



# Hooksett Village Design Study

March, 2004

Prepared For:

**The Community Economic Development Corporation of Hooksett**

**&**

**The Town of Hooksett**

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# SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

The Community Economic Development Corporation of Hooksett (CEDCOH) conducted the design study for Hooksett Village and developed the recommendations in this report in cooperation with the Town of Hooksett. CEDCOH undertook the design study to help the Town and larger community develop a vision for the future of the Village and a plan for how to achieve that vision. CEDCOH envisions that the results of this effort will be incorporated into the Town's Master Plan and serve as the blueprint for public and private actions to improve Hooksett Village.

For the purposes of the Design Study, Hooksett Village was defined as the area on both sides of the Merrimack River extending from I-93 on the west to the Route 3 corridor on the east. The southern limit of the Village was established as the intersection of Main Street and Route 3 on the east side of the river and the Exit 11 area on the west side. The northern limits of the Village are less distinct and are shown on Figure 1.

The Design Study involved two design charrettes or interactive workshops. The charrettes were held on Saturday, October 4, 2003 and Saturday, October 25, 2003 at the Hooksett Public Library. Approximately 50 people participated in the first workshop while approximately 40 participated in the second. Summaries of the two charrettes are included in the appendices.



Each workshop or charrette consisted of a mix of presentations about Hooksett Village and the opportunities and challenges facing the community, and facilitated small group exercises to explore various aspects of the Village and its future. The discussions in each small group were recorded on flip charts and are included in the report of the charrette.

The preparation of the Design Study was financially supported by several individual donors and the following organizations:

The Community Development Finance Authority  
The Hess Family Foundation  
Public Service Company of New Hampshire  
The Manchester Regional Community Foundation  
The Town of Hooksett

In addition, the following organizations and businesses provided support for the charrettes by providing publicity, food, supplies, and volunteers:

BJ's Wholesale Club  
Sara Lee Coffee and Tea  
Shaw's Supermarkets  
Southern New Hampshire University  
Target

The Community Economic Development Corporation of Hooksett thanks all of the people who participated in the charrettes as well as the businesses and community groups that supported the effort. Your involvement was greatly appreciated.



**Figure 1. Hooksett Village Study Area**



## SECTION II. HOOKSETT VILLAGE AND ITS SETTING

The Town of Hooksett and Hooksett Village are part of the growing Greater Manchester Area. Hooksett Village was shaped by transportation patterns including the river and the railroad, and its future will be influenced by transportation. Historically, the Village was the community center and the seat of local government. As the community has grown, those roles have been diminished, but many of the community and municipal facilities remain in Hooksett Village.

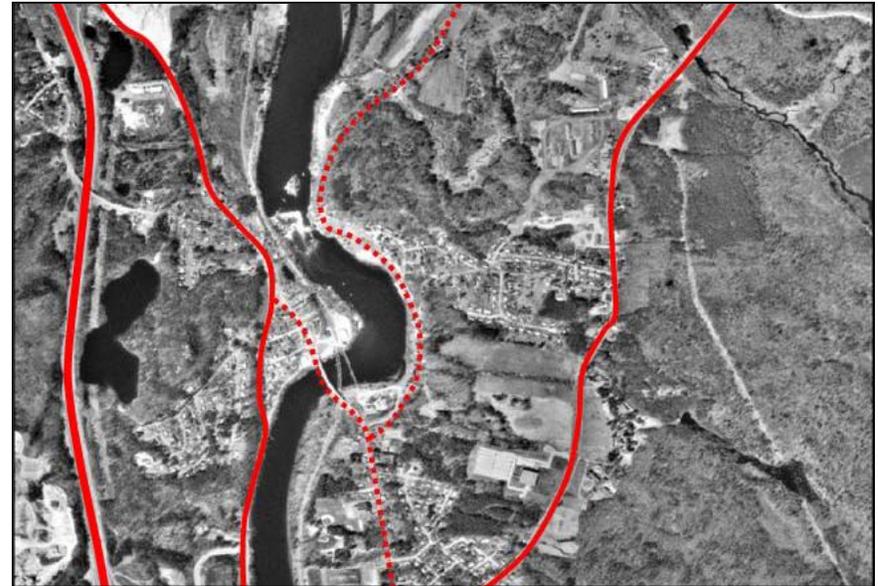
Hooksett Village includes five residential neighborhoods; the Pine Street area, the historic center, the Pinnacle neighborhood, the Beauchesne Development, and the Bert Street/Granite Street neighborhood. Each of these neighborhoods has its own character and they are somewhat separate from each other.

The bridge across the Merrimack River in Hooksett Village is both an opportunity and a liability for the community. The bridge links the two sides of the community and makes Hooksett Village a central place. At the same time, the bridge is the only river crossing between the north side of Manchester and Concord. This means that an increasing number of cars pass through the Village as they use the regional highway network.



The community is poised for significant residential growth east of Route 3. If this development occurs as presently planned, more than a thousand new units will be built in this area. This development will have implications for Hooksett Village. It will potentially increase the population who live in and near the Village. And it is likely to increase the amount of traffic passing through the Village coming to and from the bridge.

Hooksett Village has changed and it will continue to change. The Village Design Study is intended to create a vision for how that change can be managed so that the Village remains a desirable part of the Hooksett community.



## SECTION III. A VISION FOR HOOKSETT VILLAGE

Hooksett Village will be the heartbeat or spiritual heart of the community, the place that people identify with when they think of Hooksett. The “Village” will have a well-defined sense of place – you will know when you are in Hooksett Village. There will also be distinct edges to the Village and well-defined gateways. The Village will present a positive image of Hooksett with well maintained public and private property. It will embody the BSNP concept (bright, shiny, neat, and pretty).

Hooksett Village will serve a variety of roles. The Village will be an attractive, enjoyable place to live, work, and visit. It will continue to be the center of community affairs. Key public and community facilities will be located in the Village. The Village School building will continue to be an important part of the community. The Village will also be a residential center with livable, walkable residential neighborhoods where people know their neighbors and feel safe and “at home”. The Village will also provide convenient access to small, local shops and services so that residents can meet some of their day-to-day needs within the Village.

The Merrimack River and a restored Lilac Bridge will be the focal points for the Village. The scenic character of the river and its shorelines

will be maintained while improved public access to the river will be provided. Open space and green areas along the river will be retained and enhanced.

Hooksett Village will have a pedestrian scale – things will be close together so that residents can walk or bike. New development in and around the Village will have a village scale and character and be designed to enhance



the Village's identity and sense of place. A mix of uses will be encouraged. Hooksett Village will also be pedestrian-friendly -- sidewalks, trails, and bicycle facilities will be provided to encourage people to walk, bike, and enjoy the village environment.

The livability of existing residential neighborhoods will be enhanced. Access to the river and community facilities will be upgraded. Traffic that uses neighborhood streets as a "short-cut" will be controlled. Commuter and through-truck traffic will be diverted from the village. A new bridge across the river will be part of this effort. Main Street and Merrimack Street will regain their role as local, village streets.

Important open spaces and green areas will be preserved within the Village as well as on its fringes. As new development occurs, a variety of additional protected open space will be created.

Hooksett Village will reemerge as the community center of our town – it will evolve into a true New England village, but one that meets the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## SECTION IV. FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The Future Land Use Plan identifies, in broad terms, how the land within Hooksett Village should be used in the future. It can be thought of as a generalized zoning plan for the Village.

### A. CURRENT ZONING

Most of Hooksett Village is currently zoned Medium Density Residential (MDR). There is one parcel (Robie's Store) within the heart of the Village that is zoned Commercial (COM). Part of the area north of the Bert Street neighborhood on the northern fringe of the Village is also currently zoned COM. The riverfront on the west side of the Merrimack north of the bridge is zoned Industrial (IND). This includes the American Legion site as well as most of the land between the railroad and Route 3A. The CIGNA property, including the undeveloped land around the existing building is zoned Mixed Use District 1 (MUD1). Figure 2 shows the approximate boundaries of the current zoning in Hooksett Village.

#### 1. Medium Density Residential (MDR) District

The Medium Density Residential District allows a range of housing including single and two-family dwellings, manufactured housing subdivisions, multifamily housing,

