

Farmington Center Study



June 15, 2015

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Prepared for:

The Town of Farmington, Connecticut

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I. Introduction

The Town of Farmington faces a unique opportunity to play an active, leadership role in shaping the future of Farmington Center. The alternatives are clear: accept typical patterns of commercial strip development along the highway or create guidance and incentives to turn the area into a vibrant, prosperous, walkable town center. Unique circumstances create the conditions to shape the future of the study area: the potential availability of the Parsons Lot, the potential to work cooperatively with developers interested in a number of parcels susceptible to change and continued interaction with ConnDOT in the shaping of the roadway system, safety and complete streets.

Over a period of three days (March 26th, 27th and 28th) close to 500 Farmington residents participated in workshops to develop strategies and goals for addressing this challenge. Building on excellent work previously produced by the Town, Dodson & Flinker, Mullin Associates and Town staff set the stage for residents and Town leaders to explore a range of options for guiding and leading the future evolution of the Farmington Center study area. The consultant team features the unique blend of Mullin Associates' policy, economic and public participation expertise with Dodson & Flinker's team leadership, physical planning and participatory design skills.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this report is to summarize the results of a three-day set of workshops concerning the future development of the Farmington Gateway Study area. Driven by the town's desire to bolster the sense of place in Farmington and to create an attractive gateway into the town, the public was invited to participate in workshops designed to obtain the thoughts, concerns, and ideas of the citizens of Farmington, along with those of a professional team of planners and designers, and to synthesize them into a series of possible options that could serve as a guide to future actions in the area.



The Motivation for the Study

The State of Connecticut Department of Transportation, in an effort to improve safety and traffic flow along the Route 4 Corridor, is about to embark on a comprehensive reconstruction of the roadway in the town center that currently has 28,000 vehicles per day. As a result of this project, the Town is concerned that the physical character of its center will suffer, pedestrian movements will become difficult and unsafe and that there may be disinvestment. With these points in mind, local officials determined that a comprehensive long-term process would be required to insure that the corridor would be both protected and enhanced. This study represents the first step in the process.

Farmington Gateway Study area

The study area is bisected by CT RT 4. Over 28,000 cars per day pass through the area and it is the most heavily utilized entry into the town. It is adjacent to the Farmington Gateway Historic District, including the campus of the internationally renowned Miss Porters School, the Hill-Stead Museum and grounds (a National Historic Landmark), the Stanley Whitman Museum (another National Historic Landmark) and the Farmington Country Club. The study area is bounded on the west by the Farmington River.

The primary area for future development on the north side of Route 4 includes seven (7) inventoried historic structures. Only two (2) of the structures are in the local historic district. The other five (5) inventoried historic buildings are unprotected. A plan for this area will acknowledge these structures and hopefully lead to adaptive reuse rather than demolition. Key structural features of the corridor are the Farmington Center Historic District, historically recognized structures, the Brickwalk Shops, Norton Lane properties and the sculptors located there, the Farmington Country Club and the Farmington Inn. The two most important natural features are the now vacant Parsons property at the top of a hill to the east and the Farmington River to the west.



II. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

On March 26th, 2015 Mullin Associates led a lively SWOT Analysis of the study area with over 250 participants. On March 27th, 2015 Mullin Associates led a walking tour of the study area with over 60 participants. The findings from these two (2) days of workshops are as follows:

1. Overview

Historic Character

The historic character of the area is highly valued by the residents. There is support for further protection of the historic buildings within the corridor by providing proper historic designation and strengthening regulations to protect the milieu. This could include placing more buildings in the historic register, expanding the historic district, or even instituting design guidelines for new development. The surrounding museums are of great value and could be enhanced through better linkage to the area businesses and shared resources for marketing and branding. The historic buildings and museums are the foundation for new growth. Notable structures include the Country Club, Chuck's Tavern, the Farmington Inn, the museums, and the ensemble of Miss Porter's School. The Parson's property is a "gem" and will be the gateway to Farmington as one arrives to the community from I-84.

Natural Beauty – The River and the Green

The river and the Town Green are seen as hidden treasures and underutilized assets. There is much potential to integrate the river into the gateway/corridor district. This includes improving view-sheds, creating a river walk or trails that enhance pedestrian activity and perhaps encouraging small-scale businesses close by.

Similarly the village green is underused and its purpose is not clear. There is a desire for a green but most want to see it more active. Some have expressed an interest in expanding it.

Some have noted a possibility of moving it to Parsons. It needs to be better integrated into the fabric of the village.

Increased street trees and open spaces along the entire corridor are desired. Design guidelines could include a landscape plan to encourage further cohesion along the corridor and to link both sides of the corridor through street furniture, decorative crosswalks, way-finding signs and landscaping. The Corridor should be linked with the regional trail network.

Village Character

Properties along Norton Lane are an underutilized asset that has the opportunity to serve as a creative arts center. Sculptured works could be placed beyond its borders as part of a theme. There is a desire to integrate the old and new structures through architectural guidelines/standards or controls. Incentives such as density bonuses for more considerate design of new buildings may be supported. Above all, there is a desire to keep the historic character of the corridor intact, encourage new development to integrate with the existing historic structures, limit large-scale big-box retailers, chain stores and hard architecture.

There is a strong sentiment that the corridor be the gateway that announces this is Farmington. It should become a destination place rather than a transit passage. Residents are interested in recreating a sense of a village that reflects the historic nature of the town. The village should be a special place for local residents, with mixed uses, small shops, local restaurants, local artisans, and quality establishments that encourage the creative economy. The village should be people oriented, pedestrian friendly and ensure easy access for those with disabilities. Retail markets should be integrated with museum activities and tourism. The Village should be planned for the "16 hour" market.

Regulations

The participants are largely in favor of mixed uses but there are questions over “by-right” versus “special exception” approaches. Regulations should balance and reflect the need to address traffic impacts, environmental impacts, aesthetic impacts and the impacts on the current scale. There is strong support for design guidelines, standards or controls but the participants need to know more about what these regulations mean.

Parking

Parking is an issue and options need to be explored and evaluated. Flexible parking, satellite lots coupled with rush hour commuter lots would be valuable. A parking deck in the Parsons lot, on-street parking on the “backage road”, and small, scattered lots that fit the village scale should be explored. The “Park and Ride” and commuter bus service connections need to be improved. The parking issue will require extensive deliberations and may require the increased support of Farmington’s large corporations and institutions.

Reconstruction of Route 4

Many of the participants believe political activism and proactive planning can impact the reconstruction of Route 4. There is little understanding of the role that DOT can play in any of the pedestrian related concerns with the movement of pedestrians parallel to the corridor and crossing the road. There is little understanding of the influence of the town on the “backage road” configuration through the Parsons property.

Given that the alignment is set, there is lack of clarity on what aesthetic features can be applied to reduce the impact of the road. Will the State allow underground conduits to enclose wires when construction begins? Will the State contribute to character lighting and other aesthetic improvements? Will pedestrian safety be enhanced thorough pedestrian activated, time sequenced crossing systems?

There is a strong desire that a “complete streets” program be adopted. This would include sidewalks that meet national, state and local ADA standards, traffic-calming techniques, appropriate lighting on both sides, aesthetically appropriate way-finding signs and landscaping be incorporated. Regular communications on the positions of the local government and DOT are in order.

2. Silent Issues Throughout the Process

1. Who is responsible for negotiations with the DOT over remaining issues?
2. How soon must the requests, proposals and desires of the town be presented?
3. How much involvement has the town had with property owners over their plans and concerns?
4. Where do regional planning organizations fit in the equation concerning trails, river activities and touristic potential?
5. What grants can be used to fund corridor improvements?
6. How can the large corporations be drawn in to support improvements?
7. Is there agreement between Town economic development entities and planning and zoning on future directions?
8. Is there data on market leakage from Farmington to other areas?
9. Has Farmington developed a vision statement and reflection of values concerning the corridor?

10. How should the corridor be branded? Old Farmington? Farmington Village? Farmington Gateway?

3. Recommendations from the Consulting Team: Topics for Future Consideration

Define the Signature Properties

1. **The Parsons property** should be obtained from the state, after which developer proposals should be requested for development options. It should include mixed uses, including residential, commercial and office uses. The property should be considered as a signature site at the entry into Farmington. It should be architecturally significant and aesthetically pleasing.

2. **763 Farmington Ave-** If the existing structure cannot be restored on site, negotiations with Berkshire Bank should be undertaken to determine if the Town and Preservation Now group could obtain and relocate the historic house. If so, it should become part of the Parsons project. The new building should have the same orientation to the street and the river as the original building.

3. Negotiations with the owners of the **Bank of America building** should be undertaken to determine if redevelopment incentives could cause them to redesign the structure with the intent of creating a more appropriate structure including Bank of America as an anchor and other first floor retail/restaurant uses and upper story office/residential. Also explore the property be integrated it into the Brickwalk Shops which would be beneficial to the bank.

4. Conversations with the owners of the **Norton Lane Properties** should be undertaken to determine their long-term interests. If desired by the owners, the town should offer technical design assistance to them to bring

the site to its full potential while preserving the sculptures within the corridor. The new backage Road will increase development potential but also impact the character of the property.

5. The town needs to further **integrate the river** into the fabric of the corridor. It should consider a boat landing, linear park and trail system. The town should begin by acquiring the now vacant and on the market, Battison's Cleaners property, which is adjacent to town riverfront property. A development RFP combining the properties could create the anchor and river access so essential for this end of the corridor. While there are rumors of environmental contamination the town can now acquire the property for redevelopment and avoid liability provided it conducts a Phase 1 environmental assessment prior to acquisition. There are significant sources of state and federal funds available for environmental assessment and cleanup.

6. Investigate the possibility of a **walking path** from the Battison's property under the Route 4 Bridge to eliminate the need to cross Route 4. This would help create a walking loop from High Street down to the river under the bridge and back up to High Street.

7. The town needs to guide the mixed-use development of **1 Waterville Road** property in a manner consistent with the Farmington Center/Village regulations. This would include the preservation of the main house and the building to the rear of the main house and new construction along Route 4 with a minimum 2 stories with architecture that complements the historic building and a signalized intersection at RT 4 and Garden Street. The back of the property can support a residential structure provided extra care is taken to protect the residential properties on Waterville Road.

8. Owners of the two **gas stations** should be encouraged to install additional landscaping and/or decorative walls to help enclose the streetscape.

9. The **Starbucks Plaza** can support another building along Route 4 to again enclose the streetscape and make it more pedestrian friendly.

Corridor District

1. The town should work to expand the Farmington Center historic district so as to include all of the inventoried CT Register historic structures.
2. All street improvements associated within the corridor should be uniquely designed to match its character.
3. The town's museums should link with corridor businesses to determine if there are mutual marketing opportunities.
4. The town should rezone the entire study area to Farmington Center/Village District zone. That zone includes an advisory review by the Architectural and Design Review Committee and architectural guidelines.

Encourage Mixed Uses and Zoning

The corridor should function as a mixed-use district. First floor retail and restaurants and upper-story residential, and office uses should be encouraged. The residential will create a captive population to support the retail. Public spaces (green, band shell, fountains, seating etc.) and public parking should be discreetly created on the Parsons property.

The town should undertake a marketing study to determine the means to stem retail market leakage from the area. As part of the study, ancillary purchases from patrons of the Country Club and the purchasing power of the faculty, staff and students of Miss Porter's school and the UCONN Medical / Bio Science Corridor should be carefully studied.

The majority of the study area is zoned Farmington Center/Farmington Village District zone. This zone was created specifically for this area. The purpose of this zone is as follows:

"To preserve and protect the existing historic landscape and structures within the zone as well as considering potential infill

and redevelopment that will complement the same. The following design regulations shall guide mixed-use development; historic development patterns, view and vistas; a village streetscape; and pedestrian access and safety in concert with the objectives found in the Farmington Plan of Conservation and Development."

Zoning should be amended to require that all parking shall be located behind buildings, there be no additional curb cuts on RT 4, there be a maximum parking requirement in addition to a minimum, there be a maximum front setback of five (5) feet for buildings fronting on RT 4, a specific allowance and encouragement of underground parking and parking structures to the rear of the Parsons property, a mandatory residential component and a requirement that all first floor uses in buildings be restricted to retail and personal service shops, restaurants, coffee shop, gallery, shop, entertainment and restaurant's.

Banks, real estate offices and similar uses should not be allowed on the first floor. These uses are more typical 9-5 uses and when closed they create gaps in the streetscape and discourage pedestrian activity, comparative shopping and impulse buying.

With these revisions the Farmington Center zoning is ideal zoning to encourage a mixed use and pedestrian friendly development. The setbacks, lot coverage, parking requirements and uses will encourage appropriate development within that zone.

Other areas within the study area are zoned Business Restricted (BR) and Business (B1). These zones are more geared towards the creation of strip commercial development. The allowed uses, the setback areas, the lot coverage and parking requirements will not result in a development pattern conducive to the pedestrian Farmington Center. The entire study area, from Parsons to the Farmington River, should be zoned Farmington Center/Farmington Village District zone.

Way-finding and Signage

The town should use recently approved STEAP grant funding to design a comprehensive way-finding system that brings clarity to the corridor and surrounding destinations. Unique commercial and directional signage within the corridor should be considered. This would help with the branding and marketing of the Corridor.

List of Desired Elements to CT DOT

The State of Connecticut will be constructing the road improvements in 2016/2017. As the gateway to Farmington, this area will portray Farmington's image to visitors for years to come. These changes will forever change the character and functionality of the corridor. The Town needs to carefully review this plan and must insure that the state utilize the highest quality materials, as discussed in this plan, to guarantee the image of quality and the proper look for the gateway to one of the state's most significant historic districts. Once there is consensus the town must demand adherence to this plan going forward. The state must also plan these improvements with a complete streets mentality. Their improvements should incorporate space for the pedestrian, the bicyclist, CT Transit buses and the automobile.

The town should propose detailed road profiles for the Route 4 corridor and the backage road and present a comprehensive list of elements that are desired to make the corridor aesthetically pleasing and pedestrian friendly. The town, its state representatives and the DOT must begin negotiations in 2015 to identify the process and costs for incorporating the town's desires into the DOT project. These would include (at a minimum):

- Street furnishings, including decorative light poles that reflect the design character of the Gateway
- Approval of the pattern and color of pressed concrete snow shelves, center median and retaining walls, including height of walls to make them the optimal height for sitting.

- Granite curbing throughout.
- ADA compliant Portland Concrete sidewalks throughout and on both sides of the backage road.
- The pattern and color of decorative crosswalks that are ADA compliant
- Pedestrian activated street crossing lights and decorative crosswalks that insure safe passage at a minimum of four points along the corridor.
- Traffic calming mechanisms to control vehicular speed through the corridor, particularly on the backage road.
- No parking spaces should be allowed to back directly into the backage road as currently proposed. This is dangerous, totally disrupts pedestrian movement and would never be allowed on a local road (except for single family homes).
- Natural gas must be available on the backage road, essential to restaurants.
- Power, phone, cable and all other lines along backage road must underground.
- Lane widths on backage road should allow for on street parking.
- Backage road should have sidewalks on both sides.
- The Parsons fish-hook road should be eliminated. The cost savings to the DOT should be a negotiating chip for other improvements.
- The roundabout island on the backage road must be attractively landscaped and include water spigots for sprinklers.
- Curb cuts on backage road should be minimized.

- Street trees should be installed every 50 feet along backage road.

4. Implementation Plan and Schedule

The Farmington Gateway Committee shall continue to oversee the implementation of the project with regard to policy decisions. Much of the day to day work must be done at the staff level. It is essential that the Town Council, the Town Planning and Zoning Commission and Town Managers Office recognize the critical importance of this project and offer their full support in its implementation.

Proposal / Action	Lead Agency / Actor	Time Frame
Conduct Public workshops to understand public opinion for the corridor.	Farmington Gateway Committee	Complete
Present findings of workshops to public and town and state officials	Planning Consultant	Early summer 2015
Secure town ownership of the Parsons property when DOT project complete	Town Manager/ other town staff	On going
763 Main – begin discussions with developer/property owner and bank	Town Planner/Economic Development Director	Within first month
Initiate discussions with Norton Lane Property LLC	Town Planner/Economic Development Director	Within first month
Establish town staff working group regarding DOT project enhancements	Town Manager, Public Works Director/Town Engineer, Engineering staff, Town Planner	Within first month
Redevelopment on Bank of America	Town Planner/Economic Development Director	Within first 6 months
Riverfront – Acquire Battison’s property	Town Planner/Economic Development Director	Within first 6 months

Conduct Phase 1 environmental assessment on Battison’s property	Town Planner/Economic Development Director	Within first 6 months
Issue RFQ’s for formal urban design plan and market study	Town Planner/Economic Development Director	Within first 3 months / completion Dec. ‘15
Lobby property owners of inventoried CT Register buildings for inclusion in Farmington Center Historic District	Farmington Center Historic District Commission, Town Historian, Preservation Now, Farmington Historical Society	Within 1 year
Utilize recently approved STEAP grant to design way-finding improvements.	Economic Development Director	Within 1 year
Adopt final urban design plan and market study as part of Plan of Conservation and Development	Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Planner	Within 2 years, prior to completion of DOT project
Amend and rezone entire corridor to Farmington Center / Village District Zone	Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Planner	Within 2 years, prior to completion of DOT project
Utilize recently approved STEAP grant to secure permitting and install way-finding improvements.	Engineering Division / Economic Development Director	Upon completion of DOT project.
Upon securing ownership of Parsons property issue an RFP for development of the property in a manner consistent with the urban design plan and the Farmington Center/Village District zoning.	Town Manager, Town Planner/ Economic Development Director	Upon completion of DOT project.

