Vergennes Downtown-Basin Master Plan

Task 1 Report-FINAL DRAFT

December 23, 2015

Introduction

The City of Vergennes has evolved into a livable, attractive city with a growing economy. The downtown districts provide all the goods and services needed for local residents and employees, as well as high quality destinations that attract Vermonters from throughout the region. Tourism is a growing sector of the economy as Vergennes is increasingly recognized as a "must see" place for travelers. The Otter Creek Basin, the Falls, and downtown Vergennes are all major tourism draws for the City. However, potential economic benefits are not being realized due to lack of connections between these assets. Although the gap between the downtown and Basin has been considered numerous times, an effective and realistic solution has eluded the City, and it is becoming a more critical obstacle to livability and sustained economic growth.

The City of Vergennes Downtown and Basin Master Plan (the Plan) sets forth a vision and direction for realizing the economic and development potential of the Otter Creek Basin and downtown Vergennes. It is a direct outgrowth of the 2014 *Vergennes Community Visit* by the Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD). The Plan has three major objectives:

- Improving the transportation connections between the Basin and downtown
- Developing the Basin's draw as a recreation destination
- Identifying economic development issues and opportunities through a market analysis

The project is funded by a Strong Communities, Better Connections (SCBC) grant from the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) and the Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development (ACCD). The goal of the SCBC program is to encourage communities to proactively coordinate land use decisions and transportation investments. Matching funds are provided by the Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC) and the City of Vergennes.

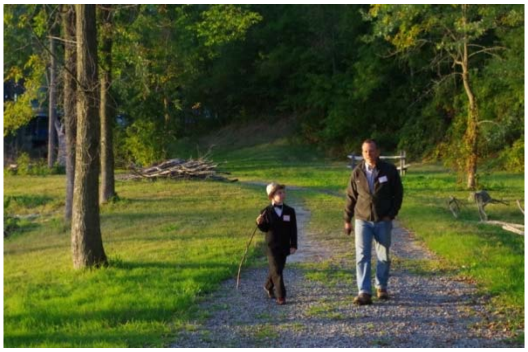
This study involves four tasks:

- Task 1: Analyzing existing conditions, opportunities, and constraints in transportation, the Basin area, economic development, land use, and market potential
- Task 2: Identifying project priorities through public input
- Task 3: Developing an implementation plan
- Task 4: Developing the final master plan

This report summarizes Task 1 and presents:

- Vision
- Background and context
- Public involvement process
- Economic development opportunities
- Issues and recommendations
- Next steps

Plan Vision



A vision statement is an important backdrop to guide the project and ensure that it maintains a consistent course throughout its development. This plan aims to accomplish the following vision for Vergennes:

To realize the economic potential of Vergennes' assets by strengthening the connection between the Downtown and Otter Creek Basin, improving multi-modal opportunities, street design, and recreational opportunities.

Background and Context

The original Basin Plan developed by LandWorks and Otter Creek Engineering spurred a number of initiatives from developing signage, improvements to Falls Park, and a stairway from Main Street to the riverfront park. There is still much to be done and strengthening the connections from the riverfront to the heart of the city and its historic green is important for commerce, tourism and to enhance the quality of life for those who work and reside in the City.

The *Vergennes Community Visit* report recommended the creation of task forces to move projects and initiatives forward. Two of the task forces, the Basin and Riverside Task Force and the Transportation Task Force, have been very active in advancing ideas and concepts, and they have been considered in this master plan as well.

A project Steering Committee has helped to guide the plan throughout its development. The Steering Committee is comprised of a diverse group of City leaders and Task Force members and helps to ensure coordination with others throughout the City.

- William Benton, Mayor
- Mel Hawley, City Manager
- Renny Perry, City Council and Vergennes Partnership
- Shannon Haggett, Planning Commission
- Shanon Atkins, Vergennes Partnership
- Mike Winslow, Basin and Riverside Task Force
- Greg Edwards, Transportation Task Force

A map of the study area is shown in Figure 1. Vergennes has a direct conduit to Lake Champlain via Otter Creek and can therefore tap into the economic potential of boaters. Additionally, the Lake Champlain Bikeway traverses the area and is a key regional bicycle connection. The Weeks School/Northlands Job Corps Master Planning project has been going on at the same time as this Downtown-Basin Master Plan, and every effort to coordinate the two has been made.

Green Mountain Power (GMP) owns the hydroelectric dam at Vergennes Falls and much of the adjacent property, including Settlers Park. The dam at Vergennes Falls has been referred to as the birthplace of GMP. The City leases the land on the east side of Otter Creek between Potash Brook and the Falls; the City owns the land between Potash Brook and the house on the north side of the docks. Burchfield Management Company owns several buildings in the Basin area including the Grist Mill and Shade Roller factory.

Wifi service is planned to be extended to the Basin area this year. Cross sections of the roadways in the study area are included in Attachment A and show the width of the paved area and sidewalks. The Transportation Task Force is undertaking a sidewalk inventory to assess the condition of Vergennes sidewalks and gaps in the network.

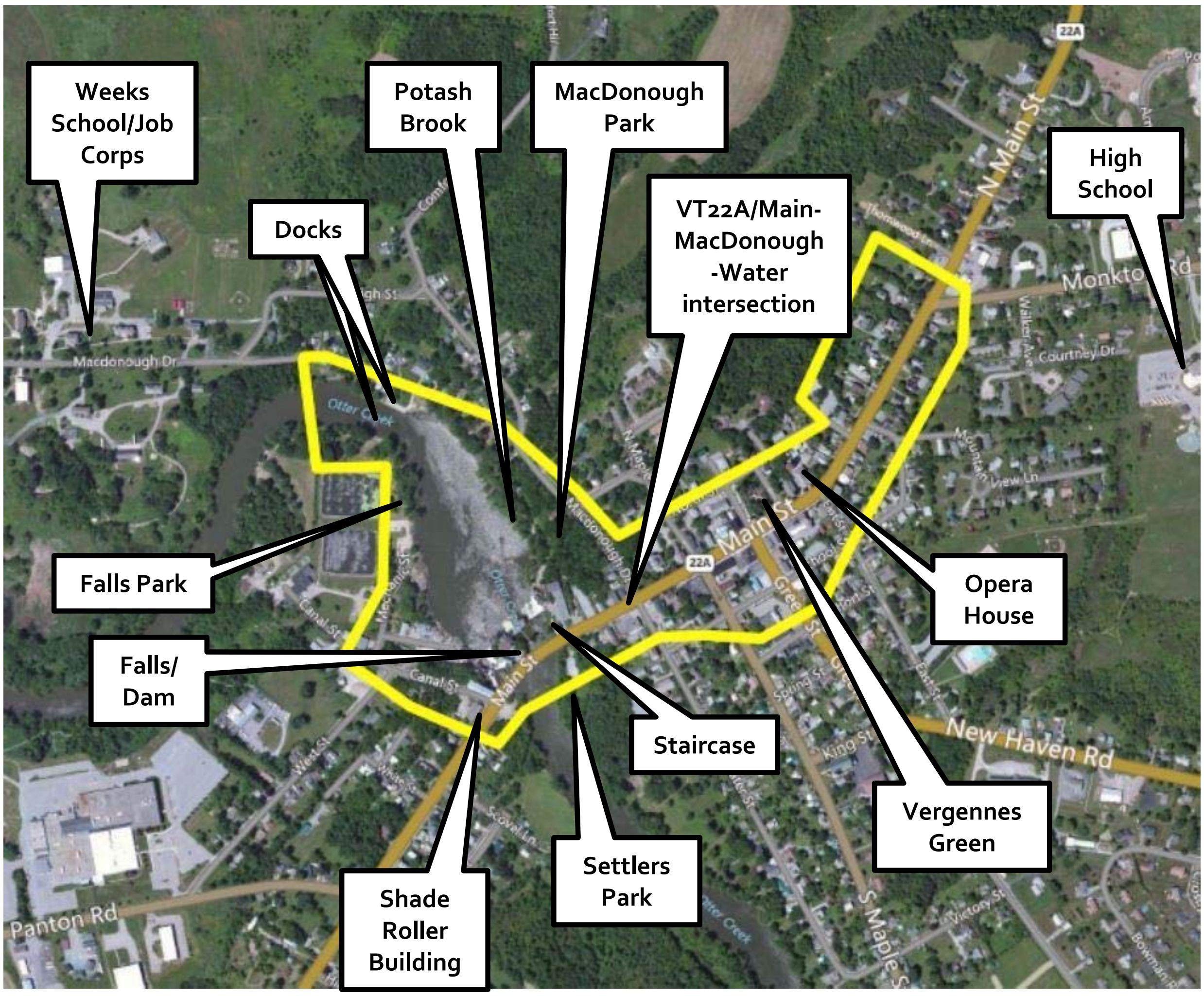


Figure 1: Study area (Base map: Bing)

Previous Plans and Studies

From "Finding Vergennes" to the recent community visit, to the work of the University of Vermont Park Planning and Design class, planning and participation have been the hallmarks of the work undertaken to explore and enhance the Basin and Main Street areas, and the connections thereof.

A substantial amount of planning for this area has already taken place, so the following plans and studies were reviewed to establish the context of the master plan and ensure consistency between recommendations and existing initiatives.

Greater Vergennes Traffic Impact Feasibility Study (2002)

The ACRPC conducted a traffic study in 2002 to assess the traffic issues in Vergennes (primarily focused on truck traffic). The study included a public workshop, which resulted in a desire to remove the truck designation in downtown Vergennes or at a minimum, mitigate the impacts of truck traffic. In the interim, Addison County supports continued study of this area and truck bypass alternatives. The report also recommends working with VTrans to set standards for mitigating truck noise and other impacts, implement traffic calming measures downtown (such as gateway treatments), and target law enforcement to trucks in the area.

VT 22A/South Water Street/MacDonough Drive Intersection Study (2006)

VTrans, ACRPC and the City of Vergennes conducted a study in 2006 to identify improvements to the intersection of VT 22A, South Water Street, and MacDonough Drive. The report recommends installing a traffic signal and curb extensions at the intersection to accommodate safe pedestrian crossings and improved operations for vehicles.

Multi-use Path & Sidewalk Planning and Feasibility Study (2006)

In 2006, the City of Vergennes and the Town of Ferrisburgh conducted a study on the location and feasibility of a multi-use path and sidewalk in the eastern side of Vergennes to connect to a new Park and Ride lot in Ferrisburgh. The preferred alternative for the multi-use path is located east of Route 22 from East Street through the Vergennes Elementary and High School campus, culminating in a loop around Route 22 and Route 7. See Figure 2.

Addison County Regional Plan (2008, 2011)

The 2011 Regional Plan is an update of the previous plan. In 2008, the transportation section was completely revised, and has since had minor updates. According to the plan, transportation is the highest contributor to Vermont's greenhouse gas emissions (57%). An objective of the plan is to reduce GHG emissions from transportation. Providing pedestrian and bicycle options is one way to address this objective. Additionally, the plan includes an objective to encourage bicycle and pedestrian friendly developments in downtowns and villages.

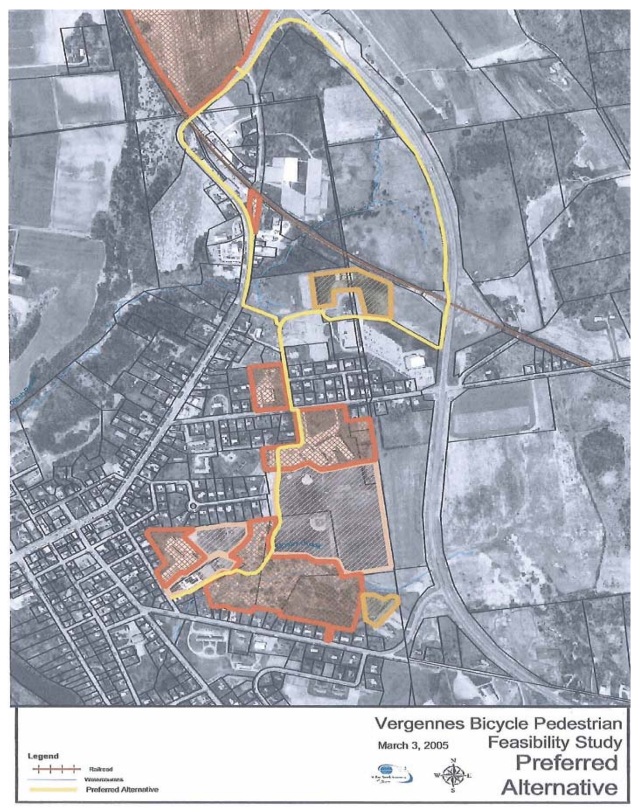


Figure 2: Preferred Alternative for the Vergennes Multi-use Path, Multi-use Path & Sidewalk Planning and Feasibility Study, 2006.

Specifically, the plan highlights the goal to support the county's position as a popular destination for bicyclists and to encourage public transit, walking and bicycling. The following projects in Vergennes are recommended in the plan: 1) Reconstruct VT 22A – South Water Street – MacDonough Drive intersection; 2) Improve facilities in Vergennes and Middlebury; and 3) Update alternatives analysis for VT 22A Bypass in Vergennes.

Vergennes Municipal Development Plan (2009)

The Municipal Development Plan for 2009-2014 includes a transportation plan which calls for improved safe accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians. Specifically, the plan supports implementation of recommendations from the *Sidewalk and Bridge Modification Feasibility Study* and *Multi-Use Path and Planning Study*, and development of the Ferrisburgh Multi-Modal Transportation Facility. The plan also calls to strengthen the Otter Creek Basin District for public access and recreational use.

Vermont Western Corridor Transportation Management Plan (2010)

VTrans and five regional planning commissions (RPCs) developed a multimodal plan for the Vermont Western Corridor (the area around US 7 between Massachusetts and Canada, including some parallel routes) to improve efficiencies and operations along the corridor. The recommended strategies for the corridor include improving bicycle and pedestrian accommodations and conducting streetscape improvements in towns and villages along the corridor. Freight accommodations are a major focus in the report, which also looks at shifting some freight transportation from trucking to rail.

City of Vergennes Zoning and Subdivision Guidelines (2012)

The Guidelines establish zoning districts within the City, including the Otter Creek Basin District, the Central Business District, the Public District, and the Residential/Limited Business District, all of which are in the study area. The Guidelines also include sign and streetscape regulations, such as those for the Central Business District: "The streetscape shall include meaningful spaces for pedestrians that draw them in and provide site furnishings, such as benches, tables, bicycle racks and other pedestrian amenities made of durable, weather-resistant and vandal-resistant materials."

Cultivating Community through Sustainable Transportation: Proposed Bicycle & Pedestrian Improvements in Vergennes, VT (2012)

In 2012, the Middlebury College Environmental Studies Senior Seminar in partnership with the ACRPC conducted a study to identify solutions to help meet bicycle and pedestrian needs in the City of Vergennes. The report found that limited connectivity between locations in the city was a primary obstacle for walking and biking, in addition to poor infrastructure and high vehicle speeds and volumes. The report recommends improved pedestrian crossings at several intersections, sidewalk expansions, traffic calming measures, bike lanes, and a recreational trail, possibly along an old rail bed.

Vergennes Community Visit Report and Action Plan (2014)

Community Visits are a 4-month process where Vermont Council on Rural Development members and state experts work with community members to prioritize goals and develop implementation strategies for improvements. In this community visit, the city identified three priority projects: 1) Improve Transportation &

Parking; 2) Advance the Vergennes Economy & Expand the Community and Economic Development Capacity of the City; and 3) Redevelop the Vergennes Falls Basin & Open a Riverwalk. A task force was assigned to each of these priority projects.

A Master Plan for the State of Vermont Otter Creek Campus and Lands in Vergennes and Ferrisburgh (Northland Job Corps/Weeks School Master Plan) (2015)

The vision laid out by this plan is for a more sustainable campus with less paving, "green" infrastructure, architectural integrity, with more diverse training programs, vacant buildings occupied, and mixed uses on site in addition to or post-Job Corps. Improved connections to Vergennes through a trail network, better sidewalks and bike routes are a significant aspect of realizing this vision. Eventually the site may include business space and housing opportunities accessed by public transit and with walkability to the downtown.

Figure 3: Vergennes is open for business!

Public Involvement

This plan builds on the outreach and success of VCRD's Community Visit. Public involvement informed the Issues and Recommendations, and has been achieved so far through several means:

1. Website
2. Intercept surveys
3. Outreach to bicycle tour companies
4. Business owner and developer interviews
5. Walking tours
6. Demonstration projects

Website

A virtual home for the project was developed on Vergennes.org to announce the plan, publicize community events, and provide access to plan documents.

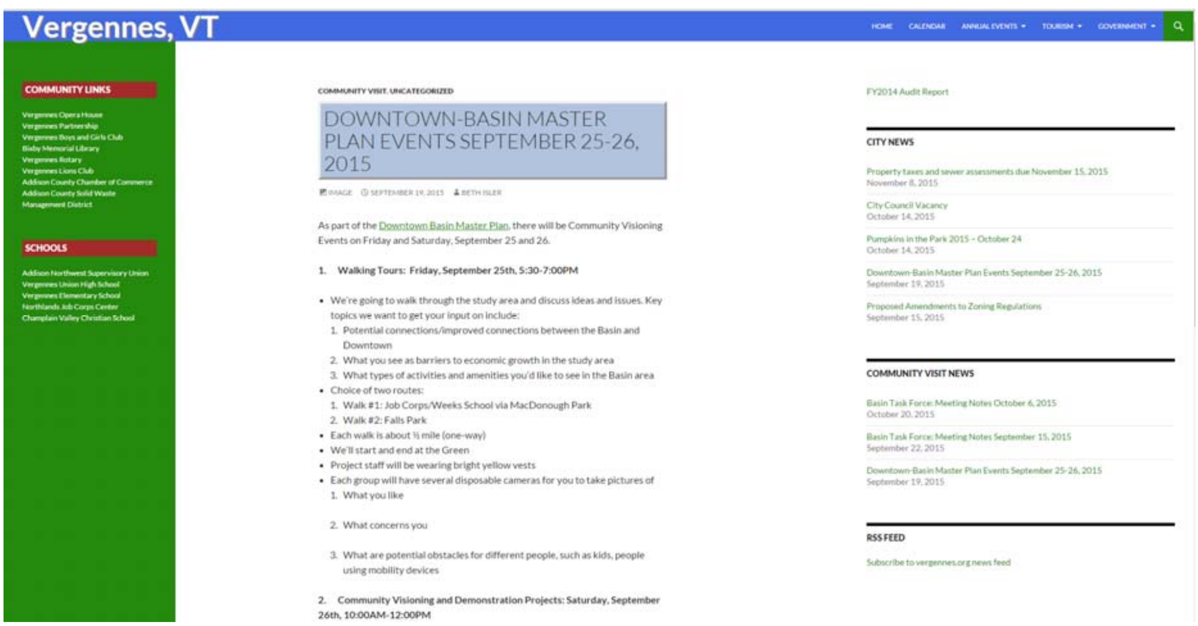


Figure 4: Screenshot of the website

Intercept Surveys

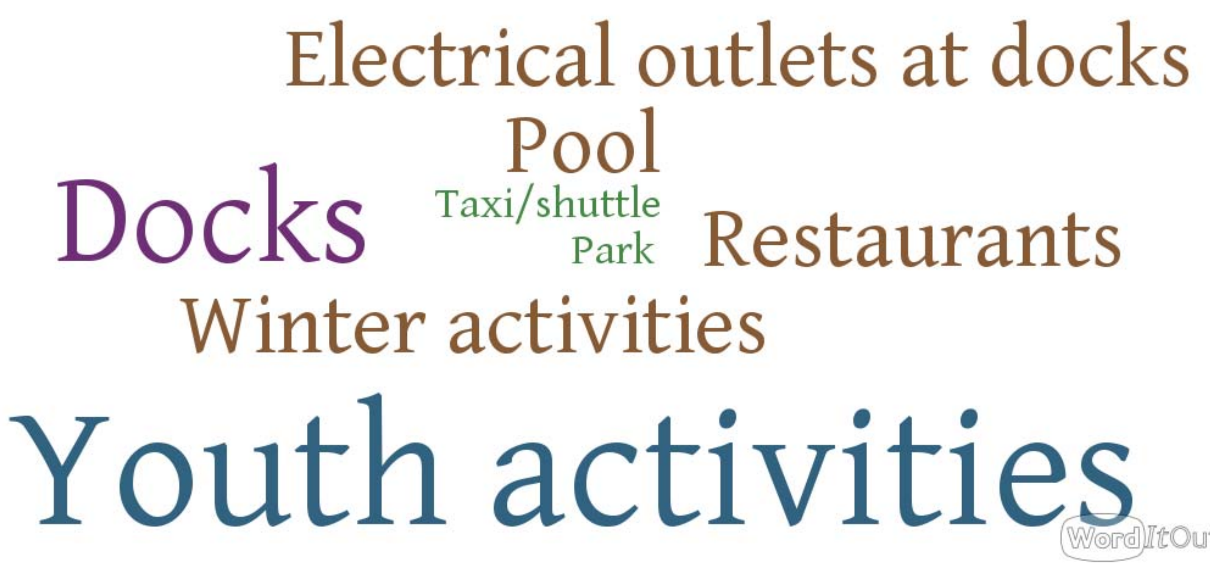
Staff intercepted people in Vergennes on July 31 and August 6 to answer a brief survey to understand people's reasons for visiting the City. The full results are in Attachment B and summarized below:

25 people were intercepted (some individuals, some in small groups). They were from:

What will you do while you're here?

What do you like about Vergennes?

Is there anything that you think is missing?



Other comments/suggestions:

- Safety issue: truck traffic, especially at the 4 way intersection.
- Safety issue: BF Goodrich traffic and pedestrians.
- Safer place for the park
- Kids are bored which is why there are drug issues.
- Nowhere for kids
- More information on water/water depth; boaters not sure if water is deep enough for keel; maybe have information at entrance of river to indicate water level
- More information on how to get here and what there is to do/notable sites for visitors; looked at map at docks but that wasn't enough info
- Water does not look inviting to swim in, would love access to a pool

Input from Bike Tour Companies

Sojourn Bicycling Vacations, Inn to Inn (Country Inns Along the Trail), and VBT Bicycling and Walking Vacations all responded to the project team's request for input on biking through Vergennes. The following summarizes their input.

- The usual approach for our clients is up either Green Street or Maple Street from the south.
- Cyclists looking for more distance will go out McDonough Drive and then counterclockwise loop to Kingsland Bay State Park, returning to the city center before heading the short distance out to Strong House for their overnight. I have them ride this direction for the rewarding view of the waterfall after they come in through the job corps campus.
- If approaching from the west, they come to Strong House via Button Bay and Basin Harbor Road, and leave to the south via Green Street or Maple Street.
- Occasionally we recommend a climb out of town up Monkton Road to Monkton Ridge and then on to Bristol, but that's not very common.
- Our strongest cyclists (longer distances) will often ride through Vergennes but not stay a night there. The in and out would be Green Street or Maple Street on the south, the Kingsland Bay loop to the north using McDonough Drive, and Plank Road or Monkton Road to the east and Panton Road to the west. Vergennes is a lunch stop rather than an overnight stop for these folks.
- My clients all understand that there are no rail-trails to speak of in Vermont and no bike lanes in most cases. They are used to biking on low-traffic, paved back roads through farmland, often with no lane striping at all, even for cars. They know that their morning inn and their evening inn are likely to be in village centers requiring more careful riding for the first and last couple of miles each day. They are familiar with the compact nature of Vermont village centers and are able to navigate Vergennes with no trouble. This is all part of the no-sprawl experience.
- In a decade of operating these tours I do not recall a single complaint about Vergennes in terms of cycling. Certainly a bike lane where possible would be welcome and make our cyclists feel even more comfortable as they pedal around Vermont leaving their money behind. I am a selectman in my town and understand that this is not always in the cards just based on road width and other needs like raised

sidewalks and on-street parking to access in-town merchants. All of these are important to the economic vitality of our small towns.

