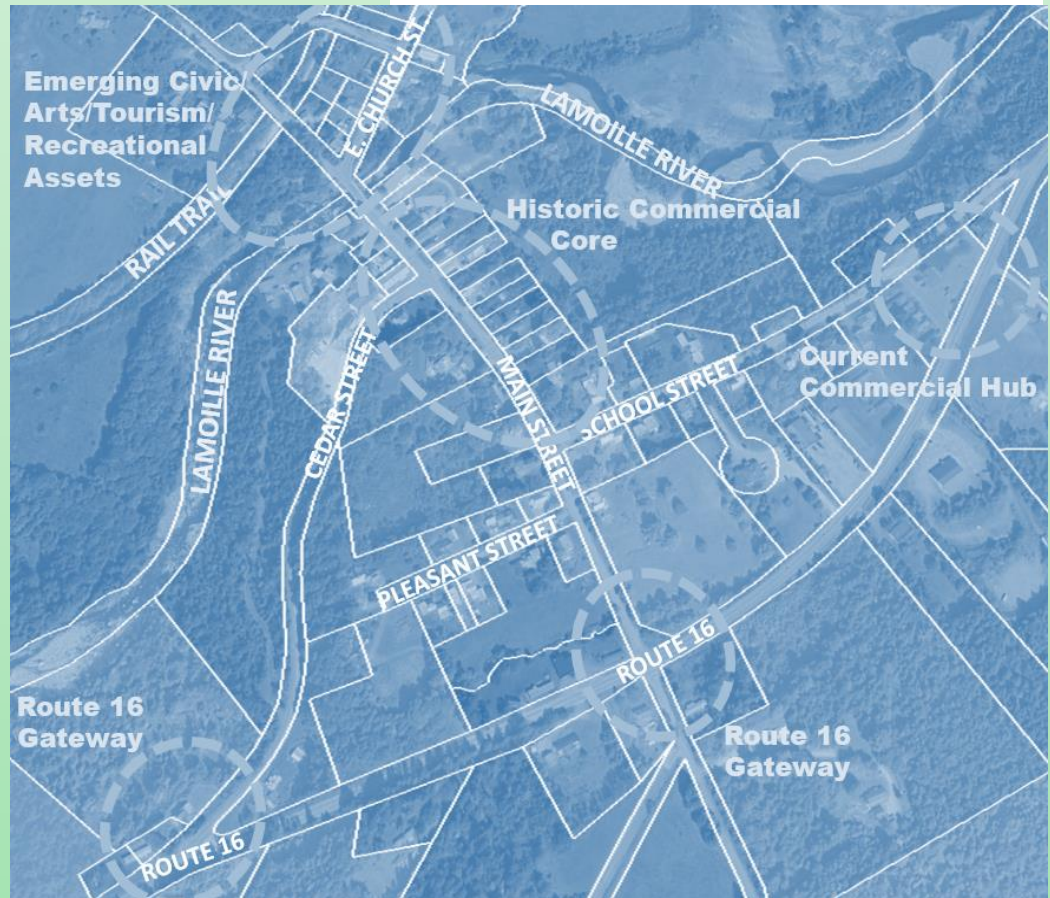


# East Hardwick Better Connections Process **FINAL REPORT**



APRIL 10, 2025

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## Contents

Executive Summary with Implementation Plan .....	iii
Implementation Plan.....	v
Preparing for Implementation .....	v
Recommended Implementation Priorities.....	v
Introduction .....	1
About the East Hardwick Better Connections Process.....	1
Who has been involved? .....	2
Existing Conditions .....	3
Overview of Demographic Trends.....	4
Summary of the Analysis.....	1
General Population Characteristics .....	2
Review of Existing Reports .....	6
Preliminary Observations.....	9
Base Map of the Village .....	10
Community Outreach.....	12
Project Website & Flyer.....	12
Community Survey .....	12
Village Supper .....	13
East Hardwick as a Place worthy of Care and Preservation .....	14
Understanding Community Priorities for East Hardwick as an Agenda for Community Vitality .....	16
Priorities and Recommendations: Access & Linkages .....	17
Existing Conditions .....	17
Recommendations for Access & Linkages.....	25
Paved/Striped Pedestrian Lanes on a Road Shoulder .....	25
Enhanced Pedestrian Access (either pedestrian lane and/or sidewalk) .....	26
Replace sidewalks (potentially including streetscape enhancements) .....	27
Reconfigured Intersections .....	28
Enhanced Route 16 Gateways.....	33
Enhanced Wayfinding/Signage .....	34
Priorities and Recommendations: Comfort & Image .....	36
Existing conditions .....	36
Recommendations for Comfort & Image .....	37

Final Report, East Hardwick Better Connections Process

Water Systems.....	37
Wastewater Treatment .....	38
Stormwater Projects .....	39
Overlook Park.....	41
Streetscape/Village Appearance .....	42
Priorities and Recommendations: Uses & Activities .....	45
Existing Conditions .....	45
Recommendations for Uses & Activities .....	48
Specific Investments in Vitality .....	48
Village-wide Initiatives .....	50
Priorities and Recommendations: Sociability.....	52
Recommendations for Sociability .....	53
Mobilizing Existing Assets .....	53
Community Stewardship.....	54
Appendices.....	56

## Executive Summary with Implementation Plan

The Better Connections Program is an interagency partnership involving the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) and the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Better Connections provides technical assistance and funds to local communities to help them achieve their goals and plan for growth.<sup>1</sup>

As a participant in this program, 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. The project has been managed by the Town of Hardwick and guided by a steering committee of local residents, local officials and representatives from state and regional organizations. Their names and affiliations are provided in the introduction to the full report

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. The first, a Village Supper, was held on July 29, 2024 at the Grange Hall and the second, a community gathering, was held on March 12, 2025 to present this draft report for community response. A full report on community outreach is included in the appendices to this report.

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. The Project 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. (The model is described in the full report.) 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 (A&L)

**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 (C&I)

**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.)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/projects-programs/better-connections>

**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 (U&A)

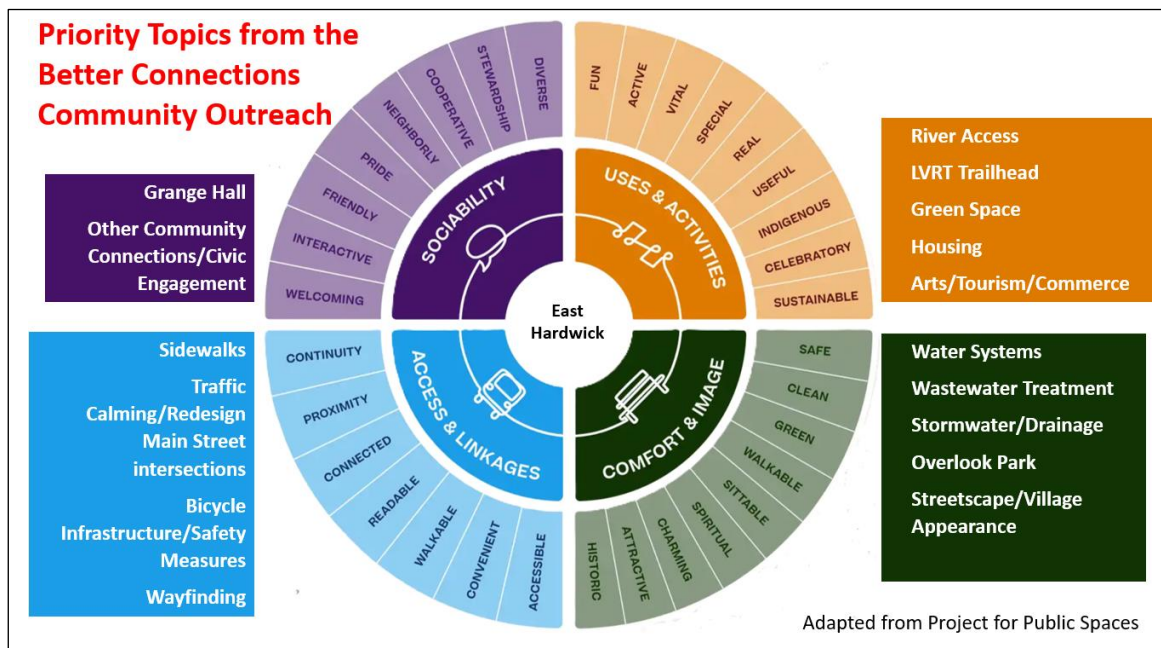
**Uses:** the ongoing functions to which parcels of land are devoted. They can include housing, retail, open space/recreation, civic functions, etc.

**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 kinds of informal gatherings that take place at coffee shops or community centers or local stores.

### 4. Sociability (S)

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

The diagram below shows how this model was used to organize the priorities identified by community outreach in East Hardwick into a coordinated effort.



The Better Connections Process has produced twenty-seven recommendations to address community priorities. They are detailed in the full report. Following this executive summary is an implementation plan to serve as a guide for completing the recommendations.

## Implementation Plan

This report is just the beginning of a process of building “better connections” in East Hardwick. The most essential phase of this effort is implementation, or making the recommendations in this report a reality. This implementation plan describes the process for organizing to take action and then provides a suggested framework for setting priorities and taking action.

## Preparing for Implementation

Implementation (AKA “getting things done”) can be a complex process. It is important that a community be prepared to take on the work. This involves a three-step process.

**Step 1. Organize:** The first step is to make sure there is clarity about which organizations will be involved and in what capacity. This implementation plan identifies lead parties for each recommendation. Any of the lead parties for a task must be aware who else will be involved, what their capabilities are and, as a result, what might be a reasonable timeframe for completion of the task. To begin this process, it is recommended that one office or organization be designated the overall coordinator of the process. For example, the town Community Development Coordinator could be the overall coordinator. As a first task, the coordinator could establish a working group of partners that agree to meet regularly to review the plan and the progress being made on individual recommendations.

**Step 2. Prioritize:** Not all of the recommendations in this report can be completed simultaneously. The implementation plan includes recommendations for priorities. Specifically, each recommendation is placed in one of three categories:

- Immediate priority (to be completed within 2 year of plan completion)
- Intermediate priority (to be completed within 3 to 5 years of plan completion)
- Long-term priority (to be completed within 6 years of plan completion)

**Step 3. Persist:** Fully implementing these recommendations will take at least 5 to 7 years, possibly longer. The most important ingredient for success in implementing any recommendations is simply persistence. This means remaining committed to completing the recommendation and making adjustments to priorities and schedules to reflect changing conditions. In turn, this involves building and maintaining strong relationships among all of the participants in the process. Creating a regular schedule to check in with participating organizations helps build perseverance. It also helps to regularly celebrate the successes, achievements and milestones reached in the process

## Recommended Implementation Priorities

The table identifies the Plan Goal with which the action is associated and specifies the “responsible party” to carry out that action. The implementation schedule suggests the following entities be tasked with implementation:

- Town Gov’t.: The Town of Hardwick’s Administration, including the Town Manager, Community Development Coordinator, etc.



## Final Report, East Hardwick Better Connections Process

- Select Board: The Town of Hardwick Select Board
- Planning Commission: Town of Hardwick Planning Commission
- EHNO: East Hardwick Neighborhood Organization
- VTrans: Vermont Agency of Transportation
- Fire District: East Hardwick Fire District
- Grange: Caledonia Grange #9

Other organizations may be added over time.

Full details for each recommendation (a description of the action, estimated costs and potential funding sources) are included in the Priorities & Recommendations section on the page indicated in the table. This implementation schedule in this table should be reviewed and as necessary revised as necessary to reflect the resources available. In addition, the implementation plan should be revisited each year by the partners in the plan to ensure it continues to reflect the priorities and capacities of East Hardwick and the Town of Hardwick.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:	
IMMEDIATE PRIORITY (within 2 years of plan completion)	LEAD PARTY
A&L-4. Replace Sidewalks on Main Street. (See page 27.)	Town Gov't./VTrans
C&I-5. Enhance the Streetscape on Main Street. (See page 42.)	Town Gov't./VTrans
A&L-5. Replace Sidewalk on Brickhouse Road. (See page 28.)	Town Gov't./VTrans
A&L-7. Reconfigure Brickhouse Road/Main Street Intersection. (See page 31.)	Town Gov't./VTrans
A&L-8. Reconfigure Cedar Street/Main Street Intersection. (See page 32.)	Town Gov't./VTrans
A&L-9. Study Safety Enhancements for Main Street/VT-16 Intersection. (See page 33.)	Select Board/VTrans
C&I-1. Evaluate the Village Water System. (See page 37.)	Fire District
C&I-3. Improve stormwater collection on Main Street, East Church Street, Brickhouse Road and the School Street/Route 16 intersection. (See page 39.)	Town Gov't.
C&I-4. Continue improvements to Overlook Park. (See page 41.)	EHNO
U&A-1. Recognize the Grange Hall as an important community center for East Hardwick. (See page 48.)	Grange
U&A-5. Adopt a Village Center District for East Hardwick. (See page 50.)	Planning Commission



RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:	
<b>S-3. Recognize EHNO as a major contributor to vitality in East Hardwick.</b> (See page 55.)	Town Gov't.
<b>S-4. Create a formal events calendar for East Hardwick.</b> (See page 55.)	EHNO/Grange
<b>S-5. Celebrate successes in building better connections.</b> (See page 55.)	EHNO/Grange
<b>S-6. Remove the former Library/Firehouse Building and create a small greenspace.</b> (See page 55.)	Fire District/EHNO
<b>INTERMEDIATE PRIORITY (within 3 to 5 years of plan completion)</b>	<b>LEAD PARTY</b>
<b>A&amp;L-1. Paved/Striped Pedestrian Lane for School Street.</b> (See page 25.)	EHNO/Town Gov't.
<b>A&amp;L-2. Paved/Striped Pedestrian Lane for Pleasant Street from Main Street to its end.</b> (See page 25.)	EHNO/Town Gov't.
<b>A&amp;L-3. Study Connectivity Options for East Church Street.</b> (See page 26.)	EHNO/Town Gov't.
<b>A&amp;L-10. Reconfigure the Cedar Street/VT-16 Intersection.</b> (See page 34.)	Town Gov't./VTrans
<b>A&amp;L-11. Create a Wayfinding system tying the LVRT to the other activity centers in the Village.</b> (See page 35.)	EHNO
<b>U&amp;A-2. Develop the LVRT Trail head as a major gateway to the Village.</b> (See page 48.)	EHNO
<b>U&amp;A-3. Pursue opportunities for access to the Lamoille River.</b> (See page 48.)	EHNO
<b>U&amp;A-4. Explore housing development opportunities with private developers and groups such as Rural Edge and the Northern Forest Center.</b> (See page 49.)	Town Gov't.
<b>S-1. Use the LVRT Trail Head to provide information about community events and activities.</b> (See page 53.)	EHNO/Grange
<b>LONG-TERM PRIORITY (within 6 years of plan completion)</b>	<b>LEAD PARTY</b>
<b>A&amp;L-6. Reconfigure School Street/Main Street Intersection.</b> (See page 29.)	EHNO/Town Gov't.
<b>U&amp;A-6. Improve the Village appearance and connectivity to support “experience-based” enterprises in the Village.</b> (See page 50.)	EHNO
<b>S-2. Create opportunities for socializing on Main Street.</b> (See page 53.)	EHNO
<b>C&amp;I-2. Over the long term, consider potential new solutions to municipal wastewater treatment.</b> (See page 38.)	Town Gov't./Fire District

## Introduction

This report summarizes the findings and recommendations of the Better Connections Process of the Village of East Hardwick, a process that involved engineering studies, market analyses and extensive outreach to the community. It is intended to provide a framework for the revitalization of East Hardwick.

