

Creating a Community at Taft Corners, Williston, Vermont

May 17, 1999

**Sponsored by the Vermont Section of the
American Society of Landscape Architects
Hosted by the Town of Williston Selectboard**



1999 Community Design Charrette Report

Creating a Community at Taft Corners Williston, Vermont

Sponsored by the Vermont Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects and hosted by the Town of Williston Selectboard.

Report prepared by Nat Goodhue, Charrette Coordinator, Susan Thompson, Intern, University of Vermont, and Michael Munson, Williston Town Planner, June 1999.

1999 Design Charrette Organizing Committee

Peter Bourgois, Community Outreach Chair, Vermont ASLA
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This report documents the third annual community design charrette held on Monday, May 17, 1999, focusing on the southwest quadrant at Taft Corners, adjacent to the Interstate 89/Route 2A interchange. It is the site of the most extensive collection of 'big box' retail stores in Vermont.

Maintaining a sense of place has become a challenge faced by communities from coast to coast. Retail developments with the same stores, the same architecture, and the same land use scheme are compromising community distinctiveness and community vitality.

They are typically located on vacant land near highway intersections for the convenience of automobile-propelled shoppers and detract from the vitality of nearby downtowns. The Town of Williston is considering alternatives for making Taft Corners "a more desirable place to be" as well as a convenient place to shop. Exploration of alternative designs for a community center in the southwest quadrant at Taft Corners is intended to generate ideas for property owners. Williston Town planning and zoning, as well as other communities facing similar issues.

To learn more about the design charrette or to find out how your community could be involved with a charrette process, please contact the Vermont Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects at PO Box 4552, Burlington, Vermont 05406.



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Introduction

Charrette--a name derived from the cart that was used to collect the creations of multiple artists at the culmination of each assignment--has come to mean an intensive design session that brings together a multi-disciplined team to problem-solve and stimulate creative solutions in a short period of time. It is not a substitute for, but rather a point of departure for, the more analytical and comprehensive process that must follow.

The third annual community design charrette was held on Monday, May 17, 1999. Thirteen professionals including landscape architects, planners, architects, and economic development representatives, along with the Williston Selectboard, volunteered their time and expertise to explore alternative designs as well as contribute to a vision for the southwest quadrant at Taft Corners, Williston, Vermont

General Charrette Goal

The development of alternative designs that would transform a commercial center into a community center and meet diverse needs such as: commercial, social, recreational, residential, aesthetic and civic.

Objectives

Town of Williston:

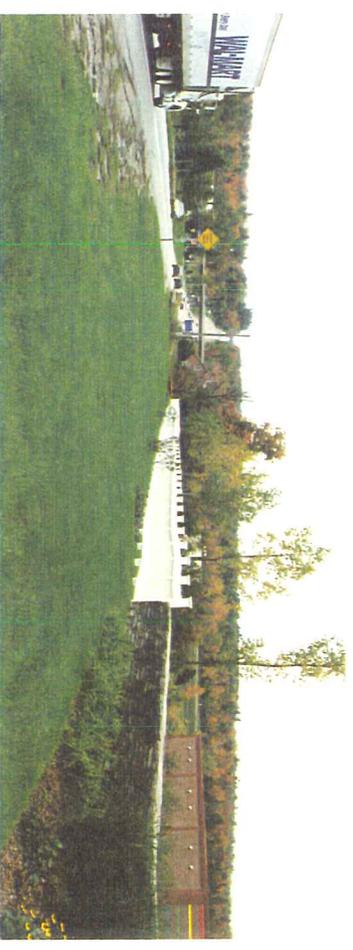
- 1) Create alternatives from which to develop a vision for the 240-acre southwest quadrant of Taft Corners;
- 2) Provide input for updating the town plan;
- 3) Provide guidance for development of zoning for the area; and
- 4) Generate ideas for design guidelines.

Vermont ASLA:

- 1) Explore land development and conservation options at a highway interchange;
- 2) Create designs that are economically successful and contribute to community character;
- 3) Provide a collegial opportunity for people in the design profession to work together; and
- 4) Demonstrate how the planning and design process can help a community achieve its goals.

Site Selection

Successful realization of the objectives at the 1997 and 1998 community design charrettes convinced VT-ASLA to continue the tradition. After exploring alternative patterns of residential neighborhood design in 1997 and alternative strategies for fitting today's commercial development into yesterday's downtown in 1998, the VT-ASLA executive committee chose to explore development at a highway interchange this year in response to a high level of interest in the issue statewide. Interest by the Town of Williston select board and Taft Corners property owners prompted the site selection for this year's charrette.

