

# *A CITY CONNECTED*

Laconia, New Hampshire  
Community Design Charrette  
August 28th and 29th, 2015





# Laconia 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

### Charrette Team

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



## The Laconia Team

### Thank you to:

City Planner: Shanna B. Saunders

Assistant Planner: Brandee Loughlin

The Orton Family Foundation

The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation

Mayor: Ed Engler

Members of the City of Laconia City Council, Planning Board members Warren Hutchins, Bill Contardo, Hamilton McLean, and Edwin Bones, and Master Plan Advisory Team members John Moriarty, Mark Warren, Mike Foote, Dorothy Duffy, Reuben Bassett, Sal Steven-Hubbard, Jeff Thurston, and Suzanne Perley for supporting, welcoming and participating in the charrette.

Members of the public and business owners of Laconia who attended listening sessions and provided crucial background information.





# **Plan NH Comes to Laconia**

**October 28th and 29th, 2015**

## **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.

The mission of Plan NH is to foster excellence in the planning, design, and development of the built environment in New Hampshire.

Plan NH has a *Vision* of a vibrant and healthy New Hampshire.

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 around, 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, intense, brainstorming session in which ideas are brought together collectively for the purpose of defining potential planning and or design recommendations.

### **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 recommendations for meeting the need or addressing the challenge



The process engages planning and design professionals in direct dialog and conversation with local residents and each other 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 is important to the citizens, what they really want. 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 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.



## Why did Plan NH come to Laconia?

In early 2015, Plan NH received an application for a Community Design Charrette from Shanna B. Saunders, Planning Director for the City of Laconia. The charrette represented an exciting opportunity for Plan's volunteers because the City had already undertaken outreach efforts in advance of the Master Plan update scheduled to be completed in 2017.

This project, called Re-Imagine Laconia, is supported by the Orton Family Foundation and the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and has included extensive community outreach, soliciting input at venues such as farmer's markets and "parking days" where community planning is rarely a topic of conversation.

In addition to presenting Plan NH with an exciting opportunity, Laconia's application presented a unique challenge in that the "ask" was more complex than is typical for a two-day charrette. Three distinct focus areas, each with its own history, constituency and challenges; and a history of high-quality planning work meant that Plan NH would have to bring a strong team in order to contribute meaningfully to the conversation about Laconia's future.

After careful consideration, the charrette committee determined that the charrette was an important endeavor based on the following considerations:

1. The efforts of the Re-Imagine Laconia project established a crucial base of public input that the charrette team could use to hit the ground running.
2. The progress to date in the city (including the installation of a roundabout at the Weirs, the construction of Gateway Park, and the purchase of the Colonial Theater) proved that Laconia was a city committed to setting its own course for the future.
3. As the largest city in New Hampshire's Lakes Region, on the banks of the famous Lake Winnepesaukee, the opportunity to contribute to the future of this small but important city was irresistible.

Formal approval was confirmed following a meeting between Plan NH representatives and representatives of the City of Laconia.





# **Laconia's Challenge for Plan NH**

## **THE CHARRETTE BEGINS**

Laconia officials and residents gathered with the Plan NH charrette team on Friday, August 28th, 2015 at the Belknap Mill to discuss the details of the town's proposal with the Plan NH team.

In addition to their professional experience, the volunteer team had decades of combined experience serving on their own local city and town boards, committees, and councils. The critical piece that the charrette team lacked was intimate knowledge of the City and the vision its residents had for the future.

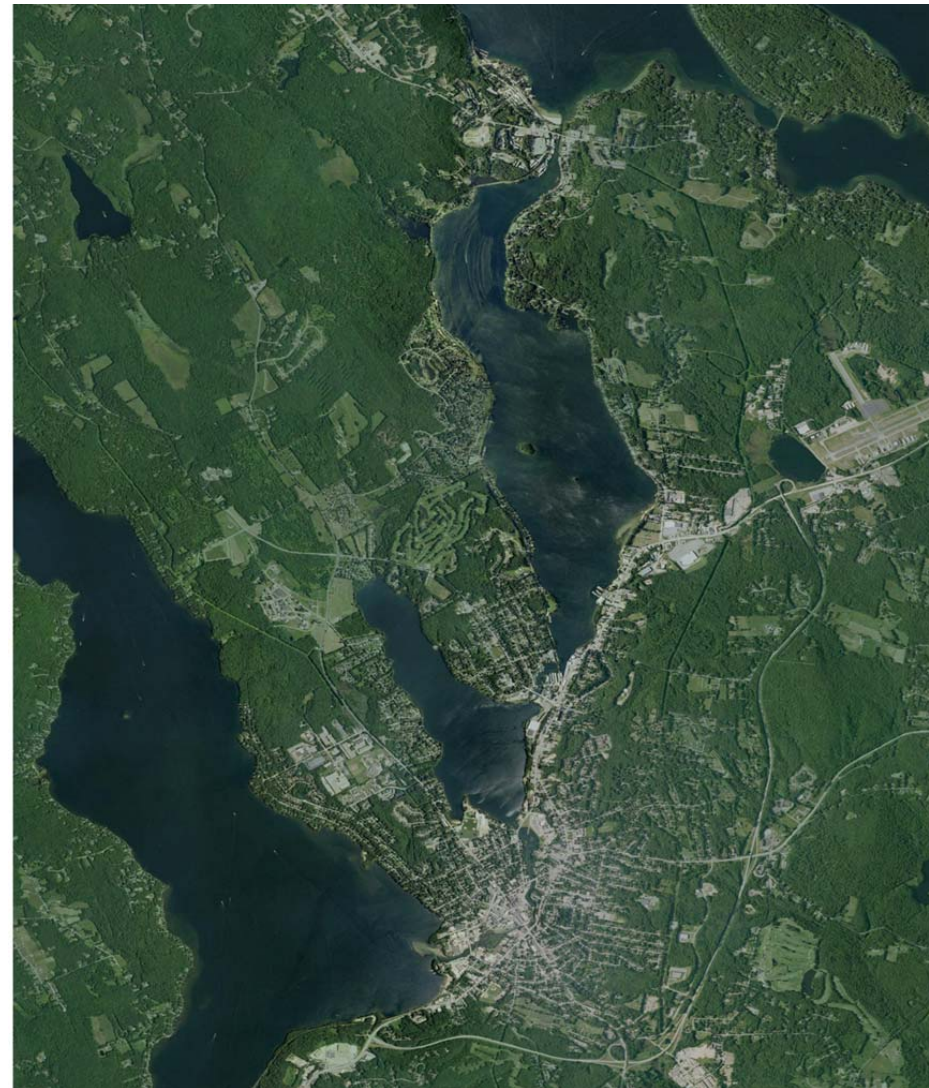
The charrette application described the challenges of balancing the needs of the City to serve its year-round residents with the needs of Motorcycle Week (a world-famous and economically important event that brings several thousand motorcyclists to the city each June) while also giving year-round and seasonal residents of the surrounding towns a reason to visit the City.

An introductory meeting was held with key community stakeholders, town staff and officials, and community leaders to inform the Plan NH team about the significant issues facing the study area. The team took a walking tour of downtown before driving up to Lakeport and the Weirs to get a feel for the full range of physical environments in the City.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

After introductory meetings and tours, the Plan NH Team drafted several guiding principles to inform their work. These principals included:

- Examine challenges facing three distinct parts of the city: Downtown, The Weirs, and Lakeport.
- Reconsider the Land Use plans from the 2007 Master Plan in light of development that has occurred and zoning changes that have been implemented or debated in the last ten years.
- Engage the public in the 2017 Master Plan update by building on the public outreach started by city staff & the Orton Foundation.



## **IMMEDIATE CHALLENGES**

The Plan NH team identified several challenges that were immediately obvious that they would address in their work. These challenges included:

- Economic push-pull of Bike Week creates a complex development environment in the Weirs.
- Downtown suffers from a legacy of negative perceptions including the perceived fall out from Urban Renewal and the perception of Laconia as regional hub absorbing the problems of surrounding towns.
- Lakeport does not have a strong identity.
- Geographical dispersion of attractions and amenities; travel among them generally requires a car.

# **What the Community Told Us**

Public listening sessions were held during the afternoon and evening of August 28th.

The purpose of the sessions was for the public to share their ideas with the charrette team about what they see and what they would like to see in the study area.

Residents were also asked to let the Plan NH team know what may not be known by the team about the study area and the community.

The charrette team also reviewed the information that had been gathered in recent months by city staff and volunteers as part of the Re-Imagine Laconia project.

## **What Do You See? Folks told us:**

- A tight housing market with pressure from second home-buyers.
- People with drug problems come to Laconia. Their presence feeds a perception problem and keeps some from moving to the city.
- Lack of public transportation.
- A transitioning economy, with more people working farther from home.
- Some great newer businesses in town.
- There is a perception that new housing being built consists mostly of rental properties, whether market rate and publicly financed.
- Great schools but demographics are challenging. Perception is that schools are not good.
- A community of people who take care of each other and are very involved in local efforts (Children's Auction, etc).
- Wonderful natural resources that are assets.
- People value the history of Laconia.
- A small but thriving arts scene on Canal Street.
- Laconia has a "small town feel" where everyone knows each other – "neighborliness."

## **What Do You Want To See?**

- More public water access.
- Better public transit.
- Better signage.
- More business and more apartments downtown.
- Expanded WOW trail.
- Laconia (specifically the Weirs) as a year-round destination.
- A better perception of Laconia by residents and outsiders.
- A larger arts and entertainment scene (theater, culture, etc).
- Better care taken of local properties (a lot are in disrepair, look bad).
- Need to attract young families/young professionals who will stay here.



## **What Else Does Plan NH Need to Know?**

- The state school property (former home for the mentally ill, closed since 1991) could be an important redevelopment opportunity.
- One-way traffic pattern has been reviewed and will be retained in the downtown.
- Motorcycle Week is important and can't be taken for granted.
- Much of the property at the Weirs is owned by relatively few property owners.





# **Corridor and Transportation Overview**

Laconia is a city on a north-south axis. The charrette team focused on three areas: Downtown, Lakeport (including Union Ave.) and the Weirs. Each focus area is itself a place that locals and others from around the Lakes Region travel to for work, recreation, and dining. What struck the team on its orientation tour was how difficult it could be to get from place to place, and thus how unlikely it would be for a resident to go from one place where he or she lived or worked to another.

Put another way, because of the weak transportation network in and around the Laconia, many residents do not benefit directly from the wonderful amenities in their own city. Many residents, when asked about the Weirs or Downtown, simply answered “I don’t go there.” Visiting the Weirs during the summer, when the place is most appealing but the road is choked with traffic, was especially unlikely for residents to consider.

