

VERMONT VILLAGE CENTERS PROGRAM



Greensboro, VT
February 5, 2015

Richard Amore
Department of Housing and Community Development

WHY ARE VILLAGE CENTERS AND DOWNTOWNS IMPORTANT?

- History – Sense of Place
- Cultural, Social and Economic Center
- Focal Point – Gathering Place
- Saves Money and Makes Money
- Preserves Vermont's Rural Character



STATEWIDE PLANNING GOALS

24 VSA CHAPTER 117 §4302(C)(1)



... plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside ...

WHAT IS VILLAGE CENTER DESIGNATION?

The Vermont Village Center Designation Program recognizes and supports local revitalization efforts across the state with dedicated staff and funding to help designated municipalities build and foster strong communities.



WHAT IS A VILLAGE CENTER?

Statutory Definition:

“Village center” means the core of a traditional settlement, typically comprised of a cohesive mix of residential, civic, religious, commercial, and mixed use buildings, arranged along a main street and intersecting streets that are within walking distance for residents who live within and surrounding the core. Industrial uses may be found within or immediately adjacent to these centers.



WHAT IS NOT A VILLAGE CENTER?



WHO IS DESIGNATED IN THE NEK?

Designated Village Centers (11)

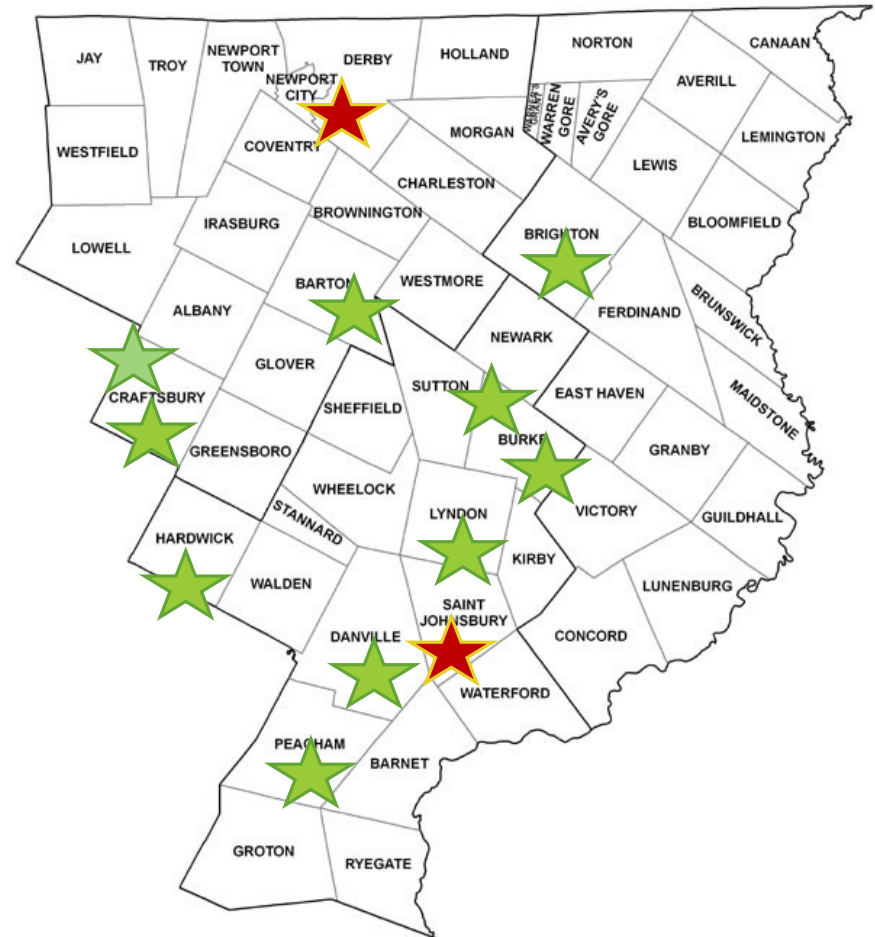
Barton	Island Pond
East Burke	West Burke
Craftsbury	Craftsbury Common
Danville	Derby Line
Hardwick	Lyndon
Peacham	

Designated Downtowns (2)

Newport City
St. Johnsbury

Statewide

118 Designated Village Centers
24 Designated Downtowns



WHAT CAN DESIGNATION DO FOR YOU?

State Benefits include:

- Technical Assistance from the Vermont Downtown Program
- Village Center Historic Tax Credits
- Priority Consideration for State Grants and State Buildings
- Eligible for Special Assessment District



WHAT DID DESIGNATION AND TAX CREDITS DO FOR HARDWICK?

\$820,000 in state tax credits has leveraged **over \$5 million** in investment so far, jump-starting new businesses, adding quality housing and creating jobs and raising grand list values.

