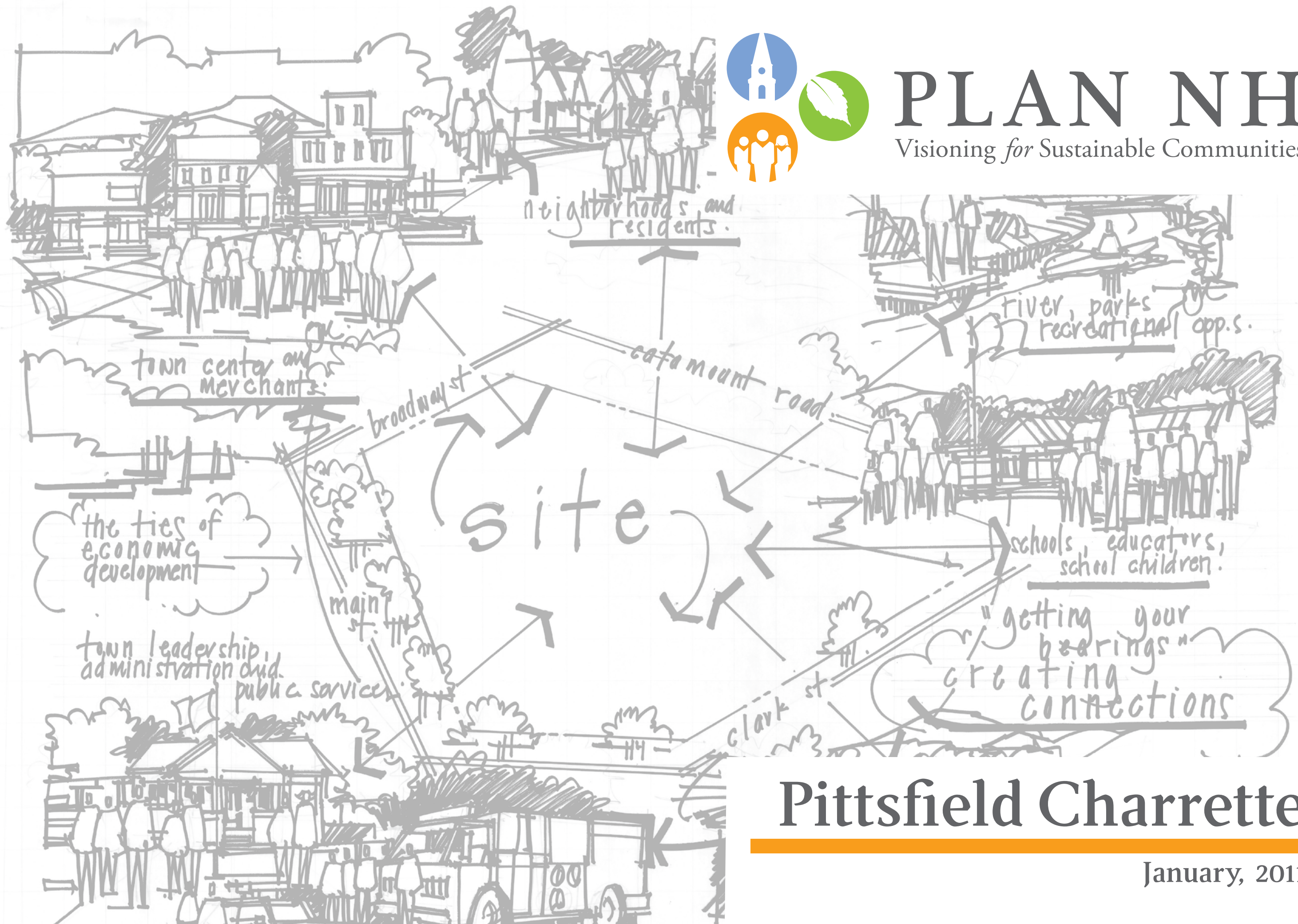




PLAN NH

Visioning for Sustainable Communities



Pittsfield Charrette

January, 2011

P R E F A C E

In early 2010, Pittsfield submitted an application to Plan NH for a design charrette and was one of six communities selected by the organization as a charrette town for the 2010-2011 year.

On January 21 and 22nd, 2011, Plan NH came to Pittsfield. The Plan NH charrette Team included architects, landscape architects, estimators, economic development consultants, engineers and planners.

Plan NH's charge focused on development needs, opportunities and challenges for a 19-acre + parcel of land adjacent to Pittsfield's town center. Of key concern were:

- the vitality of the community's downtown as a center of economic activity,
- upgrades to Pittsfield's identity,
- and the need for new employment opportunities for residents.

Plan NH's charrette team set out to understand how Pittsfield's residents saw the town, the site and the community's needs. Plan NH's Pittsfield Charrette Team was co-led by Robin LeBlanc (Plan NH Executive Director) and Scott N. Collard (Senior Landscape Architect in the Scarborough, ME office of Stantec).

Plan NH arrived on Friday, January 21st at 11 AM and held a meeting of its volunteer team. The team shared a genuine commitment to understanding Pittsfield as a community and to finding workable recommendations for its economic revitalizations. Subsequent to this meeting and a working lunch, the team met with representatives of Pittsfield's management and administrative organizations. A bus tour of the community followed this meeting. The tour, arranged by town leaders and volunteers, introduced the Plan NH team to the community's:

- educational facilities,
- recreational amenities,
- business/industrial centers,
- open spaces and natural resources,
- residential neighborhoods,
- historical landmarks, and
- community service centers.

A quick return to the Community Center enabled the Plan NH Team to prepare for the first listening session with community residents at 3 PM. The first listening session had participation of approximately 35 – 40 residents. Pittsfield hosted dinner for Team members. The second listening session, hosting approximately 15 residents, began at 6 PM. The Plan NH Team met at 8 PM for a debriefing session and to discuss and coordinate the next day's strategy.

Saturday, January 22nd's session began at 8 AM in the Pittsfield Elementary School cafeteria. Seven Plan NH volunteers were on hand.

Also Saturday morning Executive Director Robin LeBlanc conducted a community workshop seminar

entitled *Sustainable Pittsfield*. The workshop was attended by over a dozen residents. Robin introduced the citizens to the principles of sustainability and assisted them in thinking about a vision of a sustainable community.

Simultaneously, the Team met to finalize its strategy for the day's work. By 9:30 AM the team had established its goals, had divided the work to be done amongst two sub-groups and had set a schedule for preparing presentation materials. A 2 PM deadline was set for completion of work as the public presentation was scheduled for 3 PM. The public presentation began as scheduled and all team members contributed significantly to the closely coordinated and comprehensive series of recommendations made to Pittsfield residents.



Pittsfield town center showing target area

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Plan NH is sincerely grateful for the skills, expertise and volunteer commitment of its team members. Their generous contributions to the community of Pittsfield, especially given the wintery conditions, once again demonstrated our volunteers' whole-hearted dedication to the work of Plan NH's flagship community outreach program. Robin and Scott recognize the following Plan NH volunteers for their willingness to "step up and step in":

Stuart Arnett	Economic Developer	Arnett Development Group, LLC
Timothy Golde	Traffic/Civil Engineer	Golde Planning and Design
M. Hunter Ulk, AIA	Architect	UK Architects, PC
Brian Murphy, AIA	Architect	Manypenny Murphy Architecture
Peter Stimmell, LEED AP	Senior Estimator	Martini Northern
John Wacker, FASLA	Landscape Architect/Planner	
Tom Kelly		Morgan Stanley Smith Barney
Jay Doherty	Civil Engineer	HL Turner Group

Team Leaders Robin LeBlanc (Plan NH) and Scott Collard (Landscape Architect, Stantec) also express their sincere thanks to Hunter Ulf and Stuart Arnett for their leadership and willingness to assist in the preparation of written portions of this booklet.

Pittsfield's volunteers were key to making the charrette happen and to providing the space and hospitality that made the charrette possible. Plan NH is grateful to the following representatives:

Paul Skowron Town Administrator

Pittsfield Board of Selectmen

- Denise Morin, Chairman-2011
- Edward Vien, Vice Chairman-2012
- Fred Hast, Selectperson-2012
- Art Morse, Selectperson-2011
- Fred Okrent, Selectperson-2011

Pittsfield Economic Development Committee

- Ed Vien - SB Rep and Chairperson
- Ellen Barbasso - Member, Secretary
- Linda Small - Member
- Helen Schiff - Member
- Susan Muenzinger, Member
- Marilyn Roberts, Member
- Ted Mitchell, Member

Pittsfield Planning Board

- Bill Miskoe, Chair
- Ted Mitchell, Vice-Chairman
- Daniel Greene, Member
- John (Pat) Heffernan, Member
- Richard Hunsberger, Member
- Dan Schroth, Member
- Fred Hast, Selectman Ex-Officio
- Clayton Wood, Alternate

Pittsfield Zoning Board

- Ed Vien, Committee Chair and Committee Members

Pittsfield Building Inspector

- Dan Kramer

Pittsfield NH Parks & Recreation Commission

- Nicholas Abell, Acting Chairperson and Committee Members

Pittsfield Fire Department

- Chief Gary Johnson and Staff

Pittsfield Police Department

- Robert E. Wharem, Chief of Police and Staff

Matt Monahan, Central NH Regional Planning Commission

PlanNH is Grateful for the Special Support of Members:



**Public Service
of New Hampshire**
The Northeast Utilities System



Engineering a Sustainable Future



Charette Book Production Team:

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www.ZESstudio.com

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Town of Pittsfield Plan NH Charrette Application

1. Please describe the project that you would like our design assistance with.

The Pittsfield Economic Development Committee (EDC) would like design assistance with a charrette in an underused portion of Downtown Pittsfield. The charrette would focus upon specific parcels located north of Main Street, East of Broadway Street, south of Catamount Road, and west of Clark Street. The area south of Broadway, east of Carroll Street, and north of Cram Avenue would be part of the charrette as well. The specific study area is depicted on the enclosed map entitled "Plan NH Charrette Area, Town of Pittsfield."

Ideally, the charrette would include: zoning and land use considerations; public input from previous public visioning sessions; consideration of current economic conditions; and, the consideration of any potential contamination. A business incubator could be particularly attractive. The charrette should also consider the relationship of the study area with the rest of downtown and how it can be integrated with it as a whole.