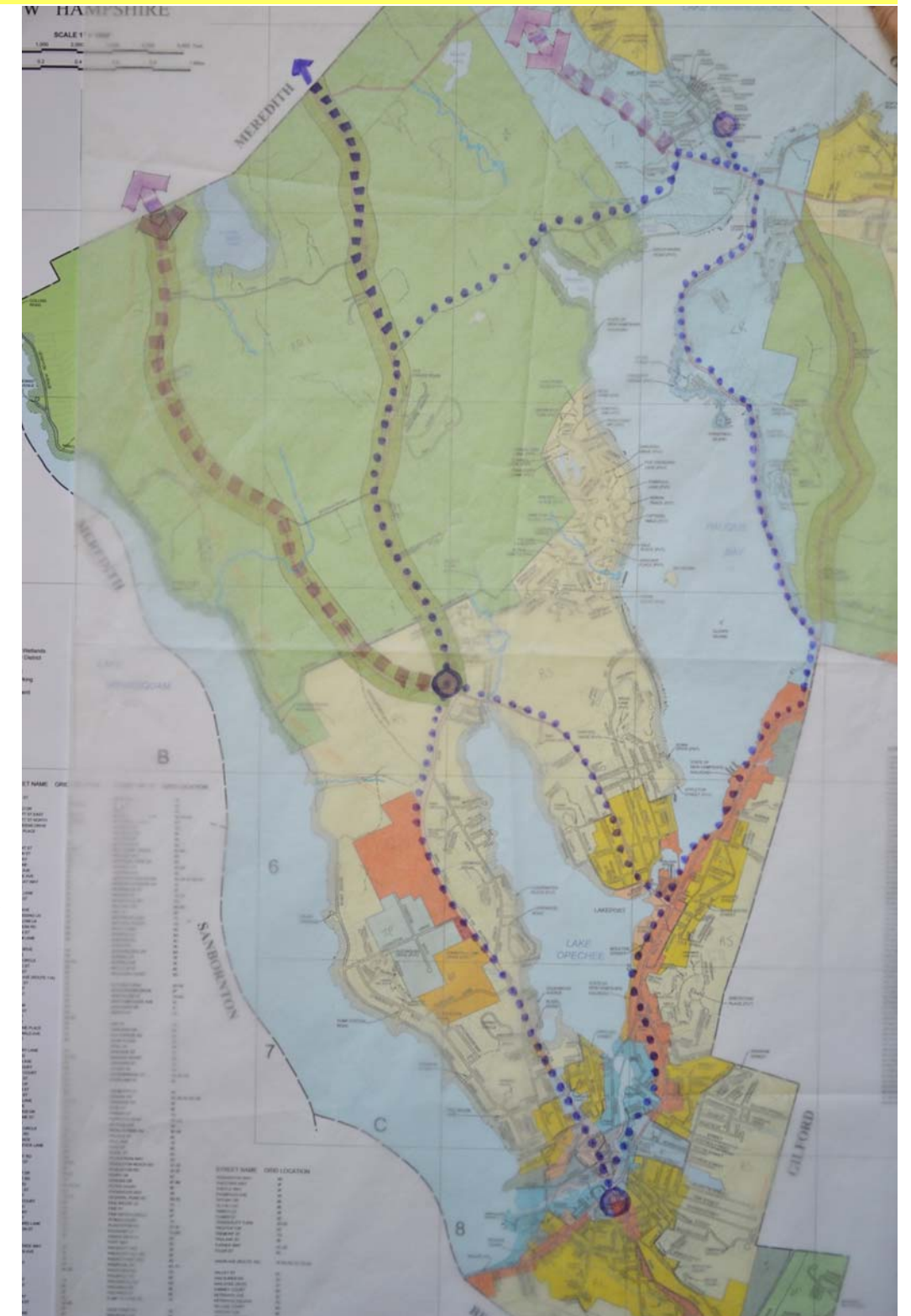
The flaws in a transportation environment that requires every individual to have a motor vehicle are familiar. Such a system marginalizes the young and old and other people who do not drive, and imposes a burden on the poor who must bear the expense of owning and maintain a car just to get to work or school. These limitations are magnified in a place with a seasonal tourist attraction; the popularity of the Weirs makes it difficult to get around even for those adults who do own cars and don’t mind driving.

The potential benefits of adopting a transportation strategy that supports people who walk and/or bicycle to get around, as well as public transportation thus has the potential to improve life for residents of and visitors to Laconia in many different ways:

- Current residents, including but not limited to teens and seniors who may not have access to a car or may not drive, could take advantage of more that the city has to offer.
- Those who work in the city, particularly at the many tourist-oriented businesses along Weirs Boulevard, would have other options for traveling to and from work.
- City businesses that depend on employees for service-sector jobs, often working irregular hours, would have access to a greater labor force.
- Laconia would be a more attractive place to young professionals, potential retirees and young families looking for a city with economic and cultural vitality and outdoor recreation.

Members of the charrette team sketched concepts for a series of multi-use paths, centered on the existing WOW trail that is already partially built and incorporating various strategies to make biking and walking safe and appealing.

*At right, a concept for a network of multi-use trails and dedicated bike lanes and sidewalks that could provide additional transportation options for residents of and visitors to Laconia.*





# Connectivity and Wayfinding

With **transportation and connectivity** identified as key considerations, the charrette team turned its attention to recommendations that could form part of a transportation strategy that could help people get from place to place.

The team working on these issues quickly identified two areas that are key to this effort:

1. Continued effort to complete the WOW trail, and to incorporate it into a system of multi-use trails and lanes; and
2. Improved wayfinding kiosks and signage.



Source: <http://wowtrail.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2013/03/standard-page-color-map-for-inside-of-tri-fold-20100915.pdf>



**The WOW (Winnepesaukee-Opechee-Winnisquam) Trail** is a 10' wide, paved, multi-use path that currently connects downtown to Lakeport, a distance of 1.3 miles. Phase 2 of the WOW trail is set to be constructed in 2016, connecting downtown to Belmont and the Winnisquam Scenic Trail.

The charrette team sees extension of phase 3 of the WOW trail, shown at left connecting Lakeport to the Weirs and Meredith, as a critical investment in Laconia's future. Its importance is hard to overstate.

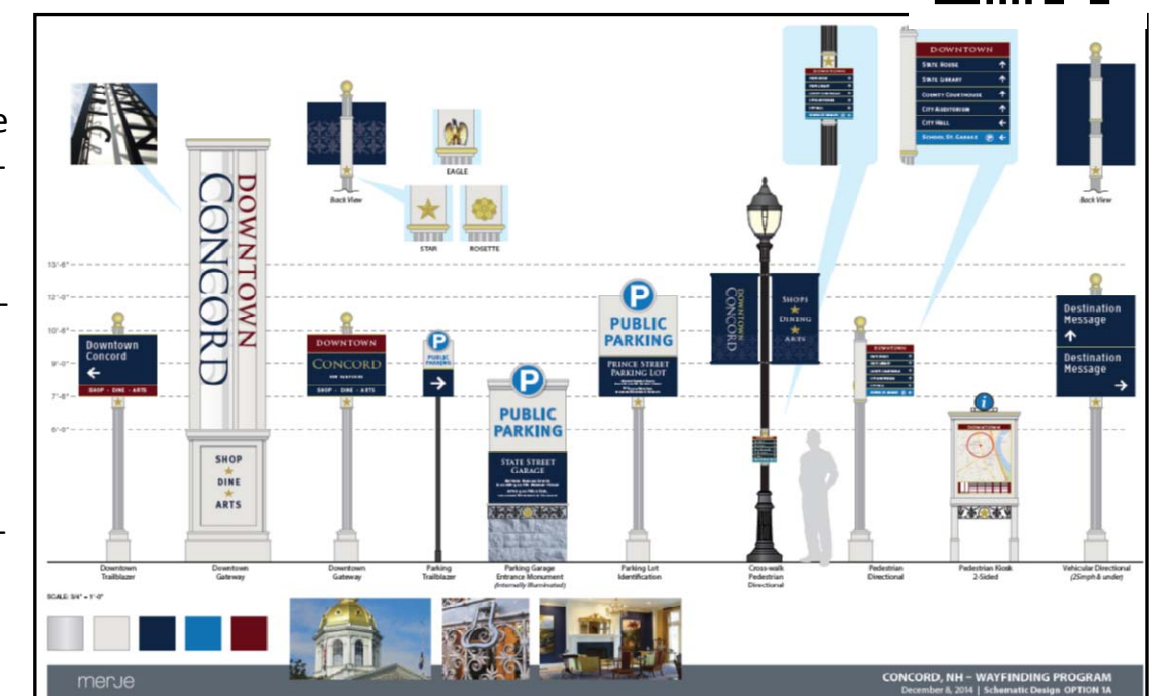
Multi-use paths have helped reinvigorate cities as diverse as Greenville, South Carolina and Burlington, Vermont. Much more than recreational facilities, they provide commuting options and bring neighbors closer together. When the WOW trail is completed, we would not be surprised if it proves to be the quickest and most practical way to traverse the city-whether one is going to work, the beach, or just enjoying the outdoors.

**Wayfinding Kiosks and Signage** are a common theme when improving a destination for visitors; no one wants to set off down the sidewalk or trail headed for an ice cream stand only to discover that the stretch that looks like one mile on the map is really three. The charrette team came up with this recommendation independently but it was confirmed when reviewing records of a public workshop from 2008 that included similar recommendations with renderings.\* All signs should share a consistent theme to reinforce a sense of place.

In recent years some wayfinding kiosks have used touchscreens to present historical information and up-to-date information (or advertisements) on local businesses and amenities. This technology is appealing but expensive and vulnerable to vandalism. One alternative is providing a static kiosk with basic wayfinding information and a QR code that anyone with a smartphone can use to access a website with current information.



Scan the QR code at right for an article about how San Francisco used QR codes to augment a walking tour about local history.\*\*



Reproduced above is a rendering of signage and kiosks being considered as part of the Main Street redesign in Concord.

