Greenfield Community Design Charrette Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks go to those individuals who donated their professional and personal time to make this charrette a success. Also, many thanks to the citizens, businesses and town officials who shared their time, services, thoughts and knowledge with us.

The Plan NH Charrette Team

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The Greenfield Team

Without the support and participation of all of the following individuals, organizations and businesses this charrette would not have been possible:

Sponsors:
Ruth and James Ewing Fund for the Monadnock Community Foundation
Peoples United Bank
New England Forest Products
Delay’s Harvester Market

Professional Services:
Jack Daniels Motor Inn, Peterborough, NH
Fiddleheads Café, Hancock, NH
STA Transportation, Peterborough, NH
Four Star Caterers, Rindge, NH
Southwest Region Planning Commission

Behind the Scenes:
Charrette Steering Committee:
Andrew Heck
Sherri Fox

Hospitality Committee:
Susie Moller
Mary Ann Grant
Mary Ann Beard

Town Groups:
Town Administrator: Aaron Patt
Town Office Manager: Catherine Shaw

Plan NH is grateful for the special support of these members:

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Plan NH Comes to Greenfield, NH
September 26 and 27, 2014

Who is Plan NH?

Plan New Hampshire, The Foundation for Shaping the Built Environment (Plan NH), is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization formed in 1989.

Plan NH has a Vision of a New Hampshire that is vibrant and healthy for its people, its economies and the environment.

Plan NH’s role, or Mission, in achieving that Vision is to encourage good planning and design and development because, we believe, that what we build, and where and how we build it has a significant impact on that vibrancy and health.

Plan NH champions principles and ideas that balance building projects - and this would include anything built in the public realm, such as buildings, roads, bridges, memorials, public sculpture - with

- The needs of people - where they live, how they get about, what services are necessary, what they value
- maintaining the “sense of place” of our towns, cities and villages that make them unique – including preserving historic assets, open spaces, agriculture and farming
- protecting our air, water, flora and fauna

Among our signature programs is the design charrette, an exercise that brings professionals from our membership together with our communities to explore design ideas, usually around a town center or other significant neighborhood. Through recommendations made, Plan NH can demonstrate the role and importance of the principles and ideas noted above in concrete, real examples.

What is a Design Charrette?

Simply stated, a Charrette is a brief, yet intense, brainstorming session in which information and many ideas are brought together for the purpose of defining potential planning recommendations and possible design solutions for an identified need. For Plan NH, this is usually related to a town center or other significant neighborhood in a community.

The charrette is typically of a short duration – for Plan NH, 8 hours on a Friday for listening and then another 8 hours the next day for brainstorming, crafting recommended solutions, and presenting thoughts to the community.

The Charrette Process:

- Identify the need or opportunity
- Collect information from the community itself to understand more deeply and broadly the situation
- Analyze and evaluate what is seen and heard
- Develop conclusions and recommendation for meeting the need or addressing the challenge

Most importantly, the process engages planning and design professionals (and/or others with related areas of expertise) in direct dialog and conversation with local residents and community representatives to collect information needed in order to develop good and relevant recommendations about how to address a particular challenge. Plan NH sees this part of the process as a period of discovery: discovering who the community is, what they value, what they really want, dream and hope for. This community input is essential and critical to the value of the outcomes.

The results of a Plan NH charrette are general and overarching planning and design recommendations, rather than specific, “how to” construction directions. Plan NH does not dictate, but suggests. Most often, the outcome of a Plan NH charrette is described as a “vision”: an expression of how things might be, based on what the team saw and heard and learned through the discovery process.
Why did Plan NH come to Greenfield?

In late 2013, the town of Greenfield submitted an application for a Plan NH Community Design Charrette. The town was seeking assistance to “address the infrastructure and surrounding buildings of the downtown [Village] area in order to manifest the residents’ vision of a social, cultural and economic center that provides local services.”

Upon formal consideration, the application met three essential criteria:

1. The completed application identified a specific area of need and interest within the community, and the community was eager and ready to address it
2. The application’s description of existing conditions in the community demonstrated that there was organized and committed community support already present in Greenfield.
3. Greenfield was recognized as a community that takes initiative and was ready and willing to follow through.

