



# Greenfield

## DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

Final Report | February 2003



Goody, Clancy & Associates | FXM Associates | Booth Associates | Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.



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## CONSULTANTS

Goody, Clancy & Associates  
FXM Associates  
Booth Associates  
Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.

## SPECIAL THANKS

The Downtown Advisory Committee wishes to recognize the efforts of the several hundred community members who have actively participated in the planning process and whose efforts have contributed to its success.



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# Overview

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*Downtown Greenfield is the heart of the community and the county. Downtown's strength is linked to its success in meeting community expectations as a civic destination, an entertainment venue, and as a place to live, work and shop. Over the last year-and-a-half, the Greenfield community has shaped a Master Plan for the downtown area that will make it a stronger community and business center. This effort was spearheaded by the 43-member Downtown Master Plan Committee working in conjunction with a consultant team and the wider Greenfield community. The Master Plan, as summarized here, is comprised of a series of coordinated actions to be taken by the town government, the business community, and other downtown stakeholders.*

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## **GOALS FOR THE DOWNTOWN: WHAT GREENFIELD RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS PEOPLE WANT**

In February 2002, 160 residents and business people participated in a visioning session for the downtown. Several hundred residents participated in a detailed consumer survey regarding downtown. This community input and additional analysis by the Downtown Advisory Committee and the consultant team led to the identification of key changes that are needed to draw more people downtown and expand business activity. The major priorities are as follows:

- Give a more lively focus to the downtown by creating a new visible public gathering space and developing outdoor seating areas.
- Improve the mix of downtown attractions with new restaurants, entertainment venues, improved retail, cultural attractions, and an expanded program of events and festivals.
- Work with property owners and developers to take advantage of underutilized space on upper floors, or in vacant buildings, and use this space to incorporate new uses.
- Improve the design of building facades and storefronts.
- Make better use of the existing downtown parking supply.
- Continue the public-private partnership that created the Plan to advance its recommen-

dations; ensure that downtown continues to be a strong focus for community leaders as Greenfield moves forward to elect a new mayor.

Each of these goals will need to be addressed through a coordinated program if downtown is to fully meet the expectations of the community. Without such improvements, downtown's competitive position as a business destination and community center will weaken in the face of increasingly strong competition from retail centers outside downtown. The Downtown Advisory Committee recognizes that this is an ambitious program that will need to be accomplished over several years and will require a strong commitment from town government and community leaders to ensure its success.



*Preservation and reuse of the former First National Bank building on Bank Row is a cornerstone of the Master Plan. Currently vacant, the building occupies a very visible site at the heart of downtown.*

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# Elements of the Plan

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*The Master Plan is built around a series of actions that enjoy broad public support and were discussed extensively over the course of the year-and-a-half long process that accompanied development of the Plan. To be fully effective, these initiatives will need to be implemented together, as part of a coordinated effort. Each of the major initiatives is briefly outlined below in this Plan summary.*

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## **Create a stronger focus at the heart of downtown by expanding the Common into a new public gathering place on Court Square.**

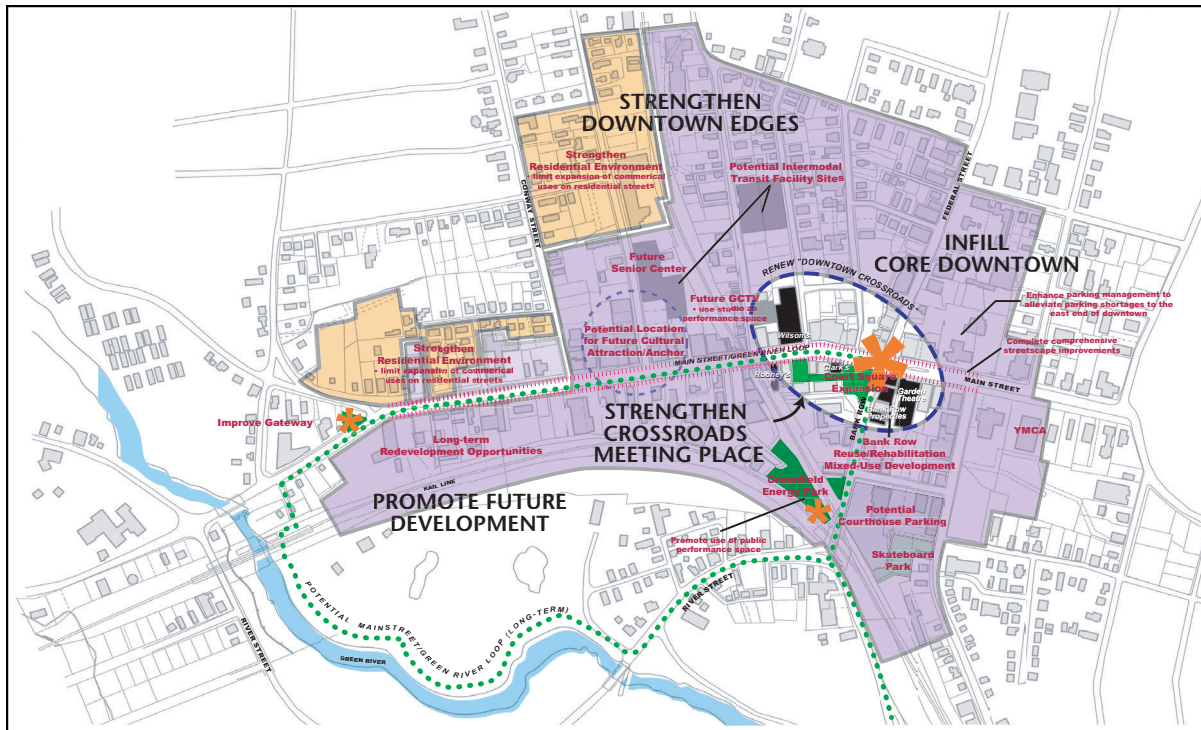
This initiative is a cornerstone of the Plan and will create a very visible space for hosting downtown events and activities. An expanded program of activities would be developed for this space that currently hosts a weekend farmers' market. This initiative together with the redevelopment of key properties along Bank Row will strengthen the heart of downtown.



*Court Square closed on a temporary basis for the Farmers' Market. Closing the street on a permanent basis could create space for new activities and events.*







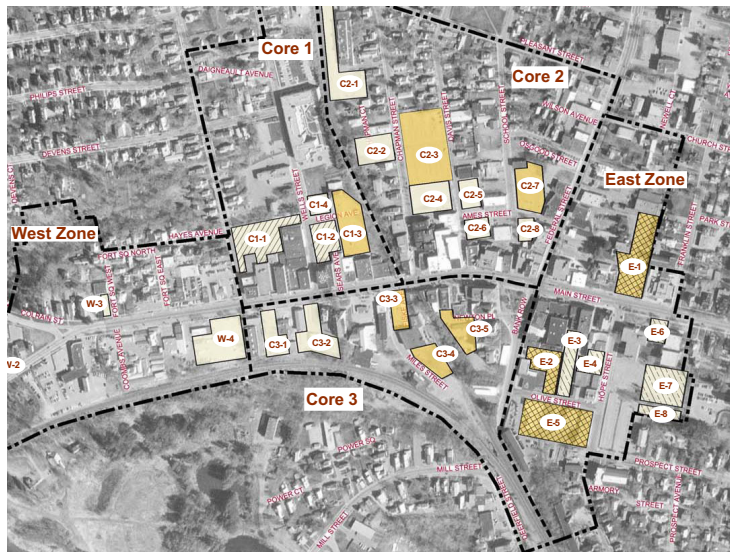
**Reuse or renovate key downtown properties that are vacant or underused to accommodate desirable new uses; attract new restaurants, entertainment venues, retail destinations, and housing that will expand business activity and attract new people to the downtown area.**

Several downtown structures have been identified as having particular potential to house new uses. The town should actively support the efforts of owners to reuse or redevelop these structures through grants, assistance with tenant recruitment, and other forms of support. The economic feasibility of reuse has been assessed; potential uses have been identified for each structure.

Property	Proposed Reuse Area	Proposed Uses
 Garden Theater -upper floor	11,000 SF	Cultural use (such as a dance studio) with multipurpose spaces, 2nd floor
 Bank Row properties -all floors	33,500 SF	A combination of office, residential, restaurants, and retail
 Clark's Sport Shop -upper floors	10,700 SF	Office suites, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors
 Rooney's Store -upper floors	3,450 SF 3,450 SF	Office suites, 2nd floor Four 2-bedroom apartments, 3rd floor
 Wilson's Department Store -upper floors	1,500 SF 10,000 SF	Tea Room, 3rd floor 18 loft-style apartments, 4th floor

Capture the full benefit of recent streetscape improvements; provide increased seating outside restaurants to enliven downtown streets.

Some Greenfield restaurants already provide outdoor seating areas. A significant expansion of this outdoor seating represents a near-term, low-cost way of bringing new vitality to the area.



Downtown has an excellent supply of parking overall; cooperative efforts between the town and business owners are needed to promote more efficient use of existing parking.

Downtown Greenfield has 2,400 parking spaces. Only 1,400 of these spaces are occupied in peak periods. However, parts of the area experience parking shortages that can be alleviated through improved parking management.

Design guidelines should be developed to help businesses make design choices that *both* meet individual needs and make downtown more attractive.

This effort should be advanced jointly by the town and the business community.





**Urban Renewal Overall Area**

**Main Street Overlay District**

**Urban Renewal Phase I Area**

**Legend**

- Urban Renewal Overall Area (Yellow)
- Main Street Overlay District (Orange)
- Urban Renewal Phase I Area (Green)



Events at these locations and other downtown destinations such as the Greenfield Community Television's new facility on Chapman Street will draw new activity to downtown.



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# Implementation

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Over the past year-and-a-half, the Downtown Advisory Committee has worked closely with the consultant team in shaping this Master Plan. This collaborative effort has engaged the entire community and has created a strong consensus on the actions that are needed to strengthen downtown's identity and economic competitiveness.

Implementation of the Plan's many inter-related initiatives will require strong coordinated municipal leadership and continued involvement of the Downtown Advisory Committee. These are both essential if the strong momentum created by the Master Plan process is to be maintained *and* translated into tangible benefits for the community.

Several members of the Downtown Advisory Committee have already committed to playing important roles in advancing specific initiatives over the next six months and will continue their involvement over the longer term. As Greenfield transitions to a mayoral form of government in July 2003, it will be important to ensure that the new mayor and council are fully aware of the challenges and opportunities associated with implementation of the Downtown Master Plan—and the need for strong municipal leadership in supporting implementation of Plan initiatives. One very significant municipal position envisioned under Greenfield's new charter is the Mayor's Assistant for Economic Development and Marketing. As downtown is a key component of the community's overall economic base and identity, the role of the Assistant in supporting and facilitating downtown development will be especially important. The filling of this new position with a well-qualified individual is pivotal to creating an effective structure for coordinating of downtown plan-

ning and redevelopment efforts with marketing and business recruitment functions. Several members of the Downtown Advisory Committee have expressed a concern that this position may not be filled in the new government due to budget constraints faced by Greenfield and many other Commonwealth communities. Others have expressed the concern that the position will not be filled at a salary level needed to attract a highly-qualified candidate. While these fears are understandable, these challenging economic times make it all the more important that downtown's role as a center of economic activity is strengthened in Greenfield's new government structure.

The following efforts should be initiated over the next six months:

- Advance efforts to expand the Common
- Expand outdoor seating
- Finalize a strategy for redevelopment of key Bank Row structures
- Draft zoning changes and design guidelines
- Initiate discussions aimed at better utilizing the existing parking supply
- Provide support to property owners considering redevelopment of key downtown structures
- Establish a firm schedule for implementing each element of the Master Plan



*21 Bank Row could be redeveloped into retail on the first floor—a shoe or clothing store and ice cream parlor or coffee shop—with office suites above.*

# Introduction

The Greenfield Downtown Master Plan is the result of a year-and-a-half long planning process involving a broadly representative Downtown Advisory Committee, town residents and businesspeople, municipal staff and a consultant team led by Goody, Clancy & Associates.

The Downtown Master Plan addresses physical, market, transportation and organizational issues affecting the future of downtown.

The Downtown Master Plan was prepared during a period where Greenfield has chosen to revise its form of government in order to more closely address its current needs and future challenges. As the community shifts to a mayoral form of government, implementation of this Downtown Master Plan represents an early opportunity to forge new partnerships that reap the benefits of the new governmental structure and roles embodied in Greenfield's new charter.



*The Town of Greenfield is taking the initiative to forge a plan for the future of its downtown.*

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## PLANNING PROCESS

The Town of Greenfield issued in the summer of 2001 a Request for Proposals to conduct a Downtown Master Plan. The RFP identified five major issues to be addressed:

- a leakage of potential sales from downtown to competing, outlying areas;
- increasing vacancies in ground floor storefronts and upper floors of downtown buildings;
- deteriorating historic buildings in the center of town;
- a need to comprehensively address a variety of issues, including transportation and parking, which affect downtown.



*The Downtown Advisory Committee met with the consultant team throughout the planning process to direct and respond to the Master Plan.*

A 43-member Downtown Advisory Committee made up of community leaders interested in downtown revitalization worked on developing the objectives of the master plan. Building on existing plans and past initiatives, it produced a scope of work, reviewed proposals and interviewed firms. The Committee is composed of business owners, residents, representatives of downtown institutions and non-profits, state and county agency representatives, town officials and the staff of the Greenfield Office of Planning and Community Development. The Committee selected the consultant team of Goody, Clancy and Associates (GC&A), FXM Associates (FXM), Booth Associates, and Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB).

The scope of work for the Downtown Master Plan was structured into five tasks: public visioning, building and use inventory, market analysis, transportation and parking analysis, and the integration of findings from these tasks into the development of a master plan, including an action plan and implementation strategy.

Over the course of the study, GC&A led the planning and design analyses, visioning and public meetings, conducted stakeholder interviews, developed a building and use inventory, and prepared overall recommendations. Booth Associates conducted an exten-

sive consumer survey in Greenfield and surrounding communities. FXM conducted a market assessment of downtown Greenfield, identified redevelopment opportunities that can become catalysts for overall downtown revitalization, and contributed to the implementation strategy. VHB conducted the transportation and parking analysis, and produced a GIS parcel and building map.

The Downtown Master Plan process incorporated extensive opportunities for public involvement and input. In addition to a major Visioning Workshop and other public meetings, meetings of the Downtown Advisory Committee have been open to the public. The progress of the Downtown Master Plan has been followed extensively in the local media.

## VISIONING WORKSHOP

In order to hear directly from Greenfield residents and learn what issues about downtown were of greatest importance, the consultant team held a Visioning Workshop, interviewed stakeholders, conducted a statistically valid consumer telephone survey, and held evening public meetings.



*Public meetings were key to understanding residents' concerns and aspirations about downtown Greenfield.*



On February 4, 2002, 160 community participants attended a major Visioning Workshop about the future of downtown Greenfield. Residents, business and property owners, and representatives of non-profit organizations formed 14 discussion groups, facilitated by members of the Downtown Advisory Committee and the Office of Planning and Community Development. The consultant team asked the groups to answer three questions, listed below, and to report the results of their discussion to the larger audience.

- 1 What are Downtown Greenfield's strengths and weaknesses today?
- 2 Describe the ideal Downtown Greenfield in 2010. What should it be, look and feel like? What activities occur where? How does it function economically?
- 3 What action steps are needed today in the areas of physical environment, economic development, leadership and implementation for this vision to become reality?

From the Visioning meeting and stakeholder interviews, the consultant team summarized Greenfield's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as identified by the community. These findings are listed below.

### Strengths

- The sense of community is the strength of downtown; the school system and the downtown are the soul of the community.
  - › Downtown is democratic: at Brad's you can sit next to a judge and have a conversation.
  - › I can get what I need, live close by, see people I know.
  - › Downtown is for everyone.
- Historic buildings, unique shops, a view of the mountains.
- Streetscape improvements have helped make downtown more attractive.



*Views of the mountains of the Pioneer Valley, framed by urban, historic buildings, contribute to Greenfield's unique identity.*

- Good service: we shop at Baker's; if there's a better deal at Staples, they tell us.
  - › Downtown has been remarkably resilient and is more alive than many realize.
  - › Greenfield has a REAL downtown and is unique; we don't need to copy other communities.
  - › The business community is actively marketing downtown.



*Vacant upper floors in the center cast a negative image on the rest of downtown.*

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## Weaknesses

- No coherent plan in place; no consensus.
- We suffer from negative perceptions.  
People who walk around downtown don't feel it's as bad as people who talk about it.
- Mix of uses:
  - › Not enough happening in the evening.  
We need more entertainment downtown.
  - › Need more market-rate housing downtown.
- Built environment:
  - › Vacant or underused upper floors.
  - › Too much office space at street level—breaks up the retail flow.
  - › Aesthetics and maintenance—need to do more.
  - › Loitering and perceptions of safety, particularly for seniors.
- No clear roles and responsibilities between the Town, the business community and the public; lack of resources to fully market/coordinate downtown efforts.

## Opportunities

- Success builds on success. Identify a couple of achievable goals. Create a plan.
  - › Redevelop vacant or underused upper floors.
  - › Develop more residential uses downtown.
  - › Attract more restaurants and entertainment uses. Add new attractions that can become destinations.
  - › Add new attractions and venues for gathering:
    - create a community center, downtown living room, an "enclosed Energy Park"—maybe in the bank building.
    - provide space for conferences, large meetings, public and private assembly.
- Create an organization to move the plan forward.

## Threats

- Failure to agree on a plan; no commitment to take on the challenges and identify solutions could leave downtown weak.
- Sprawl: the competition is getting stronger; we need to compete aggressively with a strong product.
- Lack of focused leadership; who takes responsibility for what.

These findings provided an overall context for the analyses undertaken by the consultant team. The overall finding is that residents of Greenfield value the small town character and strong sense of community that form the identity of Greenfield, but that many perceive the downtown in a negative light. The recommendations of the Downtown Master Plan are informed by these positive desires and negative perceptions. The observations of the participants in the Visioning Workshop and comments from other downtown stakeholders were broadly consistent with the views of regional and local residents solicited through a consumer telephone survey as more fully described in Section 2 of this Downtown Master Plan.

A full report of comments from participants in the Visioning Workshop is included in Appendix II: Consumer Survey, Stakeholder Interviews and Visioning.



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## **DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN GOALS**

From the results of the visioning process, interviews, and consumer survey, which captured the opinions of a broad range of residents, business owners, and government officials, the Downtown Advisory Committee, working with the consultant team, identified the following goals for the Downtown Master Plan.

### **Community Life**

- Create a community center - a downtown space or cluster of activities that allows gathering and strengthens social interaction.
- Promote age, racial and ethnic diversity; increase sense of safety; provide more destinations and activities for the homeless, youth, and seniors.
- Develop an active mix of retail uses, with cafes, restaurants, entertainment venues and nightlife.

### **Built Environment**

- Preserve downtown's historic character.
- Rehabilitate neglected buildings.
- Provide access to and reuse upper floors.
- Develop market rate housing in the downtown.
- Provide more parking where most needed.

### **Economic Life**

- Create a strong retail mix to make downtown a prime shopping destination as well as a county seat and social center.
- Develop an economic plan that ties together government, community organizations, and the private sector.
- Capture consumer expenditures now leaking to other shopping destinations.
- Maximize the use of ground floors for retail.

### **Implementation**

- Encourage public/private partnerships to develop key properties and projects.
- Manage action-oriented planning efforts with clear tasks and responsibilities among local officials, different public agencies, and private partners.