- They usually enter/exit Vergennes via MacDonough, Green, and/or Maple. They use 22A to have lunch on the town green.
- MacDonough steep, but Battery Hill to N Maple is even steeper, so MacDonough is the only way in from the north.
- MacDonough/22A intersection has a flashing light, not a traffic signal, and is missing crosswalks.
- Not intuitive that the Basin is nearby.
- Commercial trucks and heavy traffic on VT 22A can make it uncomfortable for bicycling.
- Angled parking dangerous for bicycling.
- Bike lanes would be nice.
- Signage should be considered, specifically wayfinding with Basin as the destination and mileage, for side streets that serve as gateways like MacDonough, Green and Maple.
- Fill in sidewalk gaps and add crosswalks.
- Dedicated path (ideally) or lane(s) for cycle, pedestrian traffic
- Signage directing to benefits/highlights of basin area and other points of interest (graphic/icons that will convey benefit simply and at a glance)
- Obvious parking for bikes at points of interest and in order to access downtown services
- Stop/start requirements while moving uphill are a significant barrier for bicyclists.
- Unpredictable cross traffic (not controlled by a light)
- Narrow or winding path that doesn't allow for variable riding speeds (wide-open is best for visibility and access)

Business owner and developer interviews

Interviews with local business owners are conducted as part of the market assessment, which is described in the Economic Development section below.

Walking Tours

The first community event was held on Friday, September 25th in the form of walking tours. The event was advertised through the website (Figure 4), posters (Figure 5), an article in the *Addison Independent*, and word of mouth spread by the Steering Committee and Transportation and Basin Task Force members. Steering Committee members and the project team (comprised of staff from ACRPC, ACCD, and the consultant team) led the walking tours, facilitated discussions, and recorded participant observations and comments. This input provided the basis for the Issues and Recommendations described later in this report. The routes are shown in Figure 7.

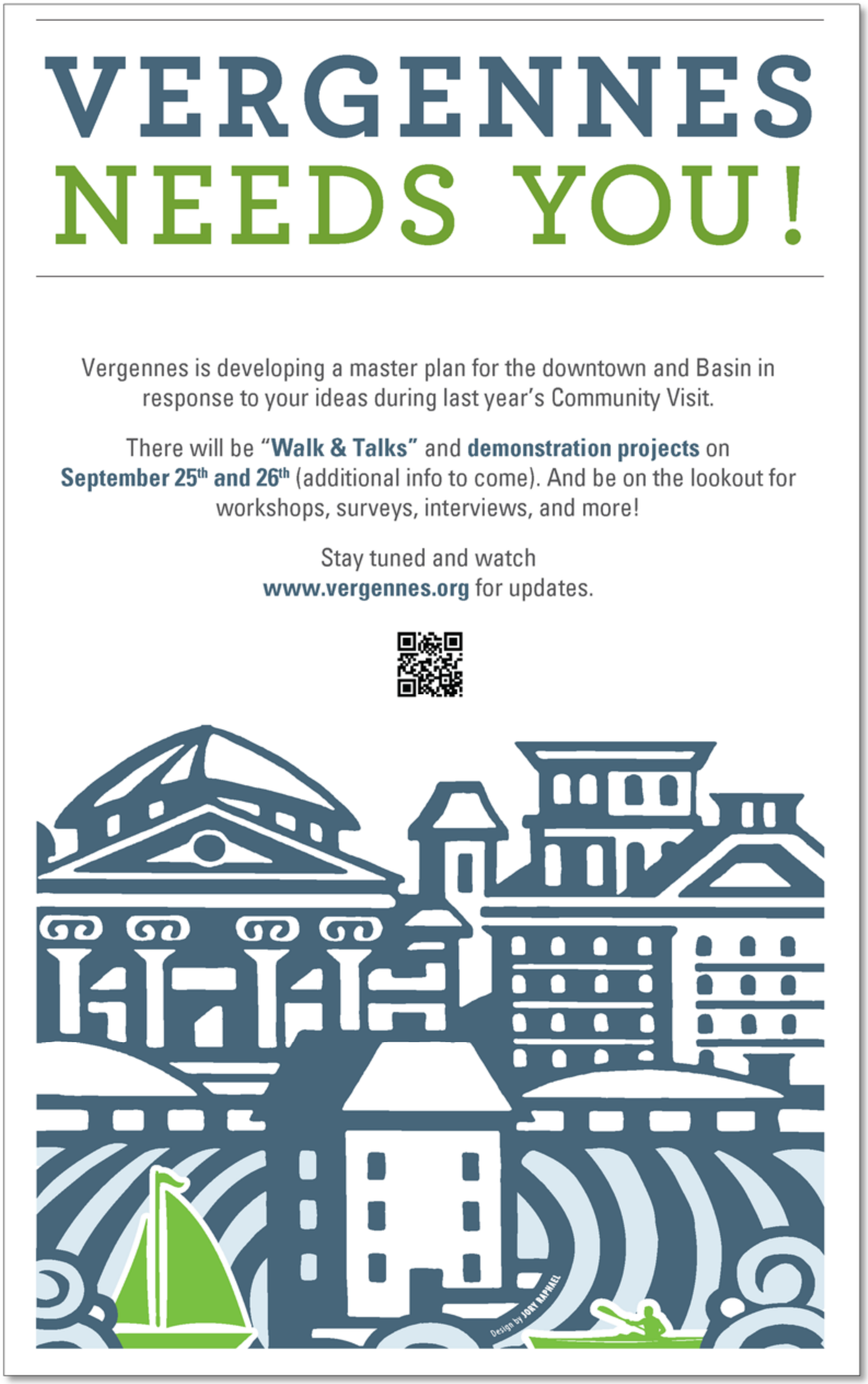


Figure 5: Poster advertising the community events

Vergennes Downtown-Basin Master Plan:

WALKING TOURS

Friday, September 25th, 5:30pm - 7:00pm

What are we doing tonight? We're going to walk through the study area and discuss ideas and issues. Key topics we want to get your input on include:

a. Potential connections/improved connections between the Basin and Downtown
b. What you see as barriers to economic growth in the study area
c. What types of activities and amenities you'd like to see in the Basin area

Choice of two routes:

Walk #1:
Job Corps/Weeks School
via MacDonough Park

Walk #2:
Falls Park

Each walk is about ½ mile (one-way). We'll start and end at the Green. Project staff are wearing bright yellow vests.

Each group will have several disposable cameras for you to take pictures of:

A. What you like

B. What concerns you

C. What are potential obstacles for different people, such as kids, people with mobility impairments…

Wrap up:

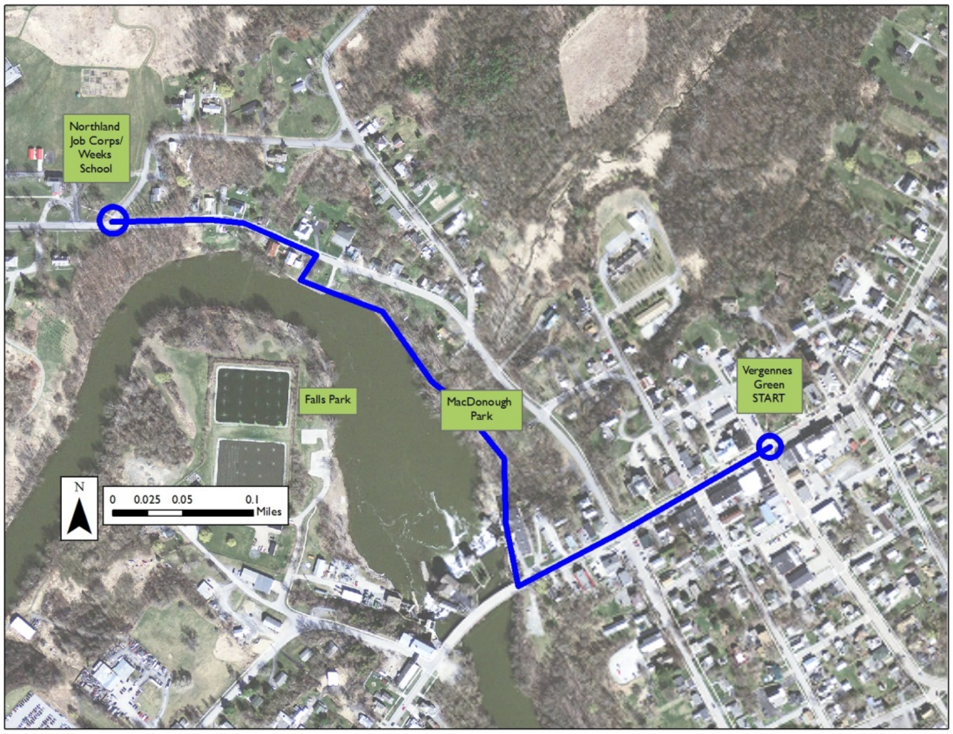
a. What are your takeaways from the walk?
b. What did you like? Dislike? What needs improvement?
c. What is your vision for Vergennes?

Join us tomorrow from 10am - 12pm for the demonstration projects! Interactive kiosks at the docks, traffic calming, bike lanes, crosswalk enhancements, and more!

Stay tuned and watch
www.vergennes.org/downtown-basin-master-plan/
for project updates.

Figure 6: Handout from the walking tours

Walk #1 Job Corps/Weeks School via MacDonough Park



Walk #2 Falls Park

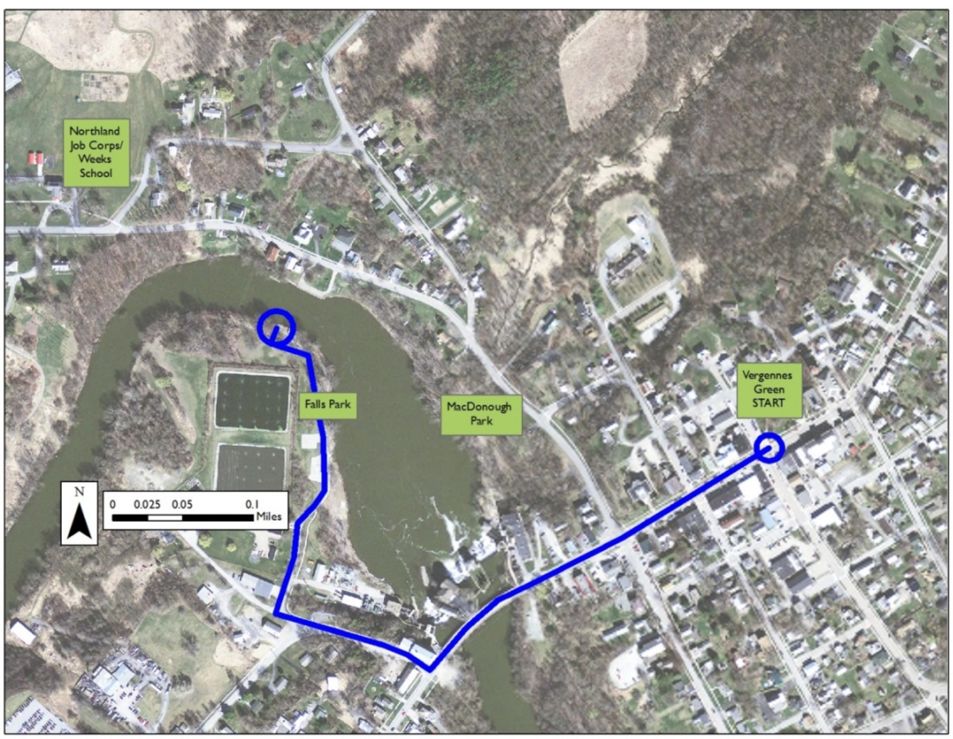


Figure 7: Walking tour routes

Figure 8: Staff record comments and input during one of the walking tours

Figure 9: One of the walking tours stops at the intersection of Main Street and MacDonough Drive to discuss issues and make observations

Demonstration Projects

The second community event was a series of preliminary recommendations demonstrated on Saturday, September 26th. This was advertised with the walking tours through the website, posters, an article in the *Addison Independent*, and word of mouth spread by the Steering Committee and Transportation and Basin Task Force members. Steering Committee members and the project team (comprised of staff from ACRPC, ACCD, and the consultant team) used spray chalk and traffic cones to demonstrate concepts like bike lanes, curb extensions/bulb-outs, gateways, and pedestrian refuge islands. An information kiosk, which has long been recommended, was constructed in Falls Park. An information tent at the Vergennes Green provided project information and allowed observers to share their reactions to the demonstrations with staff and Steering Committee members. Along with input gathered during the walking tours, this feedback provided the basis for the Issues and Recommendations described later in this report. Figure 10 through Figure 22 show the various elements of the day. The demonstration projects offered "proof of concept" of the feasibility of the preliminary recommendations, for example, that there is enough roadway width to accommodate bicycle lanes, and that curb extensions work.

Figure 10: Before and after the temporary bike lane was marked out during the demonstration project.

Vergennes Downtown-Basin Master Plan:

COMMUNITY VISIONING & DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

Saturday, September 26th, 10:00am - 12:00pm

What is today about? We want to get people thinking about what they'd like to see in Vergennes to improve the connection between downtown and the Basin. Sometimes it's hard to visualize how something like a bike lane might work, so we test it out for a day or so to help people understand how it might fit on the street.

There is an interactive pop-up kiosk in Falls Park to solicit people's vision for the Basin area. The purpose of the kiosk is information exchange and presentation of project materials and potential concepts. The aim is to bring downtown to the Basin and vice versa.

What are the projects?

Bike Lanes

Using duct tape and spray chalk to make temporary bike lanes on VT 22A/Main Street, roughly between the Otter Creek bridge and East Street.

Curb Extensions

Using traffic cones and crates to shorten pedestrians' crossing distances and their exposure to cars. For example, at corners like the intersection of Main Street and Green Street.

Pedestrian Refuge Islands

Using traffic cones at crosswalks to calm traffic as it travels through downtown and give people crossing the street a small refuge from traffic.

A huge thanks to Local Motion for their support in making these demonstrations possible!

Stay tuned and watch
www.vergennes.org/downtown-basin-master-plan/
for project updates.

Figure 11: Handout for the demonstration projects

Figure 12: Demonstration projects offered 'proof of concept' for preliminary recommendations (Base map: Google).

Figure 13: LandWorks and volunteers constructed the new kiosk in Falls Park.

Figure 14: LandWorks designed the new information kiosk in Falls Park.

Figure 15: Staff and volunteers use spray chalk to mark out a 5' bike lane while maintaining VTrans' recommended 11' travel lane for an arterial.

Figure 16: A gateway sign on the west side of the bridge was placed to show drivers that they were approaching the village and should adjust speeds accordingly.

Figure 17: A 5’ bike lane with a 2’ buffer was demonstrated while maintaining 11' width for trucks in the adjacent travel lane.

Figure 18: A bicyclist uses the 5' bike lane while being passed by a vehicle. Both the vehicle and the bicycle have adequate room in their respective lanes.

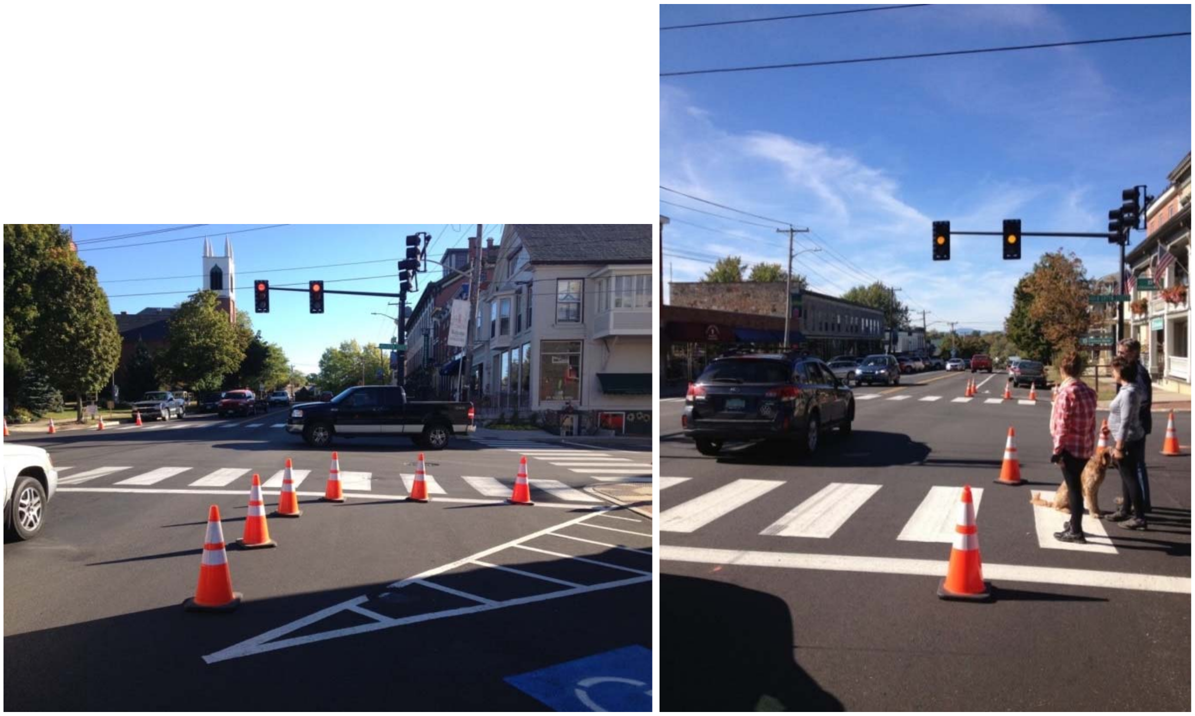


Figure 19: Traffic cones show how a curb extension would decrease traffic speeds while reducing pedestrian exposure to vehicles.

Figure 20: The hay bale and cone show how a curb extension would work to shorten pedestrian crossing distances and calm traffic.

Figure 21: Cones were used to demonstrate a pedestrian refuge island while maintaining adequate travel lane widths.

Figure 22: An information tent facilitated conversations between residents and project staff and volunteers.

Economic Development, Land Use and Market Analysis

The Background Report for the Market Assessment is included as Attachment C. The major findings of the background research are that:

- There is essentially no availability in the Vergennes rental housing market.
- The most important single industry in the Market Area is Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (10.6 percent of total employment); this is unusual for a Vermont market. Overall, no single category dominates employment.

Change In Employment by Industry: Burlington Metro (2000 – 2014; 2010 – 2014)

	Change 2000-'14		Change 2010-'14	
	Employ-ment	%	Employ-ment	%
Natural Resources & Mining	129	+33.5%	87	**+20.4%**
Construction	(274)	(4.6%)	863	**+17.9%**
Manufacturing/Durable	(7,016)	(43.7%)	(1,599)	(15.1%)
Manufacturing/Non-Durable	491	+12.2%	1,155	**+34.4%**
Trade/Transportation & Utilities	731	+3.4%	631	+2.9%
Wholesale Trade	101	+2.7%	33	+0.9%
Retail Trade	452	+3.1%	25	+0.2%
Transportation	187	+6.8%	548	**+22.7%**
Information	(881)	(27.4%)	(269)	(10.3%)
Financial Activities	(581)	(11.1%)	(10)	(0.2%)
Professional & Business Services	3,422	+33.4%	2,278	**+20.0%**
Education & Health Services	4,613	+29.9%	1,430	**+7.7%**
Education	95	+3.8%	446	**+20.6%**
HealthCare	4,518	+34.9%	984	**+6.0%**
Leisure & Hospitality	1,963	+19.5%	1,163	**+10.7%**
Other Services	(193)	(5.3%)	443	**+14.6%**
Government	4,457	+27.3%	1,377	**+7.1%**
Private Sector	2,404	+2.5%	6,172	+6.7%
Public Sector	4,457	+27.3%	1,377	+7.1%
Totals	6,861	+6.1%	7,549	+6.8%

- It is estimated that the Market Area accounts for over $63 million in total retail sales, only 4.8 percent of the Region's total. With 28 percent of the total, Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers is the Market Area's major retail category. Food & Beverage sales (19.1 percent of total) are also significant.

- Market Area residents generate annual demand for in excess of $55 million in retail goods, while Region residents generate annual demand for $1.16 billion in retail goods.
- Travel activity is estimated to have the following impacts in Vergennes:
    - Food & Beverage - $1.08 million in annual spending;
    - Groceries - $634,000 in annual spending;
    - Other Retail - $513,000 in annual spending;
    - Gasoline - $785,000 in annual spending.
- The analysis indicates that there are positive gaps (Demand exceeds Supply) in the following retail categories that would be appropriate in a downtown area:
    - Home Furnishings – a number of northern New England downtowns have developed clusters of stores in this category in recent years. Higher end merchandise appeals to both area residents and tourists and, particularly if located in combination, can create a destination appeal.
    - Sporting Goods – given Vergennes' central location with respect to Champlain Valley bike tripping, a store oriented toward bikes could find success in the downtown.
    - Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores – clearly an appropriate use for a downtown area, where there is already an entry in this category;
    - Jewelry/Luggage/Leather & Gifts – clearly appropriate in a downtown area, and potential attractive to both area residents and tourists;
    - Used Merchandise – this category has already gained a foothold and is a growing trend in most retail districts. Again a cluster of stores in this category can become a destination;
    - Food Service & Drinking Places - the primary example of the value of clustering. Vergennes' existing restaurants have already exerted a draw on the region, with regular clientele from Middlebury to Burlington. Moreover, tourists clearly are attracted to downtowns with a wide variety of eating options.
- Vergennes' demographic trends are reflective of broader trends throughout the northeast; a significant increase in the 55 to 74 years population and an uptick in the number of younger households (Millenials). In the instance of older households, real estate professionals note that 'empty nesters' and single women account for the majority of housing demand;
- While Vermont's housing market is clearly differentiated from broader U.S. trends, it is apparent that both millennials and empty nesters are showing an increased interest in living in urbanized locations, with a focus on easy access to services, places to eat and public interaction. We note the following:
    - "There is a significant portion of the Baby Boomer generation that is opting to go to the cities, I think this is the beginning of a long-term trend."
    - That empty nesters whose children have grown up and gone to college or work are downsizing by selling their suburban homes and moving into apartments is old news; the magnitude of this trend is what's surprising developers.
    - Industry experts said future projects will likely have a unit mix that includes more two-bedroom and three-bedroom units to attract renters ages 55 and older. Additionally, Millennials tend to prefer one-bedroom apartments, whereas Boomers favor multiple-bedroom units, to accommodate a home office and/or visiting children and grandchildren. Though the two cohorts enjoy amenities such as swimming pools, workout rooms, Wi-Fi, and dog parks, Millennials are more likely to want more social attractions, such as TV lounges, bars, and such, according to Zillow.com. The Boomers, conversely, the website said, prefer more-luxurious trappings, such as state-of-the art kitchens, highend bathrooms, and walk-in closets.

Current/Projected Households by Age Group: Market Area (2015 – 2020)

HH Age Group	2015 HHs	2015 % of Total	2020 HHs	2020 % of Total	Change
15-24	55	18.4%	50	17.4%	(5)
25-34	190	63.5%	212	73.6%	+22
35-44	299	100.0%	288	100.0%	(11)
45-54	394	131.8%	348	120.8%	(46)
55-64	441	147.5%	448	155.6%	+7
65-74	316	105.7%	385	133.7%	+69
75+	186	62.2%	230	79.9%	+44
Totals	1,881		1,961		+80
HHs Aged >62 Yrs.	634	33.7%	749	38.2%	**+115**

- Although the numbers are limited, it is apparent that the combination of services, cluster or residences and aesthetic qualities of a downtown located adjacent to the basin has resulted in some higher end residential development in the study area. These rental units have well above average finishes and appointments – and well above 'market' rents.
- Finally, the limited pace of new residential development in Vergennes (particularly the downtown area) would suggest that there is pent-up demand, and that good quality housing would find renters – or buyers – sufficient to translate to rapid absorption in the current market.

The Market Assessment will use the findings from this background research as a basis for more targeted assessment and recommendations for study area improvements.

Issues and Recommendations

This section describes the issues that were brought to the team's attention during the community events and recommendations for addressing them. To realize these recommendations, the City should create a long term capital improvement plan for downtown infrastructure and public improvements.