2. Why is this project important to your community? Is this a new idea? If not, what has been done to date?

This project is important to Pittsfield because it will facilitate economic development in a part of downtown that is severely unused and underused for three reasons: 1) Pittsfield's economy lags behind the state and county as evident by several indicators (discussed more below); 2) Pittsfield workers lack adequate opportunities for employment in "growth industries" (discussed more below); and 3) the area is a visual blight on the downtown area. Creating a plan for redeveloping this portion of downtown would serve as a "lynch-pin" to downtown revitalization, which would in turn serve as a spark to revitalizing Pittsfield's overall economy.

Conducting a charrette for this portion of town is not a new idea. In fact, Plan NH conducted a charrette in downtown Pittsfield in 1999 and that plan included a subsection about this part of town. The charrette recommended soccer fields in this area. Given various intervening factors Pittsfield wishes to "revise" this portion of the plan and conduct a more in-depth charrette of the area with an eye toward uses that are more economic and business in nature such as a business incubator, healthcare facilities, or businesses that are part of the "Creative Economy." Some specific reasons for changing the reuse vision to a more economic-based use as opposed to recreational include:

1. At a community meeting held this past October 24th, citizens and owners of these parcels indicated a desire and need for business uses in the study area. In addition, the property owners indicated that they felt that the area was underused and underdeveloped economically. The community meeting was

specifically held to discuss economic development in Pittsfield. Participants ranged from citizens, to business owners, to community leaders and it was facilitated by Scott Spradling of the Spradling Group. Revitalizing and reusing this portion of town was one of the key discussion items on the agenda that day and dominated much of the discussion.

2. Within a mile or so of the study area the Babe Ruth baseball fields have been updated and soccer teams now regularly use these newly-renovated fields. This eliminates the need for the soccer fields recommended in the 1999 charrette.
3. 8.77% of Pittsfield was below the poverty line in 2000 and during the same period the County saw 5.95% of its population below the poverty line while 6.55% of the State population was¹. This speaks to a need for more well-paying jobs.
4. The State and County Median Household Income was 27.38% and 25.03% greater than Pittsfield's, respectively². This also speaks to a need for more well-paying jobs.
5. Pittsfield had a slightly higher average unemployment rate than the State and County between 2005 and 2008³. Again, this speaks to a need for more well-paying jobs.
6. Pittsfield has, on average, a tax rate between 21% and 47% more than abutting towns⁴. This suggests that expanding the commercial tax base while utilizing Smart Growth principals – reusing property in the downtown – could help to reduce the overall tax burden.
7. Pittsfield may not be maximizing its economic potential now and into the future as it seems that only 16% of the workforce is in "growth industries" that will expand between now and 2016⁵:

¹ 2000 US Census.

² 2000 US Census: State \$45,476; County \$48,552; Pittsfield \$38,833.

³ NH Department of Security, Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau: State 3.6%; County 3.3%; Pittsfield 3.7%.

⁴ NH Department of Revenue Administration: between 2005 & 2008 averages included Chichester \$19.06; Epsom \$15.68; Loudon \$16.84; Barnstead \$16.17.

⁵ NH Employment Security, Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau & CNHRPC calculations, 2006 to 2016 NH Employment Projections; 2006 Town of Pittsfield Economic Profile 2006.

Pittsfield's Largest Employment Sectors	Projected Industry Growth Compared to Overall Average State Economic Growth of 10.4% by 2016		Portion of Pittsfield's Workforce (out of 2,077 workers)	
	Proposed Percentage Change in Industries by 2016	Relationship to State Growth Rate (10.4% overall growth) by 2016	Percent of Pittsfield Workers in Each Industry	Number of Pittsfield Workers in Each Industry
Manufacturing	-5%	5% CONTRACTION	21.57%	448
Retail	7.20%	3.2% LESS growth	12.76%	265
Health/Social Svc	30.90%	20.5% Greater growth	9.97%	207
Public Administration	8.30%	2.1% LESS growth	6.64%	138
Education	19.20%	8.8% Greater growth	5.97%	124

- i. 21.57% of Pittsfield workforce is in the industry expecting the largest decline between now and 2016 – manufacturing.
- ii. 2 of Pittsfield's top 5 employment sectors are in projected growth industries, but this only represents 15.94% of the community's workforce.
- iii. 2 of Pittsfield's top 5 employment sectors are within industries that are expected to grow at a rate LESS than the State's overall economy – this represents 19% of the community's workforce.
- iv. Overall, about 42% of Pittsfield's workforce are employed in industries that will decline or grow slower than the State economy in the next 6 years – in just 3 industry sectors; about 16% of the workforce is employed in "growth industries" in only 2 industries; and, the remaining workforce in Pittsfield, 42%, are in industries that may not be growing or in a few years may actually begin contracting. All in all, Pittsfield needs to expand its economy with an eye to industries that are expected to grow, such as professional, scientific, financial services, and the arts. Attracting such businesses will provide an opportunity to capitalize on assets – cultural and physical – which can help to facilitate smart growth which could help to lower taxes, provide jobs, and ensure the highest and best use of some unused and underused parcels at the heart of Pittsfield's downtown.

3. Does your organization own or control the site? Parts of the site? Are you likely to own it? How will you implement the recommendations if you don't own the site? Do you have partners?

The 32.7 acres of the study area are all held in separate ownership. Private ownership accounts for about 86.76% of the total area, Banks own about 3.3%, the Town owns

about 6.94% and public utilities own about 3%. Bank and Town owned land will lend itself to being supportive of the effort. In addition, several of these property owners – to include those who own the 2 largest parcels – have articulated support for this charrette (most recently, at the October community meeting). Taken together, 54.8% of the 32.7 acres is for sale, held by the Town, banks, or owners who have articulated their support for the charrette, all of whom will participate in the charrette.

In addition, the EDC has \$100,000 in its account for revitalization purposes and a community development corporation (Suncook Valley Regional Development Corporation) at its disposal. As stated elsewhere in this application, the cash on hand was appropriated by Town Meeting for the sole purpose of funding economic development revitalization efforts: i.e. "bricks and mortar" expenses. The community development corporation was created by the EDC for the sole purpose of facilitating and managing economic development real estate deals. With a broad base of partners, cash on hand for development purposes and a community development corporation ready to assist with any development project, Pittsfield is in a position to see the charrette successfully implemented.

4. Do you have any materials that would be helpful? Maps of the site? Building plans? Old photos? Tax maps of the area in question? It would be useful to get a list of what you have, and to have you submit any simple maps/photos of the area of interest/concern.

The Town of Pittsfield has included a map of the "study area," an aerial photograph of the "study area," and a tax map of the "study area." Additionally, the 1999 charrette maps, which include a portion of the study area, will be provided the day the charrette will take place.

5. Are there unique characteristics about this project which you would like to describe? Are there known environmental issues involved with the project?

Since the penning of the original charrette plan, several factors have intervened that barred the way to its complete implementation. First, the Economic Development Committee (EDC) in place at the time was not nearly as ready and experienced as the current EDC is. Second, the EDC at the time lacked networks and partnerships, especially with land and business owners that are needed to make land development deals happen: i.e. social capital. Third, there were no funds available to fully implement all of the previous recommendations – the Town has since appropriated \$100,000 to the EDC for "economic development" efforts. Fourth, delays due to a lack of funding and a weaker EDC became exacerbated over time, to include: community meetings as recent as October, 2009 have resulted newly identified visions and issues for this portion of town; and, the economy/real estate development (the "economy of place") has changed over time resulting in a greater need for jobs and job growth as opposed to using the area for recreation fields. Fifth, in working with the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC) Pittsfield has identified some *potential*

brownfield sites in the area that could present both a challenge (in the form of needing potential cleanup funds) and an opportunity (secured cleanup funds can lure development in the form of “brownfield developers”) with regard to development. Additionally, CNHRPC has an application in to the USEPA for brownfields assessment funds that Pittsfield will be able to access. Lastly, the previous charrette was more of a downtown-wide plan where as the goal with this effort will focus strictly on this one area in the downtown.

The plan from 1999 had a lot of zoning recommendations and the Town has not been able to implement many of these tasks. The reason for this is that past EDCs did not have the technical support or the social capital to make these changes a reality. Now, the EDC is in the process of establishing a stronger working relationship with the planning board based upon a stronger EDC and the development of stronger social capital (not to mention some joint board membership). This coming year (2010) the EDC, BOS, and the Planning Board will be engaging in a comprehensive zoning ordinance re-write with assistance from the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission. With a stronger EDC, strong social capital, and the professional technical support of CNHRPC, the 1999 plan’s zoning recommendations will be put into place over the next year.

Overall, given the challenges that have prevented Pittsfield from implementing portions of the last charrette plan there are several issues in place that will make implementation of this charrette plan more likely. These include:

- A. The Economic Development Committee (EDC) has a sound, current, economic development plan in place that outlines strategies to capitalize on development in the downtown, in particular the “creative economy,” small business growth, and a “walkable,” vibrant downtown while at the same time identifying “target industries” to bring to town.
- B. The Town is in a better position to implement the plan given a new, more active Economic Development Committee. Specifics include:
 - a. The Town will be able to leverage more money that it did not have last time for “bricks and mortar.” Specifics include:
 - i. The EDC has \$100,000 on hand for economic development efforts.
 - ii. The EDC and Suncook Valley Regional Development Corporation are both actively seeking additional grants to add to the \$100,000.
 - b. The Town and the EDC have a more extensive network of partnerships and social capital, to include:

- i. Suncook Valley Regional Development Corporation (SVRDC) is a not-for-profit development corporation, created by the Town and the EDC to facilitate real estate deals. SVRDC can purchase, hold, sell and enter into real estate deals without the burden of a slow public process: i.e. Town Meeting.
- ii. Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC) has been assisting the Town, since 2006, with regard to assistance with local economic development planning and implementation efforts (crafting plans, strategies, writing grants, etc.).
- iii. The Spradling Group has been engaged by the Town to conduct public outreach and engagement.
- iv. The Capital Region Development Council (CRDC) has been engaged by the town in the recent past to assist with facilitating real estate deals, in particular, funding. CRDC will continue to fill this role into the future.
- v. New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development (NHDRED) has been involved with providing grants to the EDC in the past and will continue to do so into the future. In addition, the EDC has secured a Economic Revitalization Zone designation for downtown Pittsfield (RSA 162N) to bring and expand additional businesses in downtown Pittsfield, to include the charrette area.
- vi. The Economic Development Committee itself The EDC represents a broad background of businesses/community leaders and citizens who can and have leveraged numerous resources through the implementation of various projects and events over the years.
- vii. The Pittsfield Chamber of Commerce has been supportive of various EDC efforts and has provided a forum for the EDC to engage with the business community in town (i.e. participation Business Showcase events).
- viii. Active local businesses community and interested citizens: several active businesses and citizens have contributed to EDC efforts at various stages and for various efforts (banks, realtors, citizen volunteers, etc.).

commercial/businesses uses would be the best fit. The charrette would help to clarify how best to achieve this goal.