III. Physical Planning and Design

A. Overview

Dodson & Flinker served as project coordinator and focused on physical planning aspects of the project. Harry Dodson, Peter Flinker and Nate Burgess worked with John Mullin and Zenia Kotval of Mullin Associates to translate their policy, development strategy, economic and public participation recommendations into specific design options for the study area. Initial alternatives were based on the results of the three workshops as well as on the professional expertise and experience of the consultant team.

The final recommendation represents Dodson & Flinker’s proposal for Farmington Center. It represents an ambitious vision for the study area based on the higher density workshop proposals adjusted for the parking required to allow the proposal to be realistic and successful. Future contracts for study area development will determine the economic and development feasibility parameters of the proposals.

The recommended option assumes that the backage road as designed by ConnDOT cannot be modified, with the exception of the northeastern “hook” road extension. It also assumes that proposed improvements to Farmington Road cannot be modified. But these restrictions do not preclude adjustments to pedestrian amenities, crosswalks, signage, construction materials, parking and other road corridor features.

Physical planning and design recommendations are based on the need to create a dynamic, walkable center with well defined streetscapes and street facades. They are also based on realistic requirements for parking to service the proposed development. Proposed new development is designed to fit in with Farmington’s traditional architectural character adopted to new commercial, office and mixed uses.



This is an ambitious proposal that can be scaled back in the future to reflect economic and development feasibility realities. This can be done realizing that the elimination of parking decks will result in a considerable decrease in development and a commensurate increase in surface parking lots and a decrease in walkability and aesthetic character of new growth.

B. Model Workshop

Over 100 people participated in the model workshop. Dodson & Flinker prepared an orthophoto base map with existing conditions, property lines, historic district boundaries, property owners and proposed street improvements printed on the map. They then affixed scale models of existing buildings made out of Styrofoam and painted to describe existing buildings in the historic district, historic buildings outside the historic district and other non-historic buildings.

Workshop participants were divided into 12 groups of 8 to 10 people each. Every group worked on a base map with existing buildings glued in place. Participants were provided with white building models to denote proposed buildings that could be developed in the study area. The proposed buildings could be placed on the plan and manipulated to create new development patterns. Parking areas, parks, sidewalks, greenways, landscaping and other features could be drawn on the models with magic markers.

The participants spent over two action packed hours making models of their proposed recommendations for the future of Farmington Center. Photos of the finished models were taken by Nate Burgess and projected on a screen. A spokesperson for each table discussed the table's recommendations while a photo of the group's proposal was projected on the screen. The images (see appendix) became a record of the workshop's events. Dodson & Flinker took the images back to their office and grouped them into three categories based on the amount, type and configuration of development and conservation proposed by the tables.

C. Workshop Results

Dodson & Flinker created three new models that synthesized the results of the model workshop conducted on Saturday, March 28th, 2015. Models created by the twelve teams were grouped into three categories with varying amounts and densities of development, approaches to the Parsons Lot and varying strategies for other parcels, especially parcels susceptible to change.

The three synthesis option models portray varied approaches to the creation of a walkable, dynamic town center along Farmington Avenue. The synthesis options range from a relatively low density approach in Option 1 to a higher density solution in Option 3. Issues such as pedestrian amenities, crosswalks, sidewalks, new development and historic preservation were addressed. After review of the synthesis models by Town officials, staff and stakeholders, a recommended plan was created incorporating the best ideas

and recommendations of the three options described below.

Images of the 12 workshop options produced by workshop participants can be found in the Appendices of this report.

Workshop Option 1

This option is a synthesis plan prepared by Dodson & Flinker based on the results of workshop groups 3, 7, 9 and 12 (see workshop results in the appendices). Option 1 is the lowest density option featuring a large park on the site of the former Parsons car dealership. It also includes moderate amounts of new development on the Chuck's Restaurant and the 1 Waterville Road parcels. A new mixed-use structure is also proposed on the Udolph parcel which will strengthen the architectural definition of the street in this area while taking advantage of the construction of the proposed backage road. New parking lots at the edge of the proposed park and at the Chuck's and 1 Waterville Road sites will accommodate increased development and public usage of the Option 1 site. Removal of the Battison's Cleaners building will create open space that will enhance the Farmington River greenway.

The park proposed for the Parsons Lot in Option 1 will create a green gateway to the village center for traffic and pedestrians approaching from the east. A community center or gazebo at the northern edge of the park will provide meeting and performance space. A moderate amount of mixed-use development is proposed for a number of parcels susceptible to change. In addition to the large park, Option 1 features the following elements:

- **Extensive landscape improvements** are proposed including street trees, lawns, meadows as well as shrub and perennial planting beds.
- **Enhanced, wide sidewalks and pedestrian crosswalks** will improve access, safety and handicapped accessibility to the new park. High quality design and materials will improve the character and function of these pedestrian features. Reducing waiting times for pedestrians seeking to cross Farmington Avenue will improve connections between the north and

south sides of this busy road. Warning paint striping and rumble strips will alert cars to the pedestrian crossings.

- **Historic buildings** in the historic district as well as in the entire study area have been preserved in Option 1. This includes historic buildings identified in the Historical Society’s plan and photographs of historic buildings in the village center area.
- **Street trees** lining either side of Farmington Avenue and the proposed backage road will create a green corridor that will enhance the aesthetics of the streetscapes while calming traffic passing through the village center. Large street trees at least 3” in caliper should be planted in large planting pits serviced by irrigation. Tree guards should be used in areas prone to compaction or damage from vehicles. Removal of overhead utility lines will allow tall street trees to grow on both sides of Farmington Avenue.
- **Pedestrian courtyards** will be created at key locations along Norton Lane and other locations in the study area.
- **A new pathway system** will link the proposed large park with buildings, courtyards and other public spaces throughout the northern half of the Village Center.
- **The Farmington River Greenway** would benefit from the removal of the Battison’s Cleaners building by creating more open space along the river.
- **Ensuring handicapped accessibility** can be achieved by meeting the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities act and local handicapped accessibility policies and regulations. Gradients, path widths, paving and grade transitions should be carefully reviewed to ensure maximum handicapped accessibility.
- **Consolidating curb cuts** and connecting existing parking lots will simplify circulation patterns in the Village Center while reducing congestion and dangerous turns on Farmington Avenue.

- **Burying overhead utilities** will greatly enhance the scenic and historic character of Farmington Avenue and the backage road. While costs can be prohibitive, this option should be explored with the utility companies and ConnDOT. Removal of overhead utility lines will allow tall street trees to grow on both sides of Farmington Avenue.
- **Providing parking for the Village Green** can be discussed with Bank of America in order to increase the usage of this existing park. A modest amount of public parking could be created by optimizing the efficiency of the existing parking layout.
- **On street parking** along the backage road will provide considerable additional parking capacity while calming traffic and enhancing pedestrian safety along this proposed road. This can be accomplished by reducing the width of proposed travel lanes from 13’ to 9’ and using the additional 8’ resulting from this change to create a parallel parking lane on one side of the roadway. No physical changes to the roadway layout are required – just modifications to roadway striping.
- **New parking along the edge of the proposed park** can service park and event parking requirements as well as accommodating some of the parking demand of the pedestrian courtyards along Norton Lane.
- **Integrating proposed parking with existing parking** can increase parking efficiency, reduce curb cuts and rationalize parking layouts.
- **The backage road extension drive** can be removed in this scheme and replaced by a park road servicing the community center building and the proposed parking lot.

Workshop Option 2

This option is a synthesis plan prepared by Dodson & Flinker based on the results of workshop groups 4, 8 and 10 (see workshop results in the appendices). Option 2 is a moderate density option featuring a mix of

multi-use buildings and a smaller park on the site of the former Parsons car dealership. It also includes increased amounts of new development on the Chuck's Restaurant and the 1 Waterville Road parcels. The Chuck's parcel includes a larger residential complex as well as several multi-use buildings facing the backage road. This will strengthen the architectural definition of the backage road in this area. New parking lots at the edge of the proposed park and at the Chuck's and 1 Waterville Road sites will accommodate some but not all of the increased development and public usage of the Option 2 site. This option suffers from a deficit of parking.

The Bank of America building has been demolished and replaced by a mixed-use building that is less massive and more in keeping with the architectural character of the corridor. The Battison's Cleaners building has been demolished and replaced by a smaller commercial structure reinforcing the street edge along this portion of the corridor.

The greater number of buildings on the Parsons Lot reduces the size of the park but strengthens the architectural edge of Farmington Road. A significant amount of mixed-use development is proposed for a number of parcels susceptible to change.

Option 2 features the following variations on the elements proposed in Option 1 as well as a number of new elements:

- **Landscape improvements** are proposed including street trees, shrub and perennial planting beds and green streets features. The greater number of buildings and the reduced size of the Parsons Lot park in Option 2 results in less extensive landscape improvements in this area.
- **Enhanced, wide sidewalks and pedestrian crosswalks** will improve access, safety and handicapped accessibility to the new buildings and small park. High quality design and materials will improve the character and function of these pedestrian features. Reducing waiting times for pedestrians seeking to cross Farmington Avenue will improve connections between the north and south sides of this busy road. Warning paint striping

and rumble strips will alert cars to the pedestrian crossings. Additional buildings along the streets in Option 2 will help calm traffic and provide variety and dynamism to the pedestrian experience.

- **Historic buildings** in the historic district as well as in the entire study area have been preserved in Option 2 as in Option 1. This includes historic buildings identified in the Historical Society's plan and photographs of historic buildings in the village center area.
- **Street trees** lining either side of Farmington Avenue and the proposed backage road will create a green corridor that will enhance the aesthetics of the corridor while calming traffic passing through the village center. Large street trees at least 3" in caliper should be planted in large planting pits serviced by irrigation. Tree guards should be used in areas prone to compaction or damage from vehicles. Removal of overhead utility lines will allow tall street trees to grow on both sides of Farmington Avenue. Additional buildings along the streets in Option 2 may affect the number of locations suitable for planting tall street trees.
- **Pedestrian courtyards** will be created at key locations along Norton Lane and other locations in the study area. These courtyards will be enlivened by the increased number of buildings and resulting increases in pedestrian use of the area. Pedestrian use of these areas could be impacted by the potential deficit of parking in Option 2.
- **A new pathway system** will link the proposed small park with buildings, courtyards and other public spaces throughout the northern Village Center.
- **The Bank of America building** was a focal issue of Workshop 2. According to most Option 2 workshop participants, renovation or reconstruction of the Bank of America building, if acceptable to the owners, would enhance the aesthetic character of the southern side of Farmington Avenue. Creation of an extension of the Farmington Village Green was also considered as an option for this site, assuming available funding and a willing seller.

- **The Farmington River Greenway** will not benefit from the removal of the Battison’s Cleaners building since a new building is proposed for this site.
- **Ensuring handicapped accessibility** can be achieved by meeting the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities act and local handicapped accessibility policies and regulations. Gradients, path widths, paving and grade transitions should be carefully reviewed to ensure maximum handicapped accessibility. A greater number of new buildings along the Village Center’s streets will provide a friendlier experience for handicapped residents and visitors. Handicapped parking will be negatively affected by a likely deficit of parking areas.
- **Consolidating curb cuts** and connecting existing parking lots will simplify circulation patterns in the Village Center while reducing congestion and dangerous turns on Farmington Avenue. Greater pedestrian usage will also reduce the need for curb cuts.
- **Burying overhead utilities** will greatly enhance the scenic and historic character of Farmington Avenue and the backage road. While costs can be prohibitive, this option should be explored with the utility companies and ConnDOT. Removal of overhead utility lines will allow tall street trees to grow on both sides of Farmington Avenue.
- **Providing parking for the Village Green** can be discussed with Bank of America in order to increase the usage of this existing park. A modest amount of public parking might be created by optimizing the efficiency of the existing parking layout. Option 2’s suggestion of renovating or removing this building would increase parking for or expansion of the Green.
- **On street parking** along the backage road will provide considerable additional parking capacity while calming traffic and enhancing pedestrian safety along this proposed road. This can be accomplished by reducing the width of proposed travel lanes from 13’ to 9’ and using the additional 8’ resulting from this change to create a parallel parking lane on one side

of the roadway. No physical changes to the roadway layout are required – just modifications to roadway striping. On street parking along the backage road will not be able to alleviate the parking deficit of Option 2.

- **New parking along the edge of the proposed park** will not be able to adequately serve the small park, park events and the increased parking required by the greater number of proposed buildings in this and other areas of the Village Center.
- **A parking deficit** will result from an increase in buildings in the Village Center which will increase the demand for parking and reduce the amount of parking spaces. This will result in a significant parking deficit in areas of the Village Center.
- **Integrating proposed parking with existing parking** can increase parking efficiency, reduce curb cuts and rationalize parking layouts. Again, the parking deficit remains a serious problem. A parking deck or structure could alleviate this problem but may not be feasible without public financial assistance at the state and/or local level.
- **The backage road extension drive** in a modified alignment will be required to service the proposed multi-use development along Farmington road and its associated parking. The layout of the backage road extension will be problematic in Option 2 due to a lack of space to service both the small park as well as the increased number of buildings.
- **Increased development in parcels subject to change** is a more realistic option for these properties given the spatial capacities of the sites and the expressed interests of potential purchasers. A parking deficit exists at all but the 1 Waterville Road and 763 Farmington Avenue sites.

Workshop Option 3

This option is a synthesis plan prepared by Dodson & Flinker based on the results of workshop groups 1, 2, 5, 6 and 11 (see workshop results in the appendices). Option 3 is the highest density option produced by workshop participants and features techniques to calm traffic on the backage road designed by ConnDOT while enhancing pedestrian as well as vehicular connectivity. The backage road hook loop is replaced by a landscaped parking area servicing the proposed buildings and park. New signalization is proposed for the High Street/Farmington Avenue intersection.

Option 3 also proposes an underground parking structure at the Parsons Lot which would service the park and proposed mixed-use buildings proposed along Farmington Avenue. The additional parking would enhance the walkability of the entire northeast portion of the Village Center by replacing parking lots with new buildings, green public spaces and an integrated pedestrian network. Extensive centralized parking in close proximity to more densely developed areas, parks and pedestrian environments creates a high quality urbanism lacking in previous options reliant on often inadequate surface parking.

The limitations of this option are based on the financial hurdles presented by an expensive parking structure servicing a relatively small amount of new development.

This option also includes increased amounts of new development on the Chuck's Restaurant and the 1 Waterville Road parcels. The Chuck's parcel includes a larger residential complex as well as several multi-use buildings facing the backage road. This will strengthen the architectural definition of the backage road in this area. New parking lots at the edge of the proposed park and at the Chuck's and 1 Waterville Road sites will accommodate some but not all of the increased development and public usage of the Option 2 site.

The Bank of America building has been demolished and replaced by a

mixed-use building that is less massive and more in keeping with the architectural character of the corridor. The Battison's Cleaners building has been demolished and replaced by a smaller commercial structure reinforcing the street edge along this portion of the corridor.

The greater number of buildings on the Parsons Lot reduces the size of the park but strengthens the architectural edge of Farmington Road. A significant amount of mixed-use development is proposed for a number of parcels susceptible to change.

Option 2 features the following variations on the elements proposed in Option 1 as well as a number of new elements:

- **Landscape improvements** are proposed including street trees, shrub and perennial planting beds and green streets features. The greater number of buildings and the reduced size of the Parsons Lot park in Option 2 results in less extensive landscape improvements in this area.
- **Enhanced, wide sidewalks and pedestrian crosswalks** will improve access, safety and handicapped accessibility to the new buildings and small park. High quality design and materials will improve the character and function of these pedestrian features. Reducing waiting times for pedestrians seeking to cross Farmington Avenue will improve connections between the north and south sides of this busy road. Warning paint striping and rumble strips will alert cars to the pedestrian crossings. Additional buildings along the streets in Option 2 will help calm traffic and provide variety and dynamism to the pedestrian experience.
- **Historic buildings** in the historic district as well as in the entire study area have been preserved in Option 2 as in Option 1. This includes historic buildings identified in the Historical Society's plan and photographs of historic buildings in the village center area.
- **Street trees** lining either side of Farmington Avenue and the proposed backage road will create a green corridor that will enhance the aesthetics

of the corridor while calming traffic passing through the village center. Large street trees at least 3” in caliper should be planted in large planting pits serviced by irrigation. Tree guards should be used in areas prone to compaction or damage from vehicles. Removal of overhead utility lines will allow tall street trees to grow on both sides of Farmington Avenue. Additional buildings along the streets in Option 2 may affect the number of locations suitable for planting tall street trees.

