

# Envision Kingston II

*Kingston, New Hampshire  
Community Design Charrette  
June 3rd & 4th, 2016*



# CONTENTS

## Contents

### Introductions & Community Input

- Introduction & Thank You ..... Page 3
- Feedback from the Community..... Page 6

### Recommendations

- Marketing and Communication..... Page 8
- Town Manager/Administrator..... Page 10
- The Plains ..... Page 11
- Depot Road/Main Street..... Page 16
- Sanborn Seminary ..... Page 21
- Bartlett House ..... Page 27
- Zoning..... Page 28

### Summary

- Recommendation Summary..... Page 29

### Appendix

- Appendix: Community Feedback..... Page 32



# Kingston Community Design Charrette Acknowledgements

*Sincere thanks* go to those individuals who donated professional and personal time to make this charrette a success.

Also, many thanks go to the citizens, businesses and Kingston officials and volunteers who shared their time, services, thoughts and knowledge with Plan NH.

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*Plan NH is grateful for the special support of these members:*



## The Kingston Team

*Without the support and participation of all of the following organizations and businesses, and the individuals within them, this charrette would not have been possible:*

### Thank you!

Kingston Board of Selectmen

Sanborn Regional School Board

Sanborn High School

Sanborn Regional Superintendent's Office

Kingston Heritage Commission

Kingston Historic District Commission

Kingston Planning Board

Kingston Museum Committee

Sanborn Seminary Trustees

Kingston Local Businesses

### A special **Thank You** to:

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# **Plan NH Comes to Kingston, NH**

## **Who is Plan NH?**

Plan New Hampshire, The Foundation for Shaping the Built Environment (Plan NH), is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization formed in 1989.

The **Mission** of Plan NH is to foster excellence in the planning, design and development of New Hampshire's built environment. Plan NH has a **Vision** of healthy and vibrant communities in the Granite State.



Plan NH *champions principles and ideas* that balance building projects- this includes anything built in the public realm, such as buildings roads, bridges, memorials, public sculpture, etc- with:

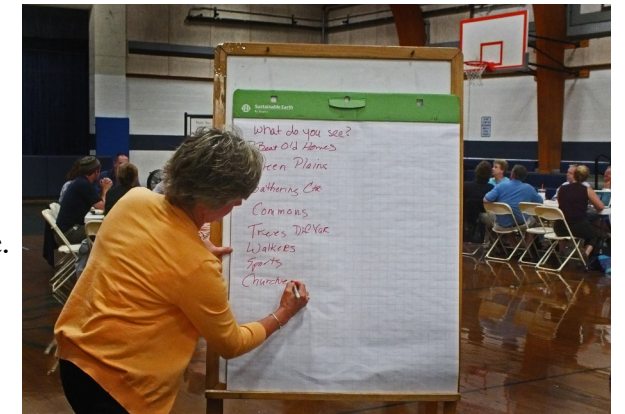
- The needs of people-where they live, how they get around, what services are necessary, what they value
- Maintaining the “sense of place” of our towns, cities and villages that make them unique- including preserving historic assets, open spaces, agriculture and farming
- The protection of our air, water, flora and fauna

Among signature Plan NH programs is the *Design Charrette*, an exercise that brings professionals from Plan NH membership together with communities to explore design ideas, usually around a town center or significant neighborhood. Through recommendations made, Plan NH can demonstrate the role and importance of the principles and ideas noted above in concrete, real examples.



## **What is a Design Charrette?**

Simply stated, a charrette is a brief, intense brainstorming session. The process engages planning and design professionals in direct dialog and conversation with local residents and each other to collect information needed in order to develop good and relevant recommendations about how to address a particular challenge.



### **The Charrette Process:**

- Identify the need or opportunity
- Collect information from community members to understand more deeply and broadly the situation
- Analyze and evaluate what is seen and heard
- Develop recommendations for meeting the need or addressing the challenge

Plan NH sees this part of the process as a period of discovery: discovering who the community is, what is important to the citizens, what they really want. This community input is essential and critical to the value of the outcomes.

The results of the Plan NH Charrette are general and overarching planning and design *recommendations*, rather than specific directions. Plan NH does not dictate, but suggests. Most often, the outcome of a Plan NH charrette is described as a “vision”: an expression of how things *might* be, based on what the team saw, heard and learned.



## ***Why Did Plan NH Come to Kingston?***



**Fall 2015** | Plan NH received an application for a Community Design Charrette from Debra Powers, the chairperson of the Kingston Heritage Commission. The completed application included thoughtful answers to Plan NH's questions about characteristics of the community and the scope of the project that Kingston hoped to pursue. Plan NH's charrette application review committee, not familiar with Kingston, was amazed with the incredible richness of historic sites existing in this quiet village so close to the State's most vibrant cities. The application described the disuse and disrepair of some of its historic buildings and recent efforts to find productive uses within Town buildings that would simultaneously honor heritage, while serving present-day public and economic needs.

Plan NH was also informed of the 2012 warrant article, defeated at Town Meeting, to restore the Sanborn Seminary. The fact that earlier efforts had not resulted in the restoration or repurposing of a precious architectural resource was an important indicator to the committee that focusing on a single building for the charrette would be a difficult, complex task.

Although the committee was initially concerned about the extent to which the charrette application focused on the Sanborn Seminary, several factors emerged during the consideration of the application:

- There is an unusual number of historic properties around the village area of the Kingston Plains. These properties are uniquely valuable, but they are at risk of decay or demolition if this value is not recognized.
- Many individuals in Town are open-minded to different development scenarios that would allow these historic properties to find new life. This is evidenced by discussions that had begun to re-purpose an existing historic building with a nonprofit housing organization, and a recent ordinance change to explicitly allow Bed and Breakfast uses.
- Volunteer energy in Kingston is remarkable and visible. Groups of volunteers dedicate themselves to maintain and expand recreational trails, to safeguard the Town's historical treasures like the former Nichols Memorial Library and to organize and advocate for various historic buildings facing the unfortunate potential of demolition.

With a deeper understanding of the challenges facing Kingston in preserving and reinvigorating its extraordinary resources, and a growing appreciation for the energy already existing in the community, Plan NH formally accepted the charrette application in February and began planning for the two-day event.

# What Kingston Told Plan NH

Two public listening sessions were held during the afternoon and evening of June 3rd.

The purpose of the sessions was for the public to share their ideas with the charrette team about what they see and what they would like to see in the study area. Residents were also asked to let Plan NH know about additional information in the study area and the community that would be helpful while developing recommendations. Comments from both sessions are transcribed below, along with notes taken during the evening session.

*Below are highlights from discussion. For full inventory of comments see the **Appendix**.*

## What Do You See?

- ⇒ Abundance of outdoor opportunities
- ⇒ Lakes, trees, natural resources
- ⇒ Lack of communication in Town
- ⇒ Empty stores/vacancy
- ⇒ Soccer & football fields
- ⇒ Restaurants
- ⇒ Historic buildings & Homes (Bartlett, Daley)
- ⇒ State Park
- ⇒ The Plains, open space & bandstand
- ⇒ Green space
- ⇒ A very quaint community
- ⇒ Lack of community identity & branding
- ⇒ Friendly neighbors, warm & inviting
- ⇒ Potential (nothing but)



***“A historic village, preserving remarkable architecture with a neighborhood feel ”- Resident***

## What Do You Want To See?

- ⇒ Sidewalks/walking paths
- ⇒ Accessibility (handicap)
- ⇒ Transportation options
- ⇒ Concerts on Plains
- ⇒ Connected trails/connectivity to Park & Beach
- ⇒ Activities & places for youth and younger families
- ⇒ Completed Rec Center
- ⇒ Term limits for town officers
- ⇒ Restructured & revised government to meet needs of current population
- ⇒ Town Manager & point person for economic development
- ⇒ Partnership between School & Town
- ⇒ Restructure/Lessen property tax burden
- ⇒ Sanborn grounds beautified
- ⇒ Small, local businesses & coffee shops
- ⇒ Maintained historic buildings
- ⇒ Encouragement- new buildings to look like old
- ⇒ Streetscape improvements
- ⇒ Seating on the Plains
- ⇒ Information kiosks & signage
- ⇒ Affordable housing for young people
- ⇒ Community center & community engagement
- ⇒ Council on aging & Senior Center
- ⇒ Downtown center, small town character