The Village of East Hardwick was shaped by better connections. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup>

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. But East Hardwick's promise for the future extends far beyond the Rail Trail.

## About the East Hardwick Better Connections Process

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. This final document includes 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 Priorities and Recommendations section provides a summary of community priorities and lays out the recommended actions to improve connections in the Village. The Implementation section categorizes the specific steps to be taken to accomplish the recommendations

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<sup>2</sup> <https://hardwickvthistory.org/about-hardwick/hardwick-history/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://hardwickvthistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Hardwick-on-the-Map-Complete.pdf>

## Final Report, East Hardwick Better Connections Process

and puts forward a prioritized list of actions to carry out these steps. The plan appendices include 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 has been involved?

The project has been managed by the Town of Hardwick and guided by a steering committee of local residents, local officials and representatives from state and regional organizations. Their names and affiliations are provided below.

#### **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>
Matthew Arancio	VTrans, Planning Coordinator
Faith Dall	VTrans, Planning Coordinator
Natalie Elvidge	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 and Floodplain Administrator
David Gross	Chair, Hardwick Planning Commission (also an East Hardwick resident)

## Final Report, East Hardwick Better Connections Process

### Project Consultants

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

## Existing Conditions

This existing conditions section of this report consists of four subsections:

- Overview of Demographic Trends
- A Review of Existing Reports
- Preliminary Observations
- A Village Base Map

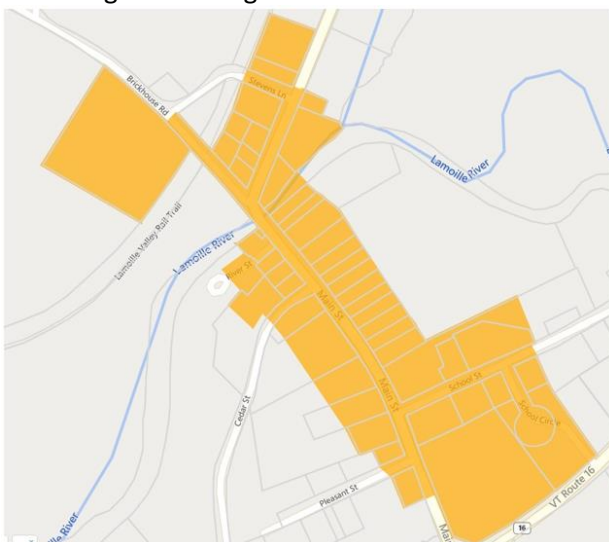
The analyses are intended to provide a better understanding of the situation facing East Hardwick at the beginning of this effort and to contribute to the ability of the process to identify key issues and opportunities facing East Hardwick.

The Better Connections Process is centered on the Designated Village Center for East Hardwick. But the actual focus will extend beyond the borders of the Designated Village Center to include a broader “Planning Buffer.” The reason for this is best illustrated in Figure 1.

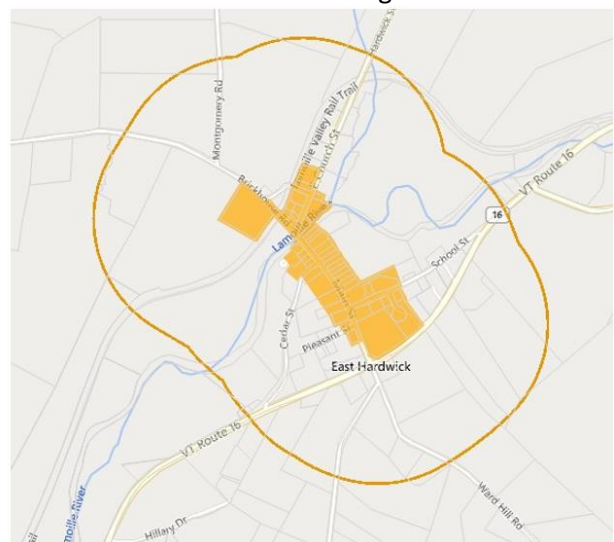
East Hardwick’s Designated Village Center is found on the left-hand side of Figure 1. The “Planning Buffer” is on the right-hand side. Note that the Village Center is almost entirely made up of commercial properties, with only a handful of residential areas included. Were this to be the focus of the Better Connections Process, there would be few opportunities to identify and take advantage of potential synergies between the Center and the nearby residential areas. Thus, the focus of this project will be the larger “Planning Buffer” which essentially includes residential areas within ½ mile of the Designated Village Center.

**Figure 1.**  
**East Hardwick’s Designated Village Center & the “Planning Buffer.”**

The Designated Village Center



The “Planning Buffer”

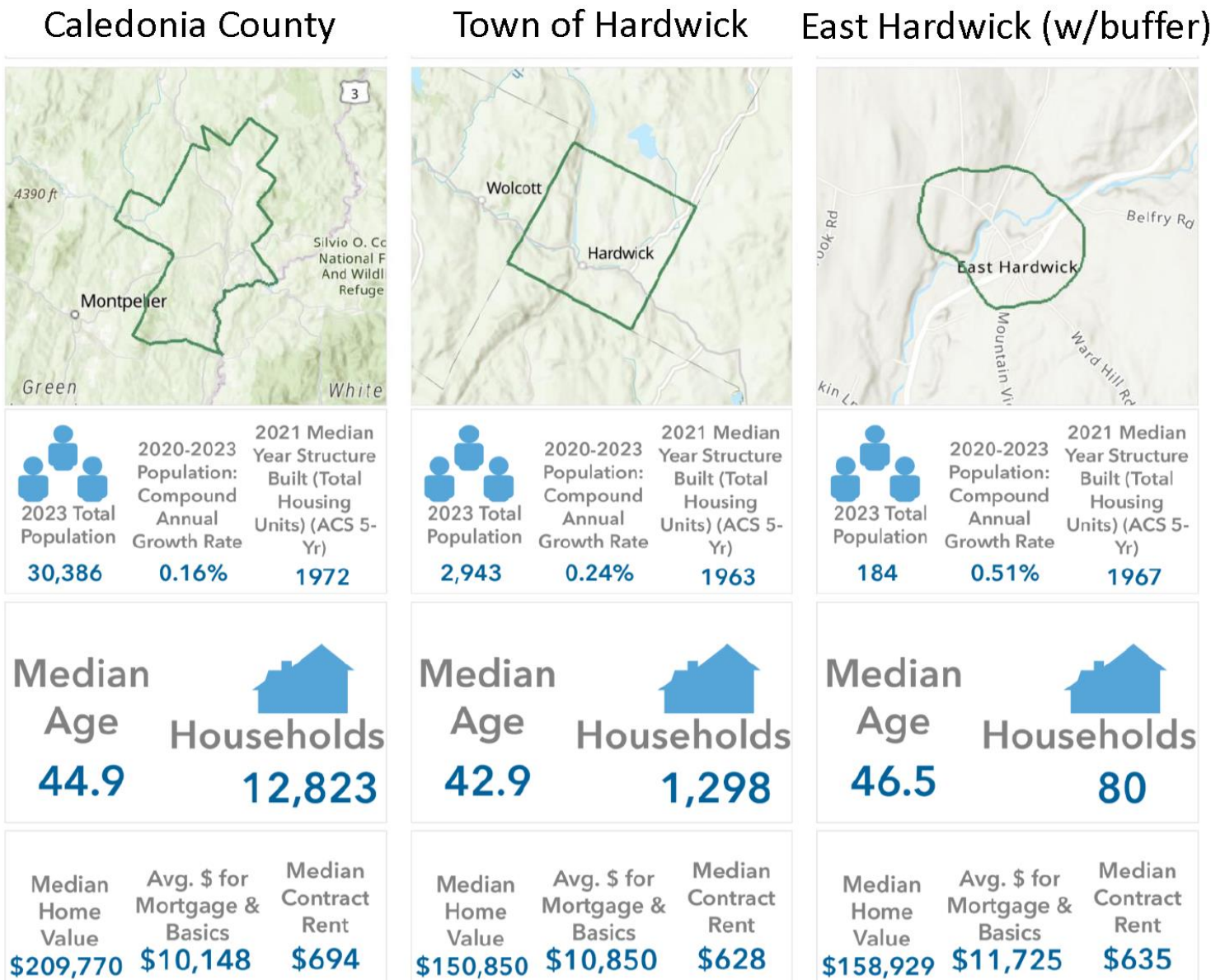


## Overview of Demographic Trends

This section reports on key demographic trends (e.g., population, housing, etc.) for the study area of the Better Connections Process for East Hardwick. The data in this section comes from ESRI Business Analyst and includes or derives from data from the decennial censuses and the American Community Survey of the US Census Bureau. The infographic in Figure 1 provides a summary of these data. NOTE: ESRI has developed a process for geocoding Census data that provides reasonable estimates for areas with customized boundaries such as the Designated Village Center (DVC) and the “buffer” zone. Consequently, ESRI estimates based on Census data are used throughout this analysis. Given the small populations in these two areas, all estimates for them should be used with some caution.

**Figure 2.**

## OVERVIEW OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DATA





## Summary of the Analysis

This analysis compares five geographic areas. These include the State of Vermont as a whole, Caledonia County, the Town of Hardwick and two delineations to capture the characteristics of East Hardwick. Data found in the table columns labelled “East Hardwick” are from East Hardwick’s Designated Village Center. Data from the columns labelled “Buffer” include the Designated Village Center and a buffer area of the adjacent residential areas within ½ mile. (See Figure 1 for a map of this “buffer” zone.)

Figure 2 provides an overview of the data for East Hardwick, Hardwick and Caledonia County. (NOTE: the figure provides data on the “Planning Buffer,” rather than the Designated Village Center. This is because the DVC focuses largely on commercial properties and—as will be seen in the tables below—has very few residents. In that sense, the Planning Buffer provides a better measure of the activity on the commercial center and the surrounding residential areas.

As shown in Figure 2, there are some ways in which East Hardwick differs—at least slightly—from the Town and County.

East Hardwick’s population grew slightly faster. The population growth is slightly higher in the Planning Buffer, with an annual average growth rate of 0.51 percent from 2020 to 2023, double that for the Town and three times that for the County.

The housing stock in Hardwick and East Hardwick is older than in the County, for which the median year housing was constructed is 1972, compared to mid-sixties for the Town and Village. See Table 4 for more detailed data.

The median home value is slightly higher in the Village than the Town, but lower than the County, with respective 2020 values of \$158,929, \$150,850 and \$209,770.

As shown in the more detailed data in the four tables below, there are some ways in which East Hardwick is very similar to the Town and County.

Age distribution is roughly comparable across all jurisdictions. The “Baby Boomers” are the largest cohort (ranging from 25 to 28 percent of the population), followed by Generation X and the Millennials, each with about 20 percent of total population

Incomes are higher in the Village than in the Town or County, whether measured by Median Household Income, Per Capita Income or Average Household Income. (See Table 2.)

Owner-occupied housing is the most common form of housing, accounting for over 2/3 of all housing units in the Village and Town, and between 50 and 55 percent of housing in the County and State (see Table 3). and County.

Second homes or seasonal housing affect the housing markets in all jurisdictions. The vast majority of vacant units—two-thirds or better—are categorized for “Seasonal/Recreational/Occasional Use.”

## General Population Characteristics

This analysis compares five geographic areas. These include the State of Vermont as a whole, Caledonia County, the Town of Hardwick and two delineations to capture the characteristics of East Hardwick. Data found in the table columns labelled “East Hardwick DVC” are from East Hardwick’s Designated Village Center. Data from the columns labelled “Planning Buffer” include the Designated Village Center and a buffer area of the adjacent residential areas within ½ mile. (See Figure 1 for a map of this “buffer” zone.)

Table 1 provides general population characteristics for the five geographies included in this analysis. The data in the table estimate that the Village Designated Center had a population of 22 in 2023. The Planning Buffer had population of 184, the Town had 2,943 residents, the County 30,386 and the State 649,316. As to be expected, of the five jurisdictions, the Village Designated Center and the Planning Buffer had much higher population densities than the Town, County or State.

Note that the East Hardwick area has education levels comparable to the Town and County, with a little over fifty percent of the population over 25 years of age holding at least a bachelor’s degree.