- **Pedestrian courtyards** will be created at key locations along Norton Lane and other locations in the study area. These courtyards will be enlivened by the increased number of buildings and resulting increases in pedestrian use of the area. Pedestrian use of these areas could be impacted by the potential deficit of parking in Option 2.
- **A new pathway system** will link the proposed small park with buildings, courtyards and other public spaces throughout the northern half of the Village Center.
- **The Bank of America building** was a focal issue of Workshop 2. According to most Option 2 workshop participants, renovation or reconstruction of the Bank of America building, if acceptable to the owners, would enhance the aesthetic character of the southern side of Farmington Avenue. Creation of an extension of the Farmington Village Green was also considered as an option for this site, assuming available funding and a willing seller.
- **The Farmington River Greenway** will not benefit from the removal of the Battison’s Cleaners building since a new building is proposed for this site. Pedestrian and canoe/kayak access to the river corridor should be proposed. Rehabilitation of eroded or derelict areas should be undertaken. Wildlife and aquatic habitat restoration and invasive species eradication should take place.
- **Ensuring handicapped accessibility** can be achieved by meeting the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities act and local handicapped

accessibility policies and regulations. Gradients, path widths, paving and grade transitions should be carefully reviewed to ensure maximum handicapped accessibility. A greater number of new buildings along the Village Center’s streets will provide a friendlier experience for handicapped residents and visitors. Handicapped parking will be negatively affected by a likely deficit of parking areas.

- **Consolidating curb cuts** and connecting existing parking lots will simplify circulation patterns in the Village Center while reducing congestion and dangerous turns on Farmington Avenue. Greater pedestrian usage will also reduce the need for curb cuts.
- **Burying overhead utilities** will greatly enhance the scenic and historic character of Farmington Avenue and the backage road. While costs can be prohibitive, this option should be explored with the utility companies and ConnDOT. Removal of overhead utility lines will allow tall street trees to grow on both sides of Farmington Avenue.
- **Providing parking for the Village Green** can be discussed with Bank of America in order to increase the usage of this existing park. A modest amount of public parking might be created by optimizing the efficiency of the existing parking layout. Option 2’s suggestion of renovating or removing this building would increase parking for or expansion of the Green.
- **On-street parking** along the backage road will provide considerable additional parking capacity while calming traffic and enhancing pedestrian safety along this proposed road. This can be accomplished by reducing the width of proposed travel lanes from 13’ to 9’ and using the additional 8’ resulting from this change to create a parallel parking lane on one side of the roadway. No physical changes to the roadway layout are required – just modifications to roadway striping. On street parking along the backage road will not be able to alleviate the parking deficit of Option 2.
- **New parking along the edge of the proposed park** will not be able to adequately serve the small park, park events and the increased parking

required by the greater number of proposed buildings in this and other areas of the Village Center.

- **A parking deficit** will result from an increase in buildings in the Village Center which will increase the demand for parking and reduce the amount of parking spaces. This will result in a significant parking deficit in areas of the Village Center.
- **Integrating proposed parking** with existing parking can increase parking efficiency, reduce curb cuts and rationalize parking layouts. Again, the parking deficit remains a serious problem. A parking deck or structure could alleviate this problem but may not be feasible without public financial assistance at the state and/or local level.
- **The backage road extension drive** in a modified alignment will be required to service the proposed multi-use development along Farmington road and its associated parking. The layout of the backage road extension will be problematic in Option 2 due to a lack of space to service both the small park as well as the increased number of buildings.
- **Increased development in parcels** subject to change is a more realistic option for these properties given the spatial capacities of the sites and the expressed interests of potential purchasers. A parking deficit exists at all but the 1 Waterville Road and 763 Farmington Avenue sites.

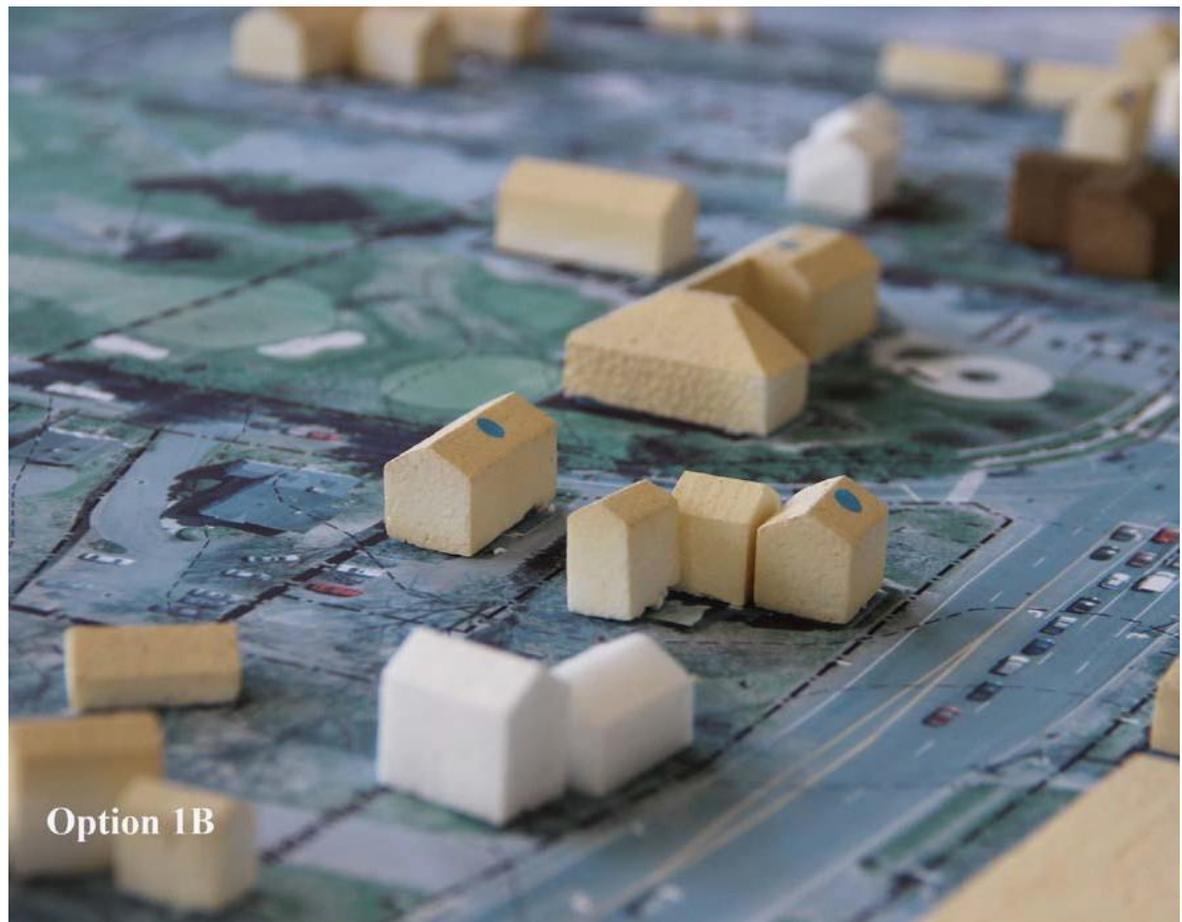


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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing Buildings Existing Buildings (Historic District) Proposed Buildings Parking (Existing) Parking (Proposed) Proposed Roads Improved/Proposed Sidewalks Improved/Proposed Crosswalks Proposed Parks/Landscaped Areas Street Trees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Connect Pedestrian Courtyards 2. Plant Street Trees – Tall Species Where Feasible 3. Connect Parking Lots 4. Farmington River Greenway 5. Green Gateway to Center 6. Park at Parsons Lot 7. Surface Parking for Park, Norton Lane 8. Chuck’s Site – Residential 9. Additional Surface Parking at Chuck’s 10. Link 2 Parking lots At Brick Walk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Bank of America Stays as is 12. Parking for Town Green 13. Renovation and Expansion 1 Waterville Road Area 14. Bury Overhead Utilities 15. Wide Crosswalks 16. Preserve and Renovate Historic Buildings 17. Backage Road Hook Stays 18. 763 Parsons Renovated in Place |
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Option 1A: View over Bank of America Building looking toward the Parsons Lot. The Parsons Lot becomes a park, creating a green gateway to the Town Center. A community building or a large gazebo is located at the north end of the park. A parking lot with a capacity of approximately 60 cars is located behind (north) and to either side (east and west) of the community building. All historic structures, both within and outside the Historic District have been preserved and renovated or converted to compatible uses.

Option 1B: Viewing northeast over the Farmington Inn looking toward the intersection of Waterville Road and Farmington Avenue. Proposed small scale development with associated parking on the 1 Waterville Road parcel. Proposed buildings reinforce the street edge and provide good visibility for the commercial and mixed use businesses. Enhanced street crossings at the intersection of the two roads. Preservation of the two historic structures adjacent to (east) of the 1 Waterville Road property.





Option 1C: Viewing southwest over Farmington Avenue looking at the proposed park, park/community building and small amounts of infill development along the north side of Farmington Avenue. The park creates a green gateway to the Town Center for west bound traffic though the visibility of the park will be reduced due to the fact that the road is below the grade of the park in its western section. Extensive street tree planting and landscape improvements will enhance the park effect. New, accessible sidewalks and a pedestrian crosswalk at the High Street/Backage Road intersection will enhance walkability in this area. 763 Farmington Avenue is preserved and renovated for commercial or mixed use development. The Chuck's parcel has a moderate amount of residential development.



OPTION 2: MODERATE DENSITY

- Existing Buildings
- Existing Buildings (Historic District)
- Proposed Buildings
- Parking (Existing)
- Parking (Proposed)
- Proposed Roads
- Improved/Proposed Sidewalks
- Improved/Proposed Crosswalks
- Proposed Parks/Landscaped Areas
- Street Trees

1. Connect Pedestrian Courtyards
2. Plant Street Trees – Tall Species Where Feasible
3. Connect Parking Lots
4. Farmington River Greenway
5. Low Density Mixed Use Gateway
6. Surface Parking Lot
7. Small Parks and Landscaping
8. Mix of Green and Architectural Gateway to Center
9. Limited Surface Parking for Park, Norton Lane
10. Parking Deficit Norton Lane
11. Chuck’s Site – Moderate Density Residential
12. Additional Surface Parking at Chuck’s
13. Link 2 Parking lots At Brick Walk
14. Bank of America Removed and Replaced
15. Additional Renovation/Expansion 1 Waterville
16. Bury Overhead Utilities
17. Wide Crosswalks
18. Preserve and Renovate Historic Buildings
19. Backage Road Hook Removed for Additional Parking
20. 763 Parsons Renovated in Place



Option 2A: Viewing southwest over Farmington Avenue looking at the proposed small park interspersed with mixed use development. More intensive mixed use infill development occurs along Farmington Avenue and Norton Lane. The Backage Road remains as designed though the hook extension is converted to a combination of access and parking. The Bank of America Building has been replaced with a commercial or mixed use project that breaks the large bulk of the current building into a more articulated massing. Additional infill development has occurred on Norton Lane. The Chuck's parcel contains more residential development than Option 1. This option suffers from a lack of parking which reflects the difficulty of accommodating moderately dense development of the area with surface parking alone. All historic structures, both within and outside the Historic District have been preserved and renovated or converted to compatible uses.



Option 2B: Viewing from over the Bank of America building looking northeast over the proposed Backage Road, Norton Lane and a proposed small park with mixed use development along its edges. The mixed use development that replaces the Bank of America building is located in the foreground. Infill development has been proposed along Norton Lane and the Backage Road. The architectural edge of Farmington Road has been strengthened. The Backage Road remains as designed but the “hook” extension has been eliminated and replaced by a mix of new buildings, a small park and parking. Streetscape and walkability/crosswalk improvements are proposed along Farmington Road.



Option 2C: The Battison's Cleaners building has been removed and replaced with a new mixed use structure with commercial on the ground floor and offices and/or residences above. One Waterville Road has a greater amount of development and associated parking than Option 1. The infill development on the Chuck's parcel, Norton Lane, along the Backage Road and surrounding the proposed park is shown in the distance. 763 Farmington Road has been preserved and remains as a focal point for east bound vehicles and pedestrians.

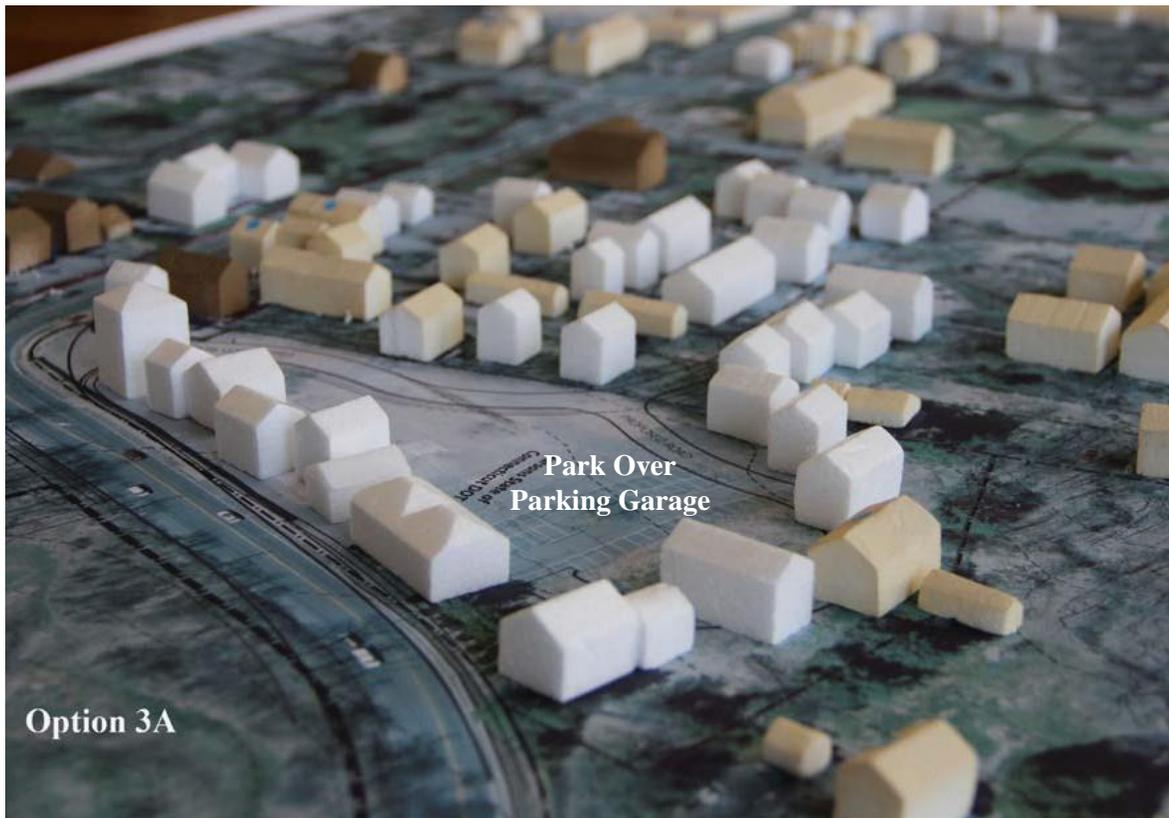


OPTION 3: GATEWAY VILLAGE DENSITY

- Existing Buildings
- Existing Buildings (Historic District)
- Proposed Buildings
- Parking (Existing)
- Parking (Proposed)
- Proposed Roads
- Improved/Proposed Sidewalks
- Improved/Proposed Crosswalks
- Proposed Parks/Landscaped Areas
- Street Trees

1. Connect Pedestrian Courtyards
2. Plant Street Trees – Tall Species Where Feasible
3. Connect Parking Lots at Brickyard
4. Expanded Farmington River Greenway with Visitors Center
5. Underground Parking Garage (210 spaces)
6. Large Park Above Parking Garage
7. Parking Garage topped with surface parking
8. Commercial/Office/Residential
9. Higher Density Infill Mixed Use
10. Adequate Parking

11. Chuck's Site – Highest Density Residential
12. Additional Surface Parking at Chuck's
13. Bank of America Removed and Replaced
14. Extensive Renovation/Expansion in 1 Waterville Road Area
15. Bury Overhead Utilities
16. Wide Crosswalks
17. Preserve and Renovate Historic Buildings
18. Keep Backage Road Hook - No Connection to Route 4
19. 763 Farmington Renovated in Place or Moved to Parsons Park
20. Mobil Station Removed and Rebuilt for Commercial/Office
21. Shell Station Removed and Rebuilt as Commercial or Redesigned Gas Station.
22. Backage Road remains as currently aligned



Option 3A: The west bound entrance to the Town Center has a strong architectural edge of new mixed use and commercial development. Large building footprints are articulated through varied massing of the structures. An underground parking structure accommodates approximately 180 cars. A park is built on top of the structure or alternatively a two story parking deck can be built on the more commercial south portion of the site. Under this scenario a smaller park would be located in the northern half of the central space. A third option would be to have the central space become a surface parking lot accommodating approximately 140 cars. Whatever its construction, the central parking lot would service the entire northern area of the Town Center from the Parsons lot to the Golf Club, creating a walkable environment. Visitors, businesses and staff would be able to park and walk to their destinations. Residents would continue to have dedicated parking near their homes or apartment. The Backage Road remains as designed by ConnDOT with new buildings lining it in order to enhance walkability, calm traffic, prevent speeding and provide more opportunities for infill with a strong relationship to streets appropriate for the center of a town.