Formal approval was confirmed following a meeting between Plan NH representatives and Bob Marshall and Aaron Patt of Greenfield in early 2014. At that time they chose the September dates for the charrette.
Adopted in August 2012, a Vision for the community includes the following:

- Maintain rural and historical character of the town.
- To keep Greenfield values, Village Center to be given priority attention, especially historical and cultural assets
- Promote economic development to support town services
- Encourage infill development in the Village, including mixed-use, to help with housing choices

The challenges to Plan NH:

How can Greenfield have a vibrant town center by promoting economic development that includes the social, economic and cultural assets of the Village?

Or

What type of planning and other pro-active actions might Greenfield take with respect to the Village in order to meet future needs of the community, promote its vitality and vibrancy, preserve its small-town atmosphere, and its cultural and historic values?

“We can begin by doing things at the local level, like planting community gardens or looking out for our neighbors. That is how change takes place in living systems, not from above but from within, from many local actions occurring simultaneously.”

Grace Lee Boggs
Greenfield Town Officials and residents gathered with the Plan NH Charrette team on Friday, September 26, 2014 in the Meeting House to discuss the details of the town’s proposal with the Plan NH team. Design professionals on the team included an architect, two landscape architects, an engineer, a planner, and the Plan NH Executive Director. The critical piece that the Charrette Team lacked, which only the local residents could provide, was the intimate knowledge of the Town and the vision for its future.

Plan NH had been in Greenfield for a charrette in 1997. While many of the recommendations from that event we implemented, 15 years had passed and the town felt it might be worth another look, with current thinking.

After a bus tour of Greenfield, an introductory meeting was held with key elected officials, and community leaders to inform the Plan NH team about the significant issues facing the study area.

Greenfield is a working-person community, with many still-rural attributes. The town is lucky to have a defined Center, with a general store, the Meeting Place (mixed use of old hotel, now with little café and some apartments), the town offices and library all around a large front yard to the Meeting House which serves as a green. The school is just a few hundred yards to the west of the center. Some sidewalks and lighting have been installed, but more could be used.

Two public “listening sessions” were held on Friday afternoon and evening, with a wonderful community supper held in between sessions. (see photo at left. Plan NH had never had linen table cloths and such beautiful tablescapes before!)

The purpose of these listening sessions was to describe the challenge that the town had set out for the charrette team and to gather input from the community regarding thoughts and ideas they had about the Town Center.

Citizens answered questions:
- What do you love about Greenfield?
- What changes have taken place over the last 20 years?
- What’s missing?

Saturday was “roll up the sleeves day”, when the charrette team reconvened, recapped, and prepared recommendations and supporting graphics for presentation to the Community in the afternoon.
Here is a summary of answers to the questions posed in the Listening Sessions (see page ___ for full transcription)

**What do you love about Greenfield?**
- Rural nature and features
- Sense of community
- Feeling of safety and security

**What changes have taken place over the last 20 years that have affected the town?**
- Lots of newcomers, but no volunteers (for town committees, etc.)
- School district
- Fewer community events
- Growing older population, fewer younger people
- Family economics

**What’s missing?**
- Ability to get around Village without a car
- Places to gather (especially for young people 12—17)
- Broadband
- Revitalized Rec department
- Local enterprise
In late 2013, the town of Greenfield submitted an application for a Plan NH Community Design Charrette. The town was seeking assistance to “address the infrastructure and surrounding buildings of the downtown [Village] area in order to manifest the residents’ vision of a social, cultural and economic center that provides local services.” The application was accepted by Plan NH, and on September 26 and 27, 2014, volunteers from Plan NH came to Greenfield to look at the “target area,” listen to townspeople, and from what they saw and learned, develop recommendations to achieve the goals the town wanted. Through listening sessions, the team learned:

**What do you love about Greenfield?**
- Rural nature and features
- Sense of community
- Feeling of safety and security

**What changes have taken place over the last 20 years that have affected the town?**
- Lots of newcomers, but no volunteers (for town committees, etc.)
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**What’s missing?**
- Ability to get around Village without a car
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- Broadband
- Revitalized Rec department
- Local enterprise

The team identified certain existing conditions, issues and opportunities:

- Pedestrian conflicts (e.g., difficult to cross road in some places)
- Connectivity (sidewalks end, no crosswalks where needed, more)
- Parking (perceived lack thereof)
- Wayfinding/directional signs and information
- Underutilized and vacant buildings
- Residential diversity (exists but need more)

**Team recommendations:**
- Extend sidewalks & develop streetscape in core [Village Center] and at “gateways”
- Improve access and improve “Meadow Park” [area over the community septic system] in the Village
- Redevelop “gas station” property
- Capitalize on the trail system
- Formalize and add parking at Town House, Town Offices and Meadow Park
- Consider adding solar in Meadow Park area to supply energy to municipal buildings, and also on new residential buildings where feasible
- Infill vacant and underutilized parcels in the core of the Village
- Limited commercial, including bike shop, coffee shop, farm/local products store
- Residential apartments over/behind commercial
- Develop additional facilities and cottages at the Greenfield Inn
- Improve/Enhance Civic Buildings
Plan Recommendations

- Develop better options for parking at Town-owned properties
- Create opportunities for redevelopment and infill development that reinforce the Village and add vitality
- Create better bicycle and pedestrian connectivity
- Build on the work that has been done to date
- Work with NHDOT to improve roadways in their jurisdiction, and to improve safety
Infill Development Opportunities

There 3 or 4 other properties that are located very close to the 2 main roadway intersections that should be developed with multifamily residential or residential above commercial to create the critical mass needed to support a couple of additional local businesses that the community could support.

It would be important to ensure that any new infill structures close to the center of the village are placed on their sites in way that reinforces the street edge and contributes to “Placemaking”.

Parking

Even though many residents commented that there is a lack of parking, the charrette team believes that there is more than enough parking within easy access of the village center.

However, much of the parking is either hidden or not clearly identified.

In addition, much of the parking is inefficient and could be easily be reorganized to allow for a greater number of parking spaces within existing parking areas, particularly at the Meeting House and adjacent to the Town Offices.
The existing Greenfield Inn property is one location that might be considered for increased development and density.

The team recommends looking at both long-term and short-term living opportunities here— it is very close to both the commercial core of the village and the community septic system.

Some development possibilities for this property could be:

- The renovation and expansion of the Inn to provide hotel rooms in the village that would serve visitors to the area and to Crotched Mountain.
- The renovation and expansion of the Inn to provide apartment or condominium units for residents looking for smaller living units.

In addition to the renovation/expansion of the Inn building, a cluster of small cottages could be located on the property. Cottages could be duplex or single unit structures with living units from 500 sf to 1,200 sf organized around a shared open space.
Getting about in Greenfield’s Village Center

Town of Greenfield residents and local officials both wanted to develop a more vibrant and walkable Village Center to help promote economic development.

Based on discussions with residents, business owners, Town officials, and safety officers within the Greenfield community, however, pedestrian safety was identified to be of utmost concern in the Village Center. The Town of Greenfield and Plan NH worked collaboratively to design a recommended pedestrian network to improve pedestrian circulation and connectivity (being able to get from point to point seamlessly).

One way to enhance or create a walkable area is by applying a concept called Context Sensitive Solutions.

Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) is a collaborative (among property owners, users and engineers), interdisciplinary approach that emphasizes a transportation design that fits in with the physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic, and environmental resources while maintaining safety and mobility.

Transportation here means how people travel – whether by foot, bicycle, skateboard, wheelchair, car, truck, bus, etc.

Some benefits of CSS include

- a more cost-effective roadway design to better accommodate community objectives, such as multi-modal transportation
- efficient land use
- preservation of cultural and environmental resources
- increased safety
- and, as a result of all of the above, more “livable” communities.

Improving the integration and connectivity of a transportation system is an important step in developing an efficient network using various modes of transportation for the movement of travelers (and for goods and services).