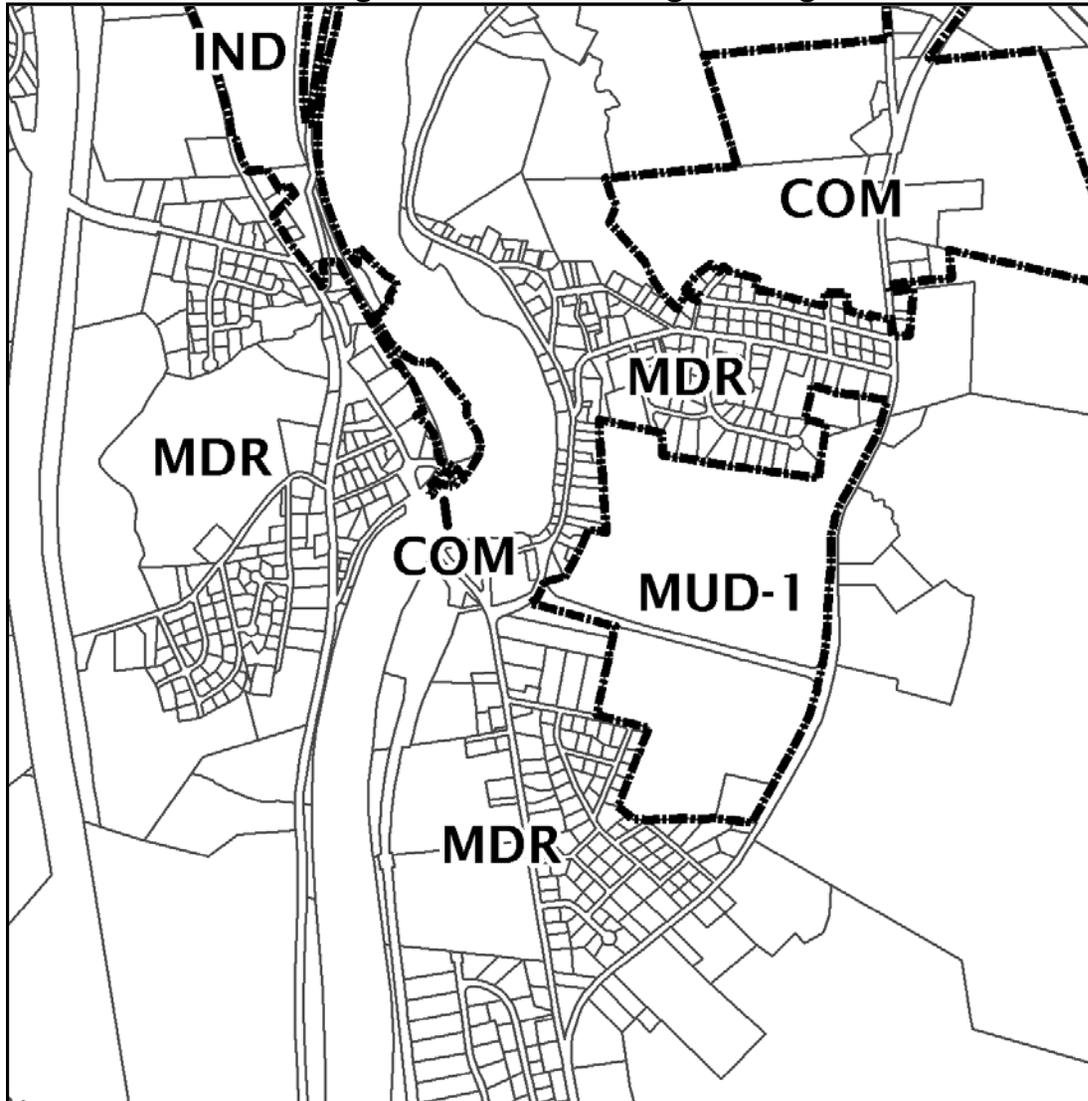


nursing homes, and elderly housing with a special exception. Home occupations are allowed in one and two-family dwellings but not in multifamily housing. Non-residential uses are limited to religious uses, recreation areas, public utility facilities, and neighborhood convenience stores with a special exception. The existing pattern of uses generally reflects the uses allowed under the Town's zoning.

The dimensional requirements in the MDR District do not reflect the current residential development pattern in the Village. Most of the existing residential lots in the Village

have an area in the range of 8,000 to 15,000 square feet with typical street frontages in the range of 80 to 100 feet. The provisions of the MDR District require a ¾ acre lot

**Figure 2. Current Village Zoning**



(32,670 SF) with municipal water and sewerage for a single-family home, an acre with municipal water or sewerage, and 1.5 acres with private services. The required minimum lot frontage ranges from 150 to 200 feet. Similarly, the yard and setback requirements imposed by the MDR District are significantly greater than the existing pattern of development.

This inconsistency between the established development pattern and the current zoning requirements raises two important issues. First, most existing development in the Village is technically nonconforming therefore requiring Zoning Board of Adjustment approval for many improvements. Second, new development in and around the Village is forced to conform to a “suburban” rather than a Village scale and pattern of development which is inconsistent with the vision for a compact, walkable village.

## 2. Commercial (COM) District

The Commercial (COM) District allows a wide range of nonresidential uses but no residential uses except manufactured housing parks and eldercare facilities. Allowed nonresidential uses include transient housing, retail uses, offices, restaurants, entertainment and recreational facilities, community facilities, hospitals, wholesale establishments, and some types of automotive businesses.

The dimensional requirements for the COM District are essentially suburban commercial standards. The provisions require lots with large street frontages (150 to 200 foot minimum). The setback standards require buildings to be setback from the street and to be separated by sizable side yards. Parking can be located between the building and the street. Interestingly, Robie's Store, the only retail building in the Village center probably is non-conforming based upon these standards.

The use provisions of the COM District are somewhat appropriate for Hooksett Village but should allow for residential uses as part of a mixed use development. The dimensional requirements are not appropriate given the vision for the Village as a compact, pedestrian-friendly area. There are no standards to assure that development is compatible with and maintains a village character.

The area north of the Bert Street neighborhood appears to have been zoned COM in response to a shopping center proposal. This proposal is no longer active and



this area is under consideration for the development of elderly housing.

## 3. Industrial (IND) District

The Industrial (IND) District appears to be designed to accommodate relatively large scale, industrial-park type uses. The allowed uses in the IND District include

industries, trucking terminals, warehouses, auto body shops, and commercial uses with a special exception. Most of these uses are not in keeping with the vision for Hooksett Village.

The dimensional requirements of the IND District do not reflect a village character. Lots are required to be a minimum of two acres in area with two hundred feet of road frontage. Buildings are required to be setback from the street and separated by sizable side yards. There are no standards to assure that development is compatible with and maintains a village character.

The designation of this portion of the river frontage for large scale industrial use appears to be a vestige of an early period when the railroad supported industrial types of uses in the Village. This designation is at odds with the current vision of the Village.

#### 4. Mixed Use 1 District (MUD1)

The Mixed Use 1 District (MUD1) appears to be designed to accommodate business/office park type development. The allowed uses in the MUD1 District include retail uses, restaurants, personal services, business and professional offices, research and testing facilities, hotels and motels, banks, and theaters. No residential uses are allowed in the MUD1 District. The possibility for large scale retail uses to locate in this area is somewhat inconsistent with the vision for the Village.

The dimensional standards of the MUD1 are somewhat suburban in character. Lots are required to be a minimum of just over one acre with two hundred feet of road frontage. The front yard is required to be 35 feet but a 75 buffer is required along a state highway such as Route 3. The side yard provision is 25 feet. There are no standards to assure that development is compatible with and maintains a village character or provides for pedestrian facilities

The provisions of the MUD 1 District appear to be somewhat appropriate on the fringe of the Village but are not appropriate for development that penetrates into the built-up portion of the Village



## B. DESIRED PATTERN OF FUTURE LAND USE

The current zoning in and around Hooksett Village does not reflect the future of the Village as set out in the Vision for Hooksett Village (see Section II). The following Future Land Use Plan lays out an alternative pattern for the Village that tries to reflect the vision.

The Future Land Use Plan suggests that the Village be designated as three land use categories:

- Village Residential District
- Village Mixed Use District
- Office/Business Park District

The Village Residential and Village Mixed Use designations are not reflected in the current zoning ordinance. The Office/Business Park designation is

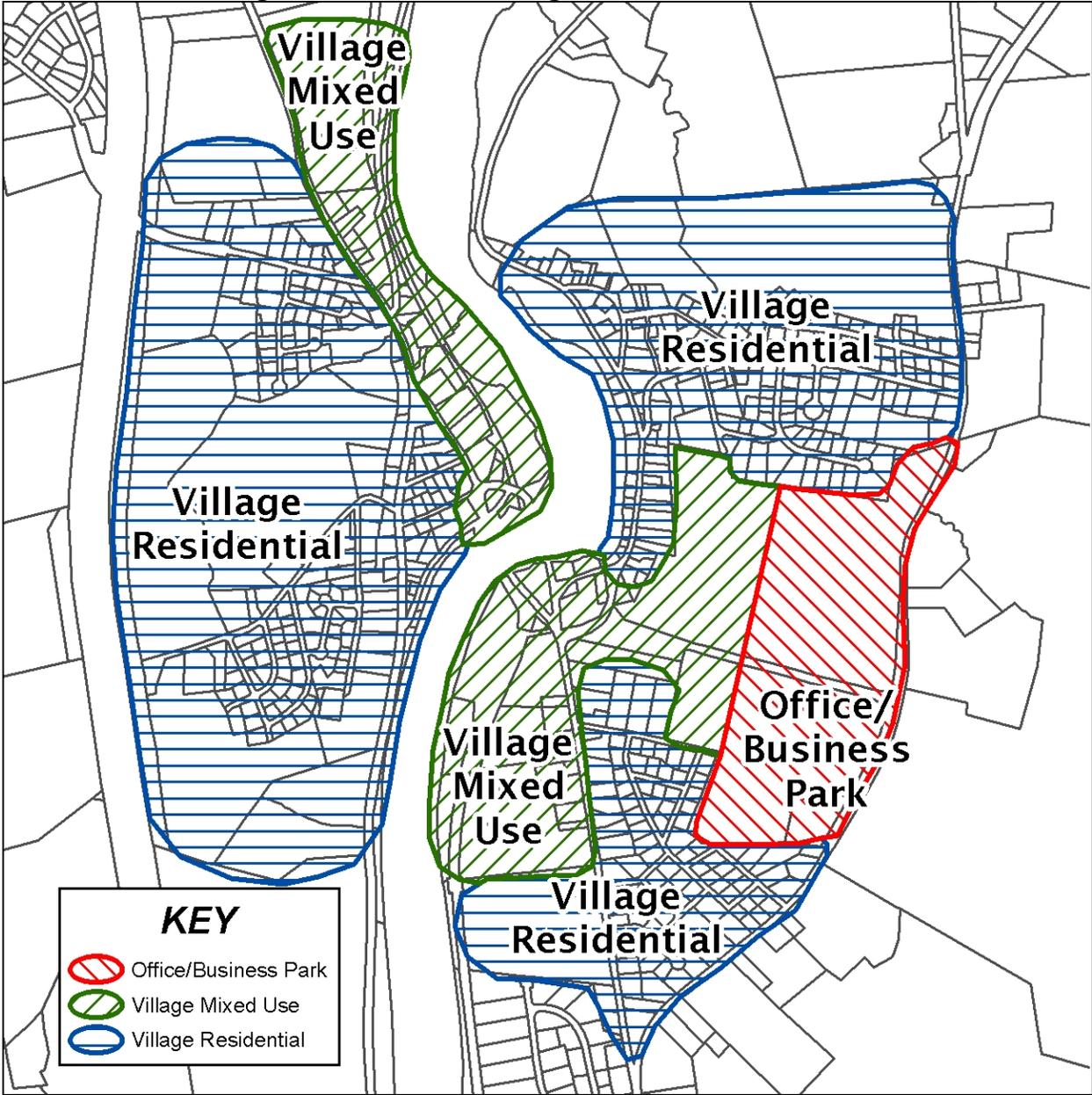
similar to the current MUD1 District. Figure 3, the Future Land Use Plan, shows how these three designations could be applied to Hooksett Village.

### 1. The Village Residential District

The Village Residential designation is intended to include the developed residential areas of the Village as well as areas that are suitable for future village scale/style residential development. The zoning standards to implement this designation should assure that Hooksett Village will have a pedestrian scale – that things will be close together so that residents can walk or bike. They should assure that new residential development in and around the Village will have a village scale and character and be designed to enhance the Village's identity and sense of place as well as providing sidewalks, trails, and bike facilities to encourage people to walk and enjoy the village environment..



