



Village Visualization

Project Summary

June 2013

Purpose

The overall purpose of this project was to develop a coherent physical plan for the village growth area. Specifically, this project created maps and 3D visualizations (e.g., SketchUp renderings of buildings, streetscapes, green spaces, etc.) to depict potential build out according to the Town's land use standards, landowner plans, and market realities. The work was completed by planning consultants working with the Village Steering Committee and the Hinesburg Planning and Zoning Department, with guidance and input by community members, involved landowners, and developers. The results of the project will be used to continue to engage the community and garner public feedback. The project will help the community design and guide future development – e.g., zoning revisions, refinement of the Official Map, greater clarity of vision in the development review process, etc. The project data and visuals will also bolster future economic development forecasting in support of a planned Growth Center Designation application.

Deliverables

- 5-minute video depicting the build out.
- 34-page booklet including maps, concept sketches, build out data, still images of build out model.
- 13-page document showing still images of the build out model.
- Project Summary.
- Stakeholder meetings and community forum/presentation.

Timeframe

Start: 5/2012; End: 5/2013

- Meetings with Village Steering Committee – Summer 2012
- Stakeholder meetings (landowners, developers, interest groups) – Fall 2012
- Creation of maps, plans, and visualization – Winter 2012-2013
- Public Forum Presentation – February 11, 2013
- Final deliverables – May 2013

Budget

\$18,500 (State funds = \$15,000; Town funds = \$3,500)

This project was funded in part by a Municipal Planning Grant, awarded by the Department of Economic, Housing and Community Development.

Next Steps

1. Post final deliverables on Town website.
2. Garner additional community feedback – possibly including an online survey.

3. Continued outreach to landowners and developers to share community vision.
4. Consider regulatory changes to better implement community vision.
5. Pursue Growth Center Designation – funds secured, project to begin in June/July 2013.

Overview & Conclusions

Through this project, the Hinesburg Village Steering Committee (VSC) and the Hinesburg Planning & Zoning Department, together with the planning firm of T.J. Boyle Associates, have prepared a visualization study for a portion of the Village Growth Area. This work was based on the vision outlined in Hinesburg's Town Plan and the land use regulations used by the Town to implement that vision. The study was also informed by direct meetings with key stakeholders (landowners, developers, interest groups) as well as the community at large, primarily via a public presentation and forum on February 11, 2013. At the February 2013 community forum, the team presented a first draft of that visualization study before an audience of Hinesburg citizens. The opinions of those attending, while mixed in certain ways, did indicate a strong interest in the town playing a more pro-active role in the gradual development of these new and expanded portions of the Village.

A little bit of history might be helpful to this description as well. In 2009, after several years of work by the Planning Commission, other Town boards, and interested citizens, the Selectboard approved a substantial expansion to Hinesburg's Village Growth Area, and as such, modified the zoning and types of growth that would be permitted in new and expanded districts. In addition to expanding the core Village Zoning District and refining related Commercial and Industrial districts, the following new/expansion districts were added: Village Northwest, Village Northeast, Residential 1, and Residential 2.

Enabling this expansion of the core village area was seen as essential to the planned growth of Hinesburg in a compact manner, thereby permitting growth within a serviceable and walkable area between the CVU High School and the Hinesburg Community School. It was generally decided, that if Hinesburg's Village area was to grow, it should grow in a compact and diverse manner rather than suffer the strip development plague so common to many neighboring communities closer to Burlington.

The 2009 zoning revisions permit more dense growth in these expanded areas, and the intent of the visualization study was to graphically represent how such growth might take place over the next several decades. The images presented in this project are intended to begin the active planning of this growth process. It is hoped that by developing a workable and overall plan development will occur in a more predictable manner. Defining a clear vision for the development community will hopefully result in the kind of Village growth for which all citizens of Hinesburg can be proud.