Four dominant themes emerged through the work completed to this point:

- Lack of wayfinding, information and signage
- Maintenance
- Trucks
- MacDonough Drive/South Water Street intersection

To assess issues and develop recommendations, the study area has been organized into four sub-areas:

- Falls Park
- Main Street/VT 22A between Canal Street and MacDonough Drive/South Water Street
- MacDonough Park
- Downtown/Main Street

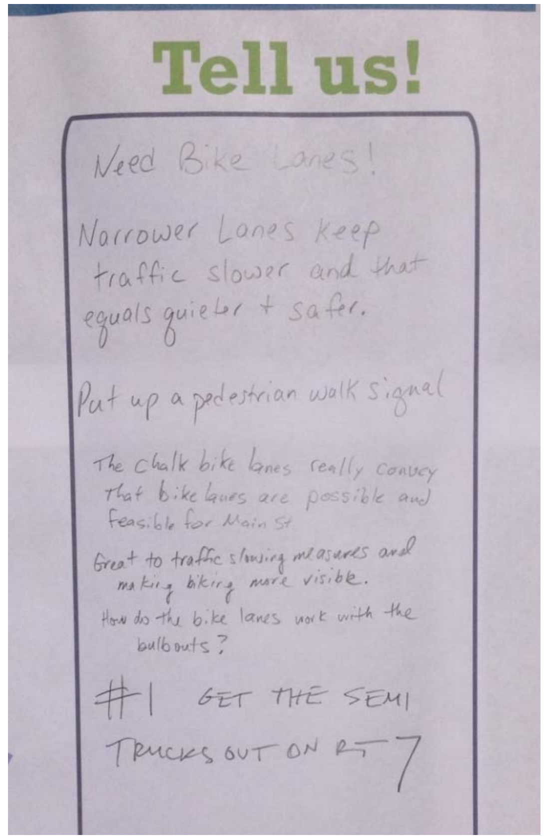


Figure 23: Comments collected on a poster during the community visioning/demonstration project event.

The following pages summarize the issues and recommendations for each of these four areas.

Parking

The Transportation Task Force completed a parking study last year (Attachment D) to understand the downtown parking capacity and how it is being used. The major finding was that there is availability in parking lots a block or two from Main Street, but since few people are aware of this fact, there is a perception that there is not enough parking.

For safety reasons, we strongly recommend a change in on-street parking to accommodate a bike lane on Main Street/VT 22A in downtown Vergennes. The current configuration of head-in angled parking is unsafe for bicyclists when drivers are backing out of their space because of reduced visibility. Back-in angled parking (Figure 24) is recommended to improve safety for bicyclists, make parking easier (especially when leaving the space), and improve overall safety. Back-in angled parking has been successfully implemented on two-way streets throughout the US, such as Binghampton, NY, Pottstown, PA, and Somerville, MA. There is a period of education and adoption involved by users, but after this period the concept is typically embraced by communities.

Falls Park Existing Conditions

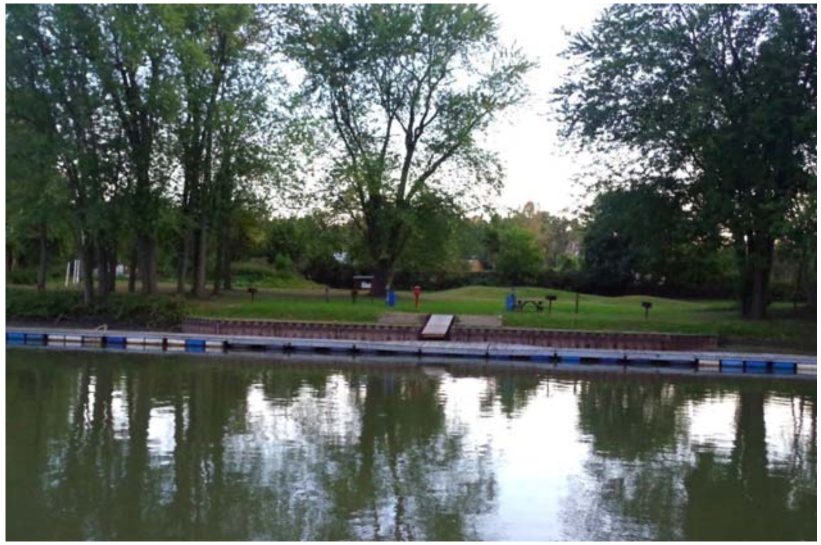
Issues

Approach/Entrance to Falls Park
- Feels like entering industrial area
- No signage-not clear what's down there
- Feel like you're driving into the GMP site
- Not welcoming (barbed-wire topped chain link fence)
- Not maintained; overgrown
- Need a more park-like entrance, less industrial
- Need landscaping to mask garages, etc.
- Canoe portage signs are inaccurate

Falls Park
- Not a "destination" from downtown
- Low utilization, neglected, not maintained
- Not a park, it's a parking lot. Too much asphalt.
- Entrance to the park is a chain across two metal poles.
- Vegetation is overgrown
- No lighting
- Grills are ugly and not maintained
- Not enough dock space
- Little for families/kids to do; playground with mounds was never fully built out
- GMP pays for the Port-o-lets, but the area floods, more permanent facilities are not feasible. Maintenance is also an issue
- City canoe program is not being used (no system to sign canoes out)
- No visitor info-no one knows what is around
- No signage, wayfinding
- Industrial area around park obscures the actual benefits of park

Falls Park

Existing Conditions (continued)



Opportunities

- Seasonal restaurant or beer garden
- Bandstand or stage for outdoor concerts and plays
- Move and expand the Vergennes Farmers Market to the Basin
- Make use of the field downstream (along the path to UTC)
- Make more of 1984 park plan
- Develop things for kids/families to do
- Staff the City-owned canoe program to get it running
- Have events and festivals in the Falls Park parking lot
- Develop historical interpretive displays about GMP and the dam: history of the dam and canal and falls as transportation, now energy with hydro, solar, wind, and recycling
- Consider disk golf, accessible tree house, playground, dog park

Falls Park			Recommendations and Implementation					
Recommendations	Time-frame	Potential Constraints	Priority	Lead Agency	Potential Partners	Possible Funding Mechanism	Anticipated Maintenance Needs	Next Steps
Remove canoe portage signs	Immediate		To be completed in Task 2			To be completed in Task 3		
WAYFINDING Post visitor information, maps, and historical photos/info of the area and of Falls Park in both French and English; make sure info is consistent with info at other Vergennes kiosks	<5 years							
Improve and maintain the trail through the Park and to UTC	<5 years							
Repair lower level of docks where decorative brick has failed	<5 years							
Repair (immediate) and upgrade (short-term) tables and grills	Immediate							
Add rip-rap along new paving to diminish chances of erosion	Immediate							
Implement dock registration program: Replace voluntary donation with something more obligatory. Imply that a harbor master will be patrolling to check on payments. Maybe a ticketing system, like pay the fee, get a receipt to show it was paid.	Immediate							
Install pet waste stations and additional trash cans	Immediate							
Install attractive bollards and gate where path beings adjacent to parking lot with sign indicating: WELCOME TO FALLS PARK	<5 years							
Install webcam so Lake Champlain boaters can estimate dock availability	Immediate							
Construct amenities like bathrooms, maybe showers	5-10 years							
Develop shuttle system between Job Corps, Basin (both sides) and	<5 years							

Falls Park

Recommendations and Implementation (continued)

Recommendations	Time-frame	Potential Constraints	Priority	Lead Agency	Potential Partners	Possible Funding Mechanism	Anticipated Maintenance Needs	Next Steps
Consider lighting	5-10 years							
Develop park-like entrance to counter the industrial feel of the area; work with GMP on this	<5 years							

Main Street/VT 22A between Canal Street and MacDonough Drive/South Water Street

Existing Conditions

Issues

Settlers Park (owned by GMP)
- Gets “shady” sometimes; illicit use
- No lights
- Crosswalk on east side at Settlers' Park not maintained because vehicle speeds make it unsafe to cross here
- Canoe portage signs are inaccurate

VT22A Hill
- No sidewalk on north side (one is planned and has been shown to be feasible but it is not yet designed)
- Trucks lose traction on slope in winter

Bridge
- Vehicle speeds on bridge too fast
- No sidewalk on north side (and therefore no walking access to Pump House Island, etc.)

Pump House Island
- Can only access by car

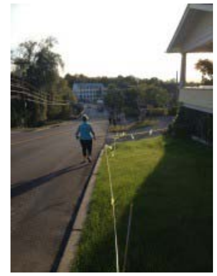
Riverwalk Stairway
- Concrete bases on light poles are out of character
- No wayfinding

Opportunities

Canal Street and entrance to Falls Park
- Development/commercial opportunity southwest side of bridge across from Canal St/Shade Roller Factory

Pump House Island
- Reconstruct the ruins
- Pump house would make a great ‘mystery tour/quest stop’, could post cultural/community stories on the side of it

Bridge
- New lights to match Basin stair lights/black railings etc.



Main Street/VT 22A between Canal Street and MacDonough Drive/South Water Street

Recommendations and Implementation

Recommendations	Time-frame	Potential Constraints	Priority	Lead Agency	Potential Partners	Possible Funding Mechanism	Anticipated Maintenance Needs	Next Steps
Construct missing sidewalk on north side of VT 22A/Main Street between MacDonough Drive and bridge	<5 years		To be completed in Task 2	To be completed in Task 3				
Create gateway on west side of bridge; perhaps add pillars with lighting	<5 years							
Clear brush and trees along top of river walk to expose view	Immediat e							
WAYFINDING Post visitor information, maps, and historical photos/info of the area and of Falls Park in both French and English; make sure info is consistent with info at other Vergennes kiosks	<5 years							
Work with VTrans to develop traffic calming on bridge to slow vehicle speeds enough to enable sight distance needed to make the crosswalk at Settlers Park safe	<5 years							
Work with VTrans to develop bike accommodations on bridge and provide sidewalk on north side	5-10 years							
After implementing speed reduction measures on bridge, repaint crosswalk at Settlers Park, add advance crosswalk warning signs, and install additional crosswalk safety enhancements, like Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs)	<5 years							
Remove canoe portage signs	Immediat e							
Install pet waste stations	Immediat e							

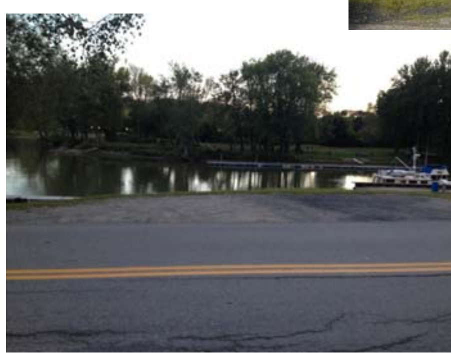
MacDonough Park
Existing Conditions

Issues

- Not a "destination" from downtown
- Low utilization, neglected
- No visitor info-no one knows what is around
- No signage, way finding
- Gaps in docks are a safety issue
- Flag is not lit at the dock area
- Sculpture needs interpretation
- Sewer caps are ugly/utilitarian
- Shoreline erosion issue
- Stormwater issues
- Parking lot on road near heritage park is confusing: which way to park? Parallel or nose in?
- Attention to physical and cultural heritage of the site is needed
- Near bottom of staircase is a drainage channel with rubble

MacDonough Drive

- Need a better connection to Weeks School
- Sidewalk is too narrow (4') and not maintained
- Often a sheet of ice from run off from steep sides



MacDonough Park

Existing Conditions (continued)

Opportunities

- Seasonal restaurant or beer garden.
- Power wash and paint the raised building.
- Potential for Green Infrastructure techniques for stormwater management.
- Old foundations – potential for creative seating etc.
- Consider disk golf, accessible tree house, playground, dog park.
- Restaurant, beautiful spot to be appreciated
- Parallel parking would work on the street (safer and more visible).

MacDonough Drive

- Public transit – work with ACTR for connection to Job Corps with stop at dock.
- Add trees on east side of MacDonough or raingardens for runoff control.
- Just to north of homes there could be clearing along McDonough Drive on the west side to open up views to the Creek and Basin area.

MacDonough Park
Existing Conditions (continued)















MacDonough Park			Recommendations and Implementation					
Recommendations	Time-frame	Potential Constraints	Priority	Lead Agency	Potential Partners	Possible Funding Mechanism	Anticipated Maintenance Needs	Next Steps
WAYFINDING Post visitor information, maps, and historical photos/info of the area and of Falls Park in both French and English; make sure info is consistent with info at other Vergennes kiosks	<5 years		To be completed in Task 2	To be completed in Task 3				
Develop boardwalk to connect stairway to docks	<5 years							
Add marketing materials at docks to entice boaters to venture to downtown	Immediate							
Work with merchants to offer delivery services to docks	Immediate							
Develop mooring field and expand docks; re-build portions of dock for safer access and longer ramps for high water	<5 years							
Implement dock registration program: Replace voluntary donation with something more obligatory. Imply that a harbor master will be patrolling to check on payments. Maybe a ticketing system, like pay the fee, get a receipt to show it was paid.	Immediate							
Stripe advisory bicycle lanes on MacDonough Drive	Immediate							
Consider lighting the Park	5-10 years							
Develop shuttle system between Job Corps, Basin (both sides) and downtown; approach ACTR	<5 years							
Create small park-like area with picnic tables and grills	<5 years							
Install pet waste stations and trash cans	Immediate							
Add “no littering” signage	Imme[illegible]							

Main Street/Downtown

Existing Conditions

Issues

- Head-in diagonal parking is problematic: backing into traffic is very scary, especially because of the traffic signal and the hill
- South side of street is much more commercial than north side. Makes street unbalanced, affects usage and visibility.
- Electric poles and highway style lights are not attractive
- Gardens in curb extensions/bump-outs have not been maintained; need to be weeded.
- Demand exceeds supply for outside seating
- No pedestrian signals at intersections

Vergennes Green

- Bare spots of grass
- Underutilized because of lack of maintenance and traffic noise

Opportunities

- Expand the utilization of the Opera House. Bring a diverse range of events that will drive night life to the Town Center.

Main Street/Downtown

Existing Conditions : MacDonough-Water Intersection








MacDonough-Water Intersection Issues

- Intersection is chaotic
- Delivery trucks unload on South Water Street
- Parking/access for gas station/market on South Water Street
- Head in parking on east side of South Water Street requires cars to back into traffic
- Trucks can't stop on VT 22A/Main Street hill because they lose traction
- Corner radius huge at MacDonough Dr.
- No curb on northwest corner
- Sidewalk ends on north side of Main Street/VT 22A heading down the hill
- Parked cars on Main Street block visibility of cars trying to exit South Water Street
- Most patrons of the store/gas station use parking on east side/South Water Street, not parking lot on west side
- Signal and curb extensions recommended in 2006 study
- Reconstruction recommended in Regional Transportation Plan
- Vehicles speed up to make it up the hill
- Very challenging for pedestrians
- Hard to cross (both walking and driving)
- People go out of their way to avoid this intersection
- Southbound left-turn is extremely difficult

Main Street/ Downtown			Recommendations and Implementation					
Recommendations	Time-frame	Potential Constraints	Priority	Lead Agency	Potential Partners	Possible Funding Mechanism	Anticipated Maintenance Needs	Next Steps
Work with groundskeeper to improve grass/eliminate bare spots on Vergennes Green	<5 years		To be completed in Task 2			To be completed in Task 3		
WAYFINDING Post visitor information, maps, and historical photos/info of the area and of Falls Park in both French and English; make sure info is consistent with info at other Vergennes kiosks	<5 years							
Add pedestrian signals at Main and Green, and Main and Monkton	Immedi ate							
Pilot-test back-in angled parking for a year in conjunction with education and awareness campaign OR	Immedi ate							
Widen sidewalks and convert to parallel parking to accommodate Large demand for outdoor seating	<5 years							
Weed and improve maintenance on Vergennes Green	Immedi ate							
Add bike lanes on Main Street	Immedi ate							
Weed curb extensions	Immedi ate							
Replace highway lights with pedestrian-scale lighting	5-10 years							
Create gateway at intersection with Monkton Road to define downtown	<5 years							
Improve parking management by putting up signs directing people to under-used lots	Immedi ate							

MacD-Water intersection	Recommendations and Implementation							
Recommendations	Time-frame	Potential Constraints	Priority	Lead Agency	Potential Partners	Possible Funding Mechanism	Anticipated Maintenance Needs	Next Steps
As recommended in the 2006 intersection study, signalize	5-10 years		To be completed in Task 2	To be completed in Task 3				
Tighten up corner radii on northeast corner by extending curb	<5 years							
Add curbed island to northwest corner	Imme diate							
Repaint crosswalks	Imme diate							
Work with gas station/market and Riverside Apartments to improve parking and access issues on South Water Street	5-10 years							
Discuss potential for making South Water Street one-way southbound	5-10 years							

So far in the development of this plan, there has been significant resistance to the idea of shifting the angled parking on the south side of Main Street to back-in angled parking. However, there are a number of significant benefits to be realized by adopting back-in angled parking, and the situation on Main Street/VT 22A, which is currently not safe, would be improved by it. Additional information and sample education materials are provided in Attachment E.

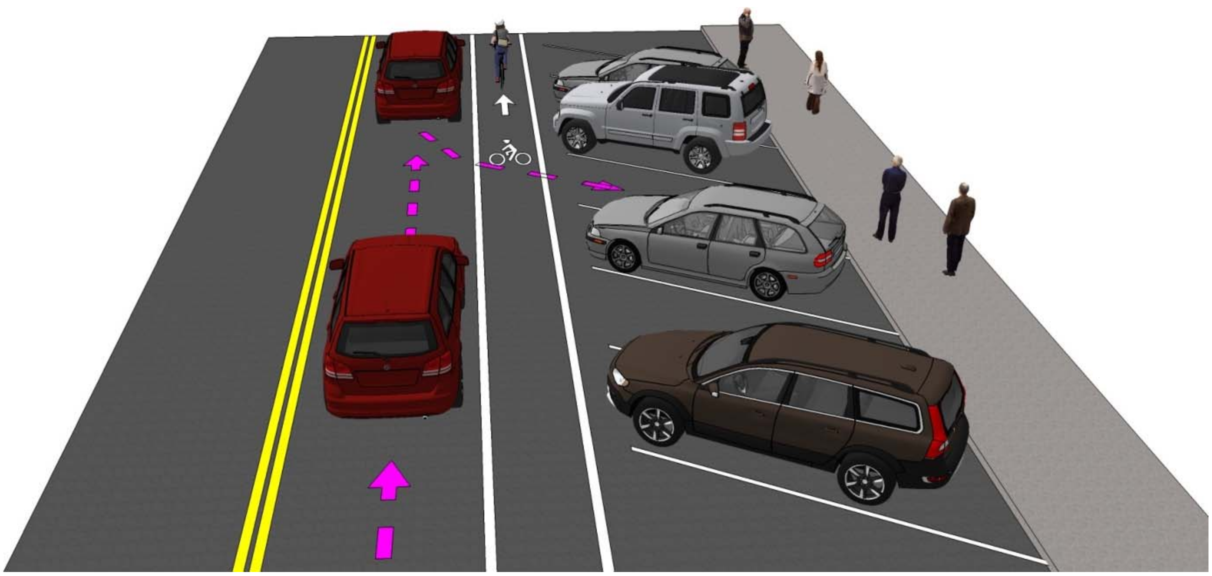


Figure 24: Back-in angled parking improves visibility for drivers, is safer for bicyclists, is easier for loading trunks, and increases safety for children who are directed towards the sidewalk rather than towards the street when they open the car door.

Figure 25: Back-in angled parking on a two-way street with a bike lane in Washington, DC.

If back-in angled parking is a non-starter for the Vergennes community, we recommend going to parallel, which will involve a loss of 25 spaces on the south side of Main Street between South Water Street and East Street (there are currently 53 angled spaces). This change would address ongoing issues stemming from the current configuration as cited by public input, be safer for bicyclists, and allow for a future expansion of the sidewalk width and additional outdoor café-style seating for restaurants.

<u>Bike Trail</u>

A bike trail connecting the Basin to the rail station/park&ride has also been discussed over the years as shown in Figure 26. A bridge structure and stairs would be required for a continuous route, and at some locations an elevated path would be necessary to travel over sensitive areas. The path would connect with the proposed boardwalk in MacDonough Park.

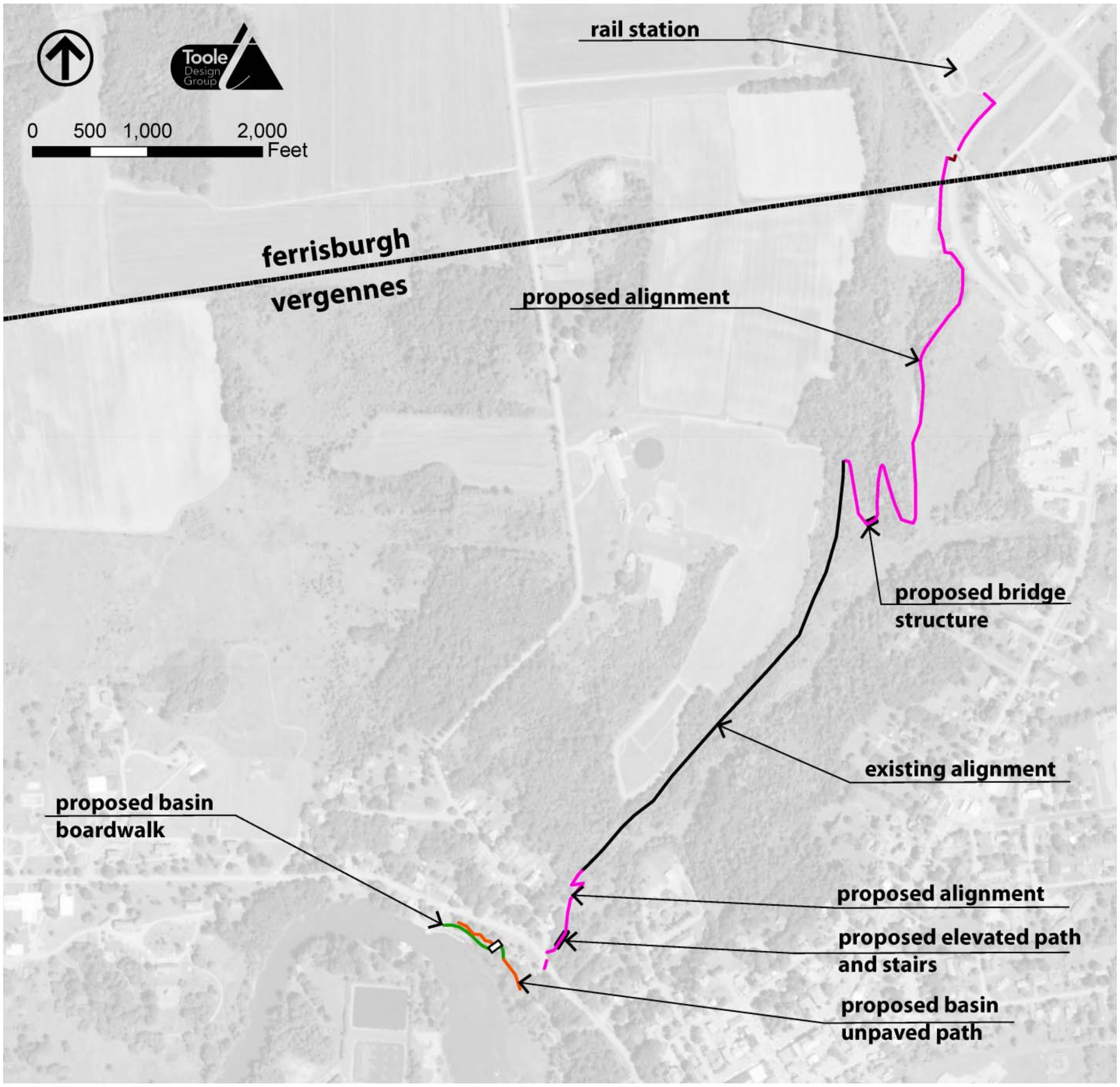


Figure 26: Potential bike trail alignment; concept provided by Timothy Cowan.

Truck Traffic

According to VTrans Automatic Traffic Recorder (ATR) Data, 10.83% of the vehicles that passed through Vergennes on VT 22A in 2014 were classified as trucks. This large volume of trucks is loud, conflicts with the village setting of Vergennes, and creates problems on the VT 22A hill between Otter Creek and downtown, which exacerbates existing issues at the intersection with MacDonough Drive.

The idea of a bypass to reroute large trucks has long been discussed in Vergennes, but there is concern that such a bypass would detour all traffic- and its economic benefits- from Vergennes. The Addison County Regional Transportation Plan recommended an alternatives analysis for a bypass but it has not yet been initiated. Opportunities for shifting freight from truck to rail is one of the alternatives that such a study could consider.

One concept for rerouting truck traffic involves VT 17, which would be five minutes longer than the current route through downtown Vergennes (Figure 27). While the VT 17 Otter Creek bridge is narrow and constrains truck travel, in the future, the construction of a wider bridge might be feasible for the sake of Vergennes' economic development, safety, and livability.