Table 1. General Population Data.					
Variable	East Hardwick DVC	Planning Buffer	Town of Hardwick	Caledonia County	Vermont
2020 Total Population	19	181	2,920	30,233	643,077
2023 Total Population	22	184	2,943	30,386	649,316
2020-2023 Population: Percent Change	15.8%	1.7%	0.8%	0.5%	1.0%
2020-2023 Compound Annual Growth Rate	4.74%	0.51%	0.24%	0.16%	0.30%
2020 Household Population	18	175	2,869	29,173	618,176
2023 Household Population	21	178	2,892	29,326	624,415
2020-2023 HH Population: Percent Change	16.7%	1.7%	0.8%	0.5%	1.0%
2023 Population Density (Pop per Square Mile)	487.3	347.1	76.9	46.8	70.5
2023 Population Age 25+: High School Diploma	5	44	750	6,648	112,979
2023 Population Age 25+: Bachelor's Degree	5	41	583	4,944	127,495
2023 Population Age 25+: Graduate/Professional Degree	1	8	175	2,996	88,751
% of 2023 Population Age 25+ w/ at least BA	54.5%	52.7%	50.3%	54.4%	65.7%
Source: Compiled by Fairweather Consulting from ESRI Business Analyst.					

### *Population by Age & Socioeconomic Status*

The data in Table 2 pertain to the age and socio-economic status of the residents of each of the five jurisdictions. Note that East Hardwick (in both the Designated Village Center and the Planning Buffer) has higher income levels than the Town or County, whether measured by Median Household Income, Per Capita Income or Average Household Income. At the same time, the estimates for the Designated Village Center and the Planning Buffer both show higher median ages for 2023 than the Town, County and State.



## Final Report, East Hardwick Better Connections Process

That being said, the age distribution is roughly comparable across all five jurisdictions. The “Baby Boomers” are the largest cohort (ranging from 25 to 28 percent of the population), followed by Generation X and the Millennials, each with about 20 percent of total population.

The reported incidence of poverty appears to be lower in Hardwick and East Hardwick when compared to the County and State. The percentage of households below the poverty line is below 3 percent in Hardwick and East Hardwick, compared to double-digit rates for both the County and State. The data for businesses and employees reinforces the idea that the local economy is dominated by small businesses, with the average number of employees per business holding at 6 employees in the Town, 9 for the County and 11 for Vermont as a whole. Note that these numbers only include businesses and employees covered by Workers Compensation Insurance. Those in agriculture and self-employment are not included in these numbers.

Table 2. Population by Age and Socioeconomic Status

Variable	East Hardwick DVC	Planning Buffer	Town of Hardwick	Caledonia County	Vermont
2023 Median Household Income	\$66,862	\$62,626	\$58,115	\$59,765	\$75,269
2023 Per Capita Income	\$38,693	\$38,692	\$37,272	\$34,819	\$44,740
2023 Average Household Income	\$87,923	\$87,925	\$84,437	\$82,300	\$104,624
2010 Median Age	42.5	42.5	40.6	42.0	41.5
2023 Median Age	51.2	46.5	42.9	44.9	44.1
2023 Generation Alpha Population (Born 2017 or Later) (%)	4.6%	6.0%	7.7%	6.9%	6.2%
2023 Generation Z Population (Born 1999 to 2016) (%)	18.2%	19.0%	20.7%	20.1%	21.4%
2023 Millennial Population (Born 1981 to 1998) (%)	22.7%	20.7%	22.0%	20.8%	21.1%
2023 Generation X Population (Born 1965 to 1980) (%)	22.7%	20.7%	19.9%	20.1%	20.7%
2023 Baby Boomer Population (Born 1946 to 1964) (%)	27.3%	28.8%	25.6%	26.2%	24.9%
2023 Silent & Greatest Generations Population (Born 1945/Earlier) (%)	4.6%	4.4%	4.2%	5.9%	5.7%
2021 Households with 1+ Persons with a Disability	3	20	419	3,806	69,572
2021 Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	2	12	223	1,829	27,047
2021 Households Below the Poverty Level	0	2	36	1,614	27,813
% 2021 Households Below Poverty Level	0.0%	2.2%	2.9%	12.9%	10.6%
2023 Total Businesses	3	8	167	1,455	32,370
2023 Total Employees	17	46	951	12,892	363,267
2023 Average Size of Business (Employees)	6	6	6	9	11

Source: Compiled by Fairweather Consulting from ESRI Business Analyst.

### *Housing Units by Tenure and Occupancy*

Table 3 contains data on number of housing units, tenure (i.e., owned versus rented) and occupancy. The table shows that the Designated Village Center had 12 housing units in 2022, compared to 85 for the

## Final Report, East Hardwick Better Connections Process

Planning Buffer, 1,441 for the Town, and 16,005 for the County. Owner occupied housing is the norm in all of the jurisdictions, ranging from 60 to 70 percent of all housing.

Housing vacancy rates range from 9 percent in the Designated Village Center to 20 percent County-wide. A closer look at the data in Table 3 explains why there are such high vacancy rates at a time noted for widespread housing shortages. In each case, the vast majority—two-thirds or better—of the units reported as vacant are categorized for “Seasonal/Recreational/Occasional Use.”

As is the case throughout Vermont, the housing shortage is exacerbated in Hardwick by a comparative lack of rental units, combined with the fact that much of the existing housing inventory is dedicated to only part-time use.

Table 3. Housing Units, Tenure and Occupancy					
Variable	East Hardwick DVC	Planning Buffer	Town of Hardwick	Caledonia County	Vermont
2020 Total Housing Units	11	82	1,441	16,005	334,781
2022 Total Housing Units	12	85	1,468	16,195	338,867
2022 Owner Occupied Housing Units	8	60	971	9,557	198,837
2022 Renter Occupied Housing Units	3	20	327	3,266	78,060
2022 % Owner Occupied Housing Units	66.7%	70.6%	66.1%	59.0%	58.7%
2020 Vacant Housing Units	1	9	166	3,343	62,428
2020 % Vacant Housing Units	9.1%	11.0%	11.5%	20.9%	18.6%
2020 Vacant Housing Units: For Rent	0	0	25	267	5,234
2020 Vacant Housing Units: Rented - Not Occupied	0	0	1	53	1,088
2020 Vacant Housing Units: For Sale Only	0	1	12	177	2,582
2020 Vacant Housing Units: Sold - Not Occupied	0	0	9	69	1,009
2020 Vacant Housing Units: Seasonal/Recreational/Occasional Use	1	5	53	2,199	44,057
2020 Vacant Housing Units: For Migrant Workers	0	0	0	0	68
2020 Vacant Housing Units: Other Vacant	0	3	66	578	8,390
Source: Compiled by Fairweather Consulting from ESRI Business Analyst.					

### *Age of the Housing Stock*

Table 4 contains data on the age of the housing stock in the five jurisdictions. The data reveals that the housing stock is generally much older in Hardwick than in the County and State. The median year housing units were built in the Designated Village Center is 1965, 1967 in the Planning Buffer and 1963 in the Town. This is compared to 1972 county-wide and 1975 for the State as a whole. The difference appears to come down to a drop off in housing construction over the last 20 or so years. All five jurisdictions show relatively active housing construction in the 70s and 80s. This trails off for both the County and the State in the 00s and teens. The drop off is even more pronounced in the Town and Village for those decades. At the same time, the bulk of housing construction in the Town and Village took place prior to 1939, accounting for 43

Final Report, East Hardwick Better Connections Process

percent of the Town's housing stock, compared to only 33 percent for the County and 26 percent for the State.

Table 4. Housing Stock by Year Built					
Variable	East Hardwick DVC	Planning Buffer	Town of Hardwick	Caledonia County	Vermont
2021 Median Year Structure Built (Total Housing Units)	1965	1967	1963	1972	1975
2021 Housing Units Built in 2020 or Later	0	2	15	19	219
2021 Housing Units Built in 2010-2019	0	2	30	746	16,977
2021 Housing Units Built in 2000-2009	1	8	112	2,046	35,193
2021 Housing Units Built in 1990-1999	1	9	111	1,267	35,602
2021 Housing Units Built in 1980-1989	1	8	136	1,839	50,812
2021 Housing Units Built in 1970-1979	2	15	223	2,610	51,652
2021 Housing Units Built in 1960-1969	2	11	129	1,004	27,364
2021 Housing Units Built in 1950-1959	0	3	26	604	19,255
2021 Housing Units Built in 1940-1949	0	3	32	655	10,384
2021 Housing Units Built in 1939 or Earlier	5	34	628	5,231	86,061
% of Units Built in 1939 or Earlier	45.5%	41.5%	43.6%	32.7%	25.7%
Source: Compiled by Fairweather Consulting from ESRI Business Analyst.					

## Review of Existing Reports

The documents reviewed for this report include:

- AARP-style Walkability Audit of East Hardwick (May 2022)
- Local Motion Bike Safety Improvement Concepts for East Hardwick (September 2022)
- East Hardwick LVRT Trailhead Scoping Study carried out by Wall Consulting Group (October 2022)
- Stormwater Infrastructure Mapping Project - Jim Pease, David Ainley, VT DEC (January 2017)
- Stormwater Master Plan, Town of Hardwick, VT, Stone Environmental (November 2017)

These documents contain many analyses and findings that could be incorporated into a Better Connections Process for the Village of East Hardwick. In general, they are in broad concurrence on the need for sidewalk improvements and streetscape enhancements that include improved wayfinding signage, reconfiguring key intersections and improving stormwater draining in the Village area. The findings of these studies are summarized below.

### *AARP-style Walkability Audit of East Hardwick (May 2022)*

This audit was derived from an on-site tour of the Village along Main Street from School Street to Brickhouse Road and East Church Street. It concluded that the overall walkability of the Main Street area was poor and that the overall appeal of the area as a place to walk was fair. The overall assessment made by the study team was:

The location could be improved by installation of additional crosswalks, drainage repairs, sidewalk repairs, sidewalk installation, and access management at the intersection of Cedar Street and Main Street and at the intersection of School Street and Main Street. The bridge over the Lamoille Valley River should also be examined for life expectancy.

The twelve issues identified by the report can be placed in three categories.

#### 1. Sidewalk and cycling infrastructure

The report notes that, while the sidewalk is continuous along Main Street, much of the sidewalk is cracked, broken and uneven, making pedestrian access difficult and handicapped access extremely problematic. It found that Main Street lacks adequate curbing to separate it from the road and that portions of the sidewalk have sunk as much as 10 inches below street level. It also pointed out that Main Street does not have a dedicated bicycle lane which is currently an issue when there is truck traffic in the corridor, but is likely to become more severe with the opening of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail and the increased bike traffic that will bring. An addendum to the report notes that School Street (the site of the only store operating in the Village) currently sidewalks or lanes for pedestrians and cyclists, and points out that the sections of the street with steep embankments have inadequate guardrails.

#### 2. Intersection configuration and signage

The report notes that only the intersection of School and Main streets has any crosswalks, and even these are currently faded and lack landings or caution signs, nor does it have stop signs or yield signs to calm vehicular traffic. The intersection of Main and Cedar streets is cited for having too much space for vehicular traffic at the expense of cyclists and pedestrians. In general, the report notes that East Hardwick has no signage at all to alert drivers to the likelihood of increased pedestrian and bicycle traffic in the

## Final Report, East Hardwick Better Connections Process

Village, including the School Street/Minimart Drive corridor which links the one store to the rest of the Village.

### 3. Drainage issues

Potential poor stormwater drainage is highlighted as an issue, noting that the study area “does not appear to have adequate drainage for increased capacity rain events.”

### *Local Motion Bike Safety Improvement Concepts for East Hardwick (September 2022)*

The Local Motion study ties its recommendations to various destinations or nodes of activity in the Village that are likely to attract bicycle traffic in the future. The report presents a series of conceptual infrastructure enhancements for broader community discussion prior to being finalized through engineering documents. At the end of this report, potential funding resources are identified. The enhancements identified include:

- Enhanced crosswalks and signage at all Lamoille Valley Rail Trail crossings
- Upgrading of the Main Street/Brickhouse Road intersection (e.g., extending sidewalk along Brickhouse Road , flashing beacons) to minimize potential conflicts with traffic through the corridor and pedestrian and cyclist traffic as well as traffic originating from the driveway of the house at that intersection.
- Realignment of the Cedar Street/Main Street intersection to minimize conflicts among vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian traffic via that would reduce the number of vehicular lanes at the intersection. Two potential realignments are offered in the report.
- A Crosswalk on Main Street linking the daycare on the west side of the street to the sidewalk on the east side.
- Creating a sidewalk on School Street linking the Village to the Minimart, noting the difficulty presented by steep grades and utility lines along the corridor.
- Changing the School Street/Main Street intersection into a simple “T” intersection, relocating the Tub and adding nearby seating to make it more of a local point of interest. A shorter-term solution would be to turn the intersection into a yield roadway by installing a variety of traffic calming measures to slow vehicular traffic.
- Installing Speed Tables (portable “speed bumps”) at various locations throughout the Village to slow traffic flow.
- Removal of Centerlines on Main and School Streets as a means of slowing traffic. While the State places centerlines on Class 2 highways, their removal in certain areas appears to slow traffic.
- Creating “Edge Lane” Roads. For roads with at least 22 feet of paved right of way, “advisory bike lanes” can be created on either shoulder, leaving a single lane dedicated to only vehicular traffic. Vehicles can use the advisory lanes when no bikes are present or can easily be avoided.

### *East Hardwick LVRT Trailhead Scoping Study carried out by Wall Consulting Group (October 2022)*

This study provided the research and support documentation for the recent siting of the LVRT Trailhead by East Hardwick at Stevens Lane, west of the Rail Trail. The study provides an inventory of the resources and

## Final Report, East Hardwick Better Connections Process

constraints found in the project study area: the land bounded by Church Street to Stevens Lane, Stevens Lane and Brickhouse Road from Stevens Lane to Church Street.

### *Stormwater Mapping Infrastructure Project (January 2017)*

The Stormwater Mapping Infrastructure Project completed in 2017 by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Ecosystems Restoration program focused on updating stormwater mapping for use by municipalities and identifying potential locations for the installation of Best Management Practices (BMP) to reduce nutrient and contaminant loading in surface waters.

The project identified two potential areas for improvements in East Hardwick, one near the intersection of VT Route 16 and School Street and another around the Main Street bridge. The recommended improvements include a bioretention area along VT Route 16 and outfall stabilization when culverts discharge around the bridge.

