

East Hardwick Better Connections Process

DRAFT REPORT



MARCH 12, 2025

NOTE: This report is in draft form for review. Items that will be added when the report is finalized include:

- Estimated costs of recommended actions
- Final recommendations for road alignments and streetscape improvements
- Executive Summary
- Implementation Plan

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Executive Summary and Implementation Plan

To be completed when full report is finalized.

Introduction

This is a draft report on the better connections process for public review and discussion. The final report will include cost estimates and identify potential funding sources for the recommendations.

The Village of East Hardwick was shaped by better connections. By the mid-19th Century, the presence of the railroad was a boon to East Hardwick and its surrounding farms:

Hardwick's best farm land lay in the town's north and east, and East Hardwick, with a railroad station, mills, a creamery, general stores, a hotel, churches and schools, served as the economic focus of that large prosperous agricultural community. In 1872 it had a newspaper of unknown life span. The commercial rivalry between East Hardwick and South Hardwick became fairly intense during the middle of the nineteenth century.¹

The railroad proved to be a mixed blessing for East Hardwick. What became the Lamoille Valley Railroad was part of a system meant to provide a connection from Portland, ME to Lake Champlain, to attract shipping traffic from Boston, and open up markets to the west. But, as it was being built, western railroads were also under construction, which brought cheaper farm products east at the same time, exposing Vermont farmers to national competition. This caused economic hardship that lasted until the growth of the granite industry to the south, around what became the Village of Hardwick.²

That connection still matters to East Hardwick. As will be described elsewhere in this document, the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (set on the right of way of the old Lamoille Valley Railroad) is bringing new generations of tourists to the area and is an important connection between East Hardwick and neighboring communities. Thus, a connection first made 100 years ago has been recreated as a new potential source of vitality for East Hardwick.

About the East Hardwick Better Connections Process

But East Hardwick's promise for the future extends far beyond the Rail Trail. This Better Connections project is intended to support continued community development in East Hardwick Village, using a process to define ways to strengthen existing assets in the Village as well as identifying new opportunities for revitalization. Public input, including a community-wide survey and two public meetings, has been an essential part of this process. The result is intended to be an action-oriented guide, including both short term projects that can be implemented quickly, and longer-term, more complex projects that may need additional planning and funding. The final document will include cost estimates and information on funding sources to enable the implementation of community priorities emerging from the Better Connections process.

This document has four major sections. First, the introduction provides an overview of the plan's purpose and the planning process. Second, the Plan Goals section provides an overall vision and approach and lays out the general policy goals for the Village. The Actions & Implementation section identifies the specific steps to be taken to accomplish the plan goals and puts forward a sequenced action plan to carry out these

¹ <https://hardwickvhistory.org/about-hardwick/hardwick-history/>

² <https://hardwickvhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Hardwick-on-the-Map-Complete.pdf>

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steps. The final section, Background Studies and Community Outreach documents the data analyses and community engagement processes involved in creating this plan

The East Hardwick Better Connections Process has sought to identify ways to maintain and enhance the vitality of East Hardwick. It focuses on improving pedestrian and bicycle pathways, signage, parking, etc., along with recommending potential village redevelopment projects. These could include expanding recreational activities (including river access), marketing initiatives to build local business opportunities, and other community improvements. It also identifies ways to integrate green stormwater infrastructure into Village streets and sidewalks, while addressing key stormwater runoff issues at and around the Main Street Bridge.

Who is involved?

The project is being managed by the Town of Hardwick and guided by a steering committee of local residents, local officials and representatives from state and regional organizations. To see the names of those involved, click here.

Project Managers

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Position</u> |
|--------------|--|
| David Upson | Hardwick Town Manager |
| Tracy Martin | Hardwick Community Development Coordinator |

Steering Committee

Community Members

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Affiliation</u> |
|------------------|---|
| Kathleen Hemmens | Representative, East Hardwick Neighborhood Organization |
| Meredith Holch | Representative, Caledonia Grange #9 |
| Irene Nagle | Representative, East Hardwick Neighborhood Organization |
| David O'Brien | Representative, East Hardwick Fire District #1 |
| Position vacant | Representative, East Hardwick Congregational Church |

State of Vermont Members

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Position</u> |
|-----------------|--|
| Richard Amore | ACCD/DHCD, Manager of Placemaking & Community Partnerships |
| Matthew Arancio | VTrans, Planning Coordinator |
| Faith Dall | VTrans, Planning Coordinator |
| Natalie Elvide | ACCD/DHCD, Planning Coordinator |

Regional Planning Commission Members

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Position</u> |
|--------------|---|
| Kyle Dwyer | NVDA Regional Planner |
| Annie McLean | NVDA Community & Economic Recovery Specialist |

Municipal Government Liaisons

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Position</u> |
|---------------|--|
| Kristen Leahy | Hardwick Zoning Administrator |
| David Gross | Chair, Hardwick Planning Commission (also an East Hardwick resident) |

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Project Consultants

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Firm</u> |
|-------------------|---|
| Peter Fairweather | Lead Project Consultant, Fairweather Consulting |
| Andrea Day, PE | Dufresne Group |

Community Outreach

The Better Connections Process has been informed by community outreach. This includes the creation of a website (easthardwick.com) and an accompanying flyer to inform residents of this work. In addition, a community wide survey that received 61 responses. Finally, two community meetings have been part of this process. A Village Supper held on July 29, 2024 at the Grange Hall and a community gathering held on March 12, 2025 to present this draft report for community response. With the exception of that March gathering, the results of each of the three community outreach initiatives is summarized below. A full report on community outreach is included in the appendices to this report.

Project Website & Flyer

The project website was created as a WordPress site with the domain name “easthardwick.com.” The site provides an overview of the project, a list of members of the steering committee and includes posts describing recent events and other developments related to the project. There is also a page through which email messages can be sent by visitors to the page directly to the project consultants, Peter Fairweather of Fairweather Consulting and Andrea Day of the Dufresne Group.

A one-page flyer was also created to provide an overview of the project and was distributed throughout East Hardwick by steering committee members.

Community Survey

A community survey was also completed as part of the outreach for the Better Connections Process. It was designed as a post card that asked people to name three things about East Hardwick that should be protected or encouraged as well as asking them to name three things about East Hardwick that should be improved or corrected. It also asked for the residence status of the respondents (i.e., live in East Hardwick, live in the Town of Hardwick, live outside the Town).

The survey was distributed throughout the community by steering committee members and was mailed to the households in the Fire District (as a proxy for the Village). Surveys were also distributed at the Village Supper of July 29, 2024. By its closing date of July 31, 61 surveys had been returned. The results indicated that, of the respondents, 52 lived in East Hardwick, 4 lived in the Town and 3 were from outside the Town.

The results of the survey are summarized in the following pages. The summary shows the results of “word clouds” generated when the survey results were entered into the Survey Monkey platform. This indicates which words were mentioned most frequently in response to each of the six questions (with common articles and adjectives removed from the word count). When asked about things to protect or encourage, people focused on the Village itself and important components of it, such as the Grange Hall,

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the River and the quality of the Village water system. When asked about things to improve or correct, improving sidewalks dominated the responses, followed by housing and concerns about vehicular traffic, including intersections and speeding.

The results are summarized in the pages which follow. A full listing of all responses received is included as an appendix to this report.

Village Supper

The Village Supper was held in the Grange Hall from 5:30 to 7:30 on Monday, July 29, 2024.

Approximately 50 to 55 people were in attendance, with 42 entering their names on the sign in sheet. At the session, consultants Peter Fairweather of Fairweather Consulting and Andrea Day of the Dufresne Group provided an overview of the Better Connections Process and fielded questions from the audience. For the session, 11 posters were positioned throughout the hall, each highlighting an area of concern or potential opportunity for East Hardwick.

Before beginning the buffet supper, attendees were instructed to circulate throughout the hall and review the posters. Throughout the session, attendees were encouraged to express their thoughts about these topics by writing their comments on the relevant poster and/or using a Post-It note to place their comments of each poster. (There was also a 12th poster for people to record other thoughts or ideas not addressed by the other posters.)

The results of the Village Supper can be grouped into seven overarching themes, most involving better connections of some sort. These themes are:

Improve Sidewalks: the results of the survey and village supper highlighted people's concerns about the condition of Village sidewalks. Pedestrian access and safety were frequently mentioned as important to improving the walkability of the Village.

Improve Infrastructure for Water Distribution: People expressed concern that the Village water system be protected, given the current high quality of its water and the aging of the system.

Improve Drainage and Stormwater Management: Respondents recognized the damage done by the flooding in the past year and the necessity of improving drainage and stormwater management to protect the Village properties and safeguard its quality of life.

Protect and improve Village Appearance: There were concerns expressed about the importance of maintaining and improving the physical appearance of the Village as a matter of both civic pride and enhancing the Village's economic viability

Connect to the River and Lamoille Valley Rail Trail: The River and the Rail Trail were both seen as important under-used assets for the Village. Residents are looking for ways to enhance connections to these assets to improve quality of life in the Village.