Until a wider bridge could be built, a one-way traffic pattern (counterclockwise) for trucks could be considered. This could reduce trucks by 50% immediately, reduce the likelihood of trucks passing each other across the narrow bridge, and reduce the volume of trucks going up the hill in Vergennes. A signed truck route that includes updating web-based routing applications and some enforcement by local police would be necessary to implement this concept. Exceptions would be made for trucks access farms and other local businesses via VT22A.

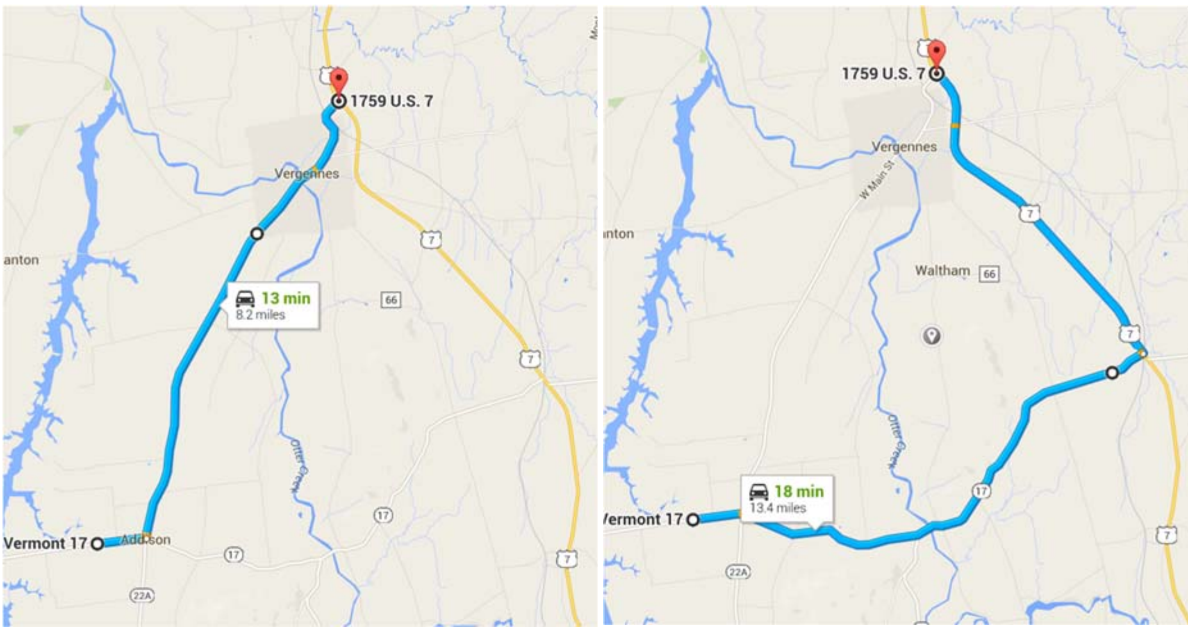


Figure 27: According to Google, the trip from Addison to US 7 north of Vergennes via VT 22A is 13 minutes and via VT 17 is 18 minutes.

<u>Transit</u>

Opportunities for strengthening connectivity via transit should also be considered. Addison County Transit Resources (ACTR) stops in Vergennes on both the Burlington LINK and the Tri-Town Shuttle Bus routes. In downtown Vergennes, the northbound stop is at Main Street-Green Street and the southbound stop is at the Opera House. There is also a stop at the John Graham Shelter on the southeast corner of Main Street and Monkton Road. There may be potential to

<u>Other Potential Opportunities</u>

Additional ideas were considered but will require further discussion before evolving into recommendations:

- Bring back the historic steamboat line
- Accessible tree house
- A Vergennes walking tour should/could be developed for the Basin and beyond
- More activities, like a swimming hole (Figure 28)

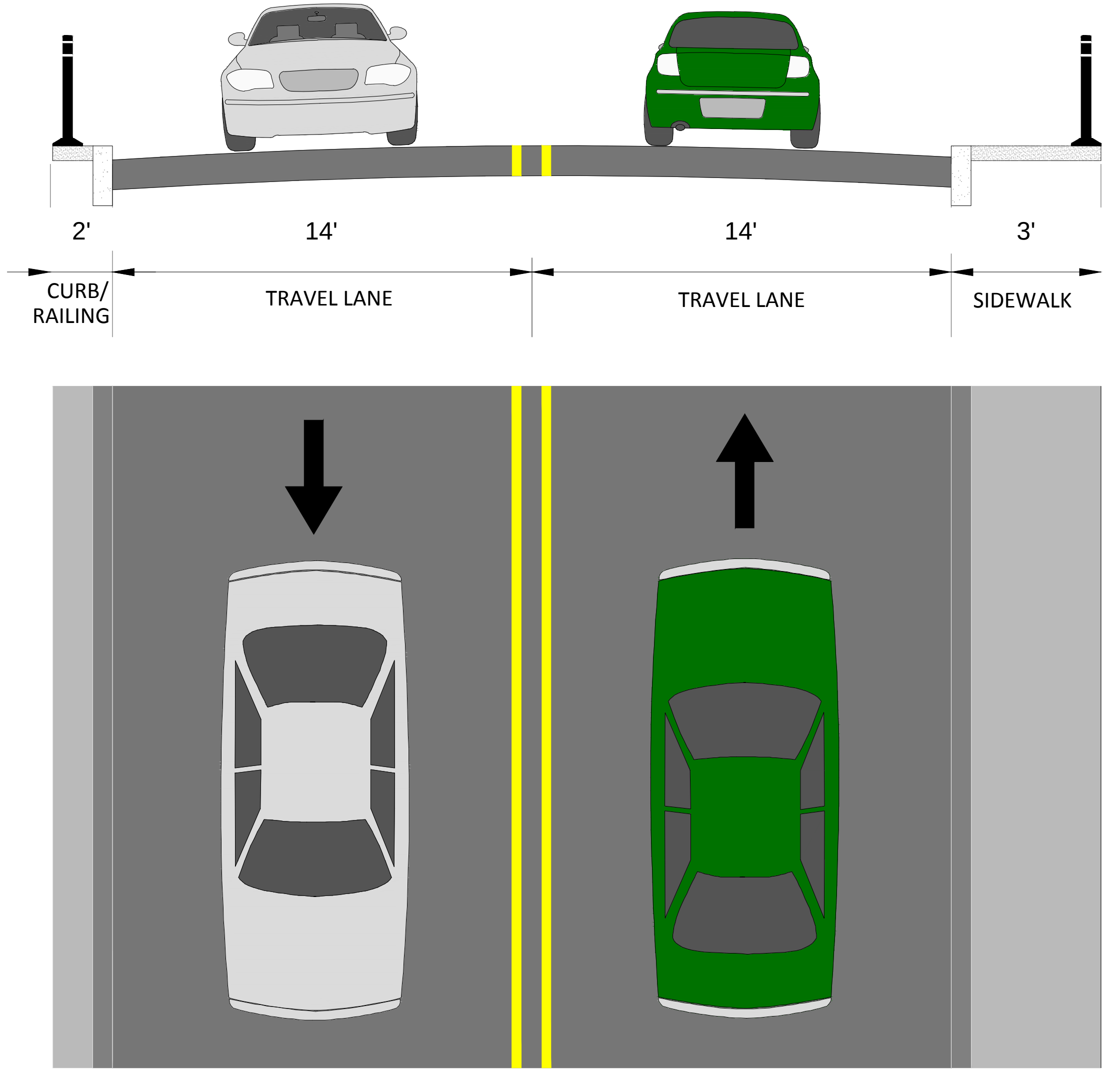
Figure 28: More natural alternative to a swimming pool: an area outlined by river rocks decreases the current and allows sediment to settle for cleaner water in which to swim (Cacapon River, West Virginia, source: http://www.terrain.org/arterrain/24/gallery.htm)

- Some see future steps including building a boat house with rest rooms, or even a pavilion on the west shore, and improving a gravel path or a board walk on the east side.
- Consider lighting the parks
- Develop a walking bridge for viewing the falls
- Build a dog park

Next Steps

- This draft memo will be presented at a public meeting to ensure accuracy and to gather input on improvement ideas for input. A draft presentation will be sent to the steering committee for review and comment prior to the public meeting.
- The team will work with the Steering Committee to establish priorities based on the public input. The prioritization criteria will correlate directly to the community vision and will be incorporated into a transparent methodology to rank the recommendations from Task 1. This task will include fast track projects and actions that can be initiated immediately.
- The steps needed to implement the priority projects will be detailed in an implementation plan, to include timeframe, lead agency, potential partners, and possible funding mechanisms. The draft implementation plan will be reviewed with the Steering Committee prior to being finalized.
- All of the documents and deliverables created in the previous tasks will be compiled into a draft master plan. The draft plan will be reviewed with the Steering Committee and then presented at a final public meeting. After the final comments from the Steering Committee and public meeting have been incorporated, the master plan will be finalized.

Attachment A: Cross Sections



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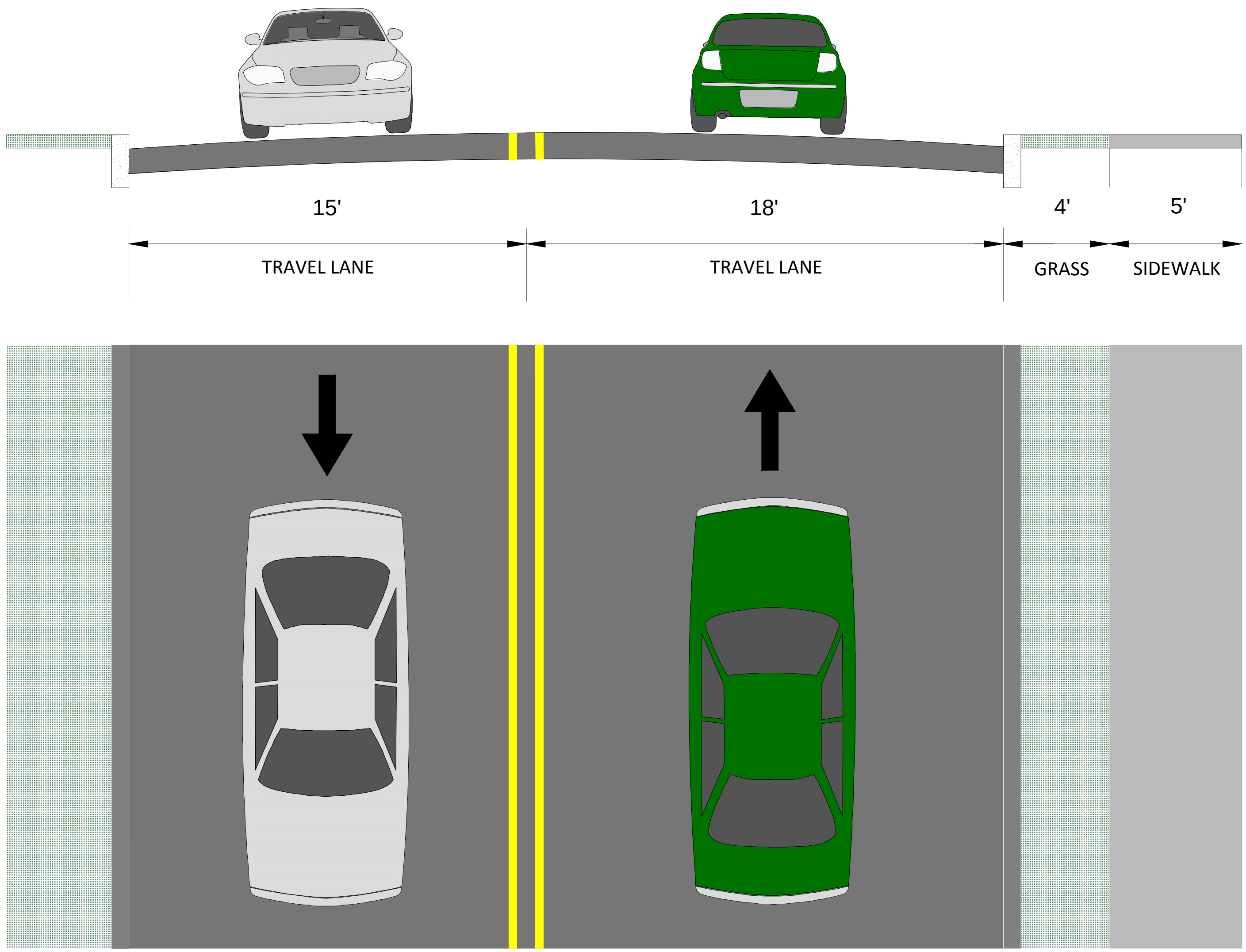
MAIN STREET
(BRIDGE)
EASTBOUND
TOWN OF VERGENNES

REVISIONS
REV. 1
REV. 2
DESIGNED
DRAWN BROWN
CHECKED ISLER
DATE AUGUST 2015

SHEET NAME
EXISTING CONDITIONS
CROSS SECTION



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EASTBOUND
TOWN OF VERGENNES

REVISIONS
REV. 1
REV. 2
DESIGNED
DRAWN BROWN
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DATE AUGUST 2015

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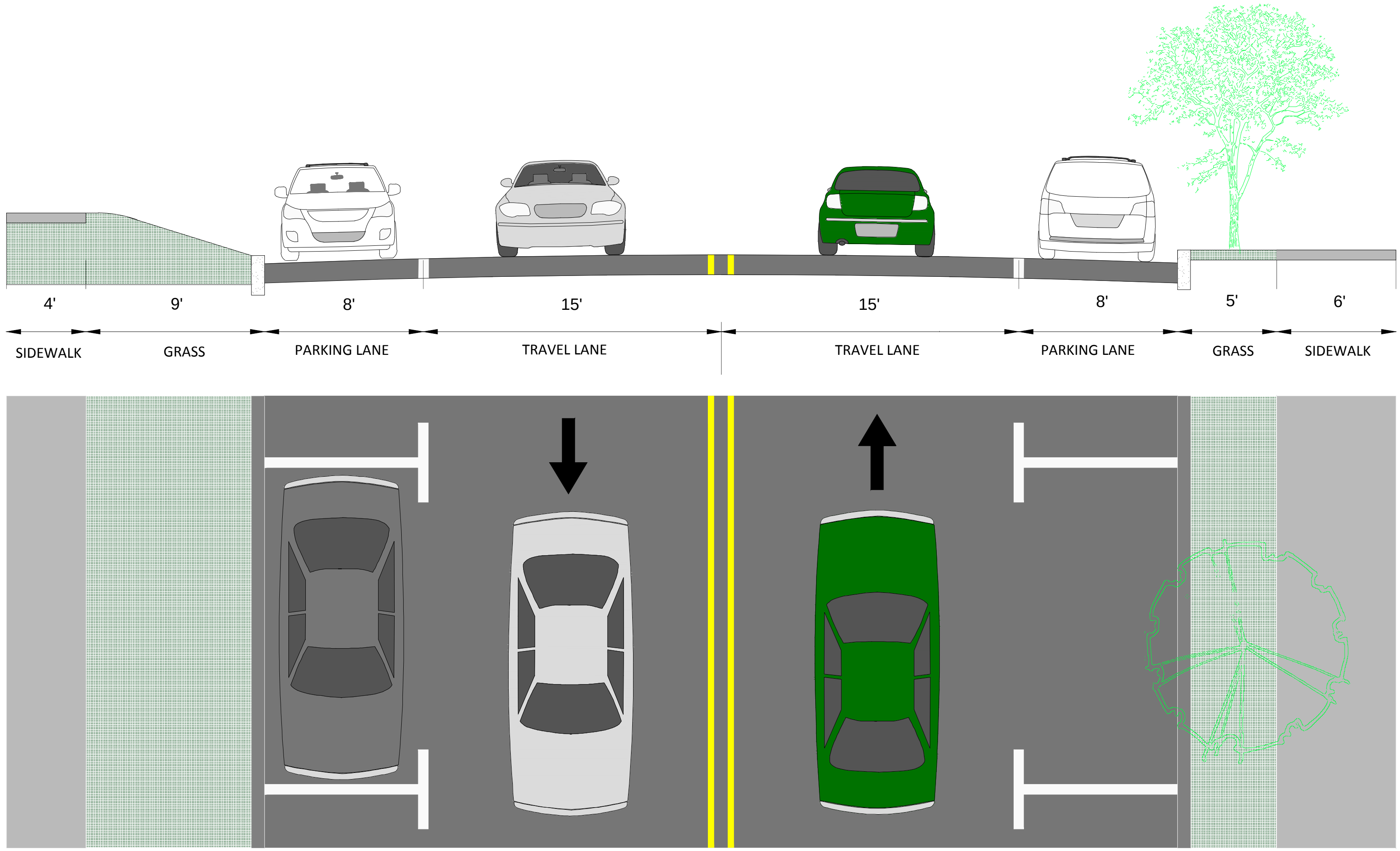

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EASTBOUND
TOWN OF VERGENNES

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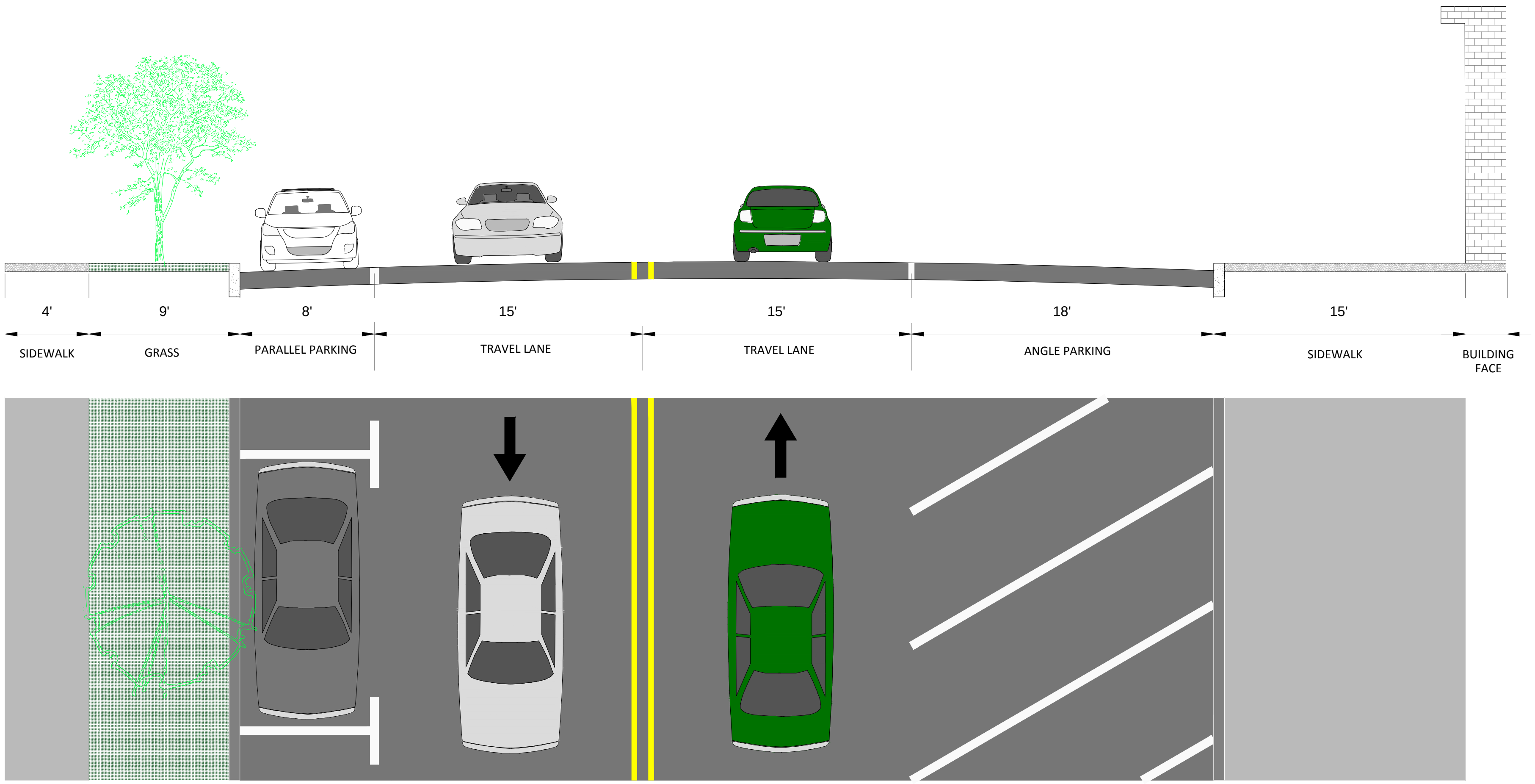

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EASTBOUND
TOWN OF VERGENNES

REVISIONS
REV. 1
REV. 2
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DATE AUGUST 2015

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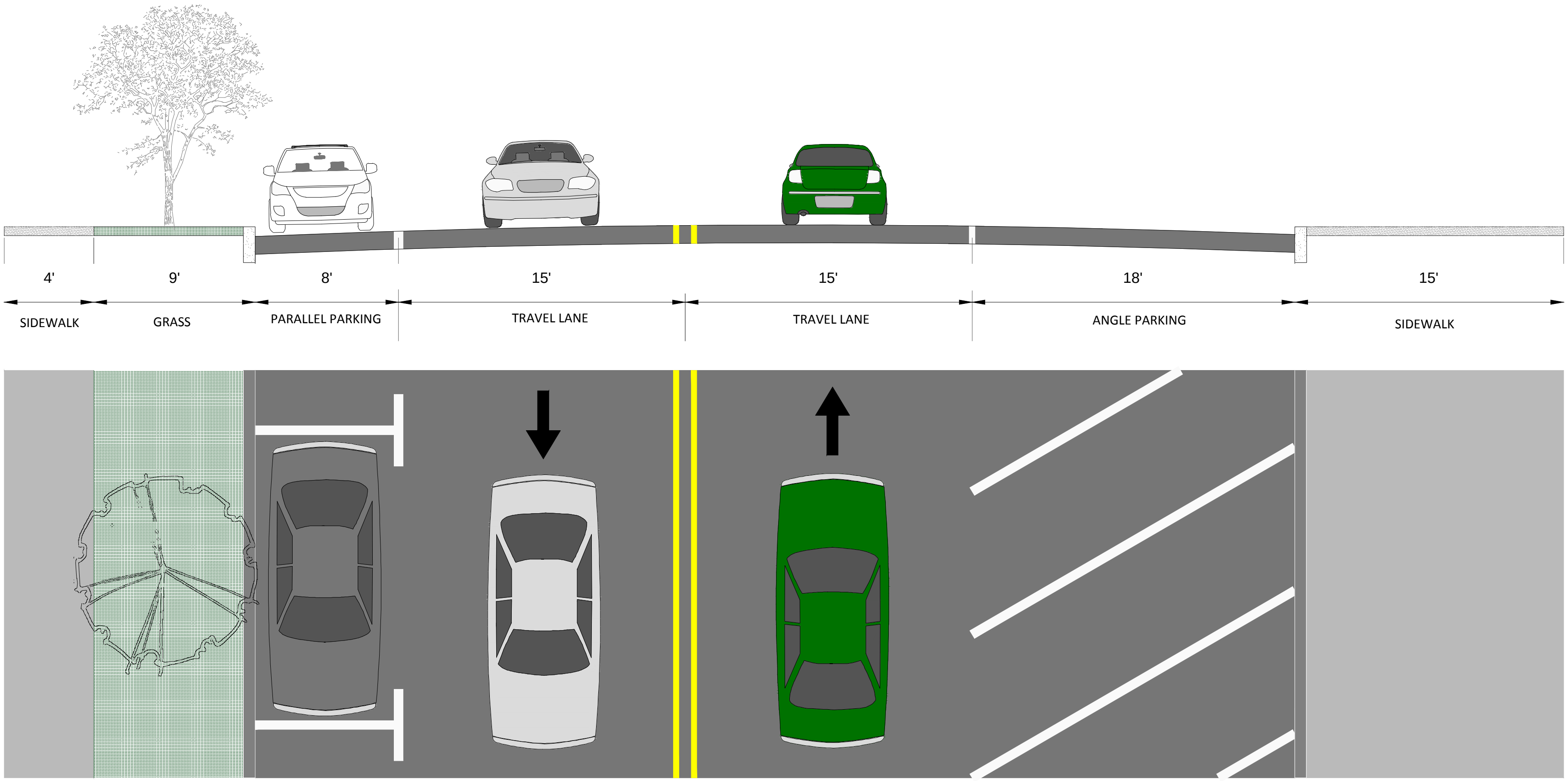

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MAIN STREET
EXISTING CONDITIONS