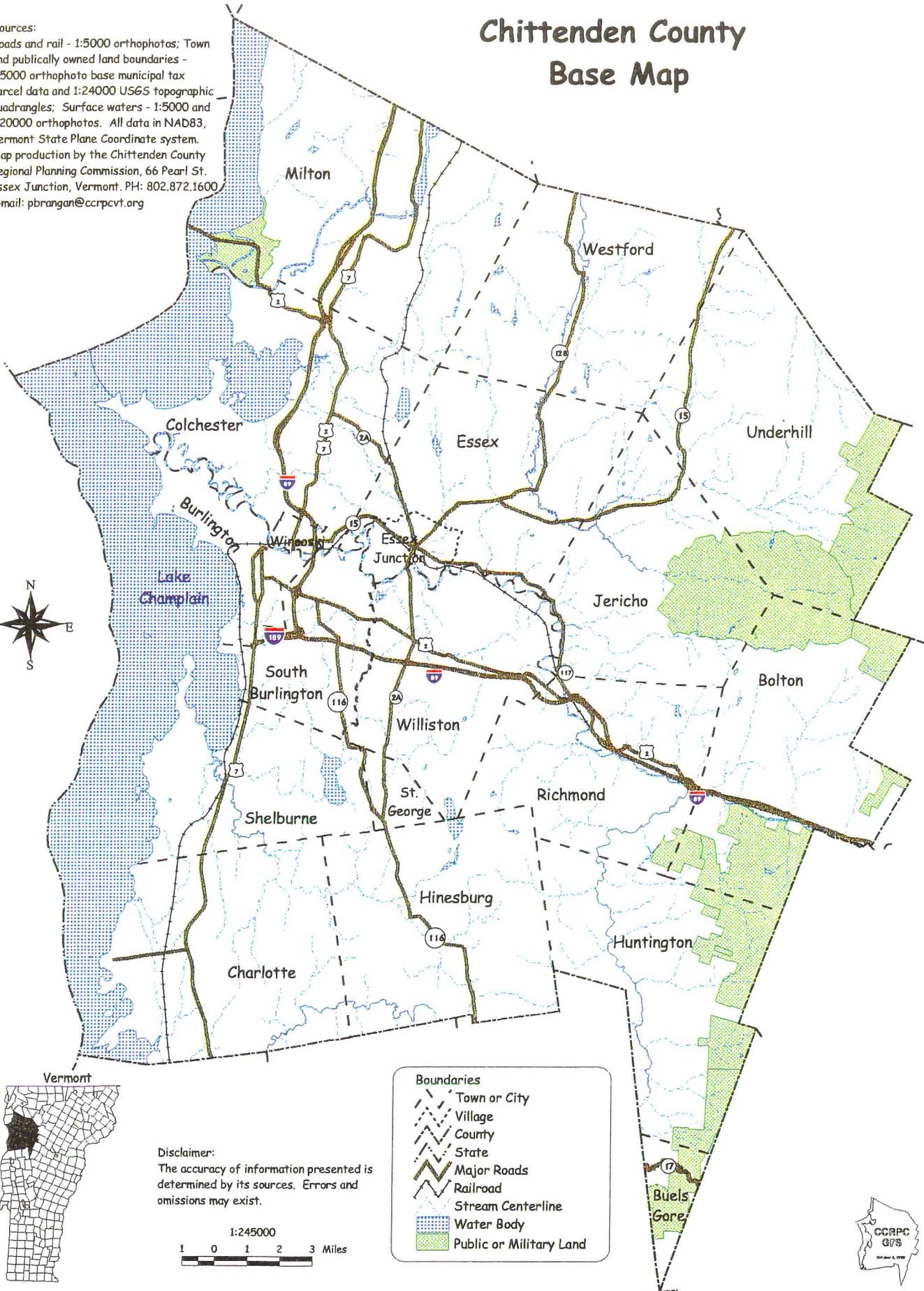


Route 2A / I-89 intersection

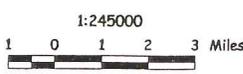
Chittenden County Base Map

Sources:

Roads and rail - 1:5000 orthophotos; Town and publically owned land boundaries - 1:5000 orthophoto base municipal tax parcel data and 1:24000 USGS topographic quadrangles; Surface waters - 1:5000 and 1:20000 orthophotos. All data in NAD83, Vermont State Plane Coordinate system. Map production by the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, 66 Pearl St. Essex Junction, Vermont. PH: 802.872.1600 e-mail: pbrangan@ccrpcvt.org



Disclaimer:
The accuracy of information presented is determined by its sources. Errors and omissions may exist.



Boundaries	
	Town or City
	Village
	County
	State
	Major Roads
	Railroad
	Stream Centerline
	Water Body
	Public or Military Land



Historical Context

The charrette study area is located in the Town of Williston, one of the more rapidly growing towns in Chittenden County. Since 1980, the Town's population has grown from 3,873 to an estimated 6,953 in 1998. Projections developed by the town indicate that a continuation of this trend will lead to the population reaching over 9,000 persons by the year 2010.

The study area is in the Town's designated commercial center that surrounds the intersection of US Route 2 and VT Route 2A. This intersection is known as Taft Corners. The focus of the charrette is the southwest quadrant of the Taft Corners intersection, an area bounded by I-89 to the south, Rte 2a to the east, Rte 2 to the north, and a line roughly parallel to Route 2A located approximately 2,600 feet to the west. This site contains roughly 240 acres.

For a long time, the Taft Corners area has been designated a major commercial center in the Town. In the 1982 Comprehensive Plan, the area surrounding the Taft Corners Intersection and the I-89 interchange was designated as a commercial center with the following description:

"The purpose of this area is to reserve space for the provision of retail and service businesses at Taft Corners. Planning in this area will stress minimal curb cuts, generous setbacks, and strict landscaping/screening criteria to preserve as much as possible an uncluttered, open character."

By the time the next town Plan was adopted, 1989, the Town had refined its vision for the area somewhat. The Taft Corners area was defined in the "Target Plan" as an area surrounding the Rte 2/Rte 2a intersection and encircled by a ring road. The plan said the following:

"The area should be people oriented, it should be friendly, warm and inviting. The development of Taft Corners should be a source of pride, reflecting the community's character and the spirit of Vermont. The pattern should be one of concentration rather than sprawl."

The future Land Use Map included in the 1989 Plan showed the ring road surrounded by Commercial areas to the southwest, west, north and northeast, and by interstate commercial area the south and southeast.

Prior to the adoption of the 1989 Plan, Subdivision approval was granted for 38 lots to Taft Corners Commercial Park. That subdivision encompasses most of the site.

The most recent Town Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 1995, retains the same language as the 1989 Plan regarding Taft Corners, but revises the description of the ring road concept. In addition, the Future Land Use Map in the 1995 Town Plan shows the Taft Corners Area surrounded by medium density residential to the north, by Commercial I areas to the southwest, west and northeast, by mixed use area to the southeast, and by a small Commercial II area immediately to the south.

While there is no specific description of these areas in the 1995 Plan, there is a general statement that in contrast to the Taft Corners Area, these areas should be "characterized by buildings set back from the street with individual parking areas and reliance on vehicular access."

Prior to 1988, development in this area was limited to a small collection of buildings in the northeast corner, at the corner of routes 2 and 2A. The most recent of these buildings were the two brick office buildings. Since 1988 significant development has occurred.

- In 1988, Moore's Lumber (16,200 s.f.) was built.
- In the 1989-90 period, UPS (52,299 s.f.) and Boise ex Copytec (44,346 s.f.) were constructed.
- In the 1991-92 period, Evergreen Eddy's restaurant (6,244 s.f.) was built.
- In the 1993-94 period, no new building were constructed.
- In the 1995-96 period the N.E Credit Union (40,000 s.f.), Hannaford supermarket (45,362 s.f.), and Toys R Us (30,000 s.f.) were built.
- In the 1997-98 period, First Choice Rental (18,400 s.f.), Berlin City Auto Sales (11,500 s.f.), Bed Bath & Beyond (40,000 s.f.), PetsMart (26,400 s.f.), Circuit City (27,671 s.f.), Home Depot (132,500 s.f.), the Digital warehouse (70,000 s.f.), and Walmart (114,513 s.f.) were built.

