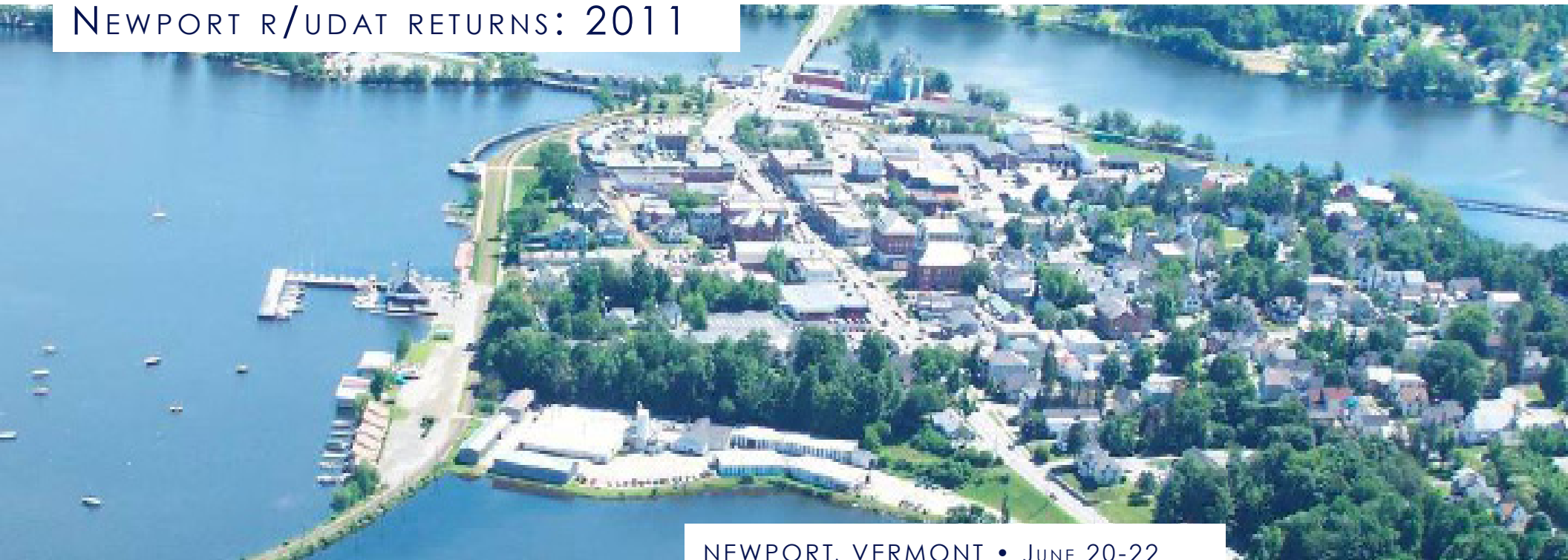


NEWPORT R/UDAT RETURNS: 2011



NEWPORT, VERMONT • JUNE 20-22

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INTRODUCTION

THE DESIGN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

With nearly 300 state and local chapters and over 80,000 members, the American Institute of Architects serves as the voice of the architecture profession and the resource for its members in service to society. The AIA has a 44-year history of public service work. Through the Center for Communities by Design, the AIA has engaged over 500 professionals from more than 30 disciplines, ultimately providing millions of dollars in professional pro bono services to more than 180 communities across the country, and engaging thousands of participants in community-driven planning processes. Its projects have led to some of the most recognizable places in America, such as the Embarcadero in San Francisco, the Pearl District in Portland, and the Santa Fe Railyard. In 2010, the AIA received the 'Organization of the Year' Award from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), recognizing its program impact on communities and contributions to the field.



- **Regional and Urban Design Assistance Teams (R/UDAT):** Created in 1967, the AIA's R/UDAT program pioneered the modern charrette process by combining multi-disciplinary teams in dynamic, multi-day grassroots processes to produce community visions, action plans and recommendations.
- **Sustainable Design Assessment Teams (SDAT):** In 2005, in response to growing interest and concern about local sustainability planning, the AIA launched a companion program to the R/UDAT that allowed the AIA to make a major institutional investment in public service work to assist communities in developing policy frameworks and long term sustainability plans. During the first 6 years of the SDAT program, the Center for Communities by Design has worked with over 50 towns, cities and regions.



The Center's Design Assistance Team programs operate with three guiding principles:

- **Multi-disciplinary Expertise.** Each project is designed as a customized approach to community assistance that incorporates local realities and the unique challenges and assets of each community. As a result, each design assistance team includes a multi-disciplinary focus and a systems approach to assessment and recommendations, incorporating and examining cross-cutting topics and relationships between issues. In order to accomplish this task, the Center forms multi-disciplinary teams that combine a range of disciplines and professions in an integrated assessment and design process.
- **Enhanced Objectivity.** The goal of the design assistance team program is to provide communities with a framework for action. Consequently, each project team is constructed with the goal of bringing an objective perspective to the community that is outside of the normal politics of public discussion. Team members are deliberately selected from geographic regions outside of the host community, and national AIA teams are typically representative of a wide range of community settings. Team members all agree to serve pro bono, and do not engage in business development activity in association with their service. They do not serve a particular client. The team's role is to provide an independent analysis and unencumbered technical advice that serves the public interest.
- **Public Participation.** The AIA has a four-decade tradition of designing community-driven processes that incorporate substantial public input through a multi-faceted format that includes public workshops, small group sessions, stakeholder interviews, formal meetings and presentations. This approach allows the national team to build on the substantial local expertise already present and available within the community and leverage the best existing knowledge available in formulating its recommendations.