As discussed elsewhere in this application, the Town of Pittsfield has enhanced its Babe Ruth fields in an effort to provide more recreational opportunities, in particular, for soccer. As the original charrette in 1999 recommended creating soccer fields in this area it would appear that the intent and effect of the previous charrette has been met – there are more opportunities to play soccer and pursue other recreational opportunities in town. Conducting another charrette for the area with an eye toward economic development would identify potential new uses in line with this vision.

The poverty rate and median household income in Pittsfield are challenges that can also be addressed with a successful redevelopment vision. More jobs and more jobs in growth sectors will help to raise incomes and provide employment opportunities where none exist. Jobs in growth sectors have greater demand and therefore pay greater wages. Also, adding jobs in growth sectors will diversify the local economy in terms of types of employment and services available and insulate Pittsfield against future industry-specific decline or another larger economic down-turn. The charrette will outline what best end-users will facilitate this effect and what steps should be taken to make this a reality. Pittsfield has made strides towards a better economic future and a Plan NH Charrette would be the next step along that path.

7. Would a spring or fall session work better for your community?

A spring session would be preferable.



SCHEDULE

Friday, January 21, 2011

- 11:45 am: Team gathers at Town Office building (85 Main Street). Meet other team members, review project and expectations, things to consider. Lunch provided.
- 1:00: Meet with Town officials to learn about project from their viewpoint.
- 2:15: Tour of target area
- 3:30 – 5:00: First Public Listening Session at Community Center (68 Main Street)
- 5:30-6:15: Supper
- 6:30-8:00: Second Public Listening Session
- 8:00: Team debrief.

Saturday, January 22, 2011

- 8:30 am: Team meeting at Elementary School
- 9:00 – 2:30: Brainstorming; The Work.
- 3:00: Present recommendations to Town.
- 4:00: Depart.



LISTENING SESSIONS

TOWN REPRESENTATIVES:

The Plan NH Team met with representatives of the Pittsfield Town government to listen to the issues, needs and concerns of the community. In summary:

1. The town's primary concern is its limited tax base: Pittsfield seeks a solution to broadening its tax base.
2. Housing stock is aging: its value is diminishing.
3. Town has numerous small businesses: limited source of employment.
4. The revitalization of the downtown area is a key concern, including aesthetic improvements, diversification of retail shops and the development of a sustainable business environment.
5. Route 28 is Pittsfield's front door and is zoned for retail and commercial land uses.
6. Pittsfield's water supply infrastructure is adequate for its current size; expansion in the area of Route 28 and beyond would require upgrades.
7. A large portion of Pittsfield's housing stock consists of apartments: approximately 600 or approximately 4,000 residents. The economic demographics of Pittsfield is largely influenced by a significant transient and low income population.
8. Pittsfield's preferred development alternatives include:
 - Development of a food co-op center
 - Creation of vocational/technical educational opportunities
 - Creation of a youth center: a place for the youth to experience the community.
9. Pittsfield's concerns include:
 - Limited amenities for the youth: "they need a place to go".
 - Growth beyond Route 28 requires extending the sewer system: a costly and challenging engineering project.
 - The existing sewer system is old and leaks: chronic infiltration of stormwater into system creates overburden on treatment facility. Main pump needs to be upgraded.
 - Water and sewer is at a chronic space; at Route 28 primarily.
 - Issues with water supply and pump condition places constraints on fire protection.
10. Extension of the water system beyond Route 28 is a constraint to development: Pittsfield water system is constrained by Penichuck area of service; water system service within target area is sound.
11. Pittsfield has discussed benefits of Town-owned water system: goal of stabilizing water utility rates. Debate continues regarding merits of town-owned utility.
12. Community goals and achievement include:
 - Creation and opening of Babe Ruth baseball field outside of town center area
 - Keeping the target area connected to the 5-points area and local businesses
 - Community's five year sidewalk/streetscape improvement program: enabling children to walk safely to school
 - Balloon Festival (1st weekend in August) welcomes 15,000 – 20,000 visitors to Pittsfield
13. Pittsfield's assets include:
 - "We have a downtown.": strong beautification program
 - Downtown is on the National Historic Register: reinforces town's historic character through preservation
 - "We have a strong sense of community."
14. Pittsfield's issues include:
 - Zoning creates restrictions: "not friendly to development"
 - Large unemployed and unskilled workforce
 - Town is isolated and needs transit connections to Concord and Manchester: "where the jobs are"
 - "We need a draw.": some place other than the state liquor store on Saturday morning



PUBLIC

Listening sessions engaged Pittsfield residents in an open dialogue about their community. In a 'world café' setting, three questions were asked:

When looking at this [target] area:

- Question One: "What do you see?"
- Question Two: "What do you want?"
- Question Three: "What do we need to know?"

Their summary of their comments follows.

LISTENING SESSION 1 – RESIDENTS (Friday afternoon)

Question One: "What do you see?"

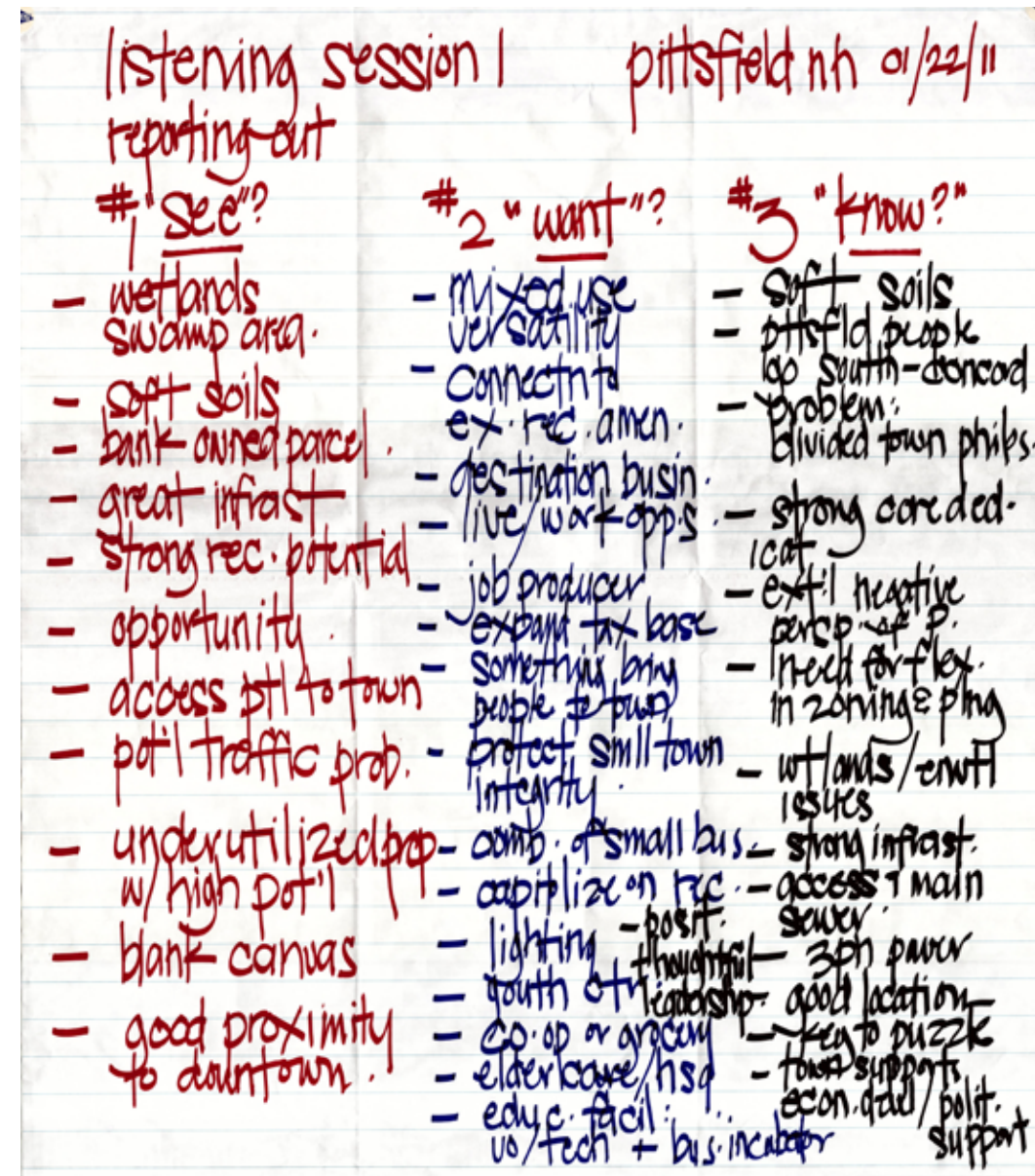
- Wetlands, swamp area
- Soft soils
- Bank-owned property (bank has final review of qualified bids)
- Great infrastructure
- Strong recreational potential
- Opportunity
- Access potential to town
- Potential traffic problems
- Underutilized property with high potentials
- Blank canvas
- Good proximity to town

Question Two: "What do you want?"

- Mixed use versatility
- Connection to existing recreational amenities
- Destination business
- Live/work opportunities
- Job producer
- Expand tax base
- Something to bring people to town
- Protect small town integrity
- Combination of small businesses
- Capitalize on recreation
- Lighting
- Youth center
- Co-op or grocery
- Eldercare housing
- Educational facility, such as vo-tech and business incubator

Question Three: "What do we need to know?"