Bemis Block - 73 South Main Street



Grand List Before
\$257,800

Grand List After
\$797,400



Hill Block [1874] - 35 South Main Street



Grand List Before
\$55,400

Grand List After
\$314,500



Hardwick Inn - 1 North Main Street

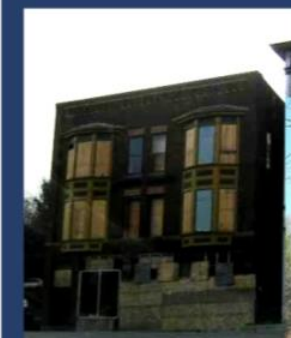


Grand List Before
\$147,800

Grand List After
\$583,300



Marshall Block - 87 South Main Street



Grand List Before
\$145,500

Grand List After
\$297,200



DOWNTOWN AND VILLAGE CENTER TAX CREDITS

Before



After



Bemis Block, Hardwick

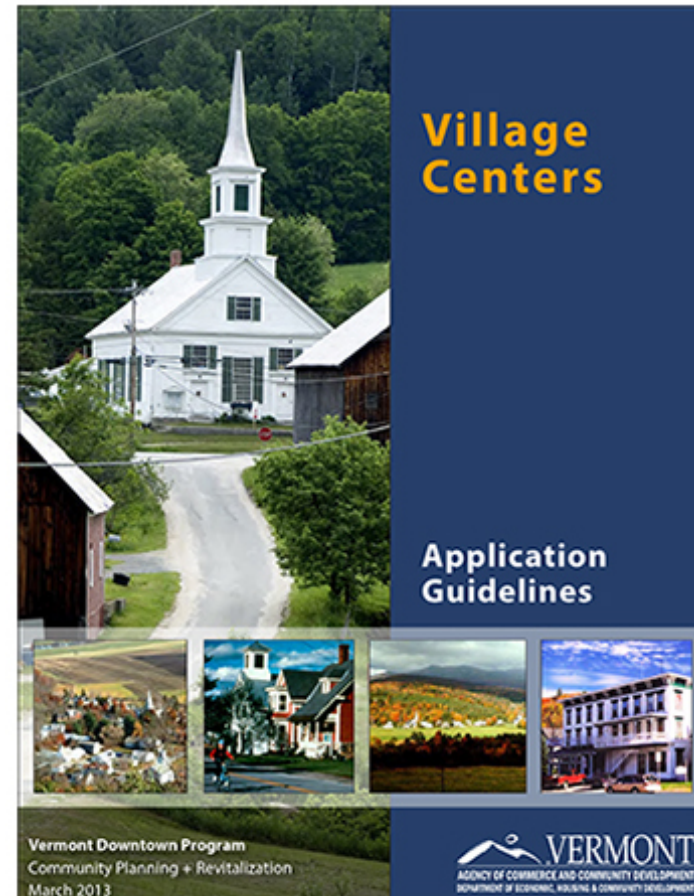
Cliff Street, Montpelier

Perry's Store, Wallingford

Last year, 37 projects in 26 Vermont communities benefited from over \$2.4 million in tax credits, leveraging a total investment of \$78 million.

VILLAGE CENTER DESIGNATION – 8 STEPS

- 1) Gather Local Support
- 2) Initial Meeting/Call
- 3) Gather Documents and Map
- 4) Complete Application Checklist
- 5) Pre-Application Meeting
- 6) Submit Application
- 7) Review Application
- 8) Attend Downtown Board Meeting




APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Cover Letter
- 2) Authorization from Town
- 3) Notification to RPC and RDC
- 4) Confirmed Planning Process
- 5) Integrate with Town Plan
- 6) Zoning and Historic District Maps
- 7) Boundary Map
- 8) Photographs



1.) COVER LETTER

- Name of Town or Incorporated Village
- Brief Narrative of Why You Seek Designation and List of Revitalization Activities
- Primary Contact Person with Contact Information
- A List of all Documents in the Application
- Completed Application Checklist


TOWN OF WAITSFIELD

November 30, 2012

Leanne Tingay
Vermont Downtown Program
Department of Economic, Housing, and Community Development
National Life Office Building, 6th Floor
Montpelier, VT 05620-0501

Re: Town of Waitsfield Village Center Designation Renewal

Dear Ms. Tingay:

Please accept this letter and the enclosed materials on behalf of the Town of Waitsfield as our application for renewal of Waitsfield Village's Village Center Designation. One original set enclosed that includes the following material:

1. The Selectboard has discussed renewal of the Village Center Designation at several meetings over the course of the year, always in the context of support for pursuing renewal of the designation, but lacking an adopted and confirmed Town Plan to allow us to do so. The minutes of June 11, 2012, enclosed, is an example. The Selectboard's support was dire.
2. ctly affirmed at their November 26, 2012 meeting, the minutes of which are not yet available and will be conveyed under separate cover;
3. Copies of letters to the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission and the Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation, dated May 9, 2012, notifying them of our intent to renew our Village Center Designation;
4. Letter from the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, dated November 14, 2012, confirming the status of Waitsfield's planning process;
5. A color map and orthophoto showing the proposed Village Center boundary, streets by name, buildings identified by type, property lines, and the Waitsfield Village Historic District boundary. The zoning districts are not shown on this map, but the Village Center boundary generally coincides with the Village Business and Village Residential districts; and

9 Bridge Street, Waitsfield, Vermont 05673 • P: (802) 496-2218 • F: (802) 496-9284 • W: www.waitsfieldvt.us

Unless otherwise noted, the photos on Frey in April 2012. The Village Center on Main Street is the Village Center on Main Street boundary of the Village

Waitsfield Village is the historic center of the community and continues to be serve as its civic core, as evidenced by the numerous historic structures and such uses as the Joslin library, Town Office, church, elementary school, health center, theater, a pocket park, apartments, and a variety of commercial buildings and services. It is pedestrian-oriented with a sidewalk on the east side of Main Street, street trees, a compact settlement pattern, and on-street parking. A second sidewalk is in the process of being scoped out for design and construction on the west side that will further support pedestrian activity. Inuville, to the south of the Village, is characterized by a more suburban development pattern and contains two shopping centers.

