

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The community design charrette brought together many ideas and people; it was a day of brainstorming possible solutions to community concerns about the vitality and future of Middlesex. The charrette designs presented here are a culmination of the day's discussions and not necessarily the final analysis on any one recommendation. While much was gained from the available expertise and knowledge follow-through in terms of design, planning, engineering, economic feasibility studies, etc. come next.

Continued representation from Middlesex citizens and village and board members, and support for their leadership, is critical. Finding a means of providing a person to coordinate and implement the tasks is useful to move these efforts forward in a timely manner. A recommendation voiced by several citizen participants at the charrette was the hiring of a part time town planner and possible grant writer to help move these proposed directions forward. Subdividing the work into smaller task forces is an alternative to one large oversight committee, but takes more coordination. Alternatively the Planning and/or Conservation Commissions may take up some of the specific follow-through tasks.

How to proceed? There is an array of grants to be applied for from the Agency of Transportation, the Dept. Housing and Community Affairs, Preservation Trust of Vermont, etc. Middlesex has a multitude of assets to support itself—from its community pride and rich history to its natural resources and geographic location. Tapping into these resources can bring community enhancement that strengthens the center of the village and economic redevelopment in tune with local values and social capacity.

The following is an outline set of NEXT STEPS developed from each teams recommendations:

VILLAGE CORE

1. Town to develop a master plan for the Morse property that shows the trails, benches, bike racks and eventual pedestrian bridge to the island in the river.
2. Town to apply for an enhancement grant to engineer, fund, and install sidewalks. This may want to be part of the Morse Property master plan project.
3. Town to hire a design consultant to work on the municipal building needs, i.e., create a master plan for the complex of activities—from community center on most northern part of Morse property/ next to Town Hall to extension ideas for the firehouse.
4. Village Committee to seek historic preservation advice on the historic buildings along Main Street including development scenarios for a mixed-use residential/commercial development in railroad area from Historic Preservation dept. at UVM. Specifically look at the use of the depot as additional village uses—office, library, or coffee shop with outdoor plaza or gathering space potential.

5. Planning Commission to develop an overall concept for access improvement to Gallagher Street and a long-range development plan for this area.
6. Planning Commission to look at zoning which allows the subdivision of existing larger lots in the village; the intension is to allow for infill of residential development.
7. Village committee to pursue interest in converting the existing Camp Meade lodge to a tavern/restaurant and in developing a gathering spot for a coffee shop. Williston opened a coffee shop in the historic village which was run by the community for several years.

GATEWAYS AND CIRCULATION

1. Town to develop a logo and signage for Middlesex and install a “welcome” sign at each end of the village.
2. Planning Commission to oversee a design and engineering study for on-street parking, tree and landscaping plan, traffic calming (including potential neck-down of the Church St. intersection), use of curb extensions or bump-outs, a crosswalk program, and mitigation of visibility concerns.
3. Planning Commission to oversee a design and engineering study for the three-way intersection across from the Village Country Store. This would include looking into a three-way stop at the intersection and research into the use of a roundabout in this location, the use of narrowing road widths to decrease traffic velocity, and the addition of cross-walk access to the Village Store.
4. Planning Commission to oversee a design and engineering study for enhancements to the new bridge. This would include the design and needs assessment for installing decorative and functional light fixtures at each end of the bridge, adding sidewalks as an extension of curb, and adding a bike path or lane across the bridge.

INTERSTATE INTERCHANGE TEAM

1. Planning Commission to define what is meant by industrial/commercial development, that is, with no emphasis on commercial in a retail sense and develop a set of separate identities for this zone that do not compete with mixed-use development in the village core.
2. Town to partner with the landowners to hire a design and planning consultant who can identify: 1) the capacity of the land for on-site sewer and water and/or the use living machine technology for treating sewage disposal, and 2) the market potential for senior housing, rural residential and mix of home businesses, commercial condominiums, rural small-scale hi-tech industrial, hi-tech/low-tech eco-businesses, etc.
3. Partnership to develop design guidelines for the Atwood and Colby properties. These guidelines for development might include a demonstration build-out of the properties, and/or the following criteria:

Overall site design:

- ?? Design with the lay of the land for roads, building footprints, water run-off, etc.
- ?? Identify safe and logical curb cuts for property accesses
- ?? Identify the difference (environmental and economic) build-out potentials between of Rural Residential and vs. Mixed-Use zoning
- ?? Use the allowable rural residential number of homes as a measure for what is doable on this property, with an increase allowed for clustering and smaller footprint houses

For building development:

- ?? Use a mix of densities and building sizes that work with the lay of the land—views, topography, vegetation, etc.
- ?? Allow variable set-backs to make the Atwood parcel on the west side usable as an industrial/commercial building site
- ?? Create a viable relationship between residential, industrial, commercial, and home-businesses, develop footprints for the building sites
- ?? Use passive solar orientation and earth-berming for mitigating heat-loads and environmentally-sensitive materials for construction
- ?? Use constructed wetlands for storm-water mitigation, use graywater for irrigation

Prepare an economic feasibility study that also markets the property:

- ?? Develop a high-tech/low-tech strategy for attracting a mix of business and residential development, including home-businesses, and link-ups with Verizon
- ?? Look into wind power generation as part of the economic development of the site
- ?? Determine the mix and sizes of business, light industrial and home businesses, etc., Identify building sizes, e.g., maximum footprint 7,000 – 10,000 sq. ft. buildings
- ?? Can the residential development component of this development strategy meet the expected population growth of Middlesex
- ?? Can the transfer of development rights from these properties and the Conservation zone be used to support the rural areas and promote the village properties, specifically around the RR depot and redevelopment of Gallagher Street?