\* Laconia Downtown TIF Comprehensive Master Plan, p. 14: [http://www.city.laconia.nh.us/uploads/administration\\_dept/docs/agendas/07.22.13%20TIF%20Presentation.pdf](http://www.city.laconia.nh.us/uploads/administration_dept/docs/agendas/07.22.13%20TIF%20Presentation.pdf)

\*\* San Francisco article can be accessed here: <http://usingsfhistory.com/tag/qr-code/>



# The Weirs: Overview

**Nothing is more closely linked with Laconia in most outsiders' minds than Weirs Beach.** The beach is famous and is loved for several reasons:

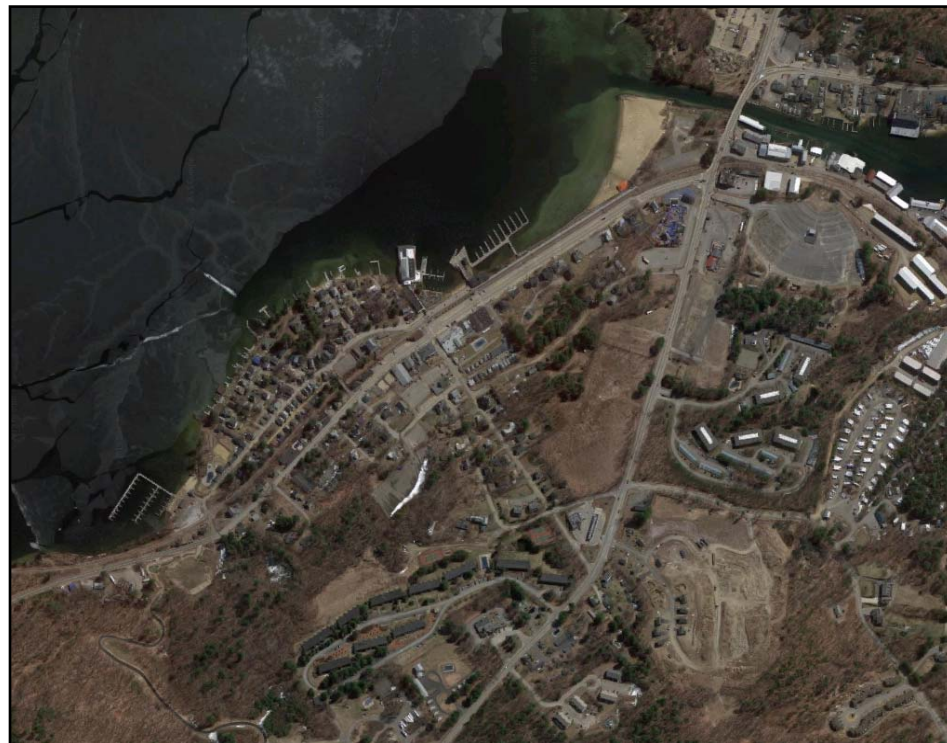
- The Natural: large public beach on Lake Winnepesaukee with City park access in a beautiful setting with mountain backdrop.
- The Man-made: the only inland boardwalk in New Hampshire; resort buildings and a rail transportation hub that inspire nostalgia for the mid-20th-century.
- The History: the Weirs is the home of Bike Week, the nation's oldest motorcycle rally, as well as New Hampshire Veteran's Association encampment buildings dating from the 1800s.

**Citizens told the charrette team:**

- Respect the history of the Weirs.
- It must become a year-round destination.
- Make it more attractive for locals.
- Make it easier to get around on foot beyond the immediate (boardwalk) area.
- Use more of the land for more of the year; large vacant lots (particularly along Endicott Street North/ Rt. 3) are rarely used outside of Bike Week.
- Don't make any recommendations that will discourage businesses from opening.
- Need a boat ramp for local residents to access Lake Winnepesaukee. Right now there is no boat access to Winnepesaukee or Paugus Bay for Laconia residents.
- Weirs needs a "facelift" of sorts – many empty lots and run-down looking buildings

Recent planning exercises and considerable effort had focused on inducing development on the vacant lots along Endicott Street North/ Rt. 3. While this is an important consideration, the team felt it equally important to look at ways to tie together existing property at the water's edge, including the wonderful and well-hidden Weirs Community Park.

The team appreciated the historic and unique charm of the Weirs and agreed with stakeholders and citizens that this was an important resource, and one that should be protected.





# The Weirs: Historical Context

The Weirs in Laconia is a varied and rich cultural landscape that has been valued by the inhabitants of New Hampshire since prehistoric times. The natural beauty of the site, with its sweeping views across Lake Winnepesaukee to Mt. Chocorua and the Sandwich Range, has been a draw to the inhabitants of New Hampshire from the archaic period to today. Home to some of the most significant identified pre-historic archaeological districts in the State of New Hampshire, the Weirs is also the site of Endicott Rock, the natural boulder inscribed in 1652 to mark what was then considered to be the northern most boundary of Massachusetts Bay Colony.



By the mid-1800s, the Weirs became a recreation center and a transportation hub with access to trains, carriages, and steamships that carried locals as well as tourists that started to flock to New Hampshire's lakes and mountains. The use of the area for lakeside recreation was further established in the 1870s when the New Hampshire's Veterans Association began constructing their "camp" for summer-time reunions and the Methodist Campground was established further north on the lake's shore. The Weirs continued to adapt to changing tourism patterns in the 20th century with the construction of cottage colonies, motels, and a drive in theater as well as a "boardwalk" that continues to house vendors, arcades, and other entertainments.

Today's Weirs Beach continues to serve the auto tourism industry



with access to train and boat service that is now recreational in nature. Some of the area's prehistoric resources have been identified and listed on the National Register as have Endicott Rock and the 1870s NH Veterans Association buildings that have statewide significance for their architecture. The area also has several camps, motor courts, recreational buildings, the arcade boardwalk and pier, and the iconic Weirs Beach sign from the 1950s that are worthy of further evaluation as significant historic resources. Plans to preserve these structures can be aided by ensuring current zoning overlays support the current building stock and/or considering other options such as form based codes to encourage continued sympathetic development. Future plans for the Weirs should move forward with a solid understanding of what gives this region its historic character and sense of place. The Weirs, with its layers of history ranging from some of the earliest dated ground stone tools in North America to what is arguably the only inland seaside resort style boardwalk in the State, make this lakeside community a special place not only for the citizens of Laconia but for all the citizens of New Hampshire.





## The Weirs: Development Options

In order to preserve that which is treasured about the Weirs while attracting more economic activity and building on the area's strength as a tourist attraction, the Plan NH team gave careful consideration to how various development scenarios could help bring about some of the changes that residents said they wanted. The input we heard touched on issues of preservation, economic development, and transportation.

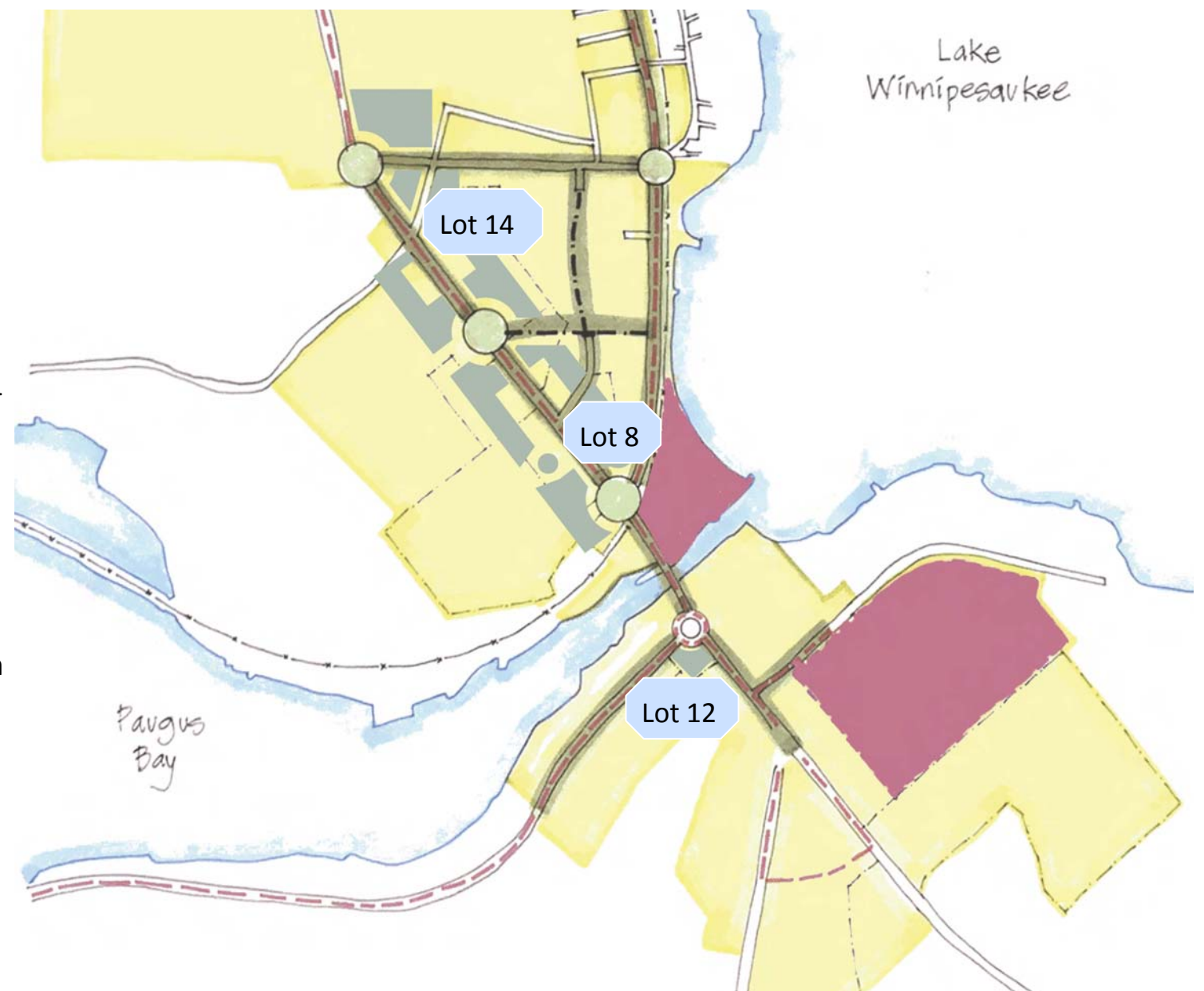
The top concern identified by stakeholders was the uncertain future of the several large, mostly undeveloped lots along Endicott Street North. These lots have been slow to develop in part because their proximity to Weirs Beach makes them very valuable for vendors and parking during Motorcycle Week. With the popularity of Motorcycle Week stagnant, this stream of revenue is not as irresistible as it once was, raising the possibility that some of these lots will be developed. The team was asked to consider scenarios that could enhance the existing economic activity and attract more visitors to the area.

Given the attractiveness of Weirs Beach as a tourist destination, the team initially envisioned a hotel in this area. The lot at the intersection of Endicott St. North and Warner St (labelled Lot 14) near the Cumberland Farms gas station is currently used from time to time for parking. A hotel here would be within a ten minute walk of either end of Lakeside Ave and would strengthen the pedestrian linkages to the beach while serving a different clientele from the nearby cottage colonies.

Lot 8, formerly occupied by a waterpark, is prime real estate: right at the historic Weirs Beach sign. This location could be well-suited for mixed use development, with retail located on the first floor to take advantage of the constant foot traffic in summer months, with residences or timeshares upstairs. The first floor space could include a small grocery or deli to serve summer residents and visitors who would no longer need to drive to Shaw's in Gilford for groceries.