I will be the primary contact person and my contact information is provided below. If you or others have any questions, I can be reached at 496-2218 and townadmin@madriver.com.

Sincerely,

Valerie Capels
Waitsfield Town Administrator
9 Bridge Street
Waitsfield, VT 05673
(802) 496-2218
townadmin@madriver.com

Encs.

2.) AUTHORIZATION FROM THE TOWN/VILLAGE

- Meeting Minutes or Resolution from Publicly Held Meeting Authorizing Application
- And/Or Signatures from Majority of Selectboard/Trustees Authorizing Application

**RICHMOND SELECTBOARD RESOLUTION
REGARDING RICHMOND VILLAGE CENTER DESIGNATION RENEWAL.**

WHEREAS, Richmond's village was approved as a Village Center Designation by the Vermont Department of Public Safety in 2002 and renewed in 2008; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Richmond has benefited from the Village Center Designation through the availability of tax credit programs for commercial property owners to renovate and improve existing buildings and through enhanced consequences in applying for 300-foot side and federal programs; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Richmond 2012 Town Plan states to "order the preservation of an historic village pattern as mandated by open land"; and

WHEREAS, based on a Planning Commission recommendation, the Selectboard voted unanimously on January 7, 2013 to renew the Richmond Village Center Designation, without any changes to the Designated Village Center boundary as stipulated in the June 20, 2008 Richmond Village Center plan. A revised map incorporating the changes as defined in the appropriate conditions for Village Center Designation, submitted in July 2012.

Now, therefore be it resolved,

The Richmond Selectboard authorizes the submission of the application for Richmond Village Center Designation renewal to the Vermont Department of Public Safety.

Adopted this 22nd day of January 2013.

Town of Richmond Selectboard

[Signatures]

SELECTBOARD MEETING
TUESDAY FEBRUARY 5, 2013 - 6:07 P.M.
Treas/AA Office

Dawn Sprague Heidi Allen Goodrich
Kaye Sprague
Rick Ackerman

1. New Business
2. New Business
3. Insurance - New Business

In January 15, 2013 meeting - Jack moved and Erik seconded the motion to enter executive session as written. So moved.

Reviewed and signed by Erik
Dawn Sprague - A sewer user's letter asking to have his bill reduced to \$100.00 was read and all he estimates he is in Chelsea was read and denied.

c. Other - Jane will check into a trench box.

5. Road

a. Certificate of Highway Mileage - Since there are no changes in highway mileage, Jack moved and Erik seconded the motion to sign the form. So moved.

b. Other - Rick inquired about stockpiling gravel on the town property on the East Randolph Road for winter use when the roads break up.

c. Other - Rick presented estimates of \$27,000 to repair roof and insulation in town garage.

d. Other - Rick reported that he had to replace the computer in the 2005 International.

6. Town Clerk

a. Liquor & Tobacco License - Tabled

b. Other

7. Old Business

a. Generator - The amount was not available to be put on the warning but Erik has contact information for the engineer doing the same project in Bethel.

b. NIMS - There is an ICS 402 training on Feb. 21, 2013 in Bethel. The town clerk, treasurer and Selectboard are encouraged to attend.

c. Health Field Permit Appeal - Erik moved and Jack seconded the motion to enter executive session at 7:20 p.m. to discuss the appeal. So moved. Ended at 7:25 p.m. No action taken.

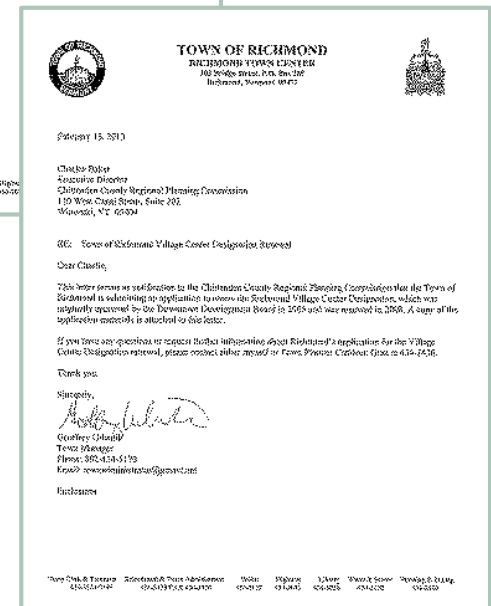
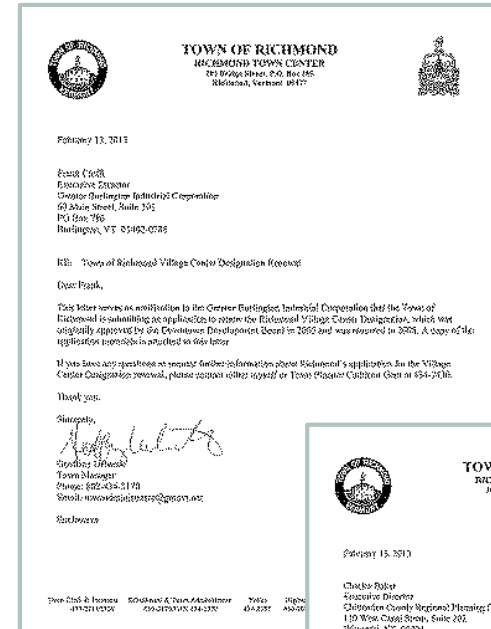
d. Town Hall Roof - An estimate for \$20,000 for town hall roof work is tabled until after Town Meeting.