- Soft soils
- Pittsfield people go south to Concord and other places to work
- Pittsfield has a divided town philosophy; problem
- Strong core of dedicated people
- External and internal negative (perspective of Pittsfield)
- Need for flexibility in zoning and planning
- Presence of wetlands and potential environmental issues
- Strong (serviceable) infrastructure in area of site
- Site is accessible
- Site capable of being served by main sewer
- Three-phase power available to site
- Site is key to puzzle
- Town supports economic development through political support



LISTENING SESSION 2 – RESIDENTS (Friday evening)

Question One: "What do you see?"

- Destination potential for residents and visitors
- Centralized location with reference to community space and recreation
- Potential with cooperation of neighbors
- Central key location
- Flexible site
- Currently a barrier between different parts of the downtown
- Void: empty space

Question Two: "What do you want?"

- Small businesses
- Crafts and arts residences
- Something that could be pleasing or aesthetically appealing
- Major support to business in Pittsfield
- Potential for a hotel or conference center
- Connection to Balloon Festival
- Use to the benefit of the town
- Mixed use opportunity
- Greatest economic benefit or value
- The connection between town needs and community benefits need to be weighed

Question Three: "What do we need to know?"

Pittsfield has:

- A lot of town pride
- People who willingly volunteer their time and energy
- An age gap between 20 and 30 years of age
- Concern for the environment
- Large number of low income housing
- Town image and town demographics are closely connected
- Potential environmental and water table concerns
- Large numbers of school age children
- Residents want the Plan NH team to recognize how these facts impact their recommendations.
- A change needs to happen to effect the disparity between the "town we (residents) know" and the "town we are known as" (by people who do not live in Pittsfield)

Pittsfield NH 01/29/11

Listening session 2 debriefing *u dont shoot too low*

the town we know → town we're known as

#1 "see" #2 "want" #3 "know"

- destination pot'l for resid. & visitors
- centralized loc. w/ ref. to comm. space & rec.
- potential - w/ coop neighbors
- central key loc. / flexible site
- currently a barrier btwn diff. parts of dtwn
- void: empty space
- small bus. crafts art residences
- pls or aesthetic
- major support bus. hotel / conf ctr.
- connect to Balloon Fest. Hsg.
- use to benefit town
- aesthetically pls mixed use
- greatest econ. benefit or value
- pt'l env'tl & water table concerns
- large no. of children (school age)
- lot of town pride
- volunteers
- age gap 20-30s
- concerns: env'tl, low income
- town demog. & image of town
- to know how these impact recommendations.

not more of the same

benefit → need resources amenities

OPEN CONVERSATION

Following the second listening session an open conversation evolved from a resident's comment that "people need a purpose". The comment was made in response to a discussion about Pittsfield residents' ability to achieve unity. The statement was made that "people need to feel a sense of belonging".

A comment was made that residents of Pittsfield were not fully aware of the good things happening in their community. The town has recognized the importance of communication and getting out the word of what is being done and achieved. Being able to share this information is critical to "creating a critical mass" that is committed to improving the community. As an example, Pittsfield has established a community wi-fi system in its downtown area.

Furthermore, it was commented that "good things" happen with:

- Perseverance
- Open-mindedness
- Financial backing
- Publicizing events and providing visibility: "getting the word out"

Pittsfield residents stated that they recognized the significance of the connection between their community's human capital and its ability to generate social capital. Residents at the evening listening session described it as Pittsfield's "intra-net": "connection through belonging". This sense of community was recognized as essential to the town's ability to take advantage of Pittsfield's assets of strong businesses, great people and the recreational opportunities in their town. Residents described their excitement about an initiative currently being developed by students and school administrators to create extended educational opportunities. This initiative focuses upon taking advantage of educational opportunities to be found within the community. Most important to the envisioned program was the ability it would provide to educate students about the values of their community.

The evening's listening session came to a close and team members met briefly to quickly reflect upon the information that had come out of the day's listening sessions. Team members were enthusiastic about what they had heard and the expressed can-do spirit of the Pittsfield residents. The general opinion of the team was that the challenge before us was how to provide Pittsfield with a vision for the target area, and its many opportunities, that would serve as a catalyst for a solution that could:

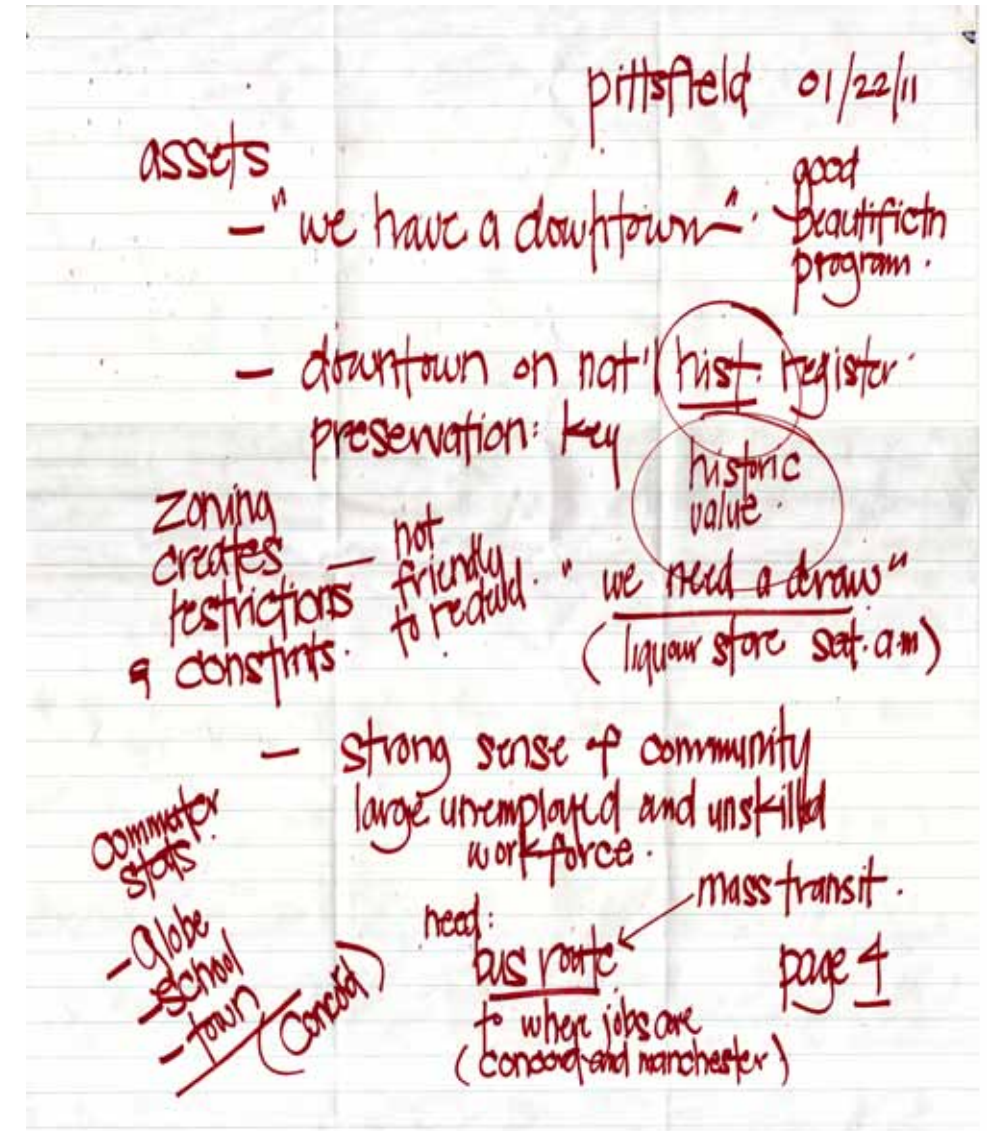
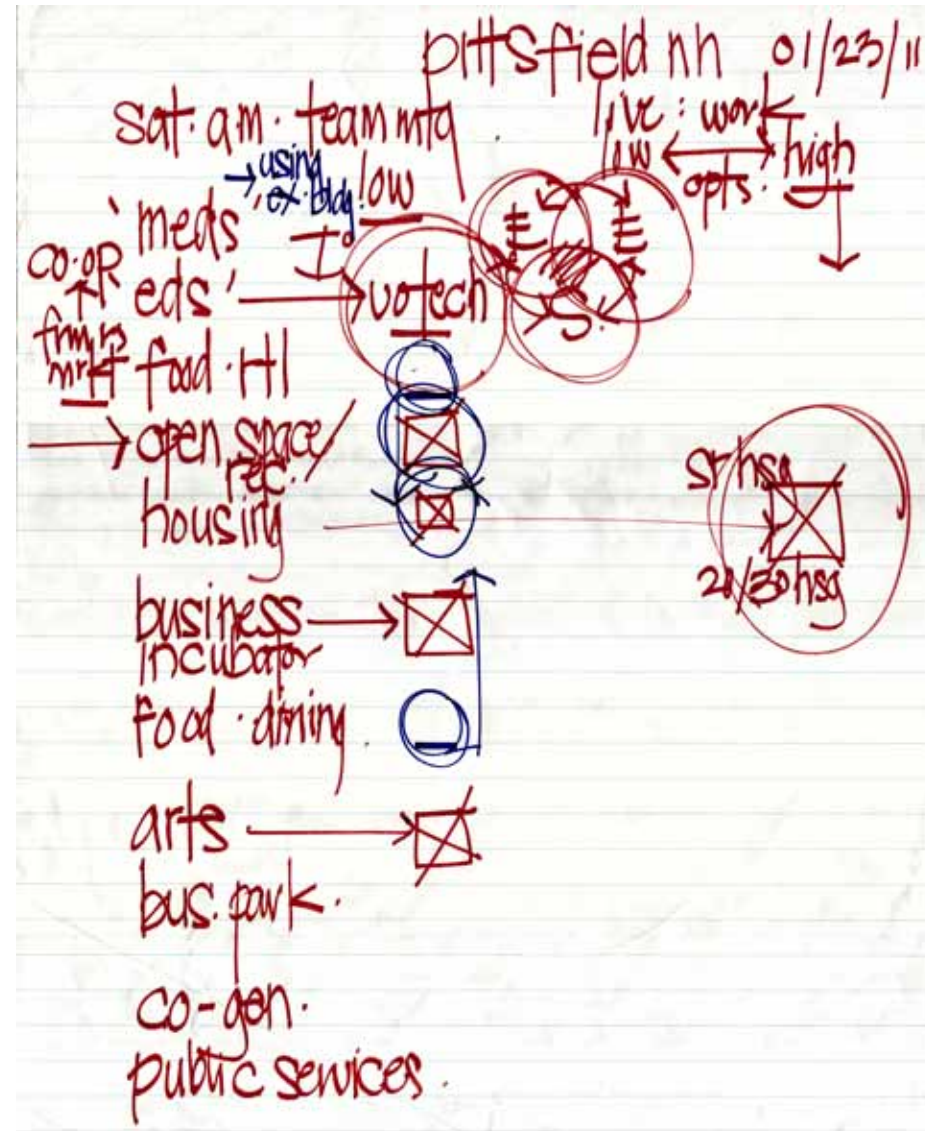
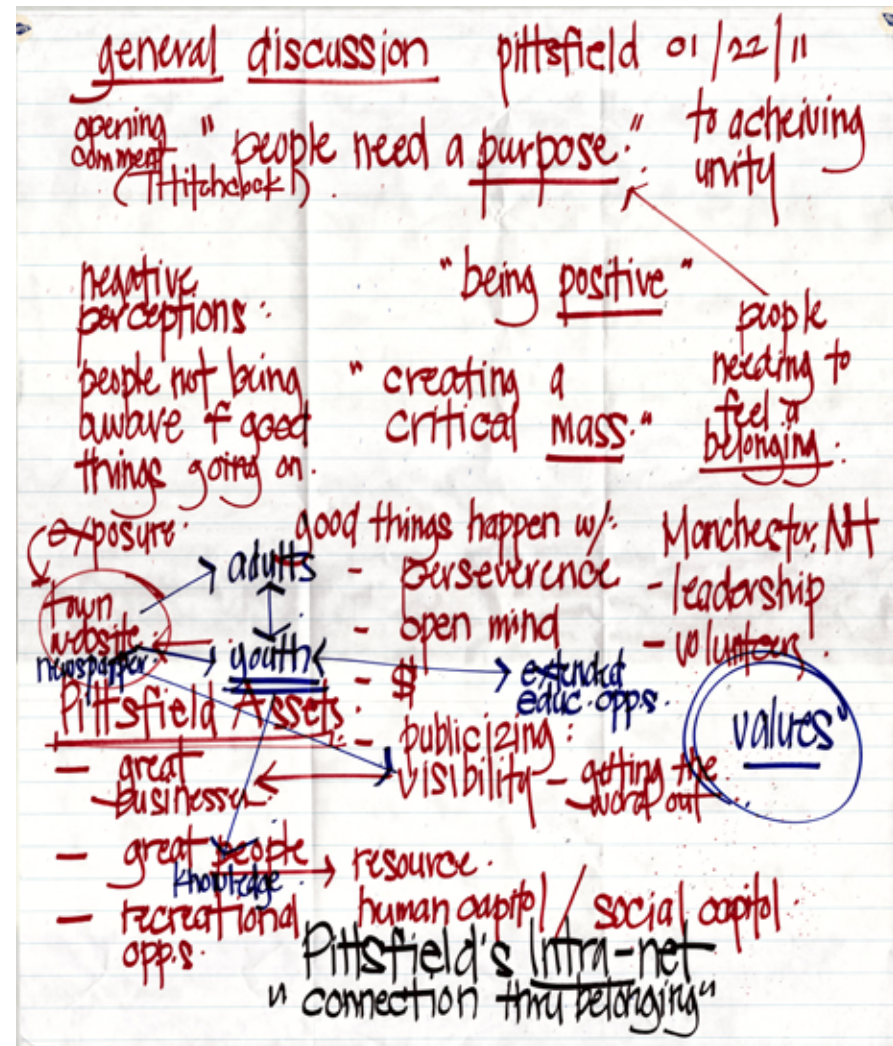
- a. Provide a feasible solution to Pittsfield's need to broaden its tax base,
- b. Offer enduring and far reaching benefits to all of its residents
- c. Make meaningful connection and addition to the downtown area, and
- d. Improve local and regional perceptions of the Pittsfield as a community.