Lot 12, a parking lot at the former "Malfunction Junction" recently rebuilt as a roundabout, is in a high traffic location that could potentially support a coffee shop or a rental shop for motor scooters or bicycles.

The drawing below shows a build-out scenario (illustrated in gray blocks) that would bring much more life to Endicott Street North. If these lots were built out as illustrated, the area would have considerably more activity and tax base, but would retain open space along the road that could be used by vendors. Multiple penetrations through the commercial building footprints would allow for pedestrian connectivity to other attractions around the Weirs.





## ***The Weirs: Development Options (continued)***

The year-round economics in the area might not be sufficient to support the type of capital-intensive developments contemplated on the previous page. With this in mind, the charrette team discussed development options property owners might consider to enhance the activity along Endicott Street North.

One option that can facilitate outdoor uses is a canopy. Two examples shown here are tensioned membrane structures like the Hughes Pavilion at the Montshire Museum in Norwich, Vermont (photo below is from Long Island Children's Museum).

A second option is the one being pursued by the city of Franklin, NH, which is planning the construction of ground-mounted solar power arrays that will eventually provide enough electricity to power 1,000 homes. These "Solar Gardens" can be built with little upfront investment from the property owner using Power-Purchasing Agreements where a financing agent provides the capital to build and maintain the array, selling the electricity to the property owner or to a third party often at a reduced rate. A large, taller solar installation could shade a year round parking lot, or it could simply shelter a farmer's market or flea market.



The farmer's market in particular would be a natural complement for a site that would be a source of renewable, carbon-neutral energy.

A shelter does not have to be architecturally unique or equipped with a solar array, however, to create a useful venue that extends the season of an attraction like an antique mall or a flea market. The flea markets that operate year-round in Fort Lauderdale, Florida (at right) are a good example of this.

Bicycle and scooter rentals could be centered under structures such as these, with the equipment sheltered from the elements and staff working out of temporary structures or trailers.

The development scenarios described here would not be transformative in terms of bringing year-round activity to the Weirs, but they could help make the area more vibrant through the summer months and still accommodate vendors and/or parking during Motorcycle

Week. An added advantage of these less intensive development options is that they don't require extensive, expensive, and difficult-to-reverse site and foundation work. If the economics of the area support a different type of development in ten or fifteen years, these structures could be removed at a relatively modest cost.

Outdoor canopies could even help accommodate some limited winter activities. When the ice on the lake is too thin for skating, rinks could be built and flooded; there is enough space for an ice hockey tournament like Concord's Black Ice. Parking for snowmobilers could be provided without having to plow underneath the canopies. The possibilities are endless.





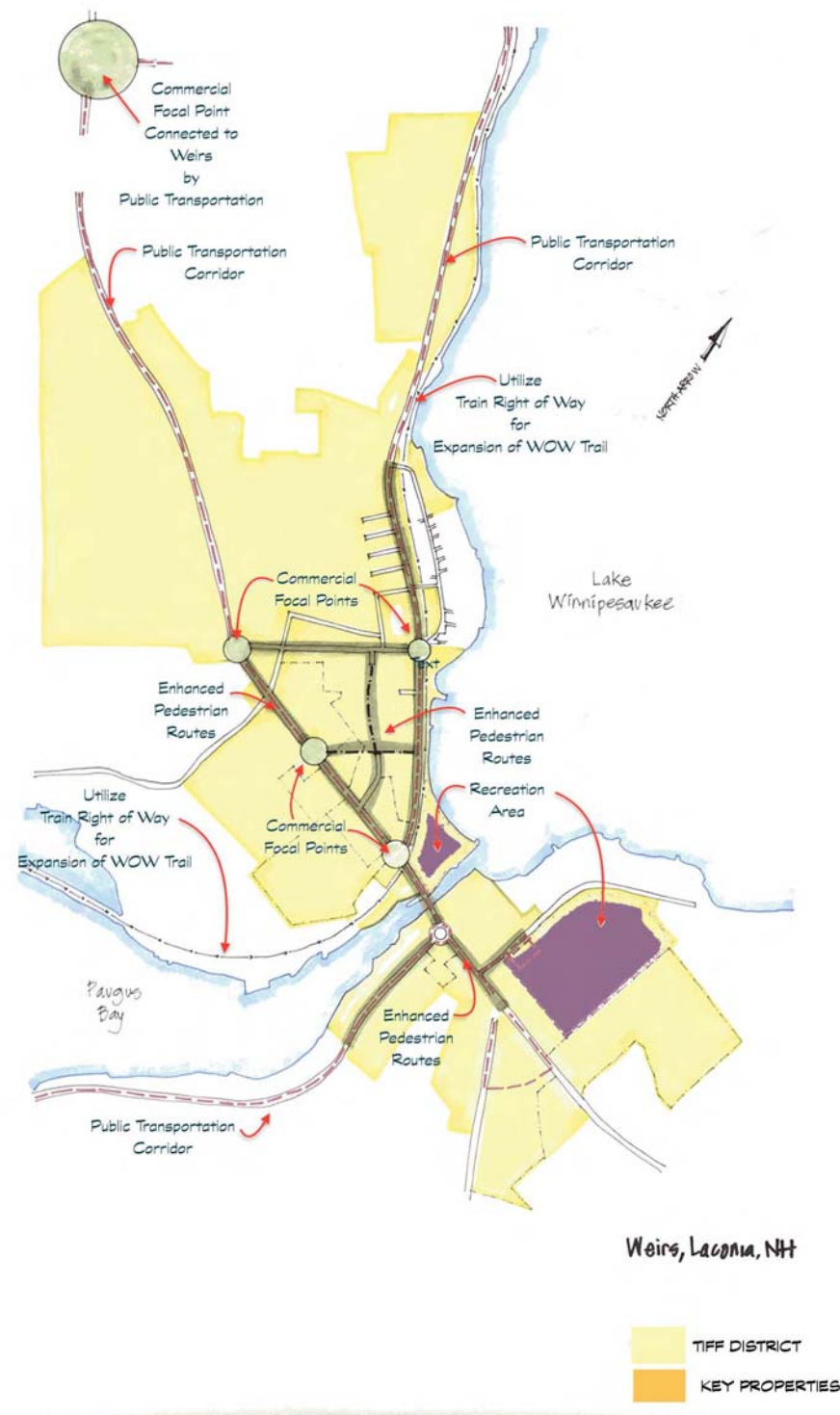
# The Weirs: Transportation

Earlier in this report, Laconia's city map was overlaid with a concept for a multi-use transportation network that would allow residents and visitors to get from one part of the city to another without needing to rely on their own car for every trip. Providing for transportation options is always a good idea for reasons of inclusiveness, public health, and reduction of traffic congestion. Providing good infrastructure for people to walk or ride their bikes around the Weirs takes on the added urgency of improving the place as a tourist destination.

Many great tourist destinations (Disney World, Nantucket, Key West to name a few) provide visitors with the ability to park their cars once and then walk or use public transit during their visit. Currently, visitors who stay at one of the cottage colonies in the vicinity of Weirs Beach have to drive to the boardwalk, drive to the grocery store, drive to the restaurants, and drive to the night-life (the last example being a problem for public safety as much as it is a problem for tourist experience). The Weirs can become a walkable, bikeable community with enhanced attractiveness for visitors. The map at the lower right shows circles around likely development nodes that represent a 1/3rd mile or 10-minute walk. Within these radii it makes good economic sense to make walking and biking easy and pleasurable by improving sidewalks,

adding bike lanes, and improving signage so that a ten minute walk does not become a twenty minute walk.

Alternative transportation, protected bike lanes, and enhanced pedestrian connectivity are often discussed in a political context. In the Weirs, it need not be so. Tourists want to get around when they are on vacation without having to worry about where to park or how to navigate balance the attractiveness of the nightlife with their need to get home safely. Those places that can offer them that are going to attract more of them and that success will build on itself as business activity grows in step with more consistent tourist traffic. The sketches on this page provide a conceptual way forward for those who agree and would like to build businesses around Weirs Beach in this way.





# Downtown Overview

Laconia has one of the great urban downtowns in New Hampshire, with stunning and historical buildings that are open to the public. The train station, public library, and the Belknap Mill within easy walking distance of one another. These treasures of the built environment will soon be joined by a renovated and re-opened Colonial Theater thanks to the efforts of the Belknap Economic Development Council and the City of Laconia. Importantly, these architectural treasures are surrounded by a vibrant economic scene thanks in no small part to small, locally owned businesses.

Recent additions to the downtown business scene such as Daub's Cobbler Shop, Burrito Me, Wayfarer Coffee Roasters, Porch Rockers, MC Cycles, Polished & Proper, and a branch of the Holy Grail Restaurant have helped turn the downtown into a commercial destination with some real momentum. Residential development is happening as well, with 40 new market rate apartments being developed on Beacon Street West and 32 income-restricted apartments under construction across the river on Union Ave.

Upgrades to the Main Street bridge, over which most traffic enters downtown, were completed a few weeks after the charrette. The city incorporated an attractive and prominent Gateway Park into the bridge project, vastly improving the first impression that most visitors get when arriving in Laconia.

This is all good news, and town leaders and Laconia's citizens who have worked for the protection and the advancement of the downtown should be proud of what they have accomplished.

During Friday's listening sessions, and in earlier sessions conducted by City staff with the support of the Orton Family Foundation, citizens and civic leaders expressed concerns that the familiar urban scourges of crime, drug use and poverty (and to a greater extent, the perception that these problems were widespread in Laconia) made it difficult for the city to appeal to all demographic groups. Less euphemistically, some people worried that professionals and families who might be attracted to the city and spend money at its businesses are put off by these problems.

These problems cannot be dismissed lightly, and indeed the opioid epidemic is a serious problem across the region and it requires an all-hands response-something that appears to be finally taking shape.



## ***Citizens told the charrette team:***

*There is a perception of drugs and homeless issues downtown, people don't feel safe. Residents want more things to do downtown – more businesses and shops, specifically locally owned businesses*

*More quality housing is needed in the downtown area, not just subsidized housing  
People want to see the Downtown play off of its history and architecture to appeal to visitors*

*Making it easier for people to walk around downtown, and to feel safer in different ways (as a pedestrian, safe from crime, etc)*

*Downtown has a small, thriving arts scene that could be grown upon*

*The Colonial Theater is important to people*

*People want more community events aimed at drawing a cross section of people into Downtown*

*More recreation/night life options Downtown*



# Downtown Recommendations

The charrette team focused on suggestions that could make the downtown more inviting so that travelers would be more likely to stop and see all that it has to offer.

The changes recommended are also likely to make the downtown much safer for travelers using all means of transportation.