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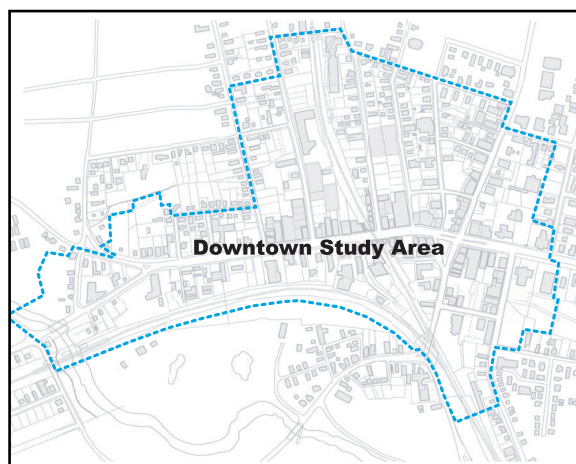
# Downtown Today

## Study Area

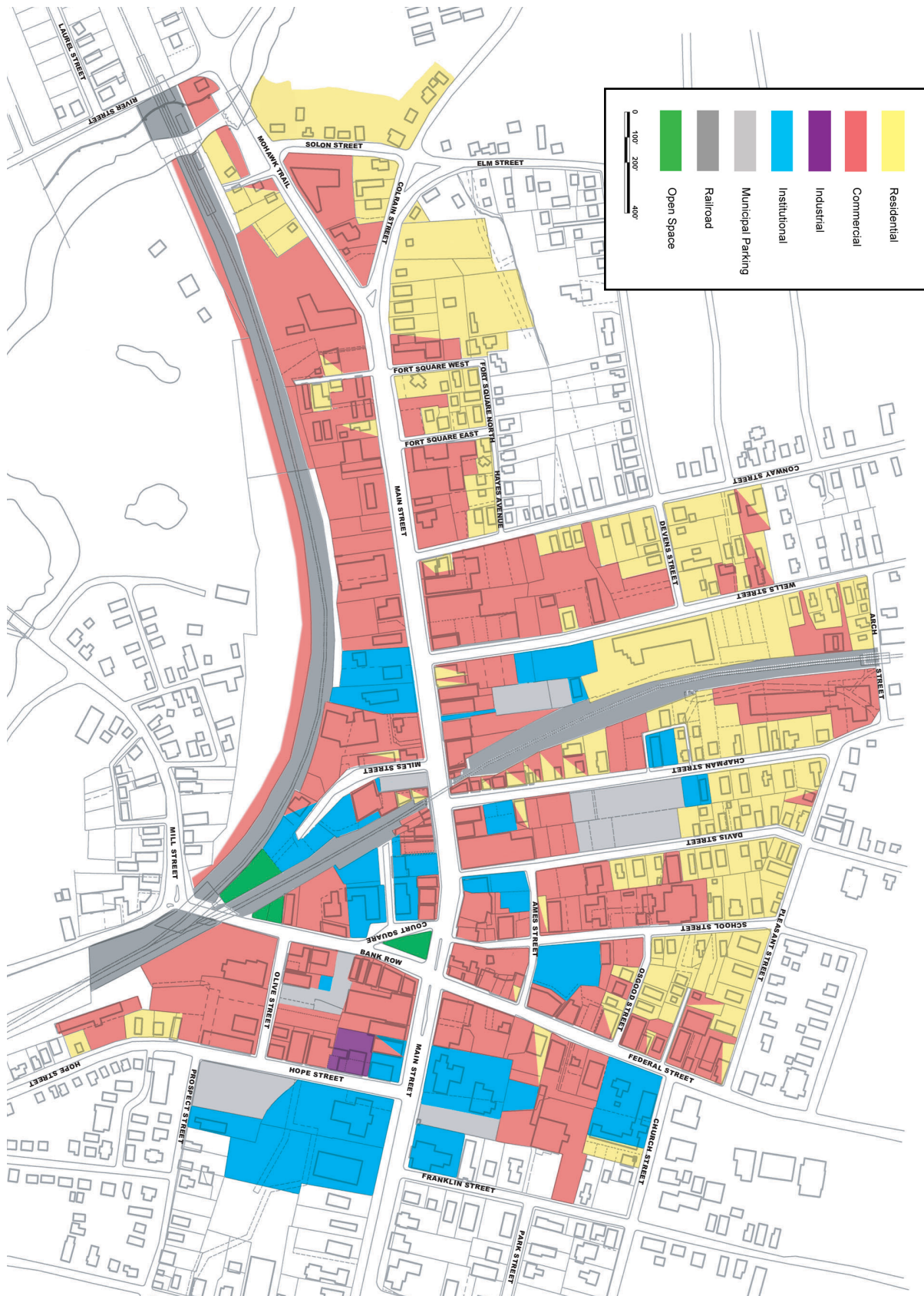
The Downtown Study Area, defined by the Town of Greenfield for this master planning effort, encompasses approximately 130 acres. The core of the study area is mainly commercial with residential areas at its northern edges. Main Street forms the spine of downtown Greenfield, extending two-thirds of a mile between River and Franklin Streets. Arch and Pleasant Streets define the northern boundary and a railroad corridor forms the southern boundary. The center of downtown Greenfield is the intersection of Main Street, Federal Street, Bank Row and Court Square, where the Town Hall and Town Green are surrounded by retail businesses, banks, and offices. The east end of downtown is more densely built up and includes a concentration of institutional uses near Federal Street: the Greenfield Public Library, the U.S. Post Office, the Franklin County Courthouse, the YMCA, and churches. The east end also has a high number of attractive historic buildings. The west end of downtown has ample parking and generally larger parcels than the east end.



*Greenfield's Main Street retains the scale of a small town commercial center.*



*The 130-acre Downtown Study Area contains 2.5m square feet of commercial, institutional, residential and industrial uses.*



**Land Use Distribution**

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## **Zoning**

Zoning within the study area is "Central Commercial". The purpose of the central commercial district, as defined in the zoning bylaws, is "to provide a downtown area with the range of business sales and services which generally constitute a central business district." Semi-Residential, Urban Residential and General Commercial districts abut the Downtown Study Area. A wide range of uses including residential are allowed within the Central Commercial zoning district.

## **Building Uses**

Greenfield's downtown study area contains 2.5 million square feet of leasable and sellable space in slightly over 300 buildings of one to four stories.

Over half of this space is at street level (58%) and the rest (42%) on all other floors: 32% on the second floor, 10% on the third floor, 0.5% on the fourth floor.

Half of total downtown space is in commercial use (retail and office), 24% in residential use, 15% in institutional use, 10% in mixed use (commercial and residential), and under 1% industrial.

The high proportion of residential use reflects the fact that the study area is larger than a typical commercial downtown and includes residential neighborhoods. At 15% of this expanded base, institutional use occupies a large portion of downtown, reflecting Greenfield's role as county seat of government. Ten percent of buildings already in mixed-use is a notably high number and a strong precedent on which to build.

Commercial space (1.25 million SF) is composed of 65% retail, 14% office, 10% service, 6% banking, and 3% restaurant. Office and banking uses are a high proportion of the downtown, while restaurant space is very low.

## **Building Conditions**

Overall, the building stock in downtown Greenfield is in good to fair condition. There are some remarkable and well-preserved historic buildings in the downtown, and others that are worthy of restoration.

At the corner of Main Street and Bank Row, several historic buildings in a continuous block have been vacant or underutilized for years. Because of their prominent location, vacancies and deterioration in these buildings cast a disproportionately negative image on Greenfield's downtown.

## **Vacancies**

As of the spring of 2002, vacancy rates in downtown Greenfield were 12% in the study area as a whole and 8% at street level, in square footage. When assessed as a proportion of space units (stores, offices, and other units for rent), vacancy rate at street level was 7%. There is a perception of a higher vacancy rate due to underutilization and vacancies in crucial buildings.

Vacancy rates in nearby communities compare as follows.

- Athol:  
17% vacancy downtown, 25% town-wide.
- Easthampton:  
11% at street level, 10-15% for downtown as a whole.
- Shelburne Falls:  
6% vacancy in commercial space alone.
- Northampton:  
5% vacancy downtown, 8% town-wide.

Greenfield's mid-range street-level vacancy of 8% indicates a relatively stable market: room enough to offer opportunities for new businesses, yet without an overwhelming inventory of empty storefronts to cast doubt on the viability of investing in downtown.



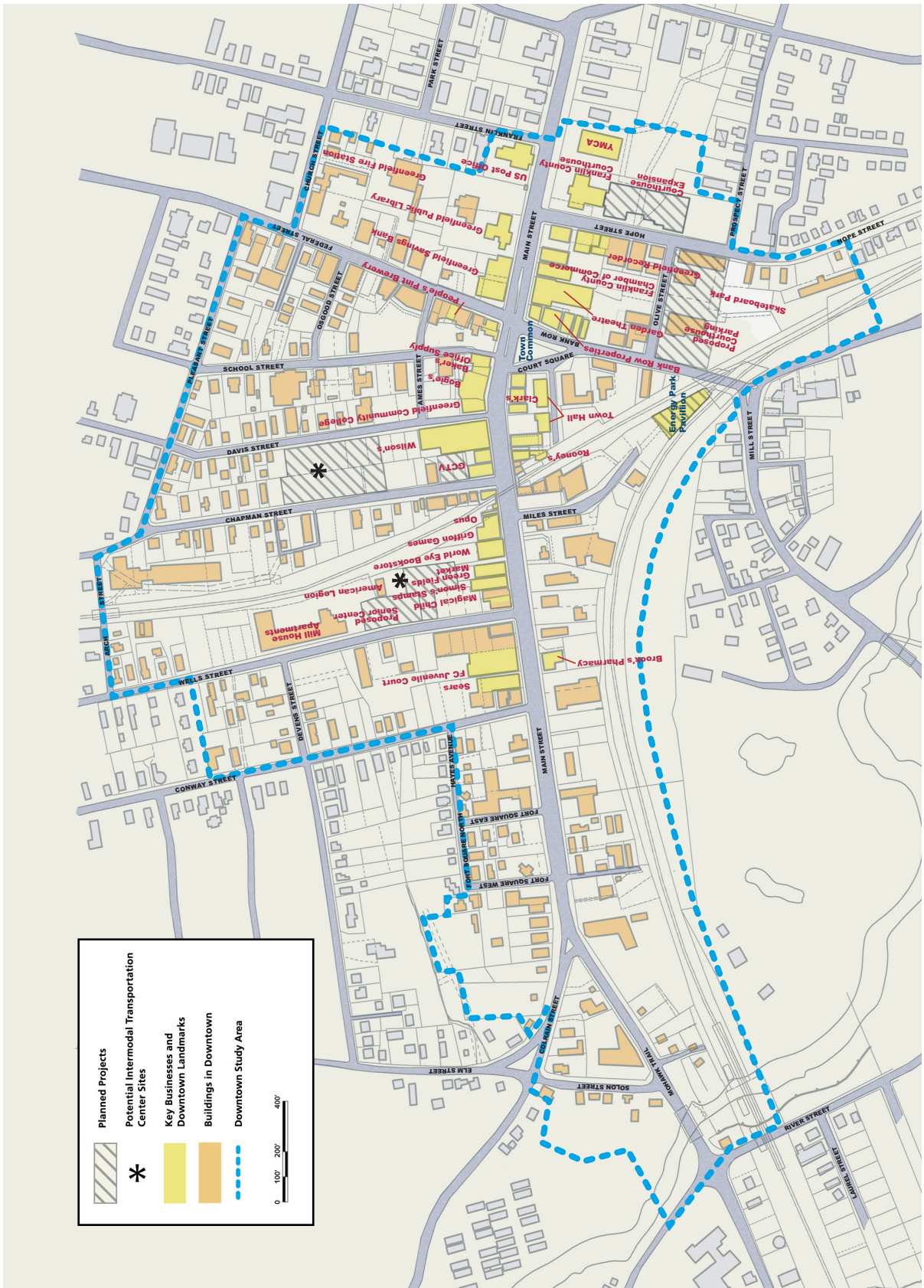
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Past public/private efforts at combatting storefront vacancies have been more successful than efforts to encourage Main Street/Bank Row property owners to rehabilitate and fill their highly visible buildings. From past experience of having lost other historic buildings to neglect and deterioration, Greenfield residents have come to think about urban renewal as a new tool that could be effective in downtown revitalization.

### **Planned Projects**

There are several projects currently underway or planned for the downtown area:

- **Courthouse Expansion:** the Massachusetts Department of Capital Asset Management (DCAM) has been renovating and expanding county courthouses throughout Massachusetts. The Franklin County Courthouse in downtown Greenfield has been considered for expansion. DCAM has been working with the Town to identify an appropriate site to accommodate the courthouse. The conclusion of these studies is that the most appropriate site addressing the courthouse's future needs and community goals is the existing courthouse site. Several studies have been conducted related to the project, but the funding has not been secured, nor have final decisions been made about the program. The Courthouse Expansion would mean a significant capital inflow to Greenfield.
- **Senior Center:** A project under consideration is the development of a Greenfield Senior Center. The Resource Development Program of the Franklin County Regional Council of Governments is assisting the Council on Aging in efforts to build a new senior center, including creating a fundraising entity and seeking funds for the building project.
- **Intermodal Facility:** A new intermodal facility is also being considered for downtown Greenfield. Several sites are being considered as locations for this facility, which would serve as a hub for transit service in Greenfield and Franklin County.
- **GCTV Studio:** Greenfield Community Television is building a new, state-of-the-art facility in downtown Greenfield begun in the summer of 2002, with completion expected by summer 2003. The new "Victoria Studios" will be built on the site of the historic Victoria Theater, on Chapman Street, which was razed in 1998. The Victoria Studio will have a performance space and possible sharing agreements with the Town and other groups to use it as public and private meeting space.
- **The Station Civic Pavilion:** The Energy Park is a community green space that graces the heart of downtown Greenfield. The park is owned by the Town of Greenfield and was built in partnership with the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association (NESEA). It provides public education about issues of sustainable energy in a friendly, non-technical atmosphere. The Station is a civic pavilion under construction on the site, scheduled to open by the spring of 2003, that will provide much needed performance space for outdoor special events and concerts within the downtown area.
- **Streetscape Improvements:** The Town of Greenfield has been designing and building downtown streetscape improvements using Transportation Enhancement and other funds. These enhancements have had a positive impact on downtown Greenfield.



## Planned Projects

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### **Downtown Organizations and Stakeholders**

A wide variety of organizations play an active role in the downtown area including the Greenfield Business Association (GBA). The GBA is a membership-based group whose goals include improving the marketability of Greenfield and marketing the community to targeted businesses, industries and tourism organizations. Other groups involved in downtown reinvestment efforts include: the Council on Aging, the Greenfield Redevelopment Authority (GRA), the Greenfield-Montague Transit Authority (GMTA), the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce (FCCC), the Franklin County Community Development Corporation (FCCDC), and the Franklin County Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG).

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# Market Analysis

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## MARKET ANALYSIS

A market analysis is a fundamental component of a Downtown Master Plan. An accurate assessment of current market conditions, consumer expectations, and potential for future growth provides a critical building block for guiding future public and private sector investment.

The Town of Greenfield identified four key factors to be addressed through the market analysis:

- **a leakage of potential sales from downtown** to competing, outlying areas;
- **increasing vacancies in ground floor storefronts and upper floors** of downtown buildings;
- **deteriorating historic buildings** in the center of town; and
- **a desire to leverage and understand the impacts of proposed new projects**, first among them an expansion of the Franklin County Courthouse.

FXM Associates conducted a market analysis of downtown Greenfield to provide a context for addressing these considerations. The analysis assesses the leakage in sales from downtown to other shopping areas, identifies underrepresented sectors in the retail mix of downtown, researches potential markets for office and residential uses, considers the role of cultural uses in attracting business, and evaluates the redevelopment potential of key properties. As an integral part of the market analysis, Booth Associates conducted and tabulated a consumer survey of residents in the downtown trade area, including Greenfield and surrounding communities. The survey results identify and characterize shopping behaviors; opinions about downtown Greenfield; preferences for potential new

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uses and activities in downtown; and suggests, based upon market preferences, those categories of retail that might attract more spending downtown.

### **Downtown Workforce**

Existing downtown employment represents a very significant factor in sustaining the level of retail and other commercial activity currently in place within the downtown area. Any reduction in this employment level resulting from relocation of a major public or private sector facility would have a negative impact on current downtown businesses, and prospects for attracting new ones. The continued presence of the Franklin County Courthouse within the downtown, for example, is important because of the jobs and income it provides to persons directly within the court system and indirectly in support of it, such as legal and other professional services, office equipment and supplies, maintenance services, and so forth. The persons who hold these direct and indirect jobs spend money in the downtown, supporting business sales, jobs, income and further spending in retail and other sectors. Visitors, sales personnel, and clients of the court system also spend money in downtown Greenfield. The law firms and other services that support courthouse functions occupy a significant amount of space in downtown, and this demand serves both current and prospective property owners and developers. The employees of all other commercial and institutional uses in the downtown daily contribute to the overall downtown, as well as townwide economy in similar ways.

The Market Analysis of downtown Greenfield consists of three components:

- Consumer survey;
- Assessment of potential markets for retail, office and residential development; and
- Assessment of redevelopment potential of key downtown properties.

### **Consumer Survey**

In February and March of 2002 Booth Associates conducted 225 telephone interviews of residents of Greenfield and surrounding towns. Telephone numbers were chosen at random from the Franklin County Area telephone book. Two thirds were selected from Greenfield numbers and one third from surrounding towns that border Greenfield. Telephone calls were made during the day, during evening hours until 9 pm and during weekend daytime hours. Following completion of the interview phase, all data were edited, coded and computer cross-tabulated.

The survey asked the following questions: frequency of visit, frequency of purchase, and reasons for going downtown; other shopping destinations used; percent of shopping dollars spent in downtown Greenfield; specific destinations for shopping downtown and frequency of use of downtown institutional facilities; and consumers' opinions of what they find in downtown Greenfield relative to twenty eight issues including store types, services provided, as well as cultural, arts, restaurant and entertainment opportunities.



The following is a summary of findings.

- People like Downtown Greenfield for its convenience and small town charm, but they are looking for more choices of stores and restaurants. They are also looking for more entertainment opportunities for both children and adults. People would like to see concerts, plays, music and other cultural activities in an environment that would offer a "dinner and night out" atmosphere that they feel is lacking now.
- Many respondents found downtown Greenfield to be somewhat generic, too "white bread" and not interesting in its overall store and restaurant choices, often comparing unfavorably with Northampton and Brattleboro. The Green Fields Market, The People's Pint and World Eye Books were singled out as notable contributions to the desired diversity. Respondents are also looking for both lower-priced choices, and more up-scale choices, not just medium everything.
- There is a feeling that downtown Greenfield could look better. There is a sense that many storefronts and buildings are getting run-down and shabby. Consumers would like to see buildings and storefronts spruced up, repaired and improved. Several mentioned restoration of original building facades at Wilson's and Rooney's, but the overwhelming majority focused on Bank Row buildings.
- Parking and traffic got mixed marks but most residents, employees and visitors are looking for improvement. The new pedestrian "bump-outs" came under criticism from some respondents.
- Verbatim responses showed a mixed feeling about downtown Greenfield. When asked what they would say to recommend downtown Greenfield to someone who has never been there, nearly 1/3 either didn't know, would say nothing, or actually mentioned a negative comment about downtown Greenfield. Over 10% gave a conditioned, guarded response and 20% mentioned a specific store or business, with only 3% of those identifying a restaurant. Only 4% mentioned an institutional or natural attraction, most often the YMCA, Library, and Poet's Seat Tower. Not surprisingly, no one mentioned an entertainment opportunity. It should be noted that this question is so worded as to elicit a positive response. It is singular evidence that there is work to be done in the mind of the public.