Option 3B: View from over the Farmington River looking east towards 763 Farmington Avenue and the Parsons lot in the distance. A greenway corridor has been created by removing the Battison’s Cleaners building and re-vegetating the site, creating public access and enhancing wildlife habitat. Infill development is proposed on the Shell and Mobile gas station sites. Alternatively one or both of these gas stations could be renovated in the future to have an architectural presence close to the street with pumps and parking to the rear. One Waterville Road has been fully built out with a larger, articulated building fronting on the street and extending back in a “big house, little house, back house barn” configuration. Parking for this development would be located behind the buildings. At the east end of Farmington Road, 763 Main Street has been moved to the Parsons Lot and replaced with a new commercial or mixed use structure, continuing to serve as a terminal focal point to the roadway. As shown on the plan and illustrated in the report, pedestrian improvements, enhanced crossings, street trees and carefully sited and designed parking would be created throughout the Town Center.



Option 3C: The 763 Main Street house has been moved to the Parsons Lot and replaced by a commercial structure oriented down Farmington Avenue, serving as a terminal focal point for east bound vehicles and pedestrians. It is recommended that the architecture and building massing of this commercial structure should be compatible with the surrounding area and the guidelines of this report. As in Option 2 the Bank of America Building has been replaced by a more architecturally compatible, articulated two story mixed use or commercial structure or structures. The Backage Road, reconfigured into a town center grid layout intersects Farmington Avenue as designed by ConnDOT. Enhanced crosswalks, pedestrian walk lights and street trees increase walkability in this eastern end of the study area. On the north side of Farmington Avenue a strong architectural streetscape is created by new buildings along the edges of the Parsons Lot and infill sites along the roadway. A taller focal building anchors the intersection of the Backage Road with Farmington Avenue. The Chuck's residential project is fully built out. Parking for new development along Norton Lane and the Backage road is provided by either an underground parking structure, a parking deck or a large surface parking lot in the central area of the proposed new development. 763 Farmington Road is ideally renovated on site for commercial or mixed use. A less desirable option would be to move the buildings to the proposed Park at the Parsons Lot.

D. Consultant's Recommended Option

Overview

The Recommended Option proposed by Dodson & Flinker provides a long term vision for the Town Center that creates a walkable environment serviced by realistic amounts of parking around the edges of the pedestrian center. The option is based on the combined results of the model workshop as interpreted and elaborated upon by the consultant team. The full build-out of this option would occur incrementally over time. During the initial phases of this option some proposed development can be serviced by surface parking lots. In later phases the Parsons Lot parking deck would accommodate additional new recommended development. The first level of a parking deck at the Parsons lot would be located below grade. The upper level of the deck would be a surface lot at the grade of the surrounding buildings. The financial feasibility of constructing the Parsons Lot parking deck needs to be studied and potential sources of state or private funding explored. If the Parsons Lot deck is not built development in this area will be significantly reduced.

The Recommended Option creates a strong architectural edge and streetscape along Farmington Road at the Parsons Lot. Proposed mixed use, primarily commercial and office development at the lot is serviced by 148 surface parking spaces and 110 spaces provided by a parking deck. This parking services the new development in the Parsons Lot and can also provide parking access for new infill development in the Norton Lane area. The Parsons Lot also includes a small park surrounded by mixed use development including stores on ground floors and residences and offices on the second floors. In the Norton Lane/backage road area a moderate amount of new infill development will occur to create a more dynamic, walkable center. Parking for this center will be provided by 160 spaces of excess parking from the Parsons Lot, 36 on-street parking spaces along the backage road and some additional surface lots in the Norton Lane area.



The Bank of America building is replaced by a new commercial or mixed use structure in an articulated layout with architectural design compatible with Farmington Center. Expansion of the parking lot can allow access to the Town Green which will enjoy more frequent use. Development at 1 Waterville Road makes full use of the site while creating a strong building edge along Farmington Road featuring architecture that is compatible with Farmington. New development lines the street at the shopping center and the gas stations, creating a dynamic gateway to the Town Center for east bound vehicles and pedestrians. The gas stations can either be replaced by mixed use development or be reconfigured to place the buildings along the street with the pumps and parking in the rear.

The Recommended Option proposes a major expansion of the Farmington River Greenway by converting the Battison's Cleaners building - or a replacement building - to a greenway and Town Center visitors' center. The town should begin by acquiring the now vacant and on the market Battison's cleaners property, which is adjacent to Town riverfront property. A development RFP combining the properties could create the anchor for that end of the study area. While there are rumors of environmental

contamination, the Town can now acquire the property for redevelopment and avoid liability provided it conducts a phase I prior to acquisition and enrolls the property in the Municipal Brownfield Liability Relief Program, Section 30 of Public Act 13-308. There are also State and Federal funding programs available in the absence of a responsible party.

Parking for visitors to the greenway on foot, bicycle or canoe would be provided next to the visitors center. Using portions of the Battison's and other adjacent properties to enhance the Greenway will also enhance recreational and conservation opportunities along the river. The natural wooded sweep of the Greenway will serve as a green entrance to Farmington Center from the west.

Development Guidelines and Recommendations

- **Principles for Creating a Walkable Town Center** include locating buildings along complete streets to create a pedestrian friendly town center environment oriented toward people, not cars. To achieve this goal some visitors and residents will park their cars outside the village core and to walk a relatively short distance (100' to 300') to their destination at a store, restaurant, office, apartment or house. In earlier phases of the Recommended Option this can be accomplished with surface parking lots. Later phases will require parking decks. New sidewalks, street crossings, accessibility features, street trees and friendly buildings located close to the street will also help create a walkable town center.

- **Parking** is an issue many would like to avoid discussing but adequate parking is essential to the success of the northern half of the Town Center. Currently parking in the northeastern quadrant of the study area (not including the Parsons Lot) is maxed out with little room for additional parking. New development in this area requires an expansion of parking capabilities in the form of both surface and deck parking on the Parsons Lot. Without these parking improvements it will be difficult to create a walkable environment in the northeastern quadrant of the Town Center because few new buildings will be able to be built.

Dark brown buildings = existing historic district buildings; tan buildings = existing buildings outside historic district; white buildings = proposed building



- **Parking and Development Area Statistics.** Currently relatively little parking exists in Jonesville, Norton Lane, the Parsons Lot and the area of the proposed backage road. To create enough parking for the proposed redevelopment of these areas a number of steps are recommended. A parking deck could be created at the Parsons Lot with capacity for 110 cars. The deck would be built below the existing grade and the second level would be at the existing grade. Surface parking at the Parsons Lot could accommodate 148 cars. On-street parking on the backage road could create 36 parking spaces. The Parsons Lot parking deck and surface parking has an excess of

160 spaces which can service 54,000 sf GFA in the Norton Lane/backage road area. Please see the development area and parking matrix at the end of this section (p.46-48) for a more detailed analysis of parking requirements and their impact on development density. An aggregate parking density of 3 spaces per 1,000 s.f. has been used for this project. This is slightly less than currently required in Farmington's zoning regulations. The reduced parking requirements are acceptable because visitors to walkable, mixed use centers will tend to park and walk to multiple destinations rather than driving to, and parking at each destination separately. In addition the scheduling of the diverse uses in a mixed use, walkable center varies, often avoiding overlapping parking demand and resulting in greater parking efficiency.

- **Historic preservation** is a critical component of the recommended option. Buildings in the historic district as well as in the entire study area have been preserved in the recommended option. This includes historic buildings identified in the Historical Society's plan and photographs of historic buildings in the village center area. Some historic buildings outside the Historic District such as 763 Farmington Avenue could be preserved on site and renovated for commercial use or could be moved to other locations such as the Parsons Lot.
- **Landscape improvements** are proposed including street trees, shrub and perennial planting beds and green streets features. The greater number of buildings and the reduced size of the Parsons Lot park in the Recommended Option results in less extensive landscape improvements in this area in order to provide adequate parking for the proposed development. Fewer landscape improvements due to parking in the Parsons Lot allows much more extensive landscape improvements in the walkable portions of the site including the Jones and Norton Lane area, the backage road and the Chuck's Restaurant area.
- **Enhanced, wide sidewalks and pedestrian crosswalks** will improve access, safety and handicapped accessibility to the new buildings and small park. High quality design and materials will improve the character and function of these pedestrian features. Reducing waiting times for pedestrians

seeking to cross Farmington Avenue will improve connections between the north and south sides of this busy road. Warning paint striping and rumble strips will alert cars to the pedestrian crossings. Additional buildings along the streets in the Recommended Option will help calm traffic and provide variety and dynamism to the pedestrian experience.

- **Street trees** lining either side of Farmington Avenue and the proposed backage road will create a green corridor that will enhance the aesthetics of the village center while calming traffic. Large street trees at least 3" in caliper should be planted in large planting pits serviced by irrigation. Tree guards should be used in areas prone to compaction or damage from vehicles. Removal of overhead utility lines will allow tall street trees to grow on both sides of Farmington Avenue. Additional buildings along the streets in the Recommended Option may affect the number of locations suitable for planting tall street trees but many areas suitable for street trees can be created during the area's streetscape improvements.
- **Pedestrian courtyards** will be created at key locations along Norton Lane and other locations in the study area. These courtyards will be enlivened by the increased number of buildings and resulting increases in pedestrian use of the area. Pedestrian use of these areas could be enhanced in the Recommended Option as a result of the construction of convenient parking decks at two locations at the periphery of the pedestrian friendly core.
- **A new pathway system** will link the proposed small park with buildings, courtyards and other public spaces throughout the northern half of the Village Center.
- **The Bank of America building** was a focal issue of Workshop 2. According to most workshop participants, renovation or reconstruction of the Bank of America building, if acceptable to the owners, would enhance the aesthetic character of the southern side of Farmington Avenue. Creation of an extension of the Farmington Village Green was also considered as an option for this site, assuming available funding and a willing seller.

- **The Farmington River Greenway** will benefit from the removal of the Battison’s Cleaners building and its replacement with a new greenway and town center visitors center. Pedestrian and canoe/kayak access to the river corridor should be proposed. Rehabilitation of eroded or derelict areas should be undertaken. Wildlife and aquatic habitat restoration and invasive species eradication should take place.
- **Ensuring handicapped accessibility** can be achieved by meeting the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities act and local handicapped accessibility policies and regulations. Gradients, path widths, paving and grade transitions should be carefully reviewed to ensure maximum handicapped accessibility. A greater number of new buildings along the Village Center’s streets will provide a friendlier experience for handicapped residents and visitors. Handicapped parking will be negatively affected by a likely deficit of parking areas.
- **Consolidating curb cuts and connecting existing parking lots** will simplify circulation patterns in the Village Center while reducing congestion and dangerous turns on Farmington Avenue. Greater pedestrian usage will also reduce the need for curb cuts. The eventual construction of parking decks will further reduce the need for redundant curb cuts.
- **Burying overhead utilities** will greatly enhance the scenic and historic character of Farmington Avenue and the backage road. While costs can be prohibitive, this option should be explored with the utility companies and ConnDOT. Removal of overhead utility lines will remove a major eyesore and will allow tall street trees to grow on both sides of Farmington Avenue.
- **Providing parking for the Village Green** can be discussed with Bank of America in order to increase the usage of this existing park. A modest amount of public parking might be created by optimizing the efficiency of the existing parking layout. The Recommended Option’s suggestion of renovating or removing this building would increase parking for or expansion of the Green.
- **On street parking along the backage road** will provide considerable additional parking capacity while calming traffic and enhancing pedestrian safety along this proposed road. Approximately 36 spaces can be created by allowing on street parallel parking along one side of the road. This can be accomplished by reducing the width of proposed travel lanes from 13’ to 9’ and using the additional 8’ resulting from this change to create a parallel parking lane on one side of the roadway. No physical changes to the roadway layout are required – just modifications to roadway striping.
- **The backage road extension drive** on the Parsons Lot will be eliminated in the Recommended Option due to the location of mixed use development, parking and a park in this area.
- **Battison’s Cleaners site**: A combination of greenway enhancements with a new mixed use building with a greenway interpretive and administrative complex on the ground floor will blend conservation and development. A visitor’s center, concession, greenway parking, restrooms, mixed use with offices above would create a green gateway to the Town Center for east bound traffic while creating a strong architectural presence for the gateway.
- **Increased development in parcels subject to change** based on the principles of the Recommended Option will be achievable while simultaneously enhancing the character, walkability and vitality of the center. Collaboration between the Town and landowners and developers will be key in ensuring that private property rights are balanced with the Town’s interests. All parties will benefit from a well planned, walkable, mixed use center that respects the Town’s historic character and pedestrian foundations.

Dark brown buildings = existing historic district buildings; tan buildings = existing buildings outside historic district; white buildings = proposed buildings



Recommended Option

Dark brown buildings = existing historic district buildings; tan buildings = existing buildings outside historic district; white buildings = proposed buildings

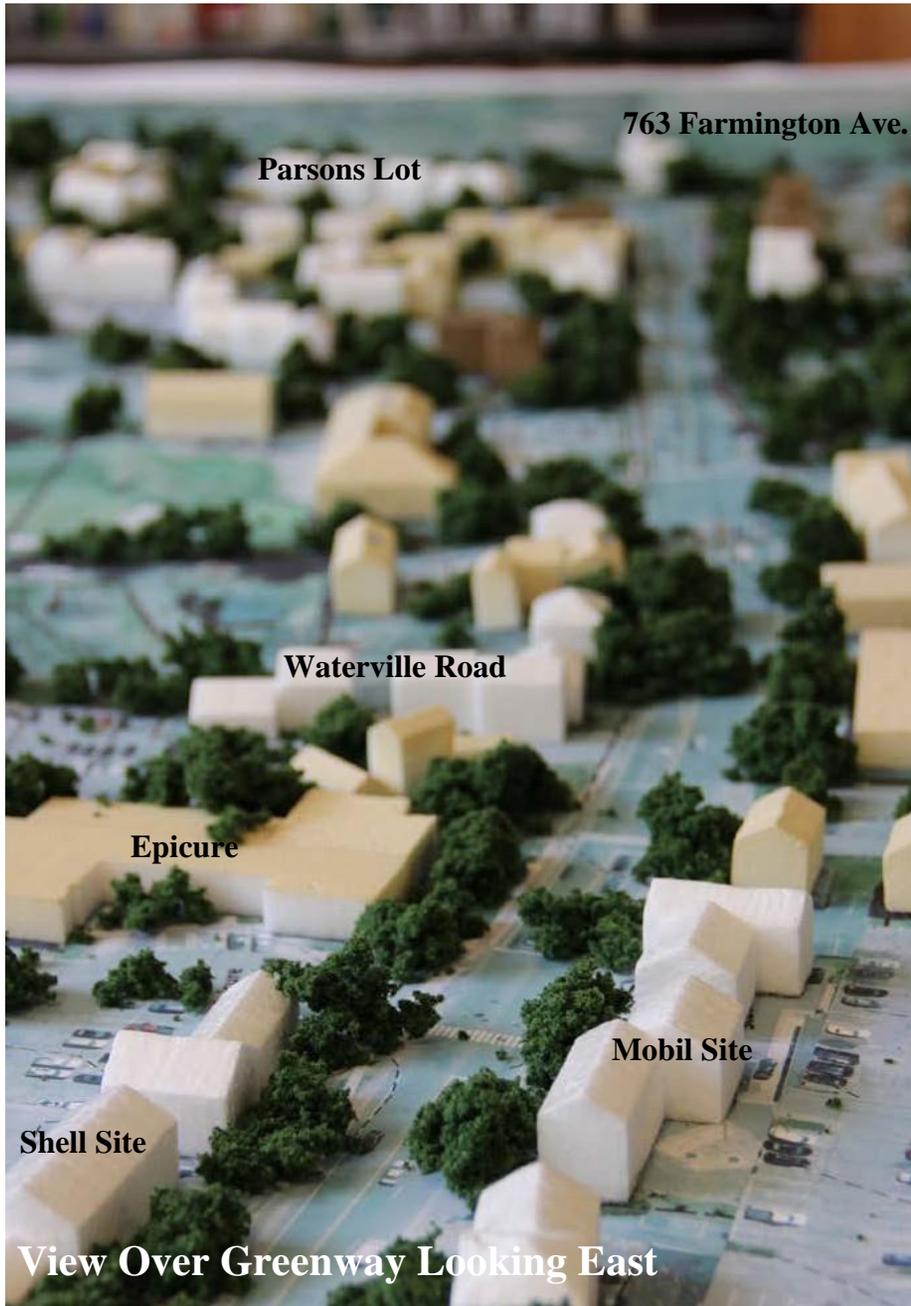


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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mixed Use/Park Gateway 2. Major Architectural Gateway Close to Street 3. Small Park Above Parking Garage 4. Commercial/Office/Residential Parking Deck: 1 level Below Grade, 1 At Grade: 258 spaces 5. Backage Road Hook Removed for Additional Parking 6. 763 Farmington Renovated in Place or Moved to Parsons Park 7. Highest Density Mixed Use Infill 8. Plant Street Trees – Tall Species Where Feasible 9. Connect Parking Lots at Brickyard | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Existing Parking 11. Additional Surface Parking 12. New Development at Norton Lane/backage road 13. Expanded Arts Park in Jonesville 14. Chuck’s Site – Attached Residential 15. Additional Surface Parking at Chuck’s 16. Bank of America Removed and Replaced 17. Mixed Use 18. Extensive Renovation/Expansion in 1 Waterville Road Area 19. Bury Overhead Utilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20. Wide Crosswalks 21. Greenway Visitors Center at Battison’s (Renovated or Removed) 22. Preserve and Renovate Historic Buildings 23. Expanded Farmington River Greenway with Visitors Center 24. Mobil Station Removed and Rebuilt for Commercial/Office/Mixed Use 25. Shell Station Removed and Rebuilt as Commercial or Redesigned Gas Station. |
|--|---|--|

Dark brown buildings = existing historic district buildings; tan buildings = existing buildings outside historic district; white buildings = proposed buildings



Recommended Option: The Recommended Option provides a long term vision for the Town Center that proposes a walkable environment serviced by realistic amounts of parking around the edges of the pedestrian center. The Recommended Option creates a strong architectural edge and streetscape along Farmington Road at the Parsons Lot. Proposed mixed use, primarily commercial and office development at the Parsons Lot and Backage Road area is serviced by surface parking and a parking deck. The new development in the Parsons Lot and can also provide parking access for new infill development in the Norton Lane area. In the Chuck's Restaurant area initial development can be serviced by surface parking followed by construction of a parking deck for 85 cars lined with mixed use commercial and office space along the Backage Road to provide adequate parking as the walkable center grows over time.