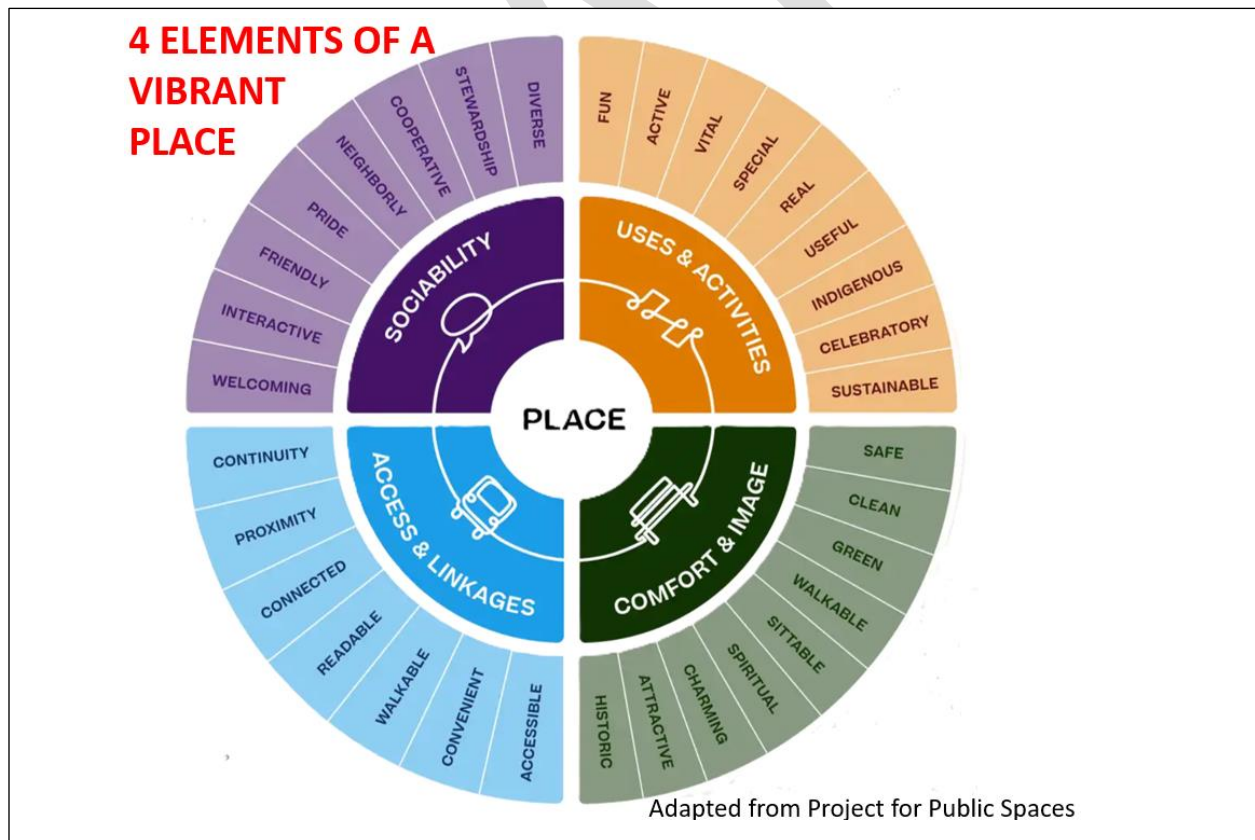
Improve Housing Opportunities: The need to improve the quality and quantity of housing available to Village residents was a consistent concern in both the survey and village supper.

Improve Community Connections in General: People appeared to be interested in strengthening opportunities for community connections in general. This included a desire to improve community gathering spaces such as the Grange Hall, a potential small greenspace at the site of the former library/fire

department, the desire to create another community gathering place/cafe in East Hardwick. In addition, there was general concern about the need to address road intersections in the Village to improve connectivity. For example, concern was expressed about the safety of the intersections of Main Street and Route 16 and Main Street and Cedar Street. There are also concerns about the now-closed intersection of Route 16 and School Street, with some looking to restore the intersection, and others favoring abandoning that intersection altogether.

East Hardwick as a Place worthy of Care and Preservation

As indicated by the results of the community outreach, there is widespread interest in enhancing the vitality of East Hardwick as it faces the challenges of climate change and the opportunities associated with the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT), outdoor recreation opportunities, agri-tourism and the presence of the arts in the Village. Navigating the Village through all of these requires careful stewardship to enhance the Village's vitality while keeping East Hardwick a great place to live. As the Place for Public Spaces has argued: "A great public space cannot be measured by its physical attributes alone; it must also serve people as a vital community resource in which function always trumps form. When people of all ages, abilities, and socio-economic backgrounds can not only access and enjoy a place, but also play a key role in its identity, creation, and maintenance, that is when we see genuine placemaking in action."³



³ <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>

The Place for Public Spaces' model for thinking about a place provides a useful framework to describe the work that's required to build better connections in and around East Hardwick. First, it recognizes that there are four aspects to a place like East Hardwick, and that all four of these aspects should be watched over by the community in order to safeguard and enhance the vitality of the Village.

The four elements in this model include:

1. Access & Linkages

Access: enabling people to get to all locations in a community easily and safely, whether they are walking, biking, driving or require special assistance to get there.

Linkages: strong connections for important public spaces, tying them together while also connecting them to neighborhoods.

2. Comfort & Image

Comfort: the creation of a physical environment that readily supports human activity and that effectively and sustainably minimize and manage the byproducts of human activity (e.g., stormwater, wastewater, etc.)

Image: the creation of a physical environment that embodies and expresses the truth about the nature of the place. A successful image enables both residents and visitors to feel connected to the place and understand what it offers to them.

3. Uses & Activities

Uses: the ongoing functions to which parcels of land are devoted. They can include housing, retail, open space/recreation, civic functions, etc.

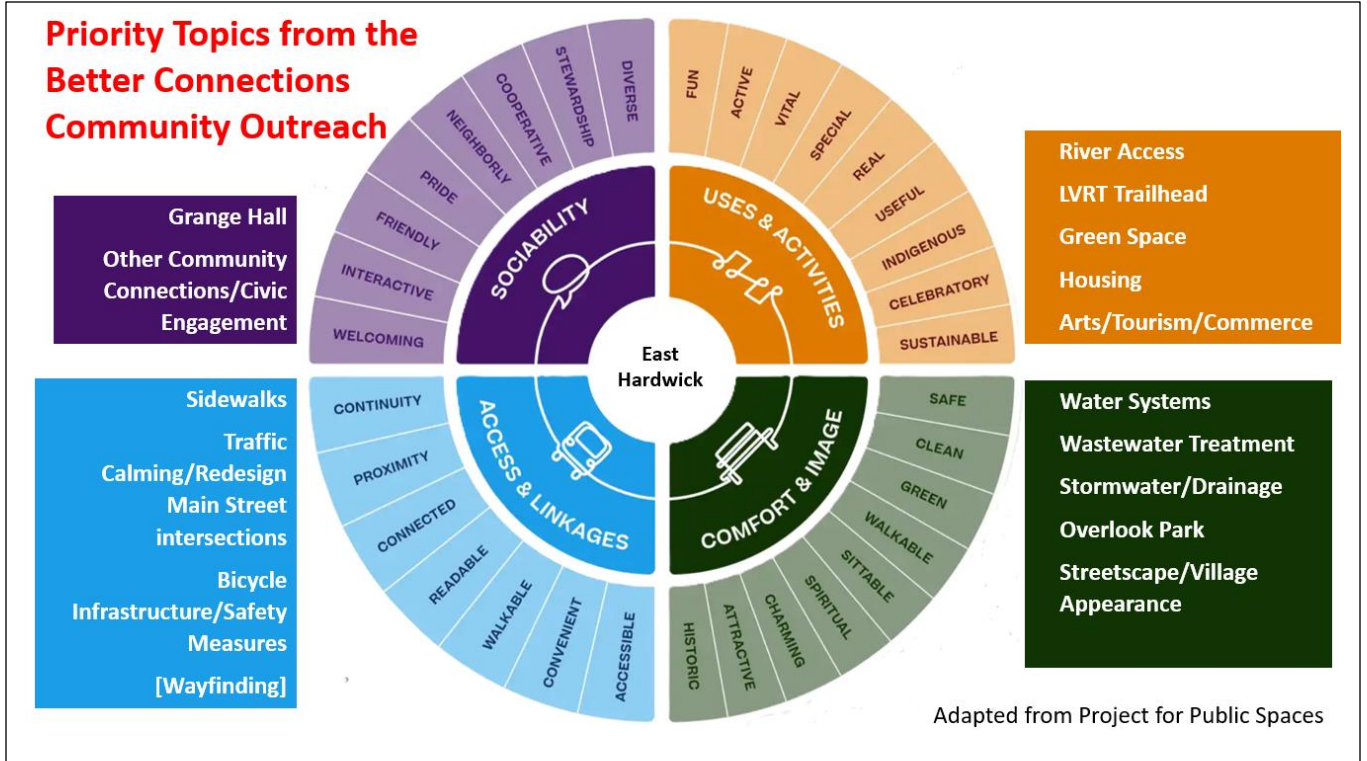
Activities: those things that happen in a community that bind it together and make others feel welcome. They can include festivals, parades, community dinners or the kind of informal gathering that take place at coffee shops or community centers or local stores.

4. Sociability

Sociability: the quality of a community that makes people feel welcome there and encourages them to interact with others.

Understanding Community Priorities for East Hardwick as an Agenda for Community Vitality

The next figure illustrates how the priority areas identified in the Better Connections community outreach can be categorized using this model for strengthening vibrant places. As shown in the figure, the community priorities easily translate into a comprehensive agenda for East Hardwick's vitality. The following sections of this report outlines the recommendations made in response to these priorities using the four elements of: Access & Linkages, Comfort & Image, Uses & Activities and Sociability.

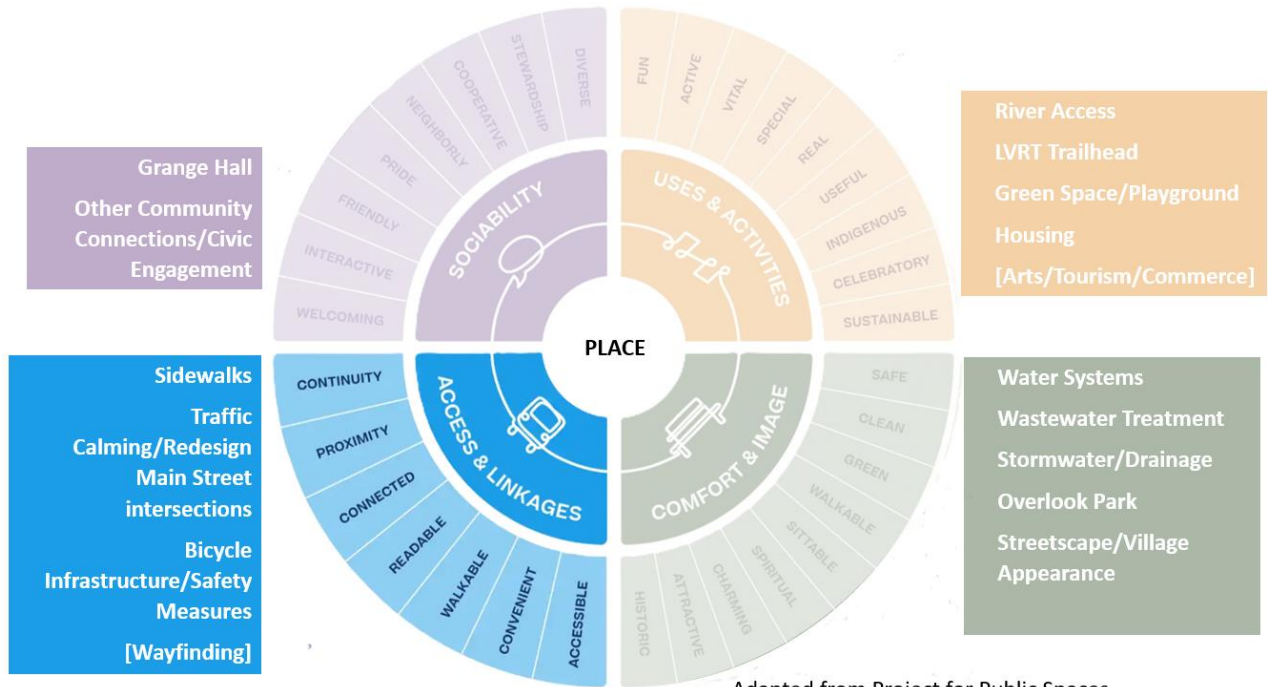


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Priorities and Recommendations: Access & Linkages

This chapter focuses on Access & Linkages issues in East Hardwick. It provides a brief summary of Existing Conditions followed by listing of recommended actions/projects.

