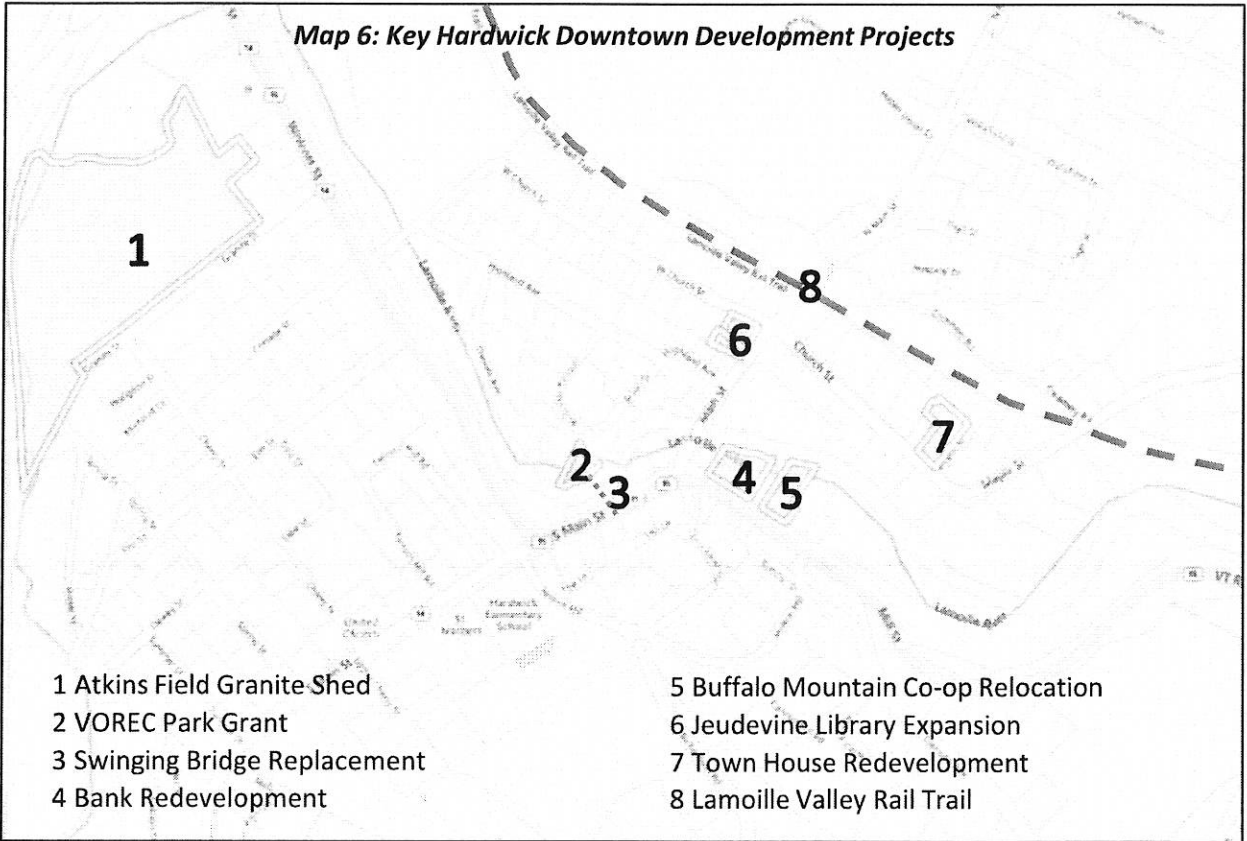
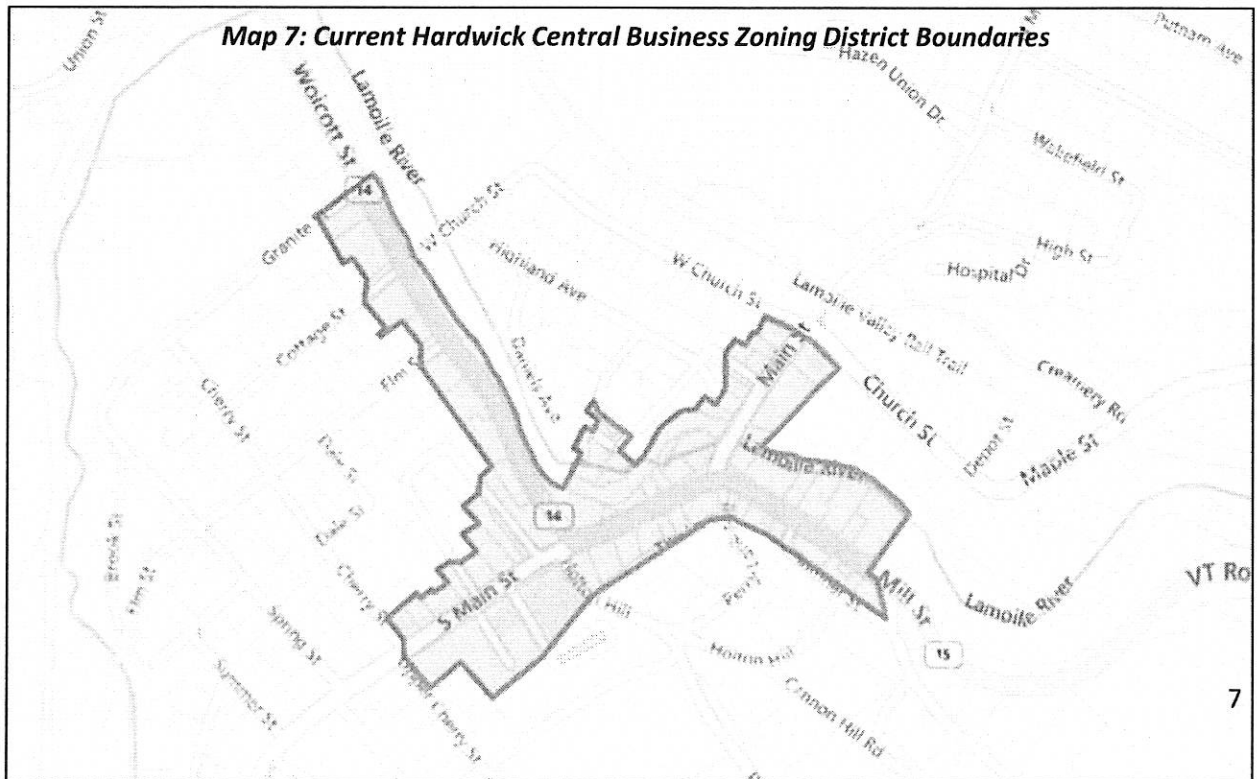