*Greenfield residents enjoy shopping and eating at the Green Fields Market (above), and appreciate the friendly service at Baker Office Supply (right).*



- As to what respondents would change if they could, 30% said more or better stores, 17% said more or better restaurants, and 15% would provide more or better entertainment opportunities. Over 20% mentioned car-related (parking, traffic) issues, 13% mentioned buildings' physical appearance and 10% made a critical comment about town political processes.
- On several occasions, interviews with Greenfield property owners, residents and businesspeople revealed a gap between perception and reality. As the consumer survey indicates, a significant majority of people want and support a strong downtown. Yet only a fraction (approximately 30%) could say anything positive about downtown Greenfield. People want Greenfield to remain as a place to live, not a place to visit, yet it is the shops outside of downtown that attract their spending dollars. People like the concept of an old-fashioned downtown, accessible and personal, that provides goods and services that are needed, rather than bought on a whim. However, retailing has suffered as people choose to buy at malls and at lower-priced, big box department stores. The old fashioned downtown image is not enough to sustain itself. More is wanted by way of character and activity. Empty upper floor space needs access and users who walk the streets at lunchtime and en route to and from work. Entertainment and an enlivened streetscape were repeatedly mentioned as desirable, and if successful, elements that would attract more residential markets.

The Consumer Survey reflects the weakness of downtown today together with desired improvements that consumers are seeking. If such improvements can be undertaken, the survey reflects the potential of downtown to

capture a larger segment of overall business activity within the region. These improvements are necessary to help shift the focus of downtown commercial life to become more of what people want, and to enhance, not replace, what is already there. Competing with mall offerings is also not an option suggested by trade area consumers. They want something distinctive in the downtown.

The full text of the Consumer Survey is included in *Appendix II: Consumer Survey, Stakeholder Interviews and Visioning*.

### **Market Assessment**

This market assessment was undertaken to evaluate potential uses for currently available or underutilized space within downtown Greenfield and especially space within underutilized or deteriorating historic properties within the downtown. The uses examined are those most likely to align with the inventory of available space within the downtown area.

The full text of the Market Assessment is included in *Appendix III: Market Analysis*. It presents a comprehensive discussion of current market conditions, potential future markets, and redevelopment opportunities of key properties. The Appendix includes quantitative estimates of potential demand, secondary source data and other information from interviews with selected businesses, and documents the assumptions and limitations of the analysis.

### **Retail**

- A five-mile circle around downtown Greenfield, representing a resident population of 29,000, was selected as the market capture area, based on knowledge of local business experiences and the competitive environment. To this resident population were added tourist and student populations, and downtown employees.

- Retail sales leakage from downtown Greenfield totals roughly \$70 million annually. This represents a high level of sales for which the downtown has a natural geographic or other competitive advantage, but which are now being made outside of downtown. The analysis suggests that downtown Greenfield has the potential to expand its level of retail business activity.
- In all but two categories, existing sales in the downtown comprise less than a third, and as low as an eighth, of the spending potential in the overall trade area. Capturing even a small additional portion of the trade area potential would therefore be significant in increasing retail activity in the downtown and positively affecting the perception of downtown Greenfield as a place of business.
- The most underrepresented category is Footwear, and is one of the categories most noted in short supply by respondents to the trade area consumer survey. The addition of three shoe stores to the downtown, for example, would be possible by capturing only one-third of the overall trade area potential.
- Other categories with sales potential, now leaked to businesses outside downtown, include Children's and Men's Apparel, Personal Care/Beauty and Laundry/Cleaning Supplies. A store in each of these retail categories may be supportable. Gifts and Women's Apparel each represent a large percentage of overall spending in many downtowns, and another five or six gift stores and one or two women's clothing stores may be supportable in downtown Greenfield.

### **Restaurants**

- There are possibly as many as 57 restaurants within the five-mile market demand area, but only 19 are located within the immediate downtown. Sales potential exists for approximately 50 restaurants downtown. Downtown offers special niche opportunities for high quality (not necessarily high expense) dining opportunities, especially those that can participate in the unique ambience of an urban setting, in contrast to the predominantly suburban restaurants within the trade area.
- The public visioning process, interviews, and telephone survey revealed that a strong majority of Greenfield area residents do not feel that there are enough dinner restaurants. The type and location of existing ones are not what they want.
- Quality restaurants (good food, good service, good ambience) are a particularly important factor in contributing to the health of downtown in that they are destinations that can attract a wide variety of people who might not otherwise have a reason to visit downtown. In many downtowns, including those with far more vacancies and underutilized building capacity than Greenfield, destination restaurants are an anchor that can positively influence retail, office, and housing investment potential.

### **Entertainment**

- Like restaurants, businesses that provide entertainment are especially important to downtowns. They offer experiences not typically found in shopping malls, or other downtown destinations like banks and retail shops, and are therefore destinations that attract a higher level of activity.

- There is a strong sentiment among townspeople that there is not enough to do in downtown and no life to the streets after work. This lack of entertainment breeds dissatisfaction and a desire to stay out of the downtown, especially after dark.
- If enough entertainment-based businesses were introduced with public support, that attitude would shift both in support of the businesses and of the downtown as a chosen place to spend time.
- Only about a fourth of the spending potential for the entertainment category for the area is currently being spent in the downtown.
- The Garden Theater is an important asset that contributes to the overall vitality of the downtown and supports other business activity. It should be encouraged to stay, with tax incentives if necessary to help cash flow, sufficient to keep it in business and enough to improve the building. Potential reuse opportunities for the upper levels of this structure are discussed in Section 5 of this Plan.
- The demand exists and sales potential is in sufficient excess to support cultural, ticketed, scheduled activities.
- Town support is needed to initiate these endeavors by means of tax incentives, identifying appropriate parking, and providing assistance in applying for grants and state tax credit programs.
- The result could be an alternative use that is in clear demand for some amount of vacant upper floor space.

#### ***Office space***

- Most of the growth in the downtown Greenfield office market has come from within the town. Yet with stable population and employment forecast for the foreseeable future, and a current 12% vacancy rate, it will take an aggressive initiative to fill that space. If left to fill the space from normal expansion of existing tenants, the upper floors will remain largely vacant.
- Downtown needs to create a market niche and draw prospective tenants with an aggressive outreach effort. Possible markets would be small office suites and individual office spaces for startups and pre-retirees. Opportunistic tenant recruitment for customized build-out would attract these markets.

#### ***Incubator space***

- Potential tenants of incubator space seek the following characteristics: buildings that are interesting, with open floor plans or unfinished space for individualized improvements, offered at low rents, with room for expansion by absorbing adjacent vacant space, and in the midst of downtown activity. Potential tenants are those currently working at home and in other solitary work environments.

#### ***Meeting space***

- Public meeting space is another need mentioned by business and other current downtown users, and may be especially suitable for the downtown. Such a space could be rented out for private banquets, weddings, graduations, as well as for public and business meetings.
- Meeting space would add another element of activity to the downtown and would bring people during daytime and evening hours who might not otherwise visit downtown. This use could potentially be accommodated in one of downtown's underutilized buildings and is discussed in Section 5 of this Plan.



- Pre-packaged units in office parks, by contrast, cannot offer interesting space, flexible configurations and sizes that do not overwhelm a small user.

See *Appendix III* for a discussion of examples of successful incubator space developments and an assessment of the incubator space market by MassDevelopment.

#### *Pre-retirement office space*

- Potential tenants for pre-retirement space are people in the 55 to 65 year-old age group, whose children usually have completed school, and whose desire to work long days and fight commuter battles are past. With lowered overhead and desire for a more balanced life, this group is increasingly looking for the quality of life afforded in a home business.
- The type of space they desire is a small-size, low cost, downtown office suite, providing a unique, separate space for consultant-type businesses, without the inconveniences of larger urban centers.

#### *Shared services and funding assistance*

- To attract either startup businesses or pre-retirement offices, office suites need to offer joint conference rooms, shared reception and shipping, shared kitchenettes, and off-street parking.
- Rents need to be kept low, utilities separated, and space flexible enough to grow from 200 square feet to 3,000 square feet. The residential scale and often-unfinished upper floor space in several of Greenfield's downtown buildings can easily accommodate these needs.
- The Town's community development staff can assist property owners and developers to attract these office users by identifying

grants, loans, historic tax credits, and other sources of funding; the Greenfield Business Association and other partners can produce pamphlets to advertise the concept and space; and the Town can provide information about tax incentives to the owners.

#### **Residential space**

Greenfield has neither the overall population growth nor growth in the 25 to 34 year-old age bracket to support an increase in the traditional housing market.

Residential use generally follows other uses in redevelopment areas. To draw downtown residents, the downtown must first become more attractive than it is now, with a greater retail mix, and more entertainment and cultural attractions.

There are three possible sub-markets for downtown apartments to accommodate residents who would not necessarily choose a garden apartment or a single-family house for rent: artist lofts, empty nester housing, and student housing.

#### *Lofts*

- A survey of local artists undertaken by RKG Associates revealed that 70% indicated that a live/work housing arrangement in loft space was appealing. The majority said they needed and wanted studio space outside their own homes.
- The type of space needed has full utilities, elevator access, good light, parking, open floor plans and, most importantly, low rent. The average size of unit desired is 750 square feet; the maximum rent is \$500/month.

- As an example in a key property, a limited number of lofts might work on the top floor of the Wilson's Department Store building. The space is unique, has excellent lighting and views, is fully accessible by elevator, and designated parking is available in the rear. Low rents assigned to this fourth floor space are enough to cover most of the cost of renovation.
- These units could be marketed as live/work studios and bring residents to the downtown, adding activity and spending to the downtown economy.
- The success of the Artspace Community Arts Center, the music groups, the Garden Theater, and any new restaurants would help foster demand for these loft-style units.

#### *Empty nester housing*

- Potential tenants for empty nester housing are 55 to 65 year-olds seeking housing that does not require a lawn mower or large spaces to maintain, and who become long term tenants.
- As for other potential tenants, empty nesters would be attracted to apartments in the downtown because they offer the ability to live in a more rural setting without the work associated with home ownership; and the ability to walk to the library, the Y, the post office and shops that people frequent on a daily basis.
- The number of people choosing this lifestyle is small and it is suggested that only ten two-bedroom units be developed at first, in two buildings, and staggered in their delivery to the market.
- The Town can help by offering increased nighttime police presence, well-lit streets, and secure parking lots.

#### *Student housing*

- The target population for student housing is overflow graduate students from the Amherst area and graduates looking to stay in the area. They would choose either loft space or renovated two-bedroom units in historic buildings over single-family homes or units in apartment complexes outside of the downtown.
- Rents in the Amherst area are \$150 to \$350 per month higher than in Greenfield, with the highest disparity in the larger units. Occupancy in the Amherst area is at 99%, indicating that demand generally outpaces supply.
- As long as Greenfield can offer its significant price advantage, there will be some who are willing to commute to save money and to find quality apartments actually available. Again, the numbers are small, and only a few units at any given time in Greenfield are likely to be absorbed.
- Active marketing would be essential to this endeavor and the space needs to be already built. Although the older market might be willing to wait for a unit, recent graduates or students will be looking for space already available.

#### *Creating the market*

- To make a residential tenant choose downtown depends on the ability of the town to attract and keep new restaurants and offer existing and proposed entertainment and cultural activities. A few successes in these areas will help change the downtown's image and make it more attractive to residents seeking older, unique apartments or lofts.

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A market that draws from the arts community, people over 55 years old, and, to some degree, from graduate or graduated students from the Amherst area is there to fill a small number of residential units in the downtown.

- Diversification is recommended, not just in use type, but also in the apartment type. A combination of lofts and of two-bedroom apartments above older retail buildings along Main Street is suggested.

All of the suggestions outlined here have potential market support, but none represents an easy market to create or capture. They are incorporated to different degrees into the proposed redevelopment of key properties (discussed in Section 5 of this Plan) identified as pivotal in the creation of a more dynamic and attractive downtown.

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# Transportation and Parking

Transportation, access and parking are among the most important factors that can influence development patterns within the downtown area. In order to develop a parking and circulation plan that supports future development and revitalization goals for the downtown study area, especially when considering potential impacts to maintaining a functional and vibrant town center, a thorough understanding of the existing transportation system is required.

## **Existing Conditions**

VHB conducted a transportation inventory consisting of an assessment of roadway infrastructure, parking supply and occupancy, public transportation routes and services, and provisions for safe pedestrian and bicycle connections. Information regarding daily and peak hour traffic volumes, operational conditions, traffic safety conditions, and parking activity was also collected. This information was used to determine the current transportation conditions in the study area and to identify any existing deficiencies or needs. The findings of this assessment are more fully described in Appendix IV.

## **Circulation**

- Vehicular circulation in downtown Greenfield overall functions well. For the purposes of the transportation analysis, downtown Greenfield was divided into zones, illustrated on Figure 4.1.
- The transportation network within downtown is comprised primarily of collector and local streets, with two key arterial roadways: Main Street and Federal Street/Bank Row. The majority of the collector streets run in a north-south direction. As a result, there is a lack of east-west connections, primarily due to the railroad tracks, which traverse Greenfield



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north south, and few opportunities for providing cross connections. Therefore, greater demand is placed upon Main Street for east-west travel through the study area.

- Additionally, the roadway network in the Core 2 Zone, just north of Main Street and to the east of Chapman Street, consists of one-way street patterns and prohibited left-turn movements onto Main Street from Davis Street and Chapman Street. The combined effects of these street characteristics make it difficult for vehicles in this area to have easy access to Federal Street and/or travel to the eastern and southern areas of downtown.
- The north-south roadway orientation combined with limited access to the eastern edge of the Core 2 Zone causes negative impacts on the downtown circulation system. Such impacts include increased cut-through traffic in the residential areas in the northern section of the Core 2 Zone for drivers headed south or east. Since vehicles cannot turn left onto Main Street from either Chapman Street or Davis Street, and cannot access Federal Street via Ames Street due to its one-way westbound designation, drivers must travel north to Pleasant Street to leave this section of the study area.
- The observed circulation deficiencies, in addition to the lack of clear signage, hamper the use of the available parking lots in the Core 2 Zone, which includes the Chapman-Davis municipal lot, especially for drivers who are not familiar with the area.

#### **Traffic Volumes**

- Peak hour traffic volumes on Main Street and Federal Street/Bank Row account for

approximately 6% of the downtown traffic during the morning peak hour, and 8% during the evening peak hour, which is considered typical for most roadways.

- Approximately 40% of the traffic into Downtown Greenfield comes from the north; 15% comes from the east; 15% comes from the south; and 30% comes from the west.

#### **Levels of Service**

- Capacity analyses indicate that all of the unsignalized intersections in the study area operate at acceptable levels of service during the morning peak hour. During the evening peak hour, two intersections operate at less than an acceptable level of service, and four intersections operate at poor levels of service.
- The intersection of Main Street at Federal Street/Bank Row operates at an acceptable level of service in the morning and evening peak periods. Some movements at the intersection experience longer than average delays.
- The average travel speed on Main Street toward the central intersection, at peak periods, is approximately 17 miles per hour; average speed on Federal Street is approximately 14 miles per hour, and Bank Row is approximately 18 miles per hour. All of these streets have a 25 miles per hour speed limit, indicating a normal lowering of speed at the point of greatest traffic.

#### **Safety**

- All intersections within the Downtown Greenfield study area, with the exception of Main Street at Federal Street/Bank Row, have experienced less than five accidents per year. All intersections experienced a Massachusetts Highway Department crash rate that is lower than those experienced





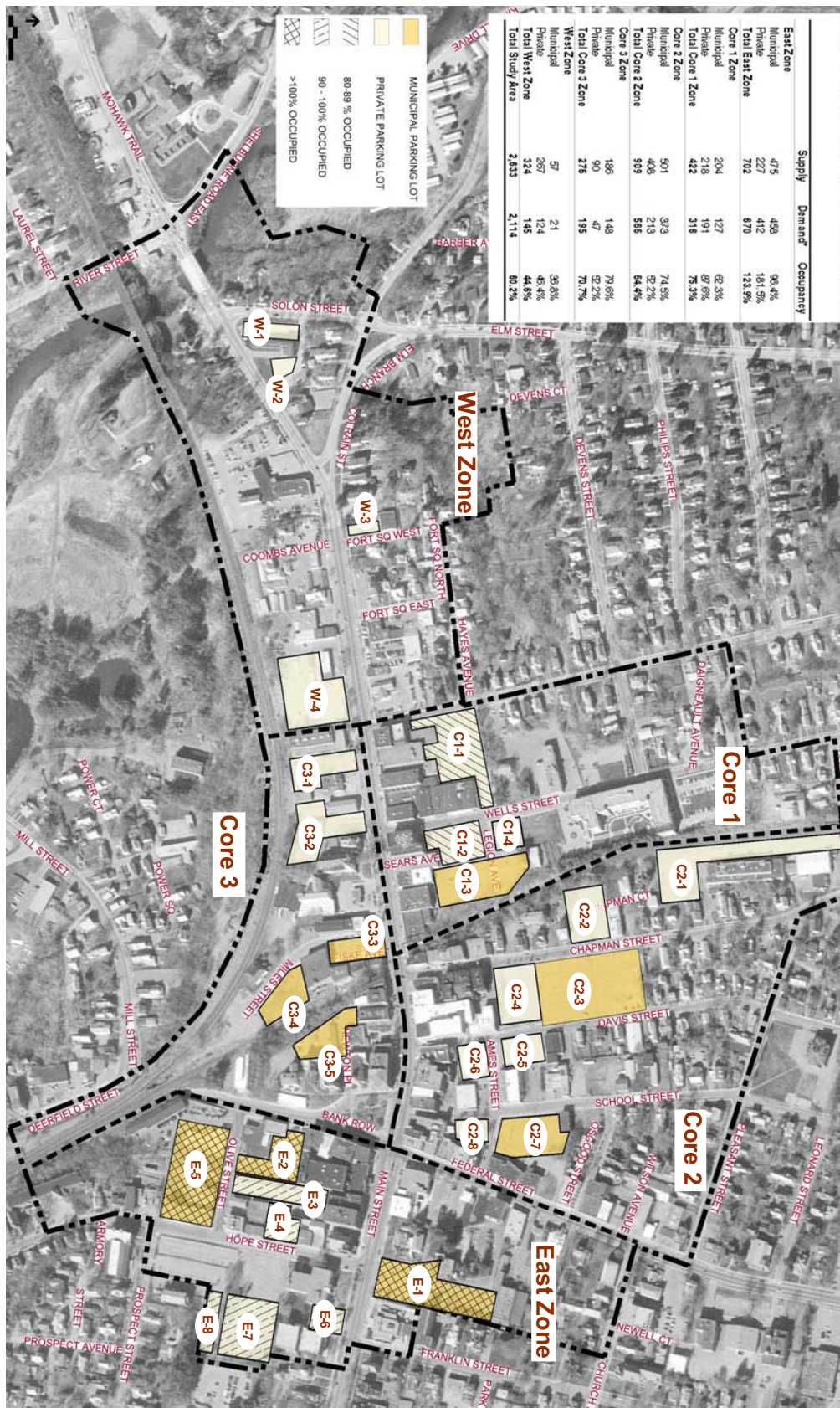


Fig. 4.2 Future Conditions Study Area Parking Demand

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- on average by intersections in District 2.
  - Accidents at the Main Street/Federal Street/Bank Row intersection could be in part due to the presence of lag phases in the signal timing that creates a "left-turn trap", a situation where vehicles turning left during a yellow phase wrongly assume that opposing traffic will stop.