PRIORITIES FOR BETTER CONNECTIONS: ACCESS & LINKAGES



Access means enabling people to get to all locations in a community easily and safely, whether they are walking, biking, driving or require special assistance to get there.

Linkages are strong connections for important public spaces, tying them together while also connecting them to neighborhoods.

Existing Conditions

Past studies and community input for the Better Connections Process have indicated that Access and Linkages are limited by the poor condition of many sidewalks, poorly configured intersections resulting in unsafe conditions for pedestrians, poorly configured road intersections and inadequate provision for cyclists (particularly with the opening of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail--LVRT). (See the appendices for a summary of these past reports.) To sum up these concerns, current and emerging centers of activity in the Village are poorly connected to one another and to residential areas, thereby limiting the ability residents and visitors to have easy and full access to these locations. The Village's centers of activity include:

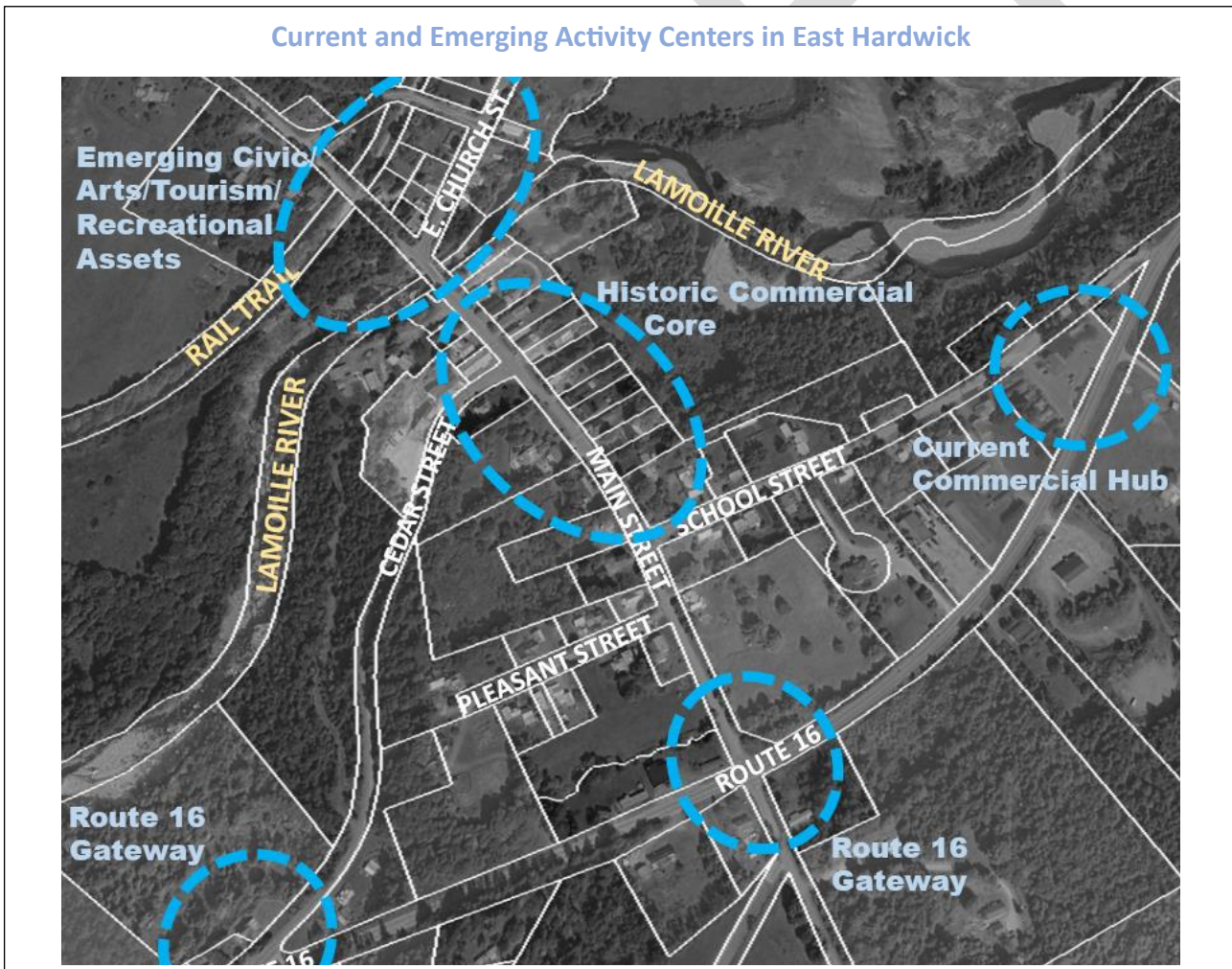
Emerging Civic/Arts/Tourism/Recreational Assets: these include the trailhead for the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT), the Grange Hall, the First Congregational Church, Summersweet Garden & Nursery, the nearby Whitewater Gallery and the proposed overlook park.

Historic Commercial Core: this has been the Village's center for commerce and public buildings. It currently includes Hay's Auto, the US Post Office, Care Bear Day Care Center, the McFeeter's building, the former Library/Firehouse as well as residences.

Current Commercial Hub: D&L Beverage and Deli is the major retail outlet for the Village, located at the former intersection of Route 16 and School Street. This area also includes a manufactured homes park and is adjacent to Hardwick Fitness on School Circle.

Route 16 Gateways: with the closing of the School Street/Route 16 intersection, East Hardwick still has two gateways linking the Village to that state highway: the intersection of Cedar Street and Route 16 as well as the intersection of Main Street and Route 16. These are areas in which higher-speed traffic on the highway transitions to the slower speeds associated with the narrower streets of the Village.

The figure below shows these activity centers in the Village.




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Emerging Priorities: Key priorities that have emerged for East Hardwick from the Better Connections Process and other community projects include:

- Improving the sidewalk system to increase safety for pedestrians and add to the attractiveness of the Village
- Redesigning key intersections so that they are easier to navigate and safer for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians
- Improving the safety and convenience of bicycle access both for residents and visitors using the LVRT.
- Supporting improved Access & Linkages through enhanced wayfinding via signage and design of public facilities such as the construction of the LVRT trailhead

Based on these priorities, the following recommendations have been drafted to improve access and linkages in East Hardwick.

Recommendations for Access & Linkages

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Paved/Striped Pedestrian Lanes on a Road Shoulder</p> <p>According to the Federal Highway Administration “paved shoulders on the edge of roadways can be enhanced to serve as a functional space for bicyclists and pedestrians to travel in the absence of other facilities with more separation.”. . . . Appropriate outside and within built-up areas, near school zones and transit locations, and where there is expected pedestrian and bicycle activity. . .” on low-traffic-volume roads.⁴</p> |  <p align="center">Pedestrian Lane</p> |
| <p><i>Recommended Locations</i></p> | |
| <p>School Street – Striped Pedestrian Lane from Main Street to its end near Route 16.</p> | <p>Purpose: Create stronger pedestrian/cyclist access from Main Street to the current commercial hub and manufactured home community at the far end of School Street.</p> |
| <p>Estimated cost:</p> | |
| <p>Pleasant Street – Striped Pedestrian Lane from Main Street to its end.</p> | <p>Purpose: Create stronger pedestrian/cyclist access from Main Street to residences on Pleasant Street.</p> |
| <p>Estimated cost:</p> | |
| <p>Potential Funding Sources: VTrans Bicycle and Pedestrian Program - The intent of the VTrans Bicycle and Pedestrian Program is to improve access and safety for people walking and bicycling through the planning, design and construction of infrastructure projects.</p> | |

⁴ US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, *Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks*, December, 2016, p. 33.

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[Carbon Reduction Program Federal Grant Awards](#) - provides funding to states and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to reduce transportation-related carbon emissions. The program is administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

[Local Motion Technical Assistance Services](#) - Local Motion provides a range of free or low-cost technical assistance services to communities working to build complete streets and encourage active transportation like walking and biking.

[Downtown Transportation Fund](#) - a financing tool which assists municipalities in paying for transportation-related capital improvements within or serving a Designated Downtown and eligible Designated Village Centers.

[Vtrans Transportation Alternatives Program](#) - provides funding for projects defined as transportation alternatives including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhancing mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation, trails that serve a transportation purpose, and safe routes to school projects.

More detailed descriptions of these programs are provided in the appendices to this report.

Enhanced Pedestrian Access (either pedestrian lane and/or sidewalk)

Linking activity centers is the primary concern in making better connections. But, sometimes the precise form of access or linkage requires further study to balance the needs of pedestrians, residents and other users.



Pedestrian Lane



Sidewalk, no streetscape

Recommended Locations

East Church Street - Linking East Church Street from Main Street to Steven’s Lane/Grange Hall is an essential connection for East Hardwick, linking the traditional commercial core with East Hardwick’s emerging civic, tourism and recreational assets. Further discussion and study is required to determine if this requires a formal form of access (i.e., sidewalks) or can be handled through a less formal pedestrian lane. NOTE: There are some pending projects involving the bridge and flood mitigation that may impact placement of a sidewalk.

Purpose: Provide important access to the LVRT trail head, the Grange Hall and the Congregational Church.

Estimated cost:

Potential Funding Sources: See Programs listed above in “Paved/Striped Pedestrian Lanes on a Road Shoulder” recommendations.

Replace sidewalks (potentially including streetscape enhancements)

According to the Federal Highway Administration, “Sidewalks are desirable to support pedestrian safety and comfort in areas with a mix of land uses and also in areas of the community where the roadway network connections have generally high traffic volumes or speeds.”⁵ Such projects might often include streetscape enhancements. According to University of Kentucky report, “Pleasant and safe streetscapes encourage individuals to use them for civic as well as economic activities and can lead to healthier lifestyles by providing alternative travel modes for everyday activities. Well thought out and designed streetscapes not only enhance the physical environment but also contribute to the community’s sense of place and place identity.”⁶



Sidewalks being replaced.