All together, over the past decade, over 675,000 square feet of building space has been constructed in the study area in a pattern and use that conforms with the 1982 plan.

What does the future hold? While it might be possible to calculate maximum build-out based on current zoning, it is not at all clear that such a calculation would be of much value. Rather, designs should consider total build-out based on design objectives and concepts. Future development might range up to, or at least equal to, the current square footage.



1995 – looking south before the ‘big boxes’—by Alex Maclean

Site Description

The 240 acre site is bordered by: I-89 at exit 12 on the south; Route 2, a major arterial into Burlington on the north; and Route 2A, connecting exit 12 and Vermont’s largest employer (IBM in Essex Junction) on the east. The land slopes southwesterly with good views of the Adirondack Mountains from much of the property and some views of the Green Mountains, including Mt. Mansfield to the northwest.

The site is presently subdivided into 45 lots ranging in size from 1/2 to 17 acres. There are 18 owners who each own 1 to 20 lots. Commercial buildings have been constructed on 24 of the 45 lots.

The number of businesses by type is:

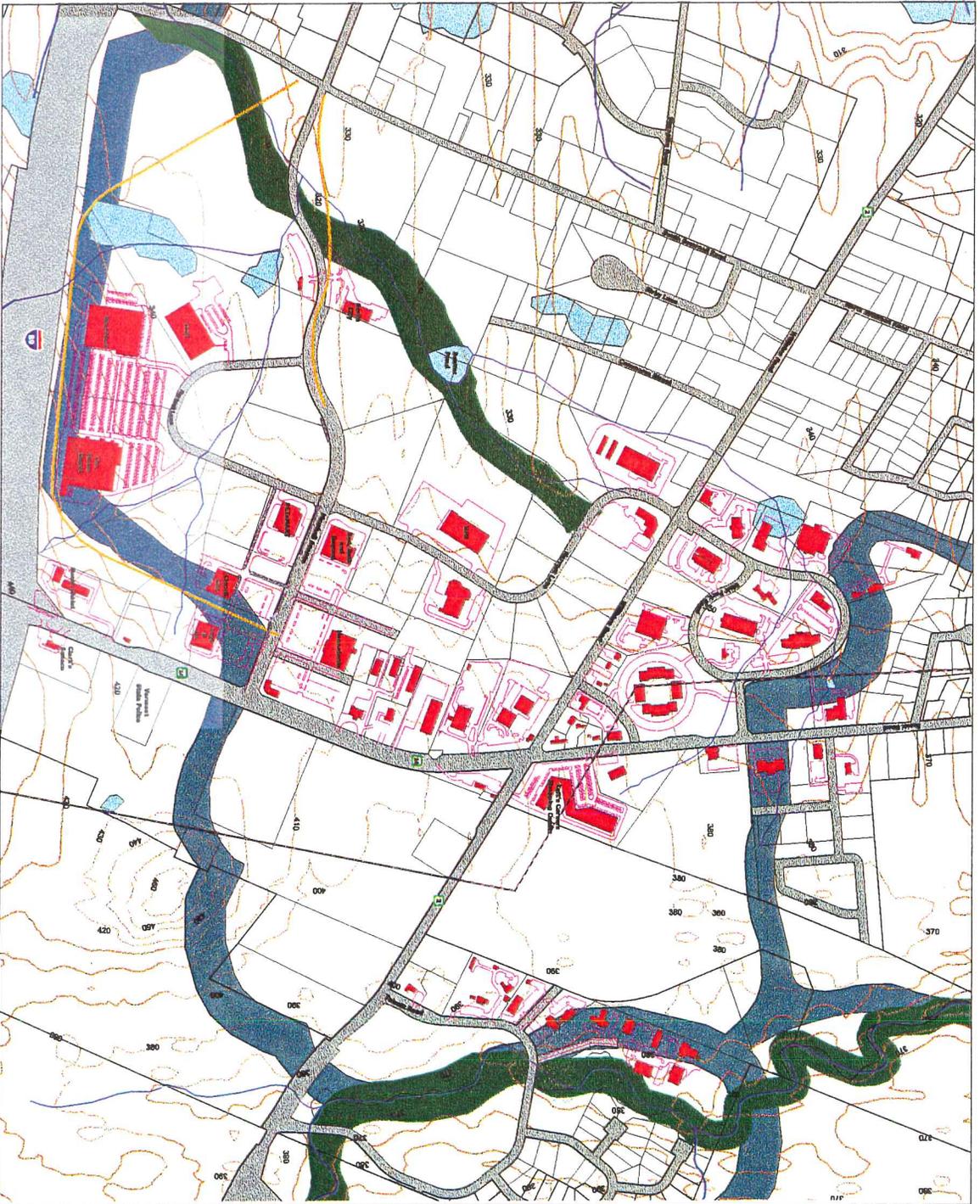
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Number</u>	
Motel	1	Recreation	1
Banking	3	Auto Sales	2
Real estate	1	Offices	2
Retail	8	Restaurant	1
Shipping/Warehouse	2	Equipment Rental	1

The “Road Runner” providing express service to and from Burlington, is currently the only public transportation available.

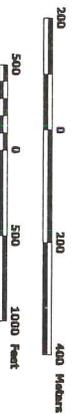
The town is working on a bike path network which will connect this area with schools, parks, residential areas, the historic village center and, eventually, adjacent towns.

A designated conservation corridor extends Northeast from the southwest corner of the site across Marshall Avenue to Harvest Lane. There are also some small wetlands identified.

TAFT CORNERS Williston, Vermont



- Surface Water
- 10 Foot Contour Interval
- VELCO Powerlines
- Existing Sidewalks
- Parking Lots and Private Drives
- Proposed Alternative Transportation Path
- Alternate Transportation Path
- Conservation Corridor
- Wetlands
- Roads
- Parcel Boundaries
- Building Footprints



Data Sources

Burton Ward, Vermont Center for Geographic Information (VCGI) and
 Concord, VCGI Derived from 1988 Chittenden County Digital Orthophotography
 VELCO Powerlines, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission
 Parking Lots and Private Drives, Tisdell Consulting Engineers, Inc.
 Proposed Alternative Transportation Path, Town of Williston
 Alternative Transportation Path, Town of Williston
 Conservation Corridor, Town of Williston
 Wetlands, USFWS National Wetlands Inventory
 Roads, Extracted from 1985 Williston Digital Parcel Map
 Parcel Boundaries, 1985 Williston Digital Parcel Map
 Buildings, Tisdell Consulting Engineers, Inc.