### *Stormwater Master Plan (November 2017)*

Stone Environmental completed a Stormwater Master Plan for the Town of Hardwick in 2017 and identified one area of focus in East Hardwick. Area of moderate erosion around the Main Street Bridge and on the east side of Church Street were identified in the plan. Recommendations for addressing erosion at the northwest corner of the bridge include step-pool conveyance, a stone-lined swale or a swirl separator. These items are all intended to address erosion caused by discharge of the storm drain in this area. At the southeast corner, to address erosion at the storm drain outlet, stone splash pads are recommended along with overall bank stabilization using large stone.



## Preliminary Observations

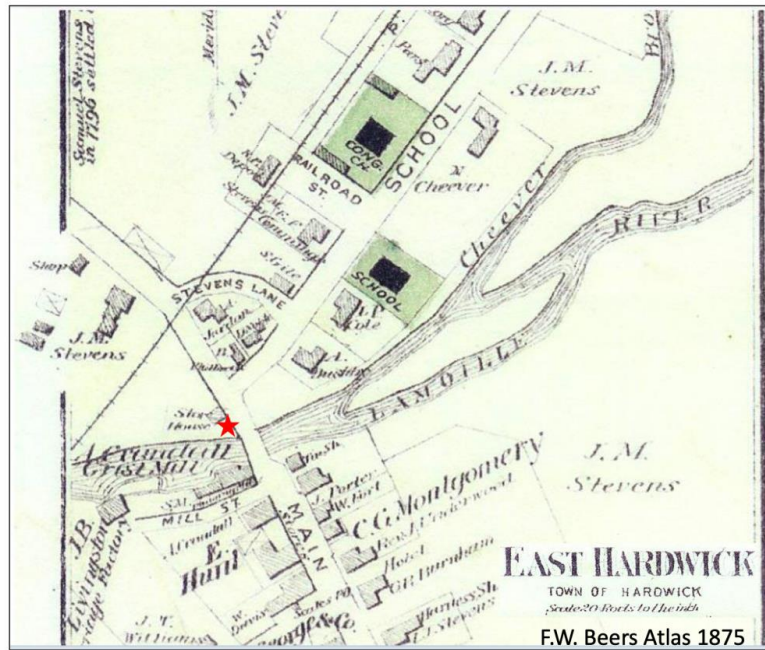
The history of East Hardwick as a settled place in the State of Vermont extends back over 200 years. As pointed out on the website of the East Hardwick Neighborhood Organization (EHNO), in the fifty years following the construction of the bridge spanning the Lamoille River at Stephens Mills, “Federal and Greek Revival residences and commercial structures were built on Main, Church and School Streets,” with many of the structures from that time still standing, helping to define the historic character of the Village.<sup>4</sup>

On the EHNO site, a Beers map from 1875 shows the Village anchored to the railroad that served local farms, the Stephens Mill and, as evidenced by the depot on Railroad Street, visitors to the Village.

The historic character of East Hardwick remains intact. The photos in Figure 4 show Main Street looking North to the bridge and a view looking East on Church Street (School Street on the map in Figure 3), showing the Congregational Church and the Grange Hall.

While history is important to East Hardwick, it is also hosts economic activities that can serve as anchors for revitalizing the Village. Some of these are depicted in Figure 5. The Minimart already serves as a community crossroads and meeting place. The manufactured housing development has brought new residents to the Village. In addition, Figure 5 shows emerging activities that will play a key role in East Hardwick’s future. These include the arts (as represented the Whitewater

Figure 3.



Source: <https://ehno5.wordpress.com/historic-pictures/>

Figure 4.

### The Village’s Historic Character

Main Street facing the Bridge over the Lamoille River.



Church Street with the Congregational Church (right) & the Grange Hall (left).



<sup>4</sup> <https://ehno5.wordpress.com/historic-pictures/>



Gallery and River House) and tourism related to outdoor recreation (as represented by the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail) and agri-tourism (as represented by Summersweet Gardens). Capitalizing on these opportunities will require a Village that attractive and walkable, as well as easily navigated by walkers, bikers and vehicles. Consequently, addressing the infrastructure issues highlighted in the Review of Existing Reports is one of the key priorities facing the Better Connections Process.

**Figure 5.  
Economic Drivers**



### Base Map of the Village

The base map of the Village is on the following page in Figure 6.



Figure 6. East Hardwick Base Map.



## 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 was distributed 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 the 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

A project specific website was created at 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 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, 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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.

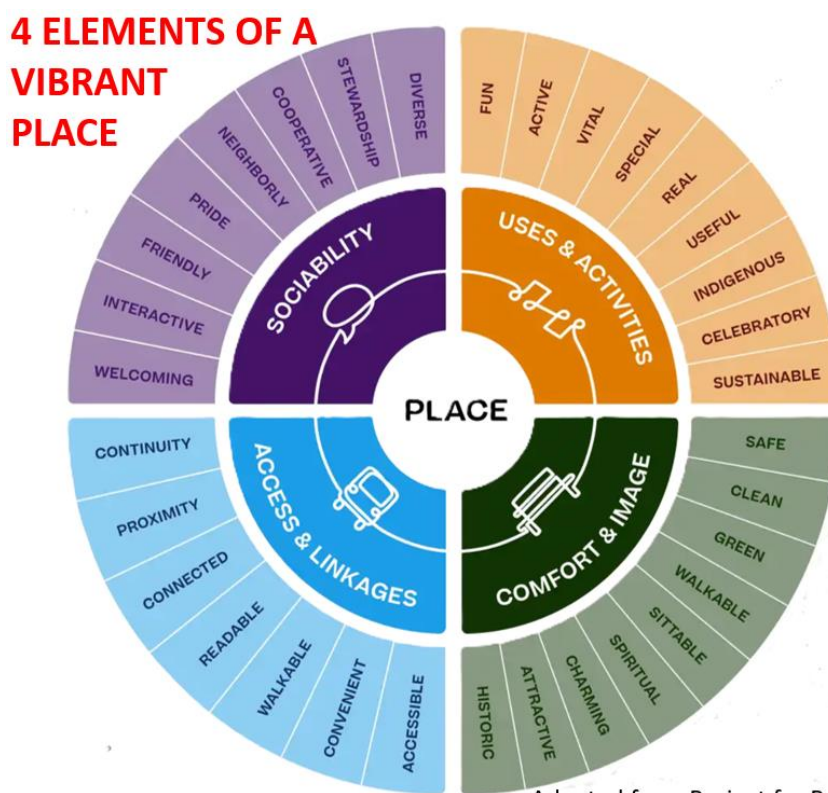
**Improve Housing Opportunities:** The need to improve the quality and quantity of housing available to Village residents was a consistent concern in both the survey and village supper.

**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 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."<sup>5</sup>



Adapted from Project for Public Spaces

The Project for Public Spaces' model for thinking about a place provides a useful framework to describe the work that is 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:

### 5. Access & Linkages

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>

**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.

## 6. 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.

## 7. Uses & Activities

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

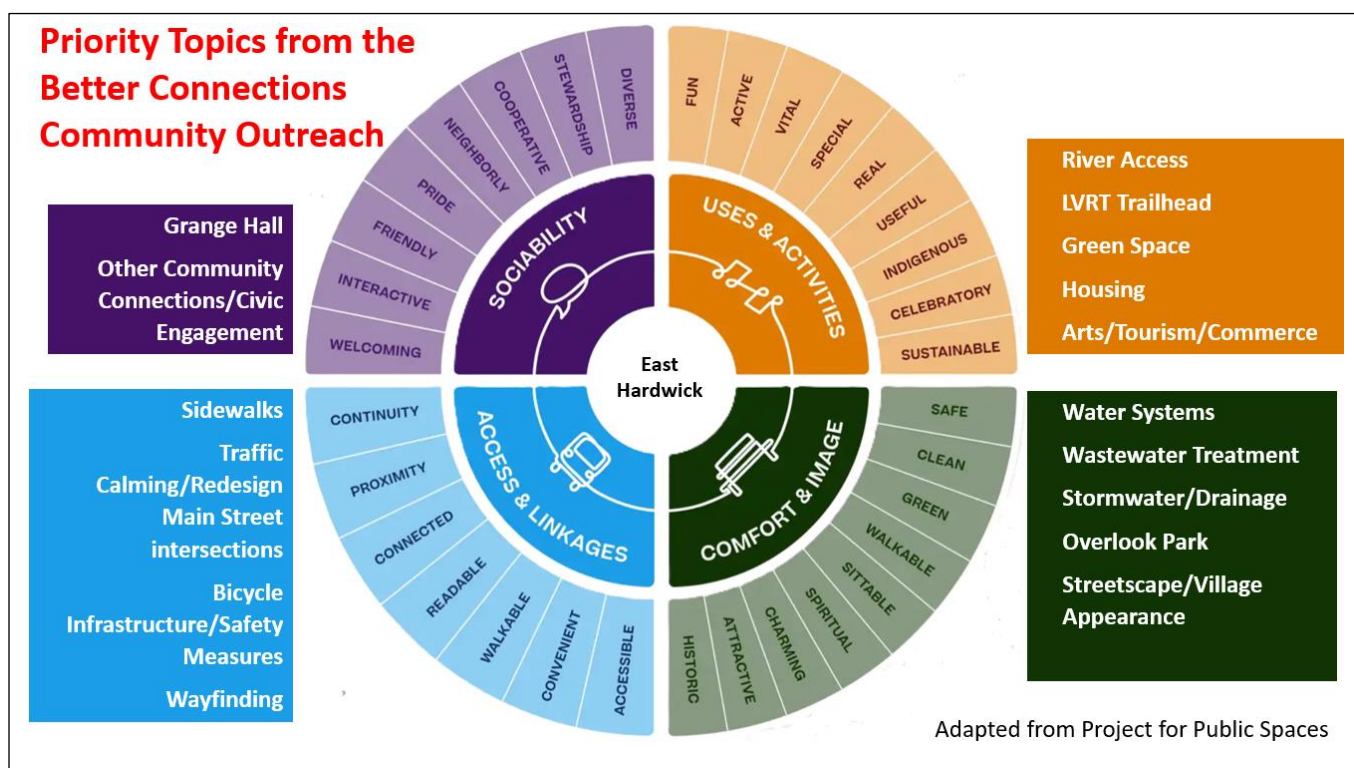
**Activities:** those things that happen in a community that bind it together and make others feel welcome. They can include festivals, parades, community dinners or the kind of informal gatherings that take place at coffee shops or community centers or local stores.

## 8. 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 outline the recommendations made in response to these priorities using the four elements of: Access & Linkages, Comfort & Image, Uses & Activities and Sociability.