Figure 3. Hooksett Village Future Land Use Plan



### **A. Use Standards**

The use standards for the Village Residential District should allow a wide variety of residential and community uses while assuring that they are compatible with a village environment. This should include single and two-family homes, multifamily housing, accessory dwelling units, elderly housing, and retirement and eldercare facilities. Allowed community uses should include municipal buildings and facilities, community and recreation buildings, schools, religious facilities, public outdoor recreational facilities, public utility facilities, day care, and similar uses. In addition, the Village Residential designation should allow for home occupations and home businesses. The provisions for these uses should be reasonably liberal in terms of the type of use but should assure that these uses do not adversely impact the residential character of the Village's neighborhoods.

### **B. Dimensional Standards**

The dimensional standards for the Village Residential District should reflect the current pattern and density of residential development in the Village neighborhoods both to avoid making existing homes non-conforming and to allow new development that is of a village character. The minimum lot size for a single-family home should be in the range of 10,000 to 12,000 square feet with 80 to 100 feet of road frontage provided that it is serviced by public water and sewerage. Lots for two-family homes should be required to have a minimum of around 15,000 square feet of area. Multifamily housing should be

allowed at a density of 6-8 units per acre with higher densities allowed by special permit for elderly housing and other age-restricted facilities.

New housing should be sited so as to maintain the established relationship of buildings to the street and to other residential buildings. Front setbacks should be in the 15 to 20 foot range with side yards of 10 to 15 feet. Larger side yard setbacks should be considered for multifamily housing, elderly facilities and community uses but these uses should be required to maintain the established relationship to the street.

### **C. Other Standards**

In addition to the typical zoning standards, the standards for the Village Residential designation should include basic design guidelines to assure that new and expanded buildings are compatible with the village character and promote a pedestrian-friendly environment. In general, parking lots should not be permitted to be located in the area between the front of the building and the street. The standards should assure that new buildings have their front facing the public street and, where appropriate, a front door. Multifamily housing, community buildings and other nonresidential uses should provide appropriate pedestrian facilities that link the building to the sidewalk and provide for pedestrian movement on the site. The design of public or community buildings should reflect the scale and style of the Village. The mass of larger buildings should be broken up and roof lines should be pitched or flat roofs hidden.

The Village Residential designation should also include a provision requiring that a new residential development or subdivision set aside part of the site as common recreational area or open space or pay fee-in-lieu of to allow the Town to develop additional recreational and open space in the Village. The provision should require that 20-25% of the site be used for these purposes and that these spaces should be connected to create a network throughout the village. In addition, standards should require that new streets be laid out to form an interconnected network and that sidewalks and street trees be provided.

## 2. The Village Mixed Use District

The Village Mixed Use designation is intended to allow for the reuse or redevelopment of existing buildings in the Village as well as the construction of new buildings in designated areas to expand the range of shopping and services available in the Village in a manner that is consistent with the desired character of the Village. While it is recognized that the owners of some developed

property in the Village may not choose to take immediate advantage of the opportunities created by this designation, the objective is to allow the Village to evolve over time in the direction of the vision.

### **A. Use Standards**

The use standards for the Village Mixed Use District should allow a wide variety of small-scale, nonresidential and community uses while assuring that they are compatible with a village environment. Allowed uses should include small retail and service uses, restaurants, fraternal organizations, business and professional offices, municipal and community buildings and facilities, recreation buildings, schools, religious facilities, public outdoor recreational facilities, public utility facilities, day care, and similar uses. Allowed residential uses should include elderly housing, and retirement and eldercare facilities, multifamily housing that is part of a mixed use building or project, and workforce housing developments that meet the needs of households with a variety of incomes.



### **B. Dimensional Standards**

The dimensional standards for the Village Mixed Use designation should allow new development to occur in a manner that is similar to the existing development pattern of the Village. Minimum lot size requirements should be in the 10,000 to 12,000 square foot range if they are required at all. Similarly, minimum street frontage

requirements should allow reasonably narrow lots to be developed. A major focus of the dimensional standards should be on maintaining a village-scale relationship between the building and the street. Typically, the front setback should be in the 15 to 20 foot range.

Consideration should be given to establishing a maximum setback or “build to” line to assure that new buildings maintain this relationship. Required side yards should be small with provisions to allow zero side yards if proper fire protection is provided

### ***C. Other Standards***

As with the Village Residential designation, the zoning provisions for the Village Mixed Use District should include basic design guidelines to assure that new and expanded buildings are compatible with the village character and promote a pedestrian-friendly environment. These standards should address the same issues as the residential standards but be focused more on the commercial aspects of the potential uses in these areas. The standards for new development should require that special attention be paid to corner lots so that they become high-quality locations with significant buildings.

The Village Mixed Use designation should also include a provision requiring that a new development or subdivision set aside part of the site as common recreational area or open space or pay fee-in-lieu of to allow the Town to develop additional recreational and open space in the Village. The provision should require that 20-25% of the site be used for this purpose, and

that open spaces be connected to create an open space network throughout the village. In addition, the standards should require that new streets be interconnected to form a network and that sidewalks and street trees be provided.



Since the Village Mixed Use designation includes developed properties along Main Street, the zoning standards should also address the reuse of these properties for nonresidential or community use. These should require that the existing architectural character of the building be maintained and that the commercial aspects of the use (parking, storage, dumpsters, etc.) be located to the side or rear of the building and be screened. These provisions should also allow the parking requirements to be reduced for the reuse of an existing building if there will be reasonable parking available to serve the property taking into consideration available public and/or shared parking.

### 3. The Office/Business Park District

This designation is intended to allow continued development of suburban style office park uses on the portion of the CIGNA property along Route 3. The proposed Office/Business Park designation is similar to the current MUD1 zone with limitations on retail uses and provisions for some pedestrian facilities.

#### **A. Use Standards**

The allowed uses in the Office/Business Park District should be similar to the uses currently allowed in the MUD-1. Retail uses should be limited to

small businesses with less than 5,000 square feet of gross floor area.

#### **B. Dimensional Standards**

The dimensional standards in the Office/Business Park should be similar to the current standards in the MUD-1.

#### **C. Other Standards**

In addition to the typical zoning requirements, the Office/Business Park designation should include provisions that parking and service areas be located to the side or rear of buildings. In addition, there should be provisions that all uses should provide appropriate pedestrian facilities that link the building to the sidewalk and provide for pedestrian movement on the site including provisions for linking the Village to Route 3.



## SECTION V. MUNICIPAL POLICIES

The vision for Hooksett Village envisions that “Hooksett Village will reemerge as the community center of our town – it will evolve into a true New England village, but one that meets the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” Attaining this vision for the future of the Village will require that the community implement municipal policies that support this vision. The following are key policy areas that will need to be addressed:

### A. Location of Municipal Facilities

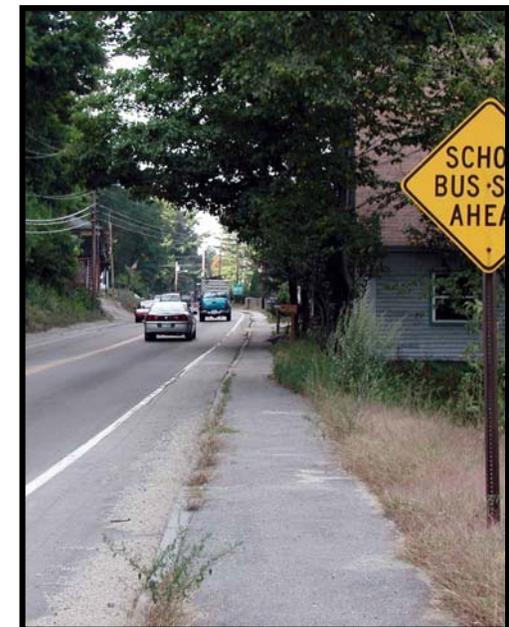
Hooksett Village has been the historic governmental center for the Town even though it is not located in the municipality’s geographic center. The vision for the village envisions that Hooksett Village will continue to be the community center and that key public facilities will continue to be located in the Village. As the Town faces decisions about the location of the Town Offices and other municipal facilities, the



temptation will be to relocate them to a “highway” location closer to the geographic center of the community. Retaining this role as the government and community center is a key to the future of the Village and its re-emergence as a 21<sup>st</sup> Century New England village. Therefore, these key municipal facilities must continue to be located with the Village. In addition, the possible need for expanded Town offices in the near future creates the possible catalyst for the development of a new focal point for the Village. This decision as to the location and design of a new Town Office building will be one of the most important decisions the community makes with respect to the future of Hooksett Village.

### B. Upkeep of the Public Realm

The Vision for Hooksett Village envisions that the village will be an



attractive, enjoyable place to live, work, and visit. The Village will present a positive image of Hooksett with well maintained public and private property. It will embody the BSNP concept (bright, shiny, neat, and pretty). The Town's current stewardship of the public realm within the village including Town buildings and grounds and streets falls short of this goal. The Town needs to make a commitment to the BSNP concept as it relates to "housekeeping" in Hooksett Village and to make an extra effort to make the existing public infrastructure as attractive as possible.

### C. The Connector Road

The likely construction of a "connector road" linking the bridge to Route 3 will have important implications for the future of Hooksett Village. On one hand, this road will provide significant traffic relief to portions of Main Street on the east side of the river as well as other streets such as Granite Street, Merrimack Street, Pleasant View Drive, and Thompson Avenue that are now used as short cuts between the bridge and Route 3. It will eliminate the need for the dangerous left turn from Route 3 onto Main Street.

At the same time, the construction of this road will facilitate the development of a significant amount of housing east of Route 3 resulting in increased traffic through the Village. This impact will probably be

greatest on the portion of Main Street on the west side of the river and on the intersection of Main Street with Route 3A.

Therefore the design of this road will need to balance the competing interests of providing improved movement between Route 3 and the bridge, and the need to maintain the quality of life in the Village. The basic design of the connector road should be as a street rather than a highway. It should provide one through travel lane in each direction with designated left turn lanes where

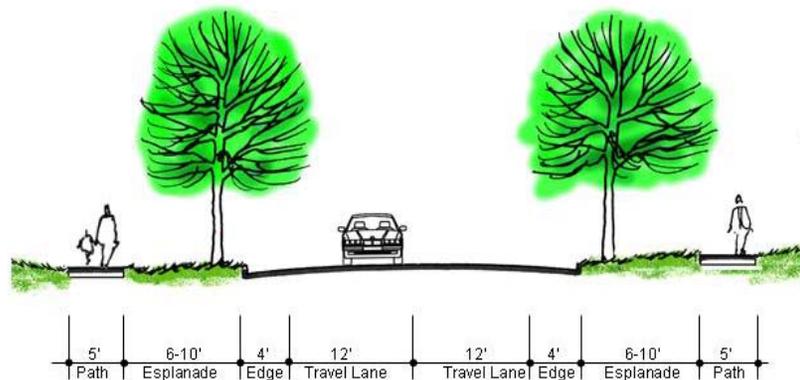


needed. The cross-section of the road should provide for granite curbs and gutters with enclosed stormwater collection. A sidewalk or pedestrian way should be incorporated into the design to link the Village to the Route 3 corridor and the library. Street trees should be provided along the length of the connector road. The location of cross streets should be identified in the initial design and the number of cross streets should be limited. Curb cuts that provide direct access to buildings or parking lots should be controlled and minimized. Figure 4 provides a sketch of an appropriate cross-section for the facility.