City staff and leaders informed the charrette team at the beginning of the design effort that some changes were not feasible. Principle among these changes was a reversion to a traditional two-way traffic pattern, which would bring a host of benefits including slower, safer and better (and more evenly distributed) exposure for retail stores. While we understand that investment in the infrastructure for the current traffic pattern makes it unlikely that the city will entertain this change anytime soon, we encourage those who care about the city to keep it in the back of their minds.

**The parking garage** was built following the adoption of Laconia’s Urban Renewal plan in the late 1960s and continues to serve the city well from a utilitarian standpoint, providing free, sheltered parking that is steps from the Downtown. From an economic development standpoint, the charrette team felt that the garage made for an unattractive welcome mat for the city. Even worse, it is not obvious from the existing signage that one should pull into the garage upon arriving in Laconia in order to visit downtown businesses. Parking garages can be made more attractive through the use of “Living Walls,” an architectural feature that has gained popularity in recent years that makes use of hanging plants. Better signage should usher in visitors. Beacon Street East can be updated to provide a safer, slower entry into Downtown and a place where passing cars want to stop.



**Bank of New Hampshire** (formerly known as Laconia Savings Bank) is the largest bank headquartered in the state and its main office is in downtown Laconia. The bank brings several hundred jobs and a long (over 150 years) history of commitment to the community.

From the perspective of the built environment, Bank of NH has the opportunity to significantly improve the landscape along Beacon Street West, where the very wide right-of-way is compounded by the bank’s expansive parking lot. One resident of the Beacon Street West condominiums stated that he was afraid to cross the street to the bank because cars travel so fast on Beacon Street West with poor sight distance and many turning movements.

Prominent, multi-tier plantings along Beacon Street could be an important step to reduce perceived road width and slow traffic. Eventually, should the needs of the bank evolve to the point that a new building is considered, building closer to the road in the style of its historical neighbors would greatly enhance the character of this important street. In effect, with this one parcel, the bank could restore the downtown’s historical streetscape to its original footprint. The St. Mary’s bank built recently on McGregor and Amory streets in Manchester is an example to consider.



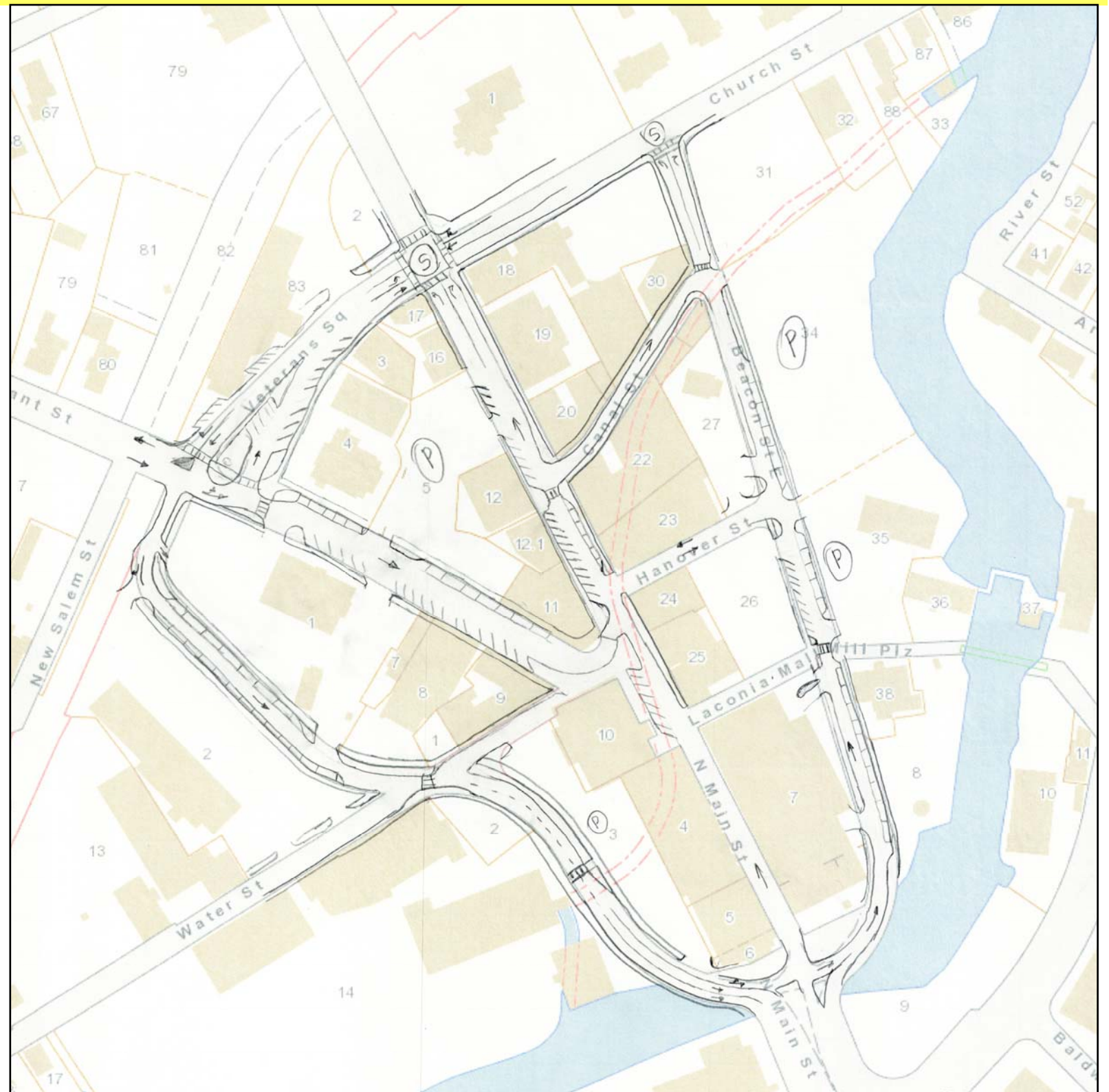
## Downtown Traffic: Overview

Asked to consider how the downtown could be made safer and more welcoming without changing the existing traffic flow, the charrette team—including traffic engineer Jeff Santacruce, a former DOT engineer now working for McFarland Johnson—set to work sketching roadway improvements that would make the downtown safer and more pleasurable to visit by any mode of transportation without sacrificing parking.

The team noted that while the downtown has traditional, human-scale light fixtures, Beacon Street East—the road on which many visitors enter downtown—is furnished with streetlights more appropriate for a highway or major arterial road. On the next page, a sketch illustrates changes that could be made at relatively modest cost to make Beacon Street East a much more inviting gateway to Downtown—a street that informs the traveler that they have arrived at a place where they might want to stop, rather than a road that informs the traveler where they should move on to.

Perhaps the most pressing problem in the downtown is how the traffic on Beacon Street West should be handled. This critical street defines the western portion of the downtown core, but it has been transformed by overzealous traffic engineers into an urban auto slalom that is uncomfortable in a car and terrifying for even an able-bodied pedestrian. As with Beacon Street East, the traffic volume that could theoretically move through its three poorly defined, rapidly coursing lanes is rarely seen and the barrier that this street presents to pedestrian traffic is impossible to ignore.

Fortunately, the situation can be improved tremendously by the actions of a single property owner, the Bank of New Hampshire, as detailed and sketched on the previous page.



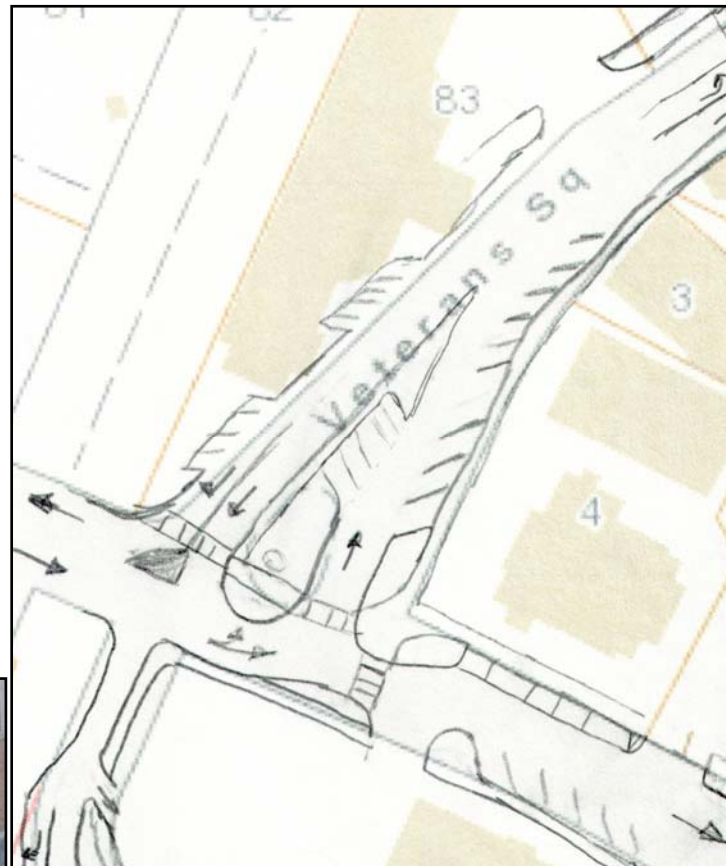


# Downtown Traffic: Recommendations

Asked to consider how the downtown could be made safer and more welcoming without changing the existing traffic flow, the charrette team-including traffic engineer Jeff Santacruce, a former DOT engineer now working for McFarland Johnson-set to work sketching roadway improvements that would make the downtown safer and more pleasurable to visit by any mode of transportation without sacrificing parking.

The team noted that while the downtown has traditional, human-scale light fixtures, Beacon Street East-the road on which many visitors enter downtown-is furnished with streetlights more appropriate for a highway or major arterial road.

The sketch in the lower right shows a revised streetscape that uses traditional double-mantle streetlights with banner poles as well as planted bump-outs to inform visitors that they have arrived in a place with an identity. Preserving the existing parallel parking spots, shortening the crossing distance for pedestrians, and creating



a buffer between the sidewalk and car traffic are included in the recommendations. All this is accomplished using one travel lane, which is rarely needed on this thoroughly overdesigned road.

The other intersection considered by the team was the southwest end of Veterans' Square in front of the Congregational Church. The sketches in the upper right shows planted bumpouts and an additional streetlight to make this important intersection safer to cross. The plan at the center of this page also shows how to narrow the northbound travel lane in front of the Baptist and Congregational church, improving pedestrian access to the train station to and from downtown and adding diagonal parking in close proximity to the new Holy Grail restaurant.

All of these changes could be tested with paint and cones before making permanent changes to the streetscape.