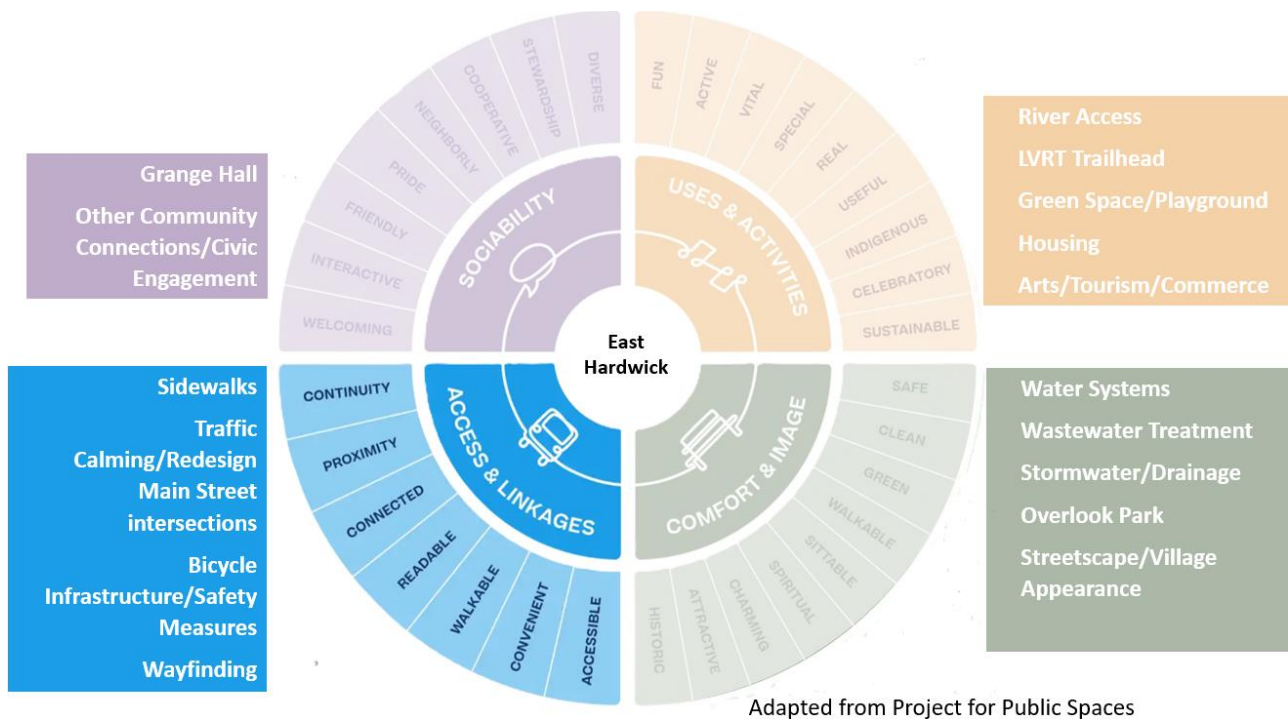




## Priorities and Recommendations: Access & Linkages

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

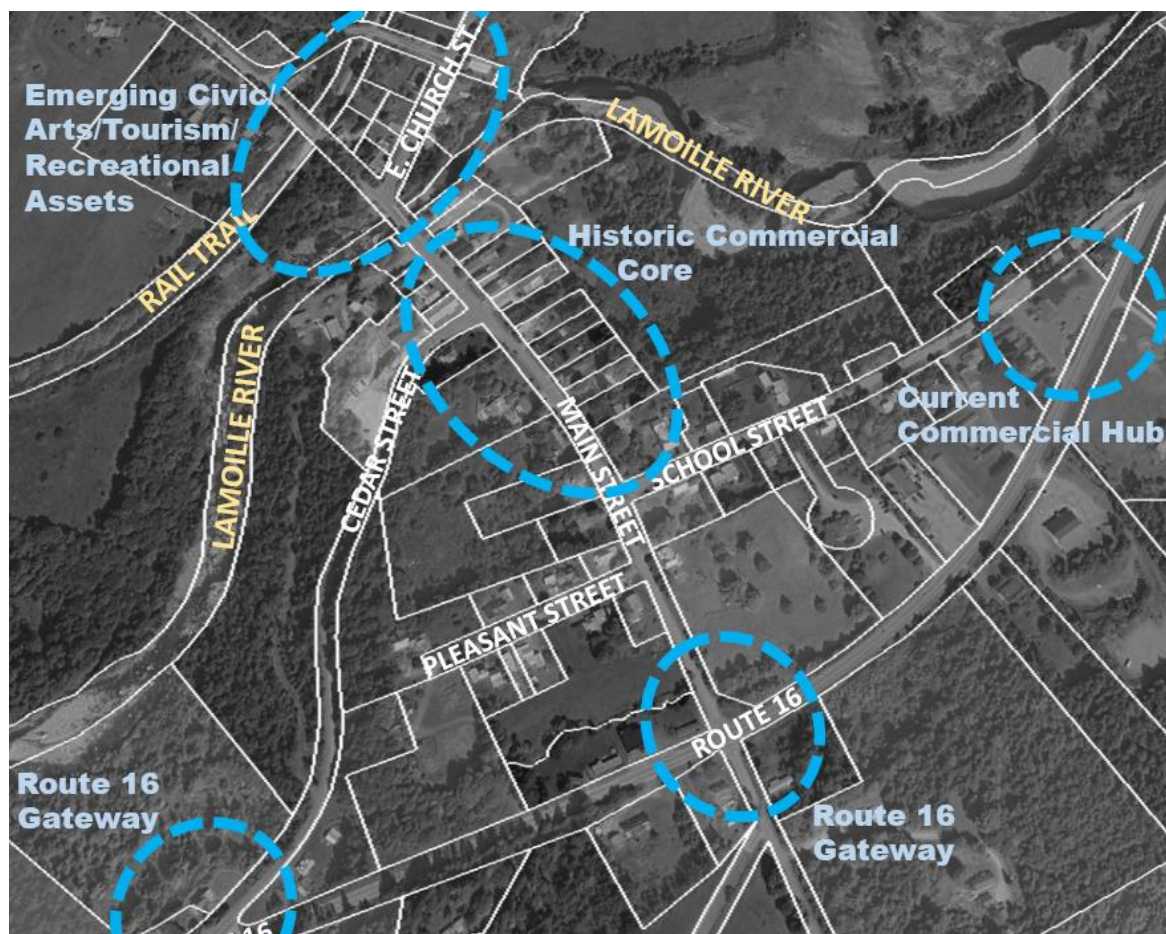
**Historic Commercial Core:** this has been the Village's center for commerce and public buildings. It currently includes Hay's Auto, the US Post Office, Care Bear Day Care Center, the McFeeter's building, the former Library/Firehouse as well as residences.

**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.

Figure 6 below shows these activity centers in the Village.

**Figure 6. Current and Emerging Activity Centers in East Hardwick**



## Final Report, East Hardwick Better Connections Process

**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

### **Alternative Approaches Considered for Improving the Sidewalk System:**

Determining the most appropriate option for improving the sidewalk system in East Hardwick requires striking a balance between making the system comprehensive (i.e., ensuring that the maximum number of streets are served by sidewalks or other forms of pedestrian access), and ensuring the resulting plan is affordable in terms of its construction, maintenance and ability to serve East Hardwick's pedestrians.

The steering committee considered five alternative approaches or components to a sidewalk system to accomplish this:

- Alternative 1. Main Street Sidewalk from School Street to East Church Street: a sidewalk along the east side of Main Street from School Street to East Church Street (Figure No. 7)
- Alternative 2. Main Street & East Church Street Sidewalk: A sidewalk along the east side of Main Street from School Street to East Church Street, with the sidewalk continuing on East Church Street to the Grange Hall. (Figure No. 8)
- Alternative 3. Main Street Sidewalk, Both Sides: Sidewalks on both sides of Main Street, with a sidewalk extending up the west side of Brickhouse Road to the Lamoille Valley. (Figure No. 9)
- Alternative 4. School Street Sidewalk: This additional option displays how a sidewalk along School Street would be configured. (Figure No. 10)
- Alternative 5. All Sidewalk Improvements: This option included sidewalks along both sides of Main Street, the south sides of both School Street and East Church Street, as well as the sidewalk on Brickhouse Road extending to the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail. (Figures No. 11)

The committee concluded that alternative 3, "Main Street Sidewalk, Both Sides" provided the best approach for East Hardwick, with sidewalks on both sides of Main Street, and linking to the LVRT via Brickhouse Road, but only having a pedestrian lane on School Street and to consider alternative approaches for East Church Street. Rendering of all five scenarios considered by the steering committee are included in figures 7 through 11, with Figure 9 representing the preferred alternative.





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**FIGURE NO. 7**  
**ALTERNATIVE 1**  
**MAIN STREET SIDEWALK**  
**FROM SCHOOL STREET**  
**TO E. CHURCH STREET**

**HARDWICK, VERMONT**

PROJECT NO. 7124009

PROJECT MJR. AJD

SCALE AS SHOWN

DATE OCT 2024

DRAWING NO. SIDEWALK FIGURES





0 50 100 200 300 400  
Feet



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**FIGURE NO. 8**  
  
**ALTERNATIVE 2  
MAIN STREET AND  
E. CHURCH STREET SIDEWALK**  
  
**HARDWICK, VERMONT**

PROJECT NO. 7124009  
PROJECT MJR. AJD  
SCALE AS SHOWN  
DATE OCT 2024  
DRAWING NO. SIDEWALK FIGURES





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**FIGURE NO. 9**  
**PREFERRED**  
**ALTERNATIVE 3**  
**MAIN STREET SIDEWALK**  
**BOTH SIDES**

**HARDWICK, VERMONT**

PROJECT NO. 7124009

PROJECT MJR. AJD

SCALE AS SHOWN

DATE OCT 2024

DRAWING NO. SIDEWALK FIGURES





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**FIGURE NO. 10**

**ALTERNATIVE 4  
SCHOOL STREET SIDEWALK**

**HARDWICK, VERMONT**

PROJECT NO. 7124009

PROJECT MJR. AJD

SCALE AS SHOWN

DATE OCT 2024

DRAWING NO. SIDEWALK FIGURES





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**FIGURE NO. 11**

**ALTERNATIVE 5  
ALL SIDEWALK  
IMPROVEMENTS**

**HARDWICK, VERMONT**

PROJECT NO. 7124009

PROJECT MGR. AJD

SCALE AS SHOWN


DATE OCT 2024

DRAWING NO. SIDEWALK FIGURES

## Final Report, East Hardwick Better Connections Process

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

### Recommendations for Access & Linkages

<b>Paved/Striped Pedestrian Lanes on a Road Shoulder</b>  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. <sup>6</sup>	 Pedestrian Lane
<b>Recommended Locations</b>	
<b>A&amp;L-1. Paved/Striped Pedestrian Lane for School Street</b> – Striped Pedestrian Lane from Main Street to its end near Route 16.	<b>Purpose:</b> Create stronger pedestrian/cyclist access from Main Street to the current commercial hub and manufactured home community at the far end of School Street.
<b>Estimated cost:</b> \$9,000	
<b>A&amp;L-2. Paved/Striped Pedestrian Lane for Pleasant Street</b> from Main Street to its end.	<b>Purpose:</b> Create stronger pedestrian/cyclist access from Main Street to residences on Pleasant Street.
<b>Estimated cost:</b> \$5,000	
<b>Potential Funding Sources:</b> <a href="#">VTrans Bicycle and Pedestrian Program</a> - 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. <a href="#">Carbon Reduction Program Federal Grant Awards</a> - 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). <a href="#">Local Motion Technical Assistance Services</a> - 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. <a href="#">Downtown Transportation Fund</a> - a financing tool which assists municipalities in paying for transportation-related capital improvements within or serving a Designated Downtown and eligible Designated Village Centers. <a href="#">Vtrans Transportation Alternatives Program</a> - 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	

<sup>6</sup> US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, *Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks*, December, 2016, p. 33.



## Final Report, East Hardwick Better Connections Process

improvement activities, 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*

**A&L-3. Study Connectivity Options for 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:** \$11,000 to \$185,000

#### **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.”<sup>7</sup> 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.”<sup>8</sup>



Sidewalks being replaced.



An example of a strong streetscape.

### *Recommended Locations*

**A&L-4. Replace Sidewalks on Main Street** – Replace existing sidewalk with one of concrete with granite curbing along existing alignment between School Street and East Church Street. See recommendations for streetscaping on Main Street on page 21 in the “Comfort & Image” recommendations.

“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:** \$410,000

<sup>7</sup> US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, *Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks*, December, 2016, p. 33.

<sup>8</sup> 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)

**A&L-5. Replace Sidewalk on 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:** \$100,000

**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*

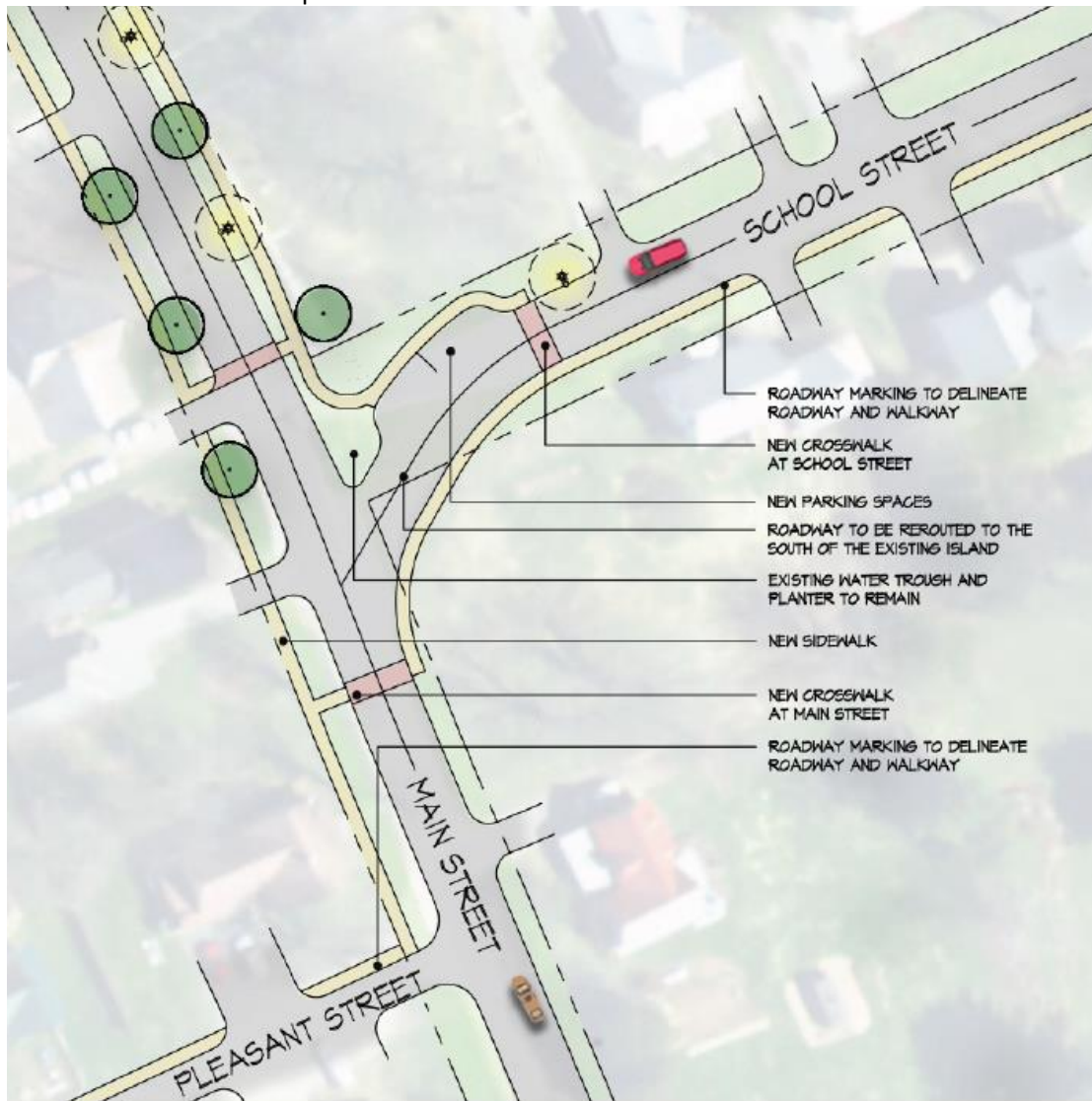
**A&L-6. Reconfigure School Street/Main Street Intersection**

It is recommended to reconfigure the intersection to have one point of access. As a result of public input, the recommendation is to maintain the historic water tub in its present location and to create a single intersection on either the north or south side of the tub, adding parking spaces as the realignment is implemented. The accompanying illustrations show the two options for realigning the intersection.

**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, and assist in ameliorating problems with speeding vehicles on Main Street.