An example of a strong streetscape.

Recommended Locations

Main Street – Replace existing sidewalk with one of concrete with granite curbing along existing alignment between School Street and East Church Street. An option including streetscaping (e.g., complete streets) will be presented to the public to collect feedback.

“Sharrows” (see below) could also be added to Main Street to enable riders on the LVRT to access the traditional commercial core and, for the time being, to access the LVRT detour to Ward Hill Road.



A “Sharrow”

Purpose: Creates a stronger link between the traditional commercial core of East Hardwick and the Village’s residential areas as well as the emerging civic, tourism and recreational assets in the Village. In addition, the presence of sidewalks and a strong streetscape can provide traffic-calming for vehicles entering the Village off Route 16.

Estimated cost:

⁵ US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, *Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks*, December, 2016, p. 33.

⁶ Jayoung Ku, *Streetscapes: Planning and Designing Vibrant Streets*, University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, Cooperative Extension Service, August, 2017, p. 1.

Replace sidewalks (potentially including streetscape enhancements)

Brickhouse Road – Replace existing sidewalk between East Church Street and the LVRT.

Purpose: Strengthen the link between the LVRT and the core of East Hardwick to encourage residents to use the trail and provide access for tourists to the Village core.

Estimated cost:

Potential Funding Sources: See Programs listed above in “Paved/Striped Pedestrian Lanes on a Road Shoulder” recommendations.

Reconfigured Intersections

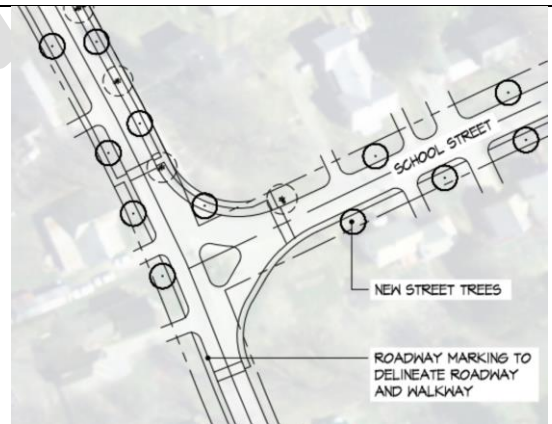
Intersections are crucial connections in any transportation network. They are particularly important in those parts of the network that host traveling on multiple modes: e.g., autos, cyclists and pedestrians. They should be easy to navigate, with adequate site lines, clear alignment of travel routes and able to accommodate multiple transportation modes. It is also important that they blend into the fabric of the community in which they are located, rather than creating “asphalt deserts” in the midst of compact villages or areas of greenspace.



A poorly defined intersection.

Recommended Locations


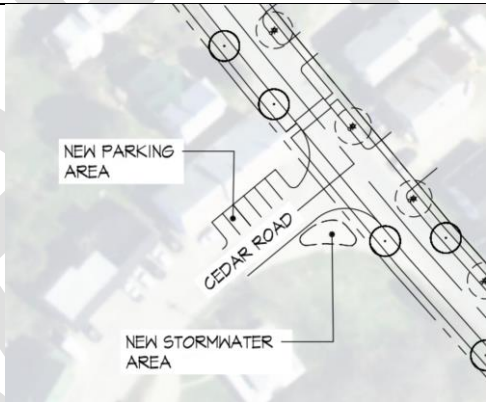
School Street/Main Street Intersection – Reconfigure intersection to have one point of access. Three options will be presented to the public, two of the alternatives will be with one or the other side of the road on each side of the water tub closed off. The third option will be a perpendicular intersection that would likely require relocating the water tub which could trigger review by the Division for Historic Preservation.





Purpose: Create a stronger link between the traditional commercial core of East Hardwick and the Village’s residential areas as well as the emerging civic, tourism and recreational assets in the Village. In addition, the presence of sidewalks and a strong streetscape can provide traffic-calming for vehicles entering the Village off Route 16.

Estimated cost:

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| Reconfigured Intersections | |
|---|---|
| <p>Brickhouse Road/Main Street Intersection – Reorient the intersection in accordance with the Local Motion recommendations to create a more perpendicular intersection.</p> |  |
| <p>Purpose: Strengthen the link between the LVRT and the core of East Hardwick to encourage residents to use the trail and provide access for tourists to the Village core. A clarified alignment would improve safety and would help slow traffic that currently drives at high speeds down Main Street and up Brickhouse Lane.</p> | <p>Estimated cost:</p> |
| <p>Cedar Street/Main Street Intersection – Reduce the width of the intersection, add parking along McFeeters and add stormwater infiltration on the uphill side.</p> |  |
| <p>Purpose: Clarify and simplify the intersection with Main Street</p> | <p>Estimated cost:</p> |
| <p>Potential Funding Sources: [BEING COMPILED]</p> <p>More detailed descriptions of these programs are provided in the appendices to this report.</p> | |

| | |
|--|---|
| <h2>Enhanced Route 16 Gateways</h2> | |
| <p>East Hardwick has two roads intersecting Route 16 that would benefit from some kind of “gateway” treatment. According to the FHWA, “Community gateways provide identity and are landscaped sign installations or areas that announce to motorists that they are entering a community. . . Gateway signs provide an indication to motorists that they are leaving a rural area and entering a city or town where land use, pedestrian, and motor vehicle activities will be more intense. The motorist should, in turn, respond by slowing down.”⁷ In some cases, an effective gateway requires reconfiguration of the intersection itself.</p> |  <p>Example of a poorly configured rural gateway to a major highway</p> |
| <p><i>Recommended Locations</i></p> | |
| <p>Main Street/VT-16 Intersection – Narrow, poor sightlines, increased traffic with closing of School Street/VT 16 intersection.</p> <p>Purpose: Creates a stronger link between the traditional commercial core of East Hardwick and the Village’s residential areas as well as the emerging civic, tourism and recreational assets in the Village. In addition, there has been a previous attempt to get the speed limit lowered along VT 16 in the area of East Hardwick that did not progress beyond the selectboard. Discussions of adding a blinking light near the end of Main Street to encourage people to slow down in the Village. The presence of sidewalks and a strong streetscape can provide traffic-calming for vehicles entering the Village off Route 16.</p> |  <p>Estimated cost:</p> |

⁷ <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/speed-management/speed-management-eprimer-rural-transition-zones-and-town-centers/5>

Enhanced Route 16 Gateways

Cedar Street/VT-16 Intersection – It is recommended that the intersection be reconfigured to be perpendicular with VT-16 to provide clearer sight lines. This could include possible traffic calming measures for traffic coming off Route 16 and into the Village.



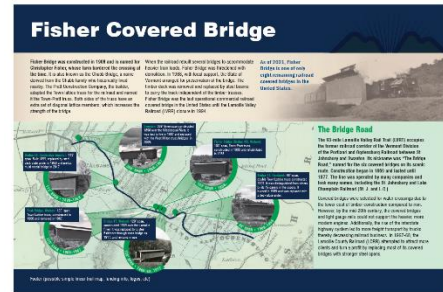
Purpose: To improve the safety and sight lines at this intersection, given the often-high traffic speeds it experiences.

Estimated cost:

Potential Funding Sources: BEING COMPILED.

Enhanced Wayfinding/Signage

Off-Trail Interpretive Sign (24"x36") Example Exhibit



Source: VTrans, LAMOILLE VALLEY RAIL TRAIL Trailside Facility Design Guidelines, May, 2023; East Hardwick Trail Head Design; Louisville Loop Wayfinding System signage family styles in Riverwalk; Lannan Park area Aerial Image Source: USDA, FSA, NAIP, 2012 <https://cedik.ca.uky.edu/community-design/publications/wayfinding-implementation>)

East Hardwick should consider creating a wayfinding system tying the trail to the other activity centers in the Village. According to the Rails to Trails Conservancy, “Wayfinding signs can help trail users stay safely on track and find their way. . . . Signs pointing trail users to restrooms, snack bars, local businesses or campgrounds are also helpful”.⁸ The signage could direct bikers from the LVRT to such local destinations as D&L, Main Street, Summersweet Garden Nursey and other spots. Signage at the trailhead will include a kiosk with one side reserved for local signage. A second Community Bulletin Board potentially at the Grange Hall may be beneficial as well.

Purpose: The LVRT has the potential to bring many visitors to East Hardwick. A wayfinding system could maximize the benefits and minimize disruption from this visitation,

Estimated cost:

Potential Funding Sources

⁸ <https://www.railstotrails.org/trail-building-toolbox/signage-and-surface-markings/>

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[Northern Border Regional Commission grants](#) – The Catalyst Program supports a broad range of economic development initiatives that revitalize transportation infrastructure; grow outdoor recreation infrastructure and economies.

[The Better Places program](#) may be able to help initiatives focused on creating or enhancing community gathering spaces and public places. ** As of 11/7/2024, no funding is available.

[Small Grants for Smart Growth](#) - Small Grants for Smart Growth provides seed money for catalyzing community-based initiatives related to smart growth.

[AARP Community Challenge Grants](#) - The AARP Community Challenge’s focus on tangible projects, community engagement and its quick-action timeline helps selected grantees fast-track ideas and replicate promising practices.

[AARP Winter Placemaking Grants](#) - The grants fund quick-action projects that initiate winter placemaking demonstrations focused on creating or reinventing public spaces to improve safety, accessibility, and overall appeal.

[Small Grants for Smart Growth](#) - Small Grants for Smart Growth provides seed money for catalyzing, community-based initiatives that are grounded in or help to support smart growth

More detailed descriptions of these programs are provided in the appendices to this report.