***“Something has to be done with Sanborn”- Resident***

## What Else Does Plan NH Need to Know?

- ⇒ 2 sets of residents (young & old)
- ⇒ Older & elderly residents lack resources
- ⇒ Lack of young people involved in community
- ⇒ Assisted living facility proposed at Main St +Rte. 125
- ⇒ Not much housing for young adults
- ⇒ Cooperation with Newton & other neighboring communities is needed
- ⇒ There is a lack of community communication
- ⇒ Lack of personal & town funds
- ⇒ Town-owned property across from town boat-launch
- ⇒ Tucker-French Trails are a great asset
- ⇒ There is a small bus system, “Safeway”
- ⇒ Events currently held on the Plains





# **What Kingston Told Plan NH**

**Summary|** The Kingston residents and stakeholders clearly expressed their love of this community by continually commenting on its enjoyable quaint, rural character. The Plains and other recreational spaces are enjoyed by the majority although many wish to see more activity on and around the Plains. Over time, Town events and some of the public buildings have moved out of the historic village which has further dissected the sense of community that historically existed in this area. The public felt that isolated decisions were being made without fully understanding the impact to the greater area. A vision for the area is needed so that the Community can make appropriate and informed decisions moving forward that will contribute positively to larger objectives. Citizens feel frustrated with the challenges of living in a historic village, understanding its beauty and financial burden of upkeep. Citizens stressed the need of increased communication between the Town and locals. Overall, citizens in Kingston would like to see a thriving town center that does not alter community heritage and beauty.



## **Kingston VALUES:**

- Open Space
- Historic Buildings
- The Plains
- *Investment* in Values
- Water
- Conservation
- Social Inclusion
- Social Connectivity
- Communication
- Cooperation
- Its “Rural Nature”

## **THEMES**

### **(From Charrette’s Discussion):**

- Transportation/Walkability
- Recreation/ Natural Resources
  - Economics
  - Sense of Community
- Facilities & Historic Buildings
  - Local Government



# Marketing & Communications

**Kingston is a hidden treasure** | Many unique assets within the community are simply not known by neither tourists nor residents. By implementing measures of marketing, the hope is that more people will be excited to visit and live in Kingston.

**Town Center “Key” assets that could be marketed:**

- New England Village Charm
- Historic Buildings
- The Plains
- Kingston State Park
- Trails (e.g., Tucker-French Trails)
- A unique “Sense of Place”

***Business only has two functions— marketing and innovation.***

***- Milan Kundera***

**Many “Key” assets are known by residents, but targeted marketing of the following could meet the *Town identified objective of attracting visitors:***

- Local Parks are available to day trippers
- Weddings could take place at a historic chapel or on the lush Plains
- Out-of-towners could embark on a Heritage or Historic Tour of Kingston’s many historic buildings (e.g, Josiah Bartlett Property, Seminary, etc.)



**Associated needs/opportunities, which may become more viable as more people visited Kingston, could involve:**

- Lodging establishments
- Summer concerts on the Plains
- Community events such as movie night on the Plains
- Farmers’ market on the Plains
- Food trucks on weekends during soccer games (i.e. Pizza on the Plains)
- Recreational equipment rentals (e.g., bicycles, kayaks)
- Cafés and restaurants in historic houses
- Outdoor skating rink in wintertime

All of the above could generate additional economic opportunity *and help achieve an additional objective identified by the Town: to keep/attract younger people.*



# Marketing & Communications

In order to achieve the Town objectives and capitalize on the potential economic opportunities, **Plan NH recommends that Kingston consider hiring a marketing, communications and/or event coordinator.**

A marketing, communications and/or event coordinator could be a staff member or person that :

- is hired on a full-time, part-time or contract basis
- works to attract businesses to the town
- focuses on getting the word out about events in Town
- sparks interest in issues that require public input
- manages a survey that seeks to understand the needs/wants of the citizens

This could help to foster a more inclusive environment for residents who currently feel out of touch with the decision making.

Plan NH recommends the coordinator focus on creating a new webpage, or keeping the Town's webpage current, to include informational links to local parks and historic assets in Town. There could be a page specifically targeting Visitors. For example an event that could be promoted by the coordinator, may be a 'movie night on the Plains' during the summer. The coordinator could also use social media and local newsletters to publicize events and Town news.



The Josiah Bartlett House landmark sign could be enhanced to be more visible with landscaping or an additional (Town) sign.

The **Rural Business Development Grant** is a potential funding source provided by the United States Department of Agriculture that could fund such a marketing, communication and event coordinator position. The grant program has been used for this purpose in Franklin, NH.



Information Kiosk could map Historic Sites and Trails. Kiosk could be designed to fit community character.



**Another recommendation to improve marketing and communication is to consider evaluating the signage and wayfinding in Town.** The following are some improvements to consider:

- Install a welcome sign near Main Streets' intersection with Route 107 to welcome visitors to "Historic Kingston"
- Make Historic Markers more prominent (e.g., landscaping, new signage)
- Coordinate with the State Park to improve signage

For additional signage and wayfinding needs:

- Provide trail, historical landmarks or other maps online (Town website)
- Consider installing a kiosk in the Plains with trail or historical landmark maps
- Establish wayfinding for trails, beaches and boating.

## **Low Cost Marketing Tools:**

- Create Facebook page
- Create a Twitter account
- Share Photos on Instagram
- Use Canva.com to create graphics and marketing icons

## **Town Manager/Town Administrator**

The team recommends that Kingston Select Board consider hiring a *town administrator* or a *town manager* who could provide cohesiveness and coordination amongst the myriad activities, committees, initiatives and more that occur throughout Town. A position such as this is critical particularly in a community like Kingston where there are many volunteer committees that make decisions. The Town staff member should have an understanding of the entire community to ensure that decisions made by individual groups are compatible with community desires, needs and Vision. This could be a part-time (e.g., 20 hours per week) position to start, as determined by the Town. The position would serve as a check and balance to support committees' progress without losing sight of the bigger picture.

This would be a big step for Kingston, and the choice between administrator and manager is not to be taken lightly.

### **In summary:**

- A *town manager* has authority and duties as outlined in RSA 37, such as overseeing town departments, hiring, firing and paying bills.
- A *town administrator* does not have these duties or statutory authority, but assists the Select Board in the management of the town.

There is a process which must be followed if a town manager form of government is desired, including the approval of the townspeople by a vote at Town Meeting.

In either case, the presence of a professional employee dedicated to running the Town's business could pay off by making the town an easier place to do business. A town administrator could work with entrepreneurs interested in opening up businesses to find out what obstacles prevent them from breathing new life into Kingston's commercial areas and its historic core.

A permanent town employee could perform some of the functions that a marketing or economic development specialist would bring to the table, although a town employee may be less likely to have specific experience in business recruiting and marketing. However, a town employee may be able to provide a higher level of service to existing businesses and residents. In either case, having a single point of contact could make the Town significantly easier to work with for residents and businesses alike.

For more information about the difference between these two, go to the NH Municipal Association's website and search their *Town and City* publications for article 248, which appeared in June 2006: *Town Managers vs. Town Administrators: What's the difference?* By Kimberly Hallquist, Esq. ([www.nhmunicipal.org/TownAndCity/article/248](http://www.nhmunicipal.org/TownAndCity/article/248)).



# The Plains

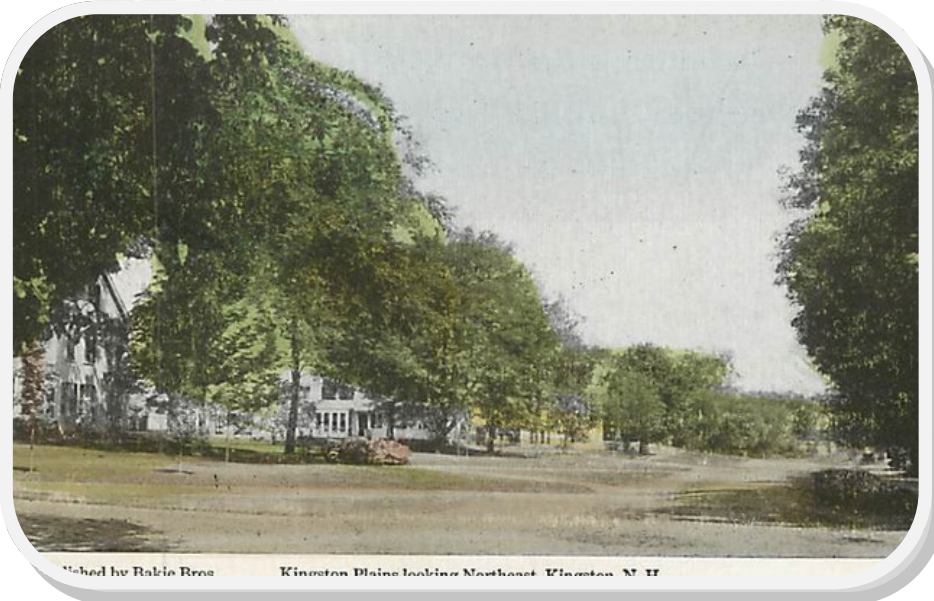
Stakeholders & residents consistently noted that The Kingston Plains (referred to as “The Plains”) are a tremendous asset to this community. Historically, the Plains acted as the central location for Town, holding annual events and community gatherings. Unfortunately, over time, these events moved to different locations in Town. The ‘loss’ of the Town Center could have also been influenced by the relocation of the post office, police station, veteran memorial park and library, all of which were previously at this central location. Furthermore, the construction of NH Route 125 has stifled economic opportunity along the Main Street corridor by diverting outside traffic from reaching the Town Center (and the Plains). A shared *sense of community* has suffered as a result of these many changes.

