

Downtown Reconfiguration and Redevelopment

Through public input and engagement, including property owners and businesses downtown, a task force could create a vision and plan for Johnson’s downtown and core services. In coordination with property owners, town officials, college representatives, residents, and businesses this group could identify and map out flood prone parcels and available land out of the flood zone to relocate services such as the grocery store, library, post office, town offices, waste water plant, businesses and more. This vision could include plans to enable services to remain open during town-wide emergencies. Some identified opportunities include turning some of the existing downtown footprint into floodplain parks with gazebos, riparian buffers, and river access; relocating the post office and grocery store with additional housing and town operations to School Street, North of the Gihon River, or the college property. This group could also explore places for public restrooms, informational signage for visitors and residents, and more.

Facilitator: **Alyssa Johnson**, *Community Visit Program Manager*, VCRD

Resource Team Members:

Name	Organization	Title	Pron.	Email	Tel.
Mindy Blank	Community Resilience Organization		she/her	mindyblank@gmail.com	
Gary Hollaway	State of Vermont	Downtown Program Manager		Gary.Hollaway@vermont.gov	
Melissa Manka	Lamoille County Planning Commission	Regional Planner		Melissa@lcpvt.org	802.851.6347
Bonnie Waninger	Vermont League of Cities and Towns	Federal Funding Assistance Program Specialist	she/her	bwaninger@vlct.org	802-262-1955
Randall Szott	Town of Johnson	Community and Economic Developer Specialist	he/him	ceds@townofjohnson.com	

Current status and overview of the issue today:

- Lamoille River is there!
- State regulations w/ river
- Evaluating future of wastewater treatment plant – potential hardening plans
- Library grant – move historic building to Legion field (undergoing evaluation – hope to move next May)
- Several storefronts *that have* recovered and that *have not* recovered
- Unused Wooler Mill Space (open to input)
- Pomerleau – flood hardening grant
- Municipal building repaired but in floodplain

- New woolen mill restaurant
- Village designation
- Light industrial park
- Arboretum
- LVRT
- Form based code
- Rec Plan
- LCRPC working on Hazard Mitigation Grant

Priority Action Steps

1. Approach SB + Trustees regarding a professional staff planner position (job description needed) and seek town/resident input
2. Funding resources for prof planning support
3. Resiliency case study & resource research
4. Connect with other task force groups

Other Potential Action Ideas:

- Check into resources for keeping current downtown
- Move to school St.
- Food/restaurant – breakfast/lunch customer base
- Hostel for bikers, incubator, coworking ideas @ Woder mill
- Brewpub – beer/meal, not monthly
- Test kitchen rotating space
- Parking lot @ grand union, become a park/dog park
- Branding/social media presence
- Beautification Committee
 - Mini grants, Public art, Flowers
- Downtown-wide sculpture park that was walkable
- Rain garden, grants with conservation commission
- More defined community garden plus veggies
- Youth/community center
 - Music, art, tutoring
- Find out what is happening with grocery store
- Recruit the Gemy
- Rice/cranberry patties
- Comprehensive asset mapping/strategic planning e.g., library moving
- Visibility/engagement w/ SB & trustees
 - Temporary City Planner position/mapping
- Simulating different scenarios
- Promoting flood resilience
 - Individual buildings

- New construction and retrofits
- Town plan map/visual
 - Canals, rain garden, flooding
- Pavilion structure w/ rotating vendors
- Advisory committee for planner
- Rail Trail Committee
 - Campground @ Homes Meadow for overnight camping
 - Purchased & SLR is doing flood modeling
- Talk with Rec Committee Grocery Store/Food group
- Make a list of desired business (hardware, pharmacy)
- Downtown zoning
- Pizza place, Co-op** (Community-oriented smaller deli/grocery)
- Reach out to established brands
- Mapping places for water to be held
 - Looking @ buyout areas, lowering floodplain
- Green energy
 - Sidewalk, hydro etc.

Resources

- Grants for planning, municipal planning grant
- Hardwick example
- Regional Planning Commission
- Agency of Commerce + Community development
- CDBG-DR, EDA, etc.
- Tropical Storm Irene cases studies (VDAT)
- Bob Stevens, architects, engineers
- Business pitches
- Current EDA grant: identifying low risk areas for economic development
- VNRC small grant – for visioning
- LCRPC (via town/village)
- MTAP grant - \$\$\$ for a consultant
- Grassroots organizing!
- To get grants, you need to know what you want to do! Turn it into a project – VLCT coaching
- Human capital/clean-up
- USDA funding – through nonprofit/town
- Leahy Institute @ UVM, pitch a project
- \$ vs. effort mapping

Next Meeting Date, Place and Time: Tuesday, 10/22 @ 6:30pm, Town offices (pending confirmation)