Projection: State Plane
 Zone: 18
 Datum: NAD 83
 Spheroid: GRS 1985
 Units: Meters

The Approach

The overall sequence of events consisted of: 1) a public meeting to find out what people liked in order to generate ideas that lead to the community creating vision for the site (see page 20); 2) the charrette that led to three alternative designs for Taft Corners; and 3) a public critique of the designs in the evening after the charrette (see page 17).

The charrette consisted of four phases: 1) a site visit guided by the town planner and the major property owner; 2) preliminary designs; 3) noon time feedback from other charrette team members, selectboard members, and property owners; and 4) more detailed designs.

Each team was assigned a distinct theme:

Team A: No changes to existing roads and buildings;

Team B: No additional retail buildings over 25,000 square feet; and

Team C: No limit to alterations of existing roads and buildings.



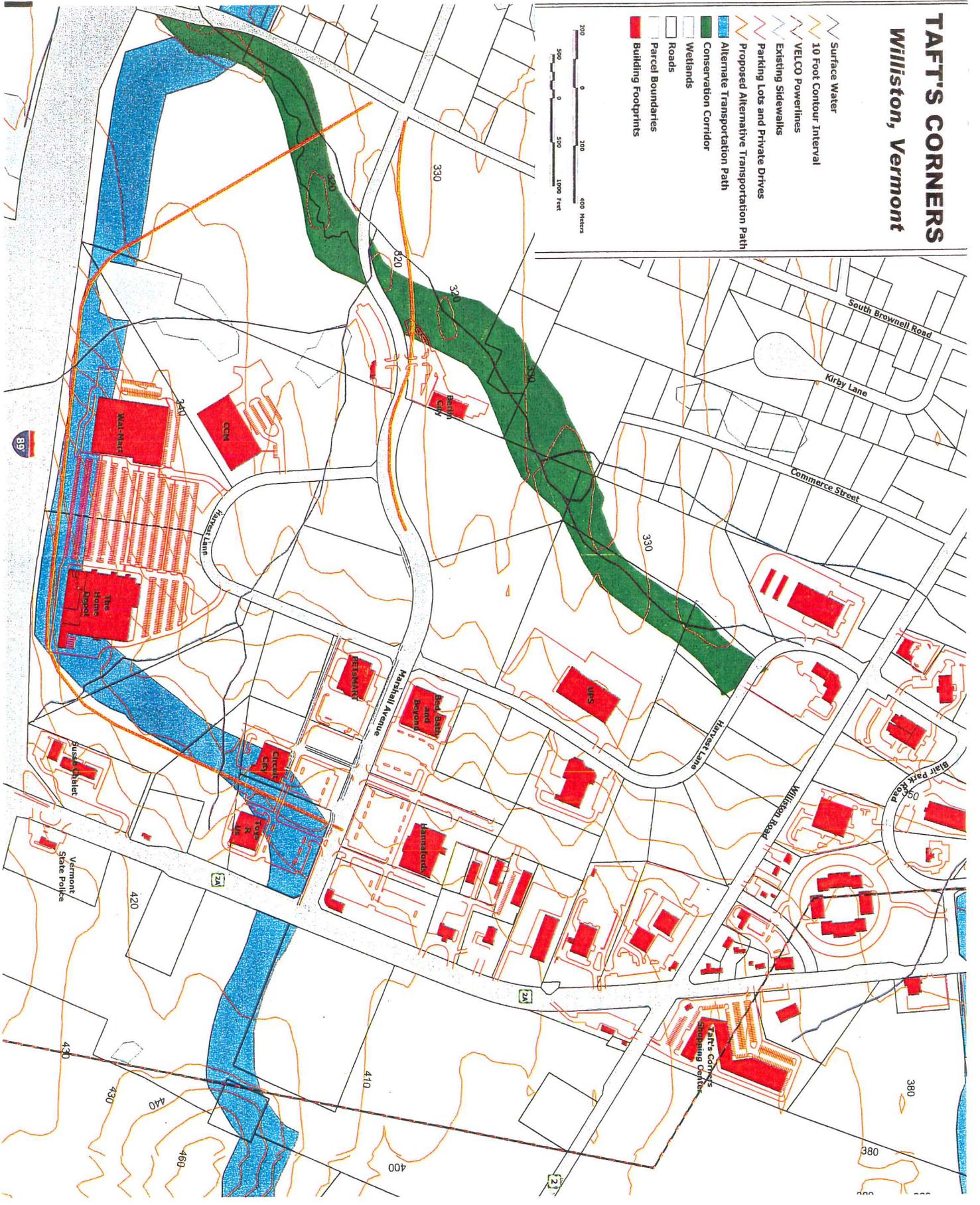
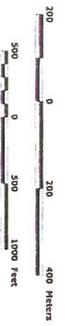
During Phase I, each team graphically demonstrated and verbally summarized a scheme for the 240-acre parcel. The results of Phase I were presented at the lunch hour to select-board members and charrette participants.

During Phase II, all teams responded with more detailed designs that included:

- Strategies for minimizing the adverse impacts of parking on views, pedestrian access, and compact critical mass while not detracting from user convenience.
- Public gathering places for relaxation, talking, eating, and viewing the built, human and natural environment.
- Orient outdoor vantage points, buildings, streets, paths towards views of the Adirondack Mountains to the southwest and the Green Mountains to the east.

TAFT'S CORNERS Williston, Vermont

-  Surface Water
-  10 Foot Contour Interval
-  VECO Powerlines
-  Existing Sidewalks
-  Parking Lots and Private Drives
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-  Alternate Transportation Path
-  Conservation Corridor
-  Wetlands
-  Roads
-  Parcel Boundaries
-  Building Footprints



Team A Design

Intent: Existing roads and buildings must remain.

The overall concept of this plan proposes higher density development in the northern and central portion of the site for a town center, office park, residential/mixed use, light industrial, and retail infill in exchange for a lower density edge. The intensive, smaller scale, mixed use incorporates residential, retail, local services, and a pedestrian friendly environment to reduce traffic impact. Green spaces enhance the sense of community by creating an open edge to the high-density development.

The Plan

Town Center – Retail is mixed with office, high tech industries, and apartments. Retail sites are along two streets – extending westerly from Maple Tree Place and northerly from Hannafords. Buildings would front the streets in a “neo-traditional” pattern with parking areas behind buildings. Residential use is encouraged in locations with high view potential on second or third floor levels. An east-west pedestrian corridor extends from the Maple Tree Place mid-block pedestrian crossing to a plaza at a second story level with Adirondack views. An intersecting north-south pedestrian corridor connects to the Office Park district immediately north of the Town Center.