- A connected network supports easy transition between transportation systems and encourages “multi-modal” trip-making (i.e., using different ways of travel to get from one point to another)
- A fully integrated and connected transportation system helps to improve the quality of life for those living and working in the area and is also important for maintaining a vibrant economy.
IMPORTANT NOTE: Transportation is the collective term for how we get about, from one place to another. For most of us, it includes foot travel (even if just to get to the car or bicycle and then from car or bicycle to destination), car, bus, train ...

But keep in mind, transportation is a means of access —
to jobs, to school, to the grocery store, to health care and other services, to connections with friends and family, and more.

Those who drive cars should always keep in mind that there are those of us who do not drive — the reason does not matter —
but, like all of us, need access to jobs, food, and more.
Safe, seamless connections from home to destinations and back again are critical for the quality of life for all of us.
A closer look at the Pedestrian Activity Center

The Village Center represents a pedestrian activity center with:

- Greenfield Town offices and Police Department located along the western side of Sawmill Road north of Forest Road.
- Greenfield Town Meeting House along the northern side of Forest Road between Sawmill Road and Francestown Road.
- Stephenson Memorial Library on the southern side of Forest Road east of Slip Road.
- Greenfield Meeting Place on the southwest corner of the Forest Road and Francestown Road/Slip Road intersection.
- Delay’s Harvest Market on the southwest corner of the Forest Road and Sawmill Road/775 Forest Road driveway intersection.

Crosswalks are striped across Slip Road and the Forest Road west leg of the intersection. However:

- The crosswalks that meet on the southwest corner of the intersection (i.e., adjacent to Greenfield Market Place) are not in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements as they do not provide curbing for a refuge area and they intersect, rather than having a separation with an area of refuge.

Further, there is a ramp provided from the crosswalk to the sidewalk only on the south-eastern corner of the intersection.

Pedestrian Amenities

With the several destinations for pedestrian traffic, connectivity between these areas is desired to provide a safe means of travel as well as reduce the amount of vehicle trips required.

A field inventory revealed the following available pedestrian amenities within the Village Center:

- The eastern intersection (i.e., Forest Road/Francestown Road/Slip Road) includes sidewalks provided along the south side of Forest Road east of the intersection, the east side of Slip Road for a short length, and the north side of Forest Road west of the intersection.

However, sidewalks are not provided along either side of Francestown Road, the north side of Forest Road east of the intersection, the west side of Slip Road, or the south side of Forest Road west of the intersection.
Pedestrian considerations

According to ADA requirements, a curb ramp is intended to provide an accessible route that people with disabilities can use to transition between a roadway and a curbed sidewalk.

The ramps in Greenfield do not include a detectable warning surface (i.e., distinctive surface pattern of domes that alert people with vision impairments of their approach to street crossings and hazardous drop-offs).

**Consideration should be given to upgrading the crosswalks and curb ramps to ADA standards.**

The northern end of the Forest Road crosswalk does provide access to a pedestrian walkway that leads to Greenfield Town Meeting House.

Pedestrian Crossing (W11-2) warning signs with diagonal downward-pointing arrow (W16-7P) plaques are post-mounted on the Forest Road approaches.

The Pedestrian Crossing sign and plaque on the Forest Road eastbound approach are posted on the southwest corner of the intersection at the crosswalk location.

The Pedestrian Crossing sign and plaque on the Forest Road westbound approach, however, are posted on the northeast corner of the intersection (i.e., ±90 feet away from the crosswalk on the opposite side of the intersection).

**Consideration should be given to replacing the downward arrow pointing plaque on the Forest Road westbound with an AHEAD (W16-9P) plaque.**
The western intersection (i.e., Forest Road/Sawmill Road/775 Forest Road) includes:

- Sidewalks provided along the east side of Sawmill Road and the north side of Forest Road east and west of the intersection.

  Sidewalks are not provided along the west side of Sawmill Road or along the south side of Forest Road.

- A crosswalk is only striped across Sawmill Road.