### **Parking**

- Greenfield has an extensive downtown parking supply that is a key asset for supporting downtown development. There are 2,404 parking spaces in downtown Greenfield: 486 on street, 700 in municipal parking lots, and 1,218 in private lots. During the afternoon peak hour of use, 1,400 spaces are occupied.
- Parking utilization rates range from 44.8% in the west end of downtown to 78.7% in the east end, below the utilization rate of 85%, which is considered close to capacity. Figure 4.2 shows the distribution of public and private parking lots and their utilization rates.
- Most of the municipal lots are not visible from major roadways and their directional signs are not clearly visible either, many being obstructed from view by trees or standing among a "clutter" of other signs. This lack of visibility and signage can lead to a perception that there is a shortage of parking in the downtown area.
- While the lots in the East Zone of downtown Greenfield are at or close to capacity, the lots located in the Core 1 and 2 Zones do have the capacity to absorb additional cars. Thus, although the current parking supply is actually adequate, the lack of easy access to and from parking areas, and a lack of knowledge about parking areas, can lead to a perception that there is a

parking shortage in the downtown area.

### **Courthouse Development/Expansion**

Extensive parking and transportation analyses have been undertaken associated with future expansion of the Franklin County Courthouse. Expansion of the courthouse will result in the need to undertake a number of intersection improvements within the downtown area to address future needs. Additional parking will be needed as proposed courthouse development will involve expansion onto the courthouse's existing parking lot. Adequate replacement parking has been proposed through the design of a new lot at Olive Street to meet future needs of the courthouse.



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# Downtown Master Plan Recommendations



## FINDINGS

As shown in the analysis of the previous chapters, Greenfield has a wide range of assets and opportunities upon which to build. These findings, described below, form the framework upon which Greenfield can build its strategy for development.

1. Many residents consider downtown as very important, but spend only small amounts of time and money in downtown, seeing it as not attractive enough to merit longer trips or increased spending.
2. Consumers cite only a limited number of positives about downtown in terms of physical environment or character of stores; however these same consumers are willing to spend more time downtown if it becomes a more attractive place with an increased choice of stores.
3. Several market sectors are underrepresented downtown; an effort to target the recruitment of new businesses in these sectors would increase downtown's attractiveness and economic success.
4. The vacant structures of Bank Row create a highly unfavorable impression at the center of town; there is an urgent need to redevelop this area in a way that creates a stronger identity for Greenfield and a substantially improved physical environment. Reuse of Bank Row buildings together with open space improvements that create a more cohesive public environment around the Common and Town Hall are a first priority. In view of the long history of vacancy and deterioration in these structures and the failure of private sector efforts to secure productive reuse or redevelopment, development of an Urban

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Renewal Plan will be needed to provide the necessary tools to ensure appropriate reuse and redevelopment within this area and other locations within the downtown.

5. Several additional downtown structures represent development opportunities; capturing these opportunities, however, will require significant public-private cooperation, and involvement in the recruitment of prospective tenants and specialty developers. At a minimum, public sector contributions will involve technical support to building owners on building reuse and renovation strategies consistent with this Plan. In selected cases, public funding through loan or grant programs may also be desirable or necessary.
6. Downtown Greenfield has limited vacancy at street level but upper floors of several key downtown structures are either underutilized or vacant; reuse of these upper floors for more productive uses is a key to building increased activity and vitality within the downtown area.
7. Office uses occupy several ground floors within the heart of downtown; these uses tend to break up the continuity of storefronts that is important to a successful retail environment. Zoning changes are needed to promote the development of continuous retail frontage at street level and connect current fragmentation of retail use within the downtown.
8. Streetscape improvements currently being completed will enhance the identity of downtown, but in order to benefit more substantially from these improvements, downtown must provide opportunities for more outdoor eating and relaxation in several time periods.
9. Zoning for the edges of downtown should be modified to prevent expansion of commercial uses onto attractive, stable (but commercially zoned) residential streets. Deterioration of residential properties at the edge of downtown has the potential to weaken the connections between downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. Zoning should promote continued commercial growth within the core of downtown rather than dispersal to its edges.
10. Parking supply represents an important asset for downtown Greenfield; any reduction in this parking supply in the near term could compromise downtown's longer term potential for growth in business activity. Overall parking supply is adequate to meet current and anticipated future needs within the downtown area without construction of structured parking. Any proposal to reduce public parking should be carefully evaluated in terms of its potential impact on the downtown's viability. As downtown zoning does not require on-site parking as part of new development, anticipated development will potentially increase the demands on the public parking supply. Privately-owned lots in several sections of the downtown may continue to be underutilized. Cooperative efforts should be undertaken to ensure that these private lots are well utilized as part of an overall downtown strategy. The Town should consider leasing or acquiring some privately-owned lots over the longer term to ensure more effective control and efficient management of the overall downtown parking supply. The availability and utilization rate of public parking should be monitored annually. Parking is currently limited in the east part of downtown (east of Federal Street); better management of existing parking can provide an effective solution to this problem.

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11. Downtown's ability to continue to attract Greenfield and regional residents and visitors will ultimately require further efforts to provide new cultural, educational and artistic offerings in combination with commercial uses. These initiatives can build on the success of current destinations including the Greenfield Energy Park. The new civic pavillion at the Energy Park represents an important addition to the downtown area and should be used for as many cultural and artistic events as possible.
  12. Continued efforts are needed to strengthen links between downtown and surrounding neighborhoods including Deerfield Street, the Green River, and other neighborhoods.
  13. Programming activities in the downtown area, such as the Farmers' Market, special events, races, parades, and seasonal celebrations, are a vital ingredient in continuing to attract people to downtown, increase its visibility and viability to the larger community, and provide entertainment for a wide cross-section of Greenfield residents and visitors.
  14. Planning for downtown and implementing its master plan should continue through the Downtown Advisory Committee, which combines broad representation and collaboration among the Town, the business community and residents. In addition, Greenfield's new charter allows for a Mayor's Assistant for Economic Development and Marketing. This position should be designed to provide overall leadership and coordination in guiding downtown revitalization efforts and development projects of both the public and private sectors, and be filled by an individual with experience in similar downtown renewal efforts.

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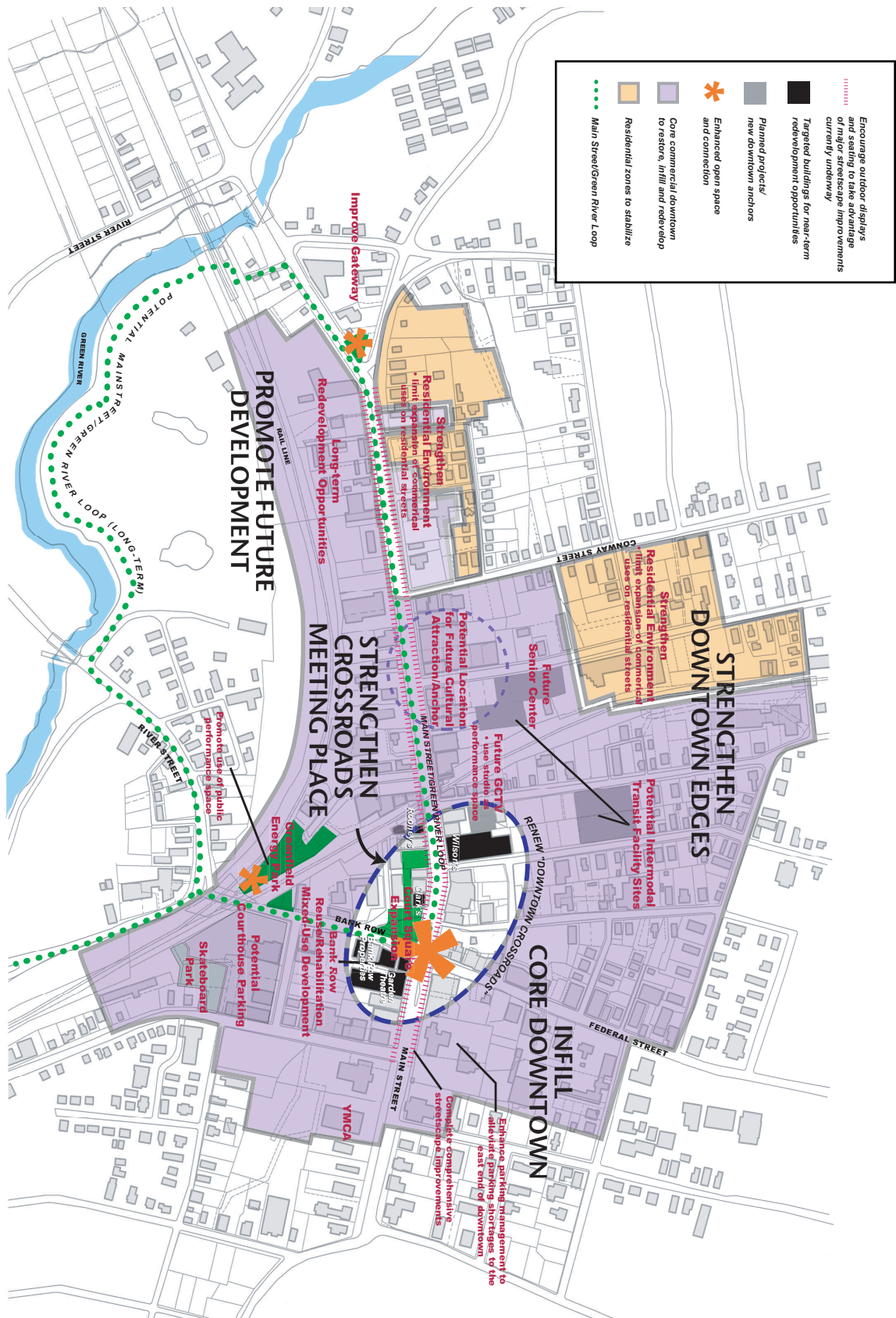
## RECOMMENDATIONS

The revival of Greenfield's downtown requires a series of coordinated actions by both the public and private sectors. These actions are conceived to build on downtown's strengths while addressing its current weaknesses. Successful implementation of the Plan will require a more coordinated and focused effort than has been possible to date. Only with such an effort will the Plan be successful in addressing the goals and objectives of the wider Greenfield community.

Downtown's future success will depend on effective partnerships between the Town and the business community to advance implementation of several key initiatives. These initiatives are listed below.

- Court Square Revitalization/Crossroads Meeting Place
- Streetscape Improvements
- Redevelopment Strategy for Key Downtown Properties
- Development of a Downtown Urban Renewal Plan
- Downtown Zoning Changes
- Development of Design Guidelines
- Transportation and Parking Improvements
- Marketing and Programming
- Longer Term Opportunities







*The historic facades and attractive streetscape of Main Street frame the northern edge of the Common.*

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## **COURT SQUARE REVITALIZATION STRATEGY/CROSSROADS MEETING PLACE**

*“Communal and public spaces should be supported and enhanced downtown.” (quote from Visioning meeting)*

At the heart of Greenfield, within a block on either side of the Main Street and Federal Street/Bank Row intersection, are clustered all the symbols of community life: the Common, Town Hall, churches, the Library, historic commercial buildings, local retail stores, coffee shops and restaurants, banks and professional offices. A Farmers' Market gathers residents every Saturday on the Common. The Town Common is visually and symbolically a central community space, yet is small and surrounded by roadways that isolate it from the rest of the downtown. This Crossroads area is currently a weak link in the overall structure of downtown and significant improvements are needed to strengthen the area's image and identity.

Also in this highly visible location, vacant and derelict Bank Row buildings create a negative image for downtown as a whole. Rehabilitation of these inherently attractive structures with new uses, combined with upgrades to other structures and enhance-

ments to the Town Common, are critically needed to restore the appeal and historic integrity of this area. Potential reuse and redevelopment options for these Bank Row buildings are described further in this section of the Downtown Master Plan.

Public actions including the development of an urban renewal plan (as described later in this section) are needed to provide the necessary redevelopment framework and tools to support the timely reuse and redevelopment of Bank Row. In the absence of these actions, this area is likely to continue to cast a blighting shadow over the core of downtown. In conjunction with reuse and redevelopment of Bank Row, there is an historic opportunity to strengthen the public environment and pedestrian character of the area.

### **Court Square**

In our vision for a revitalized downtown, and in the opinions of Greenfield residents about current strengths and needed future improvements, a sense of place in the center of town supporting its role as the 'heart of the community' figure prominently. To strengthen the area's role as a gathering space, the Town Common could be expanded by closing Court Square to traffic. Court Square is occasionally closed now when the Farmer's Market needs the extra space. The bus stop in front of Town Hall could be relocated. The municipal parking lot behind Town Hall could be accessed one-way in from Main Street and one-way out along Newton Place. The pedestrian space could extend behind Clark's Shop and connect the Town Hall and Common to the Veterans Memorial Mall, where Town Hall Annex is located, creating a continuous pedestrian link among civic functions. Emergency vehicles would have access through all of these pedestrian spaces.





*Enlarging the Town Common would reinforce its role of community gathering space at the heart of downtown.*

This approach to the heart of downtown would create a green Common attached to historic brick buildings complemented by outdoor seating.

While increasing the gathering capacity of the Common, the additional space would also provide a dignified forecourt to Town Hall, and a pedestrian outdoor area directly adjacent to Clark's Sport Shop. Tables and chairs in this location would allow residents and visitors to enjoy the spectacular view of green, unspoiled mountains in the near distance, framed by the historic and urban buildings of

Bank Row. This contrast in views is one of the most memorable sights of downtown Greenfield, and in many respects, its defining identity.

This proposal for enhancing the Common has been discussed before in Greenfield, and met with some concern that it could compromise the historical integrity of the Common. Preservation of the integrity of the Common is central to this proposal and can be achieved through the design process. Indeed these improvements should enhance the Common's attractiveness for the entire community. One possible approach to design would be to leave the Court Square boundary of the Common unaltered, and pave the roadway itself with cobblestone, brick, or other appropriate paver, both keeping intact the tracing of the original roadway and allowing for a comfortable surface for pedestrian circulation and outdoor seating.



*Court Square is closed to vehicular traffic when Farmers' Market needs the extra space and gives a glimpse of the activity and pedestrian character that could be established in permanence. (Photo credit: Jeffrey C. Martell)*

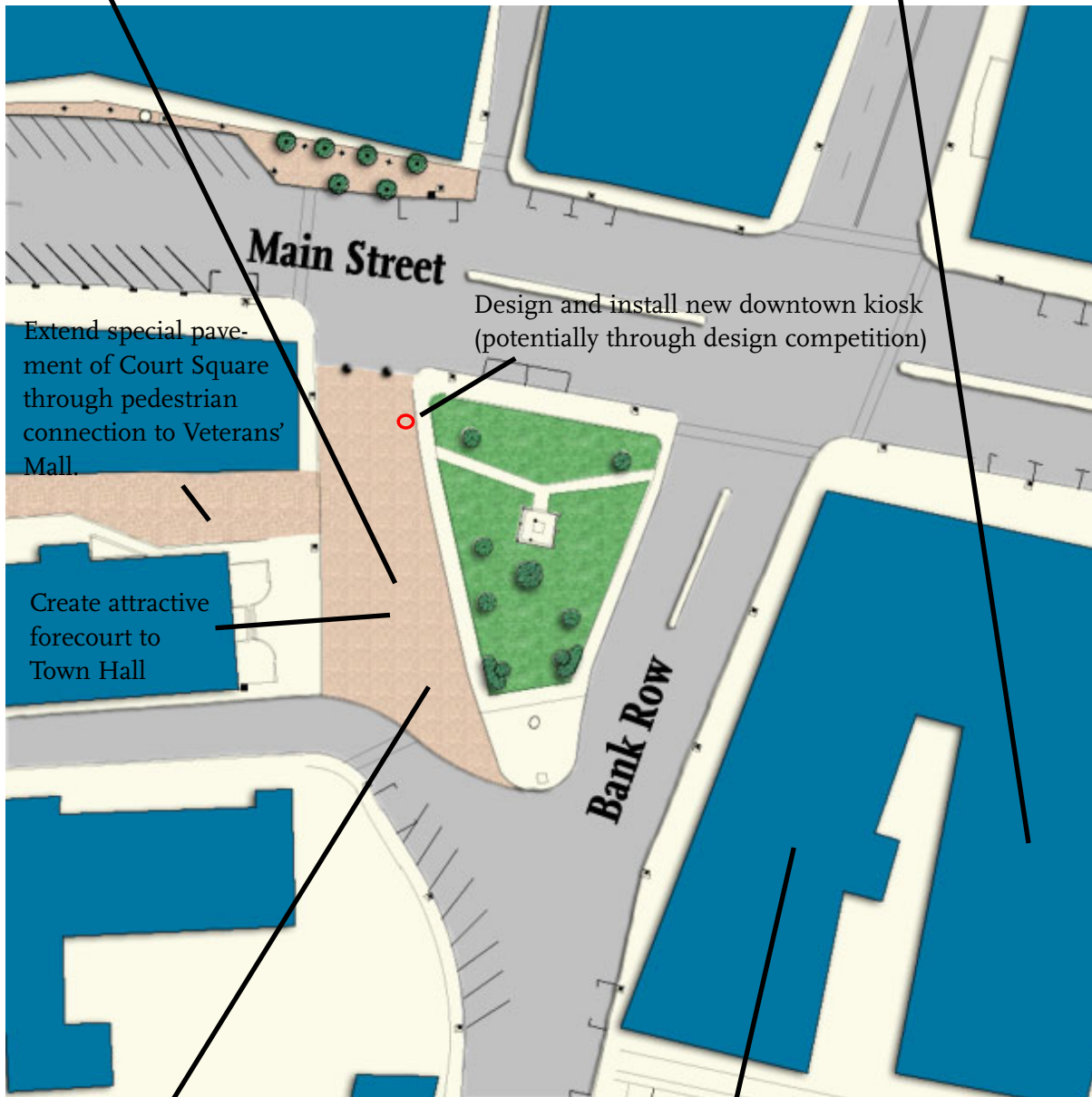
### **Community anchors**

All around the Common are several other potential anchors of community meeting space. Uses proposed for the redevelopment of the key properties (as described later in this section), in conjunction with the advancement of other currently proposed

## Crossroads at Court Square and the Common

Expand the Common and create a pedestrian space for special events and activities including Farmer's Market, street festivals, seasonal events; include street furniture and sitting areas.

Reuse the upper level of Garden Theater for performance and rehearsal space, cultural and artistic uses.



Extend special pavement of Court Square through pedestrian connection to Veterans' Mall.

Design and install new downtown kiosk (potentially through design competition)

Create attractive forecourt to Town Hall

Close existing Court Square street to traffic, and pave with cobbelstones, brick, or other textured pavers. Space bollards to allow emergency vehicle access.

Rehabilitate Bank Row properties to include restaurants, ice cream shop, and retail stores at street level, and office, meeting space and residential uses on the upper floors.





*The new home of Greenfield's Community TV studio and performance space, Victoria Studios, has the potential to become a new entertainment destination.*

projects, will reinforce the heart of downtown as the meeting space for the whole community, and consequently contribute to downtown economic revitalization.

Current facilities that are being planned or are potential future initiatives around the Common area include the following:

- **Garden Theater**—potential to accommodate additional cultural and educational uses on the upper floor, as described later in this section under Redevelopment Strategy for Key Downtown Properties.
- **Bank Row Buildings**—potential to accommodate active street level retail uses with upper level office, meeting space, and residential uses.
- **Victoria Studios**—Greenfield Community Television station is building a new facility on Chapman Street, close to Main Street. Its main studio is designed and equipped as a performance center, for live productions as well as large assembly space.
- **Clark's Shop**—potential to accommodate office suites on the second, third and fourth floors.
- **Rooney's Store**—potential to accommodate office suites and residential apartments on the second and third floors.
- **Wilson's**—potential to accommodate restaurant and residential uses on its third

and fourth floors. The viability of a Tea Room on the third floor would be strengthened by the presence of Victoria Studios adjacent to Wilson's.