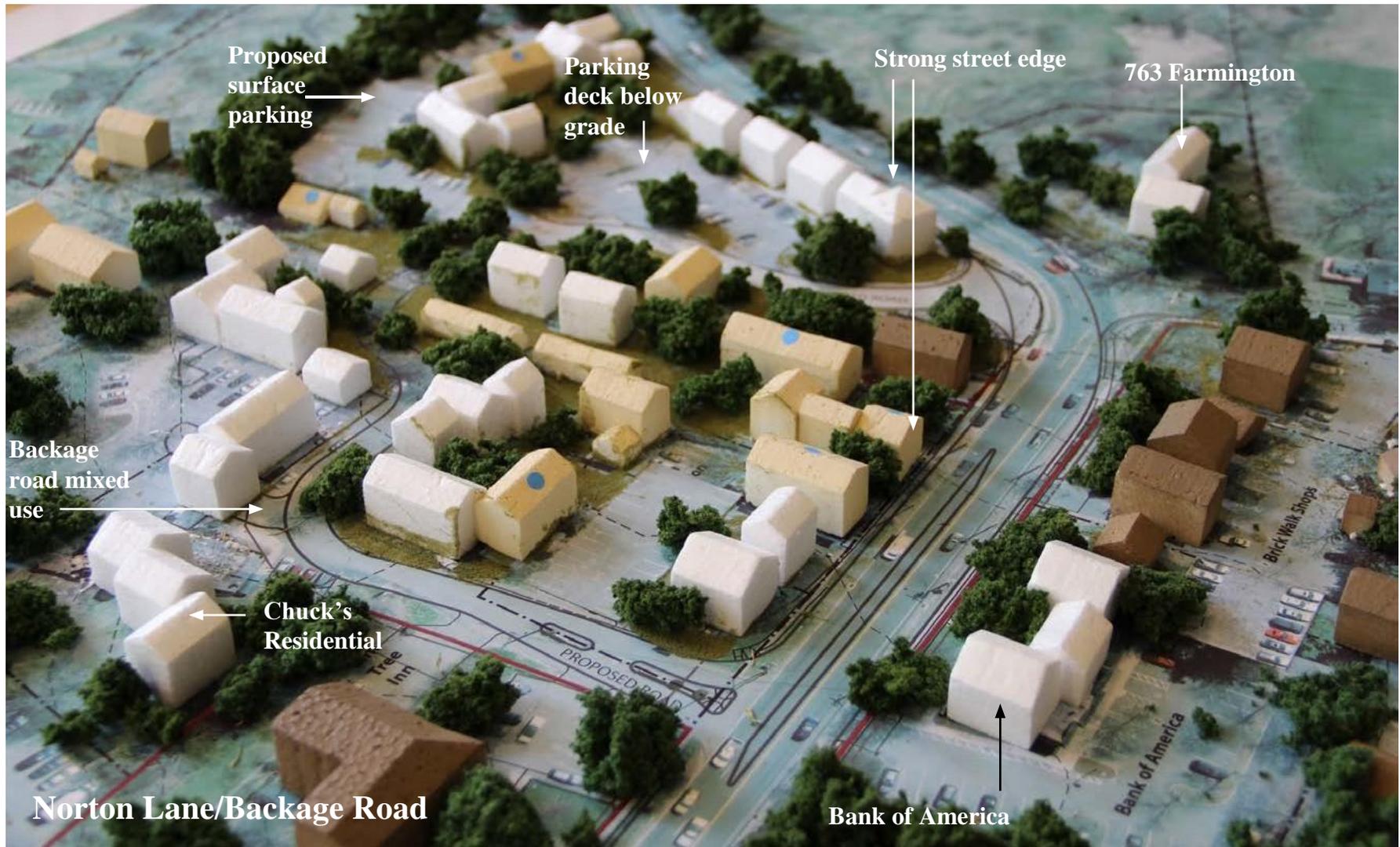
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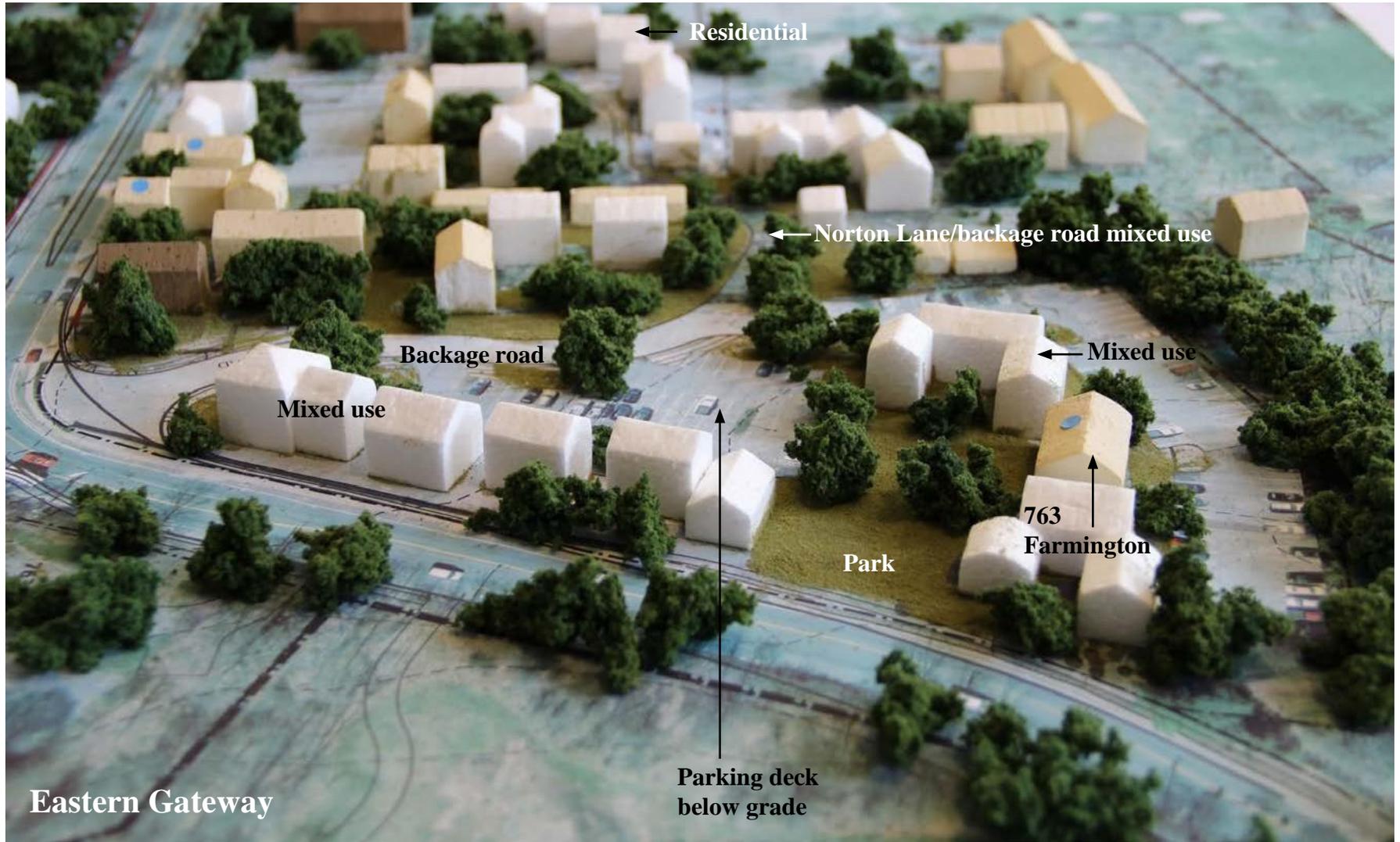
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The Bank of America building is replaced by a new commercial or mixed use structure in an articulated layout with architectural design compatible with Farmington Center. Expansion of the parking lot can allow access to the Town Green which will enjoy more frequent use. Development at 1 Waterville Road makes full use of the site while creating a strong building edge along Farmington Road featuring

architecture that is compatible with Farmington. New development lines the street at the shopping center and the gas stations, creating a dynamic gateway to the Town Center for east bound vehicles and pedestrians. The gas stations can either be replaced by mixed use development or be reconfigured to place the buildings along the street with the pumps and parking in the rear.

Dark brown buildings = existing historic district buildings; tan buildings = existing buildings outside historic district; white buildings = proposed building



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The Recommended Option proposes a major expansion of the Farmington River Greenway by converting the Battison's Cleaners building - or a replacement building – to a greenway and Town Center visitors' center. Parking for visitors to the greenway on foot or by bicycle or canoe would be provided next to the visitors center. Using portions of the Battison's

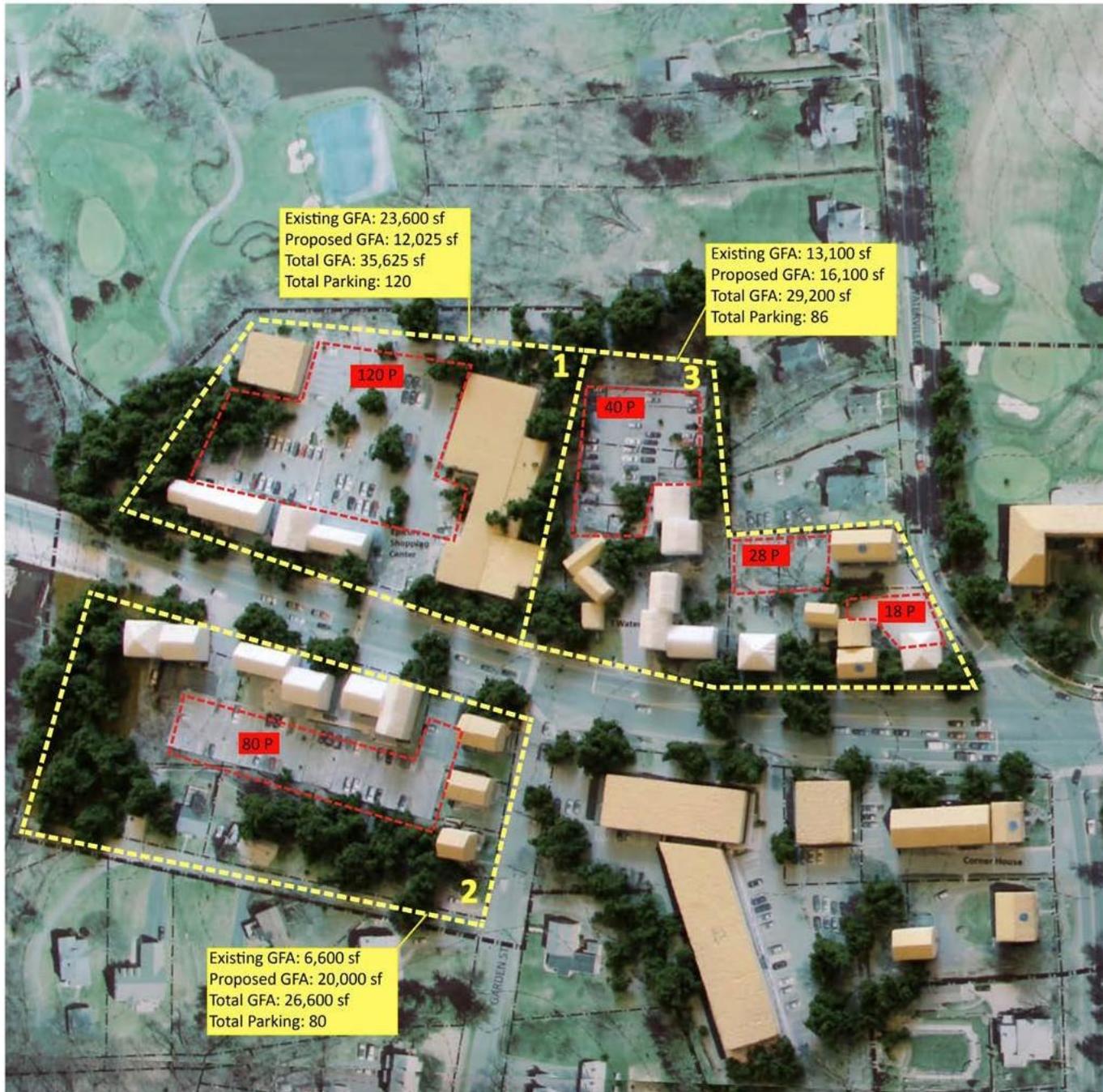
and other adjacent properties to enhance the Greenway will also enhance recreational and conservation opportunities along the river. The natural wooded sweep of the Greenway will serve as a green entrance to Farmington Center from the west.

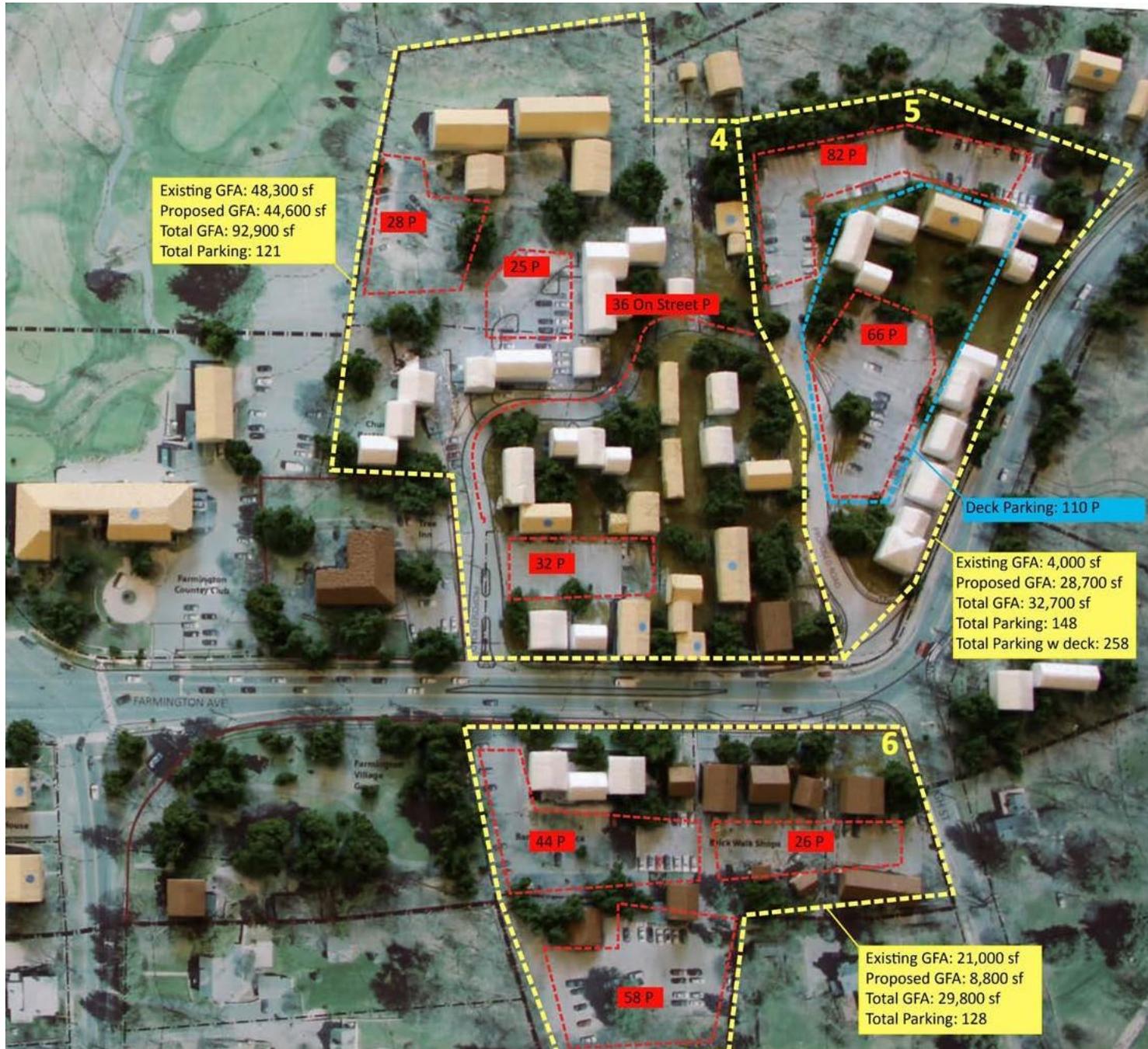
Dark brown buildings = existing historic district buildings; tan buildings = existing buildings outside historic district; white buildings = proposed building