Now a little disclaimer ... this visualization effort only depicts possible growth patterns in one of the expanded Village Districts, namely the Village Northwest District. As with all planning efforts, much work remains as many individuals, landowners and prospective developers should have further input into the form and character of this district. With that said though, the VSC believes that the visualization study provides an important step forward, and is based on a

series of good principals - principals that will help guide growth in this district for decades to come. Those principals are represented in the study and they are further elucidated below:

1. **A PLAN THAT WORKS FOR ALL.** A visualization plan for the expanded village that works for our community, for landowners and developers, and for those who will come to live, work and play here.
2. **DENSITY in the Village NW district.** The visualization model shows the maximum density permitted by the current zoning regulations in this district. This is both informative and perhaps the basis for making adjustments to better reflect what the community appreciates or finds objectionable.
3. **Grading or DECREASING THE DENSITY from east to west** is another design premise that seems advantageous to this district. Similarly the concept of **ENCOURAGING A MIX OF USES** alongside Route 116 which would transform to solely residential in the western areas of the district likewise seems desirable. The VSC believes that grading use and density away from the major roads (Route 116 and Shelburne Falls Road) is appropriate and a good premise for future development.
4. **OPEN SPACE.** The VSC believes that useful open space is beneficial to living and working in the Village area. Open space provides useful areas of recreation, places for repose thereby permitting greater density on other parts of the site. The plan currently shows significant open spaces along 116 and an east to west open space that connects to the planned recreation fields on the west edge of the expanded district. These open spaces can also ameliorate storm water and run off using natural methods.
5. **PROVIDE ALTERNATE MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION** for all generations, both within, to and from our Village district. Provide pedestrian spaces, paths, bikeways and spaces for buses and cars to park and collect riders.
6. Provide **SHARED PARKING** in mixed use areas such that our new village districts provide, but are not dominated by automobile parking. Position and provide parking in discreet areas away from building fronts. Use on-street parking as a way of mitigating the size of parking lots and encourage sub-surface parking where appropriate and feasible.
7. Provide **NATURAL METHODS OF STORM WATER TREATMENT** and whenever possible, provide common or shared storm water areas. On-site treatment of storm water will generally create less density than is desirable in the Village District. Shared treatment will potentially be both more efficient in both the short and long term. This must be planned for the overall district rather than implemented in a piece meal fashion.
8. **NATURAL CORRIDORS.** There are several water courses that border or move through this portion of the Village. These should be respected by way of setbacks and appropriate uses. These natural corridors can enhance the site and provide routes for both people and the natural habitat.

9. **A MIX OF USES AND HOUSING TYPES.** The existing and expanded village can be enhanced by providing a mix of uses and a mix of housing types. This will result in an active, working village with a wide range of inhabitants and generations.
10. **PROVIDE A BUFFER TO ROUTE 116/MAIN STREET AND AMELIORATE THE FLOW OF TRAFFIC THROUGH THE VILLAGE DISTRICT.** This physical setback/linear green, is very important to the creation of the Village Northwest district as it provides a buffer to Route 116 while at the same time maintaining commercial frontage along that road. The buffer focuses access from Route 116 in two locations, and encourages the dispersal of traffic as it enters the village. The buffer itself is proposed as a linear green space, which is found in many historic New England and Vermont communities. This green enables pedestrian and bike traffic and provides needed open space for this new part of the Village.
11. **THE OFFICIAL MAP.** The VSC encourages updating and use of the Official Map in these new districts of village growth area. The map should be updated to specifically designate streets and open spaces. This would provide the basic structure for development, the “bones” of the development so to speak. Connected streets and open space on the map would delineate precisely those blocks and related areas for development. Refinements to the Official Map need to be approved with significant input from landowners, citizens and prospective developers. A refined Official Map would greatly enhance the process of regulatory approvals.
12. **ENERGY PERFORMANCE.** The VSC also recognizes that one of the goals in creating the Village Northwest district was to encourage energy efficient design and the usage of non-renewable energy. Toward that end, zoning bonuses for energy efficiency should be utilized to incentivize the construction of exemplary patterns of development and resource efficient buildings.