- **Energy Park**—the Station Civic Pavilion, under construction, will offer outdoor performance space for concerts and other events, strengthening the role of Energy Park as a public gathering space and community anchor.

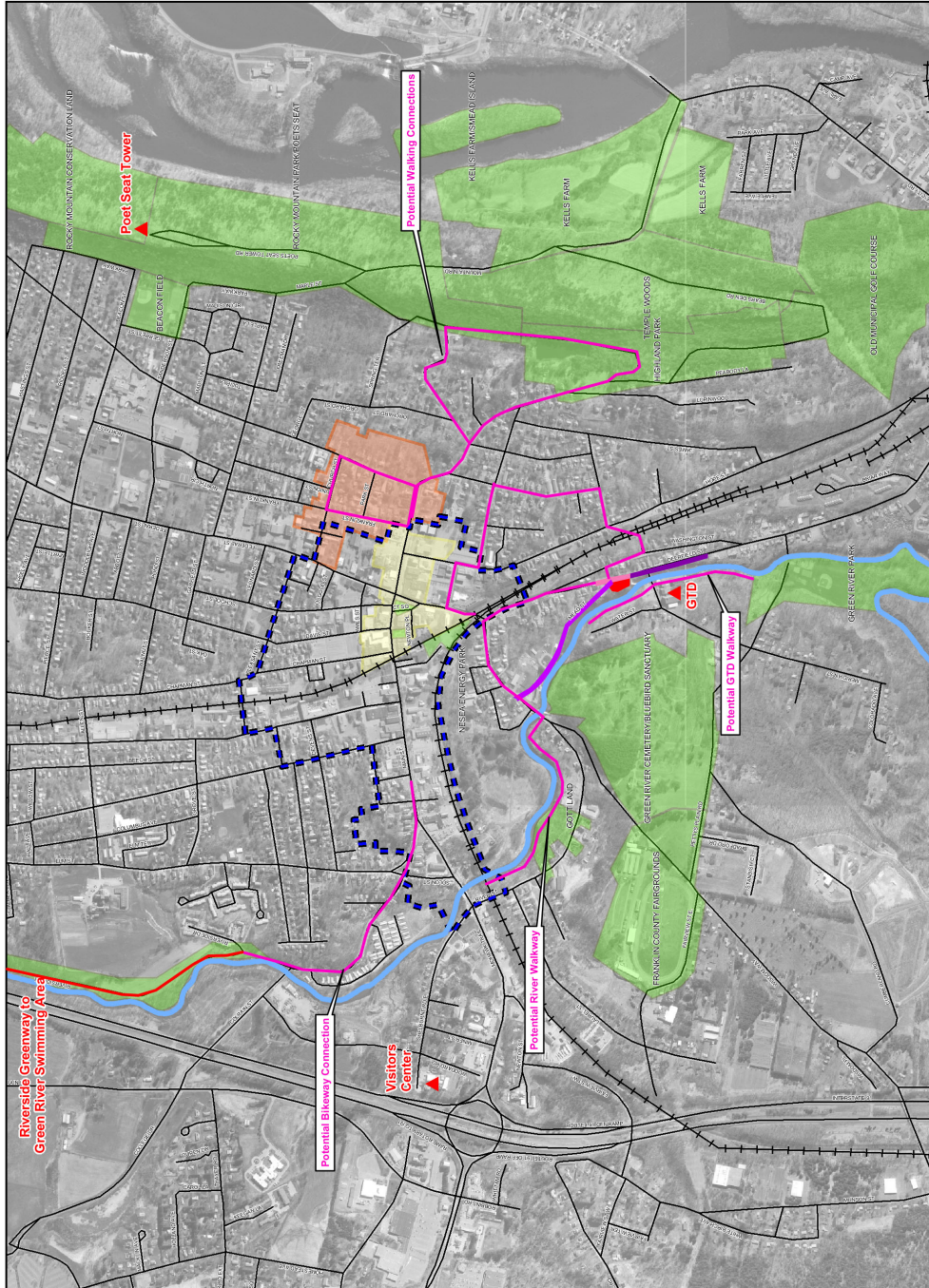
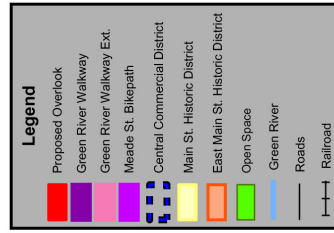
Together these planned and potential cultural and entertainment destinations would support each other, creating a truly central focus of community activity throughout the day and evening at the crossroads of Greenfield.

Increased activity, in the form of more foot traffic, more people of all ages coming and going to various connected events and venues, would in turn attract retailers, support restaurants into evening hours, and greatly benefit the economic life of downtown.

### **Green Connections**

With the celebrated Energy Park among other achievements, an environmental focus is already central to the identity of downtown Greenfield. The Town benefits from a compact, walkable downtown, in close proximity to open spaces and natural resources of great beauty. Yet these assets are currently hidden from Main Street, with the exception of the mountain views from downtown. Signage and advertising are the most critical parts of encouraging visitors and residents to explore the assets that already exist in Downtown Greenfield. The brochure that currently accompanies the Downtown Historic District walking tour could be graphically updated and reissued. Directions to the Energy Park and events at its Station Civic Pavilion could be highlighted.

# Greenfield Downtown Connections



Map Prepared By: Office of Planning & Community Development  
Data Sources: MassGIS & Town Greenfield August 2002

One place to begin a series of “green walks” would be to create a path that connects Main Street to Energy Park along Bank Row. At Bank Row and Mill Street, the path could continue eastward along Deerfield Street, and its scenic streetscape improvements along the river, to the GTD site. It could also connect to the Mead Street bike path, Rocky Mountain Park, and historic walks in the east of downtown. The current Downtown Historic District walking tour could be incorporated into these walks.

In the long term, this environmental focus could expand into projects of greater scale, such as reconnecting downtown Greenfield with the Green River (see Longer Term Opportunities further in this section.)

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## DOWNTOWN STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS—NEXT STEPS

*“Streetscape improvements need to be continued and maintained; the downtown must be clean, attractive and welcoming for everyone.” (quote from Visioning meeting)*



*Streetscape improvements build an attractive public realm and improve the shopping experience.*

Additional downtown streetscape improvements are needed to build on Greenfield's recent successful streetscape improvement program. Streetscape improvements are often and appropriately the first action a town takes to bring about downtown revitalization. Not only do they enhance the aesthetics of downtown, make shopping more enjoyable and comfortable, and unify the downtown with a consistent treatment, but public improvements also provide a framework of investment that diminishes the risk for private investors who may want to buy or develop property along Main Street.

Streetscape improvements have recently been completed along Main Street, in several phases, and have produced wide sidewalk areas with street trees, pedestrian-scaled streetlights, brick bump-outs at pedestrian crossings, and a landscaped edge to a municipal parking lot. These improvements are positive reinforcements of downtown's pedestrian-scale character.

The conversion of Memory Lane into a pedestrian alley, connecting Main Street to the potential site of the Senior Center, is a good example of a streetscape improvement that creates a new pedestrian connection, and enables social interaction. Unique to Greenfield in its location and dimensions, Memory Lane also contributes to the downtown's sense of place and identity.

The Downtown Master Plan proposes implementing a series of complementary streetscape initiatives.

### Kiosk

- As a feature of the new downtown, an information kiosk should be installed along or near Main Street at the center of activity in a location that allows for emergency vehicle circulation. The kiosk would



identify businesses and destinations on a downtown map, describe special features, announce programs and activities, and become a landmark and gathering place in itself. It could inform long-term residents as well as newcomers, and encourage tourism.

### **Directional signs**

- Create a new and attractive system of directional signs that would enhance the impression of the downtown and help with place making. They would welcome visitors at gateways to the downtown, direct drivers to municipal parking lots, and identify landmark buildings and destinations.
- Directional signs would be designed at a scale for slow-moving traffic and placed at strategic locations so as to not compete with existing signs and contribute to clutter. Current highway signs guide tourists quickly through town and overpower the streetscape with their size, particularly when they are spaced at short intervals. Two signs for Rtes 5 - 10 north, for example, appear on Main Street eastbound, before and after Court Square. The size and design of state signs cannot be changed, but past discussions with MassHighway should be renewed to determine the feasibility of removing one of two signs when they are paired so close together.

### **Outdoor seating**

Increasing opportunities for outdoor seating associated with existing downtown restaurants will enable the community to take full advantage of its recently completed streetscape program and add to the sense of vitality within the downtown area. Store owners should be encouraged to provide outdoor seating and dining on the sidewalk, in the



*Memory Lane, connecting Main Street to parking areas, has been converted to a pedestrian walkway.*



*Pedestrian walkways enrich downtown livability and are good locations for benches, lights, plantings, and other streetscape elements.*





*Downtown Greenfield could significantly change its streetscape, livability, and image with a campaign of vastly expanding outdoor seating opportunities.*



public way adjacent to restaurants, cafes, lunch places, and other establishments that may want to extend service outdoors. This zone could be immediately adjacent to the building, with the walking area of the sidewalk along the street. Or the seating zone could be along the street edge of the sidewalk, with the walking area next to the building. The latter configuration allows tables and chairs to be under a canopy of trees. Either option would ensure that sidewalks be handicapped accessible.

Several small-scale restaurants already have one to three tables informally set out on the sidewalk. This proposal would extend the practice to other locations and increase the scale of the visual impact. The Green Fields Market, Memory Lane, Griffon Games, Bogie's, Brad's, several other restaurants, and a future pedestrian space next to Clark's on the Common, are potential new locations for outdoor seating.

A pilot project should be developed to test the idea over the summer of 2003. The project could feature installing outdoor tables and chairs at participating businesses to demonstrate and evaluate the use of sidewalk zones. The furniture would be of compatible style, material, and color, and would be secured to border planters. The program would be a success if the new spaces were well used for social interaction as well as consumption, and if merchants increased sales. The image of Greenfield's Main Street could be dramatically enlivened and used in turn in a marketing campaign. Merchants in the downtown area would choose the pilot's duration and specifications, and the Business Association could coordinate the purchasing and distribution of street furniture.

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## REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR KEY DOWNTOWN PROPERTIES

*"Greenfield needs just one development that is seen as a major accomplishment to have the whole thing start rolling."*

Equally as important as a strong sense of community, Greenfield residents identified downtown's historic buildings as one of the Town's greatest assets. Conversely, the neglect or underutilization of these buildings is one of the Town's greatest burdens. Vacant upper floors, vacant buildings, or extreme deterioration, although not widespread throughout the downtown, occur in prominent locations along Main Street.

Residents repeatedly mentioned the reuse and redevelopment of these vacant or underutilized spaces as a very high community priority. Spaces that are considered to be underutilized generally refer to storage areas on the upper levels of downtown buildings. These spaces could instead accommodate office or residential uses that would attract people who serve as new customers for existing downtown businesses. The reuse of upper floors into housing has also been expressed as a goal to add vitality to the downtown.

The Market Analysis of the Downtown Master Plan researched several potential markets for increased uses of vacant or underutilized downtown buildings. It identified unmet retail and entertainment demand, and specialized niche markets for office and residential uses.

Eight properties were selected and identified as potential priority projects for reuse. In some cases, opportunities are limited to the reuse of one or more upper floors. In other cases, reuse or redevelopment of the entire building was evaluated. These properties are



*Key downtown properties were selected for possible redevelopment scenarios, based on their prominence in the center of town and availability of vacant or underutilized space.*



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not intended to be an exclusive list of potential properties with reuse or redevelopment potential within the downtown area. Several other downtown properties include vacant or underutilized space. However, the eight priority properties meet a number of criteria that reflect their potential to contribute to overall downtown renewal.

### **Criteria**

Four criteria were used to select these properties over other underused or partially vacant buildings.

- **Visibility:** the more visually prominent on Main Street, the more central to downtown's image, the greater impact will the redevelopment of the building have on residents, shoppers and visitors, and the more encouragement it will provide for other owners or developers to invest in downtown Greenfield.
- **Location and adjacencies:** whether redeveloping this property would support, and be supported by, other existing or planned uses nearby.
- **Type of space:** the architectural merit of the building increases the attractiveness of the investment by promising a finished product of quality; conversely, a large, flexible space of little architectural merit offers the advantage of a more thorough and cost-effective reconfiguration. Properties in between, of small footprint or specialized space, needing much work to reuse, are least attractive.
- **Amount of space:** the more aggregate space is available for reuse or redevelopment, the more cost-effective the investment can be, and the greater social and economic impact the new activity will generate.

The properties were assessed as to their use history, building condition, needed investment, and the potential uses they could be converted to, based on the findings of the market analysis, and the goals of the master plan.

### **Mix of Uses**

The properties and their suggested new uses are shown in a chart on the following page. These are not the only possible redevelopment scenarios for each building, but represent a sample of what could be achieved. There is potential market support for each of the uses listed. The redevelopment of the buildings would be feasible, but not without concerted efforts to recruit tenants and experienced developers, and not if owners' expectations for buyout or equity participation are too high. Nor are these the only buildings that could be redeveloped or better used, but they are the most prominent or promising.

The market in Greenfield, now and over time can absorb the proposed retail, office, cultural, and residential uses, in those quantities. Although significant in the context of Greenfield development, each reuse is relatively modest as an individual project, compared with the new construction of the same amount of space in a single mixed-use downtown development. But the reuse over time of smaller increments of space is necessary to ensure market absorption, and would still have great cumulative impact on the vitality of downtown.

#### *Garden Theater*

The Garden Theater is already an entertainment destination but could redevelop its upper floor into a cultural center of multipurpose spaces: art classes, dance instruction, and symphonic and choral practice, all activities that need expansion space and benefit from proximity to each other. Reuse of the space for these purposes could draw additional people downtown and contribute to the overall liveliness of the area.

### 3 Bank Row

A key corner property, 3 Bank Row could accommodate a coffee or ice cream shop at street level with legal or medical office space on the upper floors. This approach would generate additional activity on the street around Court Square while adding to the customer base for other downtown functions.

### 9 Bank Row

The former First National Bank building, once a proud landmark on the Common, has been vacant and deteriorating for years. Its unique space and character, however, if feasible to preserve, would make an ideal setting for a restaurant at the street level and much needed conference space, function rooms, or office suites, on the second floor created at the level of the current mezzanine.

## Chart of Key Properties New Uses

Property	Proposed Reuse Area	Proposed Uses
Garden Theater	11,000 SF	Cultural center with multipurpose spaces, 2nd floor
3 Bank Row	1,000 SF 5,700 SF	Coffee/ice cream shop, 1st floor Legal and medical offices, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors
9 Bank Row	6,500 SF 6,500 SF	Restaurant, casual, 1st floor Conference center/function rooms, or offices, 2nd floor
21 Bank Row	2,500 SF 4,000 SF	Retail: clothing, shoe, and/or coffee/ice cream, 1st floor Office suites, 2nd and 3rd floors
25 Bank Row	2,400 SF 4,900 SF	Restaurant, small upscale, 1st floor Five residential units, 2nd and 3rd floors
Clark's Sport Shop	10,700 SF	Office suites, 2nd, 3rd and 4th floors
Rooney's Store	3,450 SF 3,450 SF	Office suites, 2nd floor Four 2-bedroom apartments, 3rd floor
Wilson's Department Store	1,500 SF 18,000 SF	Tea Room, 3rd floor 18 loft-style apartments, 4th floor

*At 3 Bank Row, the recommendations do not apply to the ATM space, which can be incorporated into the reuse of the first floor.*

*At 9 Bank Row, a second floor would be built where there is currently a mezzanine.*

*At 25 Bank Row, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints has plans to build and move to a new structure, thereby vacating the entire building it now leases.*



#### *21 Bank Row*

This vacant building offers potential for creating retail space on the street level for a clothing or shoe store or as an alternative location for an ice cream or coffee shop. Office suites could be accommodated on the upper levels.

#### *25 Bank Row*

This renovated building is in good condition. With moderate investment, it could accommodate a small upscale dinner restaurant on the street level with up to five residential units on the upper floors.



#### *Clark's Sport Shop*

The historical commercial block sits at the center of downtown, on the Common, with three exposed facades. It has the potential to be reused into prominent office suites on its three upper floors.

#### *Rooney's Store*

With a long footprint and more privacy than other key properties, Rooney's Store could accommodate office suites on the second floor and four residential units on the third floor.

#### *Wilson's*

Wilson's Department Store is already a renowned shopping destination in downtown Greenfield. The building with the largest footprint, it could house a Tea Room on a portion of the third floor and up to eighteen loft style apartments on the fourth floor.



*One redevelopment scenario for the First National Bank Building would be a large, casual restaurant on the first floor and a conference center/function rooms, or office suites, on the second floor (where there is now a mezzanine.)*



21 Bank Row could be redeveloped into retail on the first floor—a shoe or clothing store and ice cream parlor or coffee shop—with office suites above.

### **Worksheets**

A worksheet was developed for each of the key properties, identifying size, condition, assessed value and use history. Different levels of renovation costs, depending on the building condition and desired level of finish, were calculated, as well as the rents to be expected from the reuse, to determine the level of equity required and its return on investment (ROI).

### *Cost assumptions*

The worksheets on individual building reuse potential take a conservative and modest approach. They show low renovation costs because the office and residential markets identified as likely to be attracted to downtown Greenfield want the flexibility, openness, and low rents of relatively unfinished space, as compared to Class A office space or high end condominiums. These worksheets would not entice traditional developers. Developers would be hesitant to engage not

because the shown rents are too high, or rehab costs too low, but because, even with the rents and rehab costs shown, the return on investment (ROI) is still well below the typical 50-100% sought by most developers in a high-risk (inactive) market. If the rent assumptions are lowered, and the construction cost assumptions are raised, an already marginal possibility would become infeasible to most developers. Another assumption is needed to make these non-traditional development projects work: that acquisition costs be no higher than the assessed value of the property (and in some instances zero), a notion that is often resisted by property owners, but is necessary to turn around vacant buildings. In cases of long-standing deterioration, the value can be negative. Without these assumptions, and the will to take the risk they represent, it is understandable that no major buildings in downtown Greenfield have been successfully transformed.



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### *Attracting the market*

The key to changing the status quo for downtown Greenfield is to recognize that what has to be done is, in several important respects, new territory: more aggressive outreach and marketing to specialized user groups. The market study, for example, zeroes in on specific types of uses and users, most of which are not now represented in Greenfield. The assessment articulates a clear market rationale for each of the targeted tenant types. It also makes it clear that they must be attracted to Greenfield through concerted outreach efforts. They will not materialize on their own or in response to general promotions of goodwill. The same can be said for attracting developers whose experience and expertise include communities and markets like Greenfield, and who also must be sold on a compelling and interesting project.

### *Summary assumptions*

The assumptions and conclusions underlying the market study and the sample building worksheets are summarized below.

- Buildings are valued at no more than assessed value, and in some instances have no cash value that can be withdrawn by current owners, if the type of suggested improvements are to be made;
- Rehabilitation must be done initially at a basic level, as the market cannot, at least in the foreseeable short term, absorb extravagant finishes or reconstruction;
- A cachet or unique identity for downtown must be developed over the longer term that includes more exciting and diverse tenant types, or substantial improvements in the products and offerings of current tenants. Accomplishing this goal will require active and aggressive recruitment of desirable tenants who are well-positioned to capitalize on the identified market opportunities.
- In addition to new efforts to market and recruit tenants, returns on investment in the short term (even with a façade improvement grant and investment tax credits) are not sufficiently attractive to entice traditional developers. A concerted, cooperative effort to lower owners' short term expectations and elevate their commitment to longer term rewards is essential under currently foreseeable conditions of market support.