Apart from Kingston Days and the recreational youth soccer uses, the Plains is a tremendous asset which is incredibly underutilized. In order to spark more public interest in & involvement with the Plains, the area could be improved to include activities that will make it a desired destination.

With Kingston already improving the existing bandstand, an additional asset, **Plan NH suggests creating a means to make the Plains more accessible**, highlighting the great asset that it already is.

To do this, the following is recommended:

- Create a sidewalk that connects from the elementary school to the museum at Depot Road
- Create a sidewalk that extends from the museum to the Town Hall
- Provide a crosswalk at Town Hall to cross over to a multi-use path network within the Plains



Postcard from The Plains circa 1800s, sold on ebay.





# The Plains

The multi-use path within the Plains could be 10' to 12' wide and consist of an ADA compliant stone dust material. The path could be offset from the roadway to provide users with a level of safety and the alignment could be such that it would take advantage of the many existing trees within the Plains.

This path would not only provide connectivity from the school to the Plains, but it would provide a connection to the State Park located at the south of the Plains. The path could be a destination for those in Town looking to take a walk or take a comfortable bike ride with children. This style of 'sidewalk' would enhance connectivity but not compromise the rural attributes of the Plains and Town center.



**The wide roadside could allow for an easy accommodation of a sidewalk.**



**The Team recommends recreating a sidewalk that connects the school to Town Hall and the Plains.**



**Worn path suggests regular use of plains for walking. This indicates that a path through the plains would be used by many.**



**Installing a porous multi-use path in the current swale location could allow for water to flow to the path and infiltrate into the ground.**

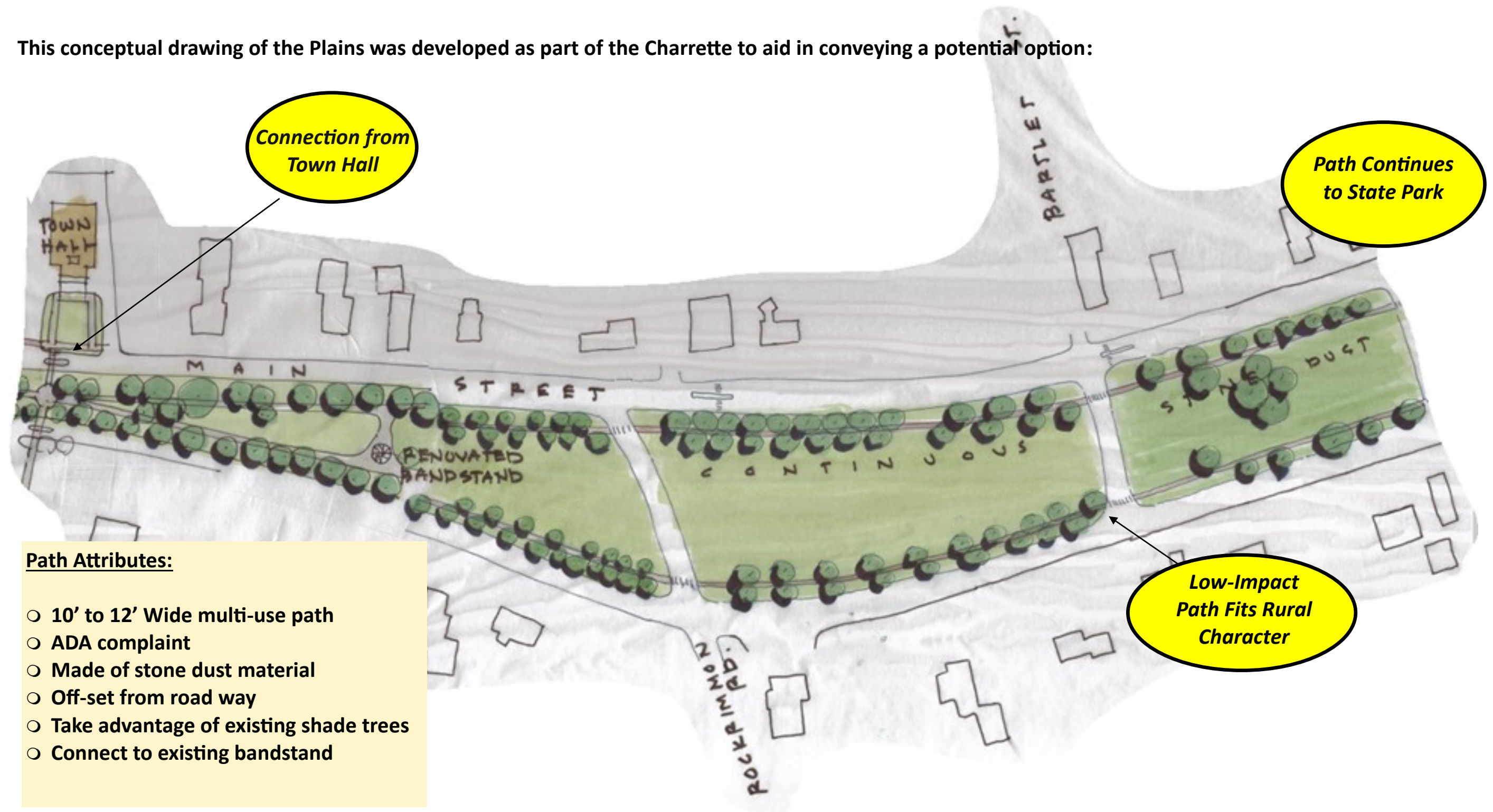
Some citizens noted that the recommended sidewalk along the east side of Main Street be extended from the elementary school to Route 107. Given the few number of homes in this stretch and the fact that there is no traffic signal equipment/crosswalks in place to facilitate a pedestrian crossing of Route 107, sidewalk within these limits seems less critical at this time.

However, should the parcel at the corner of Main Street and Route 107 (to the south of the signalized intersection) be developed, a sidewalk connection from that parcel to the Plains is highly recommended to provide connectivity and encourage walking as a healthy transportation option.



# The Plains

This conceptual drawing of the Plains was developed as part of the Charrette to aid in conveying a potential option:





## *The Plains*

The community expressed the need to provide amenities that would attract and retain young families to and in Town.