Unresolved Items to be presented at public meeting for discussion

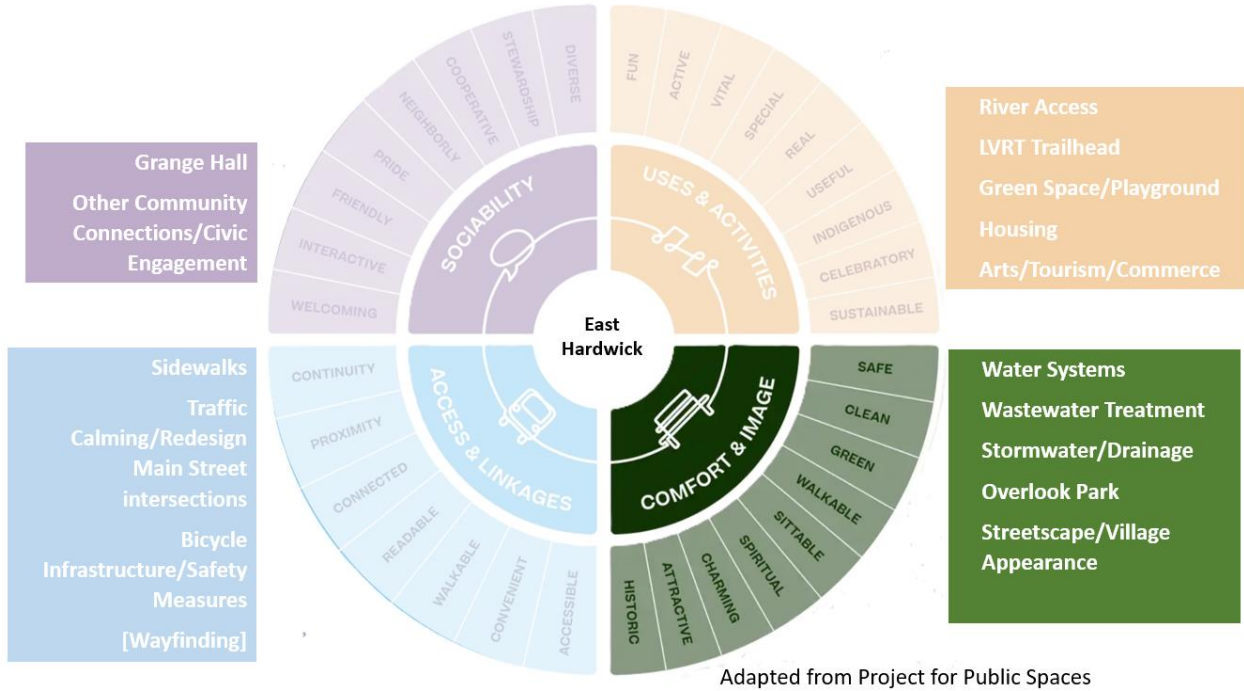
The following four issues have yet to be resolved and will be discussed at the next public meeting:

- School/Main Intersection configuration options?
- Main/VT-16 – what are the needs at this gateway in terms of traffic calming/control and pedestrian/cyclist access?
- Main Street Sidewalk – basic replacement vs. complete streets – present cross section views of each alternative
- Do we want a Cedar/VT-16 reconfiguration?

Priorities and Recommendations: Comfort & Image

The focus of this chapter is the Comfort and Image of East Hardwick. It provides a brief summary of Existing Conditions and Emerging Priorities followed by a summary of recommendations.

PRIORITIES FOR BETTER CONNECTIONS: COMFORT & IMAGE



Comfort means the creation of a physical environment that readily supports human activity in ways that are easy to understand and effectively and sustainably minimize and manage the byproducts of human activity (e.g., stormwater, wastewater, etc.)

Image means the creation of a physical environment that embodies and expresses the truth about the nature of the place. A successful image enables both residents and visitors to feel connected to the place and understand what it offers to them.

Existing conditions

Existing studies and community input for the previously completed stormwater evaluations have indicated that Comfort and Image as it relates to stormwater infrastructure are having a negative impact on the community. Several studies have recommended improvements to the conveyance and treatment of stormwater as summarized below to prevent damage to property and protection of water quality. Additional improvements identified related to Comfort & Image include streetscape improvements, also discussed in the Access & Linkages chapter, and the addition of park areas which are also discussed in other areas of this report.

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Emerging Priorities: Key priorities that have emerged for East Hardwick based on community input include:

- Improve stormwater collection and treatment to protect properties and riverbank erosion during rain and runoff events.
- Provide Park areas including Overlook Park and access to the river.
- Consider the need for a village-wide wastewater system.
- Maintain and improve the Village water system.

Recommendations for Comfort & Image

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| <h3>Water Systems</h3> | |
| <p>East Hardwick has a public water system that is owned and operated by the East Hardwick Fire District. The water system serves the area entire study area.</p> | |
| <h3>Recommendations</h3> | |
| <p>The East Hardwick Fire District is working to evaluate the water system and identify projects that will allow the system to continue to provide high quality water to their users.</p> | <p>Purpose: Maintain clean, safe drinking water service to the users in East Hardwick.</p> |
| <h3>Estimated Cost</h3> | |
| <p>Projects and associated costs will be identified in the study being undertaken by the Fire District.</p> | |
| <h3>Potential Funding Sources</h3> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean Water Grants - the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation’s (DEC) Clean Water Initiative Program (CWIP) coordinates with committed state and | |

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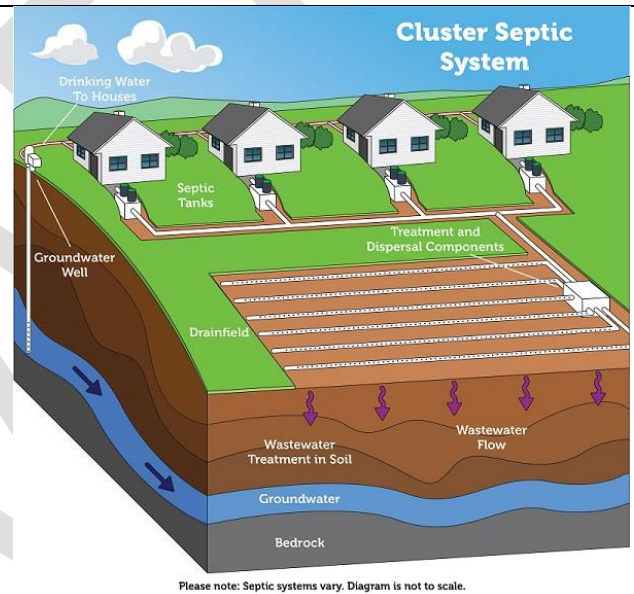
federal agencies and local partners to fund, develop, implement, and track clean water projects that protect and restore water quality.

- [Clean Water Revolving Loan Program](#) provides funding for Vermont's Clean Water projects in the form of low interest loans to municipalities and private entities for eligible projects.
- [USDA Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program](#) provides funding for clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, sanitary solid waste disposal, and storm water drainage to households and businesses in eligible rural areas.

More detailed descriptions of these programs are provided in the appendices to this report.

Wastewater Treatment

Village wastewater is something that could be considered, as much for existing homes and businesses and for future growth.



Recommendations

The State of Vermont is currently working with several villages to determine the feasibility and cost of developing a wastewater collection and treatment system.

Purpose: Provide adequate wastewater treatment for those properties that do not have space to meet current regulations and for those properties that cannot be developed as desired due to wastewater limitations.

Estimated Cost

Varies

Potential Funding Sources

Potential Funding Sources:


- [Village Wastewater Solutions Initiative](#): Villages form the heart of Vermont's rural communities, but more than 200 villages lack community sewer systems, hampering revitalization. To overcome this challenge, Vermont has formed an interagency Village Wastewater Initiative Committee (VVIC) lead by the Department of

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Environmental Conservation (DEC). The committee meets biweekly to discuss the progress of the villages, development of tools and resources, and coordination between funders and service providers.

- [Clean Water Revolving Loan Program](#) provides funding for Vermont's Clean Water projects in the form of low interest loans to municipalities and private entities for eligible projects.
- [USDA Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program](#) provides funding for clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, sanitary solid waste disposal, and storm water drainage to households and businesses in eligible rural areas.
- [Northern Border Regional Commission Catalyst Program](#) stimulates economic growth and inspires partnerships that improve rural economic vitality across the four-state NBRC region. The Catalyst Program supports a broad range of economic development initiatives that modernize and expand water and wastewater systems.

More detailed descriptions of these programs are provided in the appendices to this report.

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| <h3>Stormwater Projects</h3> | |
| <p>Due to the hilly nature of East Hardwick, stormwater collection has always been a concern, more so in recent years with events increasing in intensity. The current stormwater collection and treatment system is inadequate and has been the focus of several reports that have provided recommendations to reduce the current streambank erosion.</p> <p>More detailed information is included in the separate <i>East Hardwick Stormwater Treatment Report</i>, attached separately.</p> |  |
| <h4>Recommended Locations</h4> | |
| <p>Main Street: Stormwater is currently discharged at the Main Street bridge which causes erosion of differing degrees around the bridge. An improved collection system and treatment prior to discharge is recommended.</p> | <p>Purpose: Improve collection and treatment to protect both property and water quality by reducing erosion.</p> |
| <p>E. Church Street: There are wet areas/springs west of East Church Street that contribute significant</p> | <p>Purpose:</p> |

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| <p>runoff to E. Church and the culvert near the end of Stevens Lane.</p> | <p>Improve collection and treatment to protect both property and water quality by reducing erosion.</p> |
| <p>Brickhouse Road: There is no collection system or ditching along Brickhouse Road. Stormwater sheets across the road to the Overlook Park area.</p> | <p>Purpose: Improve collection and treatment to protect both property and water quality by reducing erosion.</p> |
| <p>School Street/Route 16 intersection: Stormwater and elevated groundwater caused a portion of the bank along School Street near Route 16 to slide. The Town has received proposals for improvements to address the bank instability along School Street and provide some stormwater treatment in the area.</p> | <p>Purpose: Stabilize the bank along School Street and improve stormwater collection and treatment to protect both property and water quality by reducing erosion.</p> |
| <p>Potential Funding Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better Roads Program - A grant program for municipalities that provides funds for planning and erosion control projects that improve water quality and reduce maintenance costs. <p>More detailed descriptions of these programs are provided in the appendices to this report.</p> | |

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| <h2>Overlook Park</h2> | |
| <p>The East Hardwick Neighborhood Organization (EHNO) has been working on improvements to Overlook Park for several years. The guardrail that extends into the park is planned to be shortened and replaced with granite blocks and a historic marker is planned to be installed at the park in the Spring.</p> <p>River access from Overlook Park is likely not feasible unless it is incorporated into a stormwater step conveyance feature.</p> | <p>East Hardwick Overlook Park Proposed Initial Phase Design 9-11-20</p> |

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| <i>Recommendations</i> |
| Overlook Park is making progress towards the vision developed by EHNO. Continued progress is anticipated to occur at the direction of EHNO. No further recommendations are included as part of this study. |
| Estimated Cost |
| Any additional items that need funding? |
| Potential Funding Sources: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) Community Grant Program: This grant program is intended to fund community projects that leverage outdoor recreation, which VOREC defines as leisure, sport and therapeutic recreation activities pursued outdoors, mainly in a natural setting. • Land & Water Conservation Fund: This fund supports the development of public outdoor recreation opportunities across Vermont, with a focus on creating parks and open spaces, enhancing recreation areas and facilities, and protecting wilderness areas and forests. |
| More detailed descriptions of these programs are provided in the appendices to this report. |