See *Appendix III: Market Analysis* for worksheets on key properties and all financial assumptions.

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## **TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING IMPROVEMENTS**

*"Parking and traffic issues, whether perceived or real, should be dealt with in logical and future-conscious ways."*

The adequacy of downtown transportation and parking will be essential to the future vitality of downtown Greenfield. Successful downtown revitalization will lead to increases in traffic as well as increased demand for parking spaces. VHB evaluated projected increases in traffic, potential transportation improvements that should be pursued to enhance the overall downtown roadway and



*Some turning improvements at intersections could ease vehicular flow under future conditions, but circulation overall functions well in downtown Greenfield.*

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pedestrian network, and the capacity of downtown parking resources to meet future demands associated with new projects.

### **Downtown Circulation—Future Conditions**

The future conditions assessment builds upon the foundation of existing parking and circulation conditions, and projects the impacts of growth and redevelopment in downtown Greenfield over a ten-year time frame, to the year 2012.

Traffic volumes on the downtown roadway network under future conditions include existing traffic, new traffic from general background growth, and new traffic related to a series of potential redevelopment projects planned to be completed within the next ten years. Assessments are based on programmatic information for the 8 reuse projects of existing buildings, proposed by the Master Plan, and 4 other projects, which were in various phases of planning at the start of the Master Plan. These projects are: the YMCA expansion, the Courthouse expansion, a new Senior Center and a new Intermodal Facility.

In general, the future conditions assessment indicates that roadways within the downtown area are adequate to support anticipated growth in traffic. A number of modest improvements are desirable to improve the overall traffic flow within the downtown area and address some intersections. These improvements are summarized here and described in considerable detail in *Appendix IV: Circulation and Parking Reports*.

Below are some specific recommendations to improve circulation as traffic increases with the added activity of future development.

### **Operations**

- To improve efficiency at intersections with less than acceptable levels of service in the

Core 1 zone, provide striping for exclusive left and right turn lanes where feasible. To provide sufficient right-of-way for additional lanes, restrict parking during peak hours in areas adjacent to intersections to accommodate additional movements and vehicle stacking. While such lane configurations may be impractical for buses or large trucks, thus causing limited delays, efficiency would be greatly enhanced for automobile traffic, which would be the majority of traffic during peak hours.

- The intersection of Olive Street with Bank Row may warrant signalization due to the full build out of the potential projects in the East Zone of the study area and other variables. It is recommended that a detailed analysis of this intersection be conducted when additional redevelopment projects are proposed to occur in the East Zone.
- Consider providing striping for left turn movements for westbound Main Street traffic onto Hope Street. Striping should also be provided to accommodate both left and right-turn movements from Hope Street onto Main Street.
- Improvements to the Main Street/Federal Street/Bank Row intersection should include installation of a fully actuated signal (including all required equipment) and revision of signal phasing to avoid "left turn traps", during a yellow phase. Both improvements should significantly enhance the safety and efficiency of the intersection.

### **Bus routes**

- Once a location for an Intermodal Facility is determined, the Town should work with operators and service providers at the facility to designate appropriate and feasible





*The bus stop in front of Town Hall should be relocated.*

bus routes to ensure that overall circulation is not adversely impacted.

- Implement improved streetscape and pedestrian connections adjacent to municipal parking lots and along all streets leading to municipal parking lots that are not clearly visible from main roadways. Creating a more inviting, pedestrian-friendly environment that connects the lots to Main Street can be a significant tool to make parking in outlying areas appear to be more convenient.

#### ***Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections***

- Consider implementing pedestrian-friendly elements such as special surface treatments for sidewalks and crosswalks (such as use of patterned concrete) along with



*Bicycle paths encourage alternative forms of transportation and should be promoted. Attractive bicycle path markers give direction without adding to the clutter of street signs.*

better maintenance of striping, and better signage for pedestrian crossings.

- Additional facilities should be considered to enhance and promote bicycle use in the study area. Designate more on-street bicycle routes, with appropriate signage, and install bicycle racks at destinations of concentrated use.
- All new and upgraded signal installations should include full pedestrian and bike accessibility, pedestrian push-button actuation, and bike detection devices.

#### ***Public Transportation***

- While implementation of an Intermodal Facility would likely increase the use of public transportation to/from the study area, additional efforts should be made to encourage use of public transportation, including increasing marketing efforts, developing incentives for employees to use transit, additional stops at key areas, and convenient shuttles between Downtown and the Greenfield Community College.

#### ***Downtown Parking***

The provision of an adequate supply of parking spaces to support future development is essential to the successful implementation of the Downtown Plan. Downtown's current parking supply exceeds current needs and is a significant asset in supporting future growth within the downtown area. Current parking supply within downtown Greenfield, in public and private lots, and on street, is approximately 2,404 spaces (1,186 public, 1,218 private) with a peak period use of 1,443 in February 2002.

Unlike many comparable downtown areas, Greenfield is in the enviable position of having an adequate parking supply to meet current and foreseeable future needs. Several improvements in the management of the existing supply, however, are desirable in the



*One of the most important decisions facing the Town in the mid- to long-term future will be how to manage the efficient use of all downtown parking.*

immediate term to more effectively serve downtown users. Development of a parking structure within the downtown area is not anticipated to be needed within the foreseeable future.

#### **Utilization rate**

Transportation planners consider a utilization rate of 85% of spaces to be desirable: at this level of utilization, spaces are available and easy to find. Under such an assumption, the most desirable utilization of Greenfield's 2,404 spaces would be no more than 2,043 spaces. Approximately 1,443 of Greenfield's 2,404 downtown spaces are currently occupied in the peak PM period, representing a utilization rate of only 60%. Approximately 600 new cars could therefore be added while keeping the downtown within the desirable utilization range of no greater than 85%.

#### **Impact of future projects**

If all of the potential projects identified in the Downtown Plan were developed, including the YMCA Expansion, the Court House Expansion, the Garden Theater, 3, 9, 21 and 25 Bank Row, Clark's, Rooney's, Wilson's, the Senior Center, and the Intermodal Facility, the resulting increase in parking demand in the peak period would be 630 spaces.

#### **Impact on public and private parking supply combined**

These projects are anticipated to increase the parking supply by approximately 230 spaces resulting in an overall supply of 2,634 spaces. Parking demand in the peak period could be expected to increase from 1,443 spaces to 2,073 spaces, representing a utilization rate of 79% of 2,634 spaces.

This assessment assumes that the proposed Intermodal Facility will accommodate its own parking needs. One alternative that is currently under consideration for the Intermodal Facility would reduce the public parking supply by approximately 175 spaces. While this alternative represents the lowest cost strategy for developing the Intermodal Facility by siting the facility on public parking lots, it will result in higher public costs over the longer term as public funds will be needed to replace these lost spaces, either through leases, acquisition of private lots or construction of a parking structure. From a downtown revitalization perspective, utilization of public parking lots to site the Intermodal Facility is not economically justifiable and creates new barriers to downtown revitalization. Community leaders must determine how to prioritize these competing needs related to downtown parking and creation of an Intermodal Facility prior to finalizing a location and program for the facility.

#### **Impact on public parking supply**

Future development projects within the downtown area are anticipated to rely on public parking. Over time, the utilization rates for public parking will increase while excess capacity will continue to be present in privately-owned lots. The Town must work with the owners of privately-owned lots to secure arrangements that enable these lots to be used by the broader public and potentially enable private owners to benefit through

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parking fees. Over the longer run, the Town may consider long term leases or the acquisition of some larger privately-owned lots to expand the supply of parking and support a more effective overall management of downtown parking resources.

### ***Parking visibility and access***

Portions of the downtown today experience shortages of parking in peak time periods. This problem can best be addressed through better management of existing parking resources. To increase the use of its municipal parking lots, Greenfield must better promote their location. The Town should develop and implement a more unified signage and way-finding system. A customized and clearly visible signage program, that complements urban design elements for the downtown Greenfield study area, would provide an inviting and effective method of directing visitors to municipal parking areas.

### ***Parking management plan***

To optimize the use of available parking, a parking management plan should be developed and implemented. Such management plans are based upon the need to more effectively distribute and balance parking demand, and could include techniques such as the following:

- Designate outlying areas for employee parking, with increased evening security measures, and reserve more convenient and centralized parking spaces for customers and visitors.
- Develop incentives for owners of private parking lots to provide shared parking arrangements where feasible. This is especially beneficial when clustered buildings in an area take advantage of alternating peak periods for different uses, such as offices during weekdays, and restaurants and entertainment venues in the evenings and on weekends.
- Designate reserved parking for residential uses through techniques such as shared parking agreements on private lots, or designating public parking areas as "resident only" during off-peak hours, controlled by a permit-restriction/parking sticker.
- Encourage the use of alternative forms of transportation by promoting transportation demand management strategies such as carpooling/ride sharing with designated parking spaces, providing transit subsidies, and providing more convenient bicycle parking areas.

### ***Monitoring future parking demand***

It is also recommended that when future projects are being planned, a simple parking needs assessment be conducted to determine potential impacts on the downtown beyond the assumptions of this analysis.

A parking study for each project in the downtown area should be required by the Zoning Bylaws as part of the site plan review process, and an assessment of projected parking needs should be submitted as part of the requirements for building plan review. Collecting these parking studies and demand projections would allow the Town to review parking demand in a cumulative manner, and to foresee when and where additional parking is needed.

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## **PREPARATION OF A DOWNTOWN URBAN RENEWAL PLAN**

*"The Bank Row block is the center of downtown and influences the rest of downtown. Greenfield should be willing to be aggressive with these buildings."*

Urban renewal, within the context of an overall plan, is a powerful tool for municipalities to use for stimulating development in areas

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that would not attract private investment without public intervention.

Urban Renewal allows towns and cities to:

- Revitalize deteriorated areas by providing the economic environment needed to attract and support private investment;
- Redevelop blighted target areas into a variety of uses;
- Expand the municipal tax base;
- Acquire, assemble and dispose of land, including through the use of eminent domain;
- Protect taxing authority; and
- Leverage private investment.

Greenfield's historic downtown is one of its most valued assets. As often stated, however, at its center lies a block of deteriorating buildings that have been vacant or underused for many years. Because of its central location and high visibility, this group of buildings casts a disproportionately negative image on the rest of downtown. And because of its prominence at the confluence of Main Street, Federal Street, and the Common, this block once restored physically and filled with active uses could unlock the private development and revitalization potential of the rest of downtown.

The Downtown Plan recommends the development of an Urban Renewal Plan for the downtown area to address a broad range of immediate and longer-term issues and concerns.

### **Urban Renewal Plan**

The Urban Renewal Plan will establish the framework for multiple initiatives accomplished over a multiyear period. The initial effort to create the plan should establish an overall roadmap for near and longer term initiatives that may be undertaken utilizing

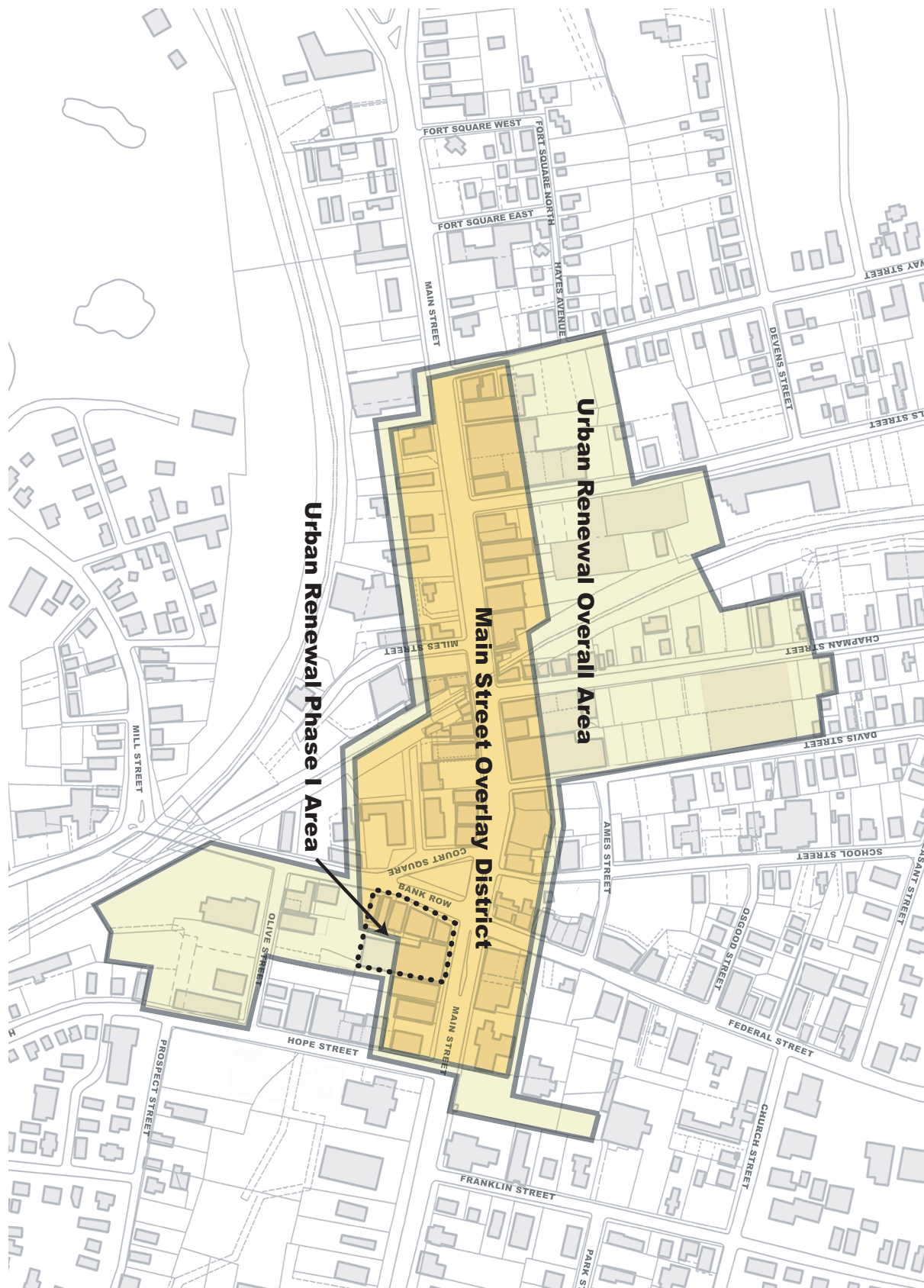
urban renewal powers and funding. While the Urban Renewal Plan may ultimately be implemented in distinct phases, the initial effort should define the overall scope and nature of these multiple phases. The Greenfield Redevelopment Authority will need to work closely with the state's Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) which has the statutory authority under MGL 121B to review and approve urban renewal plans, in order to ensure that its proposed framework for plan development is consistent with DHCD's regulations and program goals.

### *Phase 1*

The Downtown Plan supports the development of a Phase I Urban Renewal Plan that includes a target area of five properties at Main Street and Bank Row: 361 Main Street, and 3, 9, 21 and 25 Bank Row. This block needs immediate attention, before further deterioration renders its rehabilitation infeasible. Concentrating on this focused effort within an initial phase will increase the chances of successful implementation in a timely manner.

The Downtown Plan recommends several possible commercial, residential and cultural uses for these properties, based on a market analysis and consumer survey of the Greenfield region. These uses are logically linked to an overall vision of the future economic and community development potential of downtown Greenfield. Recruiting businesses within the identified retail categories, out-reaching to specific housing and office market segments, and marketing to residents, consumers, and visitors, will not only achieve the urban renewal goals of the target area but launch and solidify the larger economic development and marketing effort of revitalizing the whole of downtown Greenfield. The





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Greenfield Redevelopment Authority has already initiated a consultant selection process to support it in this effort.

#### *Subsequent Phases*

The larger overall Urban Renewal Area would include all of the key ingredients for a successful long term revitalization of downtown: public and private property, landmark buildings to preserve, blighted properties to redevelop, and municipal and private parking lots for future expansion of the parking supply as development proceeds. The Downtown Plan proposes that locations to be addressed through subsequent phases of urban renewal planning include the following:

- The Town Common, Court Square, Newton Place and Veteran's Memorial Mall.
- The block immediately south of the first phase Urban Renewal Area, from the boundary of the Olive Street municipal parking lot to the east, to Bank Row to the west, and including Olive Street to the south.
- The block south of Olive Street, from Hope Street as the eastern boundary to Bank Row as the western boundary.
- Potential areas for public parking expansion, including municipal and private parking lots in Core Zones 1 and 2.

The overall Urban Renewal Area links these locations within a broad area that includes the Main Street Overlay District, and the key properties proposed to be reused.

By including municipal property, the overall Urban Renewal Area gives the Town more flexibility for redevelopment. It would allow public improvements to be more directly integrated into the revitalization of downtown, such as the proposed closing of Court Square to increase the size, pedestrian use, and appeal of the Common. The block south of Olive Street was to be acquired by the state to

build a surface lot for its parking needs related to Courthouse expansion, and also accommodate some of the town's needs.

The larger Urban Renewal Area and Plan would provide the Town of Greenfield with the array of tools needed to achieve a comprehensive downtown revitalization.

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## **DOWNTOWN ZONING CHANGES**

*"Retail is dispersed through downtown; office uses split up continuity and diminish critical mass. We need the spaces filled in with the right things."*

Zoning is the long-standing planning tool of preference for shaping a variety of desired community outcomes, from land use to building envelope. Zoning can be used with flexibility to direct the nature, intensity, and appearance of development in the downtown area, as well as prevent undesirable outcomes, such as wasteful use of land or insufficient density to support retail diversity. The zoning recommendations below have in common the objectives of concentrating commercial uses (office and retail) in the core downtown area, encouraging infill and rede-



*The former Miles Street Hotel, converted to retail shops at street level and two floors of housing above, preserves the historic facade of the block and contributes to the character of downtown.*

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velopment over sprawl, attracting residential uses downtown, and strengthening the small-town quality of Greenfield by preserving residential neighborhoods close to downtown.

- Reduce the size of the Central Commercial zone. Concentrating commercial uses in the pedestrian-oriented core of downtown would increase the incidence of casual shopping. Increasing the commercial base of activity creates a livelier downtown than spreading locations at a lower density, which is a disincentive to shopping.
- Rezone two residential areas now included in the downtown study area from Central Commercial to Urban Residential: north of Main Street west of Conway Street, and north of the Mill House between Conway Street and the railroad. This would help to preserve the residential character of these areas, adding to the attractiveness of downtown, often mentioned by residents, of having housing neighborhoods close to Main Street.
- Create a Main Street Overlay District to incorporate new zoning policies. The district would include buildings fronting on Main Street, between Federal and Conway Streets. Within the Overlay District would be applied the restriction of office use on the first floor of mixed-use buildings, a one-year demolition delay for historic buildings, and design guidelines for commercial buildings, described below.
- Within the Overlay District, in mixed-use buildings, allow office uses to locate above first floors only, just as residential uses are allowed above the first floor only under Central Commercial zoning. This would protect street-level retail from being interrupted with office uses, a significant deterrent to downtown shopping. Supporting retail on the ground floor creates an active streetscape that can bolster other retail and office uses.
- Adopt into Greenfield's zoning bylaws a one-year demolition delay for historic buildings. Buildings of historic significance, in the downtown area, are too vital to the image and identity of Greenfield for the Town to not be able to consider alternatives. A demolition delay allows the time necessary to protect a potential historic resource or to make an informed decision to demolish. This delay would apply only to historic buildings in the Overlay District.
- Encourage the development of multifamily housing in the Urban Residential areas rezoned from Central Commercial. This would help build the density of population needed to support a vibrant downtown with diverse retail and entertainment uses. It would also allow residential property owners to gain the economic benefits of redevelopment, while alleviating the uncertainty and disinvestment that often accompany residential properties under commercial zoning.
- Reduce barriers to residential development in downtown Greenfield by modifying parking requirements. The current bylaw requires two off-street parking spaces per unit, which can be off site as long as they are not separated from the housing by a road of 60' of right-of-way or wider. (Main Street has a row of 90') Consider reducing the parking requirement to one space per unit, and eliminating the location restriction, which effectively bars parking from being across Main Street from a residen-

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tial use. For certain types of housing envisioned to fill upper floors in downtown Greenfield, such as lofts, this flexibility might make the difference between a project moving ahead or not.