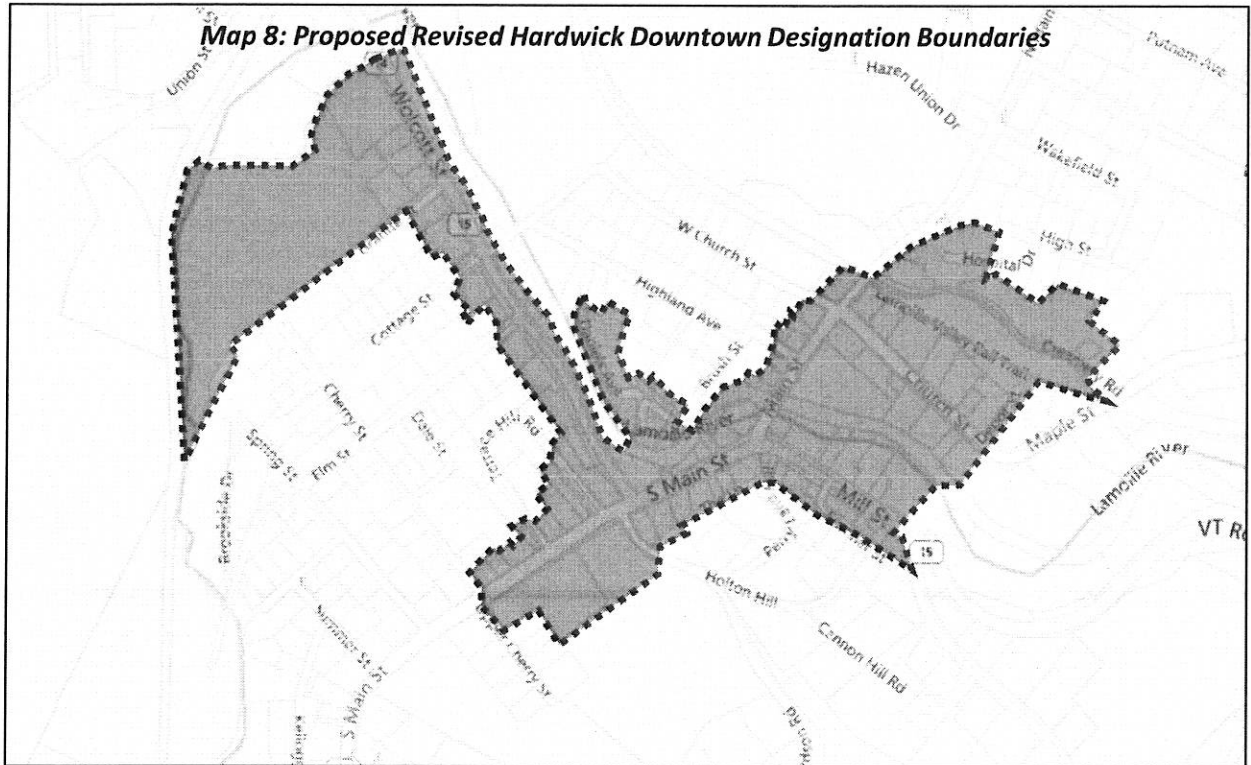
Map 6: Key Hardwick Downtown Development Projects



The Downtown Designation incentives will be essential for a broad range of priority projects in downtown Hardwick. The final proposed boundaries should be reinforced at every planning level possible. Aligning the boundaries and parcel composition with priority projects and zoning districts helps to make the case and streamlines future efforts. There is potential to modernize zoning to catalyze the types of development that are priorities for the Town of Hardwick. Deliberate planning of the overlay between the downtown designation and zoning districts will lay the groundwork.