**Farmington Center
Development Area &
Parking Calculations:
Western Half**

*Dark brown buildings = existing historic
district buildings; tan buildings = existing
buildings outside historic district; white
buildings = proposed building*



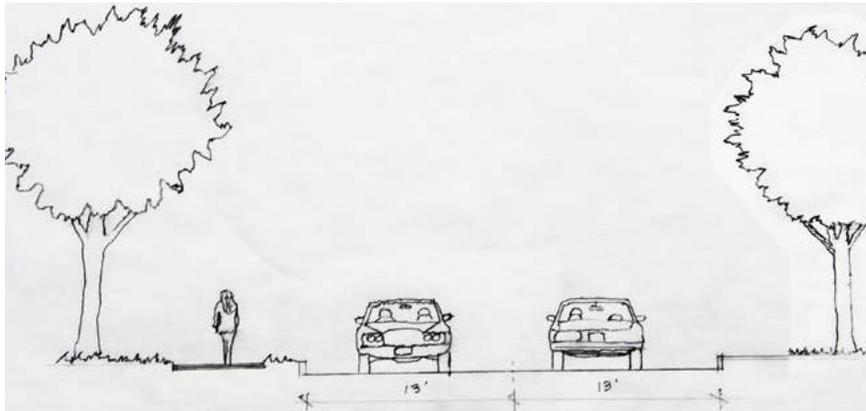


Farmington Center Development Area & Parking Calculations: Eastern Half

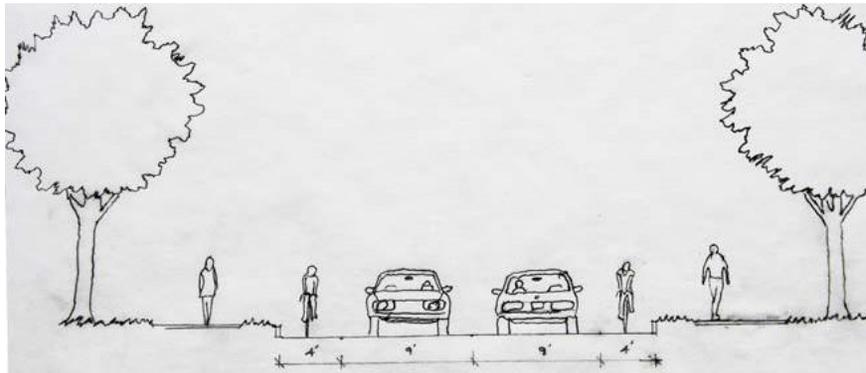
Dark brown buildings = existing historic district buildings;
 tan buildings = existing buildings outside historic district;
 white buildings = proposed building

Farmington Center Gross Floor Area & Parking					
Section	Category	Gross Floor Area: GFA (footprint X stories) square feet (SF)	Parking spots required at 3 per 1,000 SF	Parking Spots Provided	Parking deficit or surplus
1	Proposed	12,025	36	120 surface	13 surface
	Existing	23,600	71		
	TOTAL	35,600	107		
2	Proposed	20,000	60	80 surface	0 surface
	Existing	6,600	20		
	TOTAL	26,600	80		
3	Proposed	16,100	48	86 surface	-2 surface
	Existing	13,100	39		
	TOTAL	29,200	87		
4	Proposed	44,600	134	121 surface	-158 surface
	Existing	48,300	145		
	TOTAL	92,900	279		
5	Proposed	28,700	86	148 surface +110 w/ deck = 258	50 surface + 110 w/ deck = 160
	Existing	4,000	12		
	TOTAL	32,700	98		
6	Proposed	8,800	26	128 surface	39 surface
	Existing	21,000	63		
	TOTAL	29,800	89		

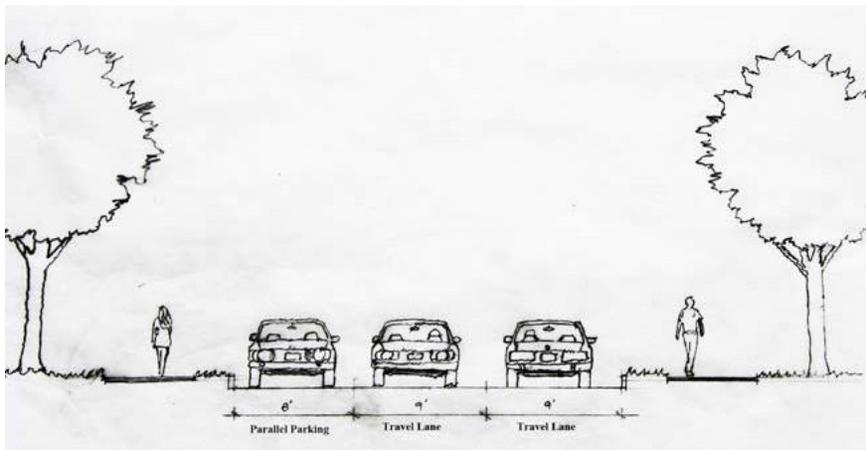
* Note: If the additional 110 parking spaces provided by the deck are not available, about 30,000 sf of proposed GFA would need to be eliminated in Section 4 and/or 5 since without the deck, there is a deficit of 108 parking spaces.



*Existing ConnDOT Striping:
Two 13' Travel Lanes.*



*Backage Road Section: Current ConnDOT Alignment
with Modified Paint Striping That Creates 2 Bike Lanes.*



*Backage Road Section: Current ConnDOT Alignment
with Modified Paint Striping Creating a Parallel Parking
Lane. This modification calms traffic, reduces travel
speeds, enhances pedestrian safety and creates an active
streetscape.*

Design Guidelines

The following planning and design guidelines present recommendations for the layout, materials, configurations and types of physical improvements that could benefit the character and quality of Farmington Center. The guidelines are derived from successful comparable projects from other locations in Connecticut and throughout the United States.

Pedestrian Friendly Centers



Wide sidewalks, places to sit, storefronts, tall shade trees and quality. Building materials and construction create a pedestrian friendly setting.

Historic Preservation



Historic Preservation of buildings & landscapes saves irreplaceable town character and street trees while creating lasting, meaningful and prosperous places high in quality of life.

Night Lighting



Attractive, well lit streets and pedestrian areas creates an inviting, friendly and safe night time town center environment. Shielded lights eliminate glare and harsh lighting.

Street Furniture



Street Trees



High Quality Materials



Street Lights



Attractive street lights that minimize glare enhance town centers.

Cross Walks



Wide cross walks, clearly marked and built with durable, high quality and attractive materials enhances the safety as well as the character of town centers. Cross walk lights that reduce pedestrian waiting times to less than a minute and a half are also desirable.

Streetscapes



Wide, accessible sidewalks, tall street trees, attractive store fronts and a strong and friendly architectural street edge create dynamic, walkable town centers.



Landscape Screening



Landscape screening can reduce the negative visual impact of discordant features while improving habitats and increasing water retention.

Traffic Calming/Complete Streets



Roundabouts, narrow travel lanes, street trees and other traffic calming techniques slow down cars to create complete streets serving pedestrians and cyclists as well as cars.

Dynamic Public Spaces



Public squares, plazas and outdoor sitting and dining areas bring vitality, interest and friendly, relaxed dynamic to town centers

Mixed Use Buildings



Mixed use buildings with retail, restaurant and commercial on ground floors and residential above.

On Street Parking



Residential Neighborhoods



Residential Neighborhoods located near traffic calmed streets have high quality, accessible sidewalks, friendly porches and entrances, new street trees while presenting a strong, unified yet varied street façade.

Parallel parking along streets with 9' travel lanes enhances pedestrian safety, encourages drivers not to speed, creates a village scale and makes a town center feel active and lived in.

Architectural Edge Along Streets, Accessible Sidewalks



Consistent narrow setbacks with architectural unity with variety create a strong, friendly building edge along streets conducive to walking, shopping and relaxing.

Parking Options



Parks and Landscapes



Dynamic, versatile and environmentally friendly parks enhance town centers.

Farmington River Greenway



A preserved, environmentally restored river with public access will continue to enhance the natural environment of the Farmington River while forming the western gateway to the town center.

Buried Overhead Utilities



Burying overhead utility lines greatly enhances the aesthetics of town center streets and allows tall street trees to be planted.

Town Center Landscapes



Tall street trees, urban scale landscape plantings and shrub and perennial beds. Create a welcoming, attractive and cared for town center.

Wayfinding and Signage



Clear, attractive signage appropriate for an historic town center.

IV. Acknowledgements

Town of Farmington Select Board

Town of Farmington Department of Planning, William Warner, Chief Planner

Town of Farmington Economic Development, Rose Ponte, Director

Farmington Historical Society

Miss Porter's School

Hundreds of Workshop Participants

Connecticut Historic Preservation Office

Connecticut Department of Economic & Community Development.

Community Investment Act of the State of Connecticut

V. Appendices

Appendix 1 Results of the SWOT Exercise: Comments Directly from Work Sheets

Opportunities

- 1) Walking
- 2) Biking
- 3) Increased park use
- 4) Mixed use
- 5) Gazebo
- 6) Gain architecture cohesiveness
- 7) Re-engineer Rt16/Rt4
- 8) Pedestrian friendly
- 9) Underground wiring
- 10) Complete Streets Policy
- 11) Underpass
- 12) Revisit State road design
- 13) Develop Parsons
- 14) Water Ville canal path
- 15) Pedestrian access to the river
- 16) Retail development
- 17) More pocket parks
- 18) Collaboration on beautification
- 19) Reason to stop in town
- 20) Cultural diversity
- 21) More parking
- 22) Wheel chair accessibility
- 23) Parson's as entry way
- 24) Lower Rt 4 and create pedestrian bridges
- 25) Parking garage under village green
- 26) Ice rink/pool at Parsons
- 27) The river
- 28) Underutilized properties (Waterville Road)

Strengths

- 1) Historic character
- 2) Natural beauty
- 3) Interest of town's supportive people
- 4) Green space
- 5) Quaint brick walk lane
- 6) Mixed uses
- 7) Financial strength of town
- 8) Volunteerism
- 9) Jonesville
- 10) Brick Walk
- 11) Village Green
- 12) Country Club
- 13) Miss Porter's
- 14) The River
- 15) Visibility
- 16) Mixed age groups
- 17) Developable land
- 18) Sense of place
- 19) Visual appeal
- 20) Farmington Inn
- 21) Charming
- 22) Tree cover
- 23) Variety of uses
- 24) Access to I-84
- 25) Historic district
- 26) Business at Epicure
- 27) Main road connecting to Farm Valley
- 28) Views from road

- 29) Eliminate curb cuts
- 30) Better access to Hill-Stead
- 31) More bike friendly
- 32) Plan road bypass of downtown
- 33) Cut and cover Route 4
- 34) Bury wires
- 35) Active use of town green
- 36) More restaurants
- 37) Gas lights
- 38) Improve town green
- 39) Improve Chuck's Steakhouse area
- 40) Grade changes
- 41) Design review
- 42) Designate more historic buildings
- 43) Connect both sides of Rt4
- 44) Rt. wires underground
- 45) Redesign Rt. 4
- 46) Parsons as business center
- 47) Parson's provides parking
- 48) Provide bike lanes
- 49) Attract new businesses
- 50) Link businesses to river
- 51) Parsons as new village green
- 52) Traffic islands
- 53) Underground utilities
- 54) Purchase Bank of America building
- 55) Better use of green
- 56) Better use of backsides of buildings
- 57) Create design guidelines
- 58) Create gateways at Parsons
- 59) Art/creativity center near Steakhouse
- 60) Relate historic and modern structures
- 61) Slow down traffic to allow views of amenities
- 62) Redesign town green
- 29) Historic landmarks
- 30) Historic mile
- 31) Low taxes
- 32) Industrial base
- 33) Climate ready for change
- 34) Town green
- 35) Beautiful buildings
- 36) Mixed zoning
- 37) Truffles
- 38) Starbucks
- 39) Naples
- 40) Piccolo Arancio
- 41) Available land
- 42) Mixed uses
- 43) Available land
- 44) Historic charm
- 45) Jonesville gallery
- 46) Old Tavern
- 47) Sculpture park
- 48) Traffic count for retail
- 49) Sense of place
- 50) Museums
- 51) Jonesville
- 52) Town green
- 53) Mixed uses
- 54) Ability to walk on sidewalks (not crossing)
- 55) Arts and culture
- 56) Community pride
- 57) The river
- 58) Good schools
- 59) Small size
- 60) Quality of older buildings
- 61) Volume of people traveling to Mormon Temple
- 62) Convenient location

- 63) Positive Parsons development
- 64) Mixed uses at Jonesville
- 65) Tunnel under Rt. 4
- 66) Create a shuttle trolley
- 67) Provide child friendly areas
- 68) Provide a dog park
- 69) Increase Mass Transit
- 70) Make village “place to come”
- 71) “History meets today”
- 72) Create sense of center
- 73) Create gateway at Parsons
- 74) Walking shopping areas
- 75) Place buffers between residential/commercial uses
- 76) Make village a destination
- 77) Provide improved signage/way finding
- 78) Provide economic incentives to small businesses
- 79) Make village a destination
- 80) Provide “starter” homes for families
- 81) Increase restaurants
- 82) Connect “Gems” via signage
- 83) Day/night street life
- 84) Create Bucolic settings
- 85) Avoid street lights – create sidewalk lights
- 86) Prevent underpass in front of the country club
- 87) Develop Parson’s
- 88) Open up river views
- 89) Riverside shops
- 90) Availability of business-living spaces
- 91) Tell/show over historic story
- 92) Support handicapped access
- 93) Attract small businesses

Weaknesses

- 1) No sense of town center
- 2) Bottleneck for traffic
- 3) Not walkable
- 4) No central focus
- 5) Inaccessible for handicapped
- 6) Traffic
- 7) Parsons property (vacant)
- 8) Poor zoning
- 9) No cohesive architecture
- 10) Limited return on investment
- 11) Little parking
- 12) Proximity of sewer plant
- 13) Poor condition of some structures
- 14) Traffic density
- 15) Suspicion of DOT
- 16) Too many curb cuts
- 17) Backage area
- 18) Ability to turn left
- 19) Gas stations (too much asphalt)
- 20) Poor sidewalks
- 21) Walking on Route 4
- 22) Possible mismanagement of road design
- 23) Litigation
- 24) Resistance of stakeholders
- 25) Traffic volume
- 26) Visibility of green
- 27) Traffic
- 28) Left run at Bank of America
- 29) Non protected historic buildings
- 30) Turn signals
- 31) Increased travel times
- 32) Ability to turn off Rt. 4

Threats

- 1) Disturb historic character
- 2) Tearing down buildings
- 3) Gas stations, banks
- 4) Dry cleaners, drug stores
- 5) Mill rate increase
- 6) Overdevelopment
- 7) Demolition of properties
- 8) Lack of funding
- 9) Non-complimentary development
- 10) Lack of cohesion among property owners
- 11) Over-under regulations
- 12) Disneyfication of corridor
- 13) Increased traffic
- 14) Risk of doing nothing
- 15) Potential river flooding
- 16) Pollution at Parson's
- 17) Access to Bank of America
- 18) Absence of youth in moving into town
- 19) Impact on High Street
- 20) Easy access will bring in criminal activity
- 21) Businesses may destroy beauty
- 22) Cookie cutter business layout
- 23) Possibility of golf club closing
- 24) Traffic
- 25) DOT tunnel vision
- 26) Big boxes
- 27) Farmington is a conduit, not a destination
- 28) Access to Rt. 4 from High Street
- 29) State plans v. town plans on highway
- 30) Lack of design commission
- 31) Impacts on Garden Street
- 32) Threats of Jersey barriers

- 33) Limited Developable land
- 34) Flooding
- 35) Safety crossing Rt. 4
- 36) Drive through not a destination
- 37) Hidden village
- 38) Underutilized river
- 39) Parson's looks blighted
- 40) Mixed zoning uses
- 41) Amenities do not attract traffic
- 42) Lack of parking
- 43) Pedestrian unfriendly
- 44) Route 4 is barrier
- 45) Route 4 is unsafe
- 46) Golf club entrance
- 47) Zoning restrictions
- 48) Unsightly Utilities
- 49) Lack of village cohesiveness
- 50) Lack of architectural integrity
- 51) Traffic dump
- 52) Lack of character
- 53) Poor appearance
- 54) Lack of Mass Transit
- 55) Too much development
- 56) Lack of design integrity
- 57) No gateway
- 58) Lack of restaurants
- 59) Empty commercial spaces
- 60) Underutilized park

- 33) Developers not accepting vision
- 34) Dark place – poor lighting
- 35) Absence of playground(s)
- 36) No action – business will suffer
- 37) Inappropriate development at Parsons
- 38) Demolition of historic structures
- 39) Traffic problems if design fails
- 40) Zero lot lines too close to residential properties
- 41) Poor design for new buildings
- 42) Increased congestion
- 43) Big box retail
- 44) Non Farmington interests
- 45) Doing nothing
- 46) DOT ignores the town
- 47) Chains coming to Parsons
- 48) Rent increases causing gentrification
- 49) Loss of green spaces

Appendix 2: Town of Farmington Draft Report

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- C. Historical Significance of Study area

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- 4. Wetlands and Watercourses
- 5. Utilities
- 6. Existing Zoning
- 7. Traffic and Pedestrian Circulation

E. State of Connecticut Plan

F. Susceptibility to Change Analysis

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A. Community Participation

B. SWOT Analysis - Strengths, Weakness Opportunities and Threats

Section III

A. Recommendations

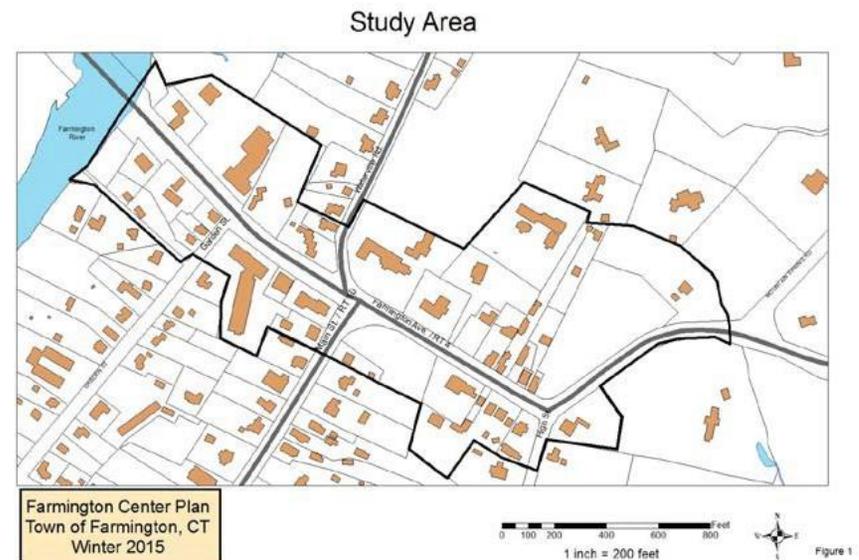
- 1. General Goals
- 2. Policies
- 3. Specific Recommendations

Appendix

Public Right of Way Considerations, landscape, sidewalks, curbs, crosswalks, lighting

A. Study Area

The study area is displayed on Figure 1. It is generally bounded by the parcels fronting on the north and south side of CT Rt. 4/ Farmington Ave between Mountain Spring Road on the east and the Farmington River on the west.