- Include a policy toward downtown housing in a Parking Management Plan. Consider providing dedicated, or reserved and shared, parking spaces for residents, in existing or future parking areas, as a way to support new residential development downtown. As with commercial uses, the public cost of providing parking for residential uses, even if acquisition of new parking sites is needed, is an investment in the greater benefit of stimulating private development, generating tax revenue, and populating downtown.
- Ensure that zoning outside the downtown area supports the policy of encouraging infill redevelopment in the center over sprawl at the edges, and that new businesses being recruited to Greenfield have clear advantages in locating downtown.
- Support the development of restaurants in downtown Greenfield by addressing one of the major obstacles to their opening: the lack of liquor licenses to apply for. As a first step, liquor licenses that have been inactive for an extended period of time, such as two years, should not be renewed, so that they can be made available to new eating establishments. Once all liquor licenses currently in Greenfield are active, and if there is still demand and potential for growth, consider petitioning the state for additional liquor licenses.

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## DEVELOPMENT OF DESIGN GUIDELINES

*"The historic buildings and streets are our face to the world.  
We should be concerned about their fate."*

Design guidelines for downtowns, Main Streets, and commercial and mixed-used districts give direction to property and business owners for the design, construction, appearance and maintenance of their buildings. Guidelines address facades, storefront displays, signs, and lighting, as well as public streetscape elements, in order to create an attractive and cohesive environment for the district as a whole. Guidelines are not meant to be restrictive or punitive, but rather a source of information and direction for owners undertaking new construction or substantial rehabilitation, and used over time by existing businesses in the normal course of maintenance, repair and replacement.

The application of design guidelines over time improves storefront facades, increases the visibility and attractiveness of businesses, strengthens the downtown as a whole, and protects the public investment of streetscape improvements with a consistent quality in the appearance of private buildings.

Design guidelines are not for historic districts only, and need not be developed for the purpose of historic preservation; they should focus on ways to make the shopping experience more exciting, convenient and attractive for a variety of consumers and visitors, and include modern materials and technology. Within this overall approach, Greenfield's remarkable stock of historic commercial buildings gives the downtown its identity and is a fundamental part of an attractive shopping experience. The architectural elements of historic buildings should be restored, preserved and enhanced.





*Transparent facades invite people into retail stores and restaurants, animate the sidewalk, and enliven the pedestrian experience.*



*Conversely, blank facades disrupt the continuity of street-level shopping and diminish the quality of the pedestrian environment.*



*Original, distinctive signs are good advertisements for individual businesses and contribute to the vitality of the whole downtown.*



Three categories of design guidelines stand as most important in a commercial district: transparency, signage, and lighting.

### ***Transparency***

Transparency is a design guideline widely adopted in the retail industry, which requires that 70% of a storefront façade be of clear glass, including display windows and entrance doors. This transparency animates the sidewalk, especially at night, invites passers-by to come in, increases the visibility of merchandise or services, and presents a welcoming image to the street.

### ***Signage***

Signage is a complex and important guideline that can give distinction to a commercial district. Greenfield's Sign Bylaw is generally sound and needs only to be enforced uniformly. The additional considerations below are principles that should guide the design, size and location of signs, within the general framework of the existing Bylaw.

- Signs should generally be oriented to pedestrians and slow-moving automobiles.
- Business signs should typically not be located on the upper facade. Traditional locations for signs on historic commercial buildings include: on a canvas awning, on the window glass or glass door, mounted flush to the building facade in the panel above the awning or transom windows, on the transom window area, or a small projecting sign oriented to pedestrians.
- Signs should be kept subordinate to the building and fit within the existing features of the facade. Signs should not cover up architectural details of the building.
- Window signs should not obscure the display area.
- Generally, wood, metal and glass are the best base material for painted signs.
- Sign colors should complement the colors of the building.
- Signs should be clear, concise and easy to read.



*Gooseneck lights are most effective at illuminating signs and facades without glare, reinforcing pedestrian scale, and complementing historic architecture.*

### **Lighting**

Lighting can significantly impact the feeling of a downtown. As downtown Greenfield pursues more entertainment, restaurants and night-time activities, the lighting of building facades and storefront displays could play an important role in making downtown more attractive to more people and to make a success of night-time investments.

- In order to maintain an attractive image, exterior building lighting should be appropriate to the building's architectural style.
- Exterior lighting should highlight building elements, signs, or other distinctive features rather than attract attention to the light fixture itself.
- Building lighting should provide an even illumination level.
- Light fixtures for commercial buildings should be as simple as possible and mounted where they will be partially or completely hidden.
- Original light fixtures should be preserved where possible.
- Concealed up-lit light fixtures, fixtures of simple design, or fixtures appropriate to the period of the building are encouraged.
- Avoid lights which glare onto streets, public ways, or onto adjacent properties. Provide indirect lighting whenever possible.

### **Guidelines**

Design guidelines come in a variety of forms, with different methods of application. They can be contained in an illustrated booklet that gives suggestions for improvements, or they can be incorporated into the Town's Zoning Bylaws and enforced through the permitting process. In all cases, they should not be a restriction of creativity, but rather a useful frame of reference for property and business owners to use when undertaking capital improvements, from routine maintenance, to sign replacement, to changes in a storefront façade.

In towns that use Design Guidelines as a prescriptive method to control community character, typical language in their Zoning Bylaws would include the following statement of purpose:

"...to preserve and enhance the Town's cultural, economic and historical resources by providing for a detailed review of all changes in land use, the appearance of structures and the appearance of sites which may affect these resources. The review procedures are intended to:

- 1) Enhance the social and economic viability of the Town by preserving property values and promoting the attractiveness of the Town as a place to live;
- 2) Encourage the conservation of buildings and groups of buildings that have aesthetic or historic significance;
- 3) Prevent alterations that are incompatible with the existing environment or that are of inferior quality or appearance."

The Design Guidelines section of the Zoning Bylaws would then describe the establishment and powers of a Design Review board, the selection of board members, review procedures, and principles that guide the approval process.

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Alternatively, Towns may develop other models to achieve a consistent and attractive treatment of private facades and public streetscapes in downtown areas. A Town can draft recommended guidelines, illustrate them for different aspects of design, and create pamphlets for widespread circulation. A private partner, such as a Chamber of Commerce or Historical Society can support the effort with production and publication, workshops and classes. Technical assistance offered to property and business owners, on their premises, is a good way to increase awareness of the importance of good signage, storefronts and other design elements. Most important however, is conveying the message that the purpose of the design guidelines is not just to preserve Greenfield's wealth of historic architecture, but that better designed storefronts mean more and better business.

Greenfield's Sign Regulations are part of its Zoning Bylaws: a permit is required from the Inspector of Buildings before any sign may be erected, altered or enlarged. Design Review would broaden this function to other elements of the downtown environment. This review could be performed by a committee or assigned individual.

#### ***Interim Design Review Committee***

Building on work already done by the Planning Board, Greenfield should consider establishing an Interim Design Review Committee that would assess the appropriate course of action over a 4 to 6-month period. During that time, committee members could analyze the design needs of downtown Greenfield and determine which type of guidelines would be most beneficial and useful to the Town, its business community, property owners and residents.

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## **MARKETING AND PROGRAMMING**

*"We need more stores, more shops and more things to do at night. A daytime economy and a nighttime economy, with culture and entertainment."*

The development of an extensive program of special events and activities will be very important to enhancing the vitality of downtown. These events and activities will serve as an attraction drawing people downtown and increasing opportunities for sales at downtown businesses. The new pavillion at Greenfield Energy Park has the potential to serve as an important location for staging special events but other locations and activities should be considered throughout the downtown as well. One significant benefit of improvements to Court Square and the Common would be to use this very visible space for events and activities not suited to Energy Park. The existing Farmer's Market shows some of the potential of this location that could be further expanded to support lunchtime and evening events on weekdays and weekends. Programming efforts within the downtown should be carefully coordinated and an overall calendar created.

Information about upcoming events should be well advertised and should be posted on the proposed new downtown events kiosk to be located along or near Main Street. The Greenfield Business Association is best positioned to take the lead in defining programmed events and activities working closely with other downtown stakeholders. Marketing of events and other downtown attractions should be a coordinated effort of the Business Association and the Town.

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Overall marketing of downtown and recruitment of new businesses and developers that most closely meet downtown's needs should be led by the Town in partnership with the Greenfield Business Association, and coordinated through the new position of the Mayor's Assistant for Economic Development and Marketing.

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## LONGER-TERM OPPORTUNITIES

*"Put the Green in Greenfield: promote the river, valley and resources of the county."*

### Main Street/Green River Loop

Reconnect downtown Greenfield to its Green River through a Main Street/Green River Loop. The loop could come down Bank Row from the Crossroads at Main Street, connect to Energy Park along the way, proceed along River Street to the Green River, and follow a trail along the river's northern edge, until rejoining with Main Street in the west end.

The proposed path crosses private property, a floodplain, wetlands and important habitats. As part of its Open Space Plan, The Town of Greenfield could consider entering into discussions with private owners of riverfront property, with a view to pursuing rights of first refusal when such property comes up for sale, for the preservation of open space in the interest of future generations.

### Cultural Attractions

Institutional, recreational, and cultural attractions, such as libraries, performance centers, museums and art galleries, draw patrons and visitors from a large region beyond Town borders, and stimulate additional business activity. The importance of quality artistic and cultural attractions is especially important in a town like Greenfield that cannot rely on a large commercial base to draw in dollars. In

addition to the community meeting spaces identified in the center of downtown at the Crossroads, Greenfield must find the potential to create anchor attractions in the western part of Main Street.

Such a new anchor could add a critical mass of community activity to the west, extending foot traffic along a longer stretch of Main Street businesses. It would also serve well the future Senior Center on Wells Street, with shopping, cultural or recreational opportunities. The District Attorney's office and Juvenile Court currently occupy space in a set of buildings in the west end of downtown that have unusually large floor plates, as these buildings were former department stores.

The District Attorney's office is renovating the upper floors of the former Sears building to create Class A office space. The investment represented by this conversion should be protected, and when the DA office moves into the new Courthouse, their present space should continue to be Class A office space. However, since the adjoining Juvenile Court building, and the street-level floors of both will not be receiving substantial new capital investment, the large floorplates of this group of buildings, coupled with ample parking to the rear, can be an ideal location for a larger attraction. The façades could then be renovated, such as reopening the street level of the Juvenile Court building to more retail-like transparency, thereby contributing to the street animation and pedestrian character of the west end of Downtown Greenfield.

It is critical to try to implement some non-traditional arts and cultural uses: these would draw higher interest from neighboring towns than traditional ones, and would capitalize on a large local artist community and sense of cultural entrepreneurship that characterize Greenfield and its region.



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# Implementation of the Downtown Master Plan

Over the past year and a half, the Downtown Advisory Committee has worked closely with the consultant team in shaping this Master Plan. This collaborative effort has engaged the entire community and has created a strong consensus on the actions that are needed to strengthen downtown's identity and economic competitiveness.

Implementation of the Plan's many inter-related initiatives will require strong coordinated municipal leadership and continued involvement of the Downtown Advisory Committee. These are both essential if the strong momentum created by the Master Plan process is to be maintained *and* translated into tangible benefits for the community.

Several members of the Downtown Advisory Committee have already committed to playing important roles in advancing specific initiatives over the next six months and will continue their involvement over the longer term. As Greenfield transitions to a mayoral form of government in July 2003, it will be important to ensure that the new mayor and council are fully aware of the challenges and opportunities associated with implementation of the Downtown Master Plan—and the need for strong municipal leadership in supporting implementation of Plan initiatives. One very significant municipal position envisioned under Greenfield's new charter is the Mayor's Assistant for Economic Development and Marketing. As downtown is a key component of the community's overall economic base and identity, the role of the Assistant in supporting and facilitating downtown development will be especially important. The filling of this new position with a well-qualified individual is pivotal to creating an effective structure for coordinating downtown planning and

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redevelopment efforts with marketing and business recruitment functions. Several members of the Downtown Advisory Committee have expressed a concern that this position may not be filled in the new government due to budget constraints faced by Greenfield and many other Commonwealth communities. Others have expressed the concern that the position will not be filled at a salary level needed to attract a highly-qualified candidate. While these fears are understandable, these challenging economic times make it all the more important that downtown's role as a center of economic activity is strengthened in Greenfield's new government structure.

The Downtown Master Plan proposes the following structure and responsibilities:

- ***Downtown Advisory Committee***

The Downtown Advisory Committee will continue its work to revitalize downtown Greenfield and rally public support for the implementation of its Master Plan. As a broadly representative body of business and property owners, residents, political and civic leaders, heads of non-profit groups and institutions, and officials from town, county and state agencies, the Advisory Committee has been effective at articulating the challenges and promise of downtown Greenfield and outlining ways to improving its future. Because of its composition and voluntary nature, the Committee includes some of the most committed, energetic and dedicated members of the community, with strong working relationships among them, and knowledge of how to proceed in Greenfield. The Committee has already formed task forces around several elements of the Master Plan to begin organizing the steps and actions needed for their implementation. The Committee will continue to serve as

an incubator of downtown initiatives, and will act as a sounding board and advisory body to the Downtown Coordinating Committee, described below, as well as to the task forces, technical committees, and working groups that will implement the Master Plan.

- ***Mayor's Assistant for Economic Development and Marketing***

Under guidance of the Mayor, the Assistant will be responsible for coordinating public and private sector initiatives focused on the revitalization of downtown. The Assistant will coordinate the efforts of the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD), the Greenfield Redevelopment Authority (GRA), and the Greenfield Business Association (GBA) in implementing the Downtown Plan. The Assistant will lead efforts associated with business recruitment within the downtown working closely with the downtown business community and property owners. A high priority will be business and developer recruitment associated with downtown buildings identified in the downtown Plan as having significant reuse or redevelopment potential. The Assistant will establish and chair a *Downtown Coordinating Committee* (DCC) to monitor and review progress on the implementation of the Downtown Plan. This Committee will be comprised of a single representative from the following entities: Office of Planning and Community Development, Greenfield Redevelopment Authority and the Greenfield Business Association.

In order to be an effective leader of downtown planning efforts, candidates for the position of Mayor's Assistant for Economic Development and Marketing must have demonstrated experience in successful downtown economic develop-

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ment and business recruitment.

Recruitment of a well-qualified candidate for this position is key to successful implementation of the Downtown Plan.

- ***Office of Planning and Community Development***

The Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) will be responsible for ongoing downtown planning, including identifying funding sources for downtown initiatives, such as CDBG funds, grants, federal tax credits for historical rehabilitation, and other funding sources. OPCD will take the lead in advancing zoning changes and other regulatory reforms identified under the plan. OPCD will work closely with the Mayor's Assistant for Economic Development and Marketing. The OPCD will participate in the Downtown Coordinating Committee.

- ***Greenfield Redevelopment Authority***

The Greenfield Redevelopment Authority (GRA) will lead efforts necessary to create an urban renewal plan for the downtown area. The GRA will lead redevelopment efforts to implement the Urban Renewal Plan within the framework established by the Downtown Plan. The GRA will participate in the Downtown Coordinating Committee.

- ***Greenfield Business Association***

The Greenfield Business Association (GBA) will continue its efforts to strengthen cooperative efforts within the business community through coordinated marketing, programming and promotional efforts. The GBA will participate in the Downtown Coordinating Committee.



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## KEY NEAR-TERM TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The recommendations of the Downtown Master Plan are listed below as projects with associated tasks, lead roles and contributing public and private entities. The following key efforts should initiated be in the spring and summer of 2003:

- Advance efforts to expand the Common
- Expand outdoor seating
- Finalize a strategy for redevelopment of key Bank Row structures
- Draft zoning changes and design guidelines
- Initiate discussions aimed at better utilizing the existing parking supply
- Provide support to property owners considering redevelopment of key downtown structures
- Establish a firm schedule for implementing each element of the Master Plan

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## ONGOING TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Court Square/Crossroads Meeting Place

Relocate bus stop	GMTA
Program activities and events in Court Square/Common with: Recreation Commission, YMCA, Greenfield Public Library, Greenfield Community College, Farmers' Market, Energy Park, GBA, businesses, non-profits	OPCD
Connect Common to existing walks, paths, surrounding destinations: Downtown Historic District Walking Tour, Mead Street Bike Path, Green River Walkway and Extension, potential GTD Walkway and Overlook, Rocky Mountain Park and Poet's Seat with: Historical Commission, Recreation Commission, bicycle groups, tourism groups	OPCD
Design Common expansion	OPCD, consultant, DPW
Build Common expansion (resurface Court Square, install kiosk, bollards, streetscape furniture)	DPW, contractor

### Public Facilities

Pursue Senior Center project with: Council on Aging, FRCOG, Stravos Center, Planning and Construction Committee	OPCD
Pursue expansion of Greenfield Public Library project with: Public Library, Planning and Construction Committee	OPCD

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## Streetscape Improvements

Complete and add to streetscape: add benches, trash receptacles, improvements to Memory Lane	OPCD, DPW
Maintain streetscape (replace trees)	DPW
Design kiosk (hold design competition)	OPCD, GBA, local artists
Design and install directional signs	OPCD, DPW
Design and implement Outdoor Seating Pilot Project: Identify participating businesses Purchase and install street furniture Hold spring kick-off event Monitor use through fall	GBA, businesses, OPCD, BOS, DPW, restaurants
Improve pedestrian connections and lighting to and from public parking lots	OPCD, DPW, Police
Designate and mark on-street bicycle routes connecting to existing paths	OPCD, bicycle groups, DPW
Continue to install bicycle racks at key downtown destinations	OPCD, DPW, NESEA

## Key Properties Redevelopment and Reuse

Identify developers and tenants to recruit	DCC, BCCC and Technical Review Committee for all tasks below
Prepare financial investment plans	Property owners, banks, realtors
Redevelop or reuse all or part of key properties: Garden Theater, 9 Bank Row, other Bank Row properties, Clark's Sports Shop, Rooney's Store, Wilson's Department Store	DCC, FCCDC, property owners, developers
Assist owners with property marketing and tenant recruitment	DCC
Assist owners with financial plans and loan applications	Banks
Assist owners with historic tax credit applications, grants and information on fiscal incentives	OPCD

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### **Parking and Circulation**

Establish a Parking Authority (GPA)	Mayor/ Town Council
Establish a parking management plan, including sharing agreements, leases and acquisitions	(GPA)
Monitor parking demand and supply as reuse and development projects occur	(GPA)
Pursue Intermodal Facility	GMTA, OPCD, (GPA)
Pursue potential public and private partners for structured parking in connection with new projects	DCC, (GPA), OPCD, DPW/ED
Implement striping for turning lanes at key intersections	DPW, (GPA), OPCD

### **Urban Renewal**

Prepare and submit Urban Renewal Plan	OPCD, GRA
Develop phased action plan for land acquisition, public improvements and private projects	GRA
Take eminent domain action where necessary	GRA
Redevelop Bank Row properties as first phase	DCC, GRA, FCCDC
Coordinate property marketing and tenant recruitment	DCC, GRA
Not: tasks under Key Properties Redevelopment (above) and Marketing (below) are also part of the Urban Renewal Plan implementation.	