#### D. A New Bridge and Traffic Improvements

For better or worse, the bridge in Hooksett Village offers the only crossing of the Merrimack between the northern edge of Manchester and Concord. As the region grows,

**Figure 4. Connector Road Cross Section**



the volume of traffic desiring to cross the river in Hooksett Village will increase. Since much of this traffic is “through traffic” that simply wants to get through the Village as quickly as possible, this growing traffic volume is a significant impediment to achieving the community’s vision for Hooksett Village.

Therefore, the policy of the Town should be to work with appropriate state agencies to improve traffic flow and safety in and through Hooksett Village in the short run. At the same time, the Town should begin working with the state to identify an appropriate location and plan for the eventual construction of a new bridge that would be located outside of Hooksett Village and would allow through traffic to travel around rather than through Hooksett Village. This is a major policy decision for the community but is one that is essential for the long term future of Hooksett Village. This policy may mean that the community will need to endure some inconvenience in the short run to accomplish its long term goal.

#### E. Development of an Alternative Community Center

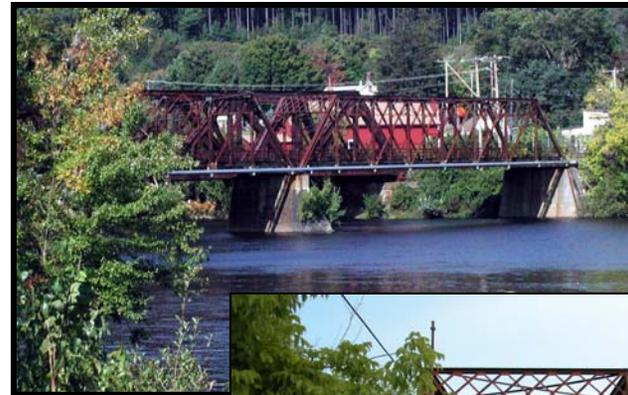
Hooksett can only support one community center. Hooksett Village should remain the Town’s community center. Therefore, the Town should resist public and private efforts to create an alternative Town center and focus on reinforcing the role of Hooksett Village as the community center.

## SECTION VI. VILLAGE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

This section identifies a program of possible improvements that can be undertaken to improve Hooksett Village. Some of these improvements can be undertaken for little or no cost using volunteers and community groups. Others will involve a significant investment of community resources. The list of possible improvements probably exceeds the ability of the community to carry out and fund within any reasonable period of time. Therefore, CEDCOH and the Town will need to establish priorities based upon available resources, manpower, and support. Section VI begins to identify possible priorities as part of an implementation program.

### A. Restoration of the Lilac Bridge

The Vision for Hooksett Village envisions that the river and a restored Lilac Bridge will be the focal points of the village. The Lilac Bridge offers a unique opportunity to create a focal point and symbol for Hooksett Village. During the design charrettes, participants expressed strong feelings about the bridge and its role in the history of the community. They also expressed sadness about the current condition of the bridge and its “blighting” influence on the Village. Participants saw the potential for restoring the bridge as a pedestrian facility that



would reconnect the two “sides” of the village that are now separated by the new “highway bridge”.

The restoration of the Lilac Bridge as a pedestrian bridge and focal center of Hooksett Village should be a high priority for the village improvement program. The current estimated cost for restoration approaches a million dollars so this will need to be a community effort involving both public and private funding. CEDCOH should consider making the restoration of the bridge one of the centerpieces of efforts to improve the Village.

## B. Village Beautification

The Vision for Hooksett Village envisions that the village will be an attractive, enjoyable place to live, work, and visit. The Village will present a positive image of Hooksett with well maintained public and private property. It will embody the BSNP concept (bright, shiny, neat, and pretty). This vision does not reflect today’s reality but steps can be taken to move in that direction. There are three areas that the Village Improvement Program should address in the near term, the appearance of the public and community buildings in the Village, the treatment and maintenance of traffic islands, roadsides, and public spaces, and the possible use of flowers to enhance the visual environment in the Village.



## 1. Public and Community Buildings and Facilities

There are a number of public buildings and facilities within the center of the Village and others on the fringe. These include the Town Offices, the fire station, the Water District Building, the sewer pump station facility, the Village School, and the District Court. In addition, there are a number of “community” buildings including the Grange Hall, American Legion Building, and the churches. The appearance of each of these sites could be improved through landscaping and minor building changes. This is clearly a case where the public acting through its public and community institutions should take the lead in setting the standard for the visual environment.

CEDCOH should encourage the Town and the other community organizations to look at their facilities in the Village and develop a program for improving the visual appearance of their property. This might involve improved maintenance, upgraded landscaping, screening of storage areas or a coat of paint.



## 2. *Forgotten Places*

There are a number of areas in Hooksett Village that could become visual assets for the community but that are currently neglected or forgotten. These include:

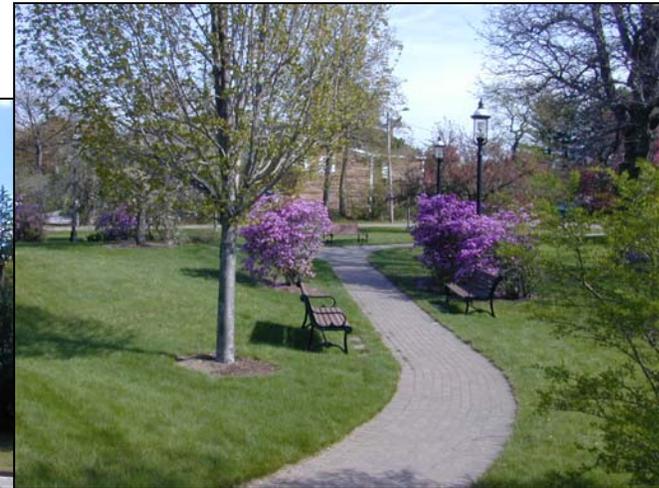
- the traffic islands at the intersection of Main Street and Route 3A
- the park at this same intersection
- the traffic barriers at the ends of Maple and Rosedale Streets
- the areas along the approaches to the bridge
- the area along the river on Riverside Street just downstream of the bridge
- the land between Route 3A and the river north of Exit 11
- the Veteran's Memorial and park on Veteran's Drive
- the land along the river from the new bridge upstream to the sewer pump station.



Each of these areas could become attractive assets for the Village through some clean up, landscaping, and regular maintenance. Most of these areas are owned either by the Town or the state and are, therefore, a public responsibility. CEDCOH should develop a program to improve these “forgotten places” by having community organizations and groups take on the responsibility for improving and maintaining one area through an “adopt-a-spot” type of program. Under this approach, an organization or group would take responsibility for a particular area and would develop an improvement plan, carry out the improvement, and then maintain the area so that it is a positive addition to Hooksett Village.

### **3. Flower Boxes and Beds**

Flowers can have a very positive impact on the visual environment. They help create a positive image for a place. Improvements with flowers are relatively easy to carry out and can be done quickly. The use of flowers should be a major component of the Village Improvement Program. CEDCOH should undertake a program to encourage property owners along Main Street, Merrimack Street, and other major streets to plant flowers in the area between the building and the street or in flower boxes or planters. CEDCOH should consider organizing a bulk purchase of the stock from a local vendor as a way of encouraging people to participate and to reduce the cost of the effort.



## C. Gateways

The Vision for Hooksett Village suggests that the “Village” will have a well-defined sense of place – you will know when you are in Hooksett Village. There will also be distinct edges to the Village and well-defined gateways. “Gateways” are the front door to a village or community. They create the first impression of the area and let you know that you have arrived at a “place” not just an intersection or curve in the road. Residential developers recognize the role and value of gateways. New developments typically contain “gateways” that set the tone and let you know that you are about to enter a special place.

The entrances to Hooksett Village from Routes 3 and 3A should function as “gateways” that serve as a lobby and tell people they are about to enter a special place – Hooksett Village. Currently, there is little to let people know that the Village exists. One can literally drive by on Route 3 and not be aware that Hooksett Village exists.

The community should create landscaped gateways at the following locations (see Figure 5):

- on the river side of Route 3A between Exit 11 and Riverside Street
- at the intersection of Main Street and Route 3A
- at the intersection of Main Street and Route 3 (interim location)
- at the intersection of the new connector road and Route 3 (future location)

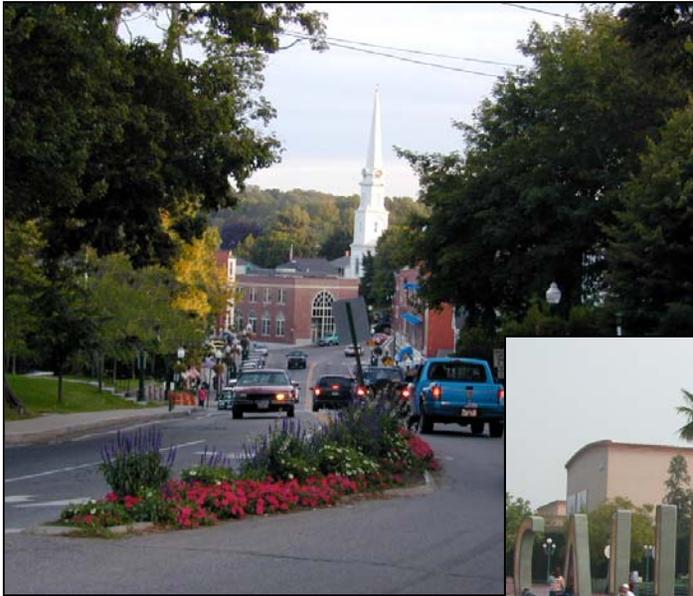


Figure 5. Hooksett Village Gateways



Other possible gateway locations are on Merrimack Street near the District Court and on Route 3 north of the Village.