TOWN OF VERGENNES

REVISIONS	
REV. 1	
REV. 2	
DESIGNED	
DRAWN	BROWN
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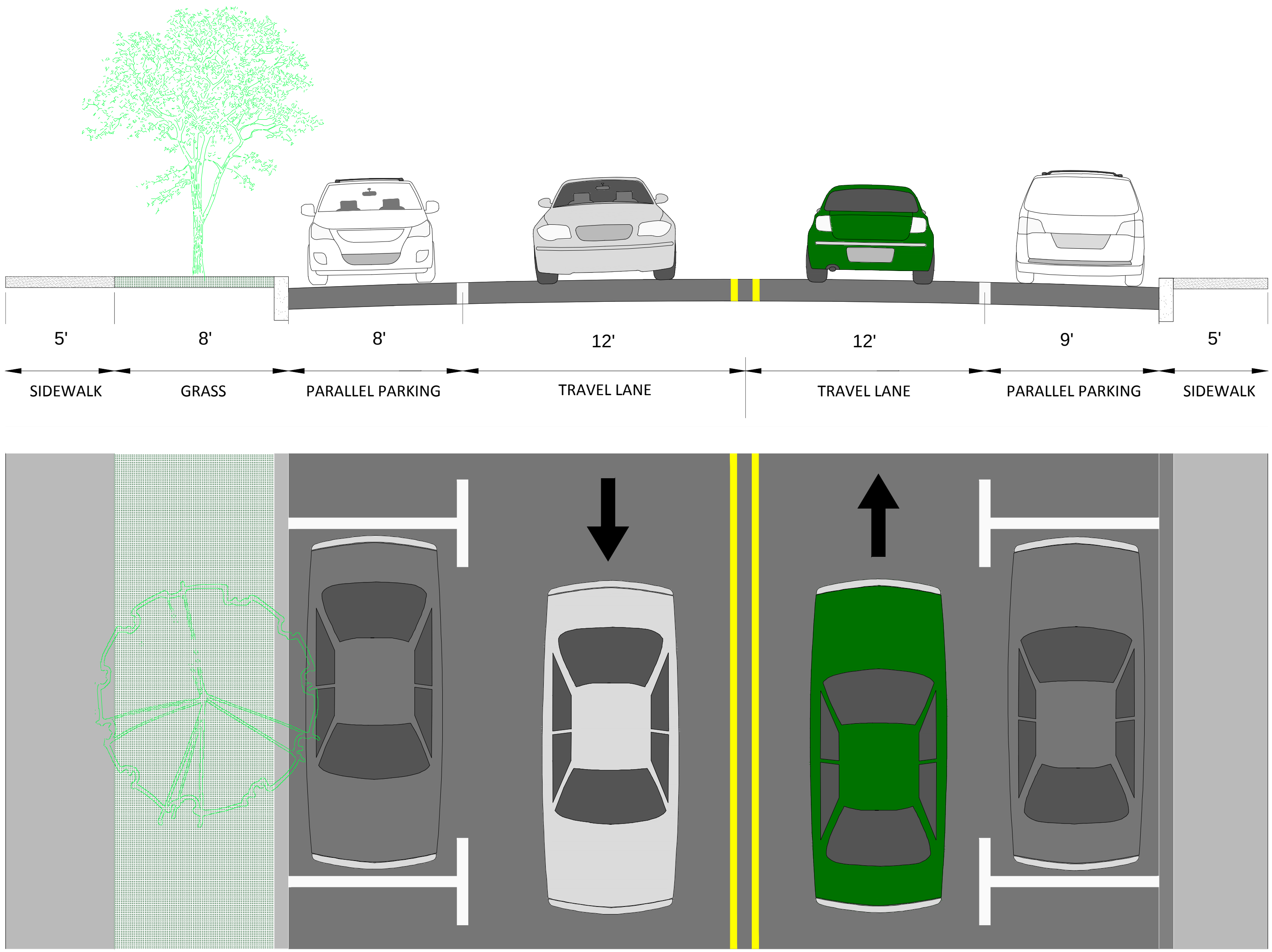
DATE	AUGUST 2015

SHEET NAME
CROSS SECTION
OPTIONS



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MAIN STREET
(BETWEEN EAST STREET & NORTH STREET)
EASTBOUND
TOWN OF VERGENNES

REVISIONS
REV. 1
REV. 2
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DATE AUGUST 2015

SHEET NAME
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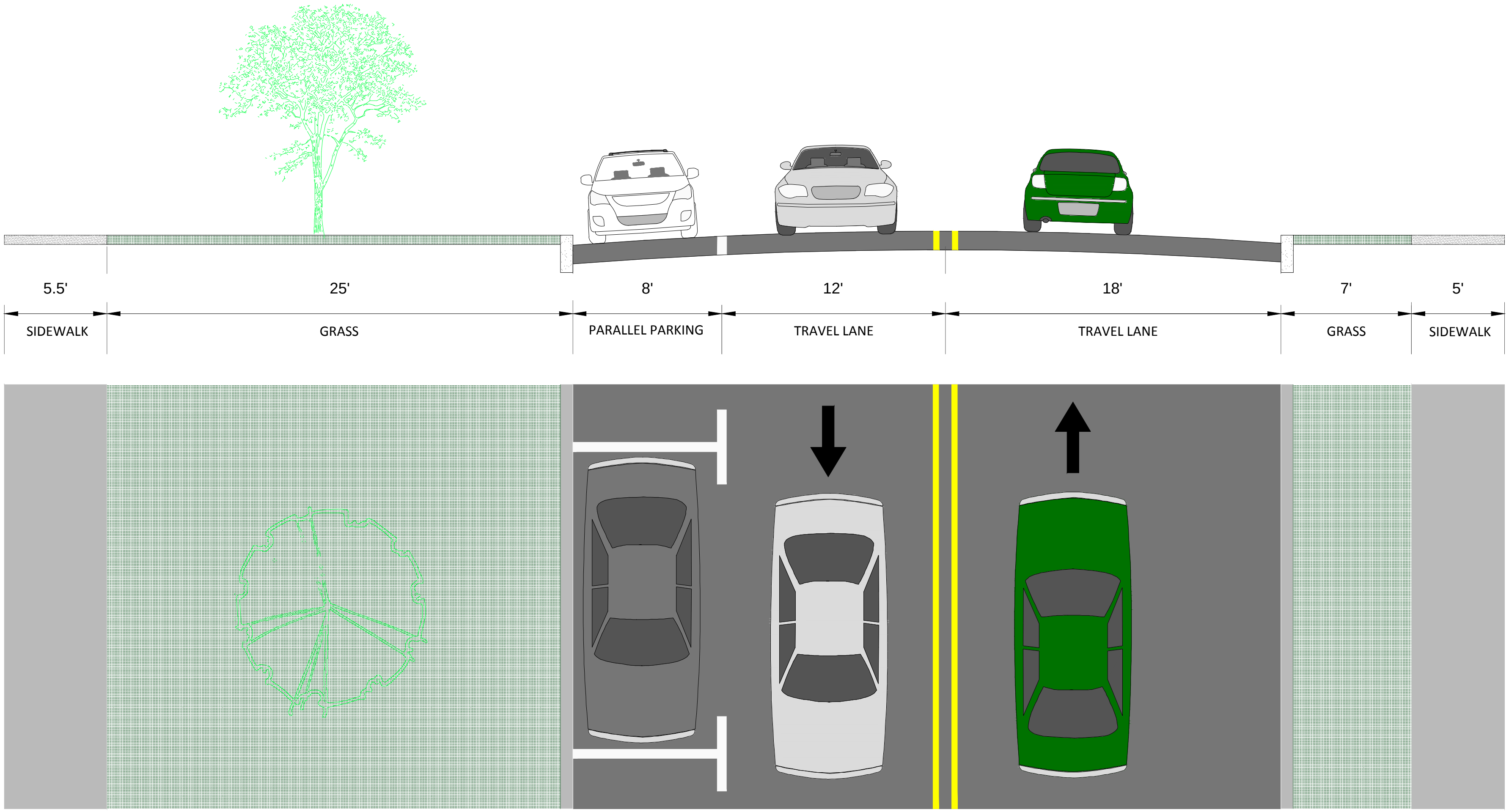
CROSS SECTION



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MAIN STREET
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EASTBOUND
TOWN OF VERGENNES

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DATE AUGUST 2015

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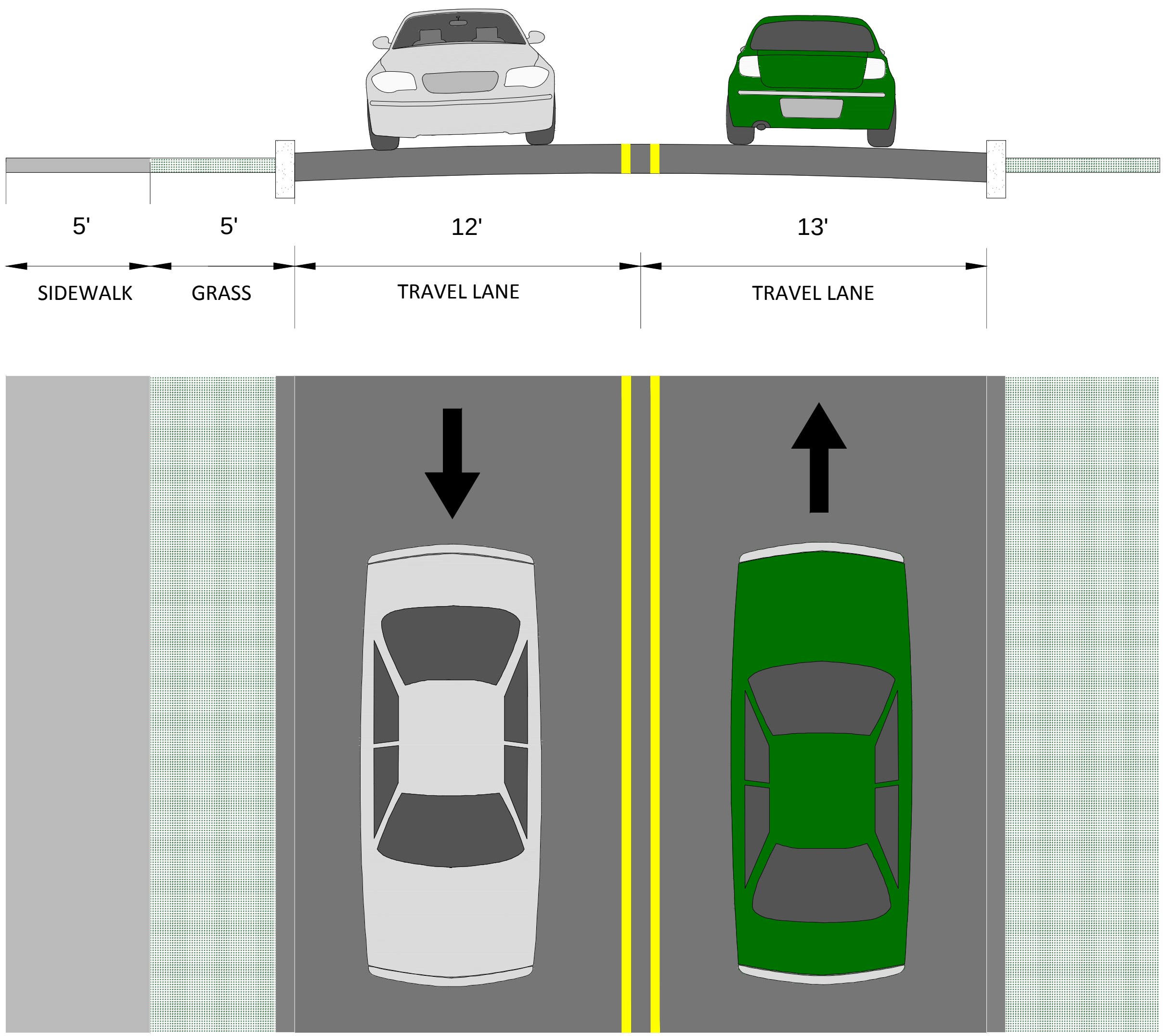

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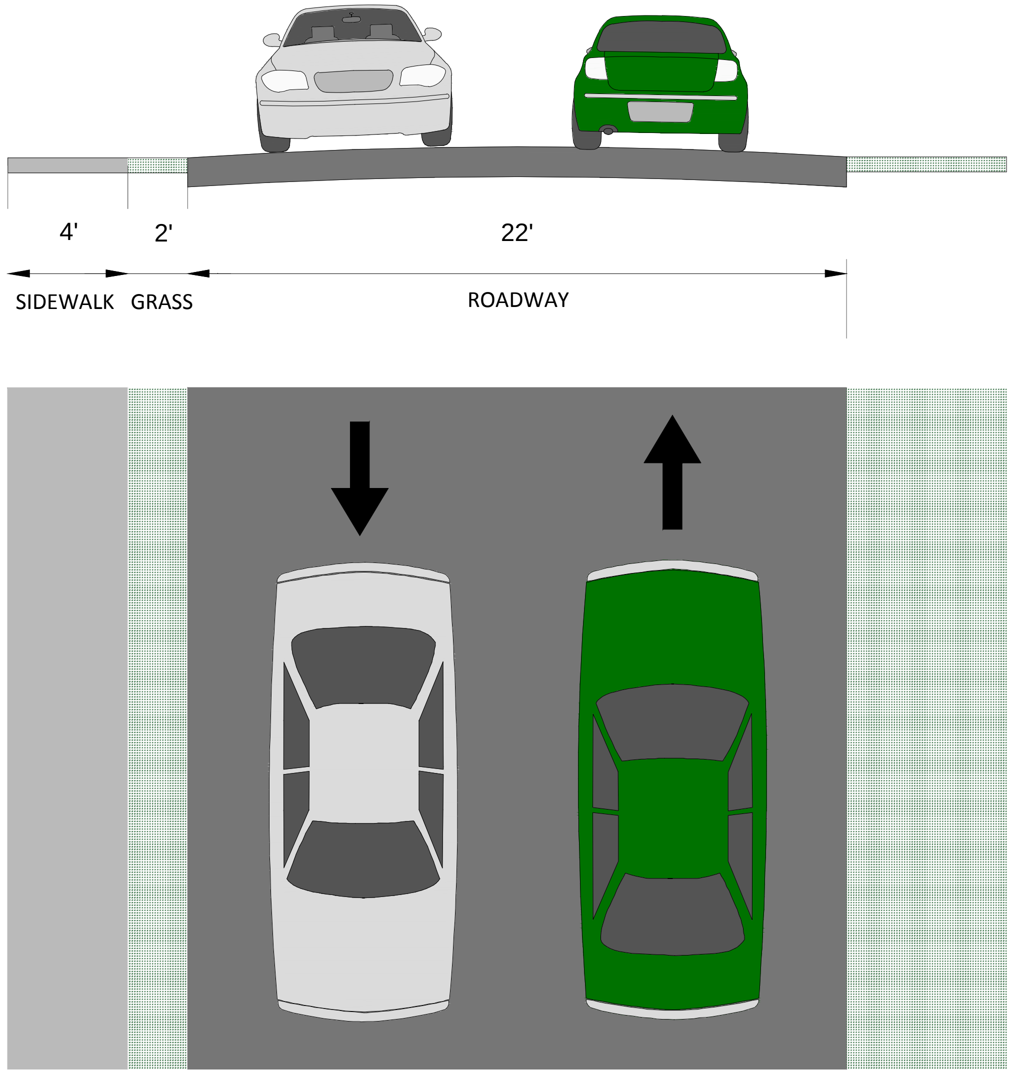
MACDONOUGH DRIVE
(BETWEEN MAIN STREET & BATTERY HILL)
SOUTHBOUND
TOWN OF VERGENNES

REVISIONS
REV. 1
REV. 2
DESIGNED
DRAWN BROWN
CHECKED ISLER
DATE AUGUST 2015

SHEET NAME
EXISTING CONDITIONS
CROSS SECTION



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Attachment B: Intercept Survey Results

Staff intercepted people in Vergennes on July 31 and August 6 to answer a brief survey to understand people's reasons for visiting the City. The results of the interviews are below:

- 25 people were intercepted (some individuals, some in small groups)
  - 7 were residents of Vergennes
  - 18 were visitors
    - 6 were from other places in VT
    - 3 were from NY
    - 9 were from Canada
- What will you do while you're here?
  - Kayaking/boating (10 responses)
  - Walking/hiking (7)
  - Dining (6)
  - Shopping (4)
  - Biking (4)
  - Fishing (3)
  - Swimming (3)
  - Visit the food market (2)
  - Reading at the library (1)
  - Basin Harbor (1)
- What do you like about Vergennes?
  - The Falls/The Basin (5)
  - Not crowded/Less hectic (3)
  - Restaurants (3)
  - Walkable (3)
  - Nice, clean community (2)
  - It's a small city with everything you want (1)
  - Shopping (1)
  - Hiking and biking (1)
  - Easy spot for kids (1)
  - Main Street redesign, Opera House, architecture (1)
- Is there anything that you think is missing?
  - Youth activities like a skate park, playground, basketball court, organized rec sports leagues (4)
  - More docks (3)
  - More electrical outlets at docks (with adaptors to convert Canadian power cords) (2)
  - More restaurants/really good restaurants (2)
  - Swimming pool (2)
  - Ice skating, winter activities (2)
  - Showers (1)
  - More trees to prevent shoreline erosion (1)

- Another grocery store (1)
- A larger safer park (1)
- Fireworks (1)
- Better, more options to recycle (1)
- Taxi service/shuttle to get groceries to dock (1)

- Other comments/suggestions
  - Safety issue: truck traffic, especially at the 4 way intersection.
  - Safety issue: BF Goodrich traffic and pedestrians.
  - Safer place for the park
  - Kids are bored which is why there are drug issues.
  - Nowhere for kids
  - More information on water/water depth; boaters not sure if water is deep enough for keel; maybe have information at entrance of river to indicate water level
  - More information on how to get here and what there is to do/notable sites for visitors; looked at map at docks but that wasn't enough info
  - Water does not look inviting to swim in, would love access to a pool

Attachment C: Background Report for the Market Assessment

Background

Market Assessment for the:

Downtown Basin Master Plan – Vergennes, Vermont

Doug Kennedy Advisors

November 23, 2015

Report intended for Internal Review Only

Contents

Introduction

The following **Background** report summarizes background research and analysis to provide a basis for making market-based recommendations relative to:

- The Vergennes downtown area as a whole and;
- The Downtown & Basin area within Vergennes's downtown area.

The analyses and findings summarized in this report will provide a basis for more targeted assessment, including interviews with area contacts who can provide more in-depth perspective on market opportunities.

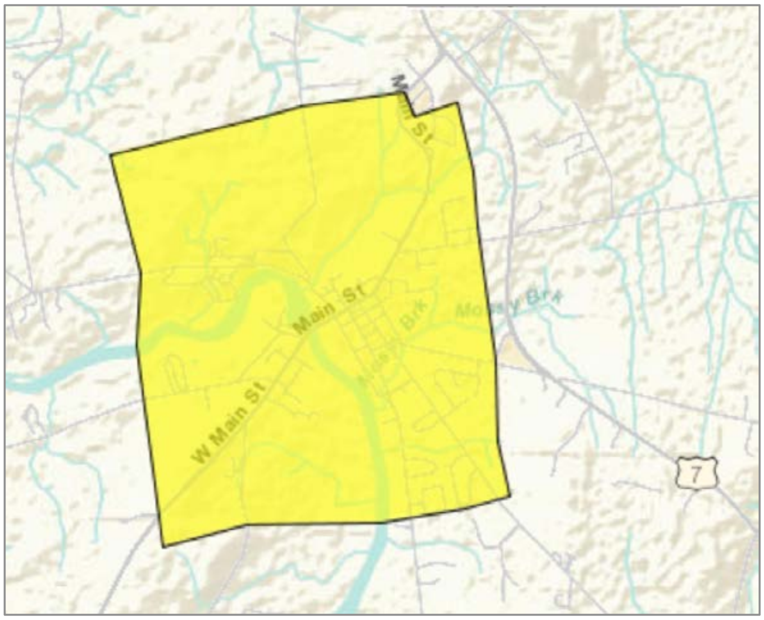
The analyses and preliminary findings should be regarded as discussion points for further assessment and fact-finding regarding recommendations for study area improvements.

The Study Area, Land Use & Market

From a market perspective, the analysis effectively assessed the area from several perspectives:

- The region – regional economic trends have, and will continue to affect business and real estate in downtown Vergennes. As such, the analysis was programmed to include a geographic area within 35 to 40 minutes drive-time of the downtown;
- Downtown Vergennes – the entirety of the downtown/urbanized area; this area includes a broad variety of commercial, retail, industrial, office an institutional uses. The graphic on the following page shows the 'Vergennes CDP,' as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau.

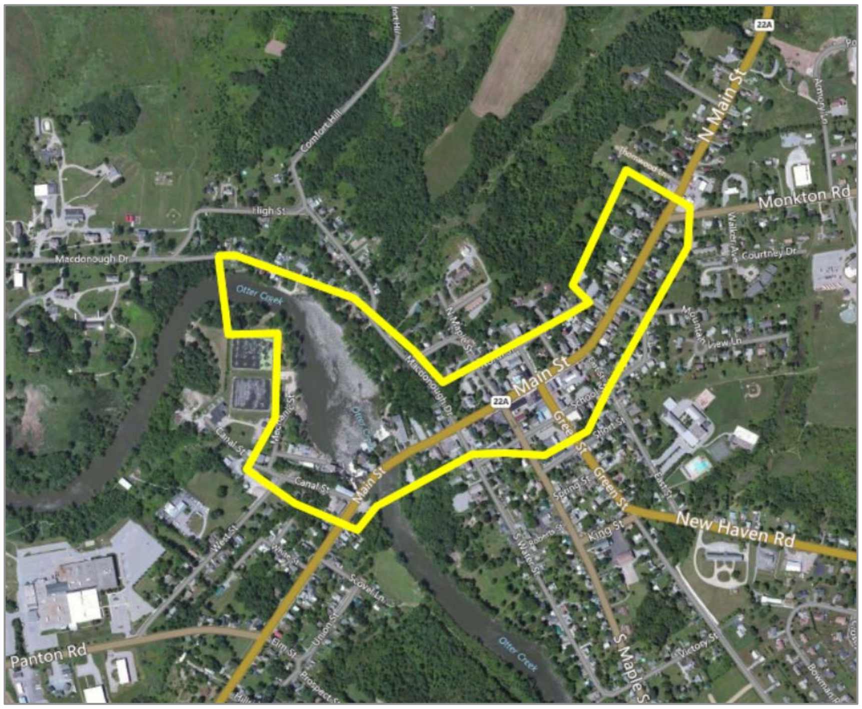
Vergennes



The market component of the work was designed to identify all development potentials within the broader downtown – ultimately resulting in an assessment of what best 'fits' on the selected re-development block.

- The 'Downtown Basin' area is the *defined* study area for purposes of the subject assessment. This area extends from Vergennes core (Intersection of Main & Maple) and extends westward to the Otter Creek basin area. This is shown in the graphic on the following page.

Downtown Basin Study Area



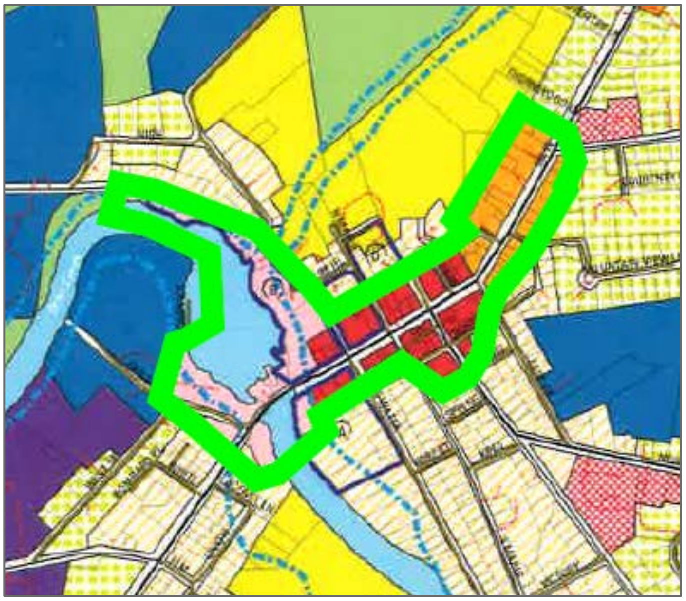
Land Use

As shown in the graphic on the following page, land uses within the defined study area generally fall into three categories:[1]

- (Pink) - Otter Creek Basin;
- (Red) – Central Business District;
- (Orange) – Residential/Limited Business.