# Downtown: Economics and Historic Assets

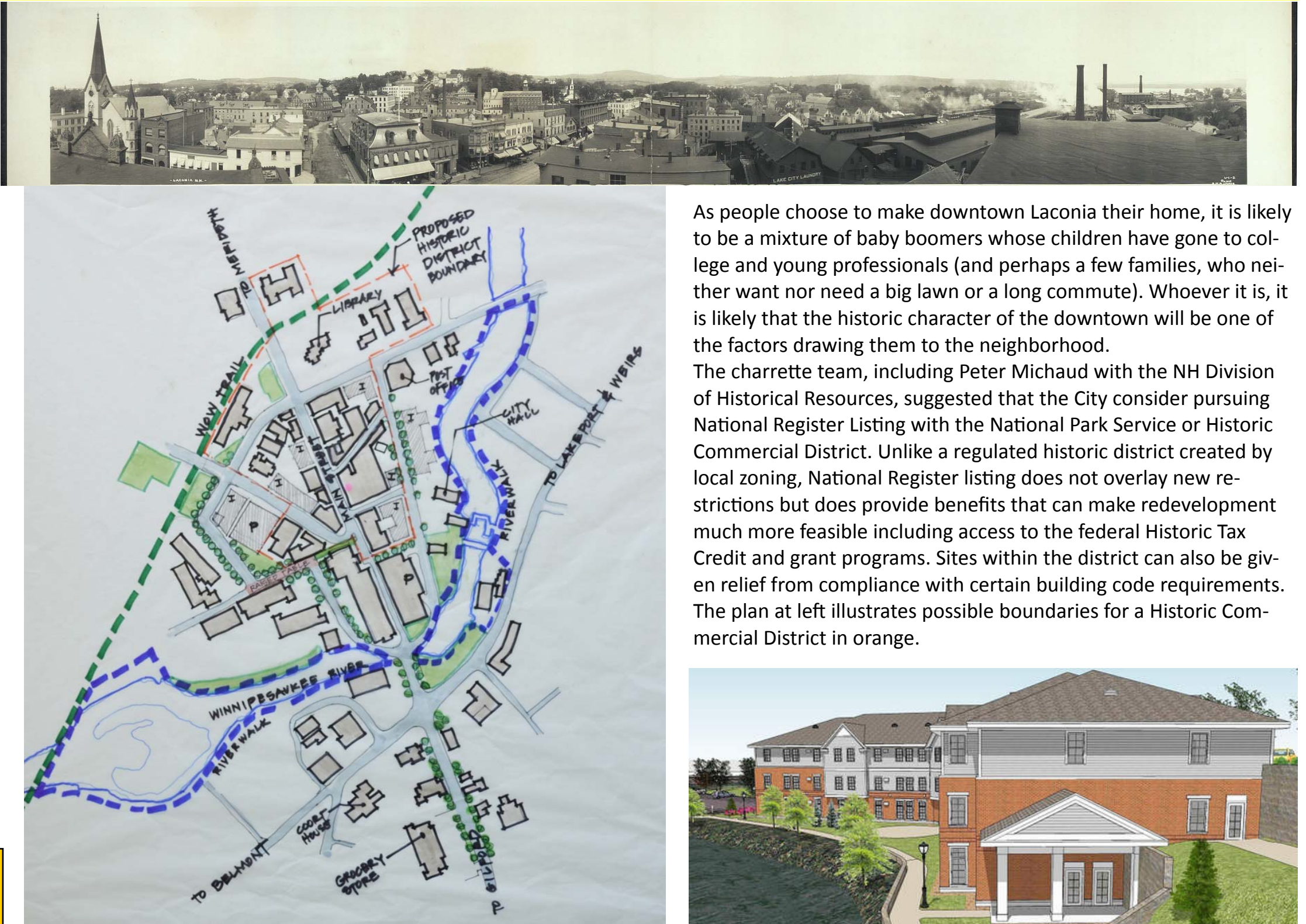
It is easy and natural to concentrate on what has been lost when it comes to historic assets. But Laconia has a wealth of historical and architectural landmarks within a compact, walkable downtown, positioning the city to take advantage of a demographic and cultural tide that is finally beginning to turn back in favor of cities large and small after decades of neglect and decay at the expense of suburbs.

News outlets such as Fortune, Time, and The Economist have reported a combination of trends such as an aging population, shrinking households, and the reluctance of many millennials to buy a suburban home when they are frequently burdened by heavy student debt loads, coupled with a desire to live where one can walk to basic services, work and more, contribute to a demand for housing in compact downtowns like this one which will increase in the coming years.

Restrictive local zoning rules have prevented builders from meeting this emerging demand in many parts of New Hampshire, but Laconia's existing landscape means the bones of a great urban habitat are already present—a fact that helps explain the current multi-family development, a trend that is likely to continue.

*"You can't rely on bringing people downtown, you have to put them there."*

— Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*



As people choose to make downtown Laconia their home, it is likely to be a mixture of baby boomers whose children have gone to college and young professionals (and perhaps a few families, who neither want nor need a big lawn or a long commute). Whoever it is, it is likely that the historic character of the downtown will be one of the factors drawing them to the neighborhood.

The charrette team, including Peter Michaud with the NH Division of Historical Resources, suggested that the City consider pursuing National Register Listing with the National Park Service or Historic Commercial District. Unlike a regulated historic district created by local zoning, National Register listing does not overlay new restrictions but does provide benefits that can make redevelopment much more feasible including access to the federal Historic Tax Credit and grant programs. Sites within the district can also be given relief from compliance with certain building code requirements. The plan at left illustrates possible boundaries for a Historic Commercial District in orange.



The new, affordable River's Edge apartment building on Union Ave is one example of the demand for multi-family development near the downtown.



## Lakeport Overview (1 of 2)

The Lakeport neighborhood is identified by the commercial intersection of Union Avenue and Elm Street, which form a gateway to the predominately residential area. Although its residents are enthusiastic, there is no consensus on the clear boundaries, or a core commercial center, of “Lakeport.” This results in a lack of consensus on where investments should be focused. The Plan NH team felt the strongest core of Lakeport was the Elm/Union intersection and not necessarily the Union Ave Corridor. The recommendations that follow are intended to address the obscure nature of its identity.



Lakeport is an area that is rich in a wide array of historic assets, including two structures, the United Baptist Church and the Goss Reading Room, listed on the National Register. The former railroad station freight house, along with a boxcar, is now a community museum. Other opportunities for building transformation await the right fit.

The neighborhood fronts both Paugus Bay and Lake Opechee, yet public water front access is virtually non-existent. With the exception of the Union Avenue corridor and the area between the corridor and the dam separating Paugus Bay and Lake Opechee, the Lakeport neighborhood is in the RG (Residential General) Zone. The more active areas, which straddle the lock waterway are either C (Commercial) or BCI (Business Commercial Industrial). When



comparing Lakeport to the other nodes of Laconia, the area that seems to most strongly define a unique character is its core. Our recommendations are intended to reinforce the function of this physical center of the area as the true neighborhood center.

The WOW Trail runs parallel to Union Avenue, along the railroad tracks and is currently about 1 1/2 miles in length starting in Downtown and ending at Elm Street. The WOW Trail is a significant community asset and once completed will be a strong connecting element between Downtown, Lakeport and the Weirs.

One theme running through the listening sessions was that Lakeport's center is seen as fairly vibrant now, especially for area foodies. There was a strong sense that parking is the main issue facing the center of Lakeport - that many businesses struggle as a consequence of parking inadequacy.

The primary intersection of Elm Street and Union Avenue is seen as a significant point of traffic backup and at the same time, does not have a particularly pedestrian friendly feel. In fact, the ability for people to walk safely is a neighborhood-wide challenge.

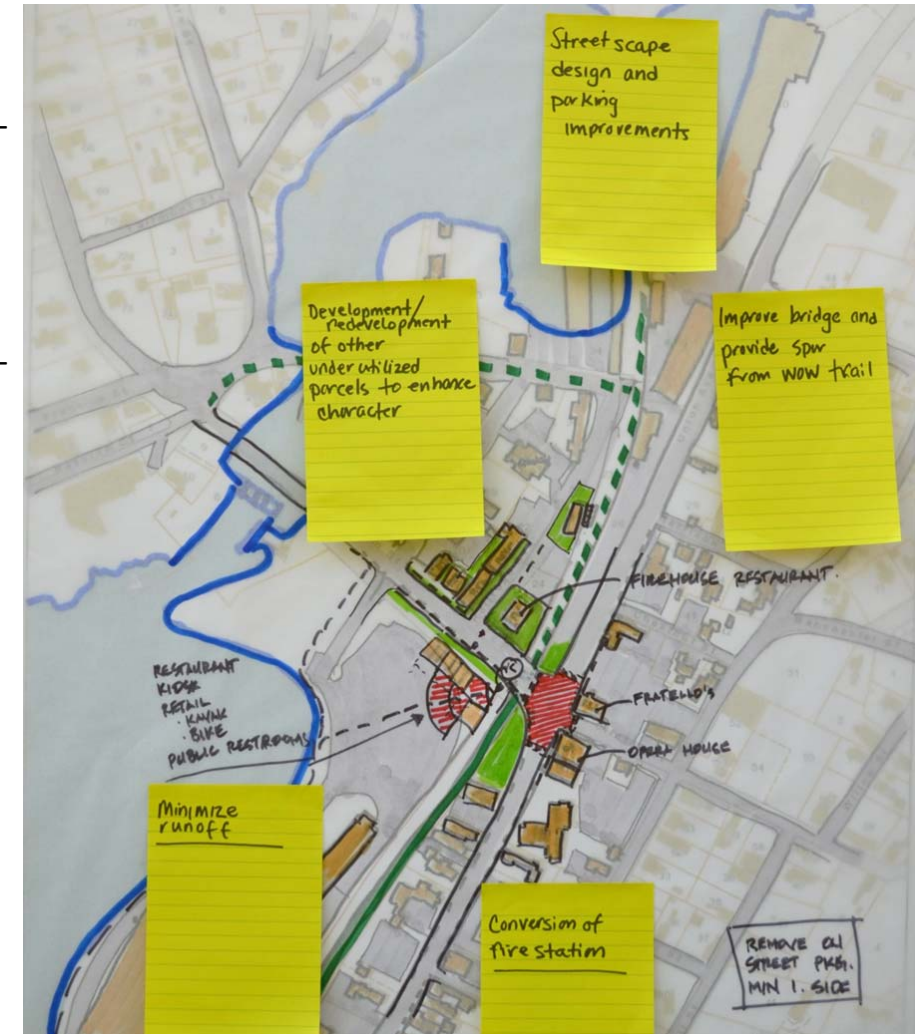


## Lakeport Overview (2 of 2)

Historically, Lakeport was a transportation and industrial hub, centered around the primary intersection of Union and Elm, along Elm across the lock. 1923 Historic map locates a railroad turntable and storage buildings in the western quadrant of the intersection, a passenger rail station and some prominent shore front commercial/industrial buildings. Along Union Avenue there stood the Lakeport National Bank (now Fratello's Restaurant), a Post Office and Drug Store capped by a "Moving Pictures Hall" on the 2nd Floor and 3rd Floor Odd Fellows Hall. A Fire House stood in the general vicinity of the presently vacant Fire House. The most significant edifice was the Baptist Church on Park, which enjoys the same prominence today. As the shore-front structures were primarily commercial/industrial, it would seem that subsequent changes to the area did not take into account the lakes as positive potential assets to the community.