Concerns voiced by the residents included the following needs:

- Public restroom facilities
- Play areas for children and families
- Parking for the State Park

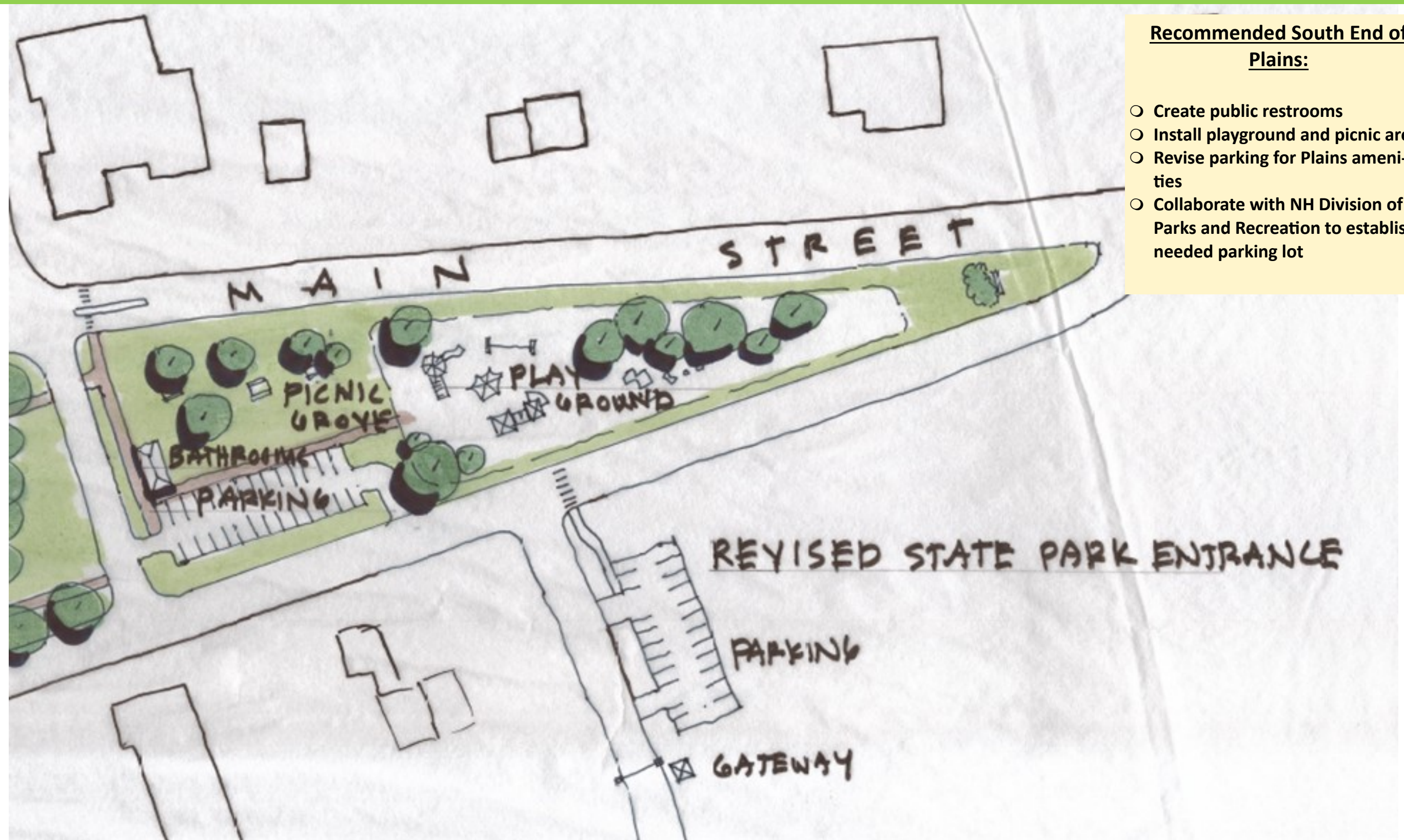
One recommendation to meet these expressed community needs is to **provide restrooms at the south end of the Plains which could be adjacent to a new parking lot, picnic area and playground.** This would be an attractive community asset that would cater to individuals using the path in addition to families and children using the playground.

Also suggested at the southern end of the Plains, **would be a parking lot for the State Park which could be located outside of the park gate.** Currently many State Park users informally park their vehicles within the Plains and cross the street into the park. Coordination with the NH Division of Parks and Recreation would be required for this suggested, new parking lot. A low cost gravel area may be sufficient to serve this need, to accommodate and serve the State facility and others using the Plains.





# The Plains



## Recommended South End of Plains:

- Create public restrooms
- Install playground and picnic area
- Revise parking for Plains amenities
- Collaborate with NH Division of Parks and Recreation to establish needed parking lot



# Depot Road & Main Street

Although vehicular volumes along Main Street did not appear to be excessive, it is recommended to provide **traffic calming** at key intersections along the roadway. In order to be effective, traffic calming is typically provided at multiple locations along a roadway to remind drivers to slow their travel speeds.

**Pedestrian refuge islands** are an option that would accomplish this at crosswalk locations. Pedestrian refuge islands would be recommended at:

- The Main Street crosswalks located at the elementary school
- Depot Road
- Town Hall
- Cemetery Lane
- Bartlett Street
- Scotland Road



Example of pedestrian island from [saferoutesinfo.org](http://saferoutesinfo.org). According to this source, the cost of adding a refuge island vary depending on size and type, \$20,000-\$40,000.



Example from Laconia Charrette where *curb extensions* were suggested to buffer pedestrians at a high traffic intersection. Curb extension is an example of *traffic calming*. Since this treatment reduces the pavement surface available for vehicles, it forces vehicles to slow during turning movements and reduces the distance across which a pedestrian is exposed to vehicular traffic.

## What is “Traffic Calming?”

Traffic Calming is defined by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) as the combination of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use, alter driver behavior and improve conditions for non-motorized streets users. These are intended to be self-enforcing measures that lead to more effective compliance as opposed to changing a speed limit which is more dependent on police enforcement. Traffic calming creates a safer environment for pedestrians and bicyclists which is a desired element to any Village Center.

## Examples of Traffic Calming Techniques:

- Curb Extensions
- Pedestrian Refuge Islands/Raised Medians
- Road Diets
- Painted Edge Lines
- On-Street Parking
- Roundabouts
- Raised Crosswalks
- Speed Cushion/Humps
- Narrowed Travel Lanes
- Striped Bicycle Lanes



## **Depot Road & Main Street**

Another concept discussed for the Plains involved the reconfiguration of the intersection of Depot Road at Main Street.

The **reconfiguration** abandons a segment of Church Street and accommodates overflow parking for the Church while gaining more green space.

The realignment allows for a more traditional intersection alignment and corrects the existing skew. The realignment of Depot Road also will bring vehicles right to the front door of some of the businesses located within the Town Center.

Another consideration that was discussed with Town staff involved the reconfiguration of Main Street to be one-way thereby allowing for the construction of a **landscaped, buffered shared use path**.

This path could be created within the existing footprint of the Main Street pavement without the need for widening. The shared use path would basically be aligned around the perimeter of the Plains and create an excellent opportunity for recreation and a safe environment for both pedestrians and bicyclists.