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| Streetscape/Village Appearance | |
| The Streetscape and Village Appearance section is closely linked with the recommended sidewalk improvements in the Access & Linkages section. | |
| <i>Recommended Locations</i> | |
| <p>Main Street: A sidewalk exists on the north side between the bridge and School Street is deteriorated and unsafe in most locations. Sidewalk improvements are discussed in the chapter on Access & Linkages. No other streetscape improvements exist along Main Street. Improvements considered by the community include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting • Landscaping <p>As a result of public input, the recommended streetscaping improvement for Main Street is</p> | <p>Purpose: Improved sidewalks and streetscapes will increase the connectivity of the village to points of interest.</p> |
| Estimated Cost | |
| <p>E. Church Street: There are no existing sidewalks along East Church Street. Points of interest accessed</p> | <p>Purpose:</p> |

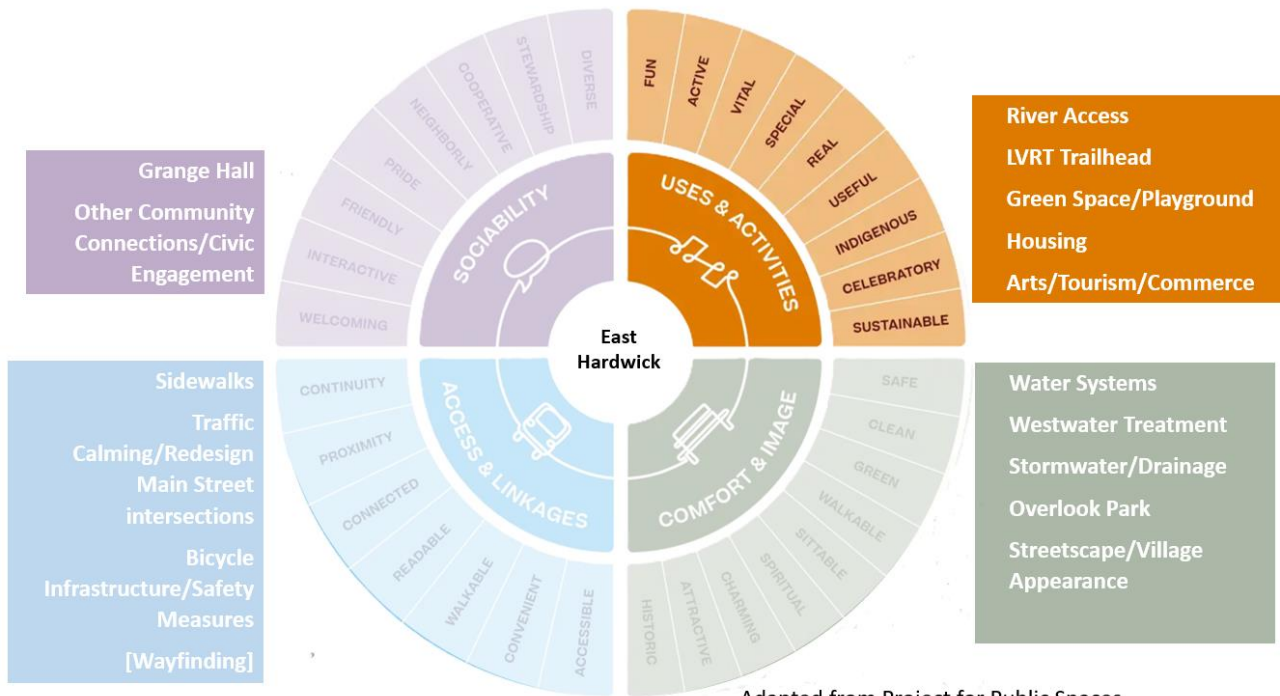
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| <p>from East Church Street include the Grange Hall and Lamoille Valley Rail Trail trailhead. Sidewalk improvements are discussed in the chapter on Access & Linkages. No streetscape improvements exist along Main Street. Improvements considered by the community include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting • Landscaping <p>As a result of public input, the recommended streetscaping improvement for East Church Street is</p> | <p>Improved sidewalks and streetscapes will increase the connectivity of the village to points of interest.</p> |
| <p>Estimated Cost</p> | |
| <p>School Street:</p> <p>No streetscape improvements exist along School Street. The only store in the Village is located near the end of School Street. In addition, housing density along School Street is greater than in some other areas of the Village. Sidewalk improvements are discussed in the chapter on Access & Linkages. No streetscape improvements exist along Main Street. Improvements considered by the community include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting • Landscaping <p>As a result of public input, the recommended streetscaping improvement for School Street is</p> | <p>Purpose:</p> <p>Improved connectivity to points of interest</p> |
| <p>Estimated Cost</p> | |
| <p>Potential Funding Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown Transportation Fund - a financing tool which assists municipalities in paying for transportation-related capital improvements within or serving a Designated Downtown and eligible Designated Village Centers. • Vtrans Transportation Alternatives Program - provides funding for projects defined as transportation alternatives (click here for additional FHWA guidance), including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhancing mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation, trails that serve a transportation purpose, and safe routes to school projects. <p>More detailed descriptions of these programs are provided in the appendices to this report.</p> | |

Priorities and Recommendations: Uses & Activities

This chapter focuses on issues related to Use & Activities East Hardwick. It provides a brief summary of Existing Conditions followed by listing of recommended actions/projects.

PRIORITIES FOR BETTER CONNECTIONS: USES & ACTIVITIES



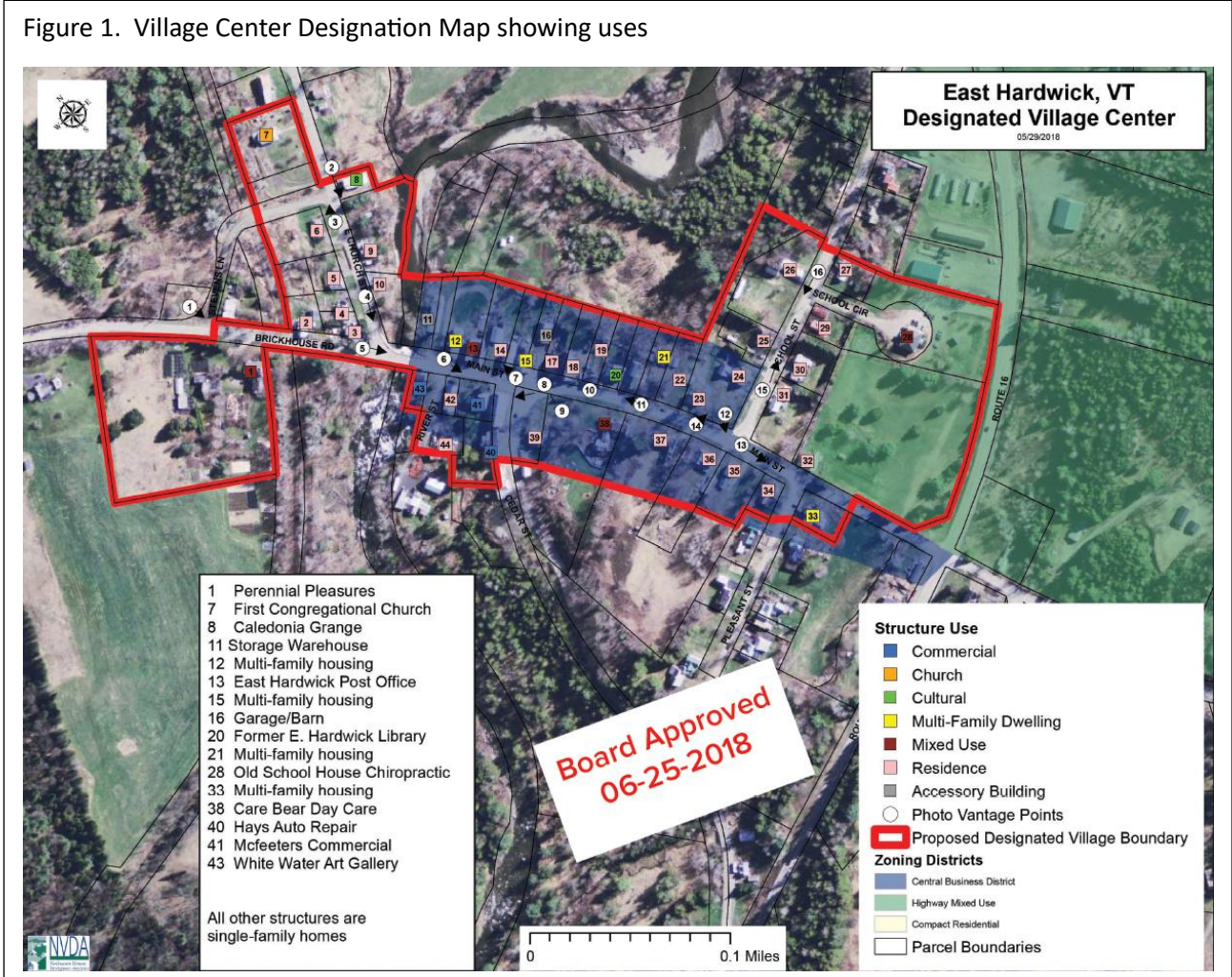
Uses are the ongoing functions to which parcels of land are devoted. They can include housing, retail, open space/recreation, civic functions, etc.

Activities those things that happen in a community that bind it together and make others feel welcome. They can include festivals, parades, community dinners or the kind of informal gathering that take place at coffee shops or community centers or local stores.

Existing Conditions

East Hardwick has a variety of uses and activities associated with it. As shown in Figure 2, it currently has 3 parcels devoted solely to commercial uses, 1 church, 2 cultural facilities, 4 parcels in mixed uses, 4 multifamily dwellings, 27 residences and two parcels in accessory uses. The market analysis attached to this document describes the potential opportunities for new uses in terms of housing, retail, arts and culture and tourism. One of the most important findings from that analysis is that, while there is demand

Figure 1. Village Center Designation Map showing uses



for goods and services that could be met in East Hardwick, that demand is relatively weak. Capturing such activity for the Village will require such enterprises to participate in a larger experience of the community, so that when people got to a shop or restaurant in East Hardwick, it is as much about going to East Hardwick as it is about commerce. In addition, Figure 2 shows the constraints on land in the area around the Village in terms the Lamoille River Floodway and Floodplains as well as steep slopes found in and near the Village. These constraints leave very little land available for development, which limits any new development in the Village, enabling some new development to occur, but only at a very limited scale.