Office Park – The office park would include the three existing buildings just southwest of the Taft Corners intersection plus a fourth of similar size and shape in the established pattern. A proposed parking structure could diminish the visual impact of surface parking. An enlarged green space should surround the historic building at Taft Corners to provide a local “heritage” park with “tourist information” services.

Residential/Mixed use – A high-density residential neighborhood on the high ground bordering Route 2 would have views of the Adirondack



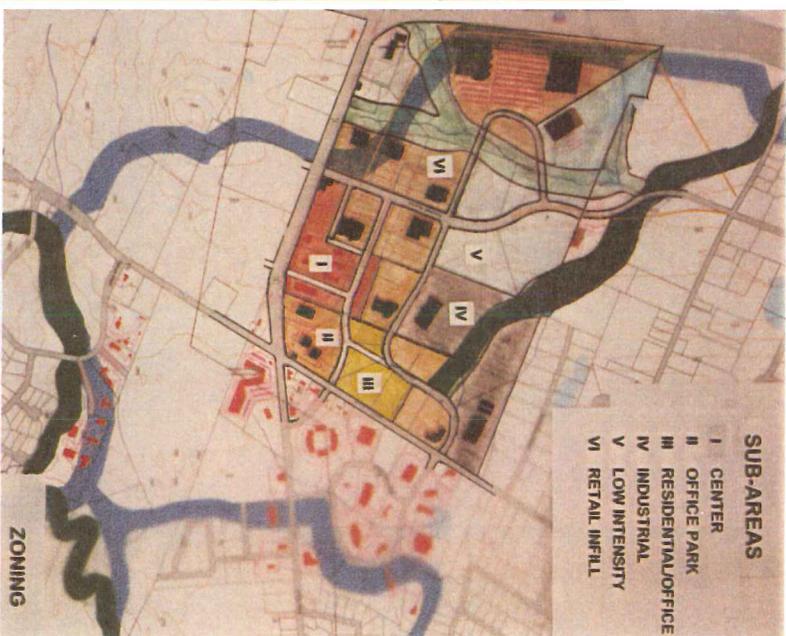
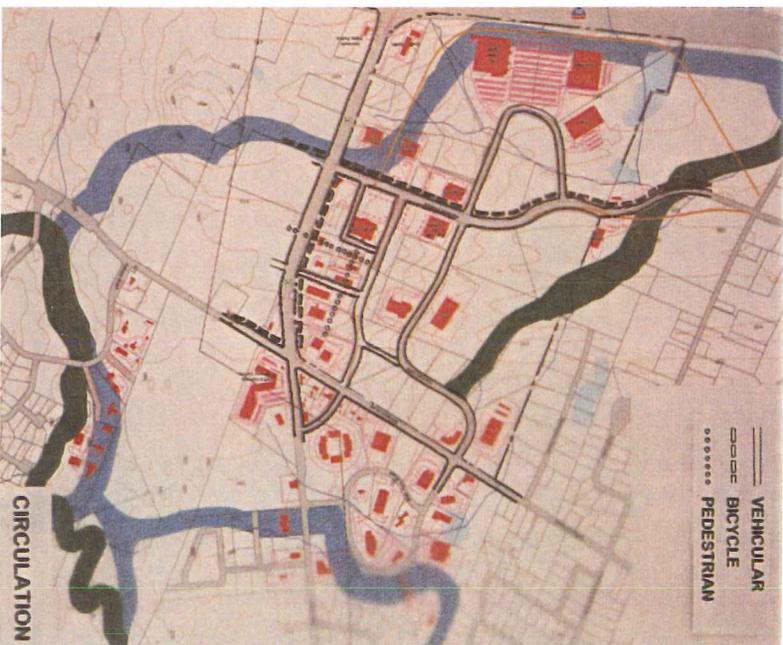
Mountains. Extensive landscaping treatment would be needed to reduce the impact of Route 2 traffic.

Light Industrial – Existing mix of uses would be maintained in the Northwest corner with additional landscaping/screening and careful placement of buildings/loading areas to minimize visual impact of large parking area and buildings.

Transition Area – The minimum square footage per retail use should be lower than the current 25,000 square footage minimum for greater diversity but should be high enough to preclude competition with the smaller retail uses in the proposed Town Center. Shared parking among stores and prohibition of exclusive parking reservations to individual users would reduce the space needed for cars and increase the space available for buildings and landscaping.

Low Intensity Use – Open space uses would be encouraged such as recreational, drainage and flood water retention treatment. Warehousing light manufacturing etc. with ample open space. This presently building free area could connect with open space planned in the other quadrants, thereby creating a continuous greenbelt around Taft Corners.

Team A Design



Team B Design

Intent: No additional large (over 25,000 square feet) retail buildings may be added.

The distinct guideline for this plan is that no additional large (greater than 25,000 square feet) retail buildings be added to the site. The objective of this design was to strategically integrate new smaller scale development with existing structures – thereby gaining critical mass of buildings and activity in certain areas.

The Plan

The plan includes a traditional “town center”, a second commercial area bordering a park, C-1 zoning district infill, and a hotel conference center bordered by greenbelts.

Town Center

A traditional “town center” to be located north of Hannaford’s would be centered around a green area. All buildings will be oriented towards the street in a traditional grid street pattern with zero lot lines, and are encouraged to be two or three stories. The desire is to place all retail on the first floor with office and residential space on upper floors, recognizing that the market will dictate the mix of uses that will be constructed. Parking will include on street parking throughout the area and if necessary two level parking may be feasible in areas where topography allows. Extensive planting of trees is also part of the plan.

South Commercial Area

A second commercial area in the circular area in front of Walmart and Home Depot is also proposed. The intention is to create a retail area with smaller buildings and secondary uses which are generated by the proximity to large retail box stores. Parking is located in front of the three buildings which surround a central park with a water feature



Transition Area

To address the current C-1 zoning, this group suggests the addition of less than a 25,000 sq. ft. retail building between ToyRUs and Circuit City with the addition of a small park west of Circuit City and south of PetSmart. Another less than 25,000 sq. ft. retail building would be opposite PetSmart with requisite parking. This building could be on two levels with one floor on same level as PetSmart parking with additional access on Harvest lane.