e. Other

8. New Business

3.) NOTIFICATION TO RPC AND RDC

- Both the Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) and Regional Development Corporations (RDCs) must be Notified of the Municipality's Intent to Apply for Designation
- Application must include a Copy of the Notification Letters to RPC and RDC



4.) CONFIRMED PLANNING PROCESS

- Town Plan meets Statewide Goals and Include Required Elements
- Town Plan is in conformance with Regional Plan
- Town Pays it RPC dues to support local/regional planning



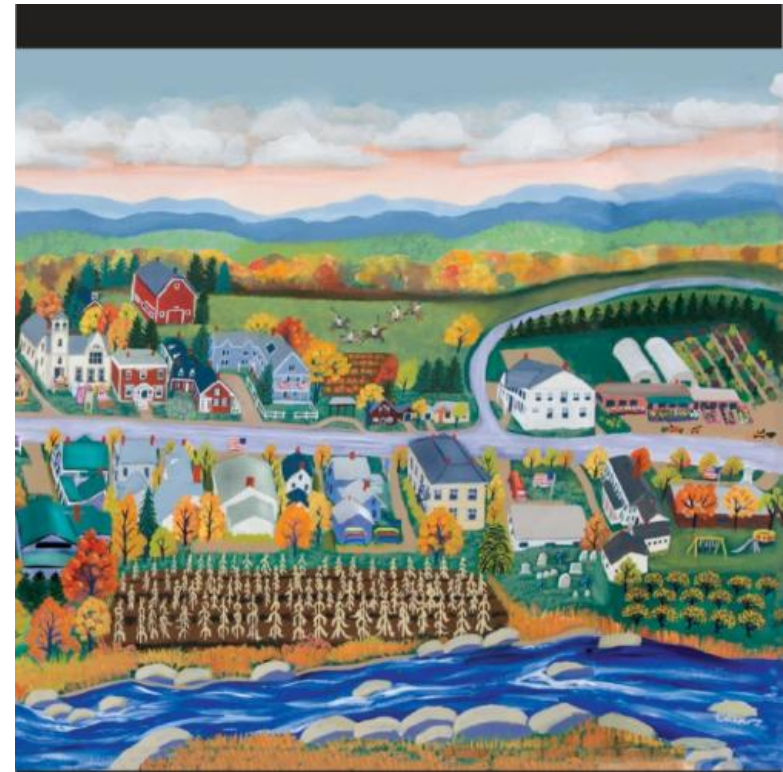
5.) INTEGRATE WITH TOWN PLAN (ACT 59)

New Applications

- For new applications the intention to apply for designation shall be included in the town plan and the town plan shall explain how the designation would further the plan and statewide goals.

Renewal Applications

- A community applying for renewal shall explain how the designation has furthered the goals of the town plan and shall submit an approved town plan map that depicts the boundary of the designated area.

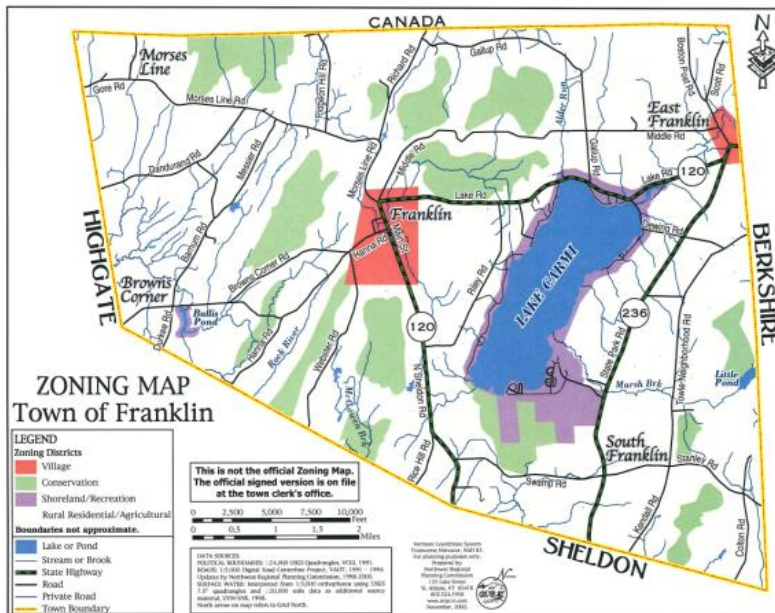


Waitsfield Town Plan

Adopted October 22, 2012

6.) ZONING AND HISTORIC DISTRICTS

- Zoning District and Supporting Bylaws
- Historic District Boundary Map and/or Historic Properties