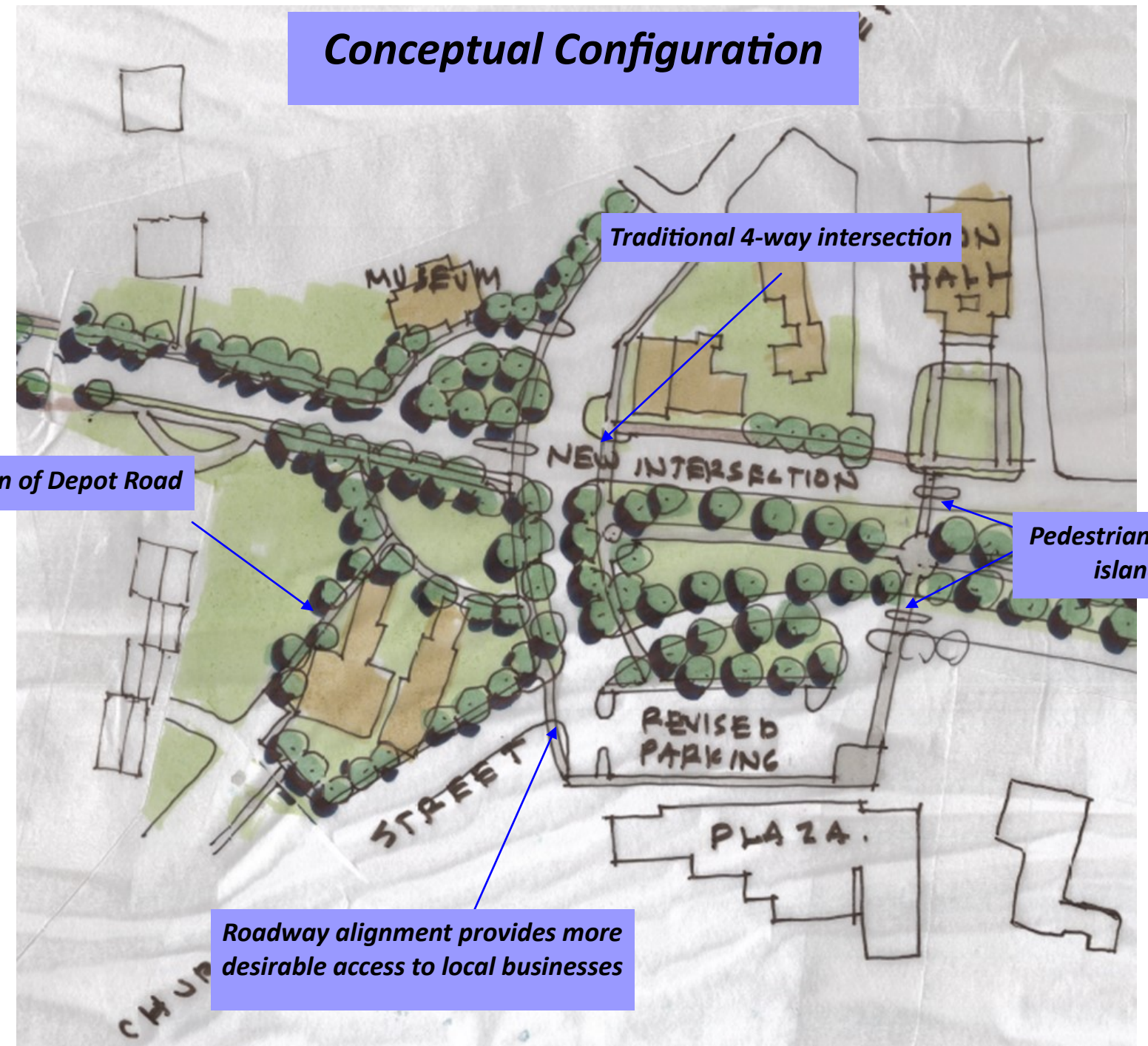
# Depot Road & Main Street

**Current Configuration:**



Abandon a portion of Depot Road

**Conceptual Configuration**



Traditional 4-way intersection

Pedestrian Refuge islands

Roadway alignment provides more desirable access to local businesses



## *Another View, Conceptual Configuration of Depot Road*





# The Plains

**Stormwater Considerations** | Today, stormwater at the Plains appears to flow to a wide drainage swale running along the eastern edge of the greenspace, parallel to Main Street. The swale not only takes up valuable space, its maintenance (mowing in the swale) is a hassle and an obstacle for east-west pedestrian movements. One option to both manage stormwater and provide better pedestrian access to the Plains is to install a **porous multi-use path** (either pavement or stonedust material) in the current swale location. Here, water would flow to the path and infiltrate into the ground. A sand and gravel bed underneath the path would filter storm water. Also, an underdrain would carry any excess off to a larger basin. A stormwater basin could be constructed to be an attractive feature that could potentially improve stormwater quality. Kingston residents addressed the importance of protecting water resources, especially in the local aquifer.



A porous multi-use path in current swale location could both protect precious water resources and provide a walkway for Kingston residents.



## What is “Stormwater?” What are Some Design Considerations?

Stormwater is from precipitation that does not infiltrate into the ground. Stormwater naturally percolates into the ground through natural vegetation, however, in developed areas infiltration can be compromised due to development and impervious surfaces. Often stormwater additionally carries pollutants like oil, fertilizer, pesticide and other runoff.

Here are some examples of design considerations for stormwater management, some of which could double as community engagement projects:

- Stormwater Planters
- Rain Barrels
- Bioretention Chambers
- Pervious Pavement
- Rain Gardens
- Yardscaping

For more information, please visit [des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/stormwater/index..htm](https://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/stormwater/index..htm)



A pervious pavement walkway (left) and bioswale (right) are both methods of controlling stormwater run-off and protecting ground water sources.

Both images are courtesy of Ironwood Design Group.





# **Sanborn Seminary**

It is recognized that there are a number of constraints at the site that need to be resolved with the School Board and the Town. However, two options are proposed for the Sanborn Seminary: **Option 1 is public ownership** while **Option 2 is private ownership**. Both options involve **subdividing** the property and leaving Swasey gym and Chase fields under the ownership of the School District.

## **Funding Suggestions for Option 1 could include:**

- Funds through the **Land and Community Heritage Program (LCHIP)** for land acquisition and rehabilitation
- Funds from the **Conservation license plate (Moose Plate)** for property rehabilitation
- Funds through **Certified Local Government (CLG) grants**

Realistically, however, it is likely that the bulk of funding will have to come from **private fundraising**.



## **Funding for Option 2 could include:**

- **Preservation Tax Incentives**
- **New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority funding** if affordable housing is pursued
- The **79E tax abatement**, should this enabling legislation be adopted by the town of Kingston



## **Sanborn Seminary: Option 1**



**Option 1 |** Option 1 entails the Town purchasing the building and the immediately surrounding land. The building could be converted into community space which is desired by some Kingston residents, as noted in the listening sessions. The front lawn area adjacent to Main Street could be retained in order to keep the setting intact. Parking and accessibility could be located toward the rear of the building. The Town could partner with a nonprofit agency to run community activities.

As the Plan NH team sees a vision for a multi-generational facility, new construction is suggested in the vicinity of the existing, modern classrooms. This option could involve demolition and new construction. The variety of cultural and multi-generational uses could complement the playing fields and recreational activities that could be focused here.

Option 1 has the advantage of providing a central community gathering space in a historically significant building that is meaningful to many Kingston and Newton residents. The reality that old buildings (even those as well kept as the Seminary) are expensive to operate and rehabilitate works against this option. This is the obvious reason that the Seminary has not been used recently; given the resounding defeat of the warrant article proposed in 2012 that would have adapted the seminary into school administrative offices (the article needed 60% to pass and received 33% of the votes). The long odds facing this scenario must be acknowledged.



A difficult, but perhaps more likely, scenario could be a ***nonprofit or cooperative venture leasing the school to convert it into a center for the arts*** such as the Emerson Umbrella in Concord, MA or the Concord Community Arts Center in Concord, NH. This path would require an extremely dedicated core group of volunteers committed to raising funds for the renovation and continued operation of such a facility.



# Sanborn Option: 1





## **Sanborn Seminary: Option 2**

**Option 2** | Option 2 involves the sale of the building and immediate land surrounding it to a private developer. A **Preservation Easement** is recommended to be placed on the building and setting (particularly the frontage) in order to retain its historic character. The land could be subdivided into a number of lots, particularly toward the rear of the building. A variety of options could be explored by the Developer including housing, arts space and commercial development.

As with Option 1, the site could be best utilized if the modern classrooms to the northwest of the old Seminary building were demolished and replaced with new construction.

Examples of historic school buildings that have been the subject of successful adaptive reuse developments by private developers include:

- Lebanon Middle School lofts in Lebanon, NH (<http://studionexusarch.com/mfr1lm.html>)
- Lafayette School in Portsmouth, NH (<http://www.porthousing.org/en/housing/senior-properties.html>)
- Ashland School, Ashland, NH
- Walker School in Concord, NH

The adaptive reuse of the Sacred Heart Church in Concord, NH also provides an instructive example of private redevelopment of a precious but challenging building.

(Right) The Lebanon middle school project involved renovating an early 20th century junior high school into urban apartments as well as community and fitness centers for special needs adults. Please see the link above for more details about this project.





## **Sanborn Seminary**

**Option 2** has the obvious disadvantage of making the building inaccessible, in all likelihood, to members of the public. However, it must be noted that the Seminary in its current state is closed to the public and, without a miracle, may remain so for the foreseeable future.

Moreover, the current arrangement consumes public resources without providing significant value to the taxpayers who finance the continued upkeep of the building. This is not a sustainable situation. If a public financing option is not realistically foreseeable in the next several years, sale of the building to a private developer who is committed to its preservation may be the Town's best hope, regardless of the use that the developer may have in mind.