  There are no Pedestrian Crossing (W11-2) warning signs posted for the Sawmill Road crosswalk.

- There are ramps provided from the Sawmill Road crosswalk to the sidewalks on the northwestern and southeastern corners of the intersection.

  The ramps, however, do not include a detectable warning surface.

  Consideration should be given to upgrading the crosswalks and curb ramps to ADA standards.

Curbing is provided within the Village Center to encourage a separation between vehicle and pedestrian travel in the areas of the sidewalks. Curbing is present at the following locations:

- At the eastern intersection along the south side of Forest Road east of the intersection, the north side of Forest Road west of the intersection, and the east side of Slip Road.

- At the western intersection along the east side of Sawmill Road and the north side of Forest Road east and west of the intersection.

**Funding possibilities:**

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) administers Federal and state funding allocations through programs that may be applicable to a Village Center project.

Consideration of these funding mechanisms should be discussed in collaboration with Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC) officials.

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) was developed under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) federal law that replaces the Safe Routes to School, Recreational Trails, Scenic and Cultural Byways, and Transportation Enhancement programs.

The TAP has combined previously separate programs such as Safe Routes to School, Recreational Trails, Transportation Enhancement, and Scenic and Cultural Byways.

This single, more flexible program provides choices for non-motorized modes of transportation that are safe, reliable, and convenient.

Some eligible activities under the TAP include the planning, design, and construction of:

- on- and off-road trails for pedestrians, cyclists, and other non-motorized transportation methods.
- infrastructure projects to provide safe routes for non-motorists such as children, elderly, and people with disabilities to access daily needs.
Intersections

The Village Center includes the junction of Route 136 and Route 31 where the roadways intersect to form two unsignalized (i.e., no traffic lights) intersections.

The eastern intersection consists of Route 136 East (Francestown Road) as the northern leg, Route 31 South (Forest Road) as the eastern leg, Slip Road as the southern leg, and Route 31 North/Route 136 West (Forest Road) as the western leg of the intersection.

- The Forest Road eastbound and westbound approaches operate under free-flow control – i.e., there is no stopping while passing through.
- The Francestown Road southbound approach and the Slip Road northbound approach operate under STOP sign and STOP bar (i.e., pavement striping to indicate where motorists should stop prior to proceeding into the intersection) control.
- An overhead flashing beacon is present at the intersection to supplement the control of traffic: The free flow along the Forest Road approaches the light which they see as having a flashing yellow, and STOP control along the Francestown Road and Slip Road approaches are supplemented with flashing red.
- The overhead flashing beacon is placed on a span wire that extends between utility poles located on the northeast corner and the southwest corner of the intersection.
- Directional flow along Forest Road and Francestown Road is separated by double yellow centerlines. There are no pavement markings to separate directional flow along Slip Road.
The western intersection consists of Route 31 (Sawmill Road) as the northern leg, Route 31 South/Route 136 East (Forest Road) as the eastern leg, a driveway for 775 Forest Road (an apartment with fueling dispensers) as the southern leg, and Route 136 (Forest Road) as the western leg of the intersection.

- The Forest Road eastbound and westbound approaches operate under free-flow control.
- The Sawmill Road southbound approach operates under STOP sign and STOP bar control.
- There is no traffic control posted or striped on the 775 Forest Road driveway approach to the intersection.

Directional flow along Forest Road and Sawmill Road is separated by double yellow centerlines. There are no pavement markings to separate directional flow along the 775 Forest Road driveway.

Based on the NHDOT’s Legislative Class structure:
- Forest Road, Francestown Road, and Sawmill Road are classified as Class II roadways (Secondary Highways) and are under NHDOT jurisdiction.
- Slip Road is classified as a Class V roadway (Local Road) under the Town of Greenfield jurisdiction.
Zoning
Zoning Recommendations

The team recognized that existing zoning in the target area might impede most recommendations:

**Business district**
- 1.5 acre required
- 150’ frontage
- 50’ front setback
- 25’ side/rear setback
- 2 parking spaces
- no manufactured housing
- restrictive regulations for accessory units

**Village District**
- 2 acre minimum
- 250’ frontage
- 100’ front setback
- 50’ side/rear setback
- no manufactured housing
- 2 parking spaces
- restrictive accessory unit regulations

The area shown on the graphic (opposite page) represents the center of Greenfield Village. All of the properties shown on the graphic—along with a few just beyond the limits of the map—provide the physical critical mass that defines the PLACE known as Greenfield.