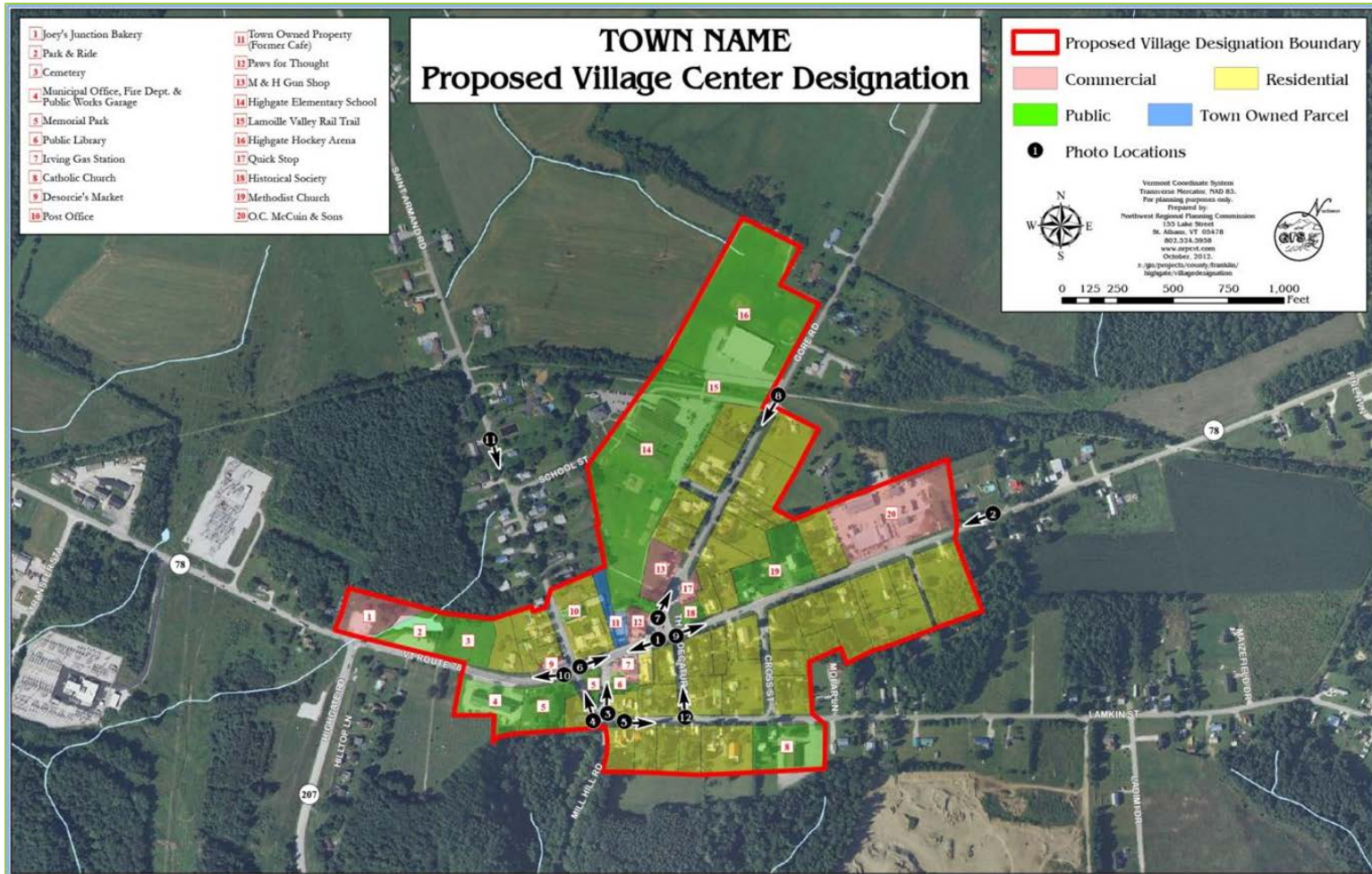


7.) BOUNDARY MAP

“Village center” means the core of a traditional settlement, typically comprised of a cohesive mix of civic, religious, commercial, residential and mixed use buildings...”