The 2007 EPA Illustrative Development Plan addressed many of the issues that were raised during the 2015 listening sessions. While that could be viewed as indicative of a lack of progress, the Plan NH team noted that the construction of the WOW Trail and the opening of the museum in the former Freight House represent significant steps that are consistent with the vision outlined in the EPA Report. In fact, we view our recommendations as building upon the excellent work that has gone on before.

As parking issues were presented as an obstacle to successful commercial development along Union Avenue/Lakeport, we looked first at the paving patterns in the area. Perhaps contrary to perception, there is a significant amount of "parkable" area in the Lakeport area in places like the Fratello's and Opechee Inn. The issue can be distilled down to whose parking it is and how accessible that parking is to area businesses? The amount of pavement adds to the confusion, as there is little visual set off of walkways, buildings, road ways and parking areas. Additionally, the apparent sea of asphalt limits the sense of character and place for the community. Assets include a rich mix of historic structures, the lakefront, and the WOW Trail. There is an opportunity to invest in the intersection of Union and Elm, turning it into a pedestrian friendly hub. Add signage and theming that supports the idea that Lakeport is a place to come to for a nice meal, for a bike ride, for a picnic by Lake Opechee, or a visit to the Freight House Museum— it could be rebranded as Lakeport Junction.



*Citizens told the charrette team:*

*The Lakeport area businesses often suffer from a lack of adequate parking. The Union Ave/Elm Street intersection is not pedestrian-friendly. Makes walking between businesses difficult.*

*More opportunities for connection with the water fronts would be nice. Lakeport is a central location, but is often overlooked in favor of Downtown or the Weirs Beach area.*

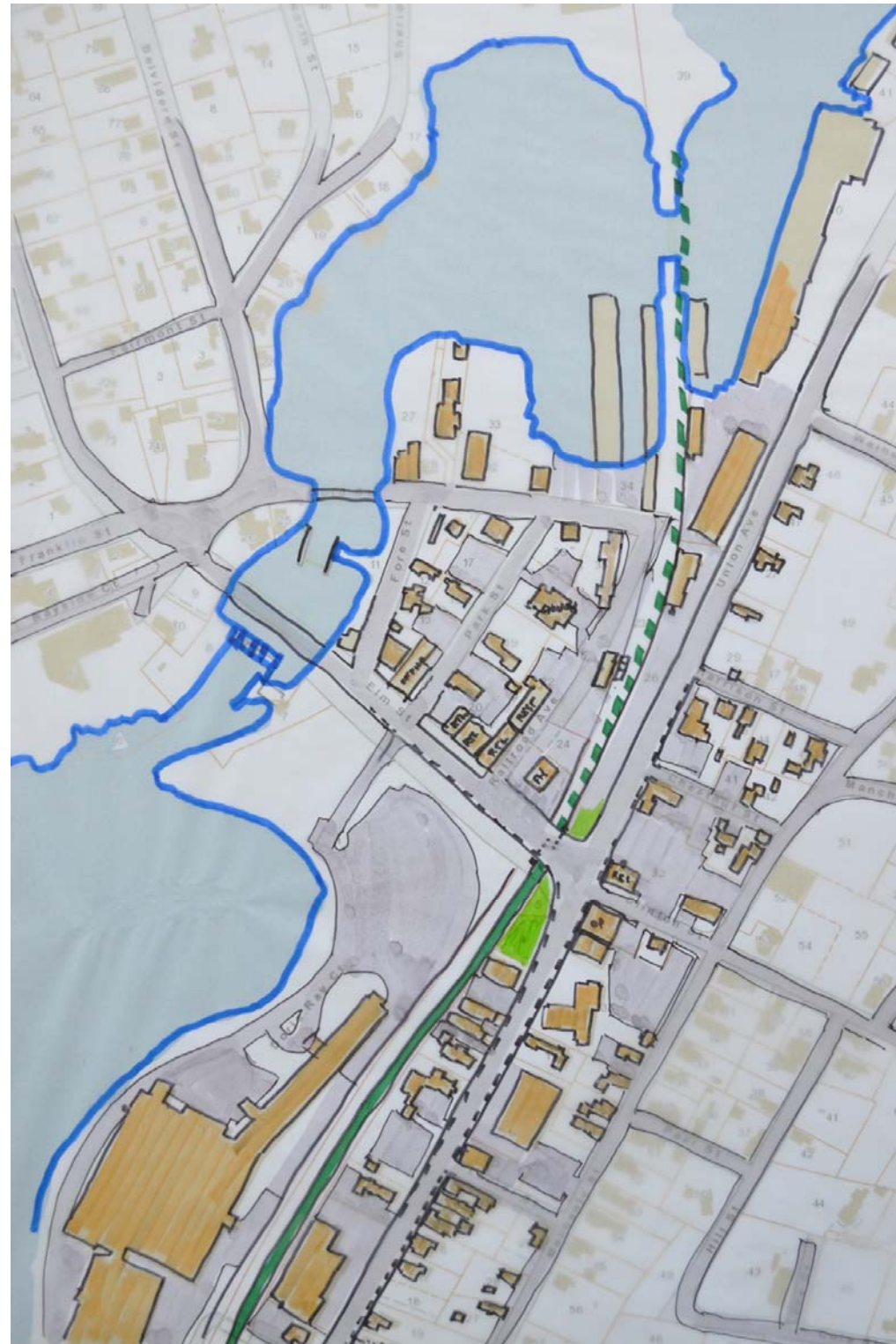
*People remember Lakeport as a thriving village center with shops and services – want it to be like it once was.*



# Lakeport Recommendations

## Recommendations:

1. Develop a collaborative parking plan, which would allow businesses to share parking as an asset to the community. Provide a signage program that informs visitors of parking options and provides directions to local businesses.
2. Provide a pedestrian centered intersection at the Junction, visually significant and controlled to connect all four corners easily and provide safe launching points at intersections through curb controls. A key feature at the junction should be a kiosk, equally accessible to pedestrian and cyclist, which would provide real time updates of citywide community activities and other Lakeport centered items of interest.
3. Enhance traffic flow by removing on street parking on the east side of Union Avenue to provide for left turn queuing onto Elm Street.
4. To enhance bicycle access to the neighborhood, improve the pedestrian bridge off of Gold Street to create a spur off of the WOW Trail.



5. Promote commercial development on the east corner of the WOW Trail and Elm, configured to channel access to Lake Opechee. Potential businesses could support both trail and lake activities, perhaps a bike rental, kayak rental, grab and go tenants would do well there. That is also a prime location for a public access bathroom. Development of this corner would enhance the character of and establish a strong visual commercial center to Lakeport.
6. Contrary to the EPA Report, we recommend that the Fire House, which is a good example of mid-century modern architecture, be repurposed as a business or themed restaurant.
7. Consistent with the EPA Report, we recommend that streetscape enhancements move forward.
8. Consistent with current area zoning, opportunities for increasing green space for both visual and water management should be taken.

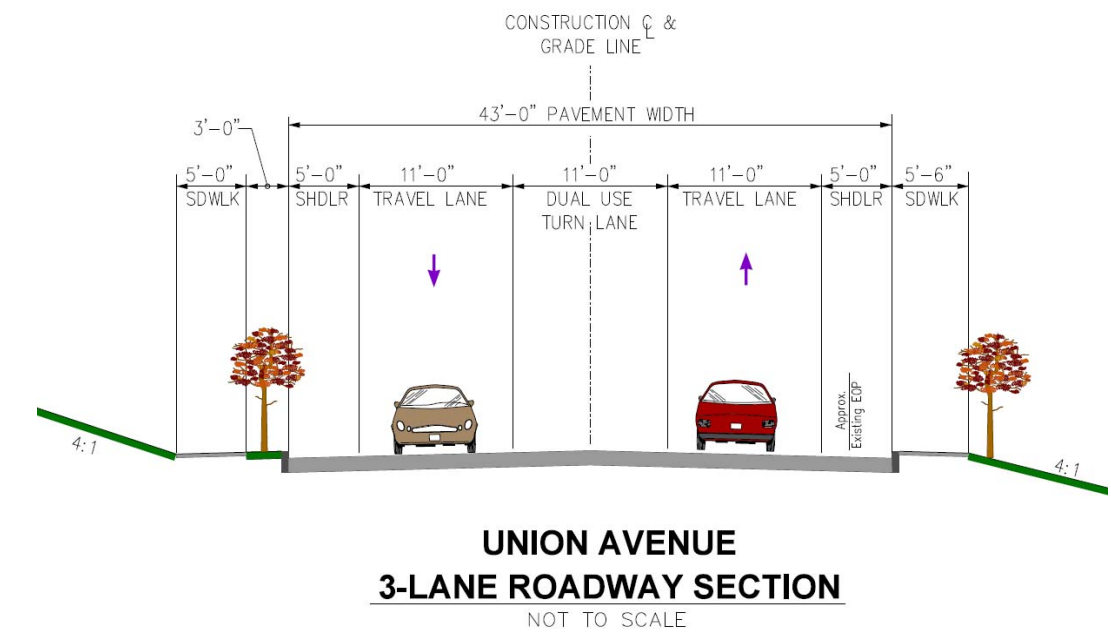


# A Word on Union Avenue

Part of the charrette team’s charge was to examine Union Avenue, a heavily travelled arterial road that connects downtown and Lakeport, and intersects with Weirs Boulevard.

Roads like Union Avenue are seldom loved by anyone, but the businesses that they are home to form an important part of the tax base in many cities, including Laconia. They also serve as a home for many important and long-established businesses. However, even those stretches of Union Ave that have sidewalks are unpleasant and unsafe for walking and biking due to the heavy traffic, high speeds, and many curb cuts.

According to the Institute of Traffic Engineers, the primary function of an arterial road is to deliver traffic from collector roads to freeways or expressways, and between urban centers at the highest level of service possible. The paradox of an arterial road is that while their large abutting lots make them attractive for development (especially the fast-food and big-box variety) and make parking easy, every new development along an arterial reduces the “level of service”- the speed at which vehicles can travel from one place to the other; because of additional curb cuts and increases in the number of vehicles entering and exiting the roadway.