Each gateway should be designed to create an attractive entrance with appropriate signage and landscaping. The gateway treatments should be appropriate to Hooksett and should have a somewhat consistent theme. The following are examples of gateway treatments:



## D. Access to the River

Key elements of the Vision for Hooksett Village are that the scenic character of the river and its shorelines will be maintained while improved public access to the river will be provided. Open space and green areas along the river will be retained and enhanced. While there is substantial visual and physical access to the river along the eastern shore and visual access to the river along the western shore upstream of the bridge, the river becomes almost invisible and inaccessible within the heart of the Village and downstream of the bridge. At least four possibilities exist for improving physical and/or scenic access to the river.



### ***1. The Lilac Bridge***

In addition to its potential for becoming the symbol of the revitalization of Hooksett Village, the restoration of the Lilac Bridge has the potential for enhancing access to the river within the core of the Village. The Town owns land adjacent to the bridge on each side of the river that is currently unused and overgrown. Re-establishment of the bridge as a pedestrian route across the river will provide a reason for people to use this key area of river frontage.

### ***2. The area on the west shore upstream of the American Legion***

There is a sliver of land between the river and the railroad that may offer the potential for providing access to the riverfront. The proposed Sea to Mountain trail will potentially run through this area. This land is currently privately owned. Access to this area can be obtained through the American Legion site and from Edgewater

Street. There may be potential to develop a swimming beach in this area.

**3. The area between the river and Riverside Street and Route 3A north of Exit 11**

There is a narrow band of land between the river and Riverside Street and Route 3A north of the Exit 11 area. The Town owns some of this land which is vacant and generally overgrown. Selective thinning of the vegetation in this area could provide enhanced views of the river while some potential may exist for walking paths in this area.

**4. The area on the eastern shore between the river and the railroad tracks downstream of the bridge**

The entire river frontage in this area is cutoff by the railroad and is undeveloped. The land is owned by a variety of parties including the railroad and the state. Pedestrian access to this area is difficult to achieve and the most realistic possibility is in the vicinity of the bridge where it may be possible to create a pedestrian way under the highway and railroad bridges to get access to this area. However, this will probably be very expensive to do.



### E. Pedestrian Connections and Facilities

The Vision for the Hooksett Village envisions that the area will have a pedestrian scale – things will be close together so that residents can walk or bike. Hooksett Village will also be pedestrian-friendly -- sidewalks, trails, and bicycle facilities will be provided to encourage people to walk, bike, and enjoy the village environment. The Village has the remnants of a sidewalk system with sidewalks along parts of Main Street, along some of Route 3A, and in the Merrimack/Veteran’s Drive area. However, pedestrian connections do not link many of the existing activity centers within the Village.

The proposed Sea to Mountain Trail will create an alternative pedestrian way that runs essentially parallel to the railroad and will create pedestrian access to the Village School site and the various recreation facilities between Main Street and the Railroad tracks. Even with this improvement, most of the residential neighborhoods will not be served by pedestrian and bicycle facilities.





CEDCHO should support the rehabilitation and expansion of the existing sidewalk system in the Village. This should include extension of a sidewalk along Main Street toward Route 3 and the construction of a sidewalk or pedestrian way from the Village to the Library as part of the connector road project. This effort should focus on making these facilities pedestrian-friendly to encourage their use. Over time, efforts should be made to extend the sidewalk network so that the residential neighborhoods are interconnected.

## F. Administrative Approaches

The Vision for Hooksett Village establishes lofty expectations for the future of the Village. For these expectations to be achieved there will need to be a strong advocate for village interests and an administrative body that can undertake some of the projects. CEDCOH should consider whether it should be that body or whether a formal development corporation should be formed to play this role.

## G. Financing Alternatives

While some of the projects identified above can be accomplished at little or no cost, many of the activities will require significant resources. CEDCHO should assist the Town in locating appropriate funding to support the village improvement effort. This should include consideration of the following:

### 1. *Comprehensive Impact Fee System*

New Hampshire law allows municipalities to charge impact fees to development activities that create the need for new or expanded public facilities. The Town should create an impact fee program for residential and non-residential development activities that impact Hooksett Village. This program could include fees to pay some of the costs for the following improvements:

- construction of the connector road and related improvements
- construction of a sidewalk or pedestrian way linking the library and the village
- acquisition of land for the future construction of a village bypass and new bridge
- expansion of recreational facilities

### 2. *Village Improvement Trust*

CEDCHO should explore the creation of a charitable trust that would support the Village Improvement Program. The idea would be to create a non-profit entity that could seek tax-deductible contributions primarily to defray the

costs involved with the restoration of the Lilac Bridge. This trust could then solicit the community, past residents, businesses, etc. to financially support the keystone project – the Lilac Bridge.

## SECTION VII. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Implementation of the Vision for Hooksett Village including the Village Improvement Program and Land Use Plan will require a coordinated and on-going effort on the part of the Town, CEDCHO, and other community groups and organizations. Realistically, the suggestions set forth in the preceding sections probably exceed the ability of these groups. Therefore it will be necessary that they establish priorities and make slow but steady progress in achieving the vision. This section begins to lay out a possible strategy for implementing the proposals. CEDCOH will need to take this draft strategy and refine it based upon its priorities and capabilities.

The implementation strategy divides actions into Immediate, Short Term, and Long Term. Immediate actions should be accomplished within the next year. Short term actions should be accomplished within 2 to 3 years while long term actions may require 5 or more years to accomplish. Not all of the proposals suggested in the report have been included in the strategy.

### A. Immediate Actions

It is important that CEDCOH and the Town generate some visible accomplishments during the next year. Therefore, the Immediate Actions portion of the strategy

focuses on projects that can be completed in a short time period without the need for significant new resources and projects that are needed to establish the framework for private development in and around the Village.

#### 1. *Town Actions*

- incorporate the Vision for Hooksett Village into the update of the Town's Master Plan
- incorporate the Future Land Use Plan and related materials into the update of the Town's Master Plan
- incorporate the recommendations of the Municipal Policies and Village Improvement Plan into the update of the Town's Master Plan
- amend the Town's Zoning Ordinance to make it consistent with the Future Land Use Plan
- administratively upgrade the "housekeeping" of the Town's buildings and infrastructure within the Village
- adopt the recommended cross-section and related design aspects for the proposed connector road
- provide for the construction of a sidewalk or pedestrian way in conjunction with the connector road
- design and undertake a simple landscaping program for the Veteran's Drive sewer pump station to improve the appearance of that facility

## **2. CEDCOH Actions**

- create a Restore the Lilac Bridge logo and begin using it in community activities
- select one or two Town-owned “forgotten places” for improvement, develop appropriate treatments, and recruit an organization to adopt each place or spot
- select one or two locations for gateway improvements, obtain necessary approvals for property owners, and design the improvements
- create a development corporation or similar body that can carry out improvements in the Village

## **B. Short Term Actions**

Once the groundwork has been established in the first year of the implementation program and some projects accomplished, CEDCOH and the Town should move forward with an aggressive program for improving Hooksett Village.

### **1. Town Actions**

- initiate discussions with state agencies on the long term planning for a new bridge and bypass of the Village
- seek outside funding for the restoration of the Lilac Bridge
- develop improvement plans for the fire station and water district building and carry them out
- fund and implement one or two gateway improvements

- undertake a preliminary design and location study for a new town office building
- undertake selective clearing of the area between Riverside Street/Route 3A and the river to enhance the visibility of the water and create scenic spots
- support development of the Sea to Mountain Trail
- prepare a five year plan for sidewalk improvements within the Village and begin implementing the plan
- create a comprehensive system of impact fees to help finance village improvements

### **2. CEDCOH Actions**

- prepare a program for the rehabilitation of the Lilac Bridge including design plans, site plans, and updated cost estimates
- establish a non-profit Village Improvement Trust
- undertake a public relations campaign and begin raising funds for the restoration of the Lilac Bridge
- depending on the future use of the facility, work with the school system to prepare and implement an improvement plan for the Village Elementary building
- obtain approval to carry out improvements to “forgotten places” that are not owned by the Town
- select one or two additional “forgotten places” for improvement, develop appropriate treatments, and recruit an organization to adopt each place or spot
- initiate a Village flower program and arrange for bulk purchasing of materials
- select one or two additional locations for gateway improvements, obtain necessary approvals for property owners, and design the improvements

- evaluate the suitability of public access to the riverfront upstream of the American Legion
- support development of the Sea to Mountain Trail

- evaluate the suitability of public access to the riverfront downstream of the bridge

## C. Long Term Actions

As progress is made on the short term activities, the Town and CEDCOH should continue to support ongoing activities (housekeeping, forgotten spots program, gateways maintenance, flower program, etc.) and move forward with major projects.

### **1. Town Actions**

- undertake a preliminary design study in conjunction with state agencies to identify a preferred location for a future new bridge and village bypass so steps can be taken to protect the right-of-way from development
- continue implementing the sidewalk improvement plan
- begin developing additional waterfront access if feasible
- initiate restoration of the Lilac Bridge
- fund and implement additional gateway improvements

### **2. CEDCOH Actions**

- work with the Grange, American Legion, and churches to prepare and implement improvement plans for their buildings
- select one or two additional “forgotten places” for improvement, develop appropriate treatments, and recruit an organization to adopt each place or spot

# APPENDIX A. VIRTUAL TOUR OF HOOKSETT VILLAGE

The following presentation was shown at the first charrette to familiarize the participants with the community and Hooksett Village.