7.) SAMPLE BOUNDARY MAP



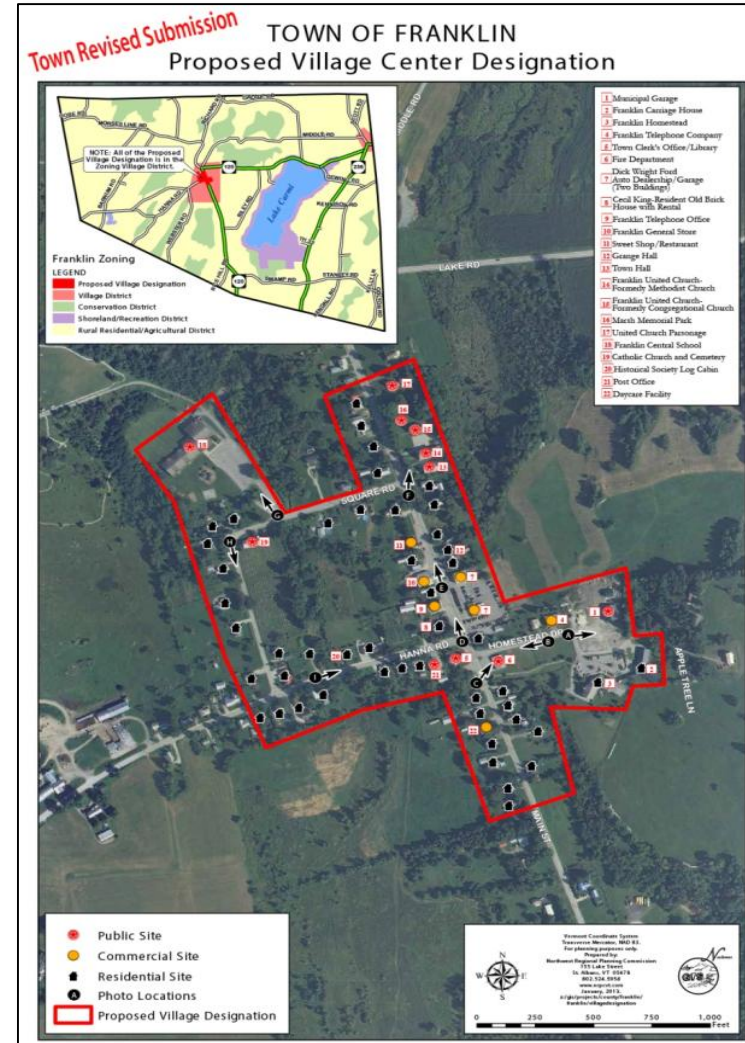
7.) BOUNDARY MAP EXAMPLE

Staff found the initial proposed boundaries exceeded the statutory definition and worked with the Town of Franklin and the Northwest RPC to tighten the boundary.



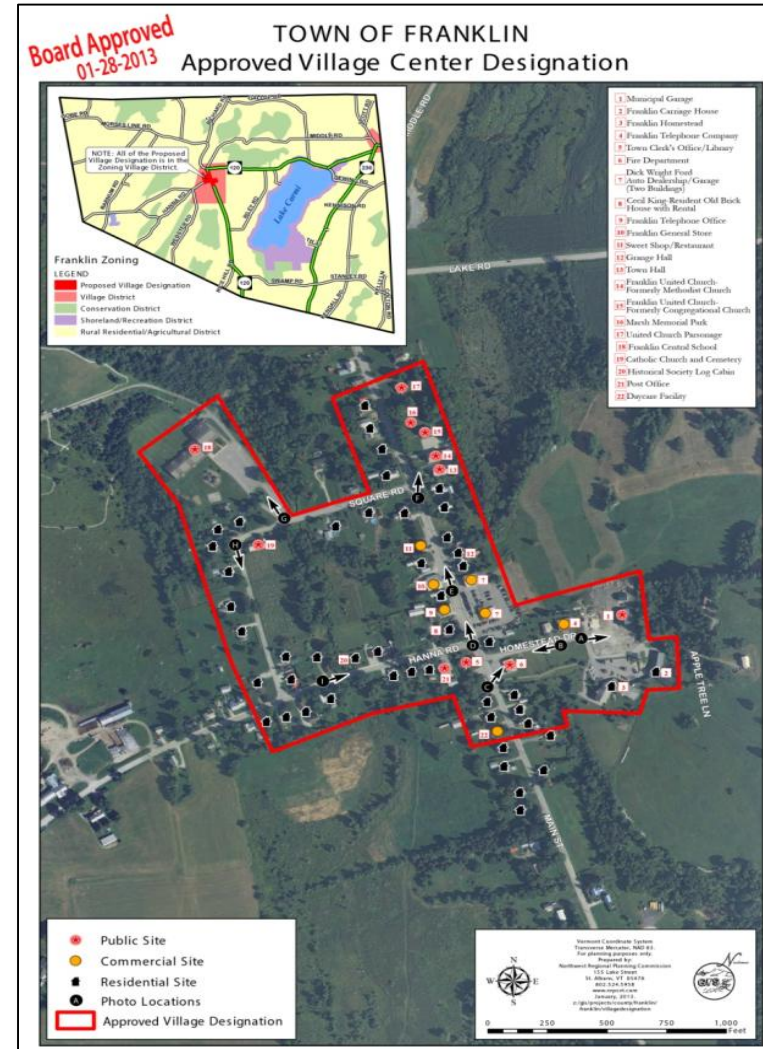
7.) BOUNDARY MAP EXAMPLE

The town revised the boundary and it is substantially smaller than the previously submitted boundary and better defined the traditional socio-economic center of Franklin.