SUMMARY OF CHARRETTE TEAM FINDINGS

Team Strategic Planning Session:

Saturday, January 22nd began with a team meeting in which we were to identify and develop a planning and design concept for the target area. Working from the information gleaned from the previous day's listening sessions, the team began its discussion by focusing on what they had learned about the community as a whole.



pittsfield 01/22/11

development alternatives:

1. food co-op employment
2. vocational/technical ed. opp.
3. youth center. a place to experience their community.

concerns

- 6. - limited amenities for youth need "a place to go."
- 7. infrastructure. sewer system. access to system @ 20
 - chronic leak - leaky stormwater / overburden
 - main pump needs to be upgraded. on system.
 - develop
 - water and sewer @ chronic space - @ 20
 - influence on fire protection - vol. f.d. primarily

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8. water system - development on other side of 2B an issue. town water system constrained by perichuck (P.S) area + service.

stability of water rates

people debating merits of town ownership. target area water system is sound.

9. "other things"

- Babe Ruth bb field traffic movement by site.
- keeping target area connected to 2 points and business.
- sidewalk / streetscape imp. prog. 5 yrs.
- kids walk to school - Balloon elementary school.

10. Balloon Fest. 1st wknd in Aug. 15-20k people. co-sponsored event.

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safety area truck movements

A Strategic Planning and Design Rationale

Plan NH's team developed its concept for the development of the target area by recognizing the following statements as its planning and design rationale:

1. Pittsfield's needs were the key indicators to evaluating and assessing the benefits anticipated to come from whatever ideas or action were to be proposed in the design of the target area.
2. Pittsfield's "needs" were to be defined by the needs of all its residents.
3. "Benefits" were to focus upon strengthening Pittsfield's sense of pride and belonging/community through enhancing security and stability. Residents would experience these benefits through:
 - Employment
 - Shelter
 - Education
 - Safety
 - Leadership
 - Recreation
4. Benefits would be envisioned as a means of supporting residents' need for a purpose ("sense of belonging") that would further enhance the community's values.
5. The planning and design concept for the target site would act as a point of convergence for values, purpose, needs and benefits.