**Estimated cost:** \$60,000

Option 1. Intersection South of the Water Tub



Option 2. Intersection North of the Water Tub

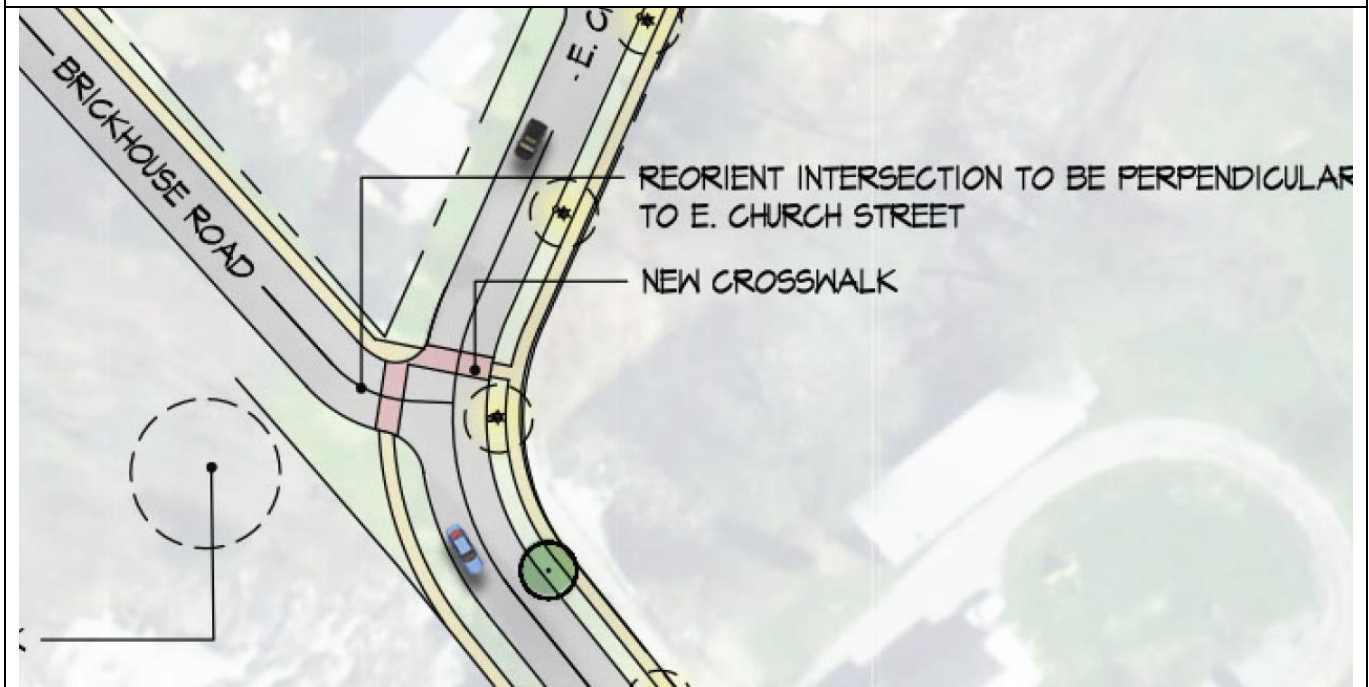


*Recommended Locations*

**A&L-7. Reconfigure Brickhouse Road/Main Street Intersection** – Reorient the intersection in accordance with the Local Motion recommendations to create a more perpendicular intersection. As this work is completed, it is important to ensure that the new alignment is able to accommodate truck traffic that currently passes through the intersection.

**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.

**Estimated cost: \$10,000**

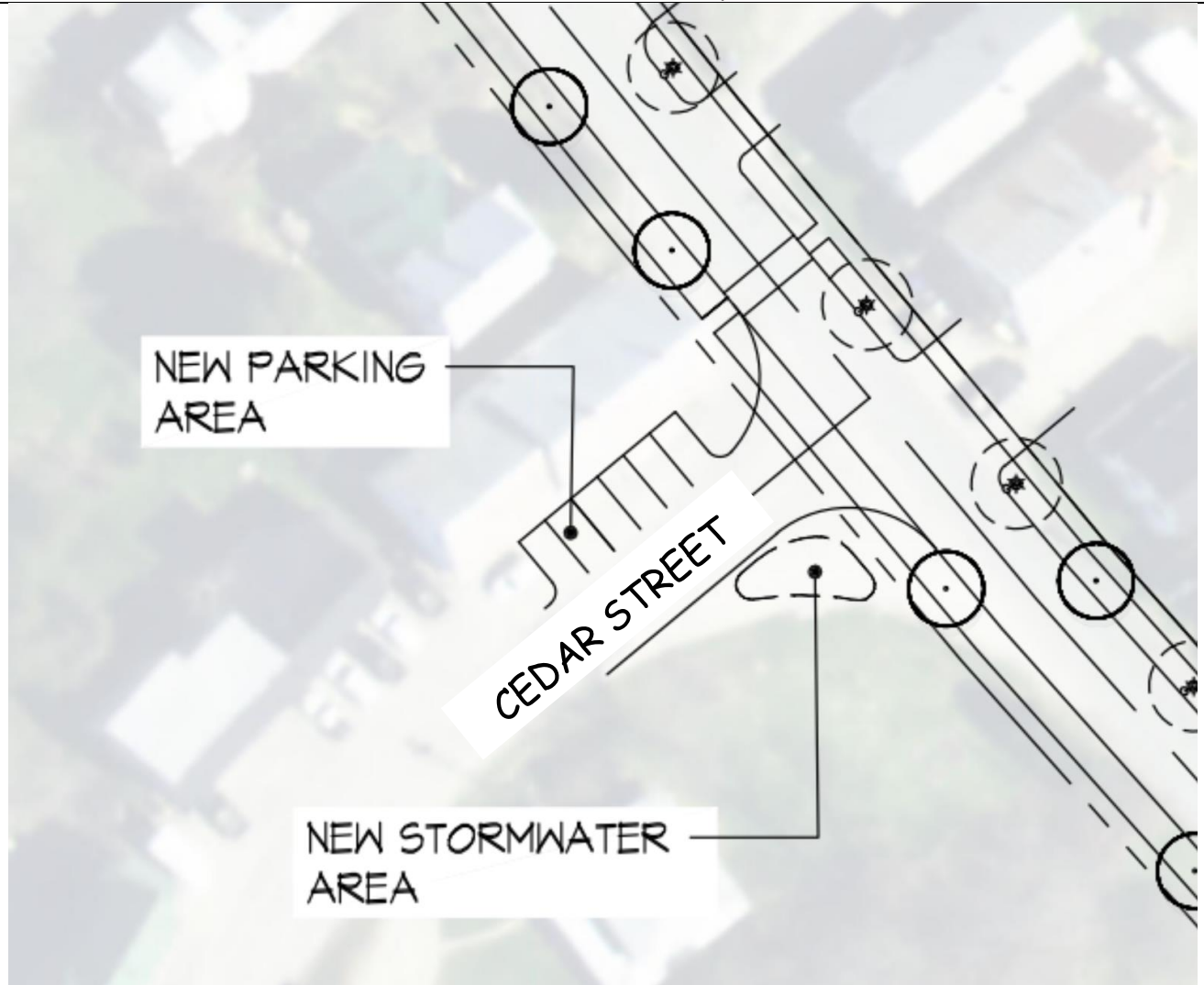


**A&L-8. Reconfigure Cedar Street/Main Street Intersection** – Reduce the width of the intersection, add parking along McFeeters and add stormwater infiltration on the uphill side.

**Purpose:** Clarify and simplify the intersection with Main Street

**Estimated cost:** \$15,000

Stormwater costs are included in the East Hardwick Stormwater Report.



**Potential Funding Sources:**

- [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.

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



## Enhanced Route 16 Gateways

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.”<sup>9</sup> In some cases, an effective gateway requires reconfiguration of the intersection itself.



Example of a poorly configured rural gateway to a major highway

### *Recommended Locations*

**A&L-9. Study Safety Enhancements for Main Street/VT-16 Intersection** – Narrow, poor sightlines, and increased traffic with closing of the School Street/VT 16 intersection have raised community concerns regarding the safety of this intersection.

As a result of public input, it is recommended that, since Route 16 is a state road, the Town should request a speed study of this intersection by VTrans to determine if a reduced speed limit or other measures (e.g., a blinking yellow light at the intersection) can enhance the safety of this intersection. The Town may also wish to contact the VTrans regional office to ensure the site lines are not obstructed by tree branches.

**Estimated cost:** further planning required to specify costs.

**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 and assists in ameliorating problems with speeding vehicles on Main Street..



<sup>9</sup> <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/speed-management/speed-management-eprimer-rural-transition-zones-and-town-centers/5>



## Enhanced Route 16 Gateways

**A&L-10. Reconfigure the Cedar Street/VT-16 Intersection** – It is recommended that the intersection be reconfigured to be perpendicular with VT-16 to provide clearer site lines. This could include possible traffic calming measures for traffic coming off Route 16 and into the Village. The Town should contact VTrans about the possibility of realigning this intersection.

**Estimated cost:** further planning required to specify costs.

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



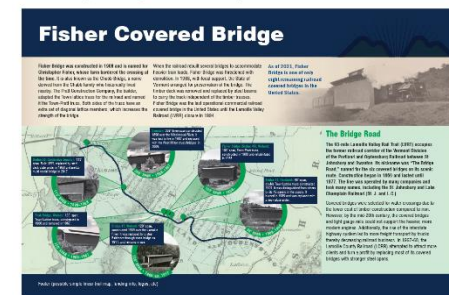
### Potential Funding Sources:

- **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.

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

## Enhanced Wayfinding/Signage

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



Signature Marker (SM)

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>

Image: Timber Homes VT

## Final Report, East Hardwick Better Connections Process

<b>A&amp;L-11. Create a Wayfinding system tying the LVRT to the other activity centers in the Village.</b> 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”. <sup>10</sup> 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.	<b>Purpose:</b> 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.
<b>Estimated cost:</b> Cost may range from up to \$300 dollars for a simple sign, depending upon size, materials used, etc.	
<b>Potential Funding Sources:</b>  <a href="#">Northern Border Regional Commission grants</a> – The Catalyst Program supports a broad range of economic development initiatives that revitalize transportation infrastructure; grow outdoor recreation infrastructure and economies. <a href="#">The Better Places program</a> 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. <a href="#">Small Grants for Smart Growth</a> - Small Grants for Smart Growth provides seed money for catalyzing community-based initiatives related to smart growth. <a href="#">AARP Community Challenge Grants</a> - 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. <a href="#">AARP Winter Placemaking Grants</a> - 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.  More detailed descriptions of these programs are provided in the appendices to this report.	

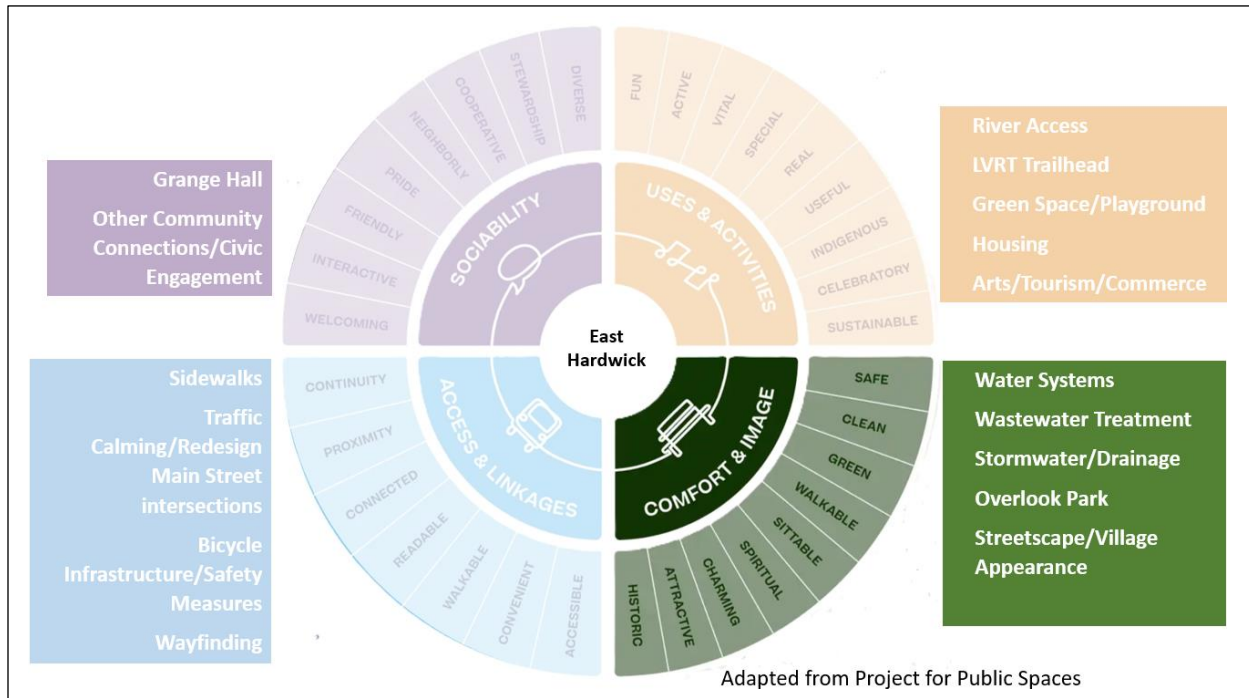
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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.railstotrails.org/trail-building-toolbox/signage-and-surface-markings/>

## 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.

## Final Report, East Hardwick Better Connections Process

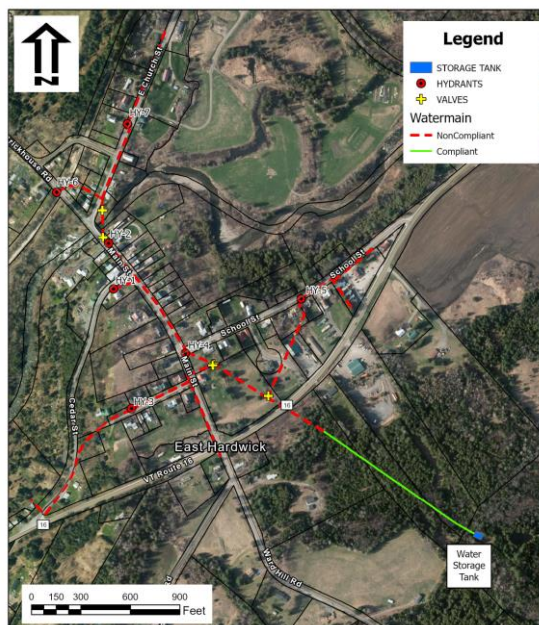
**Emerging Priorities:** Key priorities that have emerged for East Hardwick based on community input include:

- 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

### Water Systems

East Hardwick has a public water system that is owned and operated by the East Hardwick Fire District. The water system serves the entire study area.



### Recommendations

**C&I-1. Evaluate the Village Water System.** 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.

**Purpose:** Maintain clean, safe drinking water service to the users in East Hardwick.

**Estimated Cost:** The existing water main on Main Street is in close proximity to the existing storm drain and sidewalk. Replacement of this main is estimated to cost \$470,000. Additional projects and associated costs will be identified in the study being undertaken by the Fire District.

