchard Block, which now houses 48,000 of mixed retail and office space, and the Aldrich Block, in danger of demolition following a fire in 2010, now home of the celebrated Cornerstone Restaurant.

Barre isn't content to rest after these successes and has set its sights on the 2015 makeover of "Enterprise Alley." The project will use a variety of public and private funding sources to remediate a brownfield site and transform a poorly configured parking with inadequate drainage into a pedestrian-friendly public space with new parking, storm water controls, sidewalks and landscaping; ADA accessible entrances to Merchants Row shops; a public plaza at the city's historic train depot and a long-planned bike path along the Stephens Branch of the Winooski River.





## 2011-2014

4 State Downtown Transportation Fund Grants  
\$270,000

12 State Downtown Tax Credit Projects  
\$793,895

4 State Municipal Planning Grants  
\$55,334

Vermont Agency of Transportation Grants  
\$15 million

Public and Private Investment Since 2011  
\$65 million

## Funding Toolbox

### Downtown Transportation Grants

The Downtown Transportation Fund (DTF) annually grants approximately \$350,000 to help municipalities make a variety of transportation-related capital improvements within or serving state designated downtown districts and supporting economic development. The maximum annual grant is \$100,000. Projects may include, but are not limited to streetscape improvements, electric vehicle charging stations, parking facilities, rail or bus facilities, utility relocation, way-finding signage, street lighting and ADA access improvements.

### Downtown and Village Center Tax Credits

In 2015, \$2,200,000 in state income tax credits are available to projects that enhance the historic character and improve building safety of older and historic commercial buildings located in Designated Downtowns or Village Centers. The credits support general rehabilitation work, code compliance work, data and network wiring, and exterior improvements, and may be combined with the federal program. Past projects range from small retail, office, and rental apartment rehabilitations to multi-million dollar redevelopments.

### Municipal Planning Grants

Awarded annually and administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Municipal Planning Grant Program works to strengthen Vermont by funding local planning initiatives that support statewide planning goals. Grants of up to \$20,000 are available for a wide range of municipal planning projects such as bylaw updates, planning for downtowns, village centers and neighborhoods and municipal plans.

### Tax Increment Financing

A Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District is established by a municipality (with State approval) around an area that requires public infrastructure to encourage public and private property development or redevelopment. Once a TIF District is established, the municipality seeks voter approval to incur debt to build public infrastructure. The public infrastructure improvements cause real property development and redevelopment to occur, and, for a limited time, a percentage of the incremental municipal and education property tax revenue generated by the new development and redevelopment may be retained to pay the infrastructure debt, with the revenue from the original value and the balance of the increment going to the taxing entities (municipality and state). Currently, statute prohibits the creation of any further TIF Districts.

### Vermont Agency of Transportation Funding

Vermont receives federal funding for roadways that are on the federal-aid road system from the Federal Highway Administration. All federal highway funds are received on a reimbursable basis. This means that project sponsors must pay for the project and be reimbursed by FHWA when the work is done. Vermont receives federal highway formula funding that is distributed to all states based on a formula. Federal Aid highway funds are authorized by Congress to assist the State in providing for construction, reconstruction, and improvement of highways and bridges on eligible Federal Aid highway routes and for other special purpose programs and projects.



### Overview

The City of St. Albans is flourishing, welcoming nearly 50 new businesses and 300 workers – including 140 state employees – to its historic downtown and commercial center over the past five years. This robust revitalization is no accident: businesses, property owners and municipal officials have worked together with the state to take advantage of tax incentives, grants and planning assistance through the State Designation Programs, administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development, and support for transportation planning and implementation with grants administered through the Vermont Agency of Transportation. As the City continues to move forward, the example of its recent accomplishments offers a roadmap that communities statewide can follow.

### The Challenge

The success in St. Albans took time and didn't come without challenges. As with revitalization in any community, finding money to support infrastructure improvements and economic development was, for many years, an obstacle. Another challenge was determining what projects to tackle, where to invest and how best to leverage limited financial resources. "Without a plan that focused on goals supported by the community we could never have gotten the support to tackle the big projects" says Chip Sawyer, St. Albans Director of Planning and Development.

### The Solution

A critical first step was a community visioning process to support their downtown which received State Designation in 2004. This step was funded in part by two State Municipal Planning Grants (MPGs) – the initial \$10,500 grant was followed by a second of \$15,000 to create a Downtown Master Plan in 2009. With State Designation and a blueprint forward, the door opened to a number of funding sources that helped leverage taxpayer dollars and spurred private investment. Approval for a state Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District in 2012 provided yet another source of funds. "Downtown Designation and support from the State, both technical and financial, were key to getting several of these projects out of the planning pages and into reality," says Sawyer.

For more information, please contact:

Caitlin Corkins: [caitlin.corkins@vermont.gov](mailto:caitlin.corkins@vermont.gov) or 802.828.3047  
or visit: <http://accd.vermont.gov/historic-preservation/funding/tax-credits>



### The Result

With a vision that city residents and city leadership could get behind, successful private/public partnerships and strategic use of public funds and taxpayer dollars, the list of recent public infrastructure and community development projects in St. Albans is impressive. These include:

- An ambitious three-year streetscape improvement project funded with the help of more than \$250,000 in state Downtown Transportation Funds and a number of grants funded through and administered by the Vermont Agency of Transportation. These included two federal TIGER grants – one for design and one for construction, Transportation Enhancement Program funds, Transportation Community and System Preservation Program funds and federal earmark funds totaling about \$2.5 million. The streetscape project included new traffic signals, sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, drainage, storm water treatment, paving, and signage.
- State tax credit projects, totaling \$1.1 million which sparked over \$7.5 million in private investment, including, the former Fishman's Department Store, the former Napoli Variety Building, and the historic St. Albans House a former hotel that had been empty for over 15 years before its recent rehabilitation.
- \$14 Million in TIF bonds to finance construction of a new parking garage, redevelopment of a brownfield site for a new downtown hardware store and construction of a new State Office Building.

The decade-long effort to revitalize St. Albans was recently capped by the announcement of a new 88-room downtown hotel to be completed in 2017. Also currently under construction and planned for the near future are additional streetscape enhancements along Main and Lake Streets to be funded with \$300,000 of Transportation Alternative Program funds and \$300,000 of Transportation Community and System Preservation Program funds. All this proves St. Albans is not resting on their past success, but continuing to create a vibrant community with a diverse economic base.

### By the Numbers [2008 - 2017]

# \$3.1

million awarded in  
VTrans federal funding

# \$103k

awarded in  
reallocated sales taxes

# 9

tax credit projects

# \$125k

awarded in HUD  
Community Development  
Block Grants and Loans

# \$11

million in new  
construction

# \$40

million in private  
investment

# \$125k

awarded in ANR  
Grant

# \$14

million in TIF and local  
bonds

# \$1.1

million awarded in tax credits

For more information, please contact:

Caitlin Corkins: [caitlin.corkins@vermont.gov](mailto:caitlin.corkins@vermont.gov) or 802.828.3047  
or visit: <http://accd.vermont.gov/historic-preservation/funding/tax-credits>

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