B. Introduction

The enhancement of the study area is an absolutely critical issue because it is the gateway to Farmington and the Farmington River Valley. The area is most recognized for its historic building stock. Farmington's historic character defines the town.

Most outside of Farmington think of Farmington as Farmington Center and Miss Porters School. The thoughts are strong and positive because of the significant number of historic buildings in the area. The area gives Farmington its stately reputation. It is quintessential Farmington.

Fortunately, the Farmington Center Historic District gives many of the buildings in that area a high level of protection. The majority of the properties on the south side of Farmington Ave., Main St., High St., Mountain Road, School St., Church St, Colton St. and Diamond Glen are protected. In the district, anything, other than color, which affects the view from the street, requires a public hearing and a certificate of appropriateness from the Farmington Center Historic District Commission.

The same cannot be said for the north side of Farmington Avenue. That area, with the exception of 2 properties, is not in the historic district and is the most susceptible to change. Two properties have secured Planning and Zoning approval to demolish historic structures and construct new bank/retail buildings. A developer is proposing a project which would demolish two (2) buildings and replace them with 2 new buildings. The State of Connecticut Department of Transportation is proposing a road project that will permanently alter the character and functionality of the study area.

Currently there is no plan in place for how the study area should be developed. The study area is the most important gateway into Farmington. A smattering of historic buildings mixed with unplanned and inappropriately designed and placed new buildings and a State DOT job with an "automobile only" orientation will quickly erode any historic character and/or sense of place.

If the Town fails to properly plan, it is highly likely the stately image of Farmington's principle gateway, which portrays a town founded in 1640 on the banks of the Farmington River, will be lost forever.

C. Historical Significance of the Study Area

Farmington Center is one of the largest and most significant collections of historic homes in the entire state. The vast majority of the structures are located in the Farmington Center local historic district and on the Connecticut Register of Historic Buildings.

In her book *Farmington: New England Town Through Time* Barbara Donahue writes about the origins of Farmington Center as follows:

"On the east bank of the river in Farmington, the land terraces up rather sharply, and it was here the English settled shortly after 1640. Following European tradition, the settlers lived in the village and went out from it to work their corn and hayfields beyond the river and to pasture their animals in the hills. The houses they built reminded them of home, with massive timbers, steep roofs, and second stories that jutted out over the first.

They built for protection, against the natives and against the overwhelming wilderness, and clustered their dwellings along the Town Path (now Main Street) and the track to the sawmill (now Colton Street and Diamond Glen). As late as 1704, houses which still exist, one as part of the Elm Tree Inn on Farmington Avenue and the other at the corner of Main Street and Tunxis Road, were considered the northern and southern limits of the village and were garrisoned against possible native attack.

Every Connecticut town centered on its church. Farmington's Congregationalists, who formed their own ecclesiastical society in 1652, built a meeting house soon after and replaced it with a larger one in 1709.

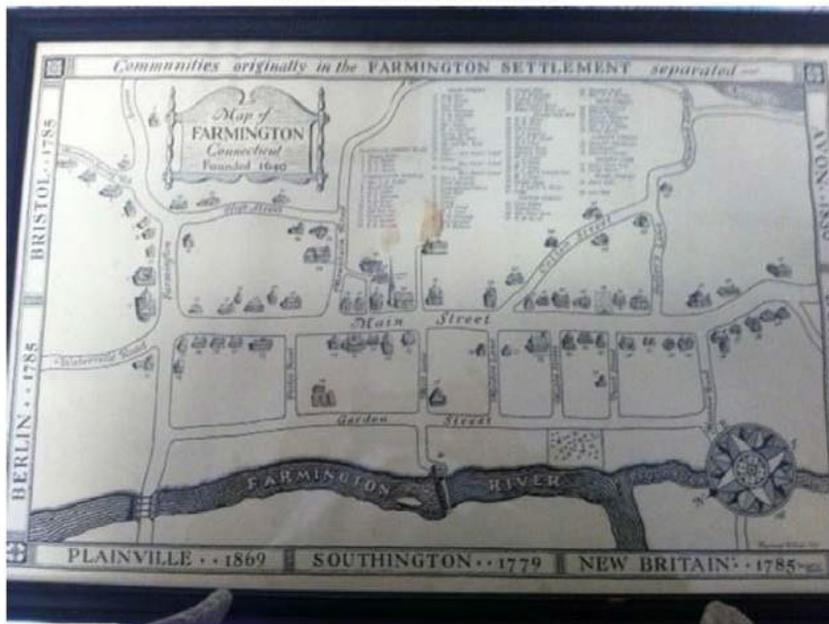
The town continued to grow, in number and wealth, and in 1769 residents voted to replace the second meeting house with a third. Architect/builder

Judah Woodruff and merchant Fisher Gay were sent to Boston to select Maine timber and in 1771 construction began on the graceful building that is still in use.

In the American Revolution the town sided with the rebels, furnishing men, arms, and supplies to the cause. The war brought new prosperity to the town, as farmers sold provisions to the American and French armies, and perhaps to the British as well. No battles were fought here but a French army under Comte de Rochambeau came through Farmington twice, patronizing local taverns and camping in the meadows below town.

Figure 2 is a map depicting the historic Farmington Center.

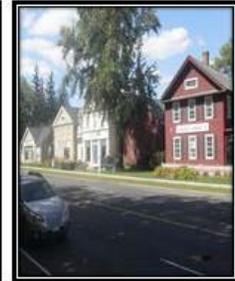
Historic Farmington Center



D. Existing Conditions

The study area is approximately thirty nine (39) acres in size and has Farmington Ave. (RT 4) running through the middle. It also contains portions of High Street, Garden Street, Hobart Street, Main St. (RT 10) and Waterville Road. As displayed below, the public right of way and several of the properties are suffering from deferred maintenance and neglect. Cracked and broken sidewalks and curbs, weeds, an illogical, mix of bituminous and concrete sidewalks and curbs, vacant, overgrown structures and sign structures no longer in use.

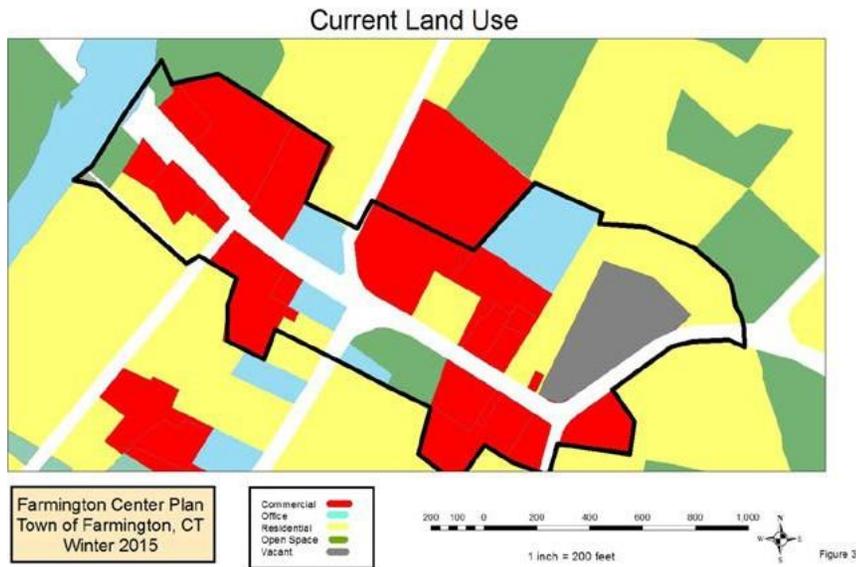




The above conditions are not what represent an attractive gateway into a community. Images to the right are photographs from other communities which are representative of the standards Farmington should strive for in this location.

1. Land Use

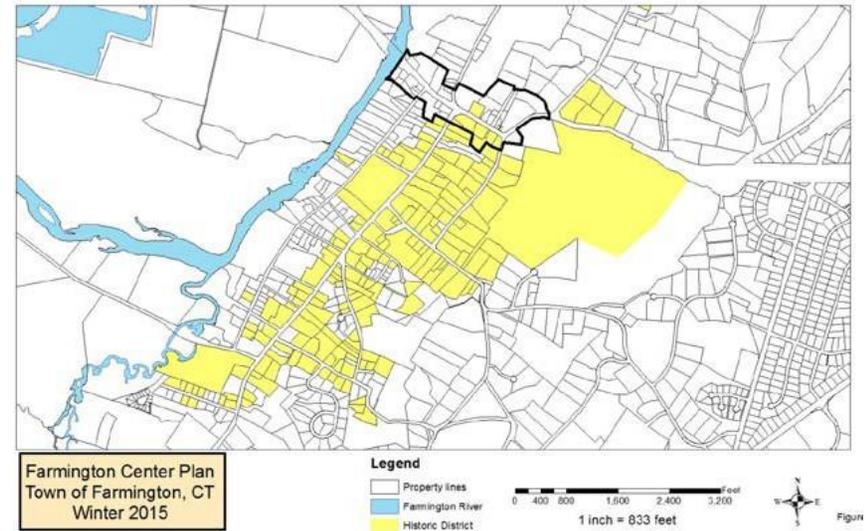
The land uses are varied and are displayed on Figure 3. Land uses include vacant parcels, the town green, vacant buildings, general commercial/retail, office, banks, restaurants, and multi-family residential.



2. Historic Resources

The study area is the northern terminus of the historic Farmington Center. Figure 4 displays the Farmington Center Historic District in relation to the study area.

Farmington Center Historic District / Study Area



There are seven (7) buildings located within the study area that are surveyed in the 1985 “Town of Farmington Architecture and Historic Survey” and thus on the Connecticut Register of Historic Buildings.

Only two (2) of these buildings are located in the local historic district and protected by the Farmington Center Historic District Commission.

- 792 Farmington Ave. Elm Tree Inn, ca. 1655, ca. 1800 (building with a building)
- 772 Farmington Ave. North-Frost Blacksmith Shop ca. 1827
- The five (5) historic buildings that are not located in the local historic district are as follows:
 - 774 Farmington Ave. Charles Frost House, ca. 1826
 - 776 Farmington Ave. John Norton House, ca. 1670

- 778 Farmington Ave. Daniel Buck House and Store, ca. 1845
- 806 Farmington Ave. Farmington Country Club, ca. 1901
- 820 Farmington Ave. Woodford-Newell-Strong House, ca. 1807 ca. 1655

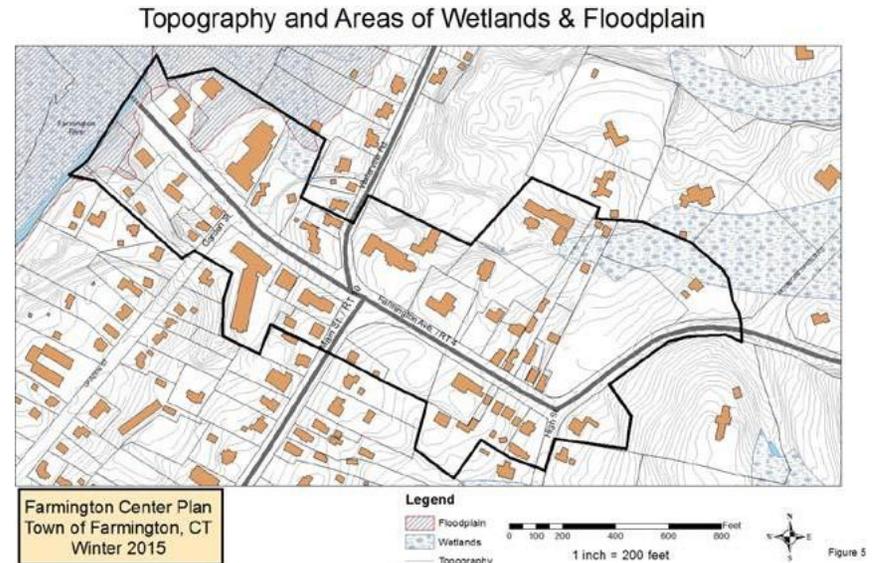
These remaining buildings are largely unprotected from demolition using private funds. There is a 90 day demolition delay ordinance in place but that rarely results in the preservation of a building. The purpose of identifying these buildings in this plan is to make it clear to future developers that the Town of Farmington considers these to be important resources within the town and should be strongly considered for preservation when a development is proposed.

3. Topography

The topography of the site slopes generally to the west towards the Farmington River. For the most part the topography is gently sloping and poses no constraints to future development. (Figure 5)

4. Wetlands and Watercourses & 100 year flood plain

There is a small area of wetlands in the north east corner of the study area with a small stream running east to west towards the Farmington River. There is flood plain along the Farmington River at the western extreme of the study area. (Figure 5)

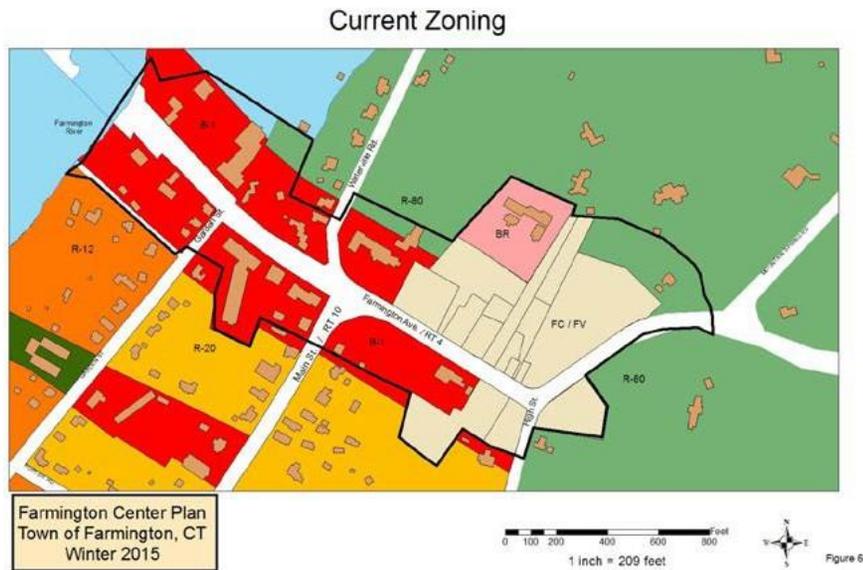


5. Utilities

All utilities are present. The area is serviced by sanitary sewer system, public water, natural gas and electricity. Figure 6 displays sewer, water and natural gas lines.

6. Existing Zoning

Figure 4 displays the existing zoning within the study area.



The majority of the study area is zoned Farmington Center/Farmington Village District zone. This zone was created specifically for this area. The purpose of this zone is as follows:

“To preserve and protect the existing historic landscape and structures within the zone as well as considering potential infill and redevelopment that will complement the same. The following design regulations shall guide mixed-use development; historic development patterns, view and vistas; a village streetscape; and pedestrian access and safety in concert with the objectives found in the Farmington Plan of Conservation and Development.”