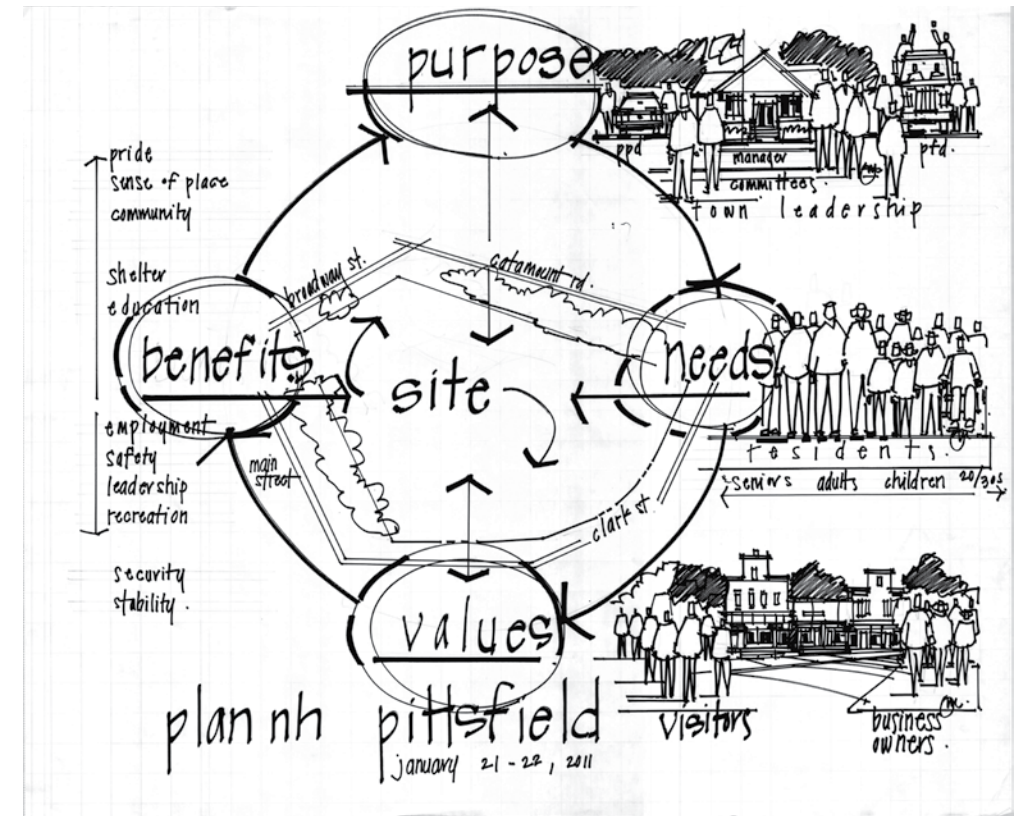


Diagram A: Pittsfield's Balancing Needs and Benefits

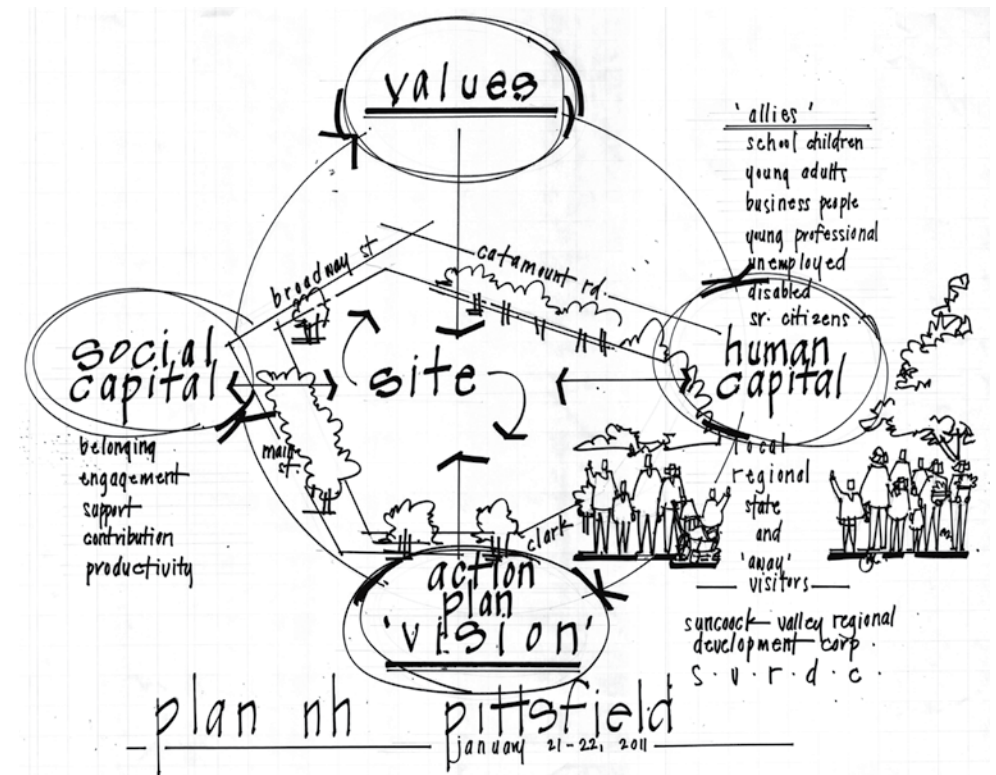


Diagram B: Uniting Social Capital with Pittsfield's Human Capital

The Action Plan

To achieve a feasible solution to Pittsfield's needs, however, the Plan NH team needed an action plan that accurately reflected the community's values. The team recognized the inherent need to strengthen the potential bond between Pittsfield's "human capital" and the vitality of its "social capital"; the community's unifying experience of belonging, engagement, contribution and productivity (Refer to Diagram A). The action plan, therefore, became the team's basis for design decision-making. As such, the team had the means by which planning or design choices could be made and evaluated for feasibility, suitability and appropriateness.

The team recognized that Pittsfield residents needed a vision that included not only a description of "what" to do, but also "how" the proposed plan or design could be implemented. The team, therefore, evaluated the skills of its team members and divided the team into two sub-groups:

- Sub-group One was to focus on the physical planning and design of the target area.
- Sub-group Two set as its goal the development of a "map" for the implementation/phasing and financing of the proposed development components.

Given the time constraints under which the team was working, it was accepted that the target area's design would have to be highly conceptual: the development program would need to be fairly open and general. This would give the overall plan two advantages:

- Advantage One: The basic plan would be described in broad strokes whose phasing could be broken down and quickly illustrated based on the target area's basic features, characteristics and constraints.
- Advantage Two: The combined design and implementation strategy as presented by the Plan NH team would serve as a transferable and adaptable guide to the target area's development. Its value would transcend the value of any possible single design solution. Pittsfield would have a description of the process and tools needed to manage its own decision-making for the target area's development.

With this shared understanding and agreed-upon approach, the Plan NH team prepared the presentation of the points summarized on the following pages.

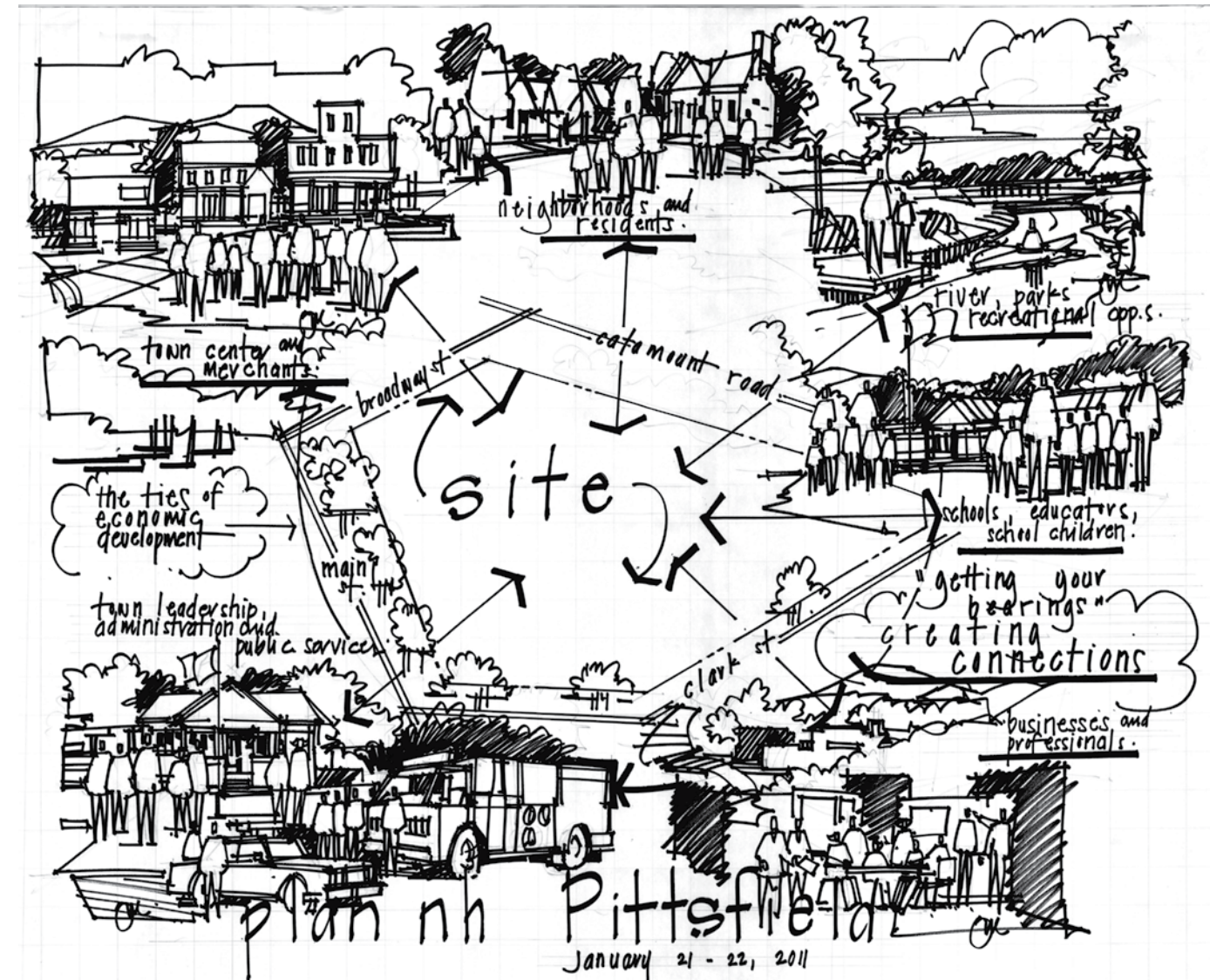


Diagram C: Creating Connections in Pittsfield

SUMMARY OF CHARRETTE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS - DESIGN GROUP

Site Assessment:

The site has a prime, central location within the community of Pittsfield, but is perceived as a “barrier” that divides the surrounding commercial and residential areas. It has existing natural wetlands that can become a recreational and environmental amenity, and also divides the site into north and south segments. These segments enhance the site by allowing for phased development, segment by segment, and promoting the appropriate scale of development.

Conceptual Development Master Planning:

Plan NH has conceived of a five-phased approach in building out the site, with each phase promoting and creating development opportunities for subsequent phases. In addition, each phase carefully considers financial impact and need. The types of development suggested below serve only as examples, with the goal that all development on this site will establish connections to other parts of the community, preventing this site from becoming an “island” of development in the center of town, and allowing livable community principals to extend beyond the site in order to benefit the overall community.

Phase One:

The first phase of the Concept Development Master Plan considers ways to increase the site use with the least amount of investment by utilizing existing features.

- Re-purpose the existing buildings for business “launch sites”, enabling new businesses to start-up and become established in the community.
- Clean-up existing open areas of the site for weekly farmers markets to begin to establish visibility and foot traffic.
- Create space for overflow parking during events, such as the Balloon Festival.

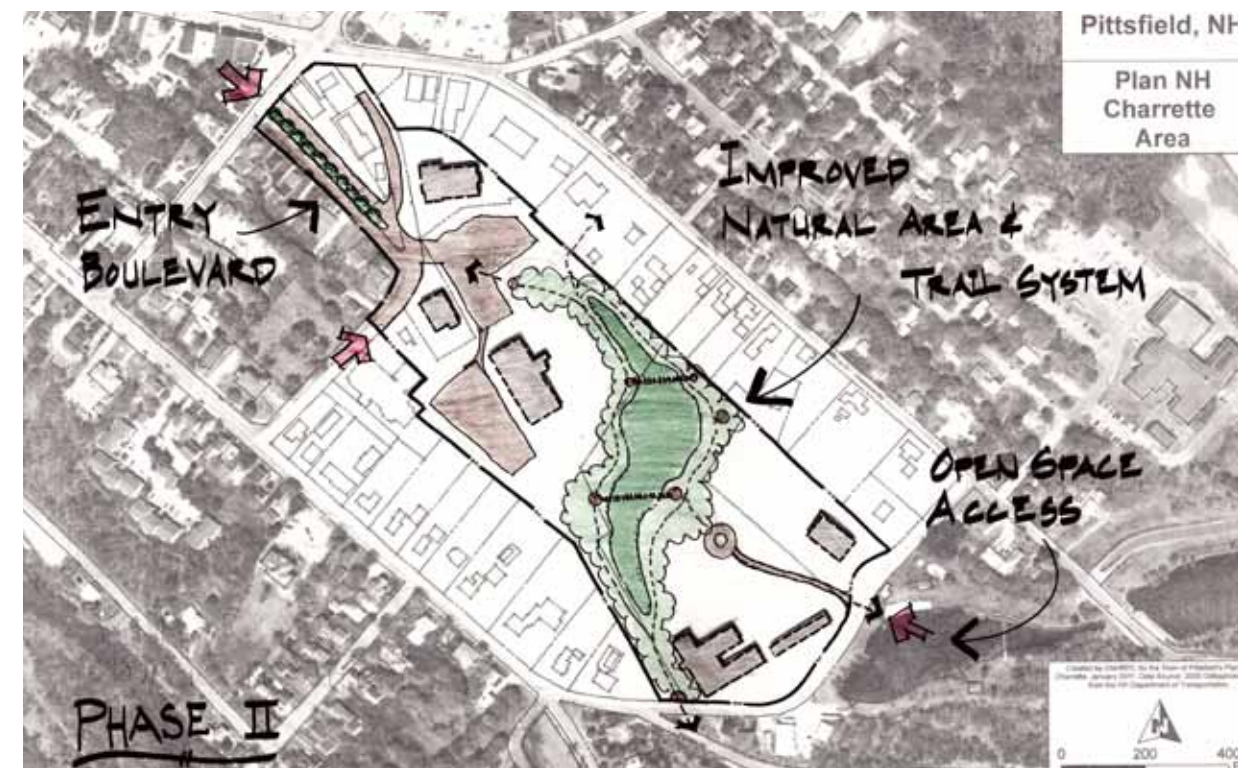


Phase One
Exhibit Panel 4/Conceptual Development Master Plan – Phase 1 and 2

Phase Two

The second phase of the Concept Development Master Plan begins to look at investment in the site's infrastructure in order to enhance public use.