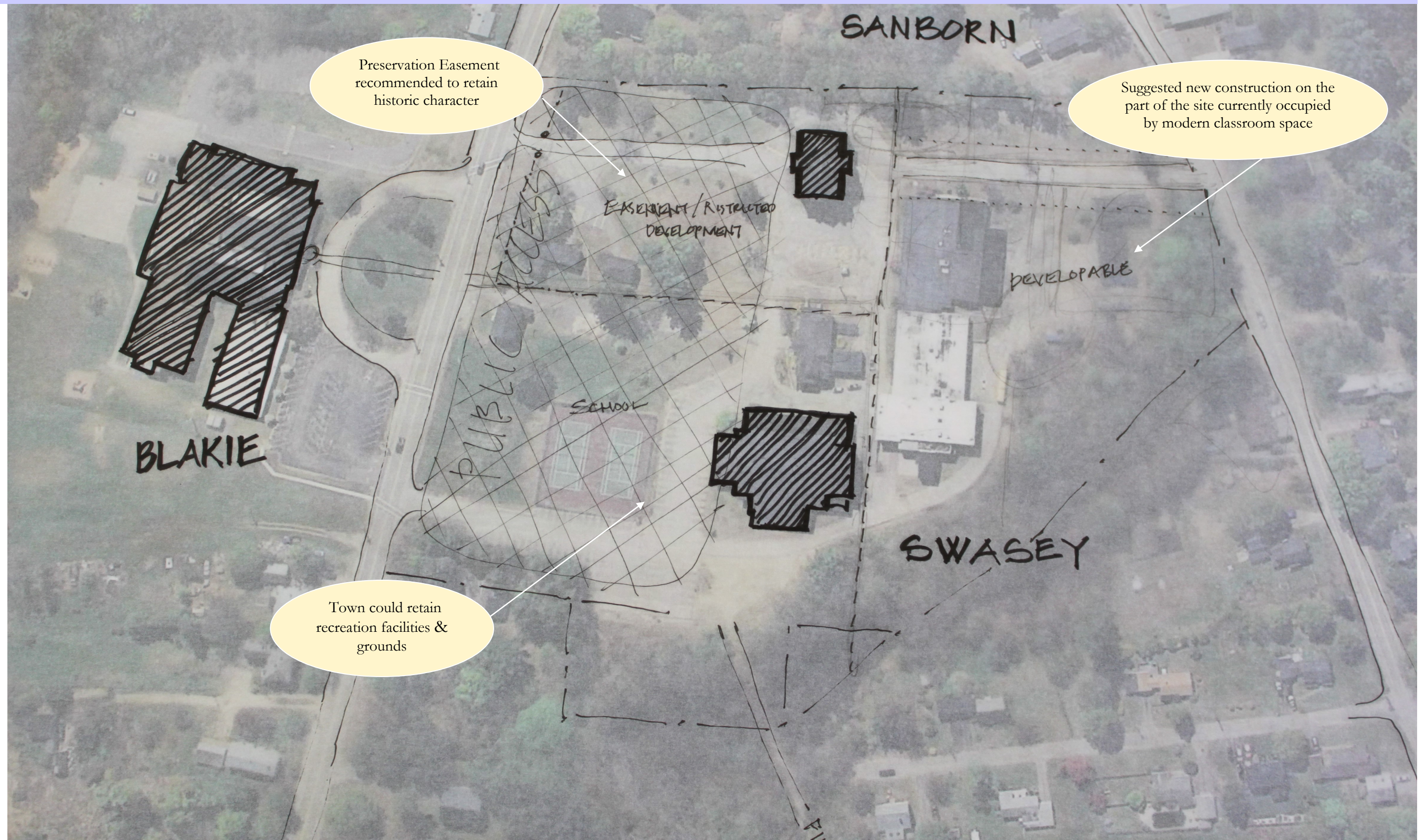
Indeed, some community-minded advocates for public ownership of the Seminary may feel that certain uses — such as luxury condominiums or senior housing— are the least appealing. However, such individuals may find that these options could contribute to the civic life of Kingston. Also such development could present local people with housing options for which they might have otherwise needed to move to Exeter.

It was discussed in the listening sessions and the final presentation that the current school board ownership of the Seminary may present a significant obstacle to the privately funded redevelopment of the property. Therefore, it would be prudent for the towns of Kingston and Newton to **explore options for transferring ownership of the Seminary and immediate grounds to the Town of Kingston so that transfer to a private entity could be streamlined.** The best application of volunteer time, for those who want to save the Seminary, might be to work on making it easier for a private entity to buy the property and obtain site plan approval.





## Sanborn Option: 2





# *The Bartlett House*

**Historic Homes |** While the Sanborn Seminary was the focal point of the charrette application, the village of Kingston has a number of historical assets around its elongated commons that make the Town unique. Foremost among these is the Josiah Bartlett House, a 1774 homestead built by the statesman and physician who signed the Declaration of Independence and served as governor of New Hampshire.

This house and the adjoining property, incredibly, were for listed for sale at the time of the charrette and as this report is written the property has yet to find a buyer. This house has tremendous value not only because of its connection with a key individual in the history of the state and the country, but also because it is well preserved (this is the first time it has ever been listed for sale) and serves as a tangible connection to the lives that our ancestors lived. As such, it provides a link to our history both big and small: the momentous events and the mundane details of life in the past.

Some attendees expressed their hopes that the state or federal government would buy the Josiah Bartlett house and turn it into a house museum and historical park. However, funds for this type of expansion have simply not been made available for the state parks in recent years. Given the uncertain future of this property, **the team recommends that citizens of Kingston consider other development scenarios** that would preserve essential parts of the house and grounds while providing a benefit for the community without depending on infusions of operating funds from any public body.



Image of the Josiah Bartlett House from waymarking.com.



Most historic houses that have been turned into successful businesses while preserving some elements of the original house have been Bed and Breakfasts or restaurants. Examples recalled by the charrette team include:

- Stone Soup, a restaurant in Strafford, VT
- The Wayside Inn, an inn operated by a nonprofit in the Massachusetts house made famous by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
- The Colby Hill Inn in Henniker, NH

Given Kingston's proximity to dense population centers and wealthy suburbs, the success of such a venture in Kingston seems probable.



**The charrette team recommends that the those who are interested in identifying a feasible path forward for the Josiah Bartlett house consider seriously whether a commercial venture like those described would be an acceptable outcome.** If the answer is yes, the zoning ordinance should be reviewed to ensure that this type of establishment is allowed by right (without having to seek variances or special exceptions from the Zoning Board). If those conditions are in place, it may be wise for the Town's economic development committee to consider low-cost marketing efforts to get the word out that this type of adaptive reuse would be welcomed in Kingston.



# **Recommendations for Zoning**

**Zoning Could Be Key** | It is critical that the Town's zoning support the Town Center vision. Some members of the public commented, saying the current zoning should be relaxed in order to attract developers.



## **Other suggestions to help revise Kingston's Zoning:**

- Compile photographs of acceptable historic commercial buildings in Kingston and other communities to use as examples for potential businesses.
- Encourage conceptual discussions with Planning Board and HDC to discuss projects prior to submission of full site plans.

## **The following are some potential revisions to consider for the Historic District in the Kingston Zoning:**

- Revise regulations for Bed and Breakfast establishments to allow more guest rooms if certain criteria are met and allow such establishments to be primary uses (not subordinate to primary residential use)
- Specify multifamily dwellings as permitted uses with restrictions on density
- Allow accessory dwelling units
- Reference Historic District Commission guidelines in the Historic District regulations
- Restrict size of other non-residential uses (currently, only size of retail stores is restricted)
- Allow senior housing if certain criteria are met
- Note that mixed residential-commercial uses are allowed in same building

These revisions might encourage more economic development while retaining the essential historic character in the District which was identified as a priority by the public. **It is also recommended that the Town consider reaching out to the Rockingham Planning Commission for assistance in zoning** given the goals of the Town Center identified through this charrette process.



# **Summary of Recommendations**

Marketing & Communications | **Need: Attract Visitors, Keep and Attract Young People.**

**Recommendations:**

- Market Key Assets (Historic Buildings New England Village Charm, Kingston State Park, Local Trails)
- Evaluate the signage and wayfinding in Town (install welcome sign & informational kiosks with trails & recreational spots)
- Consider hiring a marketing, communications and/or event coordinator who could maintain a website, survey the community for needs/wants, focus on drawing people to events

Town Management | **Need: Increase Community Communication.**

**Recommendation:**

- **Consider hiring a *Town Administrator* or a *Town Manager*,** who could provide cohesiveness and coordination throughout Town

The Plains Area | **Need: Increase Safety for Pedestrians' Access to Passive Recreation on the Plains.**

**Recommendations:**

- Create sidewalks to connect the elementary school to the museum at Depot Road & to extend from the museum to the Town Hall
- Provide a crosswalk at Town Hall to cross over to a multi-use path network within the Plains
- Provide restrooms at the south end of the Plains which could be adjacent to a new parking lot, picnic area and playground
- Work with NH Division of Parks & Recreation parking lot for the State Park which could be located outside of the park gate

Depot Road & Main Street | **Need: Increase Safety of Pedestrians and Access to Local Points of Interest.**