Almost all of the structures located on the properties in this area preceded the adoption of zoning regulations in the Town of Greenfield. Based on the current zoning regulations for the two districts (Village and Business) that make up this area, almost every single existing structure is in nonconformity with the current zoning regulations, particularly with respect to building setbacks and lot area.

We assume that collectively, most of the structures in the village center have together created a desirable area that the town would like to, at a minimum maintain, and probably reinforce.

Style, size, location in relation to the streets and to each other—these are fundamental characteristics that create the sense of place that is Greenfield’s Center. So that this is not lost, and indeed is enhanced in the future, the team recommends that zoning be revised to ensure that any new development, renovations, and additions in this area can actually be done in a way that fits together with and reinforces the existing character.

The team recommends the Town look at modifying zoning to allow the existing village form to be replicated and reinforced:
- 1/4 acre minimum lot size or equivalent bedrooms
- Higher allowable densities if tied into the Community Septic System
- Reconsider list of allowed uses to accommodate desired ones
- Creating a “Build-to” line rather than front setback for certain properties to reinforce the streetscape and visual qualities of the Village,
- Use life safety code to set side setbacks -- no required number
- Encourage accessory units
- 50’ frontage
- Reduce parking requirements (1 space per 2 bedrooms)
A note about SOLAR

A number of people mentioned that they wanted to find a way to do solar-powered generation of power. There are a couple of things that the team would like to make Greenfield aware of.

**Vital Communities** in the Upper Valley has been rolling out a program called *Solarize Upper Valley*, now in its second round. (Round 1 & 2 has included 15 total towns in VT & NH)

*Solarize* is a program to significantly increase the number of residential and small business solar electric systems. Example: Lyme, NH (population 1,679) is a community that participated in round 1 and has just added 25 residential solar systems in between April and September 2014.

Hanover, which kicked its program off in October 2014, hopes to exceed 100 new solar installs.


Hanover just became NH’s first Green Power Community certified by the EPA

[http://www.hanovernh.org/Pages/HanoverNH_News/01EA0BEC-000F8513](http://www.hanovernh.org/Pages/HanoverNH_News/01EA0BEC-000F8513)

*Group Net Metering* is another way a collection of residents can come together to do solar:

Summary of Recommendations and Next Steps

- Extend sidewalks & develop streetscape in core [Village Center] and at “gateways”
- Improve access and improve “Meadow Park” [area over the community septic system] in the Village. Consider directional signage for parking
- Redevelop “gas station” property
- Capitalize on the trail system, and improve the existing Schoolhouse Trail. Use improved parking at the Town Offices as a trail head for mountain biking.
- Formalize and add parking at Town House, Town Offices and Meadow Park
- Consider adding solar in Meadow Park area to supply energy to municipal buildings, and also on new residential buildings where feasible
- Fill in vacant and underutilized parcels in the core of the Village
- Add Limited commercial, including bike shop, coffee shop, farm/local products store to Main Street
- Develop residential apartments over/behind commercial in the village
- Develop additional facilities and cottages at the Greenfield Inn to accommodate older residents and transient visitors to town
- Improve/Enhance Civic Buildings

Finally, the team outlined what they saw as priorities to start to move forward:

- Find the “low hanging fruit” – what is easily, immediately accessible, with low cost
- Sidewalk Extensions
- Streetscape
- Meadow/Greighwater Park
- Parking areas at Park & Meeting House
- Trail Map of “owned” Trails
- Amenities for trail users – horses & bikes
- Push Broadband Solutions
- Work w/ New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) to improve Route 31 right-of-way
- Resolve property ownership for buildings in the Village that are in need of repair/reconstruction
- Look for business partners – Crotched Mountain, local businesses