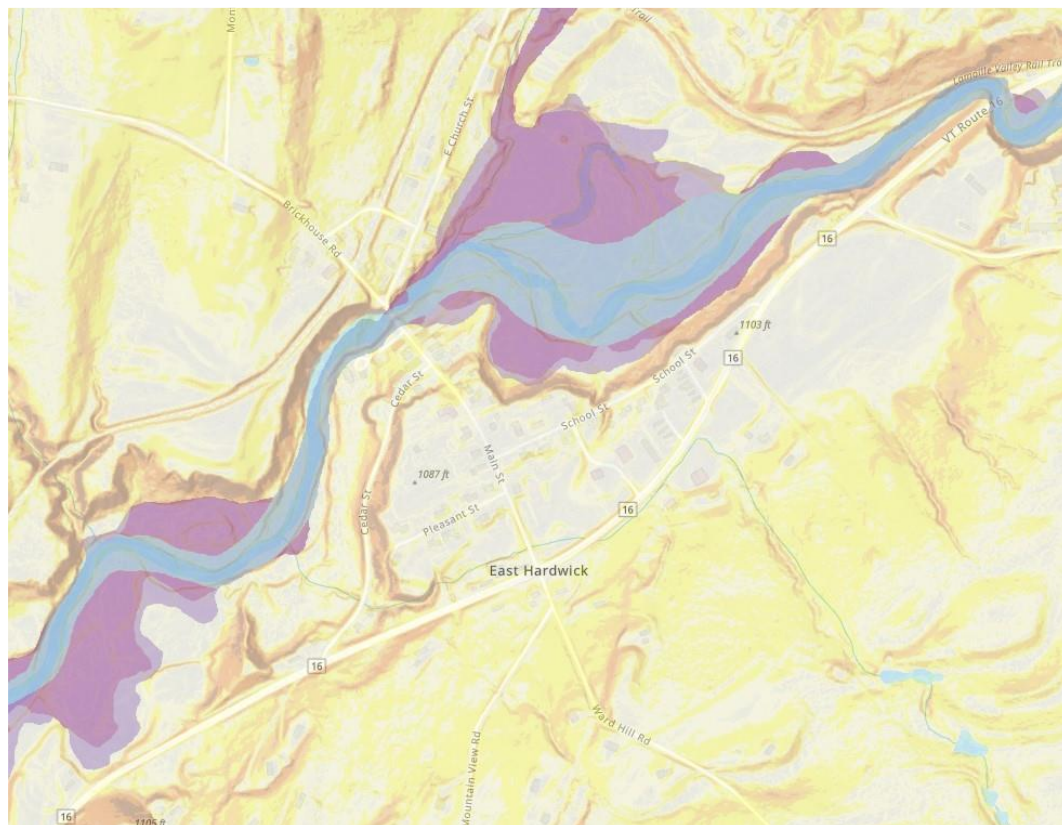
Figure 2. Constrained Lands in and Around East Hardwick

USA Flood Hazard Areas

- 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
- 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
- Future Conditions 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
- Regulatory Floodway
- Area with Reduced Risk Due to Levee
- Special Floodway

Terrain: Slope Map


- Flat (0°)
- Nearly level (1°)
- Gently level (2°)
- Gently sloping (3° - 5°)
- Strongly sloping (6° - 10°)
- Gently steep (11° - 15°)
- Moderately steep (16° - 20°)
- Steep (21° - 30°)
- Very steep (31° - 90°)




Emerging Priorities: Key priorities that have emerged for East Hardwick from the Better Connections Process and other community projects include:

- Create a coffee shop to serve as a community gathering place. Suggestions included a small diner or snack bar or farmers market in the Village
- Small office space. Encourage home businesses.
- Bicycle and fishing-related businesses were mentioned, both find support in the market analysis
- Maintaining the gas/convenience store.
- Using the LVRT to support village vitality by, for example, having food carts on LVRT.

Recommendations for Uses & Activities

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| <p>Specific Investments in Vitality</p> <p>The old cliché is that it takes a village to nurture a child. Similarly, it takes a village to nurture a village, involving a full range of partners, projects and activities. Specific “catalytic” investments are an important part of this mix. Four specific catalytic investments are recommended for East Hardwick, including continued restoration of the Grange Hall, developing the LVRT trailhead as a major gateway to the Village, developing Overlook Park and other opportunities for access to the Lamoille River and exploring the possibilities for creating new housing in the Village through adaptive reuse of existing properties.</p> |  <p>Caledonia Grange Hall #9</p> |
| <p><i>Recommended Actions</i></p> | |
| <p>Recognize the Grange Hall as an important community center for East Hardwick. Even in its current state of incomplete renovation, the Hall has emerged as an important community center for East Hardwick. Obtaining funding for its full restoration is an important component in securing the ongoing vitality of East Hardwick. The Friends of Caledonia #9 has recently been constituted as a 501c3 corporation to specifically support such efforts.</p> | <p>Purpose: Properly restored the Grange Hall could become the signature community gathering space for East Hardwick and beyond.</p> |
| <p>Estimated cost:</p> | |
| <p>Develop the LVRT Trail head as a major gateway to the Village. As discussed in the market analysis, the LVRT is becoming a major tourist draw for tourists. In addition, the largest segment of users of the LVRT is expected to be residents of the nearby communities. Thus, Thus, as planned, the Trail Head should be treated as a major entranceway to the Village, with strong connections to Main Street. There may also be opportunities to collaborate with similar trail-related initiatives in Greensboro Bend and other nearby communities.</p> | <p>Purpose: The LVRT can be an important way to introduce all visitors (locals, as well as tourists) to East Hardwick.</p> |
| <p>Estimated cost:</p> | |
| <p>Develop the Overlook Park and pursue other opportunities for access to the Lamoille River. The Lamoille River is an important asset for the Village. As various projects are undertaken to improve Village infrastructure and manage flooding, to the extent possible, these efforts should seek opportunities to improve access to the river for fishing, kayaking, etc.</p> | <p>Purpose: River access can be an important source of local activity as well as a tourist attraction for the Village.</p> |

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| Estimated cost: | |
| <p>Explore housing development opportunities with private developers and groups such as Rural Edge, with a focus on the adaptive reuse of existing buildings. Given the limited developable land available and the need to assure that the housing is affordable to residents, such development is only likely to happen if the community cooperates closely with prospective developers and is able to take advantage of State and federal financing available for such projects, particularly for adaptive reuse of existing structures. This could include mixed use buildings, with a store or office on the first floor and housing on the floor above.</p> | <p>Purpose: The market analysis indicates that the one use for which there is a clear demand in East Hardwick is housing. Reusing existing building for new housing can bring added social and economic vitality to the Village.</p> |
| Estimated cost: | |
| <p>Potential Funding Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Border Regional Commission Catalyst Program stimulates economic growth and inspires partnerships that improve rural economic vitality across the four-state NBRC region. The Catalyst Program supports a broad range of economic development initiatives that grow outdoor recreation infrastructure and economies. • Municipal Assistance Grants support planning in your village. Good for town plans and specific planning projects (i.e. economic development, zoning, transportation, etc.). • Recreational Trails Program (RTP) :RTP provides annual funding to Vermont communities for the development, restoration, and maintenance of public recreational trails with a focus on project planning and development. • Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF): LWCF supports the development of public outdoor recreation opportunities across Vermont, with a focus on creating parks and open spaces, enhancing recreation areas and facilities, and protecting wilderness areas and forests. • Homes for All: The Vermont Homes for All Toolkit and community engagement process will re-introduce Missing Middle Housing to Vermont by focusing statewide attention on small-scale gentle infill and incremental development. • Vermont Housing Improvement Program 2.0: VHIP 2.0 offers grants or forgivable loans. • Recreational Trails Program: This grant program provides annual funding to Vermont communities for the development and restoration of public recreational trails. <p>More detailed descriptions of these programs are provided in the appendices to this report.</p> | |

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| <p>Village-wide Initiatives</p> | |
| <p>As mentioned earlier, village vitality depends heavily on partnerships and village-wide initiatives. Two are recommended to implement the Better Connections Process: working with the Town to adopt a Village Center Zone for East Hardwick and working with local businesses, property owners, the Town and others to improve the overall appearance of the Village to boost economic activity there.</p> |  <p align="center">East Hardwick</p> |
| <p><i>Recommendations</i></p> | |
| <p>Adopt a Village Center District for East Hardwick. This would create a separate district for East Hardwick so the Village would not be subject to zoning changes as Town regulations may be changed to address problems elsewhere in the Town.</p> | <p>Purpose: According to the draft language of this zoning proposal, “The purpose of the Village Center District is to support a central mixed-use area in East Hardwick. The Village Center District is intended to provide a place of civic pride and a focal point for development in the community. The Village Center District enables a variety of housing opportunities with a mix of small-scale commercial in a pedestrian-friendly setting.”</p> |
| <p>Estimated cost:</p> | |
| <p>Potential Funding Sources:</p> | |
| <p>Improve the Village appearance and connectivity to support “experience-based” enterprises in the Village. As described in the market study, “experience-based” retail is possible when local businesses are able to attract consumers who are accessing interesting experiences in the area (e.g., the village) in which their store is located.</p> | <p>Purpose: As mentioned in the marketing report, the opportunities for enhancing vitality in the Village are dependent upon being part of a large experience of the Village. Thus, all of the recommendations in this Better Connections Process will serve to improve the ability of East</p> |

