

TO: Hardwick Select Board

FROM: The Hardwick Planning Commission

DATE: June 16, 2025

RE: East Hardwick Better Connections Plan (2025) – Consistency with the Hardwick Municipal Plan (2019)

Overview:

The Better Connections Plan (2025), developed through a comprehensive community engagement process that included participation of three State agencies, delivers a detailed action plan to revitalize East Hardwick. It reflects the broad, town-wide goals of the Hardwick Municipal Plan (2019) through specific, place-based projects that improve livability, mobility, resilience, and economic vitality.

This memo summarizes how the Better Connections Plan supports and complements the Municipal Plan. After thorough review, the Hardwick Planning Commission confirms there are **no conflicts** between the two documents. Instead, the Better Connections Plan provides a valuable implementation framework to realize the community's long-range planning vision at the neighborhood level.

Alignment with Municipal Plan Goals:

1. Land Use & Village Vitality

Municipal Goal: Preserve compact, walkable village centers.

Better Connections Actions:

- Implement sidewalk and streetscape improvements in the village core.
- Propose adoption of a new Village Center Zoning District (U&A-5) to strengthen compact development patterns.

2. Transportation & Access

Municipal Goal: Improve pedestrian infrastructure and connectivity.

Better Connections Actions:

- Replace Main Street sidewalks and redesign intersections to enhance safety and accessibility (A&L-4 to A&L-9).
- Establish a wayfinding system linking the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT) to key community destinations (A&L-11).

3. Economic Development

Municipal Goal: Support local commerce and revitalize downtowns.

Better Connections Actions:

- Develop a formal trailhead gateway at the LVRT access point to boost visitation and local spending (U&A-2).
- Create coordinated marketing strategies and provide small business support (U&A-6).

4. Housing

Municipal Goal: Encourage diverse, affordable housing near services.

Better Connections Actions:

- Conduct demographic and housing needs analyses in collaboration with regional partners (U&A-4).
- Promote infill development and housing options within walkable distances to village services.

5. Historic Preservation & Community Character

Municipal Goal: Protect historic structures and scenic views.

Better Connections Actions:

- Invest in streetscape improvements that respect and reflect East Hardwick's historic character (C&I-5).
- Recognize and support revitalization of local landmarks like the Grange Hall (U&A-1, S-3).

6. Flood Resilience & Infrastructure

Municipal Goal: Improve water, sewer, and stormwater systems.

Better Connections Actions:

- Integrate green stormwater infrastructure into Main Street improvements (C&I-3).
- Emphasize climate resilience and infrastructure upgrades in key village locations.

Conclusion:

The Better Connections Plan embodies the goals of the Hardwick Municipal Plan and transforms them into actionable, community-backed investments. By focusing on revitalization, connectivity, and resilience, this plan positions East Hardwick for sustainable growth and long-term vitality.

Motion approved by the Hardwick Planning Commission on June 10, 2025:

To recommend to the Hardwick Select Board the adoption of the 2025 Better Connections Plan as an addendum to the 2019 Hardwick Municipal Plan. Furthermore, the HPC supports a dedication of the 2025 Better Connections Plan to the memory of Meredith Holch.