1 Source: City of Vergennes; Municipal Master Plan.

Study Area Land Use



The market assessment includes two major components:

1. A broad-based assessment of market potentials in Vergennes's downtown area, with the intent of identifying new uses and redevelopment potentials for downtown sites:

2. A focused market/feasibility assessment for the defined study area, including: a) identification of potential new uses that 'work' within the context of the downtown market; and b) assessment of quantitative and qualitative parameters surrounding potential redevelopment of the area.

The Downtown Market

Background Market Trends

New development and related real estate activity are inevitably a local affair. However, there is little doubt that the macro-economy plays a significant role in local events. Ongoing national and regional trends in employment, personal income, housing permitting all exert a strong influence over the rate of development in Addison County and within the study area.

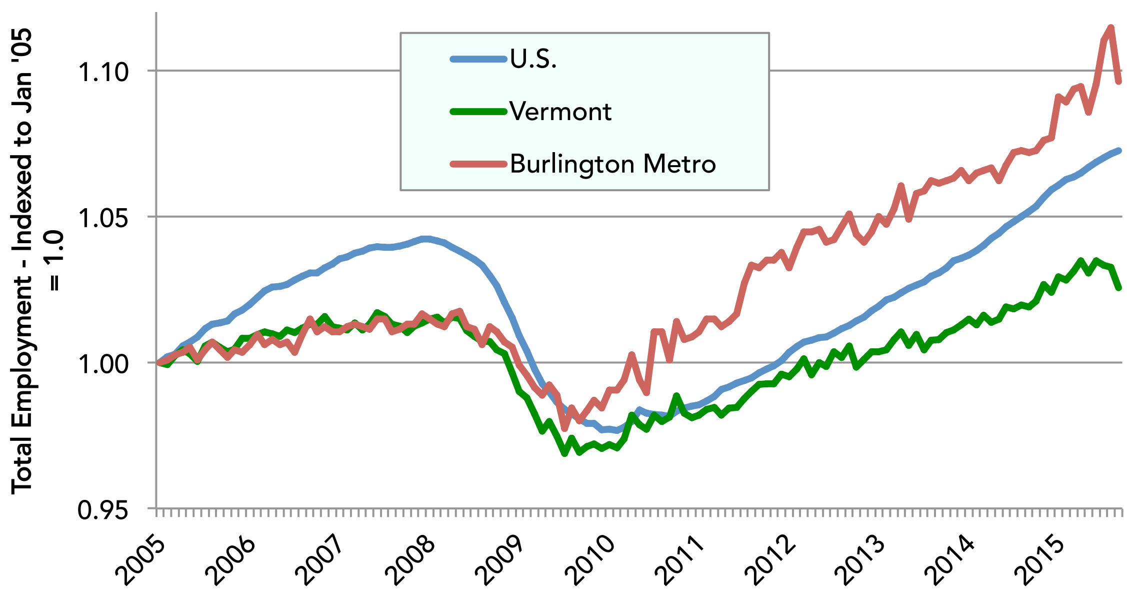
Core Economic Indicators

The following graphics and tabular data compare national (U.S.) level trends with trends at the regional, tri-state, statewide and county levels; as backdrop to the exploration of potential new development in Vergennes' downtown. Where available, the discussion also includes projection-based data.

Employment

The graphic below compares recent total employment trends at the U.S. Vermont and Burlington/So, Burlington Metro levels. In this instance, the data is *indexed* to show January 2005 employment levels equal to 1.0, providing a basis for comparative assessment of trends at all geographic levels.[2]

Indexed Employment Trends: U.S.; Vermont; Burlington Metro; (January 2005 to September 2015)

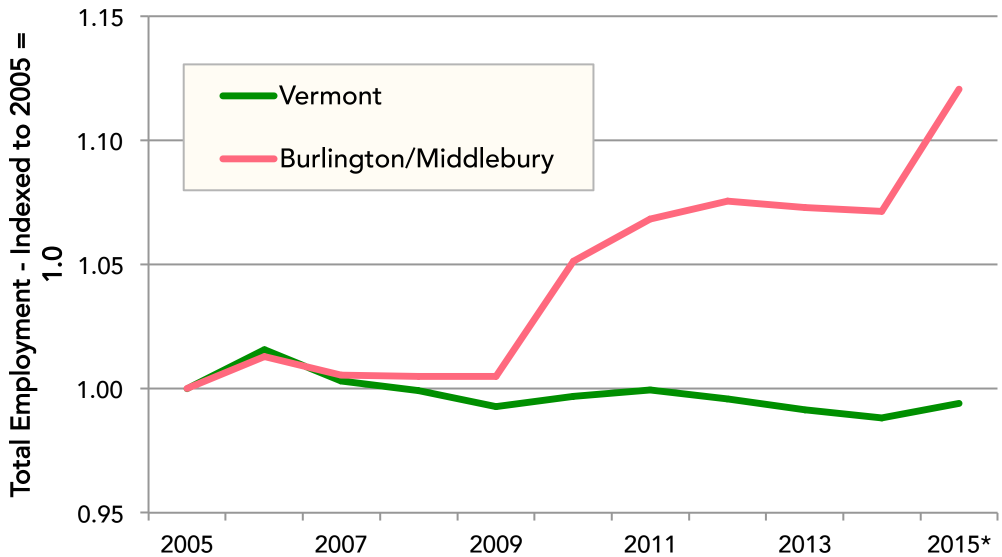


While employment at all three geographic levels reflects the impact of the recession during the 2008 to 2010 period, the comparative rates of recovery have varied. While Vermont as a whole has trailed the U.S. rate of employment increase, the Burlington Metro has surpassed the national level of employment creation.

[2] Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Standards, Vermont Department of Employment.

A more localized assessment of comparative employment trends is shown in the illustration below; this time comparing: Vermont with combined data for the Burlington Metro and Middlebury Labor Market Area (LMA).[3] Again the data is indexed to 2005 = 1.0 for comparative purposes.

Indexed Employment Trends: Vermont; Burlington Metro/Middlebury LMA Combined (2005 – 2015)



Overall, Vermont's employment level has not changed dramatically since 2005. However, the employment level in the project region has increased dramatically since 2009.

The employment forecast for Vermont is generally positive; as shown in the table on the following page – Vermont compared to U.S.[4]

[3] Source: Vermont Department of Employment. 2015 data for May.

[4] Source: NEEP October 2014 forecast.

Employment Forecast: Vermont; U.S.;
(2012 – 2018 ~ Forecast Percent Annual Change)

	Recent			Forecast			
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Employment							
U.S.	1.7%	1.7%	1.8%	2.4%	2.4%	1.3%	0.5%
Vermont	1.3%	0.5%	1.2%	2.0%	1.9%	1.5%	0.9%
Gross Domestic/State Product							
U.S.	2.3%	2.2%	2.1%	3.5%	3.3%	2.7%	2.1%
Vermont	1.0%	1.9%	2.4%	3.9%	3.0%	2.3%	1.8%

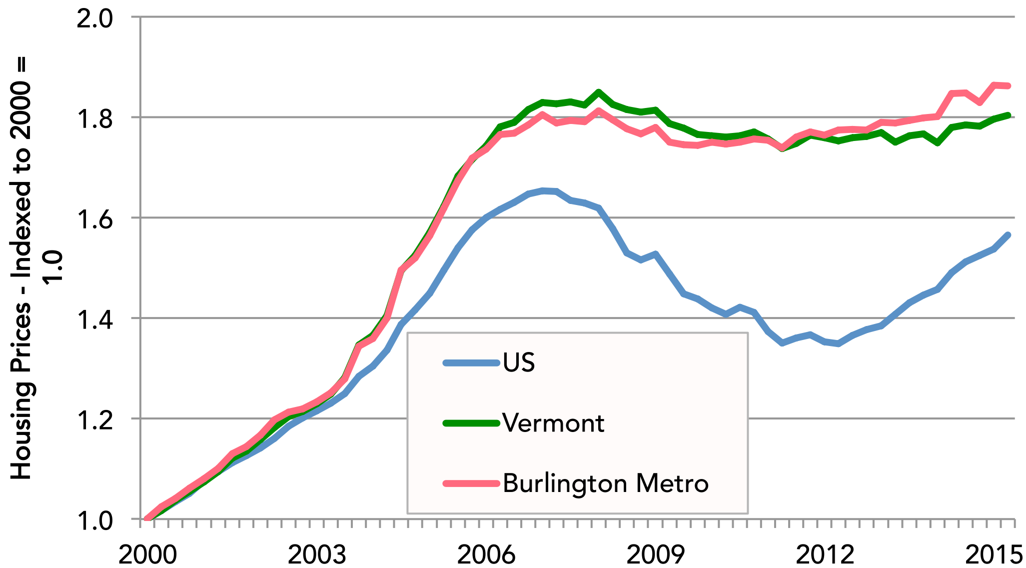
Vermont employment is projected to increase at an average annual rate of 1.5 percent between 2015 and 2018.

Housing: Pricing & Permits

Residential pricing is a key economic statistic, as it serves as a relatively direct indicator of household wealth. The graphic on the following page compares the U.S., Vermont and the Burlington Metro in terms of change in housing pricing. The data is indexed to year 2000 = 1.0.[5]

[5] Source: Federal Housing Finance Agency.

Indexed Housing Pricing: U.S.; 3-State; Vermont; (2000 – 2Q 2015)



After a steady/strong rate of increase through the mid-2000s, residential pricing fell at all levels through to 2011 – albeit at a far less extreme rate in Vermont/Burlington Metro than for the U.S. as a whole. Since 2012, U.S. housing pricing has improved at a strong rate, while regional pricing (Vermont/Burlington Metro) has been slower to experience price increases; but is on a steady upward course currently. Note that Burlington Metro price increases have exceeded those for the state as a whole.

The graphic on the following page compares trends in housing permits for the U.S., Vermont and the Burlington Metro; for the period January 2005 to current. Again, the data is indexed to year 2005 = 1.0.[6]

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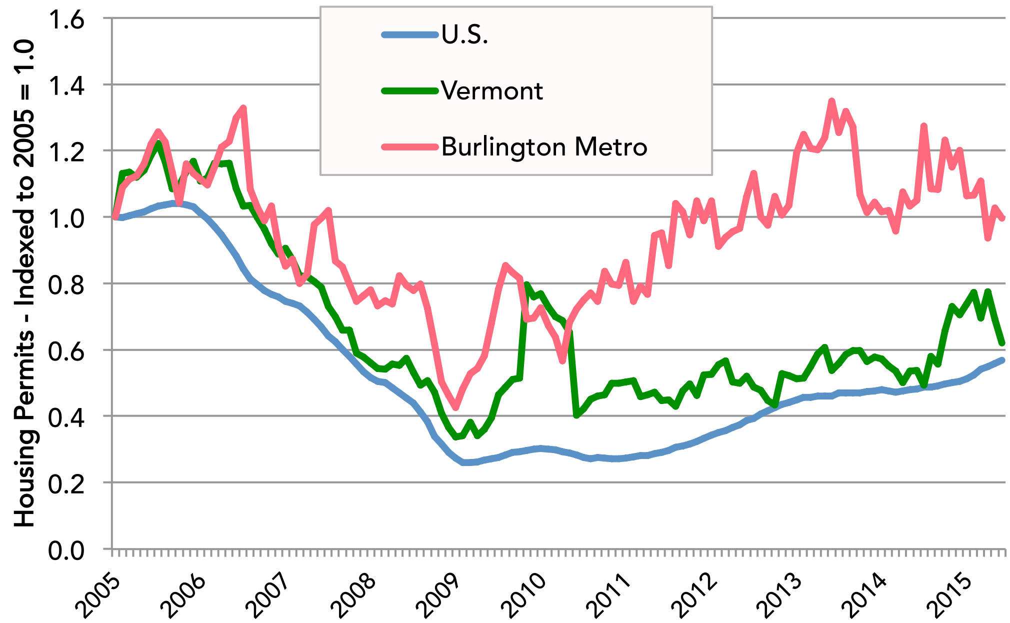
[6] Source: Federal Reserve Bank, Boston. 2015 data through April.

Indexed Housing Permits: U.S.; New England; Vermont; (2005 – 2015)



Not surprisingly, housing permits fell precipitously at all levels from 2005 to 2009. Since then, both the three geographies have experienced gradual recoveries.

The table on the following page takes shows local trends in residential building permits for Addison County and Vergennes, with breakdowns by single-family and multi-family permits.[7]

[7] Source: HUD State of the Cities Database.

Residential Building Permits: Addison County; Vergennes; (2004 – 2014)

	Residential Building Permits												
	2004	*2005*	*2006*	*2007*	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*	*2014*	Totals	% of Total
Addison County													
Single-Family	187	158	169	135	66	66	80	61	85	82	na	1,089	84%
Multi-Family	0	34	60	32	16	27	4	15	4	11	na	203	16%
Totals	187	192	229	167	82	93	84	76	89	93	na	1,292	
Vergennes												Totals	% of Total
Single-Family	2	2	1	1	1	4	0	2	2	2	na	17	33%
Multi-Family	0	0	0	0	0	25	0	4	4	2	na	35	67%
Totals	2	2	1	1	1	29	0	6	6	4	na	52	

With the exception of one significant multi-family project that was permitted in 2009, Vergennes' *new* residential development is occurring at a slow pace. Overall, Vergennes accounted for only four percent of all Addison County's building permits between 2004 and 2013.

Area Economy

The analysis of core indicators makes it clear that the Vergennes area has gained employment in recent years. A more detailed analysis of employment by industry (for the Burlington Metro) provides a better view of the dynamics of change in the region. The table on the following page shows year 2000, 2010 and 2014 county employment broken down by industry.[8]

[8] Source: Vermont Department of Employment.

Employment by Industry: Burlington Metro (2000 – 2014)

	2000		2010		2014	
	Employ-ment	% of Total Employ.	Employ-ment	% of Total Employ.	Employ-ment	% of Total Employ.
Natural Resources & Mining	385	2%	427	1%	514	1%
Construction	5,965	4%	4,828	4%	5,691	4%
Manufacturing/Durable	16,040	12%	10,623	9%	9,024	11%
Manufacturing/Non-Durable	4,018	2%	3,354	2%	4,509	2%
Trade/Transportation & Utilities	21,482	24%	21,582	25%	22,213	22%
Wholesale Trade	*3,720*	*4%*	*3,788*	*4%*	*3,821*	*3%*
Retail Trade	*14,664*	*16%*	*15,091*	*16%*	*15,116*	*14%*
Transportation	*2,770*	*2%*	*2,409*	*3%*	*2,957*	*3%*
Information	3,218	2%	2,606	1%	2,337	1%
Financial Activities	5,240	3%	4,669	3%	4,659	3%
Professional & Business Services	10,231	8%	11,375	7%	13,653	8%
Education & Health Services	15,447	16%	18,630	21%	20,060	21%
Education	*2,519*	*1%*	*2,168*	*1%*	*2,614*	*1%*
HealthCare	*12,928*	*16%*	*16,462*	*20%*	*17,446*	*20%*
Leisure & Hospitality	10,074	9%	10,874	8%	12,037	9%
Other Services	3,667	3%	3,031	3%	3,474	3%
Government	16,304	14%	19,384	16%	20,761	15%
Private Sector	95,767	86%	91,999	84%	98,171	85%
Public Sector	16,304	14%	19,384	16%	20,761	15%
Totals	112,071	100%	111,383	100%	118,932	100%

As a follow up to the above, the table on the following page shows longer-term change (Year 2000 to 2014) and shorter-term change (Year 2010 to 2014) in employment by industry. Industries that have experienced notable employment increases during the short-term have been highlighted in *blue*.

Change in Employment by Industry: Burlington Metro (2000 – 2014; 2010 – 2014)

	Change 2000-'14		*Change 2010-'14*	
	Employ-ment	%	Employ-ment	%
Natural Resources & Mining	129	+33.5%	87	**+20.4%**
Construction	(274)	(4.6%)	863	**+17.9%**
Manufacturing/Durable	(7,016)	(43.7%)	(1,599)	(15.1%)
Manufacturing/Non-Durable	491	+12.2%	1,155	**+34.4%**
Trade/Transportation & Utilities	731	+3.4%	631	+2.9%
Wholesale Trade	101	+2.7%	33	+0.9%
Retail Trade	452	+3.1%	25	+0.2%
Transportation	187	+6.8%	548	**+22.7%**
Information	(881)	(27.4%)	(269)	(10.3%)
Financial Activities	(581)	(11.1%)	(10)	(0.2%)
Professional & Business Services	3,422	+33.4%	2,278	**+20.0%**
Education & Health Services	4,613	+29.9%	1,430	**+7.7%**
Education	95	+3.8%	446	**+20.6%**
HealthCare	4,518	+34.9%	984	**+6.0%**
Leisure & Hospitality	1,963	+19.5%	1,163	**+10.7%**
Other Services	(193)	(5.3%)	443	**+14.6%**
Government	4,457	+27.3%	1,377	**+7.1%**
Private Sector	2,404	+2.5%	6,172	+6.7%
Public Sector	4,457	+27.3%	1,377	+7.1%
Totals	6,861	+6.1%	7,549	+6.8%

During the 2010 to 2014 period, total employment increased by 6.8 percent (approximately 7.550 new jobs.) We note that the rate of employment increase in several industries exceeded this level:

- *Construction* – the recovery in the housing market – and in commercial real estate – has been accompanied by increases in construction employment;

- *Manufacturing/Non-Durable* – this is a bright spot for Vermont and the study region; the 'local food' trend is providing a boost to non-durable manufacturing as many food processors are finding a market in the state.

- *Professional & Business Services* – as the service economy expands, so do Professional and Business Services. This growth also reflects the 'work at home' trend;

- *Education and Healthcare Services* – Healthcare and Education are mainstays in the regional economy.

- *Leisure & Hospitality* – post-recession, Vermont's travel industry has experienced solid increases in business activity. It is apparent that downtown Vergennes is very much a part of this trend.

Markets & Market Areas

While the study area is the focus of this ongoing planning effort, it is apparent that economic markets – and the market for current or potential uses within the study area - are not confined by study area boundaries. Rather, market/trade areas can be better defined as a series of overlapping economic influences and markets – each with differentiated needs. Our assessment of the study area indicates the following regarding these markets:

- ***Downtown Vergennes Residents*** – persons living within the defined downtown study area, or within easy walking/biking distance of the area. The size and demographic characteristics of this population are assessed under *Market Demographics* below.

- ***Downtown Workers*** – persons who *work* in the downtown area. Based on field surveys and published data, it is estimated that there are currently approximately 285 employers and 2,200 employees working within Vergennes.[9]

- ***Commuters*** – persons who regularly drive through the study area. While it is difficult to estimate the precise number of commuters passing through the area, traffic volume data does provide some indication of levels of activity:[10]

  - Vermont Route 22A at Panton Town Line – Average Daily Traffic: 5,100 Vehicles;

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[9] Sources: Field Observations; ESRI, Vermont Department of Employment.

[10] Traffic data source: Vermont Agency of Transportation.

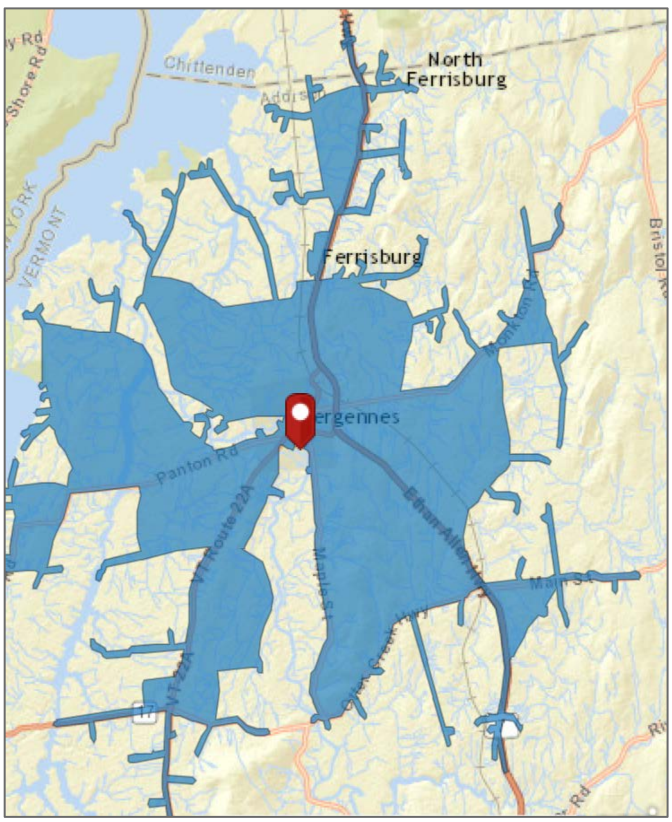
- Vermont Route 22a at Green St. (Downtown) – Average Daily Traffic: 12,700 Vehicles;

- Vermont Route 22A at Ferrisburgh Town Line – Average Daily Traffic: 4,600 Vehicles.

- ***Traditional Markets*** – commercial uses within the downtown have a market influence over the surrounding geographic area.

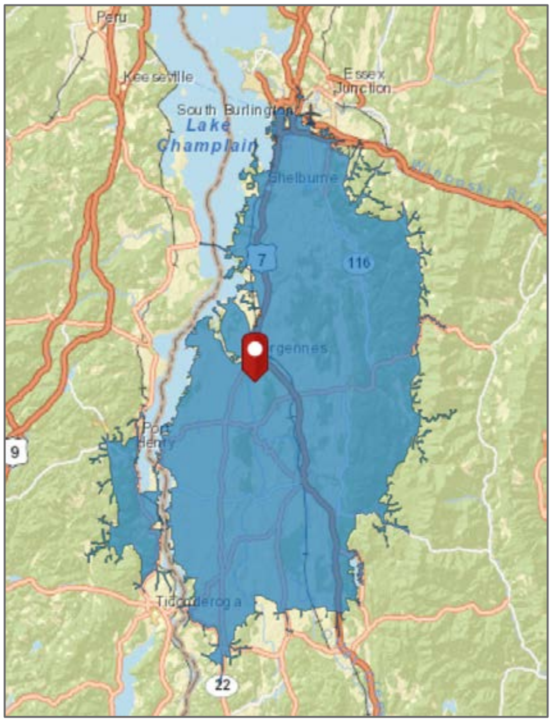
  Based on a review of traffic corridors, typical travel routes and the potential influence of study area businesses, a traditional market area comprised of the geographic area within 12⁺/- minutes drive time of the center of the study area has been defined. This area is shown in the illustration below:

Traditional Market Area



For purposes of demographic comparison (and use in the assessment of retail markets) a 'regional' market was also defined; the 'region' has been defined to include the geographic area within 35 to 40 minutes drive-time of the center of the study area. This is shown in the graphic on the following page.

Region



Market characteristics and demographics of these defined areas are addressed under *Market Demographics* below.

- **Non-Local Markets** – the market impact of tourists, through travelers and visitors to the area. Local tourism activity has been estimated as follows:
  - In 2013, Vermont is estimated to have attracted 15.1 million 'visitor nights. Addison County attracted 3.1 percent of those visitor nights; 0.466 million.[11]
  - Based on a review of Meals/Rooms tax receipts, it is estimated that Vergennes attracted 8.9 percent of Addison County's tourism activity.[12] As such, it is estimated that the study area attracts approximately 41,500 tourists on an annual basis.
  - From a study area perspective, it is significant to note that substantial tourist/traveler activity 'passes through' the area via highway Vermont Route 22A and nearby U.S. Route 7. Although Vergennes contains no singular, major tourist attraction, it is quite evident that the community's cluster of restaurants and

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[11] Source: Vermont Tourism Data Center.

[12] Source: Vermont Department of Taxes.

shops, along with a location along a major bike route, is attracting significant tourist activity.

Market Demographics

As noted under *Markets and Market Areas* above, downtown Vergennes serves several unique markets, ranging from local to non-local. An assessment of the demographics and economic characteristics of the populations of the study area, the traditional market area and the region provides some perspective on the potentials for support and creation of new activity within the study area.

Population & Households

The table on the following page shows recent and projected population change for the three defined areas (Study Area, Traditional Market Area, Region) as well as comparative recent population change for Addison County and Vermont.[13]

[13] Sources: ESRI, Vermont Department of Health, U.S. Census Bureau.