- Improve access to the site by turning the five-way intersection into a four-way intersection by eliminating Broadway Street. Establish a more distinguishable entry into the site.
- Begin to add landscape features to the site, such as trees.
- Begin to define parking for specific business locations.
- Improve the natural area by expanding the wetlands and developing a loop trail for pedestrians and bicycles.
- Build pedestrian/bicycle bridges over the wetlands area to connect the two ends of the site, and allow pedestrian flow through the site.

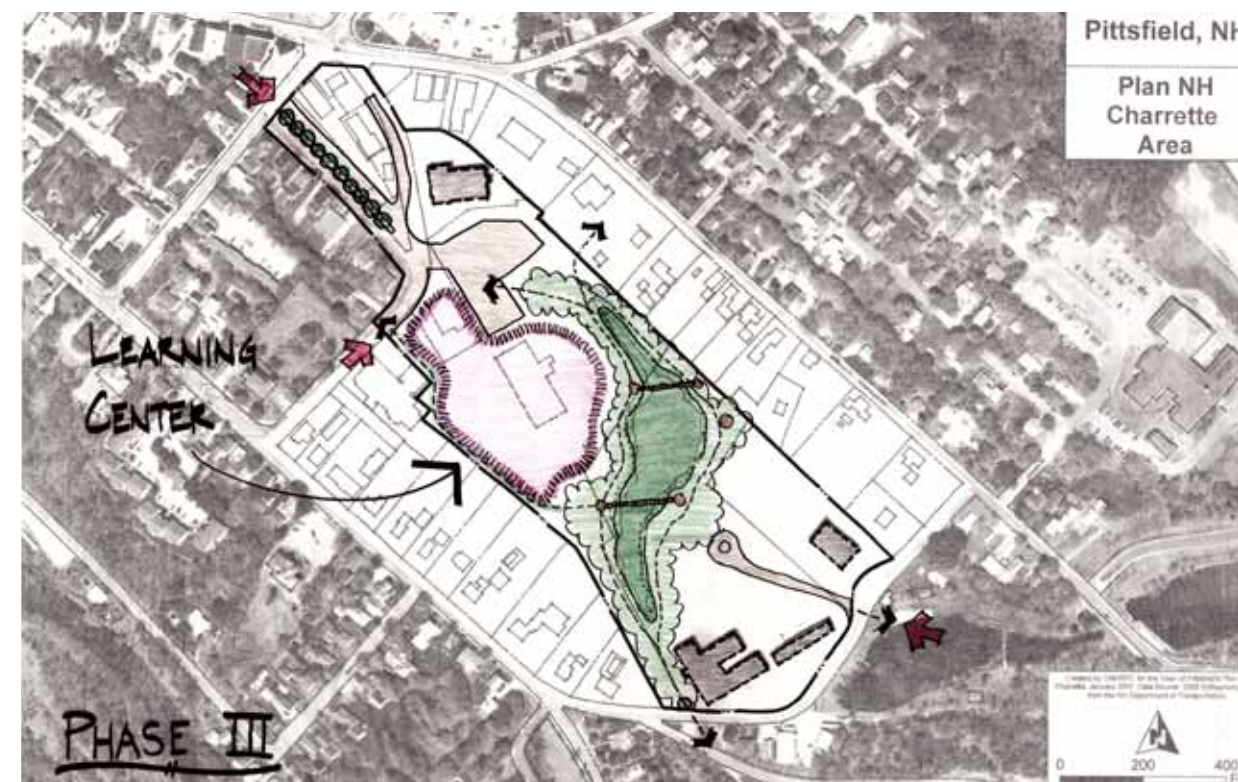


Phase Two
Exhibit: Panel 5/Conceptual Development Master Plan

Phase Three

The third phase of the Concept Development Master Plan begins to capitalize on the increased awareness of the location, and pedestrian circulation systems moving through the site. There is now a greater opportunity to attract private development.

- The larger north end of the site lends itself to a medical, or educational campus environment, creating a destination and drawing people to the site, and make strong connections to the commercial area of Pittsfield.
- A campus environment enables easy integration of pedestrian circulation systems.
- Opportunities can be created for business and education collaborations, such as a vocational training center.

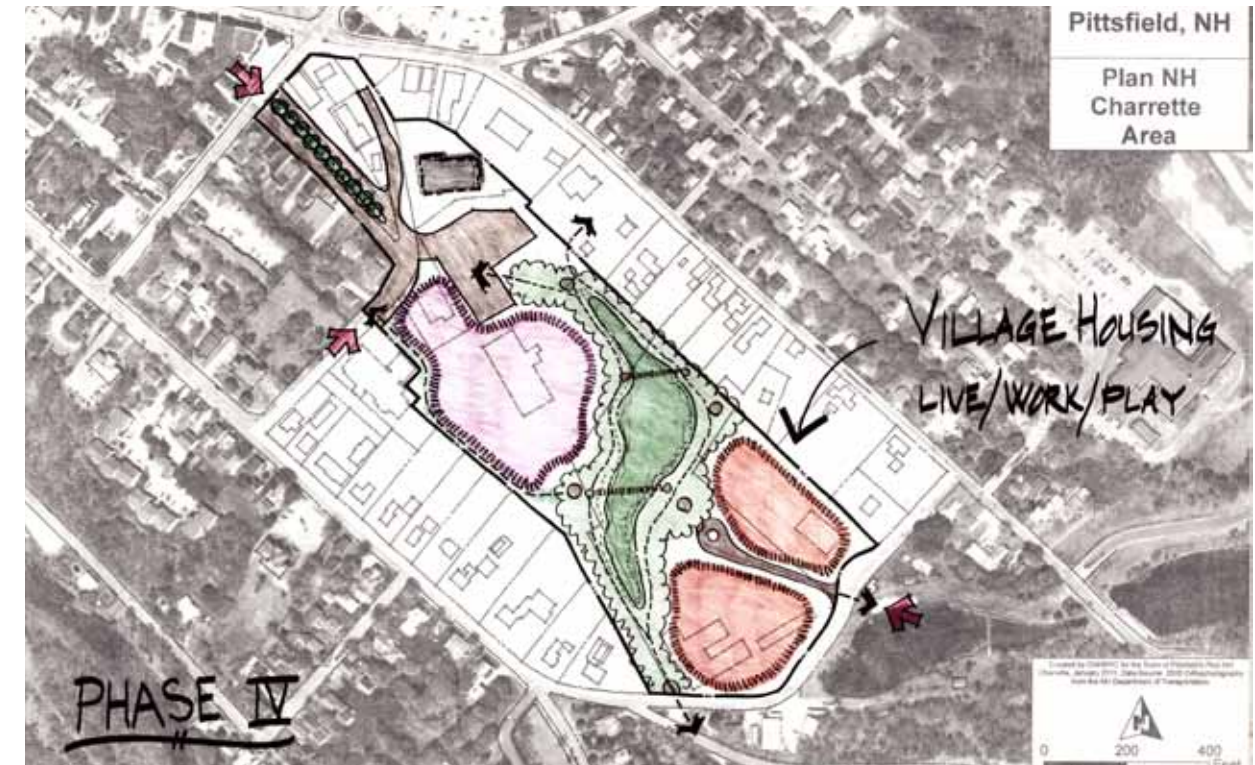


Phase Three
Exhibit: Panel 6/Conceptual Development Master Plan

Phase Four

The fourth phase of the Concept Development Master Plan builds off of the people now coming to the site for work and recreation. With continued private investment, a mix of uses can begin to flourish on the site.

- Create well-designed, energy-efficient housing on the south end of the site to attract empty-nesters and young professionals, and making connections to the surrounding neighborhood areas and recreational amenities.
- Create work/live studio-style housing that would provide additional small retail destinations on the site.