West Side

The two lots between UPS and Berlin City are suitable for warehouse, office park or other large lot uses. A mid block pedestrian crossing of Route 2A to Maple Tree place is introduced and also a green median to be constructed in the center of the road is proposed. Limiting turns to right hand turns only where the banks are located is suggested.

Greenbelts

Greenbelts along the watercourses traverse the site from the proposed conference center on Route 2A westerly through the southern commercial area and from north to south along the west side of the site.

Team C Design

Intent: May alter existing patterns of roads and buildings.

This team was able to consider all design possibilities, including alterations to or elimination of roads and buildings. Pedestrian and public transit, natural resource protection, housing and a “transitional zone” between big box development and new more “community” related development are the fundamentals of this design.

The Plan

The Center

The central idea of this design is creation of a central plaza that provides views of the Adirondacks and Mount Mansfield. The parking would be underneath the central plaza and proposed pedestrian scale streets. A raised bridge over Rte 2A to form a pedestrian connection with Maple Tree place is proposed. Atriums and other visual connections are made between the parking areas and the street.

Livable Community

The group suggests restoration and protection of wetlands that have been removed from the area and creation of drainage ponds to accommodate accelerated run-off created by additional development. Creating an attractive resource that can be used by the community for agriculture, community gardens, agriculture-based business, and recreation would help distinguish the area, contribute to a sense of place and create a buffer to make housing an attractive option. A transformation of the present UPS site to a less trucking dependent use would make the proposed residential area more attractive.



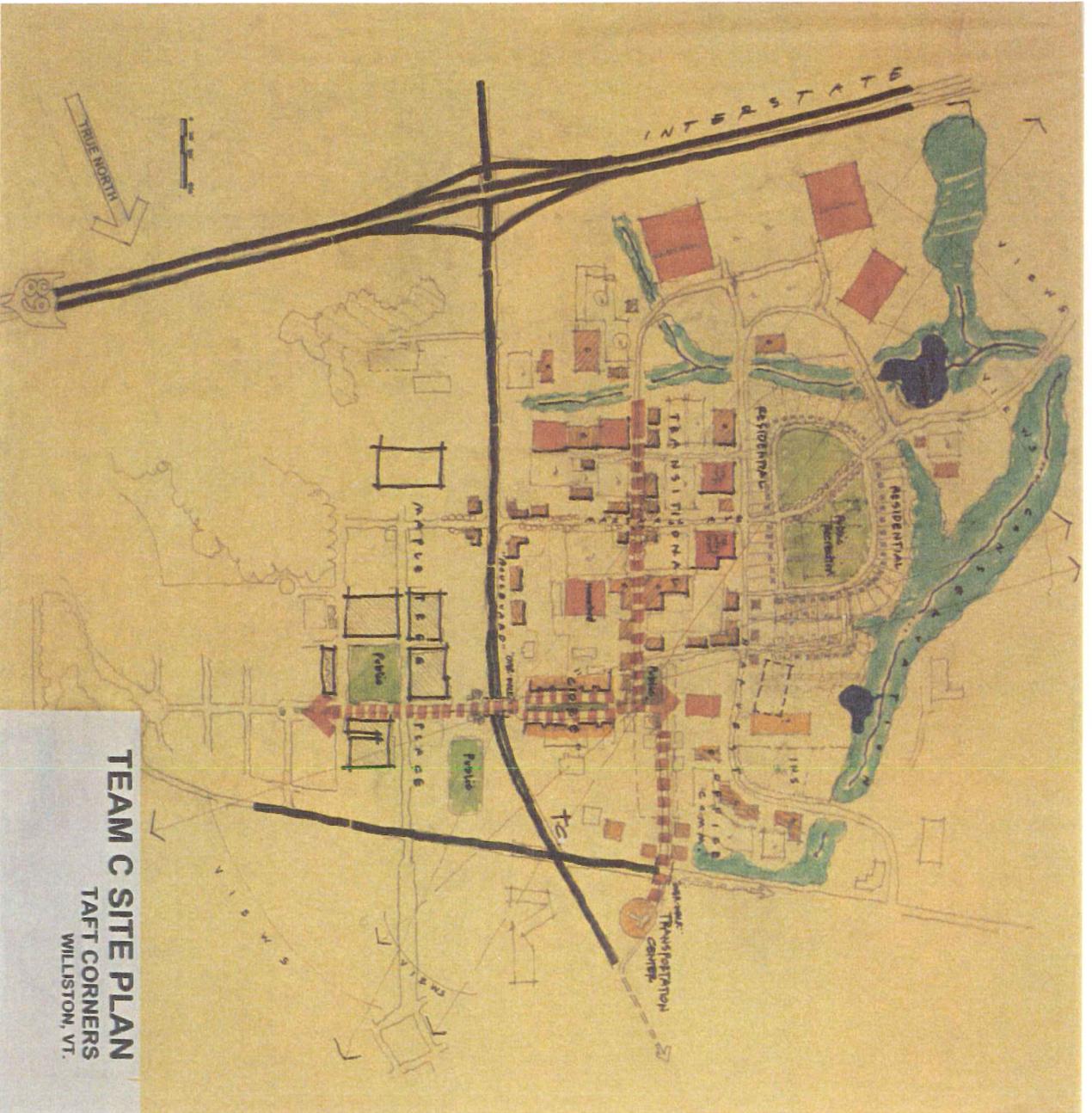
Transition Area

A Transitional Zone would be required to provide a buffer between existing big box development and new pedestrian friendly development.

Transportation

Extensive use of public transportation to and within the site and shared parking areas reduce parking requirements. The parking blocks would be smaller and connected visually by landscaping and functionally by bridges and covered walkways.

Team C Design



Comparative Analysis

The Taft Corners Intersection

All teams added an office building – infill within the existing office park pattern – accessed via secondary road, not Route 2 or 2A. Team B and C proposed building locations less likely than that proposed by Team A to block view of the Adirondack Mountains to the southwest as seen from the corner of Routes 2 and 2A. Team A’s Heritage Park provides a landmark that reinforces the corner for which the area is known.

Community Center

All three teams created a new urban setting bordered by the corner office park, Route 2A, Marshall Avenue, and Boise-Cascade. It will consist of buildings fronting on tree-lined secondary streets, public plazas and walkways. Uses include small retail, office, dining and entertainment, civic and residential – around-the-clock life. The customer base of restaurant at the corner of Route 2A and Marshall Avenue is enhanced by addition of adjacent buildings in Team C design.