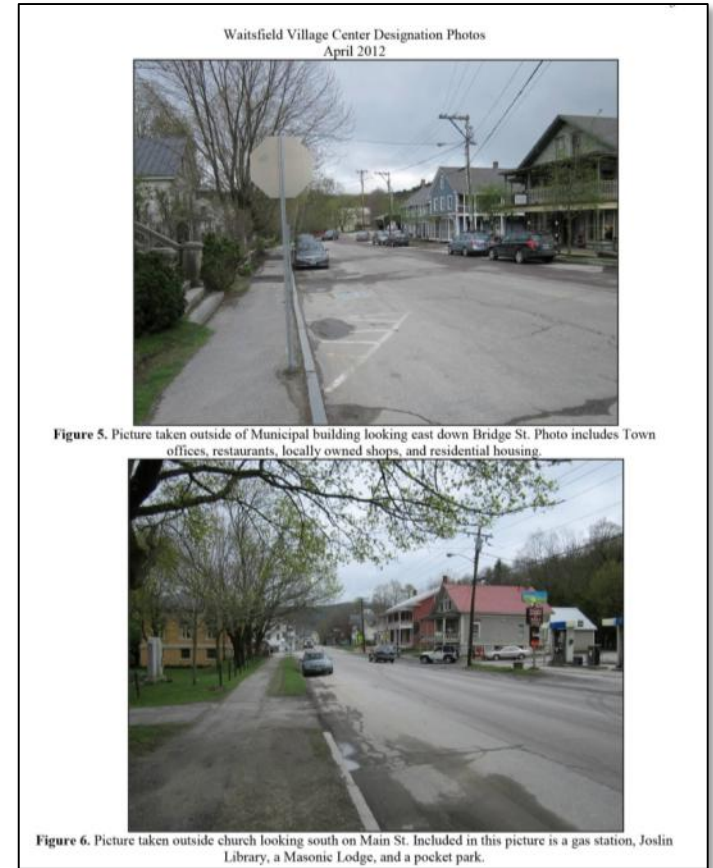
7.) BOUNDARY MAP EXAMPLE

The Downtown Board further recommended removing the southernmost section of Main Street, south of the daycare facility to be consistent with statutory definition and downtown board policy.



8.) PHOTOGRAPHS

Color Photographs showing key areas of the designated village



BOARD APPROVAL AND 5 YEAR RENEWAL

Designation is good for 5 years and then Town/Village must send in a Renewal Application.

Village Centers Application Guidelines	Renewal Checklist
1. Cover Letter, including:	<input type="checkbox"/> Name of Town or Incorporated Village. <input type="checkbox"/> Brief narrative of why you seek renewal of the Village Center Designation and a list of revitalization activities since original designation. <input type="checkbox"/> Name, address, daytime phone number and email address of the primary contact person for application. <input type="checkbox"/> A list of all documents included in application.
2. Authorization from Town or Village Selectboard or Trustees	<input type="checkbox"/> Minutes or resolution from publicly held meeting, showing that the application for village center designation has been authorized by the Town or Village (if separately confirmed municipality). <input type="checkbox"/> And/or signatures from majority of Selectboard/Trustees authorizing application.
3. Confirmed Planning Process	<input type="checkbox"/> A letter from the municipality's regional planning commission must be included in the application, stating that its planning process is "confirmed" under 24 V.S.A. §4350 by the commission. Confirmation means that the adopted municipal land use plan and planning process have been reviewed and approved by that regional commission.
4. Village Center Designation Boundary Map	<input type="checkbox"/> A color map must be included, delineating the boundary of the proposed village center district, clearly showing the buildings and properties that are within the district. In most cases, an orthophoto should be used as the base map with the information below superimposed over it: <input type="checkbox"/> Streets identified by name. <input type="checkbox"/> Significant buildings and all businesses indicated by number with a separate key identifying each number and name of the building/business - see example map. <input type="checkbox"/> Land/building use identified clearly with colors and symbols that will very clearly indicate the various land usages - see example map. <input type="checkbox"/> North arrow, scale and current date. <input type="checkbox"/> Property lines should be shown, but if not available, are not required. <input type="checkbox"/> Zoning District Boundaries should be included on map, but if not available, are not required.
5. Integrate with Town Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> After July 1, 2014, any community applying for renewal shall explain how the designation has furthered the goals of the town plan and shall submit an approved town plan map that depicts the boundary of the designated area.
6. Other Required Information	<input type="checkbox"/> Zoning District Map with corresponding bylaw language should be submitted, but if not available or there is no adopted zoning, is not required. Zoning boundaries and bylaws help explain the community's development and uses within the village center. <input type="checkbox"/> National or State Register Historic District Boundary Map should be submitted, but if not available, is not required. If available, the applicant should provide the boundary of any National or State Register Historic District or any individual building listed on the Register.

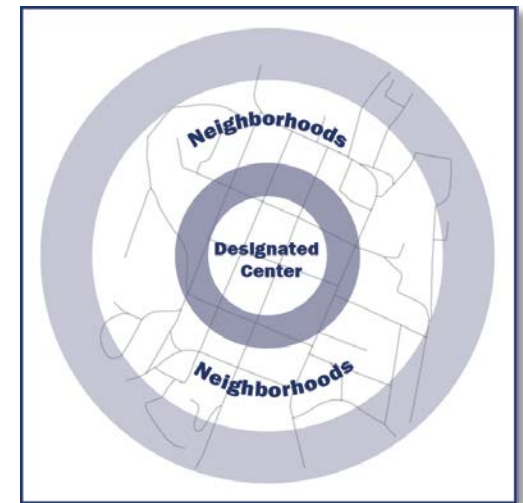
NEIGHBORHOODS – ACT 59 (H.377)

Neighborhood Planning Areas

- Neighborhood Planning Areas are delineated eligibility areas encircling designated centers, $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from Downtowns and $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from Village Centers.

Neighborhood Development Areas Designation

- The Neighborhood Development Area designation encourages municipalities to plan for new and infill housing in the area within walking distance of its designated downtown, village center, new town center, or within its designated growth center.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1.) Is the “Village Center” the same as a “Historic District”?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1.) Is the “Village Center” the same as a “Historic District”?