Hooksett Village

A Virtual Tour



Fasten your seatbelts

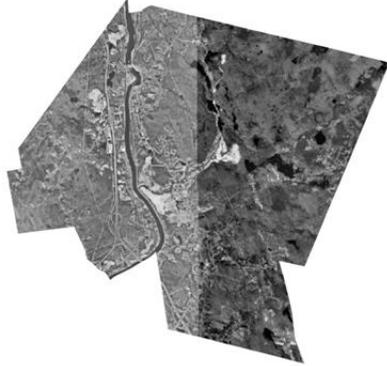


Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

2

## Hooksett

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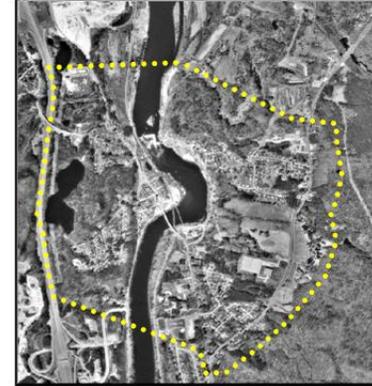


Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

3

## Hooksett Village

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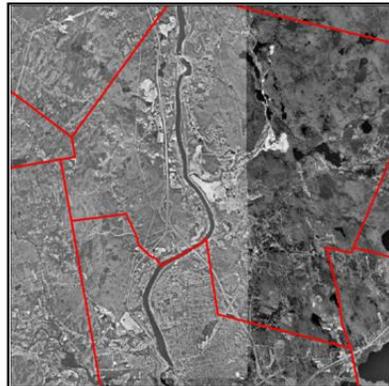


Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

4

## Hooksett region

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Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

5

## Hooksett region

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Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

6

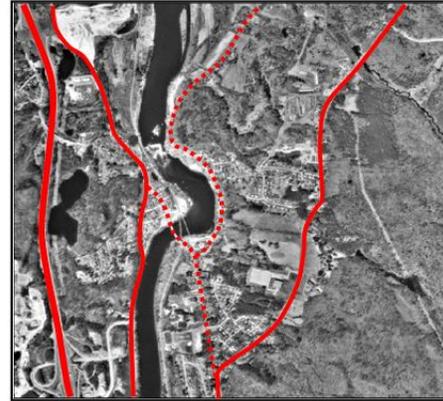
## Hooksett river crossing



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

7

## Hooksett transportation



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

8

## Hooksett transportation



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

9

## Hooksett development



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

10

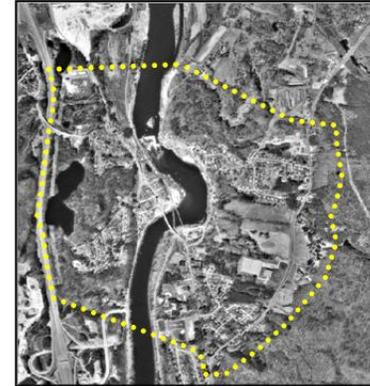
## Hooksett Village



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

11

## Hooksett Village study area



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

12

## Hooksett Village: Route 3 south gateway



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

13

## Hooksett Village: Route 3 north gateway



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

14

### Hooksett Village: Route 3a south gateway



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

15

### Hooksett Village: Route 3a north gateway



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

16

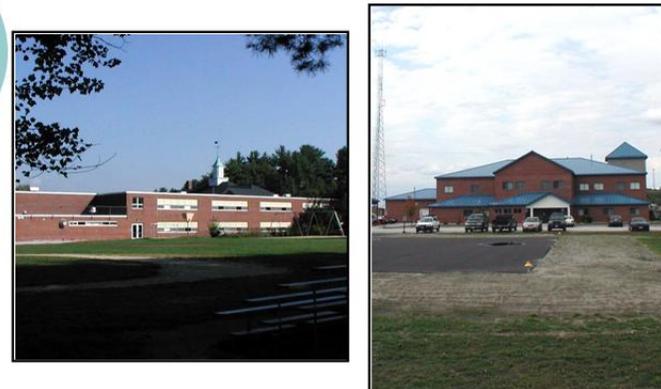
### Hooksett Village: public facilities



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

17

### Hooksett Village: public facilities



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

18

## Hooksett Village: community facilities



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

19

## Hooksett Village: civic spaces



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

20

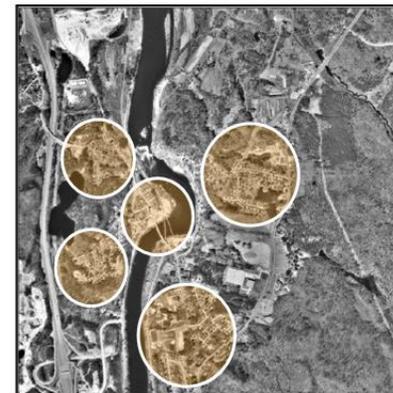
## Hooksett Village: historic structures



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

21

## Hooksett Village: residential neighborhoods



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

22

### Hooksett Village: residential neighborhoods



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

23

### Hooksett Village: residential neighborhoods



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

24

### Hooksett Village: residential neighborhoods



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

25

### Hooksett Village: residential neighborhoods



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

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## Hooksett Village: residential neighborhoods



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

27

## Hooksett Village: new development



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

28

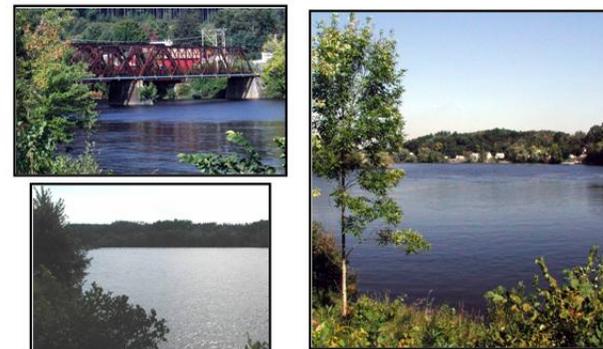
## Hooksett Village: pedestrian walks



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

29

## Hooksett Village: the river



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

30

## Hooksett Village: CIGNA



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

31

## Hooksett Village: opportunities



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

32

## Hooksett Village: redevelopment potential



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

33

## Hooksett Village: utility infrastructure



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

34



## Hooksett Village



Hooksett Village: A virtual tour

35

## APPENDIX B. SUMMARY OF THE FIRST CHARRETTE

CEDCOH hosted the first charrette for the Hooksett Village Design Study on Saturday, October 4, 2003 at the Hooksett Public Library. Approximately fifty people including members of the CEDCOH board participated in the charrette.

The following sections summarize the results of the small group exercises. In each exercise, the groups were asked to identify the top 3-5 items. The results from each table are reported below. The “common themes” section under each exercise identifies the topics that emerged from a number of groups. The worksheets developed in the small group discussions are included in the appendices of the report on the session.

### *EXERCISE #1 WHAT ARE THE POSITIVE THINGS ABOUT HOOKSETT VILLAGE THAT WE SHOULD WORK TO RETAIN IN THE FUTURE?*

TABLE 1

1. Robie's store
2. The river/the geography
3. Parks/playgrounds/recreation (hiking trails) wild spaces

4. Family oriented neighborhoods - people interact with side walks, connected

TABLE 2

1. Quality of natural resources, recreational possibilities and access to river
2. Small town atmosphere, friendly neighbors, small size, historic sites close together
3. Access to major arteries
4. Sports facilities and programs

TABLE 3

1. River
2. Historic - Architectural core area
3. Potential train station (re-instatement)
4. Recreation fields: maintained, compact, walking distance.
5. Center village

TABLE 4

1. Robie's
2. Sense of center
3. Lilac Bridge
4. Village School

TABLE 5

1. Historical aspects
2. Lilac Bridge
3. Great potential for community center
4. Parks (Veterans, Donati, Lamberts)
5. Great views/scenery

TABLE 6

1. Village school
2. Riverfront
3. Heritage Trail

COMMON THEMES - Positives to be Retained

1. The river and the riverfront
2. The sense of a community center
3. Small town atmosphere/character
4. Nice residential neighborhoods/friendly neighbors
5. Robie's
6. Availability of recreational facilities/parks/playgrounds
7. The Village School
8. The Lilac Bridge
9. Historical character/buildings
10. Ability to walk
11. Natural resources/scenic views/open land

***EXERCISE #2 WHAT ARE THE THINGS THAT NEED TO BE IMPROVED OR CHANGED ABOUT THE VILLAGE?***

TABLE 1

1. Decrease traffic at Merrimack/Granite/S. Main suicide corner at Main Street/ Route 3, Main Street 3-A.
2. Need of community center for all ages
3. Improve sidewalk access
4. Need neighborhood businesses like restaurants, stores, etc.

TABLE 2

1. Traffic:
  - a. bridge too large and too small
  - b. no sidewalks
2. No vision for:
  - a. preservation of nature during real estate development
  - b. small town preservation
  - c. money talks
3. Inadequate Town Hall facilities

TABLE 3

1. Traffic:
  - a. flow-narrow roads
  - b. speed
  - c. shortcut on Riverside Road, etc.
2. Amenities:
  - a. compared to Suncook
  - b. limited services
  - c. lack of retail
3. Access:

- a. river,
- b. walking path
- c. Heritage Trail
- d. Pinnacle
- e. other open space
- 4. No gateways

TABLE 4

- 1. Village school - redo or re-use
- 2. Safety - roads and intersections
- 3. Traffic on bridge
- 4. Destination facilities

TABLE 5

- 1. Traffic!! Too much!!
- 2. Town Hall is too small
- 3. Lilac Bridge is in disrepair
- 4. Preservation of scenery
- 5. Underutilized river/limited access

TABLE 6

- 1. More businesses in village
- 2. Use empty buildings for community purposes
- 3. Develop riverfront for people

COMMON THEMES - Things to Change or Improve

- 1. Traffic
- 2. Improved sidewalks/pedestrian facilities
- 3. Upgraded Town Hall

- 4. More businesses, services, and amenities in the Village
- 5. Improved access to/utilization of the river
- 6. Preservation of natural resources/scenic aspects
- 7. Reuse of the Village School
- 8. Lack of gateways

*EXERCISE #3 WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVING HOOKSETT VILLAGE?*

**A. Low/No Cost Opportunities**

TABLE 1

- 1. Plant flowers, bushes, trees
- 2. Grant writers (private non-profits)
- 3. Code enforcement on problem properties
- 4. Monitor what we already have (cut grass, kill poison ivy)

TABLE 2

- 1. Organize civic groups to undertake maintenance activities and beautification and clear trails
- 2. Street side landscape
- 3. Pedestrian crossings
- 4. Trails

TABLE 3

- 1. Special reg's for Village Center (overlay district)
- 2. Landscaping - gateways, parks, signs
- 3. Trail system

- 4. Town beach
- 5. Negotiate access to Pinnacle and Pinnacle Pond

TABLE 4

- 1. Adopt a spot programs: civic clubs, businesses
- 2. Pathways and trails: Heritage Trail, opportunities for trails, and interconnecting for large areas
- 3. Signage: announcing areas, historic, parks (Lambert, Donati)

TABLE 5

- 1. Theme for village
- 2. Utilize civic groups to “adopt a spot”
- 3. Flowers/planters at key gateways

TABLE 6

- 1. Village zoning performance standards
- 2. Apply for grant money
- 3. Landscape engineer plan: plantings, lighting, street scaping
- 4. Mother Theresa
- 5. Citizen sweat equity
- 6. TIF designation (private, public finance initiatives)

COMMON THEMES - Low cost improvements

- 1. Undertake activities to beautify the village - landscaping, adopt-a-spot program, gateways