The high density, necessary to establish a variety of activity within easy walking distance, may require transfer of development rights from other parts of the site where lower intensity use would be beneficial.

Northwest Sector

Teams A and B lived with the current office, building supply, and delivery service uses while Team C determined that the truck traffic would be increasingly incompatible. Buildings and parking areas in all three plans are accessed via secondary streets, not Route 2.

Transition Area

The area between the proposed Community Center and the low-lying undeveloped lots to the south would be the location of commercial development with medium sized footprints. Team B and C delineated an open north-south corridor. The Team B corridor is landscaped and the Team C corridor is for transit and associated enhancements.

Building-free Sector

The low lying area bordering the watercourse would be designated for varying degrees of low intensity use according to the three plans – and be a potential source of development rights for sectors in need of higher density than that permitted.

Southern Edge

Large scale commercial us adjacent to (and increasingly screened by growing trees from) Interstate 89 characterizes the use of the southern edge of the site in all three plans. A more direct access route to Exit 12 of Interstate 89 and/or a new exit at the Hinesburg Road could reduce traffic congestion on Marshall Avenue and in the “low intensity” area.

Residential

Apartments are located on the second and third floors over small offices and shops in the community center sub-area – on high ground with views of the Adirondack and Green Mountains in the Team A and B plans. Team A also recommends residential use of upper floors at north edge of site due to mountain view potential. The primary residential area in the Team C plan is a neighborhood of owner-occupied homes surrounding a public recreation area and bordered by greenbelts – not UPS trucks which are phased out.

Streets

A rectilinear pattern of new tree-lined streets establishes a framework for mixed use in the center of the site in all three designs. The new streets also connect with proposed streets/transit loops in the northwest and southeast (Maple Tree Place) quadrants of Taft Corners.

Parking

On-street parking parallel to shade tree-lined sidewalks is recommended in the core or central mixed-use area in all three plans. Team B includes diagonal parking to enhance capacity and traffic calming. Additional large surface parking is located behind buildings in order for the building's street entrances to be more pedestrian friendly. All three designs have underground parking with entrances that take advantage of the slope.

Public Transportation

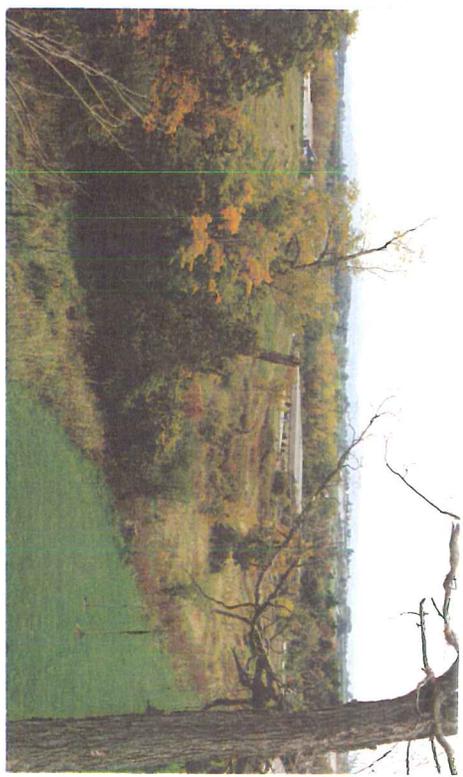
A transit loop around the four corners is delineated by Teams Band C. A transit center or transfer point between regional and local public transportation services is included in the Team C plan.

Pedestrian Circulation

Two tree-lined walkways, one of which is aligned with a Maple Tree Place walkway, intersect at a central plaza in the Team A plan. A shorter pedestrian walkway, also aligned with the Maple Tree Place walkway, is in Team B's plan. Pedestrians share Routes 2 and 2A overpasses with transit traffic in the Team C plan.

Open Space

Increased density in the center is balanced by "low intensity" use of most of the southern portion of the site in Team A's plan, thereby creating an open edge spanning the site from east to west. All three plans show greenbelts along the watercourses in the southern portion of the site and along the west side of the site.



"open edge"

Team A establishes a highly visible landmark ("Heritage Park") at the corner of routes 2 and 2A and a "shopping plaza" at the intersection of two pedestrian walkways. Team B places an open space corridor between the center of the site and the southern watercourse and creates a park and water feature in the center of proposed commercial buildings just north of Home Depot and Wal-Mart. Team C places a recreation area in the center of proposed residential neighborhood near the west side of the site. All three designs establish a central plaza east of the Boise Cascade building at a "T" intersection of new streets.

Conclusion

Although considerable development has already occurred in the southwest quadrant of Taft Corner, opportunities still exist to develop a community where people can engage in a greater variety and intensity of activities, thereby making it a more desirable place to be. Because it would be difficult for individual property owners acting alone to take advantage of this opportunity, a coordinated approach is needed with mechanisms such as a market place for transferring development rights. The intent here is to demonstrate land development and conservation strategies that benefit consumers, businesses, property owners, local residents, the Williston community, and the region – and that could be useful at other highway interchanges.

Public Comments

Public input was critical to the entire charrette process. Public meetings were held both before and immediately after the charrette to solicit public comments. Members of the Williston Selectboard and the Williston community attended the noontime presentations of the preliminary designs and provided valuable feedback to the design teams.

The following comments pertain to some or all of the designs.

- What is the biggest challenge to implementation?
- The town must be proactive as opposed to reactive. The town must guide the process, i.e. discuss options with citizen groups, developers etc.
- Can existing buildings be moved?
- Public transit should be a major component to the downtown vision.
- There should be different locations to cross Route 2A from Maple Tree Place.
- How many people could or would reside in the southwest quadrant?
- There is room for a residential component if it is done right.
- Who is paying for this? Public/private partnership?
- Could the commons be a viable option for residential? (transportation)?
- What are the numbers that are essential for critical mass (transportation)?
- Create economic incentive for one less car per household, -- \$1000/year.
- What are the limits of government determination of private land development?



Possible Next Steps

One of the most important outcomes of the design charrette is the stimulation of dialogue regarding the future of the study area. This has clearly happened. It was evident in the discussion at the evening presentation of the three design concepts. It is also evident in the fact that several Selectboard and Planning Commission members and several business owners have come to the Planning and Zoning Office to review and discuss ideas that the designs revealed. Discussions among Town boards and between Town boards and landowners will certainly continue.