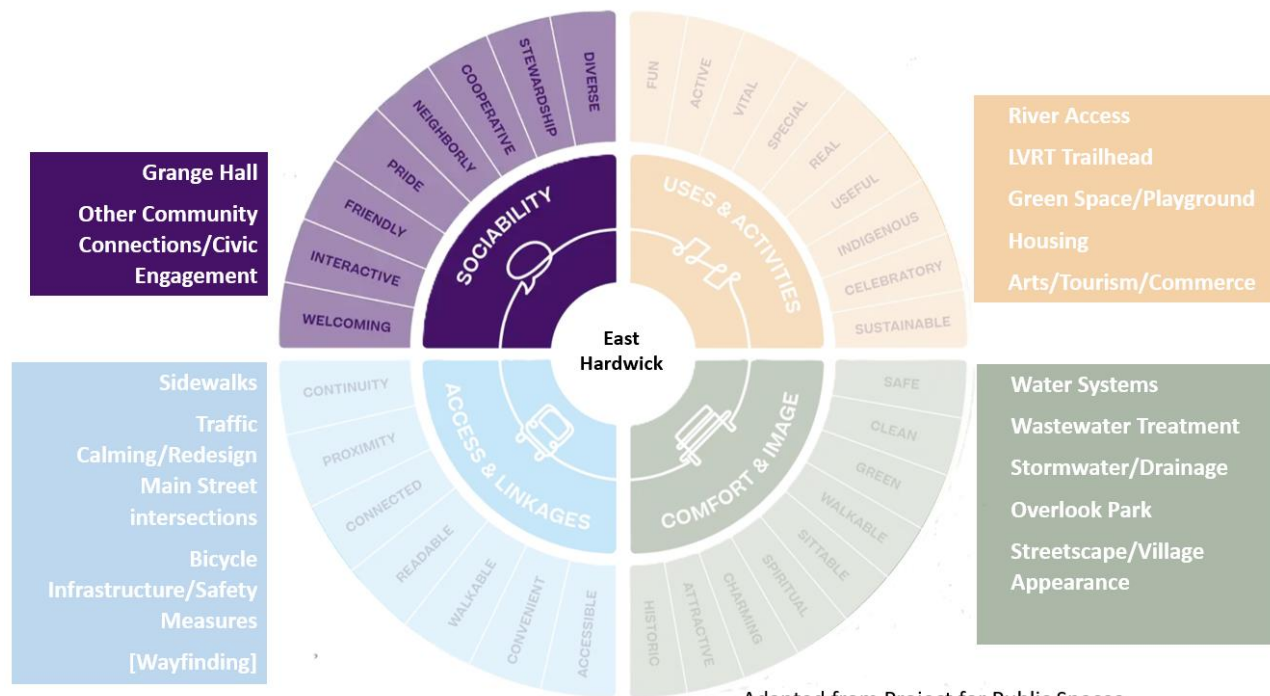
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| | Hardwick to host the small shops, cafes and other gathering spaces that were identified as desirable in the community outreach process. |
| Estimated cost: | |
| Potential Funding Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Municipal Planning Grants – grant program to support planning in your village. Good for town plans and specific planning projects (i.e. economic development, zoning, transportation, etc.).• Small Grants for Smart Growth - Small Grants for Smart Growth provides seed money for catalyzing community-based initiatives related to smart growth.• Village Trust Initiative - The Village Trust Initiative will help towns set up or galvanize a local trust to take on projects that address a community need such as the revitalization of a general store, the creation of a community center, improvement of accessibility and use of underutilized town halls, the transition of large historic single-household dwellings into village-scale affordable housing, and more.• Paul Bruhn Revitalization Grants - The Preservation Trust of Vermont offers grants to preserve and restore buildings and community gathering spaces of economic and social significance in rural communities.• Vermont Community Development Program – offers federal Community Development Block Grants to support housing, infrastructure, economic/community development, including making public buildings accessible.• AARP Community Challenge Grants - The AARP Community Challenge’s focus on tangible projects, community engagement and its quick-action timeline helps selected grantees fast-track ideas and replicate promising practices.• AARP Winter Placemaking Grants - The grants fund quick-action projects that initiate winter placemaking demonstrations focused on creating or reinventing public spaces to improve safety, accessibility, and overall appeal.• Small Grants for Smart Growth - Small Grants for Smart Growth provides seed money for catalyzing, community-based initiatives that are grounded in or help to support smart growth.• Spark Connecting Community grant program - The Spark program will accept applications from hyperlocal, place-based projects (applications from a single community or a few towns working in partnership in the same region). VCF aims to support emerging grassroots projects with the potential to build social capital—the connective tissue of our communities. <p>More detailed descriptions of these programs are provided in the appendices to this report.</p> | |

Priorities and Recommendations: Sociability

This chapter focuses on issues related to Use & Activities Sociability in East Hardwick. It provides a brief summary of Existing Conditions followed by listing of recommended actions/projects.

PRIORITIES FOR BETTER CONNECTIONS: SOCIABILITY




Sociability is the quality of a community that makes people feel welcome there and encourages them to interact with others.

Existing Conditions: East Hardwick is a close knit community with many opportunities for sociability, including the Children’s Parade, the activities at the Grange Hall .

Emerging Priorities: Key priorities that have emerged for East Hardwick from the Better Connections Process include:

- A desire for more community events. At the community outreach, participants identified a variety of events they would like to see, including an annual block party, contradances, free community meals, townwide yard sales, book clubs, etc.
- Preserve the Grange Hall, including fixing the kitchen.
- Creating public gathering spaces.
- Maintain and grow EHNO as a steward of East Hardwick.
- Enhance Internet access to support the creation of an East Hardwick listserv as well as a system to check in with each other in disaster situations (individual or communitywide).

Recommendations for Sociability

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| <p>Mobilizing Existing Assets</p> | |
| <p>One of the great things about an historic village like East Hardwick is that it comes with existing assets that can be leveraged to support and contribute to Village vitality while reinforcing its historic character. The Better Connections process recommends leveraging these assets: the Grange Hall, The Lamoille Valley Rail Trail and Main Street itself as a place where Village residents and visitors can gather and socialize.</p> |  |
| <p><i>Recommended Actions</i></p> | |
| <p>The Grange Hall should be embraced as a community center which could serve as a focus of community activities as indicated in the Uses and Activities recommendations.</p> | <p>Purpose: Properly restored the Grange Hall could become the signature community gathering space for East Hardwick and beyond.</p> |
| <p>Estimated cost:</p> | |
| <p>Use the LVRT Trail Head to provide information about community events and activities. As mentioned above, the effort could be strengthened via collaboration with neighboring communities along the LVRT.</p> | <p>Purpose: Since most of the trail users will be local residents, a local message board at the site could be an important way to provide information about community events and other activities.</p> |
| <p>Estimated cost:</p> | |
| <p>Create opportunities for socializing on Main Street. The sociability of a community requires its own infrastructure. This could involve installing benches at several locations along Main Street and possibly elsewhere in the Village. Development of greenspace at the site of the former Library/Firehouse could be part of this effort.</p> | <p>Purpose: To strengthen the role of Main Street as a informal gathering place for residents and visitors. This will in turn make the Village feel more welcoming and help support local businesses such as restaurants/cafes.</p> |
| <p>Estimated cost:</p> | |

Mobilizing Existing Assets

Potential Funding Sources:

- [Historic Preservation Grants](#) - the most likely grant program to help public/nonprofit buildings in the community.
- [Cultural Facilities Grants](#) - grants to help enhance, create, or expand the capacity of an existing building to provide cultural activities for the public.
- [Downtown and Village Center Tax Credits](#) – tax credits to help improvements to commercial properties (and income-producing residential and nonprofit properties) in the designated village center.
- [The Better Places program](#) may be able to help initiatives that focus on creating or enhancing community gathering spaces and public places.
- [Small Grants for Smart Growth](#) - Small Grants for Smart Growth provides seed money for catalyzing community-based initiatives related to smart growth.
- [Village Trust Initiative](#) - The Village Trust Initiative will help towns set up or galvanize a local trust to take on projects that address a community need such as the revitalization of a general store, the creation of a community center, improvement of accessibility and use of underutilized town halls, the transition of large historic single-household dwellings into village-scale affordable housing, and more.
- [Paul Bruhn Revitalization Grants](#) - The Preservation Trust of Vermont offers grants to preserve and restore buildings and community gathering spaces of economic and social significance in rural communities.

More detailed descriptions of these programs are provided in the appendices to this report.

Community Stewardship

To continue with the idea that it takes a village to nurture a village: it goes beyond promoting specific projects and activities, but also putting the capacity in place to oversee these efforts and make sure the Village stays healthy. The Better Connections Process recommends recognizing EHNO's central role in promoting sociability in the Village, creating a formal events calendar and ensuring that there are opportunities to celebrate successes in East Hardwick and keep the momentum going.



East Hardwick's Children's Parade, 2024
(archive.org)

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| Community Stewardship | |
| <i>Recommended Actions</i> | |
| <p>Recognize EHNO as a major contributor to sociability in East Hardwick. The East Hardwick Neighborhood Organization has done much to build sociability on the Village. Its central role should be recognized and supported in all efforts to improve East Hardwick. It could work with the Town and private and public Internet providers to monitor the state of Internet connectivity in the Village.</p> | <p>Purpose: Ensure that there is capacity to undertake and encourage efforts to maintain and enhance sociability in the Village have</p> |
| Estimated cost: | |
| <p>Create a formal events calendar for East Hardwick. Events are a great way to bring a community together. The Children’s Parade has served this purpose in the past. A formal events calendar could be maintained through an annual meeting of community organizations to coordinate the schedule of events each year.</p> | <p>Purpose: The creation of a formal calendar of events would keep both residents and visitors aware of what is happening in the Village, potentially boosting participation in and support for community events.</p> |
| Estimated cost: | |
| <p>Celebrate successes. Each Better Connections project, large or small, is an opportunity to celebrate its completion (or its initiation) and an excuse to bring people together in appreciation of the Village. It also keeps the momentum going to see other projects through to completion.</p> | <p>Purpose: Such celebrations make people aware of the accomplishments coming out of the Better Connections Process and build community support and momentum to take on other, larger projects for East Hardwick.</p> |
| Estimated cost: | |
| <p>Continue ongoing projects. While the Better Connections Process has identified some new initiatives, it is important that the following ongoing projects are continued and completed in the years ahead.</p> <p>[LIST OF ONGOING PROJECTS]</p> | <p>Purpose: East Hardwick has already launched a number of important initiatives to promote Village vitality. It is important to focus on these. However, it is equally important that existing projects continue so that both new and existing actions complement each other and go even further in strengthening the Village.</p> |
| Potential Funding Sources: | |

Community Stewardship

- [Spark Connecting Community grant program](#) - The Spark program will accept applications from hyperlocal, place-based projects (applications from a single community or a few towns working in partnership in the same region) or statewide/regional projects that support a community of individuals with a shared identity or interest. VCF aims to support emerging grassroots projects with the potential to build social capital—the connective tissue of our communities.

More detailed descriptions of these programs are provided in the appendices to this report.

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Appendices

[Appendix 1. List of Potential Funding Sources](#)

[Appendix 2. Market Study for East Hardwick Area](#)

[Appendix 3. Report on Community Outreach](#)

[Appendix 4. Existing Conditions Analysis](#)

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