**UNION AVENUE CORRIDOR - LACONIA, NH**

**CHALLENGES**

Existing on-street parking on northbound approach narrows both the through lane and the exclusive left-turn lane. Vehicles seen crossing painted centerline to fit into left-turn lane.

On-street parking spaces on east side are not visible beyond crest of hill. Vehicles frequently travel through parking spaces as their lane shifts.

Northbound and southbound approaches do not align across intersection with Elm Street. On-street parking spaces contribute to this alignment.

Sight line issues with curvature along Union Avenue approaching Stark Street. Excessive curb radius at intersection with Stark Street on southeastern corner encourages speeding.

FROM STARK STREET TO LAKE STREET. Large quantity of retail and commercial developments with multiple curb-cuts. Open curb-cuts at many locations as seen along entire Union Avenue Corridor, including head-in parking zones along frontage.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

Seek possible sidewalk along Irwin Marina on west side of roadway.

Investigate additional angled parking opportunities along Elm Street west of bike trail. May need regrading of slope between Elm Street and parking lot. Seek connection from parking adjacent to waterline to Union Avenue via Moulton Street.

Consider widening Union Avenue in area of Lakeport. Allow for alignment of Union Avenue across intersection while retaining on-street parking opportunities in location. Investigate 1000+ ft pedestrian zone around intersection to support greater vision for redevelopment.

Possible reconstruction of intersection of Union Avenue and Stark Street:  
 - Investigate traffic signal warrants for intersection.  
 - Seek reconfiguration of intersection to close the large radii on the corners to encourage slower speed around curve.  
 - Consider trimming vegetation on southeastern corner of intersection to improve sight lines.

Eliminate head-in parking with future redevelopment of Amerigas property.

Explore consolidation of driveways for Baron's Billiards and adjacent Car Wash to close open curb-cuts and increase parking availability.

SHEET 3 OF 4

The charrette team was impressed with the planning work done in recent years including a set of four plans and the Architectural Regulation adopted in June 2014 which guides building placement and architectural features to provide for a coherent streetscape. One of the four plans is reproduced above; this one identifies trouble spots and detailing improvements that could make Union Ave safer and more pleasant.

The graphic at left, provided after the charrette by Jeff Santacruce, is a sample street section that would allow for safe travel in both directions while accommodating multiple means of transportation.

The team encourages the City Council to take up these recommendations without delay and to ensure they are incorporated into future work on Union Avenue along with other traffic calming and pedestrian scale improvements.



# Leadership and Economics

The charrette team was universally impressed by the progress that has been made in recent years to preserve Laconia's heritage and natural environment, grow its economy, and improve housing options for its residents. The investments made to date have positioned Laconia to benefit from continued economic growth in the broader economy. Tax Increment Financing districts (TIFs) are in place in all three of the areas we studied, and the proceeds have been used for such worthy projects as the WOW trail and the drainage improvements that will greatly enhance Water Street Extension at Vintage Row.

While some communities visited by Plan NH are urged to begin a process of planning for demographic and economic change, perhaps **the most important message from the charrette team for Laconia's leadership is:**

- **Continue** the pattern of wise capital improvements (such as Gateway Park and the roundabout at the north end of Weirs Boulevard)
- **Focus** investments on projects that improve transportation options and the connectivity of the different parts of the city so that residents and visitors can take advantage of all that Laconia has to offer.
- **Sustain** the good work that has been done to date, including the 2007 EPA report and the studies prepared for the revised site plan regulations, when considering regulatory changes.

The Importance of City Council for Laconia's continued improvement success cannot be overstated. Stuart Arnett, a former Director of Economic Development for the State of New Hampshire, shared the following observations:

- City leadership requires **consistent** leadership, shared-vision, and a focus on the return on investment of every decision.

*We specifically support use of the TIF to finance projects that will funnel local consumers and visitors to downtown Laconia, make it easier for pedestrians to circulate around downtown, and provide an activity in and around downtown that makes it a more attractive place for people to spend time and money.*

— Sean Sullivan, BEDC Chair (Laconia Daily Sun, 12/2/2013)



## • Tax Rates 2013 (DRA)

• NH Average	\$21.43
• Moultonborough	8.20
• Laconia 34% percentile	21.57
• Nashua	22.31
• Manchester	22.33
• Franklin	23.72
• Rochester	25.50
• Newport	30.43
• Winchester	33.97
• Pittsfield	36.35
• Troy	38.14
• Northumberland	38.64
• Claremont	40.03
• Berlin	42.19 (last)



- Councilors must act as "Selected-men" vs. just Fiscal Comptrollers
- Capital Investment not expenditures
- Small-steady economic development investments better than feast and famine
- Faneuil Hall developer Jim Rouse: "A Great City redevelopment requires a great mayor."
- Tax rate: the table to the right of this page illustrates that the city has controlled its property tax rate effectively. At \$21.57/\$1,000 Laconia's taxes are well lower than those in many small cities around the state.



## *Concluding Thoughts*

The Laconia charrette presented an unusual challenge to the Plan NH team. Few communities in our state have an identity so complex (this is not too surprising given that nearly half of New Hampshire's cities have fewer than 2,500 residents). The iconic, urban character of the downtown, with its virtues and struggles so common to small cities everywhere, transitions as one travels north to the composed residential nature of Lakeport, infused as it is with commerce along Union Ave and the inescapable onset of the lake. From there, the five-mile trip to Weirs Beach feels a little bit like time travel, as the resort has somehow retained the charm of the 1950's and 60's in spite of constant development pressure as a result of its gorgeous setting (pressure that may have been relieved, somewhat ironically, by the economic incentives to keep lots empty to serve visitors during Motorcycle Week).

Overwhelmingly, the Plan NH team felt that the City was on the right track with significant investments such as Gateway Park and the WOW trail.



Less visibly, the architectural regulations enacted for Union Avenue will ensure that corridor gradually becomes a safer and more attractive place for locals and visitors to travel and shop.

The team focused on transportation because input from residents and leaders often returned to



the extraordinary amenities that the City had to offer; we concur, but these amenities must be accessible to all or they will not serve to attract or retain residents and visitors. For decades, demographic patterns have seen suburbs grow at the expense of cities; urban schools and finances have suffered as a result. The concurrent surges in retiree and young professional populations make it likely that this trend will reverse, to the benefit of Laconia and other small cities around the country; those that benefit the most will be those cities that have invested in providing amenities that will attract those populations to visit and stay within their borders. With its rich history and natural beauty, Laconia is well positioned to prosper in the coming years. We applaud the city on its progress to date and look forward to visiting again soon.



# Resources

## Possible Funding Sources

**The Cooperative Fund of New England:** <http://www.cooperativefund.org/node>

Provides loans of up to \$750,000 for cooperatives, nonprofits serving basic human needs, employee owned businesses, and co-housing developments and community land trusts.

**Associated Grocers of New England** – [http://www.agne.com/charitable\\_giving.asp](http://www.agne.com/charitable_giving.asp)

The Neighbor 2 Neighbor program is a partnership with independent grocery stores that provides charitable donations to local causes.

**The Home Depot** – Community Impact Grants

Grants, up to \$5,000, are available to registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, public schools, or tax-exempt public service agencies in the U.S. that are using the power of volunteers to improve the physical health of their community.

<https://corporate.homedepot.com/CorporateResponsibility/HDFoundation/Pages/ComImpactGrant.aspx>

**The Timberland Company** – Community Involvement Program

[www.timberland.com/corp/index.jsp?page=communityInvolvement](http://www.timberland.com/corp/index.jsp?page=communityInvolvement)

**The Madeline G. von Weber Trust** -

Funds projects in community development, neighborhood development, human services and the performing arts.

**Waste Management Charitable Giving Program** -

Support for Environment, Education, and Community Impact Programs - <http://www.wm.com/about/community/charitable-giving.jsp>

**Orton Family Foundation**, [www.orton.org](http://www.orton.org) **Heart & Soul Community Planning**

OFF has funded projects in towns of various sizes to develop a vision for growth and update master plans, zoning ordinances, etc.

Their Website has a number of tools including Implementation Guides that could be useful for TOWN NAME residents.

**The New Hampshire Preservation Alliance**, [www.nhpreservation.org](http://www.nhpreservation.org)

**Eversource Energy** – Community Giving program, [https://www.eversource.com/responsible\\_energy/serving-our-customers/In-The-Community.html](https://www.eversource.com/responsible_energy/serving-our-customers/In-The-Community.html)

## Other Public Resources

**NH Department of Transportation NH Department of Transportation**

New Hampshire Department of Transportation is a source of public funding for state road improvements, as well as safety and sidewalk improvements.

**Transportation Enhancement Act Program** - Project categories include: facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians; safety and educational activities for bicyclists and pedestrians; acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites; scenic or historic highway programs; landscaping and other scenic beautification; historic preservation; rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures or facilities; preservation of abandoned railway corridors; control and removal of outdoor advertising; archaeological planning and research; environmental mitigation to address water pollution due to highways or vehicles; and establishing transportation museums.— <http://www.nh.gov/dot/municipalhighways/tecmaq/index.htm>

**Safe Routes to School** is a 100% federally-funded program to support efforts to improve the safety of students walking and biking to school. In New Hampshire, this program is managed by the NH DOT. Funds may be used to construct pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure (such as sidewalks, marking bike lanes) along routes to schools serving grades K-8. John Corrigan, SRTS Coordinator, NHDOT, Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03301.

**Rural Development Administration** provides low interest loans and grants for municipal projects as well as financing for some private development.

**NH Division of Historic Resources** may be used as a source for historic property advice and expertise, any use of historic tax credits must be approved by this agency.

**NH Business Finance Authority** is a source for tax-exempt bonding and other subsidies for private and non-profit investment.

**NH Community Development Finance Authority** is a source for tax credits for publicly supported projects and Community Development Block Grant funds .

**NH Municipal Bond Bank** provides low interest funds for publicly bonded projects.



## **Tools for Implementation**

There is a wealth of sources of funding and expertise to explore. When applying for grants and foundation monies, many of the funders require plans or a detailed program to be in place as an assurance that projects will be completed in order to qualify for funds. This charrette plan is an important document that can be used to advance Laconia's plans and funding.

### **Expertise:**

NH Office of Energy and Planning (OEP)  
NH Office of Travel & Tourism  
Division of Economic Development (within DRED)  
NH Department of Environmental Services (DES)  
NH Division of Historical Resources  
NH Council on the Arts  
U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)  
NH Preservation Alliance  
NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT)  
Central NH Regional Planning Commission  
USDA Rural Development

### **Funding**

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)  
Economic Development Administration  
NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT)  
Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive (RSA 79-E)  
Conservation License Plate Funds  
Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP)  
Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA)  
Tax Increment Financing (TIF)  
Special Assessment Districts