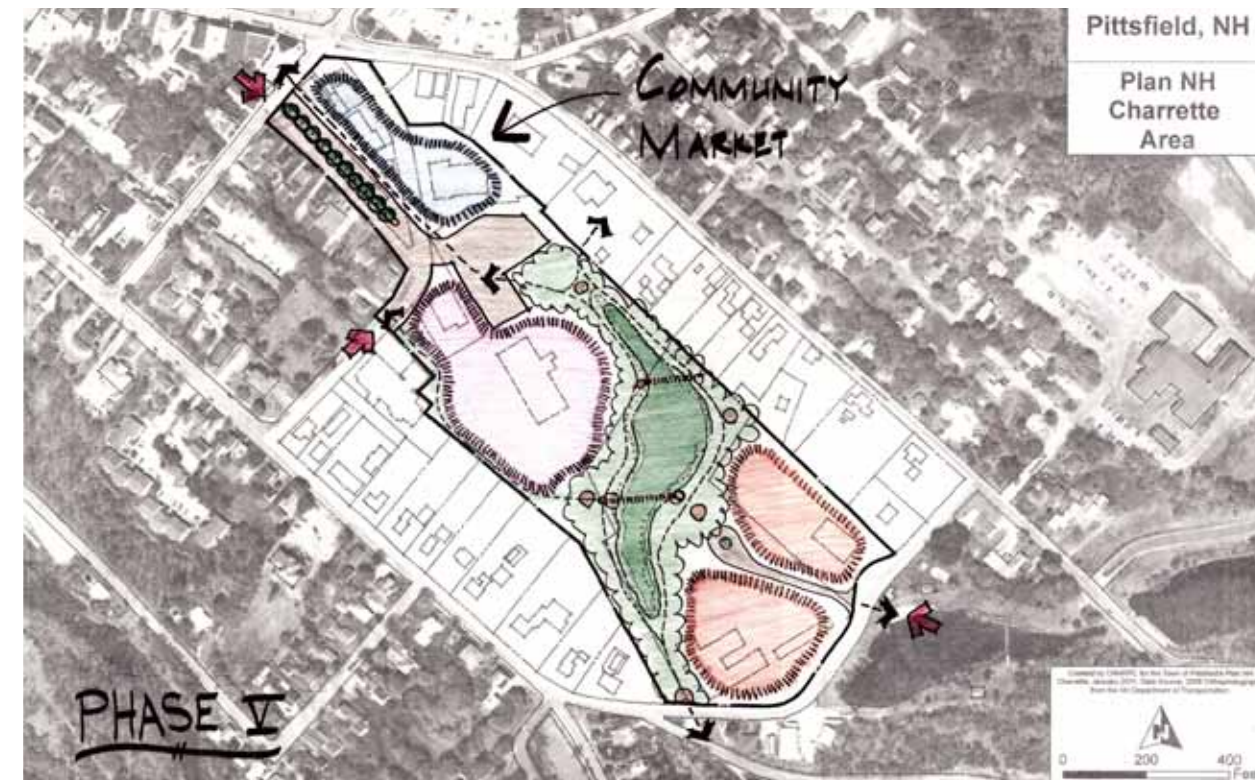


Phase Four
Exhibit: Panel 7/Conceptual Development Master Plan

Phase Five

The fifth phase of the Concept Development Master Plan continues to establish a vibrant livable community within and around the site. With the establishment of a “critical mass”, the final phase can further enhance community-wide amenities through additional private development.

- The area of the site closest to the Carroll and Depot Street intersection can support a community food market that would continue the original farmer’s market theme, and work to create and support local economies, making a transitional connection to the commercial area of town and the residential neighborhoods.

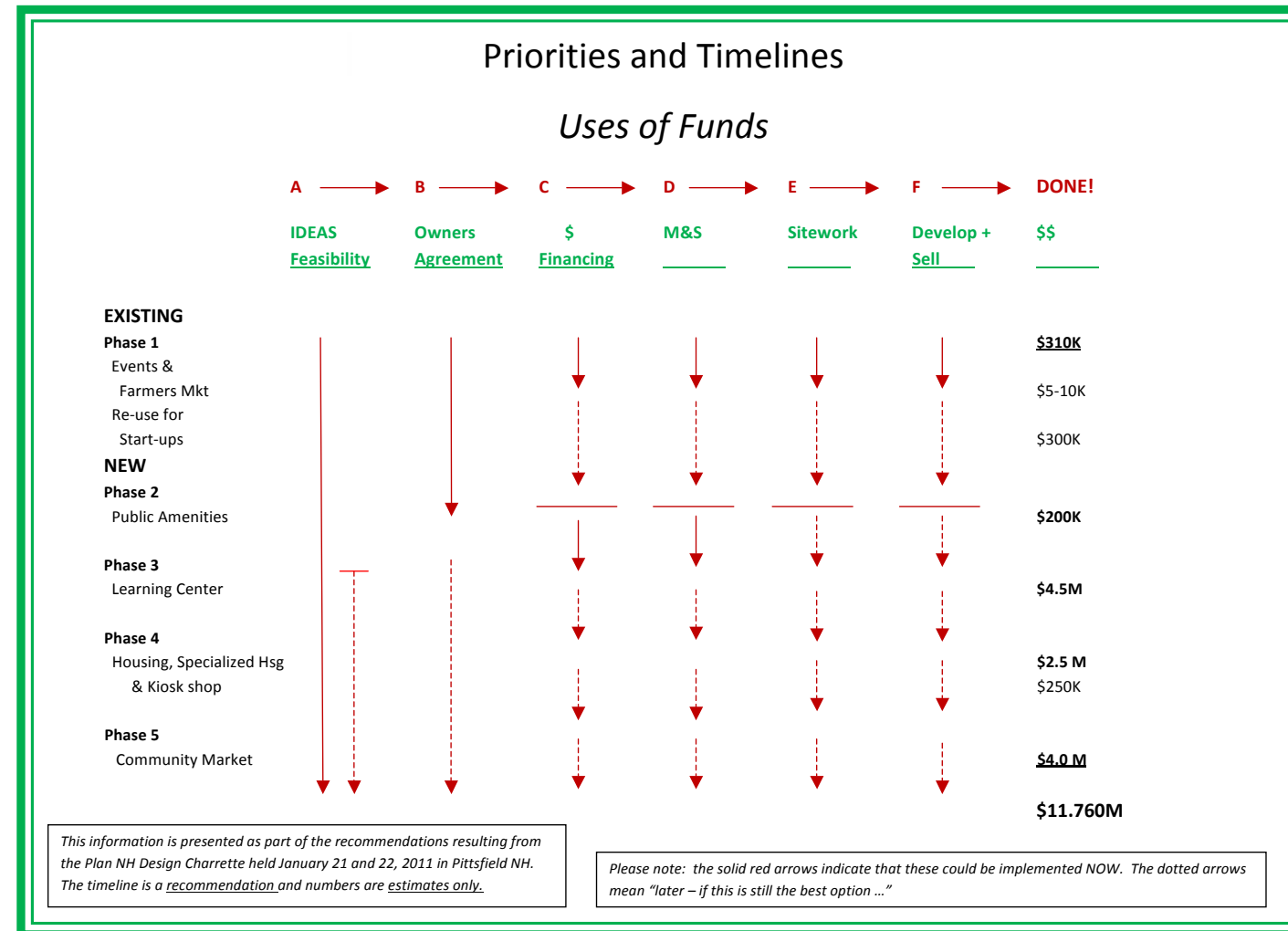


Phase Five
Exhibit: Panel 8/Conceptual Development Master Plan

SUMMARY OF CHARRETTE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS - IMPLEMENTATION GROUP

Implementation Summary:

The Implementation Schedule with Sources and Uses is presented so that this Team's highest hopes – that the Community's future becomes better because of the Plan – are realized. The schedule considers the realities of marketplace trends, costs and political realities for today, and realistic but flexible for tomorrow.



Outline of Possible Funding Sources

for Pittsfield Development Recommendations

	ED\$	TOWN	PRIVATE
New collaborations	?		?
SVRDC/EDC	\$.1		
Town CIP		\$.5	
CDBG	\$1.0M		
NH CDFA Tax Credits	\$2.0 M		
Education Bond NHEAP			\$4.5 M
NHHFA Bond Housing			\$2.750M
Co-op Fund/Bond			\$4.0M
Equity			??
Other grants	??		
			\$11-15M possible

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: Great designs and great plans, but how can we best assure it will not be another “plan on the shelf”?

A: To best enable the designs to be realized, the Plan NH team incorporated an implementation group with the design-team process from the start. This group asked the market, financial and political questions as designs were being considered, so that market, financial and political feasibility were considered and enhanced.

The Team considered what the marketplace might support over the life of the project. This is reflected in the inclusion of both over 55 housing as well as creative-artist housing, both seen as long-term housing growth markets for New Hampshire. Other options were precluded due to their declining market share, or the location constraints of the site. “Ed’s and Meds” – education and medical facilities – are included as their growth continues even during the current recession, and additional growth is projected.

Q: What was considered for this space? Why not a parking garage, or a high-rise tower instead of surface parking and limited-height residential?

In addition to design constraints, each proposed use was weighed against their costs, so that attractive but affordable options would be advocated. Land-designs take advantage of existing – and inexpensive – natural amenities for landscape features. Recreation and park areas are largely presented as untouched – and low-cost – features of great market value.

Q: What do we in the community do next to get going, and make this a reality? How can we limit any public investment during this budget-strapped period?

To move this design forward we recognized the significant internal staffing, capacity and political challenges faced by the Pittsfield Town leadership, and tried to accommodate each.

The team recognized the difficulty of the Town to spend even an absolute minimum now, before seeing new revenues to off-set that expenditure. So the proposed schedule delays the public spending until it is needed, after other improvements have begun to validate the design. It also retains any income producing use until it is needed, or until the concepts are validated.

Q: Who’s going to make this work for the Town?

The project needs a public economic or community developer, to work with the Town and future private developers. There isn’t any Town staff is dedicated to community development – there isn’t any existing in-house economic development capacity - so the

Schedule envisions early steps that can be taken and validated by the volunteer economic development committee, using existing funding sources. With success over time, the Town will have a growing need for an internal development capacity, but also the financial and political support needed to hire or buy this capacity.

Q: How do we maximize our Town’s “bang-for-the-buck”?

The Schedule seeks to maximize the Town’s limited investments to leverage other public and private funding. To be sure that ant Town investment – including the past investment into the economic development committee – gets leveraged; the Schedule shows all of the development steps as one project. This allows the town to show its funding and indirect contributions (ex: time of staff and volunteers) as “match”, and where that match might be used to entice grant and private funding. As part of a whole multi-year development scenario, the Town’s proposed match – over time – can leverage many times that amount in funding from others, and generate new tax-base that more than re-pays for the investment.

Lastly, the schedule is flexible, allowing town leadership to adjust to opportunities over time. The schedule shows “must-do now”, as well as “will need to do later” tasks, based upon project steps being obtained. However, should the project get diverted to a different- better directions during this multi-year period, no funds or efforts have been wasted anticipating a development that does not occur.





PLAN NH

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Pittsfield Charrette
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