Recent & Projected Population Change: Study Area; Traditional Market Area; Region; Addison County; Vermont (2000 – 2020)

	2000	2010	2015	2020
Study Area	409	394	404	416
Change		-15	10	12
% Change		-3.7%	2.5%	3.0%
Market Area (14+/- Min. Drive)	4,724	4,664	4,818	4,987
Change		-60	154	169
% Change		-1.3%	3.3%	3.5%
Region (35+/- Min. Drive)	75,579	78,924	81,675	84,447
Change		3,345	2,751	2,772
% Change		4.4%	3.5%	3.4%

	2000	2010	2013
Addison Cty.	35,974	36,821	36,791
Change		847	-30
% Change		2.4%	-0.1%

	2000	2010	2013
Vermont	608,827	624,741	626,855
Change		15,914	2,114
% Change		2.6%	0.3%

Although minor losses occurred between 2000 and 2010, the Vergennes area is again on solid footing and showing steady population gains. Overall the Market Area's population is projected to increase by approximately 5,000 persons over the 2015 to 2020 period. The population of the study area is relatively small; however, the study area comprises Vergennes' most concentrated commercial area.

While total population is growing at only a steady pace, the demographics of aging are creating substantial market dynamics in the Vergennes area. The tables on the following page show current and projected (2020) population by age group for the Market Area and Region.[14]

[14] Source: ESRI.

Current/Projected Population by Age: Market Area (2015 – 2020)

Age Group	Total Persons 2015	Total Persons 2020	% Change	Change
0-14	728	768	+5.6%	+40
15-24	805	678	(15.7%)	(126)
25-34	559	519	(7.2%)	(40)
35-44	535	574	+7.2%	+39
45-54	699	648	(7.2%)	(50)
55-64	723	808	+11.8%	+85
65-74	448	638	+42.5%	+190
75-84	202	269	+33.1%	+67
85+	116	85	(26.7%)	(31)
Total Population	4,818	4,987	+3.5%	+169
Population Aged 62+ Years	983	1,235	+25.6%	+252
Median Age	43.0	44.3		

Current/Projected Population by Age: Region (2015 – 2020)

Age Group	Total Persons 2015	Total Persons 2020	% Change	Change
0-14	12,333	12,160	(1.4%)	(173)
15-24	13,640	13,174	(3.4%)	(466)
25-34	9,474	10,049	+6.1%	+575
35-44	9,066	9,458	+4.3%	+392
45-54	11,843	10,725	(9.4%)	(1,118)
55-64	12,251	12,836	+4.8%	+585
65-74	7,596	9,627	+26.7%	+2,031
75-84	3,430	4,307	+25.5%	+876
85+	1,960	2,027	+3.4%	+67
Total Population	81,675	84,447	+3.4%	+2,772
Population Aged 62+ Years	16,662	19,811	+18.9%	+3,150
Median Age	41.1	42.2		

It is important to note several points regarding the area population:

- Substantial, positive growth will occur among persons aged 55 to 84 years; in large part, this reflects the aging of the 'baby boom.' While the total population of the Market Area will grow slowly between 2015 and 2020, the number of persons aged 62 years or more will increase by 25.6 percent.

- At the regional level, the number of persons aged 25 to 44 years will increase significantly over the next five years, a positive indicator for new household creation and consumer expenditures.

Households are the best indicator for activity in a number of consumer categories and for residential markets. The table below shows recent and projected total household change for the Study Area, Market Area and Region. Average household size is shown for each time period.[15]

Current/Projected Total Households: Study Area, Market Area, Region (2000 – 2020)

	2000	2010	2015	2020
Study Area	175	178	183	190
Change		+3	+5	+7
% Change		+1.7%	+2.8%	+3.8%
Market Area (14+/- Min. Drive)	1,698	1,806	1,880	1,961
Change		+108	+74	+81
% Change		+6.4%	+4.1%	+4.3%
Region (35+/- Min. Drive)	28,747	31,762	33,284	34,661
Change		+3,015	+1,522	+1,377
% Change		+10.5%	+4.8%	+4.1%
Average HH Size				
Study Area	2.19	2.08	2.07	2.06
Market Area	2.61	2.44	2.43	2.41
Region	2.45	2.34	2.32	2.30

15 Source: ESRI.

Decreasing average household sizes will result in a slightly more positive picture for total households.

The tables below shows current and projected households by age group for the Market Area and Region.[16]

Current/Projected Households by Age Group: Market Area (2015 – 2020)

HH Age Group	2015		2020		Change
	HHs	% of Total	HHs	% of Total	
15-24	55	*18.4%*	50	*17.4%*	(5)
25-34	190	*63.5%*	212	*73.6%*	+22
35-44	299	*100.0%*	288	*100.0%*	(11)
45-54	394	*131.8%*	348	*120.8%*	(46)
55-64	441	*147.5%*	448	*155.6%*	+7
65-74	316	*105.7%*	385	*133.7%*	+69
75+	186	*62.2%*	230	*79.9%*	+44
Totals	1,881		1,961		+80
HHs Aged >62 Yrs.	634	33.7%	749	38.2%	**+115**

Current/Projected Households by Age Group: Region (2015 – 2020)

HH Age Group	2015		2020		Change
	HHs	% of Total	HHs	% of Total	
15-24	1,659	*34.3%*	1,590	*32.0%*	(69)
25-34	4,474	*92.4%*	4,685	*94.2%*	+211
35-44	4,842	*100.0%*	4,976	*100.0%*	+134
45-54	6,698	*138.3%*	5,912	*118.8%*	(786)
55-64	7,216	*149.0%*	7,399	*148.7%*	+183
65-74	4,754	*98.2%*	5,888	*118.3%*	+1,134
75+	3,641	*75.2%*	4,211	*84.6%*	+570
Totals	33,284		34,661		+1,377
HHs Aged >62 Yrs.	10,560	31.7%	12,319	35.5%	+1,759

[16] Source: ESRI.

The aging pattern is even more pronounced among households; households aged 62 years or more will increase by 38 and 35 percent in the Market Area and Region respectively, while the totals will increase by lesser amounts.

Household Characteristics & Income

Several household characteristics relating to consumer and economic habits are summarized below.

The table below compares educational attainment in the Downtown Core, Market Area, Region, Vermont and for the entire U.S.[17]

Educational Attainment: Study Area; Market Area; Region; Vermont; U.S. (2014/15)

	% of Population Aged 25+ Years				
	Study Area	Market Area	Region	VT	US
Less than 9th Grade	3.4%	3.1%	2.1%	3.0%	5.9%
High School Graduate	24.3%	27.7%	20.7%	30.8%	28.1%
Bachelors Degree	19.8%	21.7%	27.3%	21.0%	18.0%
Graduate/Professional Degree	11.9%	12.7%	21.2%	13.8%	10.8%

34 percent of the Market Area population (Aged 25$^+$ Years) has a bachelor's degree or higher; this is similar to the level for the entire state – 35 percent and higher than the U.S. level – 29 percent.

Small average household size is a reflection of a number of trends: Aging Population; Delayed Marriage age, etc. The table on the following page breaks down households by size (Number of Persons) for the Downtown Core; Market Area; Region; Vermont; and U.S.[18]

[17] Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, ESRI.

[18] Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; ESRI.

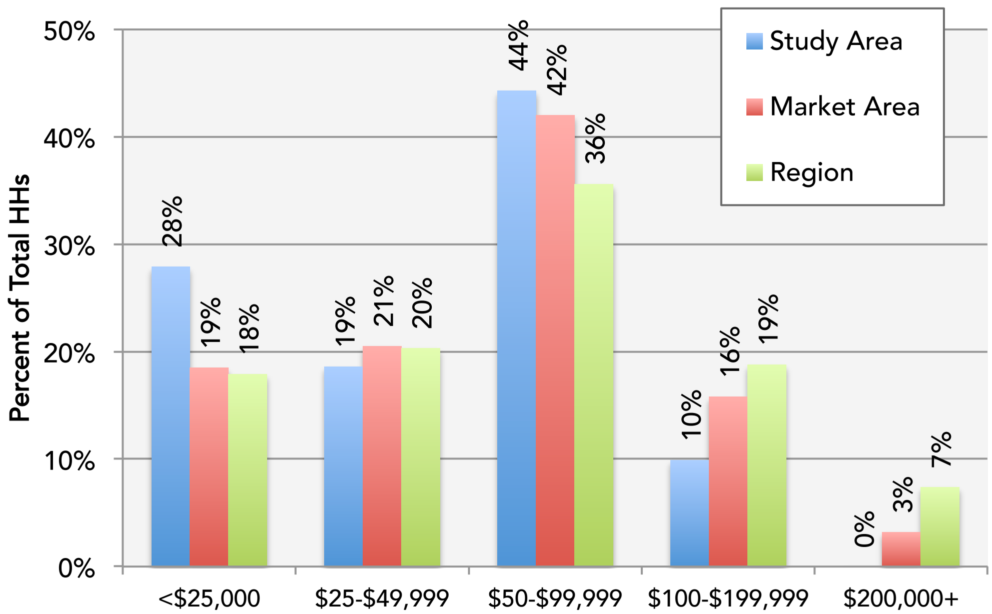
Household Distribution by Size: Study Area; Market Area; Region; Vermont; U.S. (2014/15)

	% of Households by HH Size				
HH Size	Study Area	Market Area	Region	VT	U.S.
1	31%	26%	28%	28%	27%
2	36%	38%	37%	39%	34%
3	14%	15%	15%	15%	16%
4	12%	13%	13%	12%	13%
5	5%	5%	5%	4%	6%
6	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%
7+	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

64 percent of the households in the Market Area are composed of only one or two persons, while only 20 percent include four or more persons. The prevalence of small households is particularly important when addressing the area housing market. Note that 67 percent of the households living in the Study Area include only one or two persons.

The graphic on the following page summarizes household distribution by income for the Downtown Core, Market Area and Region.

Household Income Distribution: Study Area; Market Area; Region; (2015)



Study Area households have somewhat lower incomes than those in the Market Area and Region. For purposes of comparison, the median income for all Vermont households is $54,267; this compares to:

- Study Area - $52,514;
- Market Area - $59,159;
- Region - $62,609.

Housing Stock Characteristics & Market Activity

The following housing data is provided as background for the assessment of the residential market within the study area.

The three tables below show recent changes in: Total Housing Units; Ownership Housing Units; and Rental Housing Units for the Downtown Core, Market Area and Region – for the period 2000 to 2015.[19]

Total Housing Unit Change: Study Area; Market Area; Region (2000 – 2015)

Total Housing Units	2000	2010	2015	% Change 2000-'15
Study Area	191	198	205	7.3%
Change		*7*	*7*	
Market Area	1,843	1,962	2,049	11.2%
Change		*119*	*87*	
Region	31,119	34,956	36,610	17.6%
Change		*3,837*	*1,654*	

Ownership Housing Unit Change: Study Area; Market Area; Region (2000 – 2015)

Ownership Units	2000	2010	2015	% Change 2000-'15
Study Area	114	115	119	4.3%
Change		*1*	*4*	
Market Area	1,255	1,324	1,381	10.0%
Change		*69*	*57*	
Region	20,041	22,022	22,918	14.4%
Change		*1,982*	*896*	

[19] Source: ESRI.

Rental Housing Unit Change: Study Area; Market Area; Region (2000 – 2015)

Rental Units	2000	2010	2015	% Change 2000-'15
Study Area	62	63	64	3.0%
Change		*1*	*1*	
Market Area	440	481	498	13.0%
Change		*40*	*17*	
Region	8,713	9,718	10,361	18.9%
Change		*1,004*	*643*	

The Market Area's housing stock increased a solid pace between 2000 and 2015, with a net increase of over 200 units.

U.S. Census data indicates that the total number of housing units in the City of Vergennes increased from 949 units in 2009 to 1,087 units in 2013; a total increase of 138 units at a pace of approximately 35 new units annually. This is indicative of a relatively strong pace of new housing development.

The analysis also included an assessment of residential sales activity in the community. The table on the following page summarizes residential sales activity in Vergennes and Addison County – for the period 2005 to 2014 – showing: Total Number of Sales; Total Sales Volume; and Median Sale value.[20]

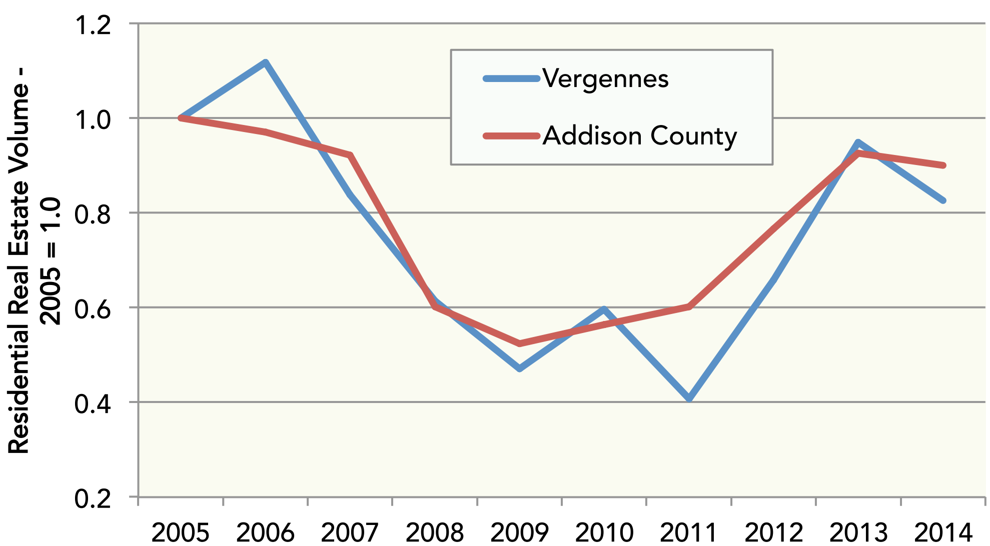
[20] Source: Vermont Department of Taxes. R1, R2, MH w/, MH w/o and Other (Condo) categories are included in tabular statistics; only 'Market' sales included.

Residential Sales Activity: Vergennes; Addison County: (2005 – 2014)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Vergennes										
Sales	52	50	39	26	22	26	18	29	44	37
Volume ($Millions)	$8.7	$9.7	$7.3	$5.3	$4.1	$5.2	$3.5	$5.7	$8.3	$7.2
Median Sale	$167,222	$185,200	$175,931	$195,846	$188,350	$186,465	$199,722	$210,000	$179,500	$185,500
Addison County										
Sales	496	435	399	282	258	282	285	376	466	462
Volume ($Millions)	$110.2	$106.9	$101.7	$66.3	$57.7	$62.2	$66.4	$84.5	$102.0	$99.3
Median Sale	$193,574	$225,009	$228,667	$214,131	$209,943	$206,018	$209,105	$197,201	$208,030	$206,955

The graphic below compares indexed residential real estate volume trends for the town and county.

Indexed Residential Real Estate Volumes: Vergennes; Addison County; (2005 – 2014)



Residential real estate volume fell precipitously from 2006 to 20011; but has been on a slow recovery trajectory since then. Year 2014 volumes were at 83 percent of the 2006 level.

Current Residential Market

The current residential market was assessed from two perspectives: Ownership Units and Rental Units:

Ownership Market

A review of current residential (Single Family) and condominium/townhouse listings and sales in Vergennes indicated the following:[21]

- The average unit includes: 3.2 bedrooms and 2.0 baths. The median unit includes 1,632 square feet of living space;
- The median listed/sold unit was constructed in 1945; pointing to relatively old housing stock;
- The median price for listed/sold units was $196,000; the median price per square foot of living space was $128.

Overall, pricing for Vergennes condominiums is toward the low end of the regional scale. The exception would be the Red Mill Condominiums in North Vergennes, where current pricing is in the $207 to $240 per square foot range. Finally, we note that – with the exception of the Apple Ridge project – minimal new development has occurred in recent years.

Vergennes most expensive residential properties tend to be historic (well-maintained) residences in or near the downtown area. However, the most expensive properties – on a price per square foot basis – tend to be newer properties, with locations outside of the downtown area.

[21] Source: NNEREN as of November 2015; residential & condominium listings/sales for Vergennes.

Rental Market

HUD reports the following regarding current Fair Market Rents in Vergennes:[22]

- Efficiency (0BR) - $717 per month;
- One BR Units - $780 per month;
- Two BR Units - $925 per month;
- Three BR Units - $1,283 per month;
- Four BR Units - $1,550 per month.

A review and survey of current residential rental listings in Vergennes's revealed the following regarding current rental availability and pricing:

- The U.S. Census (2013 Data) shows *zero* **vacancies for rental housing in Vergennes; effectively no availability;**

- The review of available rentals in the media showed very limited availability – only six listings were located in a variety of media;[23] Relatively few rentals are currently listed in the downtown area; this reflects both the scarcity of downtown core housing and a presumed low current vacancy rate.

- The limited number of listings showed the following regarding 'typical' gross rental levels.[24]

    - One BR - $995 per month;
    - Two BR - $1,480 per month;
    - Three & Four BR – insufficient listings.

- Several current listings have well above market rents and involve exceptional properties with views (Otter Creek Basin – Mountains) with high level finishes. These properties reflect the community's attractiveness to more affluent renters, as well as the proximity of highly scenic locations.

The graphics on the following page show two of the 'high end' rental properties in the study area.

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[22] Source: HUD-Gov Fair Market Rents.

[23] Review of listings in: Craigslist; Burlington Free Press; Addison County Independent; Trulia; Zillow.

[24] Vergennes listings include units rented on a net basis (no utilities included) and units with some or all utilities included. 'Gross' rents are net rents plus an adjustment for assumed monthly utility costs.

Norton Grist Mill – 'High Rent' Property;
Location Directly on the Basin

'Cataract Place';
Mountain & Basin Views

Commercial Real Estate Activity

The commercial real estate market in Vergennes is limited in scale, averaging only three to four sales and just over $1 Million in volume during the past nine years.

Current Commercial Real Estate Activity – For-Sale & Leasing

A review of current commercial real estate listings in the downtown area revealed the following:[25]

[25] Sources: NNEREN; Loopnet; Craigslist; Vermont Commercial Real Estate.

- Current five listings – ranging from buildings needing redevelopment to buildings with operating businesses; sales price per square foot ranges from $97 to $186;

- Net retail/office lease rates range from $9.00 to $18.00 per square foot, highly dependent on the quality of the space/finishes;

- Available commercial buildings have median for-sale listing rates in the $40 to $45 per square foot range – this is an extremely low level.

Commercial Activity & Retail Gap Analysis

The table below shows recent trends in annual Gross Receipt collections for Vergennes and Addison County; period-to-period percent change is also shown.[26]

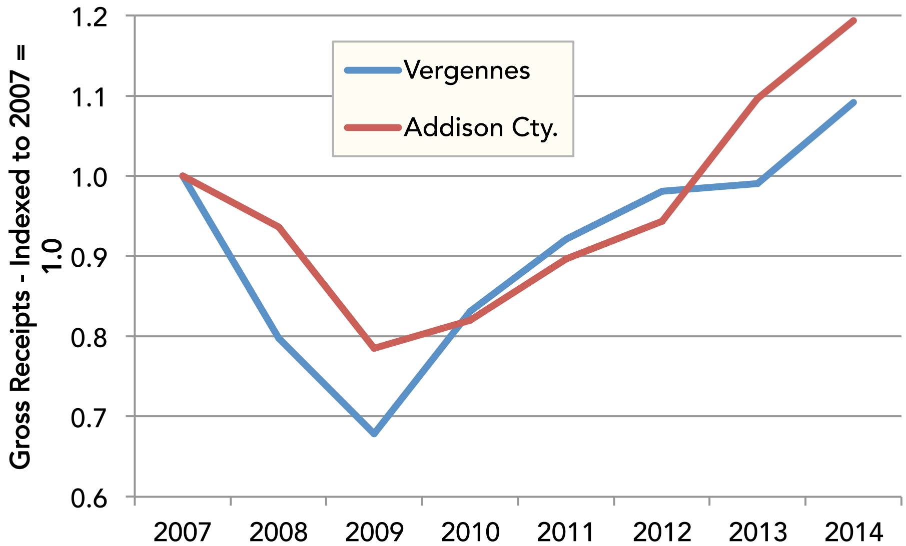
Gross & Retail Receipts Collections: Vergennes; Addison County (2007 – 2014)

	Gross Receipts ($Millions)							
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Vergennes	$191.8	$153.0	$130.1	$159.4	$176.6	$188.1	$189.9	$209.4
% Change		(20%)	(15%)	+23%	+11%	+7%	+1%	+10%
Addison Cty.	$817	$765	$641	$670	$732	$771	$896	$976
% Change		(6%)	(16%)	+4%	+9%	+5%	+16%	+9%

Both Vergennes and Addison County have shown solid increases since 2009. Indexed gross receipts changes (2007 = 1.0) are shown graphically on the following page.

[26] Source: Vermont Department of Taxes. Gross Receipts include Sales and Use taxes.

Gross Receipts Collections; Indexed to 2007 = 1.0; Vergennes & Addison County (2007 – 2014)



Current (2014) Vergennes Gross Receipts collections are at 110 percent of the year 2007 level

An inventory of Market Area businesses and employment by type was completed, as summarized in the table on the following page.[27]

[27] Source: Field Observations and ESRI. Based on both published and observed data ~ the data is for the 'Market Area' – geographic area within 12 minutes drive-time of Vergennes' downtown.

Market Area Businesses & Employment

	Number of Businesses/ Operations	Employment	Employment as % of Total
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	13	45	1.9%
Mining	0	0	0.0%
Utilities	2	7	0.3%
Construction	28	114	4.8%
Manufacturing	11	107	4.5%
Wholesale Trade	7	40	1.7%
Retail Trade	45	221	9.4%
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	7	51	2.2%
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	2	6	0.3%
Electronics & Appliance Stores	1	2	0.1%
Bldg. Material & Garden Equipment & Supplies Dealers	2	11	0.5%
Food & Beverage Stores	7	65	2.8%
Health & Personal Care Stores	1	14	0.6%
Gasoline Stations	4	21	0.9%
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	4	8	0.3%
Sport Goods, Hobby, Book, & Music Stores	2	4	0.2%
General Merchandise Stores	1	4	0.2%
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	12	34	1.4%
Nonstore Retailers	1	1	0.0%
Transportation & Warehousing	8	240	10.2%
Information	4	23	1.0%
Finance & Insurance	17	49	2.1%
Central Bank/Credit Intermediation & Related Activities	14	41	1.7%
Securities, Commodity Contracts & Other Financial	2	3	0.1%
Insurance Carriers & Related Activities; Funds, Trusts &	1	5	0.2%
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	12	29	1.2%
Professional, Scientific & Tech Services	19	91	3.9%
Legal Services	3	8	0.3%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0	0.0%
Administrative & Support & Waste Management & Remediation	9	48	2.0%
Educational Services	8	208	8.8%
Health Care & Social Assistance	19	150	6.4%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	11	249	10.6%
Accommodation & Food Services	15	110	4.7%
Accommodation	5	15	0.6%
Food Services & Drinking Places	10	96	4.1%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	28	77	3.3%
Automotive Repair & Maintenance	6	12	0.5%
Public Administration	21	148	6.3%
Totals	362	2,357	

No Business in NAICS Category

The most important single industry in the Market Area is Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (10.6 percent of total employment); this is unusual for a Vermont market. Overall, no single category dominates employment.

Retail Market Analysis & Gap Estimates

While many factors play a role in in the success or failure of a retail/commercial business, it is essential that market demand for goods or a service exist, as a prerequisite of success. Even in the presence of significant demand, substantial competition that 'absorbs' all of the available demand can be a barrier to entry. The following analyses show the results of the ***Retail Gap Analysis*** – a detailed analysis of how retail sales compare to retail demand in the defined market areas. While the results are highly quantitative, they are a significant component of any retail analyses. The gap analysis includes three major steps:

- Estimate of sales occurring within the defined areas – gross revenues accruing to businesses located within the defined areas;

- Estimate of sales demand by persons living within the defined areas – *at any location* (includes purchases made out of the area, internet purchases, etc.);

- A comparison of sales and demand as a means of identifying potential opportunities in the retail market.

While there is clearly retail activity within the defined Study Area, the retail gap analysis is primarily focused on current deficiencies in the broader Market Area, as the identification of potentials for the Market Area will identify development potentials for the Study Area.