**Recommendations:**

- Install Pedestrian refuge islands or other traffic calming measures on main intersections
- Explore the reconfiguration of Depot Road, Church Street and Main Street

Sanborn Seminary | **Need: Find a Use that Fits Community Interest.**

**Recommendations: Gain community consensus to determine if public or private ownership is desired. For either option subdividing the property is suggested.**

- Option 1 (public ownership), collaborate with a nonprofit or cooperative to lease the Seminary building to turn into a center for the arts. Possible Funding sources include: LCHIP funding, Moose Plate Conservation grants, Certified Local Government Grants and private fundraising
- Option 2, (private ownership), explore transferring ownership of Seminary building and immediately surrounding property to the Town so that transfer to a private entity could be streamlined. Sell building and immediately surrounding land to a private developer. Consider a **preservation easement** of Seminary building and front setting to retain historic character. Possible funding sources include: Preservation Tax incentives, New Hampshire Housing and Finance Authority Funding and 79E tax abatement, should Kingston adopt 79E legislation

Josiah Bartlett House | **Need: Find a Use that Fits Community Interest.**

**Recommendations: Consider development scenarios other than State or Federal designation as a Park or Historic Site.**

- Consider what of the building and grounds that would like to be preserved for public benefit, but run without Town funds
- Review current zoning if a commercial venture is desired, to ensure a commercial entity would not have to seek variances or special exceptions from the Zoning Board to have a business here



# **Summary of Recommendations**

Zoning Recommendations | **Need: Zoning to support the Town's town center vision.**

**Recommendation:**

- Consider revisions like Accessory Dwelling Units or allowing for Bed and Breakfast establishments to have more guest rooms; such revisions could encourage more economic development while retaining the essential historic character in the District which was identified as a priority by the public

## **Helpful Organizations |**

NH Preservation Alliance  
NH Division of Historical Resources  
NH Housing Finance Authority  
Rockingham Planning Commission  
Rockingham Economic Development Corporation  
USDA Rural Development  
Land & Community Heritage and Investment Program



***Thank You Kingston!***



# Appendix: Community Input

## What Do You See?

### Facilities/ Public Places

lack of facilities  
no public restrooms  
vinyl siding  
(the plains) beautiful center piece to town  
band stand  
band stand  
band stand  
bandstand  
beautiful common  
commons  
fairgrounds  
good, open space  
great shared space green  
greens/plains  
Kingston plains a nice asset- very distinctive  
large green common area could be used more  
new garden  
nice band stand being re-done  
open space-common space  
plains  
the plains are used- in a wonderful way  
beautiful HS has left abandoned/torn down  
elementary school  
empty school  
magical school  
seminary  
small high school  
historic library  
library (beautify store library) museum  
lovely old library  
museum & library- questions about use

old library museum  
museum  
historic grace daley house,  
josiah barlett house  
beat old homes  
beautiful historic area needing up keep  
destruction of important buildings  
historic buildings  
historic building being torn down -negative  
historic buildings  
historic homes  
homeowners struggling to maintain homes & yards  
j. bartett  
j.barlett house  
josiah bartlett  
many homes need TLC  
multi period homes  
Nichols  
see buildings not being a good use  
well maintained old homes  
what is historic remains  
civic center  
fire department  
fire dept.  
school & police depot moved out of center of town  
town hall  
town hall  
RTE 125  
entrance to state park and open field to entrance  
state park- make more inviting/ refreshing/facility  
state park underutilized

Kingston plaza-does not fit environment  
less gas stations in center of town  
middle of town got moved- post office/drug store  
no places to stay-no restaurants  
strip mall  
1686 house  
abandoned general store  
abandoned structures  
beautiful homes (historic) empty, deterioration, neglect, of structures  
remarkable architecture  
church on the plains (good architecture)  
church on the plains-run by historical society. (new roofing/handicap access/history building)  
churches  
churches  
churches/town halls  
religious center  
child care center  
no playground, underutilized rec center  
cemetery

### Wayfinding/Connectivity

lack of signage- no realization you are in town

### Sanborn Seminary

love the seminary  
burden on taxpayers (seminary property)  
poor conditions of seminary site- buildings torn down



### Transportation

small bus system (safeway)  
passenger trail line-not in district  
no sidewalk  
traffic-low speed

### Economics

empty stores  
general store empty, deserted town  
lack of business (empty general store)  
lack of vitality  
vacancy  
vacant variety store building  
what was the country store (vacant)  
restaurant  
restaurants  
restaurants  
see low-profile businesses who contribute (neighbors vs. outta towners)  
small business around plains blend in  
businesses struggle to survive  
cohesiveness, local good businesses  
lack of business/commercial  
small commercial  
too many barriers for establishing new businesses  
need economic opportunities  
"picturesque" expensive for property owners  
open space, not commercial (good thing!)  
potential (nothing but) stagnation, road blocks to improvement

### Recreation/Natural Resources

dog walking  
dogs  
great outdoor opportunities  
lake-boat access state park  
natural resources a plus  
recreation  
runners, bikes, skates  
snow mobile in plains are negative-trail network  
trees  
tucker-french property  
walkers  
walking on the plains-pet meet neighbors  
wild places- natural, park, trails  
soccer  
soccer & football games  
soccer & football games  
tennis courts, basketball courts  
chase field  
gym  
sports  
lack of things to do-kids/adults  
young people nothing to do  
art show  
car show  
Kingston days

### Local Government

see conflict between Town & school district  
lack of organized events/movement  
historic buildings surrounding by political debate  
lack of cable community communications  
SAU 17 website is helpful  
town of volunteers, community (as opposed to town management)



# Appendix: Community Input

## Sense of Community

beautiful little town  
beautiful town, quiet clean, wonderful,  
green plains, w/ lovely surrounding homes  
hard to maintain picturesque equality  
hybrid historic  
quaint  
quaintness  
quaint area  
wonderful quaint town  
veterans clubs, churches, very active, give back  
to community  
a lot of change (good & bad)  
historic environment  
3. no reference to history, better incorporate  
into identity  
not Plaistow (crowds)  
quintessential hometown  
rich in history  
town character  
#1 warm inviting but communications must  
improve  
celebration space  
community gathering  
family attributes  
gathering center  
neighborhood  
people talk to you  
polite, friendly neighbors  
sense of community  
sense of community  
warm, inviting  
warm & inviting  
historic Village  
small town/village  
trying to maintain "colonial" village  
village

## What Do You See?

disconnected sense of community-not vested  
everyone in hurry  
have assets-need to brand identity  
lack of emotional connection to the town  
lack of community feeling  
lack of identity, branding  
needs to be not just a bedroom community  
no center for the community  
town has spread out from center  
town struggling with its center  
"Home"  
a refreshing oasis on 125  
access



## What Would You Like to See?

### Sense of Community

community engagement  
community center  
community center- small -scale  
youth center  
ywca, seek regional partnerships  
council on aging  
council on aging  
senior center  
would be nice to have a place for  
older people to hang and go get  
groceries  
bring back community culture,  
make possible with places  
historic character remain  
like a Strawberry Banke setting  
stay small, bucolic, incorporated a  
park  
not Plaistow  
attract families  
collaboration for more short &  
long-term opportunities for fami-  
lies and kids  
more events that will draw people  
to the plains  
ways to make the town more fes-  
tive/inviting/flowers etc  
don't really have a downtown  
downtown center, small town  
character  
like to see more commemoration  
coming together of Newtown &  
Kingston to work together  
community garden in newton &  
Kingston  
county historical society  
not a lot of changes

### Wayfinding/Connectivity

information kiosk  
information, signage,  
kiosks  
trail network; connec-  
tion & signage  
an improved entrance  
into Kingston, leading to  
town  
plains & seminary prop-  
erty connected  
community garden in  
Newton & Kingston

### Housing

homes around common to  
be maintained by owners  
private owners help main-  
tain historic homes, sup-  
port from others  
affordable housing for  
young people  
if not in zoning- able to  
have an apartment  
keep all old houses

### Local Government

a point person to develop, economic development and  
"usher"/guide vision  
see town restructure gov't to allow for a full-time town  
manager  
term limits for officers  
want to see a revised gov't to meet the current needs  
of the populations  
want to see young people in and at gov't elections  
a way for newton to work w/ Kingston to balance the  
tax rate & burden  
lessen property tax burden  
restructure property tax that would help owners up-  
keep historic homes  
better communication  
put more info on the website; community events, is-  
sues/background facts, upcoming items, police/fire,  
candidates for office  
joint-partnership btw school & town  
Put more info on the website- 1. candidates for office,  
candidates district, 2. upcoming items- police/fire 3.  
issues/background facts & community events

## Facilities/ Public Places

open space  
attention to quality construction on public  
projects  
better care for public buildings  
cost benefit analysis of fire safety code as  
it relates to historic buildings  
don't want buildings to further deteriorate  
figure out a way to maintain historic  
buildings  
more maintenance  
no more buildings taken down  
reform building & fire safety codes to  
make historic buildings more useful to  
draw more business into town  
streetscape improvements  
more priority to quality construction and  
timely construction of public projects  
upkeep what we have  
Need to have buildings that are used, not  
just "here"  
improve property between school & li-  
brary  
separate school building campus from  
athletics fields  
someone to care for old High school  
front steps of town hall fixed  
town water, & sewer  
encourage state to keep the JB house  
within the state park  
town-owned, josiah bartlett homestead,  
museum  
encourage new building to look like old/  
historical  
seating on the plains  
church on plains get used  
fairgrounds  
seating on the plains



Appendix: Community Input

What Would You Like to See?