### **Zoning Changes**

Rezone areas from Central Commercial to Urban Residential	OPCD, Planning Board
Establish Main Street Overlay District	OPCD, Planning Board
Allow office use above 1st floor only in mixed-use buildings	
Adopt one-year demolition delay for historic buildings	
Apply design guidelines to commercial buildings	
Require parking needs assessment as part of permit application	OPCD, (GPA)
Review periphery zoning to support downtown revitalization	OPCD, Planning Board

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**Design Guidelines**

Draft Design Guidelines for review	DCC, OPCD, Planning Board
Adopt Design Guidelines with desired level of application	DCC, OPCD, Planning Board
Review and enforce Sign Bylaw	Zoning Enforcement office

**Marketing**

Recruit new businesses; identify successful businesses in region in need of expansion	DCC, GBA, FCCC
Recruit developers for key properties	DCC, GRA, FCCC
Outreach to and recruit tenants in the retail, office, cultural, and residential market segments identified in market analysis	DCC, GRA, GBA
Design and manage marketing campaign targeting regional shoppers, town residents, visitors and tourists	GBA, FCCC
Assist with advertising, media promotion, pamphlets, brochures	The Recorder, GCTV, FCCC

**Longer Term Opportunities**

Create Main Street/Green River Loop	OPCD, NESEA
Protect open space north of Green River (Great Meadow)	Conservation Commission
Create and promote major cultural attraction/anchor in west end	DCC, Arts Council, FCCC
Encourage higher density, mixed use development in west end	DCC, OPCD, owners, developers



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## Acronyms

DCC	Downtown Coordinating Committee
DPW	Department of Public Works
FCCC	Franklin County Chamber of Commerce
FRCOG	Franklin County Regional Council of Governments
FCDC	Franklin County Community Development Corporation
GBA	Greenfield Business Association
GCTV	Greenfield Community Television
GMTA	Greenfield Montague Transit Authority
(GPA)	Greenfield Parking Authority      () = doesn't exist currently
GRA	Greenfield Redevelopment Authority
NESEA	Northeast Sustainable Energy Association
OPCD	Office of Planning and Community Development



# Greenfield

## DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

Final Report | February 2003



Goody, Clancy & Associates | FXM Associates | Booth Associates | Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.



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## GREENFIELD DOWNTOWN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mark D. Abramson	Manager, Commercial Investment Division	Benchmark and Pratt Real Estate
William Allen	Selectman	Town of Greenfield
Lawrence D. Beane	President and CEO	Greenfield Cooperative Bank
Kay Berenson	Publisher	The Recorder
Alden Booth	Co-owner	The People's Pint
Priscilla Caouette	Community Development Administrator	Greenfield Office of Planning and Community Development
Rebecca Caplice	Executive Vice President	Greenfield Savings Bank
	Chair	Greenfield Downtown Advisory Committee
Thomas Chilik	General Manager	Greenfield Montague Transit Authority
Robert S. Cohn	President	Cohn & Company Real Estate
Linda Dunlavy	Executive Director	Franklin County Regional Council of Governments
Timothy Farrell	Selectman	Town of Greenfield
Michael A. Fritz	President	Rugg Lumber Company
Nancy Goff	Economic Development Specialist	Greenfield Office of Planning and Community Development
William Gran	Director	Greenfield Office of Planning and Community Development
Martha P. Greene	Chairman of the Board of Trustees	Greenfield Public Library
Ann L. Hamilton	President	Franklin County Chamber of Commerce
Mary Kay Hoffman	Executive Director	Artspace Community Arts Center
Margo P. Jones, AIA	Principal	Margo Jones, Architects, Inc.
Dan LaRoche	Land Use Planner	Greenfield Office of Planning and Community Development
Kim A. Levitch	Owner	K. Levitch Associates, Real Estate Appraisers and Consultants
Patricia Marcus	Member	Greenfield Recreation Commission
Jeffrey C. Martell	Coordinator	Greenfield Business Association
Martin A. McGuane	Executive Director	Greenfield Community Television, Inc.
John Merrigan	State Representative (during planning process)	Massachusetts House of Representatives
Peter S. Miller	Chairman	Greenfield Historical Commission
Kevin J. O'Neil	President	Wilson's Department Store
David Payant	Patrolman	Greenfield Police Department
Joseph A. Poirier	President and CEO	Greenfield Savings Bank
Dr. Robert L. Pura	President	Greenfield Community College
Brenda Rooney	Owner	Rooney's Store
Dianne P. Ryan	Director	Greenfield Public Library
Wendy Sibbison	Councilperson, Precinct 8	Greenfield Town Council
Michael D. Skinner	President	Franklin Medical Center
John J. Stobierski	Co-Chair	Franklin County Reinventing Justice Court Facilities Committee
Bob Sunderland	Executive Director	YMCA in Greenfield
Norman Thidemann	Town Manager	Town of Greenfield
Sandra F. Thomas	Director	Greenfield Energy Park
Ellen M. Villani	Manager	Brandt House Bed and Breakfast
Denise Vogel	General Manager—Hadley/Greenfield District	Western Massachusetts Electric Company
John Waite	Executive Director	Franklin County Community Development Corporation
Patricia Waters	General Manager	Green Fields Market Cooperative
Van V. Wood	Chairman	Greenfield Redevelopment Authority
Dan Young	Co-owner	The People's Pint

## CONSULTANTS

Goody, Clancy & Associates  
FXM Associates  
Booth Associates  
Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.

## SPECIAL THANKS

The Downtown Advisory Committee wishes to recognize the efforts of the several hundred community members who have actively participated in the planning process and whose efforts have contributed to its success.

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# Overview

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*Downtown Greenfield is the heart of the community and the county. Downtown's strength is linked to its success in meeting community expectations as a civic destination, an entertainment venue, and as a place to live, work and shop. Over the last year-and-a-half, the Greenfield community has shaped a Master Plan for the downtown area that will make it a stronger community and business center. This effort was spearheaded by the 43-member Downtown Master Plan Committee working in conjunction with a consultant team and the wider Greenfield community. The Master Plan, as summarized here, is comprised of a series of coordinated actions to be taken by the town government, the business community, and other downtown stakeholders.*

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## **GOALS FOR THE DOWNTOWN: WHAT GREENFIELD RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS PEOPLE WANT**

In February 2002, 160 residents and business people participated in a visioning session for the downtown. Several hundred residents participated in a detailed consumer survey regarding downtown. This community input and additional analysis by the Downtown Advisory Committee and the consultant team led to the identification of key changes that are needed to draw more people downtown and expand business activity. The major priorities are as follows:

- Give a more lively focus to the downtown by creating a new visible public gathering space and developing outdoor seating areas.
- Improve the mix of downtown attractions with new restaurants, entertainment venues, improved retail, cultural attractions, and an expanded program of events and festivals.
- Work with property owners and developers to take advantage of underutilized space on upper floors, or in vacant buildings, and use this space to incorporate new uses.
- Improve the design of building facades and storefronts.
- Make better use of the existing downtown parking supply.
- Continue the public-private partnership that created the Plan to advance its recommen-

dations; ensure that downtown continues to be a strong focus for community leaders as Greenfield moves forward to elect a new mayor.

Each of these goals will need to be addressed through a coordinated program if downtown is to fully meet the expectations of the community. Without such improvements, downtown's competitive position as a business destination and community center will weaken in the face of increasingly strong competition from retail centers outside downtown. The Downtown Advisory Committee recognizes that this is an ambitious program that will need to be accomplished over several years and will require a strong commitment from town government and community leaders to ensure its success.



*Preservation and reuse of the former First National Bank building on Bank Row is a cornerstone of the Master Plan. Currently vacant, the building occupies a very visible site at the heart of downtown.*

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# Elements of the Plan

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*The Master Plan is built around a series of actions that enjoy broad public support and were discussed extensively over the course of the year-and-a-half long process that accompanied development of the Plan. To be fully effective, these initiatives will need to be implemented together, as part of a coordinated effort. Each of the major initiatives is briefly outlined below in this Plan summary.*

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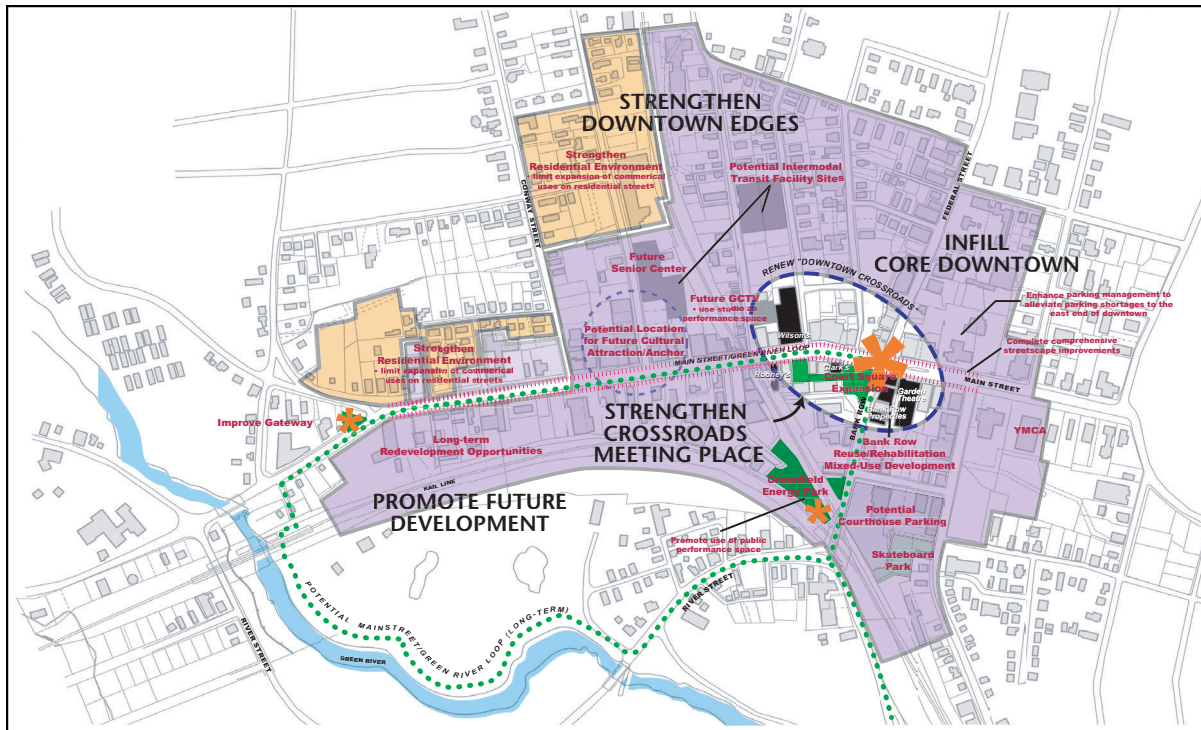
## **Create a stronger focus at the heart of downtown by expanding the Common into a new public gathering place on Court Square.**

This initiative is a cornerstone of the Plan and will create a very visible space for hosting downtown events and activities. An expanded program of activities would be developed for this space that currently hosts a weekend farmers' market. This initiative together with the redevelopment of key properties along Bank Row will strengthen the heart of downtown.



*Court Square closed on a temporary basis for the Farmers' Market. Closing the street on a permanent basis could create space for new activities and events.*





**Reuse or renovate key downtown properties that are vacant or underused to accommodate desirable new uses; attract new restaurants, entertainment venues, retail destinations, and housing that will expand business activity and attract new people to the downtown area.**

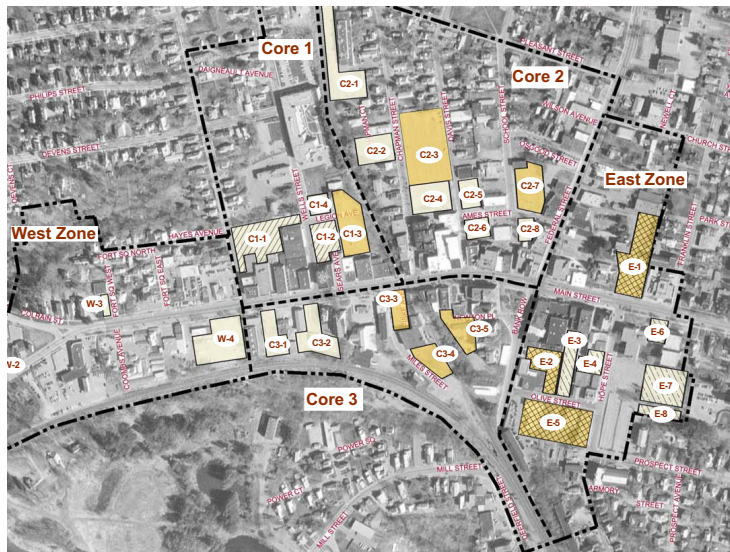
Several downtown structures have been identified as having particular potential to house new uses. The town should actively support the efforts of owners to reuse or redevelop these structures through grants, assistance with tenant recruitment, and other forms of support. The economic feasibility of reuse has been assessed; potential uses have been identified for each structure.

Property	Proposed Reuse Area	Proposed Uses
 Garden Theater -upper floor	11,000 SF	Cultural use (such as a dance studio) with multipurpose spaces, 2nd floor
 Bank Row properties -all floors	33,500 SF	A combination of office, residential, restaurants, and retail
 Clark's Sport Shop -upper floors	10,700 SF	Office suites, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors
 Rooney's Store -upper floors	3,450 SF 3,450 SF	Office suites, 2nd floor Four 2-bedroom apartments, 3rd floor
 Wilson's Department Store -upper floors	1,500 SF 10,000 SF	Tea Room, 3rd floor 18 loft-style apartments, 4th floor



Capture the full benefit of recent streetscape improvements; provide increased seating outside restaurants to enliven downtown streets.

Some Greenfield restaurants already provide outdoor seating areas. A significant expansion of this outdoor seating represents a near-term, low-cost way of bringing new vitality to the area.



Downtown has an excellent supply of parking overall; cooperative efforts between the town and business owners are needed to promote more efficient use of existing parking.

Downtown Greenfield has 2,400 parking spaces. Only 1,400 of these spaces are occupied in peak periods. However, parts of the area experience parking shortages that can be alleviated through improved parking management.

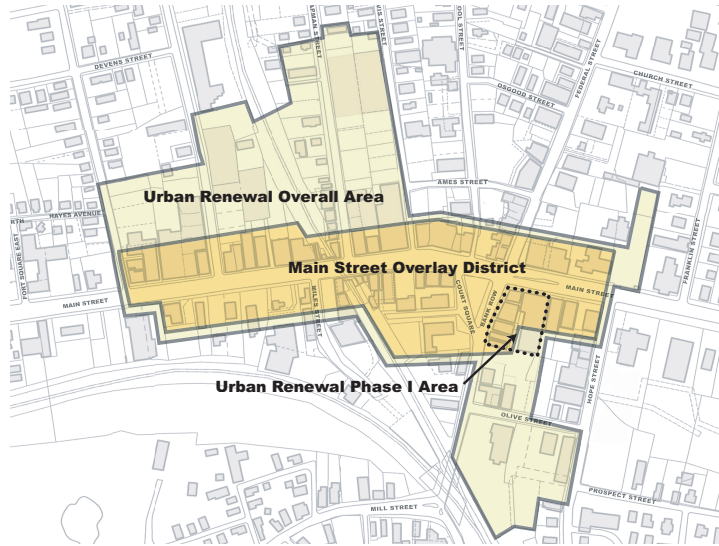
Design guidelines should be developed to help businesses make design choices that *both* meet individual needs and make downtown more attractive.

This effort should be advanced jointly by the town and the business community.





**Refine downtown zoning to strengthen the concentration of retail uses; concentrate commercial uses in the core area; promote more residential use on upper floors; develop an urban renewal plan to support advancement of the goals of the Master Plan.**

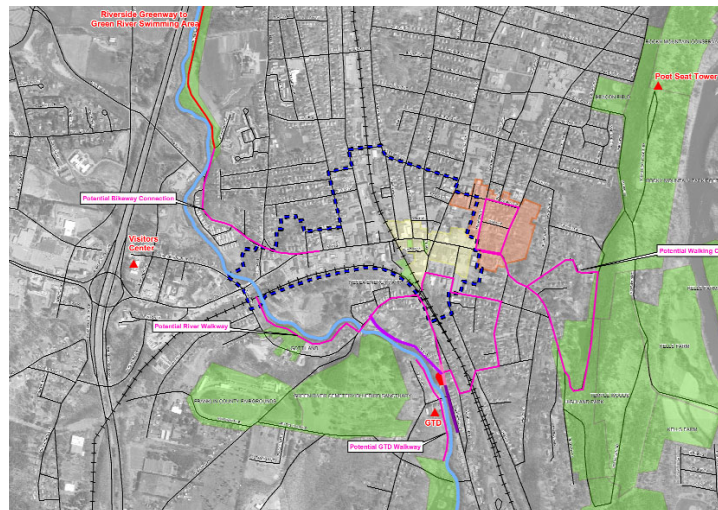


**Develop an expanded program of downtown festivals, events and special activities at the expanded Common and at the new Station Civic Pavilion at the Energy Park.**

Events at these locations and other downtown destinations such as the Greenfield Community Television's new facility on Chapman Street will draw new activity to downtown.

**Strengthen connections between downtown, the river and surrounding open spaces.**

Downtown Greenfield can benefit from improved connections to the natural and historic areas that surround it.



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# Implementation

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Over the past year-and-a-half, the Downtown Advisory Committee has worked closely with the consultant team in shaping this Master Plan. This collaborative effort has engaged the entire community and has created a strong consensus on the actions that are needed to strengthen downtown's identity and economic competitiveness.

Implementation of the Plan's many inter-related initiatives will require strong coordinated municipal leadership and continued involvement of the Downtown Advisory Committee. These are both essential if the strong momentum created by the Master Plan process is to be maintained *and* translated into tangible benefits for the community.

Several members of the Downtown Advisory Committee have already committed to playing important roles in advancing specific initiatives over the next six months and will continue their involvement over the longer term. As Greenfield transitions to a mayoral form of government in July 2003, it will be important to ensure that the new mayor and council are fully aware of the challenges and opportunities associated with implementation of the Downtown Master Plan—and the need for strong municipal leadership in supporting implementation of Plan initiatives. One very significant municipal position envisioned under Greenfield's new charter is the Mayor's Assistant for Economic Development and Marketing. As downtown is a key component of the community's overall economic base and identity, the role of the Assistant in supporting and facilitating downtown development will be especially important. The filling of this new position with a well-qualified individual is pivotal to creating an effective structure for coordinating of downtown plan-

ning and redevelopment efforts with marketing and business recruitment functions. Several members of the Downtown Advisory Committee have expressed a concern that this position may not be filled in the new government due to budget constraints faced by Greenfield and many other Commonwealth communities. Others have expressed the concern that the position will not be filled at a salary level needed to attract a highly-qualified candidate. While these fears are understandable, these challenging economic times make it all the more important that downtown's role as a center of economic activity is strengthened in Greenfield's new government structure.

The following efforts should be initiated over the next six months:

- Advance efforts to expand the Common
- Expand outdoor seating
- Finalize a strategy for redevelopment of key Bank Row structures
- Draft zoning changes and design guidelines
- Initiate discussions aimed at better utilizing the existing parking supply
- Provide support to property owners considering redevelopment of key downtown structures
- Establish a firm schedule for implementing each element of the Master Plan



*21 Bank Row could be redeveloped into retail on the first floor—a shoe or clothing store and ice cream parlor or coffee shop—with office suites above.*