Consideration should be given to also requiring that all parking shall be located behind buildings, there be no additional curb cuts on RT 4, there be a maximum parking requirement in addition to a minimum, there be a maximum front setback of five (5) feet for buildings fronting on RT 4, specific allowance and encouragement of underground parking and parking structures to the rear of the study area, a mandatory residential component and a requirement that all first floor uses in buildings fronting on RT 4 be

restricted to retail and personal service shops, fast food restaurants, dairy bar, grill, coffee shop, gallery, shop, retail bank and restaurant's.

With these revisions the Farmington Center zoning is ideal zoning to encourage a high density mixed use and pedestrian friendly development. The setbacks, lot coverage, parking requirements and uses will encourage appropriate development within that zone.

Other areas within the study area are zoned Business Restricted (BR) and Business (B1). These zones are more geared towards the creation of strip commercial development. The allowed uses, the setback areas, the lot coverage and parking requirements will not result in a development pattern conducive to Farmington Center.

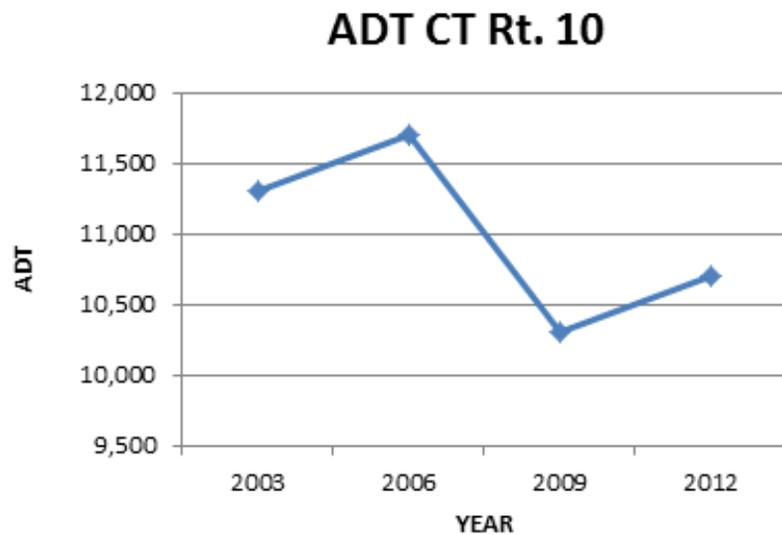
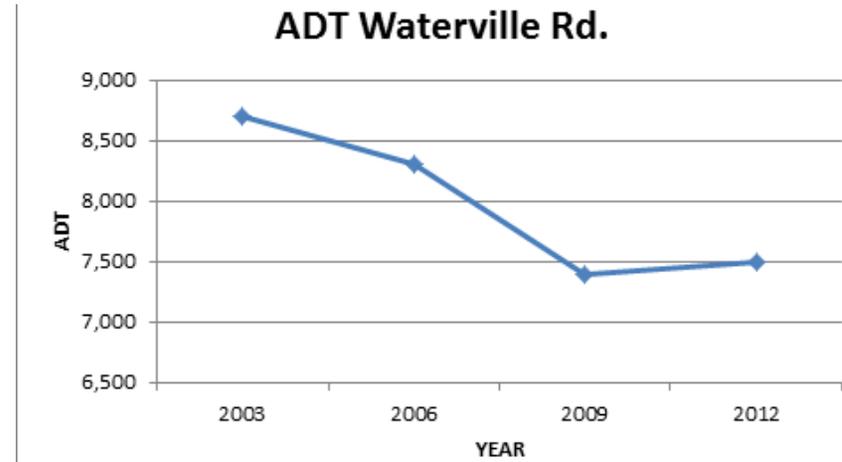
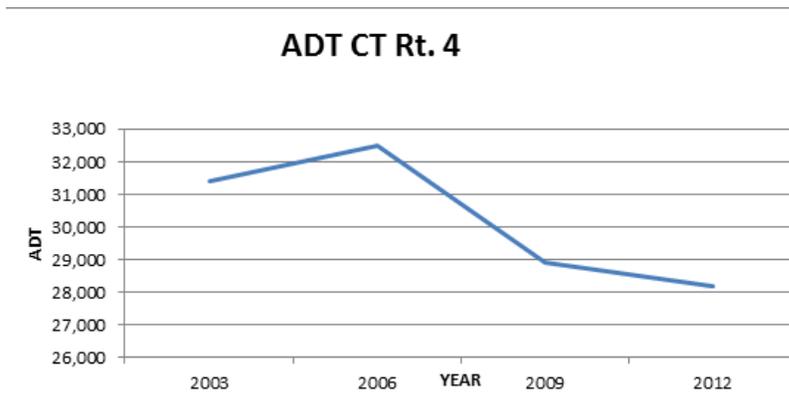
The entire study area should be zoned Farmington Center/Farmington Village District zone.

7. Traffic and Circulation

In 2012 CTDOT reported that CT RT 4 in the study area had an ADT of 28,200 cars per day. CT RT 10 had an ADT of approximately 10,700 cars per day and Waterville Road had an ADT of 7500 cars per day.

As shown below, traffic volumes have declined significantly since the start of the economic recession in 2008 and in 2012 still had not returned to previously highs in 2006.

In addition to volume and capacity, one of the more significant issues on RT 4 is left turning cars into the establishments on both the north and south side of the roadway. There are 10 curb cuts within a relatively short distance on RT 4 within the study area. The State DOT project scheduled for 2017 will place a raised center island which is designed to eliminate left turning movements.



Sidewalks – there area is fairly well serviced with sidewalks, however they are of various materials and often cracked and in poor condition. The crosswalks are worn out and walk signals should be upgraded and focused on the pedestrian. The north and south sides of Route 4 are completely isolated from each other. The pedestrian must feel comfortable crossing Route 4 in order to unite the north and south side.

Bicycle – the area is extremely unfriendly to the bicyclist and this needs to be improved. CT Transit buses run through the area and could be very important in the future as more and more employees working in the UCONN medical corridor look for attractive living, shopping and dining alternatives close by.

H. State of Connecticut Plan

The State of Connecticut will be constructing the road improvements displayed on Figure 8 in 2017. This is the gateway to Farmington, this area will portray Farmington’s imagine to visitors for years to come. These changes will forever change the character and functionality of the corridor. The Town needs to carefully review this plan and must insure that the state utilize the highest quality materials, as discussed in this plan, to guarantee the image of quality and the proper look for the gateway to one of the state’s most significant

1. **763 Farmington Ave.:** This property has been fully approved for a bank branch. The existing building will be demolished and a new architecturally appropriate building will be constructed in approximately the same location. One concern is with the buildings orientation to the street. The historic building was clearly built to look down RT 4 towards the river. Prior to a building permit being issued the Town should make sure the new building is realigned to maintain the same orientation as the original building.

2. **Parsons State of Connecticut DOT:** The former Parsons car dealership was acquired by the State DOT for the RT 4 improvement project. The normal disposition of this property after the road job is complete is an offer to other state agencies and then an offer to the Town to acquire for fair market value. It is essential that the Town control the destiny of this parcel to insure compliance with this plan. Therefore, the Town's legislative delegation should be asked to submit a bill requiring that this parcel be sold directly to the Town of Farmington upon completion of the DOT project.

3. **Norton Lane Properties, Inc.:** These properties appear underutilized and secluded. The State DOT project will split the property in half and drastically change its character by the new backage road which will run along its entire eastern border.

4. **Udolph Farmington, LLC.:** Again, with access to the new Backage Road, this property will have much more potential once the State project is complete.

5. **Farmington Country Club (Chucks parcel):** A developer currently has this property under contract and has begun the entitlement process. The developers plan for the property include the demolition of the former Chucks Restaurant and the Green Dog Market building and the construction of 12 high end condominium units at the Chucks site and a retail/service building along Farmington Ave. The initial concept plans are appropriate and will require Architectural Review Committee and Planning and Zoning Commission approval. During the approval process, it is essential that cross easements be secured to ensure shared use of parking areas, including public

use, in accordance with this plan.

6. **Bank of America:** This building is leased by Bank of America and is the most architecturally inconsistent building within the study area. Its modern façade does not contribute positively to the streetscape. The building is very large and inefficient for a branch bank. Its only access is from RT 4 and the state DOT project will install a center island along its entire frontage. This is designed to eliminate left turns in and out of the Bank of America property. This may have a major impact on their operation.

7. **1 Waterville Road:** Planning and Zoning approvals are in place for two retail buildings, including a bank with a remote drive up window. This approval is from 2010 and nothing has happened. The developer indicates that the bank tenant is no longer interested and the project, as approved, makes little financial sense. The developer is interested in taking advantage of the Farmington Center zone and is working with the Town on alternate development proposals which would need new approvals.

8. **Battison's Cleaners Property:** This property is currently vacant and in the foreclosure process. The properties' small size (much of the front parking lot is in the State ROW), flood plain, and possible environmental contamination (former gas station) severely complicate the re-use of the property. Its adjacency to State property fronting the Farmington River may make it any interesting opportunity for a more public use connected to the river and Farmington Center.

Section II

A. Community Participation

The most critical component of any plan is the public participation component. To insure transparency the Town of Farmington conducted two, widely publicized, planning workshops. The workshops included a professional facilitator and occurred on ####, ## 2015 and ####, ## 2015. Over ### residents participated in the workshops and the minutes are

included in the Appendix. These workshops were a critical step in gaining consensus from the Community and formulating a formal “Vision” for the

B. Strengths, Weakness Opportunities and Threats

Below is a listing of the Strengths, Weakness Opportunities and Threats that were identified during the public planning workshops.

Strengths

The town

- A highly regarded community with strong management, low crime rate, one of lowest mill rates in Connecticut, an excellent public school system and an affluent and educated population.
- Desirable location in close proximity to Interstate 84 and Bradley International airport and within 2 hours of New York City and Boston.
- Rich in History - one of oldest communities in Connecticut.
- Over nine (9) miles of frontage on both sides of the Farmington River.
- Strong market which can support a mix of new development including retail, office and high end residential.
- Diverse Housing options ranging from affordable to very high end.
- One of only 4 Bicycle friendly communities in the State as designated by
- Thousands of acres of open space and beautiful multi-use trails along the Farmington River.
- Strong cultural institutions - Stanley Whitman House, Hillstead Museum, Unionville Museum and Day Lewis Museum.

- Internationally renowned - Miss Porters School
- Emerging Bio Science Corridor around the University of Connecticut’s Medical School and Hospital.

Farmington Center and the Study Area

- Farmington Center, outside of the study area, is relatively compact and walkable.
- The presence of Miss Porters School adds a level of dignity and sophistication as well as a captive market for the area.
- Farmington Center has significant historic and cultural and institutional amenities that can be built on to strengthen its setting as a Town Center.
- Farmington Center contains a mix of land uses which is very desirable for a town center.
- With minor modifications, as discussed in this plan, the Farmington Center/Village District zoning is ideal for the study area and will allow a mix of uses and a level of density which will enhance and energize the study area.
- The zoning allows for a critical mass of attractive retail, restaurant, and service uses in properly placed buildings. Concentrated development within the study area is required in order to create a traditional village and strengthen the center.
- The study area has the infrastructure (water, sewer, gas) in place to allow for intensive development.
- The study area should be a smaller more attractive alternative to Blue Back Square for Farmington residents.
- The State of Connecticut has a major road improvement project

planned which creates a tremendous opportunity for the Town to leverage that work to secure other improvements within the road right of way such as granite curbing throughout, new concrete sidewalks throughout, decorative crosswalks, pedestrian crossing signals, historic lighting and landscaped islands.

- Topographically, the study area is gently sloping and is ideal for new development and reasonably conducive to pedestrian and bicycle usage.
- There is a significant amount of traffic running through the study area on RT 4 which creates high visibility which is very desirable for retail/commercial uses.
- Miss Porters School and a number of residential uses are within walking distance to the study area which will contribute to the vitality of any new development.

Weaknesses

The Town

- Lack of a downtown core creating a true sense of place
- Lack of a community gathering place. Limited nightlife options, no theatre, cafes, coffee shop. Limited offerings that attract younger workforce.
- No strong and attractive gateway into town from Interstate 84
- Ineffective Signage and limited way finding system
- Morning and afternoon peak hour traffic on RT 4 often causes gridlock
- Curve at former Parsons property has a very negative reputation statewide.

- Very little vacant land remaining for new development to grow the grand list

Farmington Center and Study Area

- Farmington Center is not fully integrated with the study area as a traditional, cohesive New England TownCenter.
- Route 4 creates a very imposing real and psychological barrier between the study area and the rest of Farmington Center and the historic district.
- Route 4 is controlled by state DOT and without significant and ongoing lobbying the proposed improvements could be detrimental to the area.
- The road, the sidewalks, the curbing, the crosswalks, various buildings and parking lots are in a severe state of disrepair.
- There is a lack of adequate sidewalks and crosswalks to encourage walking within the Center and into the study area.
- There is a lack of pedestrian connections to ease walking between the north and south side of Route 4 and the shops and services.
- There is a lack of theme elements such as lighting, sidewalks, crosswalks, benches, and trees that will help identify and unify the Center and, in particular, the study area.
- There must be retail and other services that fill a niche that the newer shopping
- Centers in surrounding towns fail to provide.
- Some historic buildings exist within the study area that are worthy of preservation and are not located within the Farmington Center Historic District.

- Traffic is currently traveling at speeds that are not considered to be appropriate for a Town Center.
- Although there is significant traffic within the study area on Route 4 and Route 10 very little is destined for shopping or services within the Center.

Section III

Recommendations

- General Goals
- Policies
- Specific Recommendations

Appendix

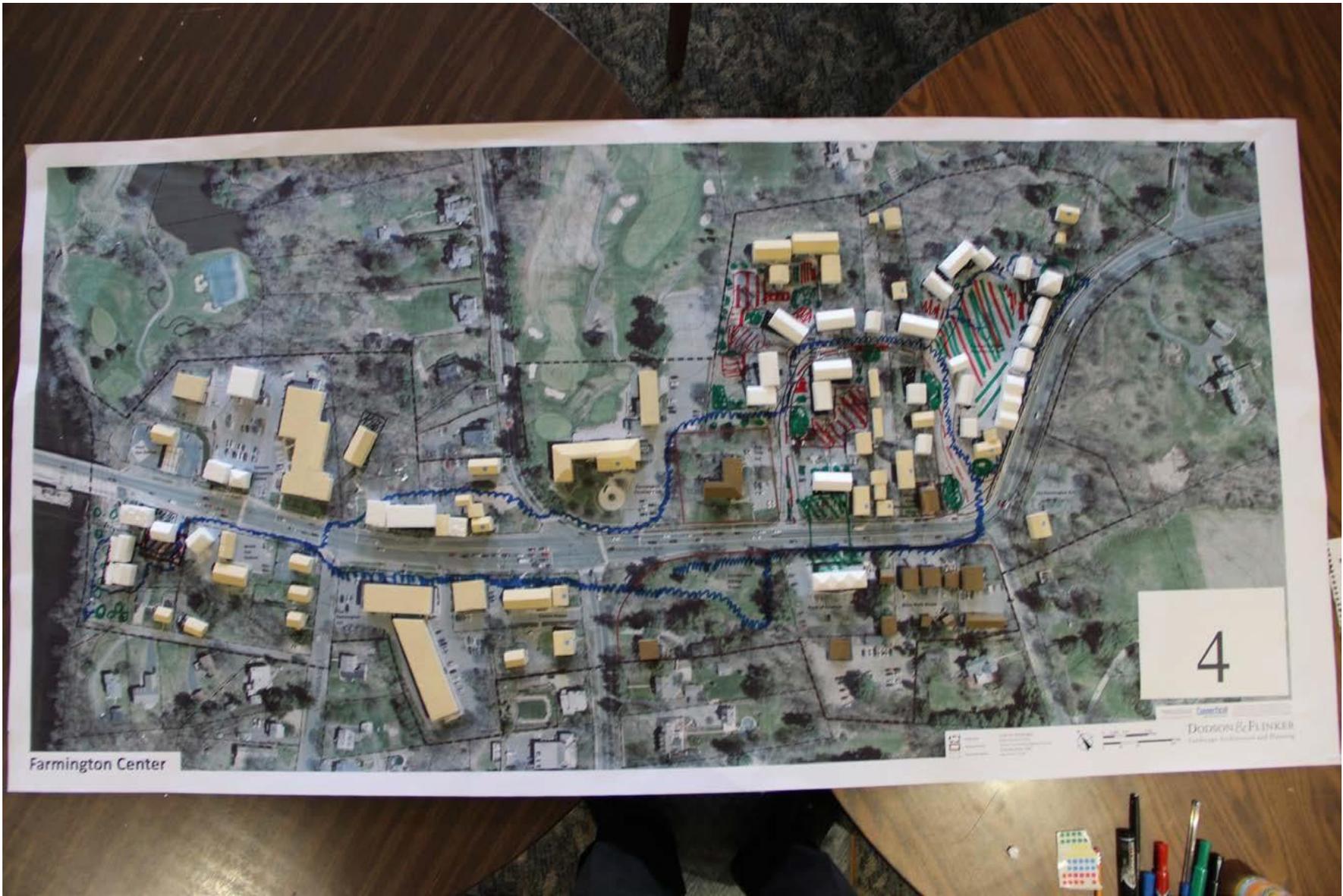
Public Right of Way Considerations, landscape, sidewalks, curbs, crosswalks, lighting

Appendix 3: Workshop Model Images























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