Transportation

paved walking path around plains/ benches  
safe walking paths  
sidewalk of plain, to school, walking path, historic center  
sidewalks  
sidewalks  
sidewalks  
walkable community  
widen-street for pedestrians  
bike path  
bike paths  
bike paths  
make the roads around the plains one way  
one way traffic  
one-way streets around the plains  
transportations options ( this would help with cost for goods, high cost convenience store)  
would like to see safeway bus & town work together, to get seniors through town  
concentrate car storage, walk ways separate  
parking  
accessible access at plains, more landscaping

Recreation/Natural Resources

bring more culture-concerts, plays  
concerts at the bandstand  
concerts on the plains  
entertainment in open area at park entrance  
entertainment in the plains  
summer concerts  
kids activities  
more family activities on town common (like Chester)  
more for kids to do  
other activities on the plains  
place for youth  
ball fields  
completed rec center, symbol of wasted resources  
gym-field complex  
rec center/ymca  
develop open space at park entrance  
make parking at entrance of state park/clean it up  
up keep of state park  
build ice skating rink  
ice skating on plains  
Build an ice rink  
connect walking trails/beach  
connection to state park from plains  
accessibility to water for water oriented-business  
better access to the lake  
expand Kingston days  
capitalize on aquifer

Economics

advertise what we have  
capitalize on assets: green, state park, historic homes  
restoration & investment  
address the brownfield issue, get gov't \$ to fix turn into park  
have the trustee work w/ the school to deal w/ tax people  
Need tax revenue-generating business opportunities that does not undermine character vision of town  
small scale local business  
a commercial area or areas that would not destroy historic character of the town, to increase \$  
attract more businesses  
need a village store or mom & pop places , no chains  
no retail at intersection of 125/111/107 lot  
vibrant business community  
need a developer  
need more jobs  
local artisans, historic theme  
Strawbery Banke concept  
more likely to be needed around the lake, convert cottages to year round  
get Kingston to become destinations, for weddings, activities, lakes  
more events that will draw people to the plains  
need a destination point  
tourist attractions various locations around town  
rent seminary building to small business, will lower taxes

Economics: Types of Business

B&Bs  
B&Bs ( now allowed)  
coffee shop  
coffee shop  
coffee shop/bakery  
farmers market  
farmers market  
street vendors  
local hardware store  
restaurant with function room  
would like to see a closer grocery store

Sanborn Seminary: Reuse Ideas

law office  
therapist  
community center  
community center  
children's camp  
artist studio  
artist studio  
center for the arts  
cultural center/ local art center  
performance center  
charter school  
charter school  
education  
apartments/condos/senior housing  
condo  
business  
crafters  
retail  
coffee shop  
house a museum  
rent space

Sanborn Seminary

something has to happen with Sanborn  
do something with Sanborn-its falling apart  
occupied seminary building, use that doesn't hurt the character of the building or community  
replace current use of seminary-property if lose in redevelopment  
seminary restored & occupied, or demolished  
beautifications of seminary property  
need better maintenance around seminary  
Sanborn seminary used by wholes town- shops, living, business  
seminary like button factory in Portsmouth  
sell the seminary to private developer  
seminary privatized, condos etc, back of tax rolls  
gathering place-farmer's market at seminary prop  
looked at seminary as school administration  
Sanborn valuable real estate, or look at town ownership, not school  
funding for the restoration for the seminary foes w/future use  
town of Kingston take ownership of the building  
separate the school fields/prop from seminary



# Appendix: Community Input

## What Else Do We Need to Know?

### Transportation

there is a small bus system (safeway)

### Recreation/Natural Resources

Rec Department is not very active

Dog sled races on the plains  
events on the plains (ice hockey, cow-  
patty lottery, muskets)

town-owned property across town boat  
launch

Tucker-French trails have been a great  
new asset

Public access to beach behind masonic  
building (leased to town)

Not much for kids to do/young

### Economics

charge for parking to generate \$

revitalize business-several closed

### Housing

not much housing for young adults

assisted living facility proposed at  
Main St + 125

### Facilities/ Public Places

Charter school demise not transparent

Cooperation from Newton a must-  
currently uncertain & some buildings lost  
because of dissimilar interest

Haven't passed school district budget in 7  
years - Lack of Trust & budget support

Kingston tuition students from Freemont  
HS

Newton also has stakes in Sanborn  
some think Fremont should join Kingston  
schools

Conflicting visions/priorities within  
neighboring communities  
Kingston & Newtown don't agree/are not  
on the same page on value of historic  
property

Also within Kingston, people not on same  
page

Grace Daley House is in process of being  
reused, working with agency to occupy

JB House sits on 12 acres of land with  
1300 ft frontage on Lake

lack of ADA

Town-owned property across town boat  
launch

State park is not used year-round

antique/historic properties disappearing

civic organizations spreading around-out

### Sense of Community

Elderly, longterm residents- lack of re-  
sources

people are aging, young people leaving,  
2 sets of residents (Elderly & New)  
lack of young people getting involved

lots of "super" commuters & retirees (super  
commuters- "not involved, don't vote, not  
informed" & retirees it was good enough  
for me"

New residents- no connection/ history  
short-term lull in population growth  
3 Generals in the cemetery

there was a history if visitors coming to  
restaurants in town, but not now (want the  
"come here & eat" here again)

need more community events

need to make it easier for people to volun-  
teer

Public-no show

some people are not invested in Kingston's  
History

large aquifer-could sell water? Need to pro-  
tect

friend of Kingston open spaces exists

Preservation of Historic Nature of Town

The town does not embrace change

no common Vision for Town

No one knows where Kingston is

Historic bonfire

Rockingham City Planning Community-  
Know a lot/Glenn Greenwood -Rep for  
Kingston

welcome wagon- used to welcome new  
entrants

### Local Government

Need less restrictions-planning board  
Need town manager with decision making  
authority, need planner

planning board/town needs to revisit regula-  
tions, some rules are strict

some disagreement in planning board

schools in disagreement

tax rates are among highest in state but there is  
not extra money in budget

taxes too high for fixed income

fire station replacement in the GIP-may be  
moved to state highway building  
many properties (town owned) don't pay for  
themselves

things are happening but they are re-active not  
pro-active

land protection vote issues almost always go  
through

people turn out to vote against warrant articles,  
because town center is filled with derelict town  
owned buildings

vote according to personal resources (\$)

voter turnout, fairly low

Need better cable broadcasting of meetings

Have elected officials, need to communicate  
with residents- need to survey all residents

lack of communication

lack of communication to residents- elections/  
meetings/decisions/cable news/ website/  
facebook/blog, etc

local newspaper to have better information  
need better communication, Comcast broadcast  
and other social media, need more public  
awareness

Serious communication problem/gap

town website could be improved, email alerts/  
meeting notifications

website could have better/more information

No demo (demolish) review ordinance

8No vision in Master Plan- Not followed

Put \$ to the ideas

lack of willingness to invest (spend \$)

town does not like to spend \$

Lack of Funding- both town/personal

unfunded mandates from State/Feds

### Sanborn Seminary

\$ to bring up to code/seminary

need to figure out disposition & division of  
any potential sale proceeds

Charter school wanted to stay-but code issues

head master house demolished without pub-  
lic input

Verizon interested in a tower on top of Semi-  
nary

Important to Know the town voted against a  
\$3Million bond to renovate seminary 3 years  
ago