- 2. Create trails/pedestrian connections
- 3. Seek outside funding for village improvements
- 4. Maintain what we have
- 5. Improve the streetscape
- 6. Create special zoning for the village

**B. Improvements to the Public Realm**

TABLE 1

- 1. More and better sidewalks, connect them
- 2. Widen and improve roads to easy traffic problem
- 3. Build new connector road (cross the river to exit 11)
- 4. Make sure we can swim in the Merrimack

TABLE 2

- 1. Open Lilac Bridge
- 2. Develop village school for community use
- 3. Do not expand river crossing
- 4. Build new bridge away from village

TABLE 3

- 1. Convert village - community center and/or town hall
- 2. Town Hall - restricted commercial development
- 3. New road/bridge to exit 11
- 4. Street: walkway lighting, widen sidewalks, beautification
- 5. Swimming - public beach
- 6. Restore Lilac Bridge

TABLE 4

1. Lilac Bridge
2. Integrating rec fields and trail system through town.

TABLE 5

1. Picnic area in Robie's "loop"
2. Connector from CIGNA to Main Street designed for livable walkable community to include pedestrians and bikes
3. Stop lights: H.Hill/3-A; Main/Merrimack; Granite Hill/Route 3; Main/ Riverside Drive.
4. Signs for local facilities/services historical markers

TABLE 6

1. Sponsoring community events/calendar\*
2. Walkways, bike paths, picnic areas, performance venues
3. Manage our traffic

\*already exists in Library website

COMMON THEMES - Improvements to the "Public Realm"

1. Improve sidewalks and pedestrian connections
2. Restore the Lilac Bridge
3. Develop a new bridge and connector road to remove traffic from the village
4. Establish a Town beach

5. Expand the trail system/Heritage Trail
6. Create a village/pedestrian, walkable scale/design of the connector road/upgrade Robie loop

**C. Improvements That Involve Private Land or Buildings**

TABLE 1

1. Allow, encourage Robie's to install waterfront access café.
2. Create guidelines for new home constructions looks - want village scale
3. Better define zoning in the village performance zone, inclusionary zone

TABLE 2

1. Future development should preserve village character
2. Commercial and residential development together/commercial development blend in with existing Robie's character.
3. Public incentives for pure improvements
4. Limit new growth
5. Buy land for conservation

TABLE 3

1. Heads Pond access and proposed town beach = sooner = now
2. Village area = redevelopment area exempting/low cost programs, improvement incentives
3. Pinnacle area access
4. Prohibit developers from attempting to construct an alternate town center
5. Establish a redevelopment authority

TABLE 4

1. Professional office space
2. Heritage Trail as it impacts private land

TABLE 5

1. North of Legion - riverfront cleanup
2. Easement from legion for river access
3. Donation of land for public use by CIGNA (park, esplanade, etc.)

TABLE 6

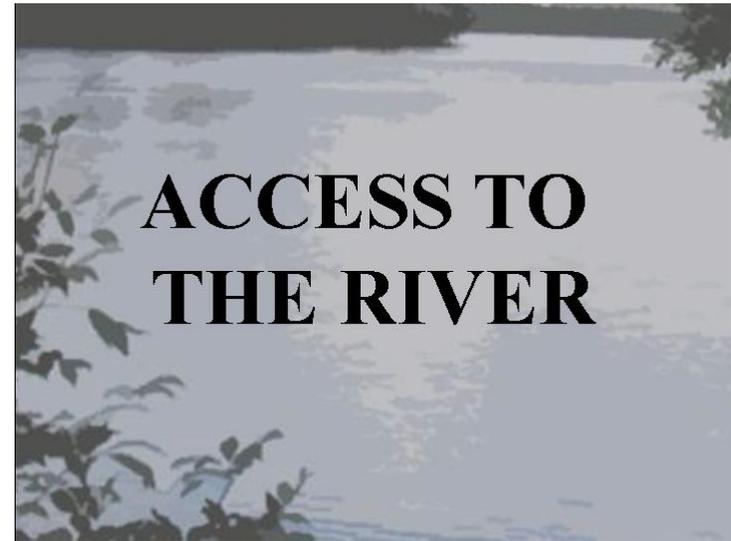
1. Neighborhood improvement initiatives
2. Encourage developments and private landowners } provide access to each other and integrate open space and public pathways

COMMON THEMES - Improvements that involve private property

1. Encourage village character development/village zoning
2. Design guidelines
3. Create an administrative mechanism to accomplish improvements
4. Improve public access - river @ Robie's, the Pinnacle, Head's Pond
5. Create incentives/financing tools
6. Maintain open space as development occurs

## APPENDIX C. VILLAGE IMPROVEMENTS

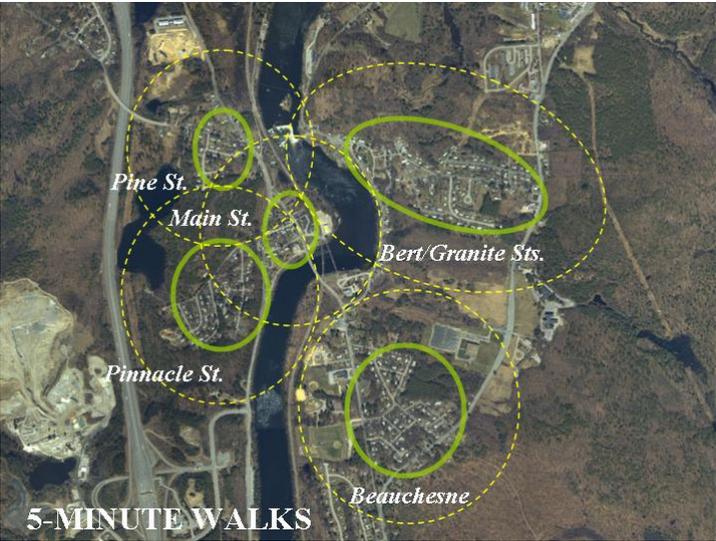
The following presentation was shown at the second charrette as examples of the types of activities that could be included in a “Village Improvement Program.”



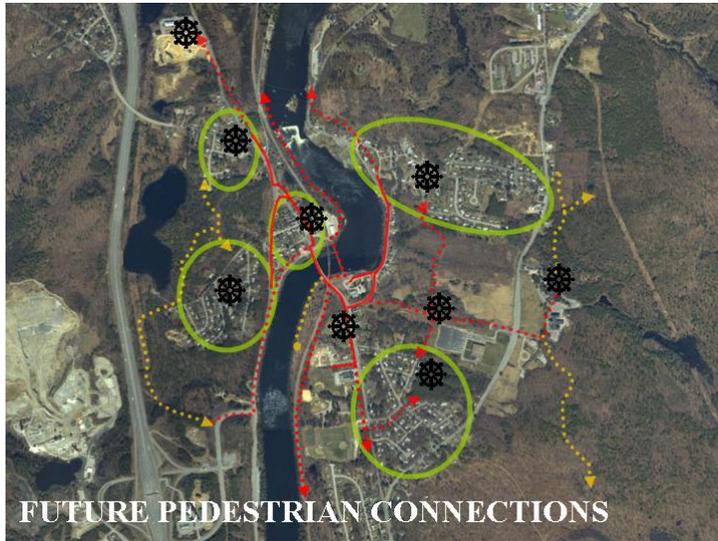




# PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS & FACILITIES

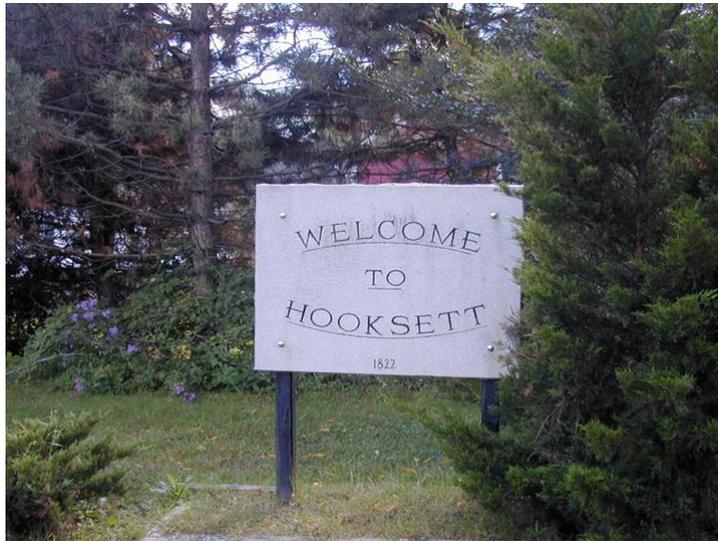








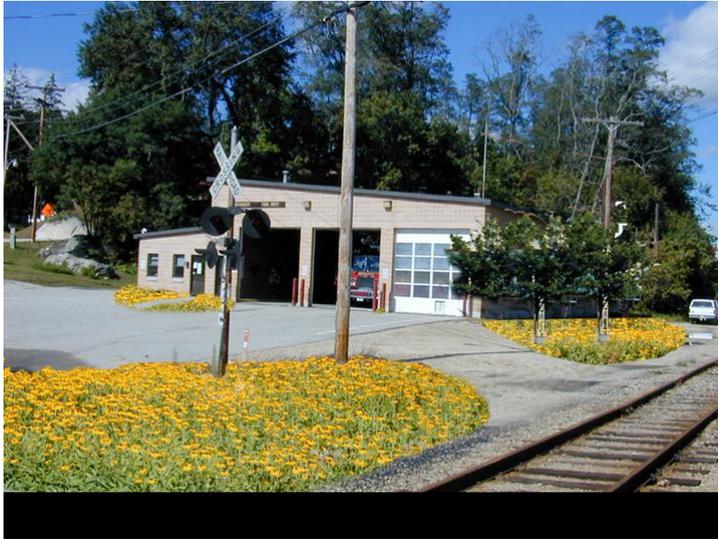






**VILLAGE  
BEAUTIFICATION**





**COMMUNITY  
FACILITIES  
&  
TOWN CENTER**





# DESIGN STANDARDS

**COMMON DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES**

The lighting plan shall consider the location and heights of buffers, screen walls, fencing, and other landscape elements to eliminate dark spots and potential hiding places.

**Landscape Plan.** Landscaping for CDE's shall be coordinated with all other elements of the site. See Chapter 4, Design of the Landscape at Cook's Corner, for further standards for landscape materials.