No, a “Designated Village Center” is not the same as a “Historic District”. A historic district is designed to ensure that all buildings within the designated historic district maintain their historic appearance both inside and outside.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

2.) Is the “Designated Village Center” the same as an the “Incorporated Village Boundary”?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

2.) Is the “Designated Village Center” the same as an the “Incorporated Village Boundary”?

No, a “Designated Village Center” is not the same as a “incorporated village”. An incorporated village tends to consist of more than the civic and commercial core of the village. The incorporated boundaries tend to be much larger than the designated boundaries.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

3.) Our Town's Zoning Regulations create a "Village" category. Would this be the same as the "Village Center"?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

3.) Our Town's Zoning Regulations create a "Village" category. Would this be the same as the "Village Center"?

No, the Village category in the Zoning Regulations may or may not encompass a larger area – the "Designated Village Center" would be the "heart" of the Village, but would not extend to village outskirts.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

4.) Are there any benefits for residential properties?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

4.) Are there any benefits for residential properties?

No. Benefits apply to commercial/income-producing properties only (residential rental properties may be eligible).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

5.) Are there any benefits for municipal properties?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

5.) Are there any benefits for municipal properties?

A municipality may benefit by priority consideration in grant applications for which it is eligible (and which pertain to the Village Center), but is not eligible for tax credits under the Village Center Designation.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

6.) Does the Village Center Designation impose regulations or restrictions on any properties within the designated area?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

6.) Does the Village Center Designation impose regulations or restrictions on any properties within the designated area?

No, it does not impose any regulations or restrictions because of the Designation.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

6.) Does the Village Center Designation in any way change or affect zoning or any other town regulations or restrictions?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

6.) Does the Village Center Designation in any way change or affect zoning or any other town regulations or restrictions?

No, all town regulations, ordinances and policies remain unchanged by the Designation.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

7.) What if the legislature changes the law pertaining to Village Center Designation, and our town no longer wishes to have a designated Village Center?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

7.) What if the legislature changes the law pertaining to Village Center Designation, and our town no longer wishes to have a designated Village Center?

The statute requires review of the designation every five years; if the Village Center Designation were to be removed at that time, any previously awarded benefits would be unaffected.


IMPLEMENTATION – FINDING WAYS [\$\$] TO MAKE REVITALIZATION HAPPEN

- Downtown/Village Center Designation
- Downtown and Village Center Tax Credits
- Downtown Transportation Fund (if designated Downtown)
- Community Development Block Grants (DR)
- BID, Special Options Tax, TIF?
- Vtrans Transportation Alternatives
- Municipal Planning Grants (MPGs)
- Urban and Community Forestry Grants
- Federal and Non-profit Grants (NEA, HUD, Orton, etc.)
- Private Investment, Public/Private Partnerships, etc.

STAY CONNECTED – STRONG COMMUNITIES QUARTERLY

The Strong Communities Quarterly is brought to you by the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development.

Strong Communities Quarterly

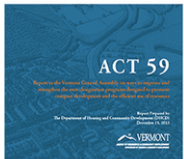


Welcome

Strong Communities is a quarterly newsletter published by the [Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development](#) to highlight news, trends and best practices to strengthen your community. Each issue will spotlight planning and revitalization successes throughout Vermont, outline upcoming grant and training opportunities, and provide tools you can use in your community. We invite your thoughts and suggestions for topics to address or articles for future issues. Please send your comments or suggestions to accd.cpr@state.vt.us

Announcements


DHCD's ACT 59 Report



The [ACT 59 Report](#) is now complete. The report includes 42 top stakeholder recommendations to improve the Growth Center and New Town Center programs and explores related issues of agricultural development, industrial parks and natural resources. As required, the report also identifies ideas to make all five designation programs ([Downtowns](#), [Villages](#), [Neighborhood Development Areas](#), [New Town Centers](#), and [Growth Centers](#)) more effective. We are extremely thankful to the over 300 committed stakeholders who contributed their ideas and expertise. Download the complete report [here](#).

Municipal Planning Grants Awarded

DHCD recently announced the [recipients](#) of approximately \$450,000 in [Municipal Planning Grants](#) that will assist 42 local communities to plan for future growth and development, and revitalize cities and towns. They were selected from 63 proposals requesting a total of more than \$733,000. The [funded projects](#) propose innovative ways to shape the future of their communities through planning, land use regulations and public facilities programs.



Department Updates

Winter 2014 Issue

- Announcements
- New Faces
- Department Updates
- Downtown Corner
- Tools You Can Use
- News and Resources

Training and Events

- Complete Streets Workshops – February 5 and 12, 2014
- Pitch Vermont Life - St. Johnsbury – February 13, 2014
- GreenWorks Winter Meeting and Trade Show - Burlington – February 13, 2014
- Municipal Day at National Life: A day of workshops for VTs Local Governments Officials - Montpelier – March 31, 2014
- APA National Planning Conference - Atlanta – April 26-30, 2014
- Vermont Historic Preservation and Downtown Conference - Island Pond, VT – May 2, 2014
- 2014 National Main Street Conference - Detroit – May 18-20, 2014
- Local Solutions: Northeast Climate Change Preparedness Conference – May 21, 2014



That's all Folks!

RICHARD AMORE, AICP/ASLA

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

RICHARD.AMORE@STATE.VT.US AND (802) 828.5229