Retail Sales

The table below shows estimates of gross (annualized) retail ***sales*** by detailed retail category – for the Market Area and Region. *Sales estimates include all sales occurring **within** the defined areas.*

The estimates are based on an inventory of retail spaces within the defined areas, as well as a series of research/analytical steps that calculate sales levels. Note that sales levels are shown in \$Millions.[28] In instances where \$0 sales are shown, there is no business within the specified retail category.

[28] Sources: ESRI; Infogroup; Census of Business.

Estimated Annual Retail Sales; Market Area, Region (2015) - *(Two Pages)*

	Gross Annual Sales – 2015 ($Millions)			
	Market Area		Region	
	Sales	% of Total	Sales	% of Total
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	**$17.89**	**28.3%**	**$375.35**	**30.4%**
Automobile Dealers	$15.82		$349.20	
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	$1.70		$15.56	
Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores	$0.37		$10.59	
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	**$1.72**	**2.7%**	**$28.32**	**2.3%**
Furniture Stores	$1.67		$17.39	
Home Furnishings Stores	$0.00		$10.93	
Electronics & Appliance Stores	**$0.45**	**0.7%**	**$22.45**	**1.8%**
Bldg. Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	**$5.90**	**9.3%**	**$57.33**	**4.6%**
Bldg. Material & Supplies Dealers	$1.32		$35.53	
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	$4.58		$21.79	
Food & Beverage Stores	**$11.05**	**17.5%**	**$190.67**	**15.5%**
Grocery Stores	$9.93		$178.54	
Specialty Food Stores	$0.42		$8.16	
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	$0.71		$3.97	
Health & Personal Care Stores	**$2.22**	**3.5%**	**$87.10**	**7.1%**
Gasoline Stations	**$12.05**	**19.1%**	**$120.14**	**9.7%**
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	**$0.93**	**1.5%**	**$116.91**	**9.5%**
Clothing Stores	$0.31		$101.77	
Shoe Stores	$0.57		$9.46	
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	$0.05		$5.68	
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	**$0.41**	**0.6%**	**$49.81**	**4.0%**
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instr. Stores	$0.41		$28.67	
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	$0.00		$21.14	
General Merchandise Stores	**$0.00**	**0.0%**	**$49.10**	**4.0%**
Department Stores Excluding Leased Depts.	$0.00		$37.27	
Other General Merchandise Stores	$0.00		$11.83	
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	**$2.27**	**3.6%**	**$22.17**	**1.8%**
Florists	$0.03		$0.99	
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	$0.11		$8.22	
Used Merchandise Stores	$0.39		$3.78	
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	$1.74		$9.18	
Nonstore Retailers	**$3.88**	**6.1%**	**$36.09**	**2.9%**
Electronic Shopping & Mail-Order Houses	$0.00		$10.01	
Vending Machine Operators	$0.00		$3.13	
Direct Selling Establishments	$3.88		$22.95	
Food Services & Drinking Places	**$4.48**	**7.1%**	**$78.17**	**6.3%**
Full-Service Restaurants	$4.22		$47.69	
Limited-Service Eating Places	$0.00		$26.63	
Special Food Services	$0.00		$2.28	
Drinking Places – Alcoholic Beverages	$0.14		$1.56	

Table Continued from Previous Page				
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	**$63.26**		**$1,233.60**	
Total Retail Trade	***$58.78***	**92.9%**	***$1,155.43***	**93.7%**
Total Food & Drink	***$4.48***	**7.1%**	***$78.17***	**6.3%**

It is estimated that the Market Area accounts for over $63 million in total retail sales, only 4.8 percent of the Region's total. With 28 percent of the total, Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers is the Market Area's major retail category. Food & Beverage sales (19.1 percent of total) are also significant.[29]

Retail Demand

Area residents make substantial expenditures on retail goods. While sales per household vary significantly dependent on household demographics and income levels, all households make expenditures in major retail categories. This *demand* for retail goods can be quantified based on historic spending patterns and resident demographics/incomes. The table below shows estimated annual retail demand generated by the residents of the Market Area and Region.[30] Keep the following in mind in reviewing the estimates:

- The estimates reflect dollars expended by residents; these dollars are not necessarily expended within the defined area. A segment of the demand generated by residents of the two areas will typically be satisfied outside the geographic limits of the defined areas (Driving to remote locations; Internet Shopping, Spending while traveling; etc.)

- The figures include only the demand generated by *residents* of the two areas. Purchases made by Vermont residents from outside the defined areas and sales generated by tourists/travelers also contribute to business activity within the Market Area and Region.

[29] Retail sales within the defined Study Area are estimated at approximately $15.3 million.
[30] Sources: ESRI; Infogroup; Census of Business.

Estimated Annual Retail Demand: Market Area & Region (2015) - *(2 Pages)*

	Estimated Annual Demand 2015 - ($Millions)			
	Market Area		Region	
	Demand	% of Total	Demand	% of Total
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	**$10.53**	**19.1%**	**$219.81**	**18.9%**
Automobile Dealers	$8.97		$187.33	
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	$0.70		$14.51	
Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores	$0.86		$17.97	
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	**$1.40**	**2.5%**	**$29.77**	**2.6%**
Furniture Stores	$0.62		$13.41	
Home Furnishings Stores	$0.78		$16.36	
Electronics & Appliance Stores	**$1.27**	**2.3%**	**$27.13**	**2.3%**
Bldg. Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	**$2.07**	**3.7%**	**$43.68**	**3.8%**
Bldg. Material & Supplies Dealers	$1.34		$29.34	
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	$0.72		$14.34	
Food & Beverage Stores	**$9.40**	**17.0%**	**$197.04**	**17.0%**
Grocery Stores	$8.90		$185.84	
Specialty Food Stores	$0.23		$4.96	
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	$0.28		$6.24	
Health & Personal Care Stores	**$4.13**	**7.5%**	**$85.94**	**7.4%**
Gasoline Stations	**$5.63**	**10.2%**	**$116.24**	**10.0%**
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	**$3.96**	**7.2%**	**$84.39**	**7.3%**
Clothing Stores	$2.98		$63.35	
Shoe Stores	$0.54		$11.33	
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	$0.44		$9.71	
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	**$1.55**	**2.8%**	**$32.87**	**2.8%**
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instr. Stores	$1.29		$27.15	
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	$0.26		$5.72	
General Merchandise Stores	**$4.54**	**8.2%**	**$96.41**	**8.3%**
Department Stores Excluding Leased Depts.	$2.19		$46.56	
Other General Merchandise Stores	$2.35		$49.85	
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	**$1.28**	**2.3%**	**$27.06**	**2.3%**
Florists	$0.07		$1.49	
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	$0.46		$9.57	
Used Merchandise Stores	$0.21		$4.66	
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	$0.53		$11.34	
Nonstore Retailers	**$4.20**	**7.6%**	**$88.52**	**7.6%**
Electronic Shopping & Mail-Order Houses	$2.93		$63.70	
Vending Machine Operators	$0.09		$1.92	
Direct Selling Establishments	$1.18		$22.89	
Food Services & Drinking Places	**$5.20**	**9.4%**	**$111.38**	**9.6%**
Full-Service Restaurants	$2.97		$63.60	
Limited-Service Eating Places	$1.90		$40.54	
Special Food Services	$0.20		$4.27	
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	$0.14		$2.96	

Table Continued from Previous Page				
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	$55.16		$1,160.23	
Total Retail Trade	*$49.96*	90.6%	*$1,048.85*	90.4%
Total Food & Drink	*$5.20*	9.4%	*$111.38*	9.6%

Market Area residents generate annual demand for in excess of $55 million in retail goods, while Region residents generate annual demand for $1.16 *billion* in retail goods.

Impact of Tourism & Other Travel Activities

Travel has an impact on retail demand in Addison County. A recent study placed annual visitor trips at approximately 466,000; accounting for $47 million in annual spending.[31] Broken down even further, travel activity is estimated to have the following impacts in Vergennes:

- Food & Beverage - $1.08 million in annual spending;
- Groceries - $634,000 in annual spending;
- Other Retail - $513,000 in annual spending;
- Gasoline - $785,000in annual spending.

These expenditure figures were added to the *demand* figures shown above in order to estimate total demand for the Market Area.

Retail Gap

Retail gap analysis is a simple comparison of *Demand* and *Sales* that can serve as a means of identifying opportunities for new retail businesses within a defined area. When applied to *Demand* generated in the Region (Residents and Tourism/Travel Activity) and *Sales* (Actual Sales) for the Region, the gap analysis helps to identify retail categories where current supply (sales) is insufficient to meet *demand.*

The analysis indicates that there are *positive gaps* (Demand exceeds Supply) in the following retail categories,*that would be appropriate in a downtown area*:

[31] Source: Vermont Tourism Data Center. Includes; Day-Trippers; Overnight Visitors; and Second Home Owners.

- *Home Furnishings* – a number of northern New England downtowns have developed clusters of stores in this category in recent years. Higher end merchandise appeals to both area residents and tourists and, particularly if located in combination, can create a destination appeal.

- *Sporting Goods* – given Vergennes' central location with respect to Champlain Valley bike tripping, a store oriented toward bikes could find success in the downtown.

- *Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores* – clearly an appropriate use for a downtown area, where there is already an entry in this category;

- *Jewelry/Luggage/Leather & Gifts* – clearly appropriate in a downtown area, and potential attractive to both area residents and tourists;

- *Used Merchandise* – this category has already gained a foothold and is a growing trend in most retail districts. Again a cluster of stores in this category can become a destination;

- *Food Service & Drinking Places* - the primary example of the value of clustering. Vergennes' existing restaurants have already exerted a draw on the region, with regular clientele from Middlebury to Burlington. Moreover, tourists clearly are attracted to downtowns with a wide variety of eating options.

Residential Market Assessment

Housing Stock

Field observations and reviews of published data reveal the following regarding the housing stock within the Study Area:[32]

- Approximately 205 total housing units;

- 58 percent of the total (119 Units) occupied on an ownership basis;

- 31 percent of the units (31 Units) occupied on a rental basis;

[32] Source: Field observations, U.S. Bureau of the Census, ESRI. The housing inventory may include small areas located outside the defined Study Area.

- 11 percent of the units are currently vacant – including units that may be held as second homes.

- The estimated median value of ownership units in the study area is $214,375.

52 of the study area's housing units are included in affordable and/or subsidized housing projects, thereby comprising a significant segment of the core downtown's housing stock.[33]

Residential Market Demographics

Household age by income data is by far the most instructive indicator of household decision-making/behavior regarding moves and housing preferences. Not surprisingly, a young, relatively low income household's housing need is substantially different from that for an upper age, upper income bracket household. The series of tables on the following page shows three sets of household age/income data – for the *Market Area:*[34]

- Current (2015) number of households by age/income bracket;

- Projected (2020) number of households by age/income bracket;

- *Change* in number of households by age/income bracket over the 2015 to 2020 period.

  - Age x Income groups that are projected to experience the largest increases are highlighted in the third component of the table.

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[33] Projects located within the study area include: Addison Housing Ltd. Partnership – 19 units; Smallest City Housing – 19 units; and Hawkins Housing – 14 units. Source: Vermont Housing Data.
[34] Source: ESRI. Market Area demographics assessed as the best indicator of area housing needs.

Household Age X Income: Market Area (2015, 2020 and Change)

2015		HH Age Group						
		25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Totals
HH Income Group	$0-$34,999	54	62	72	123	84	107	502
	$35-$74,999	73	93	123	131	148	59	627
	$75-$99,999	38	59	100	91	45	11	344
	$100-$149,999	16	60	60	63	21	6	226
	$150-$199,999	5	14	23	21	6	1	70
	$200,000+	4	10	17	13	13	3	60
	Totals	190	298	395	442	317	187	1,829

2020		HH Age Group						
		25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Totals
HH Income Group	$0-$34,999	53	43	47	90	84	118	435
	$35-$74,999	75	70	86	111	163	74	579
	$75-$99,999	48	60	95	103	67	17	390
	$100-$149,999	24	80	72	88	38	14	316
	$150-$199,999	8	24	32	41	17	2	124
	$200,000+	4	11	16	15	18	6	70
	Totals	212	288	348	448	387	231	1,914

Change 2015-'20		HH Age Group						
		25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Totals
HH Income Group	$0-$34,999	(1)	(19)	(25)	(33)	+0	+11	(67)
	$35-$74,999	+2	(23)	(37)	(20)	+15	+15	(48)
	$75-$99,999	+10	+1	(5)	+12	+22	+6	+46
	$100-$149,999	+8	+20	+12	+25	+17	+8	+90
	$150-$199,999	+3	+10	+9	+20	+11	+1	+54
	$200,000+	+0	+1	(1)	+2	+5	+3	+10

Consistent with area demographics, the most significant 2015 to 2020 increases will occur among households aged 55 to 74 years. Also note that the household income group projected to experience the greatest increase is $100,000 to $149,999. Although the most substantial increases will clearly occur among upper-moderate income upper age bracket households, it is significant to note that there will be increases among income younger (35 to 44 years) households as well.

Residential Market Trends and Implications

- Vergennes' demographic trends are reflective of broader trends throughout the northeast; a significant increase in the 55 to 74 years population and an uptick in the number of younger households (Millenials). In the instance of older households, real estate professionals note that 'empty nesters' and single women account for the majority of housing demand;

- While Vermont's housing market is clearly differentiated from broader U.S. trends, it is apparent that both millennials and empty nesters are showing an increased interest in living in urbanized locations, with a focus on easy access to services, places to eat and public interaction. We note the following:

    - "There is a significant portion of the Baby Boomer generation that is opting to go to the cities, I think this is the beginning of a long-term trend."

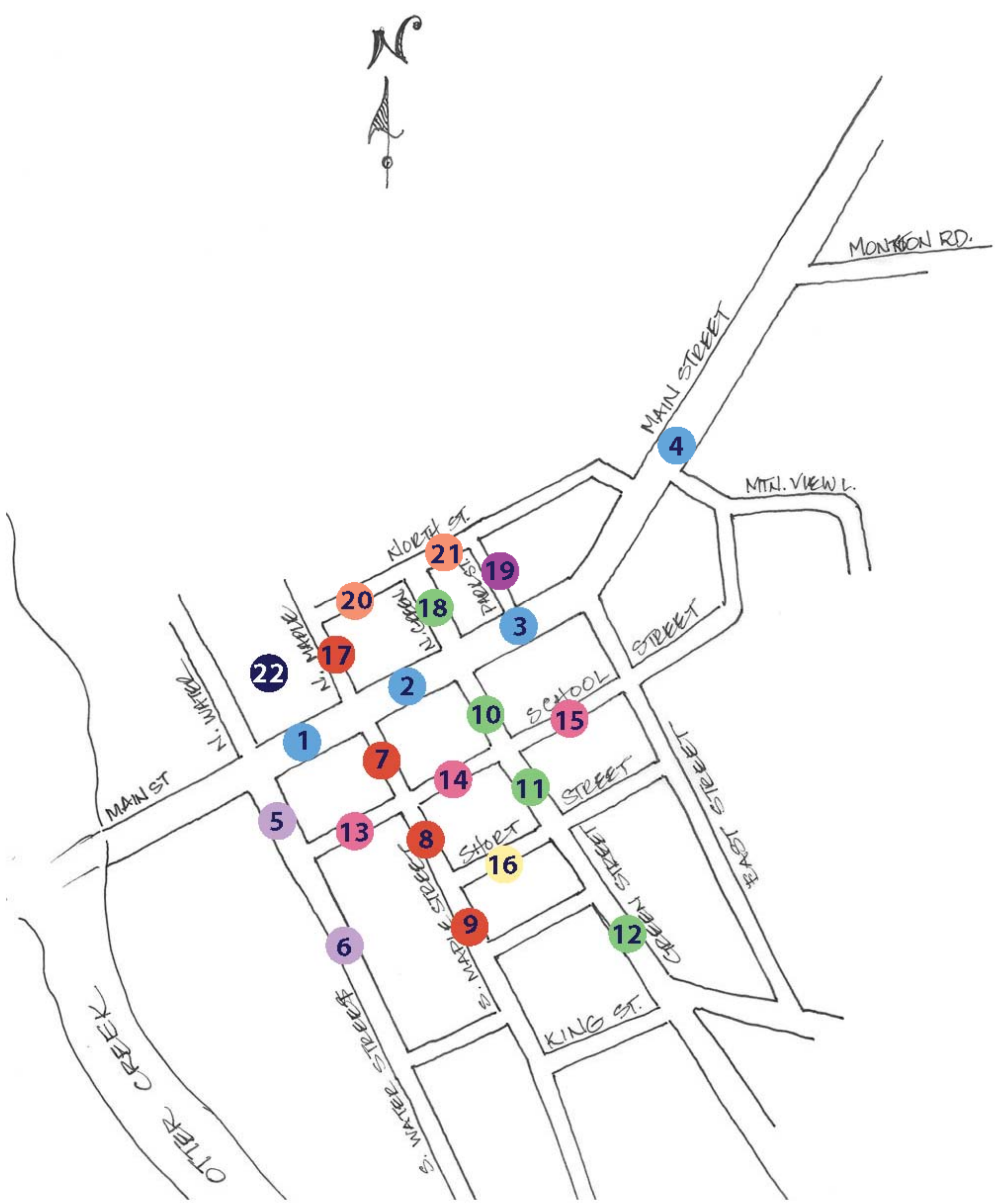
    - That empty nesters whose children have grown up and gone to college or work are downsizing by selling their suburban homes and moving into apartments is old news; the magnitude of this trend is what's surprising developers.

    - Industry experts said future projects will likely have a unit mix that includes more two-bedroom and three-bedroom units to attract renters ages 55 and older. Additionally, Millennials tend to prefer one-bedroom apartments, whereas Boomers favor multiple-bedroom units, to accommodate a home office and/or visiting children and grandchildren. Though the two cohorts enjoy amenities such as swimming pools, workout rooms, Wi-Fi, and dog parks, Millennials are more likely to want more social attractions, such as TV lounges, bars, and such, according to Zillow.com. The Boomers, conversely, the website said, prefer more-luxurious trappings, such as state-of-the art kitchens, high-end bathrooms, and walk-in closets.

- Although the numbers are limited, it is apparent that the combination of services, cluster or residences and aesthetic qualities of a downtown located adjacent to the basin has resulted in some higher end residential development in the study area. These rental units have well above average finishes and appointments – and well above 'market' rents.

- Finally, the limited pace of new residential development in Vergennes (particularly the downtown area) would suggest that there is pent-up demand, and that good quality housing would find renters – or buyers – sufficient to translate to rapid absorption in the current market.

Attachment D: Planning Commission Parking Survey



VERGENNES PARKING STUDY DATA 2014

			SPOTS USED						
	Block	Spots Designated	10/23 12n Thursday	10/24 12n Friday	10/25 11:30am Saturday	10/28 10am Tuesday	10/28 2pm Tuesday	9/20 8:30pm Saturday (VSO Concert)	Average % Used
1	MAIN STREET WATER TO MAPLE	24	21	19	21	11	12	22	74%
2	MAIN STREET MAPLE TO GREEN	29	25	20	23	22	18	29	79%
3	MAIN STREET GREEN TO EAST	34	20	25	26	20	21	33	71%
4	MAIN STREET EAST TO MONKTON	35	16	15	7	18	18	31	50%
5	WATER STREET MAIN TO SCHOOL	9	6	6	2	3	7	8	59%
6	WATER STREET SCHOOL TO ROGERS	2	1	0	0	1	1		25%
7	MAPLE STREET MAIN TO SCHOOL	7	6	6	7	6	5	7	88%
8	MAPLE STREET SCHOOL TO SHORT	10	0	2	4	2	0		13%
9	MAPLE STREET SHORT TO KING	0	0	0	0	0	0		
10	GREEN STREET MAIN TO SCHOOL	10	7	8	8	6	4	10	72%
11	GREEN STREET SCHOOL TO SHORT	7	3	2	7	2	1		36%
12	GREEN STREET SHORT TO KING	13	1	4	4	4	4		22%
13	SCHOOL STREET WATER TO MAPLE	9	5	2	1	3	3	4	33%
14	SCHOOL STREET MAPLE TO GREEN	15	10	8	3	5	5	13	49%
15	SCHOOL STREET GREEN TO EAST	16	6	7	3	2	7	14	41%
16	SHORT STREET MAPLE TO GREEN	5	0	0	5	0	0		17%
17	N. MAPLE MAIN TO NORTH	14	2	3	8	4	3	13	39%
18	N. GREEN MAIN TO NORTH	21	16	15	19	12	11	20	74%
19	PARK STREET	8	1	3	4	1	2	8	40%
20	NORTH STREET MAPLE TO GREEN	7	5	5	5	4	3	7	69%
21	NORTH STREET GREEN TO PARK	6	0	0	5	1	1	6	36%
22	BIXBY LOT	20	5	7	12	2	7	0	28%
	TOTALS	301	156	157	174	129	133	225	
	% of spaces used		52%	52%	58%	43%	44%	75%	

Attachment E: Back-in Angle Parking Educational Materials

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HddkCbsWHlk

City of Austin (TX): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HddkCbsWHlk

Indianapolis: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BTSmFJJsDn8

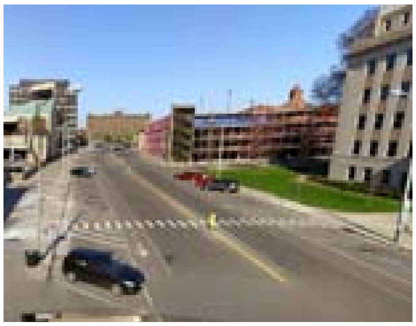
KC Streetcar: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8p2koSYh_Sc (simple instructional video)

FACT SHEETS

BACK-IN ANGLE PARKING

EXAMPLES

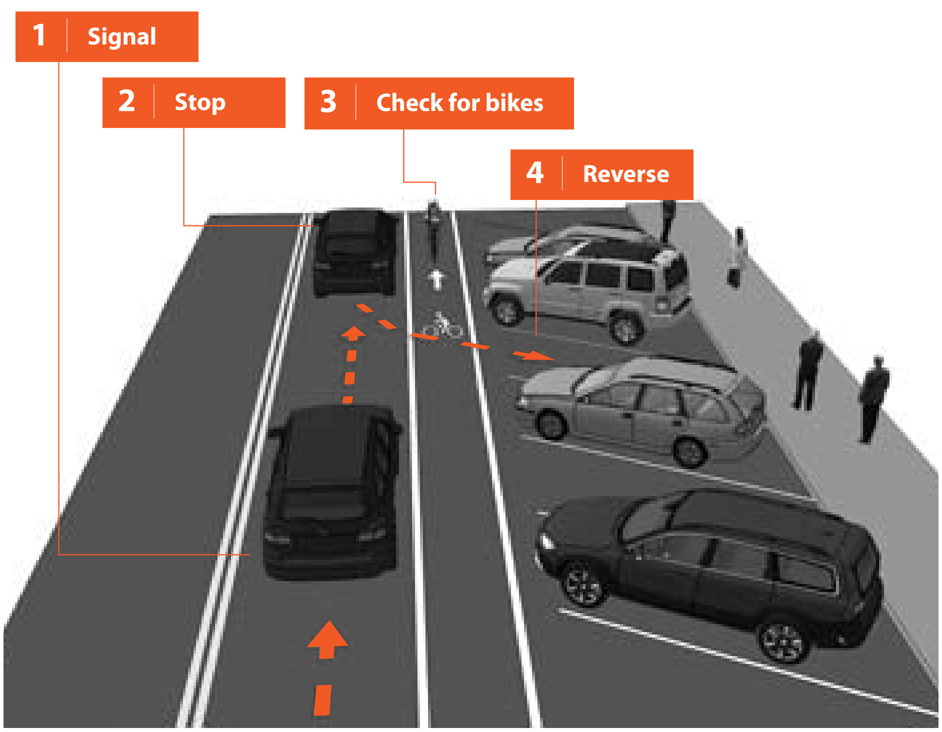
Binghamton, NY - two way, downtown



Pottstown, PA - downtown main street (state route)

Somerville, MA - neighborhood main street

HOW IT WORKS



BENEFITS

- Easier than parallel parking
- Supports accessible parking by allowing direct access to sidewalk
- Clear sight lines for people driving, biking, and walking
- Removes risk of a motorist "dooring" a bicyclist
- Easy loading and unloading of cargo and children
- Improves safety for children and bicyclists

ON-THE-GROUND RESULTS

Pottstown, PA: One year after implementing back-in angle parking, **crashes decreased by 25 percent and injuries decreased by 43 percent**. At the same time, parking increased (21 percent), bicycling increased, and pedestrian crossing time decreased.