In the formal sense, the ideas generated by the design charrette have the potential for feeding into several phases of Williston's on-going planning process.

1) Williston is currently working to develop an update of its Comprehensive Plan, which is due to expire in July of the year 2000. One of the more critical areas being considered for revision is the portion of the Land Use Section of the Plan that includes a discussion of all quadrants of the Taft Corners intersection. The charrette study area is clearly a part of this controversial area of the Town.

As part of the Town Plan update, the Town is reconsidering its vision for the future of this area. The results of the charrette are clearly relevant to this discussion. In developing its revised vision, the Planning Commission has considered such ideas from the charrette as the creation and location of public spaces, the insertion of residential uses, the suggested mix of non-residential uses, and the overall development concepts for the area. Many of these ideas can be incorporated into the updated Town Comprehensive Plan.

2) On a slightly shorter term, Williston is also faced with deciding what will happen when interim zoning in the C-1 and C-2 districts (which make up a large portion of the charrette study area) expire in November of 1999. The most likely approach is for the Town to adopt some revisions to its permanent Zoning Regulations prior to the end of interim zoning. The Selectboard and the Planning Commission have worked together to determine general principals to guide these revisions. The Planning Commission has worked to develop proposed zoning language that reflects these principals. Some of the ideas generated by the charrette have been discussed at these meetings, and it is anticipated that both the Selectboard and the Planning Commission will continue to draw on ideas from the charrette.

3) In 1998 the Town incorporated into its Zoning Regulations the Taft Corners Design Review process which applies to those Zoning district which make up the area immediately surrounding the Taft Corners intersection, plus the frontage on the major roads leading into the area. The current Zoning Regulations include some rather general guidelines to be used by the Design Advisory Committee (DAC) in reviewing proposed development. The DAC is authorized to prepare design reports or guidelines to ensure a high level of design in the area. The DAC is continuously working on such guidelines. The concepts generated by the design charrette should be shared with member of the DAC so that they can consider some of the design ideas for incorporation into future design guidelines.

Design Teams

Monday, May 17, 1999, Agenda

Team A

Nat Goodhue..... Goodhue Land Design
Dan Greller..... Landworks
Harry Smith..... Essex Town Planner
David Spitz..... Planning Consultant
Michael Oman..... Oman Analytics

8:30 am

Charrette Check-In. Williston Town Meeting Room,
Second floor of Williston Town Offices on rte 2, Williston

8:45 am

Welcome and Orientation

9:00 am

Site Visit guided by Michael Munson, Town Planner and
Jeff Davis, Property owner

Team B

Terry Boyle..... T.J. Boyle Associates
Joss Besse..... Department of Community Affairs
Sheldon Laidman..... Colchester Town Planner
David White..... David White Associates

10:30 am

Design Phase I: Each team works on development of
preliminary design scheme.

12:30 PM

Lunch Presentation and Critique.

1:45 PM

Brief Summary of Williston's Planning Process and Desired
end products from the Charrette, Michael Munson, Town
Planner

Team C

Peter Bourgois..... Landscape Architect, Cavenish Partnership
Lani Raven..... Agency of Transportation
David Sellers..... Architect
Matt Osborn..... Hartford Town Planner

2:00 PM

Design Phase II. All teams prepare designs that respond to
the design program, site characteristics, and their particular
design charges.

Selectboard Members

Ginny Lyons, Chair
Tom Vieth
Jeff Fehrs
Mary Peterson
Milke Kanfer

5:00 PM

Break for dinner at Bread and Beyond.

6:30 PM

Designs on display in the Williston Town Meeting Room

7:00 PM

Public Meeting moderated by Peter Bourgois, VT/ASLA

Town Planner

Michael Munson

Public Comments Received on May 3, 1999 Regarding Design Charrette Project

(Characteristics identified as desirable to be included in designs Organized by topic.)

A pre-charrette public meeting on May 3, 1999, found out what places people like and don't like and generated ideas that contribute to a vision for the southwest quadrant of Taft Corners.

<p>Goal: Go to Taft Corners because of "want to" vs. "need to"</p>	<p>IMAGES THAT RATED LOW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • big box store • regional vs. local • traffic generation • lack of people • nothing to cause people to linger • under-utilized parking lots - full only a few days per year • high impact/low benefit development (likely as a result of Act 60) • shopping plaza • strip/straight, no squares or circles • too uniform, no structural breaks or focal points • any place USA retail • lacks upper floors/office • no bike path 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • north to south street in a 65 acre block • grid streets (in CIP) • downtown in NE corner – consensus that it is a good idea • "market real" ideas for C1 and C2 • mixed use: theater, fountains, office, high tech, park/open space, • increase in size of downtown • commercial recreation • bicycle criterion races • shelter from wind • less obtrusive parking / reduce required and maximum spaces • more interesting buildings-- think beyond present • some existing buildings could be replaced • new streets that could accelerate change 	<p>WHAT WOULD BE DESIRABLE AT TAFT CORNERS?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preserve view corridors of Adirondacks/sunset • development that is sensitive to sloping terrain • ice skating • preserve open space while accommodating growth • sports center • outdoor concerts • eateries/ice cream/bars • walking from store to store • walking for lunch breaks • bicycling • bookstore • water attraction • street life • reality based (economically feasible) development • take advantage of inspiring views (Vermont reminders)
<p>IMAGES THAT RATED HIGH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trees, water, hills • lawns bordered by trees • open space • buildings with varied planes • diagonal on-street parking • small stores • pedestrian friendly • mixed use • street trees • people gathering/talking • market place • hanging out together • interaction between strangers • varied sizes and origins of buildings • more green • no curbs • human scale building • serene reflecting pond • busy street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nothing to cause people to linger • under-utilized parking lots - full only a few days per year • high impact/low benefit development (likely as a result of Act 60) • strip/straight, no squares or circles • too uniform, no structural breaks or focal points • any place USA retail • lacks upper floors/office • no bike path 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • north to south street in a 65 acre block • grid streets (in CIP) • downtown in NE corner – consensus that it is a good idea • "market real" ideas for C1 and C2 • mixed use: theater, fountains, office, high tech, park/open space, • increase in size of downtown • commercial recreation • bicycle criterion races • shelter from wind • less obtrusive parking / reduce required and maximum spaces • more interesting buildings-- think beyond present • some existing buildings could be replaced • new streets that could accelerate change 	<p>WHAT IS MISSING AT TAFT CORNERS?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more streets • slower traffic
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