Map 7: Current Hardwick Central Business Zoning District Boundaries





The above map reflects the consultant recommendations for revisions to the proposed Hardwick Downtown Designation Boundaries. The proposed boundaries have been adjusted in consideration of the following:

1. Incorporating large-scale town-owned properties adjacent to existing high priority opportunities
2. Maintaining continuity across both sides of key road corridors for purposes of streetscapes, wayfinding, alternative modes of transportation and balancing potential future development
3. Aligning the downtown designation boundaries with zoning district boundaries where possible to alleviate property owner confusion and to simplify the process for catalyzing growth if desired.
4. Creating flexibility for the Town to leverage existing resources to access the current unprecedented funding for housing development through state ARPA funds.
5. Recognizing that Hardwick's needs will evolve over the decades-long horizon of the Downtown Designation and positioning the Town with the flexibility to adapt.

A

ASSETS

- High average daily traffic counts
- Clear visual cues establishing the downtown center
- Strong downtown businesses
- Strong sense of community
- Committed grass-roots organizations facilitating community collaboration

C

CHALLENGES

- Confusing traffic patterns
- Visual cues disconnect Atkins Field from overall downtown
- Highly visible vacant spaces within downtown
- Limited town staff to support grant writing, applications for downtown incentives, and planning initiatives
- Lack of defined housing goals in Master Plan

O

OPPORTUNITIES

- LVRT development
- Momentum of current projects underway downtown
- Recently purchased vacant properties
- Town-owned parcels within or adjacent to downtown
- Central Business District Zoning along Wolcott Street connecting to Atkins Field
- Large amount of grant funding for housing development

F

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Connect LVRT to designated downtown with bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, wayfinding, and visual design cues
- Leverage town-owned parcels to further goals
- Partner with property owners to strategically leverage downtown incentives for underutilized or vacant properties
- Catalyze development along Wolcott Street to expand "downtown feel" connecting to Atkins Field
- Set housing goals to leverage unprecedented funding levels



Guiding Considerations for Downtown Organization Strategic Planning

The downtown designation application will require a 5-year strategic plan for the proposed downtown organization. The Downtown Commission has been working with the consultant to frame priority goals for the strategic plan based on the inventory and analysis findings. CCDS has identified a preliminary set of guiding principles to assist in priority setting decisions as follows:

1. Align priority strategies with existing regional and community goals. Use a methodical and deliberate approach to build on both the Northeast Kingdom Regional Plan and the Town of Hardwick Municipal Plan.
2. Crosswalk existing planning priorities with the National Main Street Program 4-Point Approach. Focus the downtown organization priorities within the 4 pillars of downtown organization work: Economic Development, Design, Organization and Promotion.
3. Utilize key stakeholder feedback from the community to refine the priorities. Identify consistent themes in stakeholder input to prioritize desired focus areas for the organization.
4. Create a sustainable organizational structure and funding plan. Right-size the goals and expectations to the available resources.
5. Coordinate downtown organization efforts with Town efforts wherever possible. Build mutual accountability into the staffing model and avoid duplication of efforts.
6. Consider resource limitations (funding, staffing, volunteer time, etc.) when setting priority goals. Focus short-term efforts on achievable goals that will provide highly visible wins to demonstrate value and build community support.
7. Target downtown organizational short-term priorities toward existing community goals aligned with existing grant funding sources to maximize potential for leveraging outside funds.
8. Phase the strategic plan to incrementally build on previous successes. Create a roadmap to future organizational growth and expanded services/roles at key trigger thresholds.

Preliminary Conceptual Framework for Downtown Organization

Staffing Model: Part-time Executive Director starting at 10 hours per week. This position as envisioned would initially be a shared staffing model. The 20 hour per week Town of Hardwick Community Development Coordinator would also serve 10 hours per week as the downtown organization director.

Priority Goals:

1. Bring State and Federal funding to Downtown Hardwick by writing grants and exploring other funding sources in order to capitalize on all available outside resources for Town of Hardwick priority projects.
2. Improve Downtown Hardwick's infrastructure by acting as an ally with the Town of Hardwick, providing energy, input and staff time to address bicycle and pedestrian access, wayfinding, parking, lighting, streetscaping, accessibility, connectivity and other infrastructure issues that may arise.
3. Maintain and encourage downtown vibrancy by providing a "one-stop-shop" for business and property owners seeking information and technical assistance with accessing available downtown incentives.
4. Address high-visibility vacancies in Downtown Hardwick by leveraging available State and Federal resources.
5. Support downtown grand list growth to augment the local tax base.