**Potential Funding Sources:**

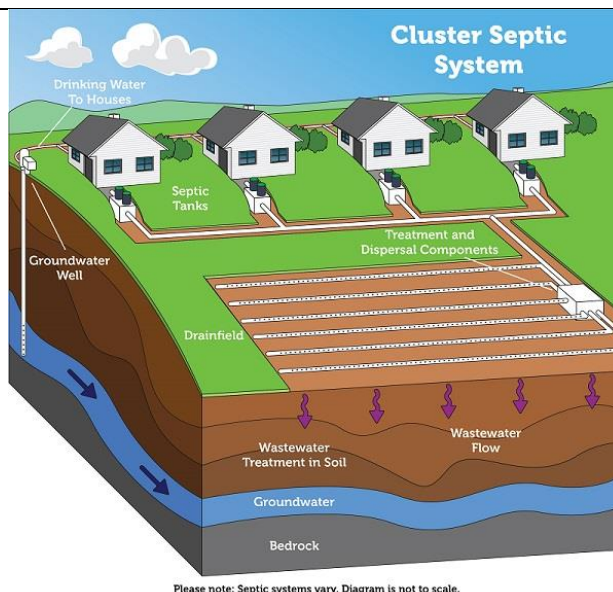
## Final Report, East Hardwick Better Connections Process

- [Drinking Water Revolving Loan Program](#) provides funding for Vermont's Drinking 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 as for future growth. With changes in technology, less expensive, more flexible solutions are being created for municipal systems.



### Recommendations

#### **C&I-2. Over the long term, consider potential new solutions to municipal wastewater treatment.**

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, additional study needed.

#### **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 (VWIC) lead by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). The committee meets biweekly to discuss the progress of the villages,



## Final Report, East Hardwick Better Connections Process

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.

### Stormwater Projects

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.

More detailed information is included in the separate *East Hardwick Stormwater Treatment Report*, attached separately.



### *Recommended Locations*

**C&I-3. Improve stormwater collection on Main Street, East Church Street, Brickhouse Road and the School Street/Route 16 intersection.**

**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.

**E. Church Street:**

**Purpose:**

Improve collection and treatment to protect both property and water quality by reducing erosion.

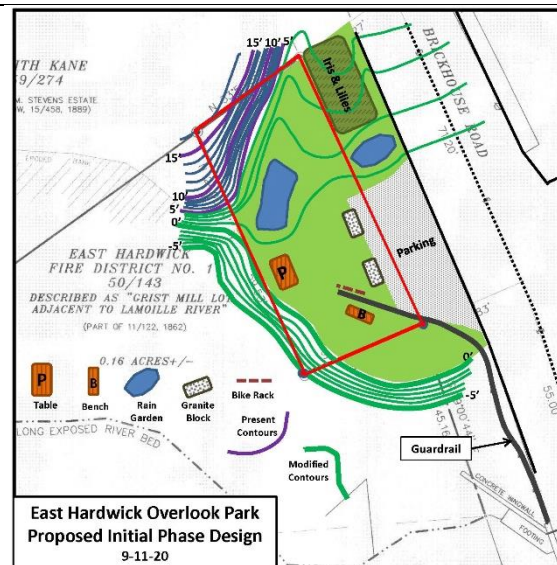
Final Report, East Hardwick Better Connections Process

<p>There are wet areas/springs west of East Church Street that contribute significant runoff to E. Church and the culvert near the end of Stevens Lane.</p>	
<p><b>Brickhouse Road:</b> There is no collection system or ditching along Brickhouse Road. Stormwater sheets across the road to the Overlook Park area.</p>	
<p><b>School Street/Route 16 intersection:</b> 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><b>Purpose:</b> Stabilize the bank along School Street and improve stormwater collection and treatment to protect both property and water quality by reducing erosion.</p>
<p><b>Potential Funding Sources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Better Roads Program</a> - A grant program for municipalities that provides funds for planning and erosion control projects that improve water quality and reduce maintenance costs.</li><li>• <a href="#">Lake Champlain TMDL Implementation Grants</a> – To support green stormwater infrastructure projects that will result in reduced phosphorus and sediment loads from developed lands, targeting schools and combined sewer systems in the Lake Champlain Basin of Vermont.</li></ul> <p>More detailed descriptions of these programs are provided in the appendices to this report.</p>	

## Overlook Park

**C&I-4. Continue improvements to Overlook Park.** 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.

River access from Overlook Park is likely not feasible unless it is incorporated into a stormwater step conveyance feature.



## Recommendations

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:** ongoing work, to be estimated.

## Potential Funding Sources:

- [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.

## Streetscape/Village Appearance

The Streetscape and Village Appearance section is closely linked with the recommended sidewalk improvements in the Access & Linkages section.

### *Recommended Location*

#### **C&I-5. Enhance the Streetscape on Main Street.**

The existing sidewalk on the East 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:

- Lighting
- Landscaping

As a result of public input, it is recommended that the sidewalk replacement be accompanied by streetscape enhancements. The preferred treatment is for both sides of Main Street to have sidewalks with curbs, planting strips/lawn areas and street trees. However, if further planning indicates this would unduly reduce the right of way or create other problems, then it is recommended that only the East side of Main Street have a sidewalk with a planting strip/lawn area, while the West side would include only a sidewalk and curbing. See the following page for an illustration of the preferred streetscaping.

The options for streetscaping are found in figures 12 and 13. Figure 12 is the preferred option.

#### **Purpose:**

Improved sidewalks and streetscapes will increase the connectivity of the village to points of interest.

**Estimated Cost:** \$1,100,000.

#### **Potential Funding Sources:**

- [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.

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



Figure 12. Preferred Approach to Streetscaping

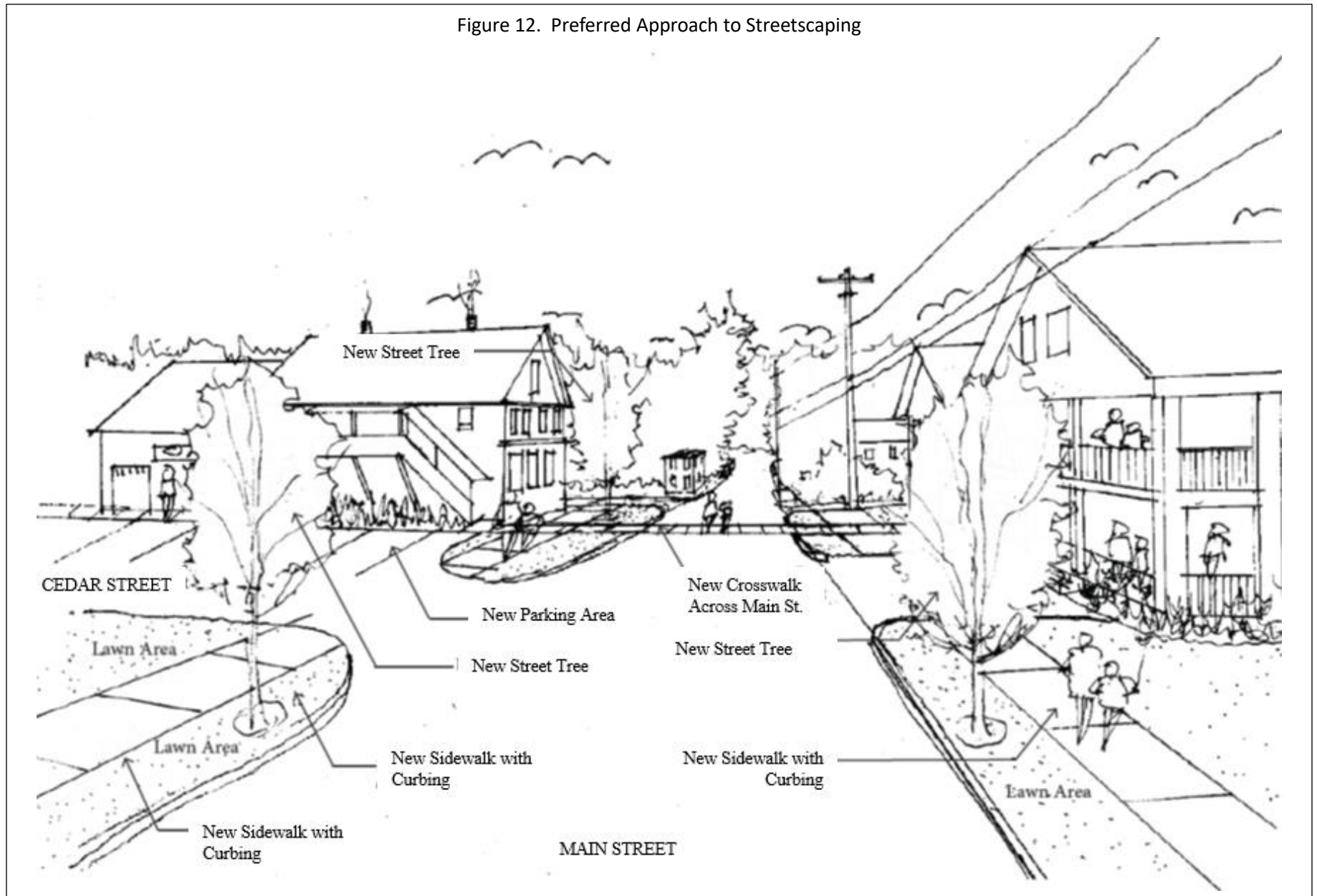
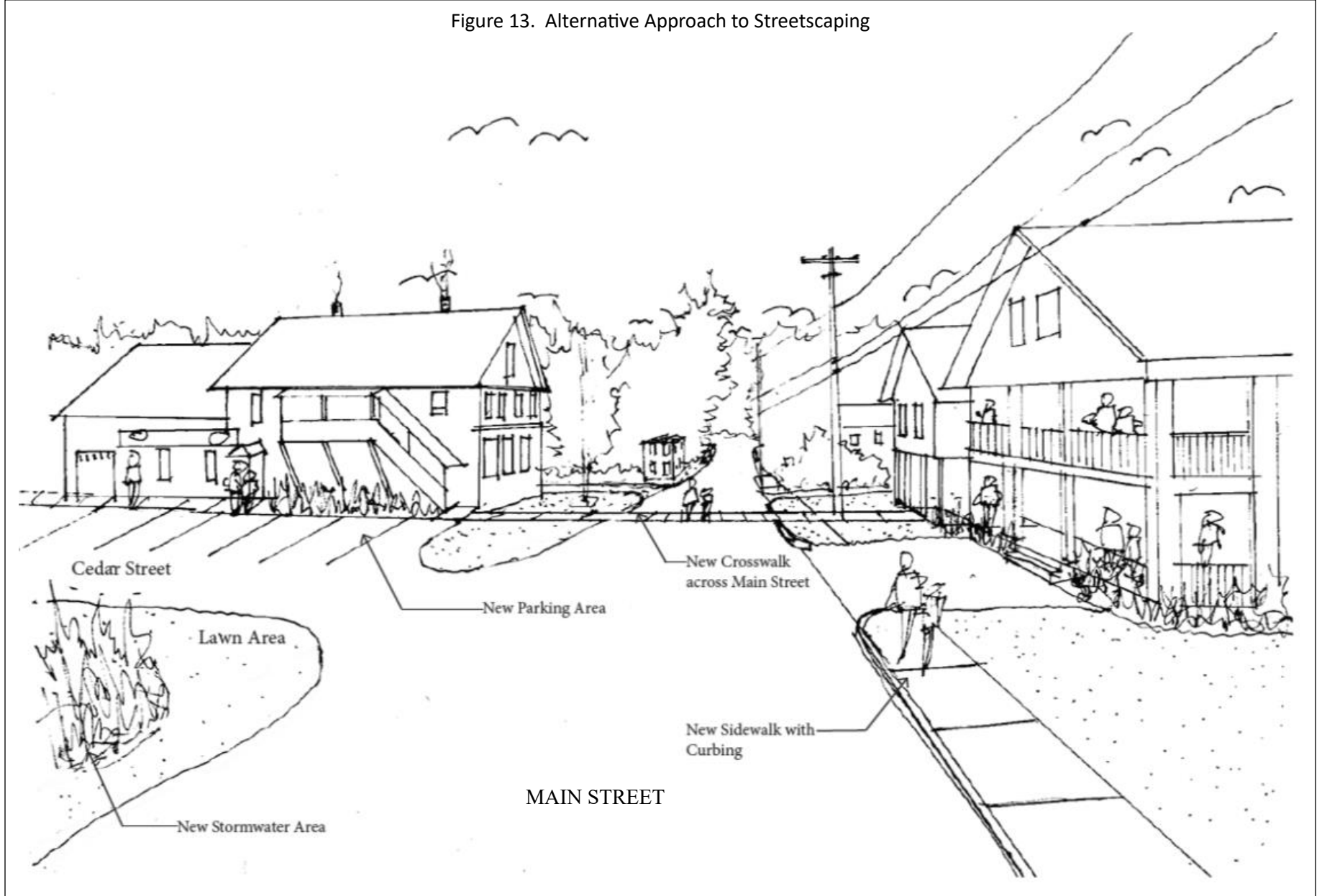