*High quality materials, such as granite curbing and concrete pavers, help to ensure minimal maintenance problems.*



*Coordinated light fixtures that consider the needs of both the pedestrian and the motorist.*



*Roadway lighting can help create a boulevard effect and emphasize pathways.*



*Large landscaped islands help to break up the scale of parking lots and reduce diagonal traffic movement.*



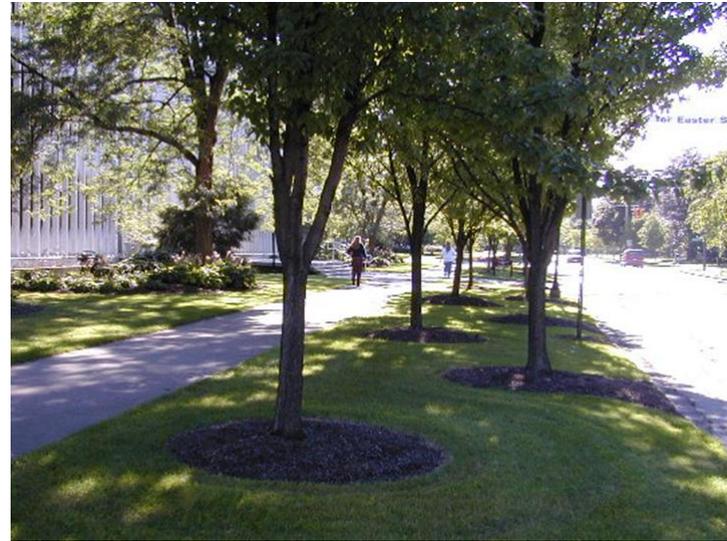
*Fences help reduce the apparent width of the front driveway and guide the pedestrian to the front entrances.*

**COOK'S CORNER DESIGN STANDARDS** 1-12

# Design Standards









# APPENDIX D. SUMMARY OF THE SECOND CHARRETTE

CEDCOH hosted the second charrette for the Hooksett Village Design Study on Saturday, October 25, 2003 at the Hooksett Public Library. Approximately forty people including members of the CEDCOH board participated in the charrette. The following sections summarize the results of the second charrette.

## 1. A VISION FOR HOOKSETT VILLAGE

Mark Eyerman presented a draft vision for the Village based upon the feedback at the first charrette. Many participants felt that the draft vision was appropriate. Participants provided the following specific feedback on the draft vision:

### *Pluses or Positive Aspects*

- Hooksett can have commercial uses in the village if it is done well - example of Chester, NJ
- The idea of service businesses within walking distance
- The zoning will need to be changed to achieve the Vision

- The Village is or should be the “heartbeat of the community”
- The opportunity to use the Village School to create a “community center”

### *Deltas or Things That Should Be Changed*

- The proposed connector road will have an impact on Main Street and will cost lots of money
- There is a concern about generating too much activity in the village businesses and facilities like a beach draw people and create additional traffic
- Do not make Merrimack Street commercial
- The Vision should include a recreational and historical focus
- Service businesses such as dentists or small offices are OK
- Heavy or large-scale retail uses should not be encouraged - but small shops are OK

- There is a concern that the Vision won't happen unless the traffic is addressed and that other traffic improvements may adversely impact the Village
- The Vision should emphasize taking care of things and consider how the Village is seen by others (weeds, graffiti, etc.) - the concept of BSNP should be included in the Vision
  - Bright
  - Shiny
  - Neat
  - Pretty
- The Vision views the Village in isolation but it must be considered in a regional context
- What is included in the "Vision" needs to be clarified
- Who carries out the Vision? Us, the Hooksett community
- The Vision needs to encourage property owners to take better care of their property
- The Village needs to be a draw so the rest of the community supports the Village and efforts to improve it
- The Vision needs to reflect the need for improved space for municipal operations not simply "improving the existing Town Hall"

## 2. The Big Picture or Overall Land Use Pattern for the Village

In the first small group exercise, participants were asked to think about the overall land use pattern for Hooksett Village. They were asked to consider the possible future use of four areas that are currently vacant or may have future development potential. In addition, they were asked to consider the existing developed residential areas of the Village and the proposed connector road through the CIGNA from Route 3 to Main Street.

- *Route 3A Property*

This is the vacant parcel on the east side of Route 3A north of the Village. The parcel extends from Route 3A down over the hill to the railroad. It is currently zoned industrial.

The small groups recognized the development limitations of this parcel including the steep slope area near the road, limited access, and possible floodplain issues. The current industrial zoning was viewed as inappropriate. A number of groups suggested that this parcel should be viewed for low intensity use. Suggestions for desired future uses included recreational and open space use, multifamily housing, an inn, restaurant, and parking for the Heritage Trail.

There was a sense that development of this parcel is not imminent and therefore this is a low priority.

One group suggested that the development rights might be able to be transferred to another area so that this parcel could be preserved as open space.

- *American Legion Parcel*

This is the parcel just north of the bridge on the west side of the river. The parcel is currently developed with the American Legion building. The area is currently zoned industrial. Participants were asked to think in terms of the long term possibilities for this site.

The groups recognized that the American Legion has no desire to move from the site and that the objective should not be to force them out. A number of the groups suggested that it would be desirable to see the appearance of the building and site improved. This included improved landscaping and upgrading the design of the building so that it has more of a “village character”.

A number of groups discussed exploring improved public access to the river including the possibility of a beach and a trail along the riverfront. One group suggested the possibility of developing an outdoor amphitheater for concerts and the like. The connection to the Heritage Trail including possible trail parking was mentioned.

In the long term, a number of groups suggested that the current industrial zoning is inappropriate. The groups suggested the possibility of creating a village

overlay district or a mixed use/recreational zone that would allow the site to be redeveloped for more village-like uses. Ideas included a waterfront restaurant or a train depot reproduction with shops, restaurant, café, etc. in a waterfront setting.

- *Land North of Bert Street*

This is the vacant land on the west side of Route 3A north of Bert Street. The area is currently zoned commercial. There is currently discussion of building elderly housing on the site based upon an old approved plan. In the past, the area was also considered for a shopping center development.

The opinions of the groups with respect to this area were more mixed. Some groups felt that allowing housing in this area was appropriate while others felt that it should remain zoned for commercial use. One group suggested allowing mixed use with village-scale housing and some commercial use. Some concern was expressed about the suitability of this area for elderly housing – some thought that it is too far from the center of the Village.

- *The CIGNA Land*

This is the vacant land surrounding the current CIGNA office building on the west side of Route 3 and extending westerly into the Village. The area is currently zoned MU1 which allows a variety of nonresidential uses but not housing.

The groups were shown five possible development scenarios for this area. One (Scenario A) looked at buildout under the current zoning with office park style development and some small retail uses. Scenario B looked at small-scale mixed use development (residential/offices/services/shops) at the west end of the parcel with office development at the east end. The three other scenarios (C-1, C-2, and C-3) looked at various approaches to developing a village center in this area with a green, community facilities, and various mixes of residential and small-scale retail/office/service uses.

The feedback on the future use of this area varied widely and no consensus emerged as to a desired pattern of use. The following sections summarize a number of the key issues:

Residential Development -- some groups felt that no residential development should be allowed on the parcel given the planned development on the east side of Route 3. Other groups felt that residential development could be accommodated as long as it was part of a mixed use development. Other groups suggested that this is an appropriate location for elderly housing or affordable housing.

Office Park Development -- some groups suggested that all or a portion of the area should be developed as an office/business park as currently envisioned. Some groups felt that

creating good quality jobs and taxable property is important. There was some discussion of office park development at the east end of the parcel along Route 3 with more village-like mixed use development at the western end.

Retail and Service Uses -- a number of groups felt that small-scale retail and service uses are appropriate as part of the development of this area. Some expressed a desire that retail uses only be allowed as part of a mixed use building while others suggested that no “free-standing” retail uses should be allowed.

Community/Public Uses -- a number of groups supported the possible location of community, recreational, and public uses within this area. One group specifically mentioned the possibility of a site for a future school.

Village Center -- a number of groups seemed to support the idea of developing some type of village center as part of the future use of this property. Some mentioned the idea of a green or commons. There were some reservations about how this would relate to the “existing” village. Some people felt that it is important to enhance the “existing” village, not move it.

Mixed Use Development -- a number of suggestions were made about having a mix of uses on the site and encouraging mixed use development within buildings or complexes.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Access -- a couple of groups highlighted the need for good pedestrian and bike facilities. Creating a pedestrian link between the center of the Village and the library was discussed.

There was considerable discussion of the proposed connector road through this site as part of the discussion of the use of this area. That discussion is summarized below.

- *The Established Residential Neighborhoods*

These are the built-up residential areas of the Village including the Bert Street neighborhood, the Beauchense development, the Pinnacle neighborhood, the neighborhood off Pine Street, and the residential core of the Village. These areas are currently zoned MDR which requires a  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre lot with 150 feet of street frontage for a single-family home connected to the public sewer. Since most of the existing residential lots are in the 8,000 to 15,000 square foot range, most existing lots are nonconforming.

The groups suggested that new residential development in the Village should have a "village character" with smaller lots and frontage than required by the current zoning. A number of groups suggested that the zoning be changed to better reflect a village character. At the same time, there was some concern about the impact of additional

housing on community services. There was some discussion about the potential to create affordable housing in the Village. A few groups suggested that if smaller lots are allowed, there will need to be design standards to assure that these are good quality developments.

Groups also discussed a desire for improved pedestrian facilities. This included the possibility of sidewalks on some streets and pedestrian connections between neighborhoods with community facilities.

- *The Connector Road*

This involves the possible construction of a new road through the middle of the CIGNA property from Route 3 to Main Street near the bridge. This road would potentially allow traffic to be reduced on the south end of Main Street and on Merrimack Street but could increase traffic on the west end of Main Street. Participants were presented with three alternative cross-sections for the connector, a typical highway cross-section, a boulevard design, and a street design with on-street parking.

The key issues to emerge from this discussion involve the role or purpose of this new roadway (is it intended to be a traffic bypass or a street) and the possible implications of building the connector on the village, especially the potential for inducing additional traffic to travel through the village.

Opinion was divided on these issues with some favoring a connector that would be primarily designed to move traffic from Route 3 to the bridge and others favoring more of a slow speed street. During the discussion, the possibility of designing a roadway that could function as traffic mover in the short term but be converted into a street if a new bridge is ever built that takes traffic out of the village. There was agreement that there should be a sidewalk or other pedestrian facility as part of the new road.

There was some discussion as to the possible impacts of the connector on the Village. Some questioned whether building this road made sense especially without a longer term plan for how traffic will cross the river. There were suggestions that if a new bridge is built, it should be located outside of the village so that the growing volume of traffic would not continue to go through the Village.