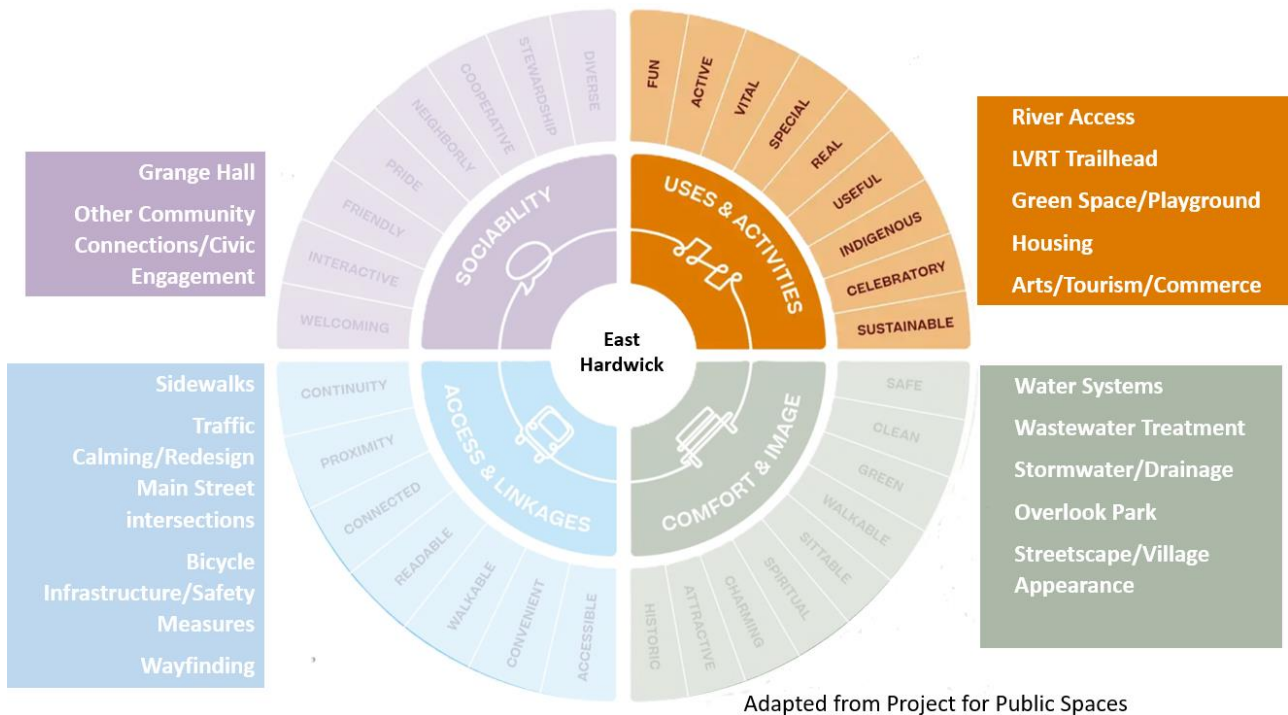
Figure 13. Alternative Approach to Streetscaping



## Priorities and Recommendations: Uses & Activities

This chapter focuses on issues related to Use & Activities in East Hardwick. It provides a brief summary of Existing Conditions followed by a 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 kinds of informal gatherings 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 14, 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



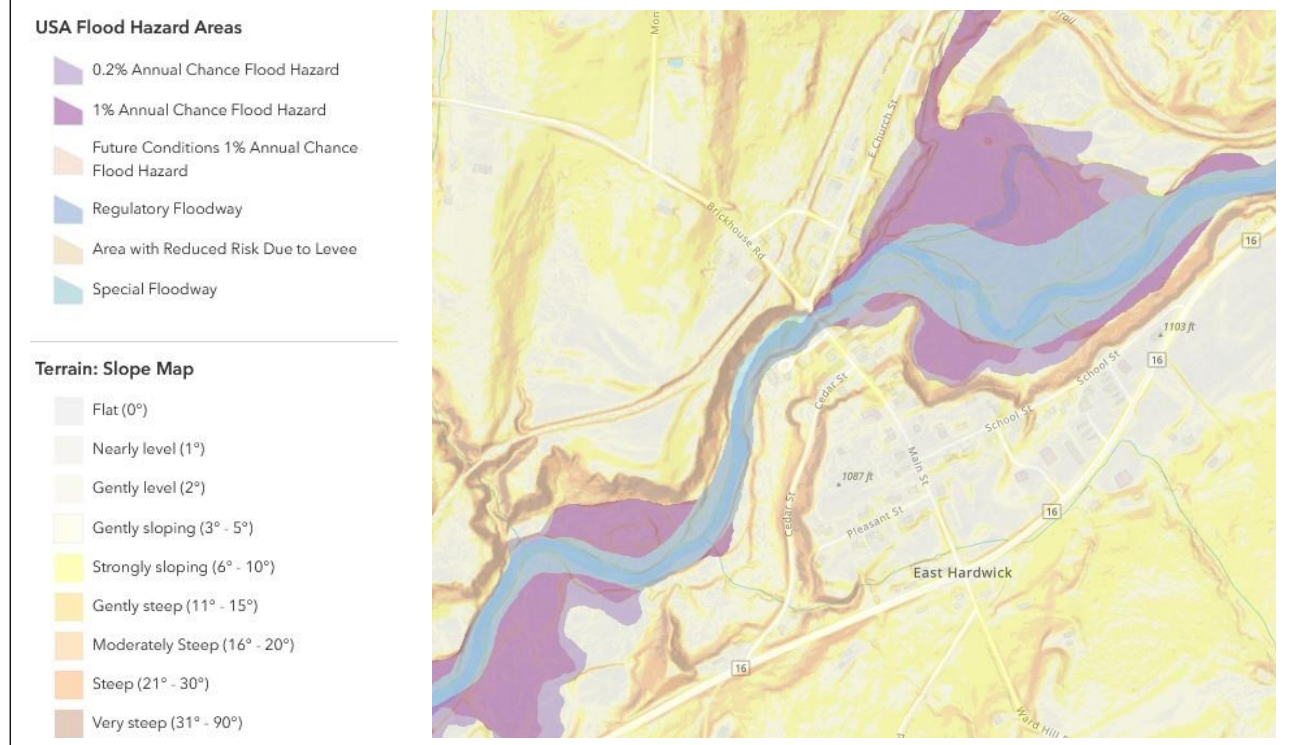
Figure 14. Village Center Designation Map showing uses



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 go 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 15 shows the constraints on land in the area around the Village in terms of 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 15. Constrained Lands in and Around East Hardwick



**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

<p><b>Specific Investments in Vitality</b></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 #9 Hall</p>
<p><i>Recommended Actions</i></p>	
<p><b>U&amp;A-1. Recognize the Grange Hall as an important community center for East Hardwick.</b> 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 and is seeking 501(c)3 status to specifically support such efforts.</p>	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Properly restored the Grange Hall could become the signature community gathering space for East Hardwick and beyond.</p>
<p><b>Estimated cost:</b> Unknown.</p>	
<p><b>U&amp;A-2. Develop the LVRT Trail head as a major gateway to the Village.</b> As discussed in the market analysis, the LVRT is becoming a major draw for tourists. In addition, the largest segment of users of the LVRT is expected to be residents of the nearby communities. Thus, as planned, the Trail Head being built on Stevens Lane should be treated as a major entranceway to the Village, with strong connections to Main Street. (The full scoping study for the trail head is included in the appendices.) There may also be opportunities to collaborate with similar trail-related initiatives in Greensboro Bend and other nearby communities.</p>	<p><b>Purpose:</b> The LVRT can be an important way to introduce all visitors (locals, as well as tourists) to East Hardwick.</p>
<p><b>Estimated cost:</b> \$350,000.</p>	
<p><b>U&amp;A-3. Pursue opportunities for access to the Lamoille River.</b> 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><b>Purpose:</b> River access can be an important source of local activity as well as a tourist attraction for the Village.</p>
<p><b>Estimated cost:</b> Unknown.</p>	

## Final Report, East Hardwick Better Connections Process

Additional planning needed to identify access location and necessary infrastructure.


**U&A-4. Explore housing development opportunities with private developers and groups such as Rural Edge and the Northern Forest Center**, 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.

**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.

### **Potential Funding Sources:**

- [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.

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

<h2>Village-wide Initiatives</h2>	
<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>
<h2>Recommendations</h2>	
<p><b>U&amp;A-5. Adopt a Village Center District for East Hardwick.</b> 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><b>Purpose:</b> 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><b>U&amp;A-6. Improve the Village appearance and connectivity to support “experience-based” enterprises in the Village.</b> 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><b>Purpose:</b> 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 Hardwick to host the small shops, cafes and other gathering spaces that were identified as desirable in the community outreach process.</p>
<p><b>Potential Funding Sources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Municipal Planning Grants</a> – grant program to support planning in your village. Good for town plans and specific planning projects (i.e. economic development, zoning, transportation, etc.).</li> <li>• <a href="#">Small Grants for Smart Growth</a> - Small Grants for Smart Growth provides seed money for catalyzing community-based initiatives related to smart growth.</li> </ul>	



## Final Report, East Hardwick Better Connections Process

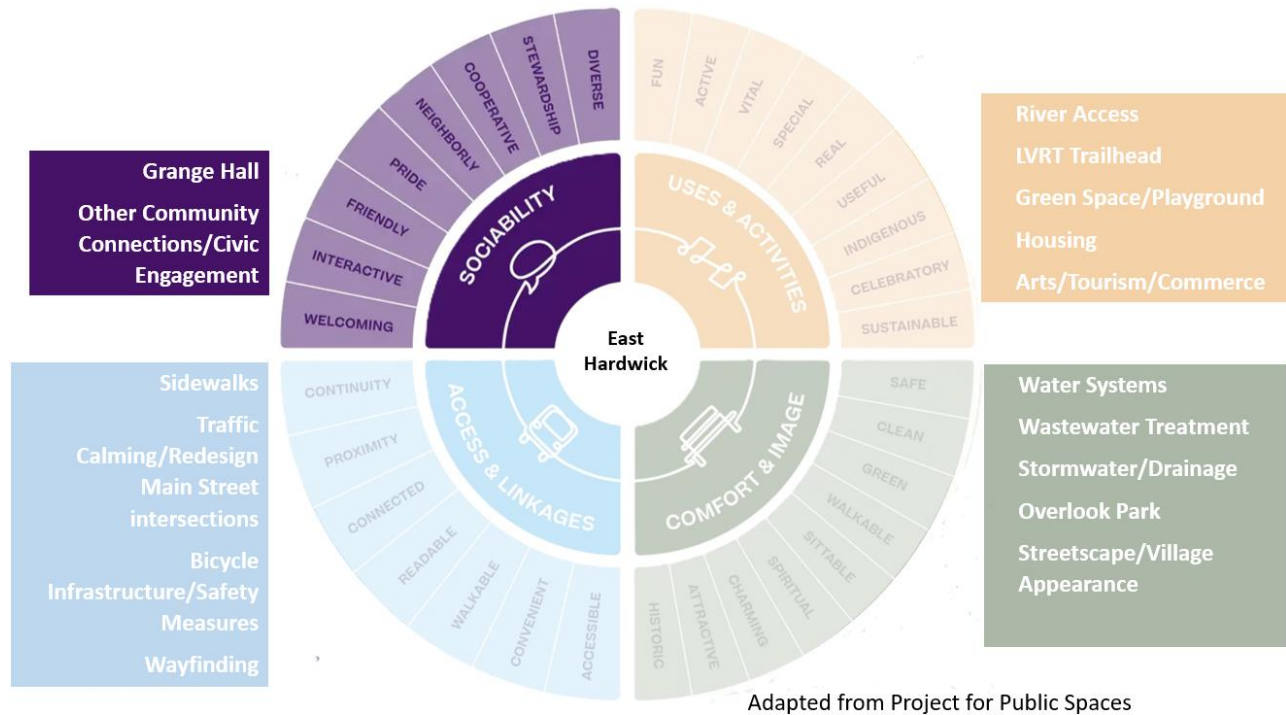
- [Paul Bruhn Revitalization Grants](#) - The Preservation Trust of Vermont offers grants to preserve and restore buildings and community gathering spaces of economic and social significance in rural communities.
- [Vermont Community Development Program](#) – offers federal Community Development Block 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.
- [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). The Vermont Community Foundation 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.

## Priorities and Recommendations: Sociability

This chapter focuses on issues related to Sociability in East Hardwick. It provides a brief summary of Existing Conditions followed by a 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, activities planned by EHNO and programs 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

Mobilizing Existing Assets	
<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>	
Recommended Actions	
<p><b>The Grange Hall should be embraced as a community center</b> which could serve as a focus of community activities. This is reiterating the recommendation in the Uses and Activities recommendations.</p>	<p><b>Purpose:</b> Properly restored, the Grange Hall could become the signature community gathering space for East Hardwick and beyond.</p>
<p><b>Estimated cost:</b> Unknown.</p>	
<p><b>S-1. Use the LVRT Trail Head to provide information about community events and activities.</b> As mentioned in the section on Uses and Activities, the effort could be strengthened via collaboration with neighboring communities along the LVRT.</p>	<p><b>Purpose:</b> 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><b>Estimated cost:</b> \$350,000 for full development, kiosk already purchased by Town.</p>	
<p><b>S-2. Create opportunities for socializing on Main Street.</b> 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><b>Purpose:</b> 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><b>Estimated cost:</b> Additional planning needed to identify improvements.</p>	

## Final Report, East Hardwick Better Connections Process

### 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](#) - Helps initiatives that focus 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.
- [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

### Recommended Actions

**S-3. Recognize EHNO as a major contributor to vitality in East Hardwick.** The East Hardwick Neighborhood Organization has done much to build sociability in the Village. Its central role should be recognized and supported in all efforts to improve East Hardwick.

**Estimated cost:** Minimal time for Town staff & EHNO volunteers.

**Purpose:** Ensure that there is capacity to undertake and encourage efforts to maintain and enhance sociability in the Village have

**S-4. Create a formal events calendar for East Hardwick.** Events are a great way to bring a

**Purpose:** The creation of a formal calendar of events would keep both residents and visitors



## Final Report, East Hardwick Better Connections Process

<b>Community Stewardship</b>	
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.  <b>Estimated cost:</b> Up to \$500 and regular minimal time commitments for Town staff & EHNO volunteers.	aware of what is happening in the Village, potentially boosting participation in and support for community events.
<b>S-5. Celebrate successes in building better connections.</b> 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.  <b>Estimated cost:</b> Up to \$500 and regular minimal time commitments for Town staff & EHNO volunteers.	<b>Purpose:</b> 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.
<b>S-6. Remove the former Library/Firehouse Building and create a small greenspace.</b>  <b>Estimated cost:</b> \$35,000 to \$50,000.	<b>Purpose:</b> While the parcel on which the building is located is very small, once cleared it could serve as an area for plantings in the Main Street corridor.
<b>Potential Funding Sources:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Spark Connecting Community grant program</a> - 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.</li></ul> <p>More detailed descriptions of these programs are provided in the appendices to this report.</p>	

## Appendices

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

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

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

[Appendix 4. Scoping Study for the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Trailhead](#)

[Appendix 5. East Hardwick Stormwater Plan](#)