THE NEWPORT R/UDAT RETURNS

In March 2009, Newport City, Vermont hosted a Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) project. It was the 143rd R/UDAT in the nation, but the first in the state of Vermont. The 5-day charrette involved hundreds of community residents and stakeholders in a dialogue about the key opportunities and issues facing the city. At the conclusion of the event, the R/UDAT Team issued a formal report with their key findings, including a series of recommendations for the community.



In March 2011, the City of Newport contacted AIA to indicate their interest in a follow up visit. The purpose of the follow up visit was two-fold:

- To evaluate progress to date on key priorities identified by the team in 2009;
- To offer additional guidance and recommendations in key areas and help the community refine its strategies based upon current progress, ongoing constraints, and new opportunities.



From June 20-22nd, the R/UDAT Review Team engaged the community in workshops concerning the following topics of focus for the follow up visit:

- Economic Development
- Waterfront Development
- A Vibrant Downtown

The Team also took a tour of the lake, toured Jay Peak Resort, participated in the first Taste of Newport event, and attended the public launch of Newport's new website and promotional videos. On the evening on June 22nd, the Team presented its findings back to the community. This report captures the summary observations and conclusions of the team at the conclusion of their visit.

THE BIG PICTURE

At the conclusion of the 2009 R/UDAT, the Team identified the “Goal of the Whole” for Newport moving forward. As the team stated then, “RUDAT presents a unique opportunity to the city and its residents...we’ve had great turnout, everyone is engaged in the same conversation about Newport’s future at the same time – capitalize on this momentum. Pursue implementation together and you will become a dramatic story for the rest of us.” Two years later, it is evident that Newport has taken that advice to heart. Newport has much work ahead of it, to be sure – but the team is excited to see that the city’s leaders, residents and stakeholders seem to have learned the most important ingredients for success – vision and partnership. As Mayor Monette stated during a public workshop, “One of the most important things that has happened has been the partnership that’s developed between the public and private sector.” Newport realizes what it can do together now, and understands that it can accomplish great things as a community, even in an era of scarce resources. One profound comment from a resident during the R/UDAT workshops captured how the community sentiment has changed: “Historically, the attitude has been that nothing ever happens here. Partnerships have changed that. When you have people working together, things can happen and do happen. And that is the most important thing that has happened here – a change in attitude. All of a sudden, nothing is impossible.”

CIVIC PRIDE AND MOMENTUM

The R/UDAT Team found that Newport has made remarkable progress in its first two years of implementation. Two years ago, much of the public conversation was colored by nostalgia. R/UDAT participants lamented the state of the city, and focused on the issues and constraints facing the community. As the team wrote then, “civic pride is an issue for Newport city residents. While citizens’ sense of attachment to the community is strong, there is a prevailing narrative of decline among many residents...the team heard a repeated chorus which described the city’s glory days in the past tense, and expressed nostalgia for days when the city was more vibrant and dynamic.” As one stakeholder surmised, “I’ve seen Newport come, and I’ve seen it go.” The team concluded that civic pride “may be the city’s most fundamental challenge.”

Two years later, the conversation is wholly different. The team finds this transformation remarkable for such a short period of time. Newport has become a ‘community on a mission’. The local dialogue is focused on what the community is doing, what its aspirations for the future are, where it sees opportunities to accomplish key community goals, and how it is partnering to achieve those goals. As one resident stated during a R/UDAT workshop, “The energy of the people here is what’s going to make these ideas real. This is a powerful community.” The energy has been contagious, and it is palpable even for outsiders to Newport. As one stakeholder from an organization outside the community stated during R/UDAT workshops, “you have momentum – other communities were not as aggressive as you have been, and Newport is head and shoulders above them now.”



THE NEWPORT STORY

Two years ago, Newport's identity was rooted in the past. Today, there is a dynamic and contemporary sense of the community, and it is focused on its collective future. Newport is becoming 'new' again, and is writing a collective narrative that is based on vision and partnership. Newport has become the first community in the state of Vermont to pass a form-based code, and it did so in a participatory manner, involving residents and stakeholders in every step of the process. The community then shared its expertise with other communities in the state and region who were interested in form-based codes through a series of workshops. Newport is attracting attention across the state. As one stakeholder in the R/UDAT meetings commented, "Newport is getting the attention of other communities around the state for their leadership." Newport has developed its own authentic brand and a story that reinforces local identity and is attracting new interest from outside the community. It is launching new websites and promotional videos, communicating its own authenticity to others within and beyond the region. Newport is celebrating its community with exciting events such as its recent Street Fair and Launch of the Community Garden, and the first annual 'Taste of Newport' event that the R/UDAT Team participated in with over 60 people. The city is becoming an attractive destination for people from around the region.

THE COMMUNITY GARDEN EXEMPLIFIES THE 'NEW' CITY

In 2009, the R/UDAT team recommended Newport pursue working on a community garden concept. As the team wrote, "Newport can use the community garden project as a low-cost, low-risk demonstration project that provides a source of community partnership and civic pride, and builds momentum for greater public investment and collaboration on larger issues present in the community." In 2011, the team is impressed not only with the fact that Newport has implemented the concept, but with how the community has worked together to make it happen. Thirty-two community partners have made Newport's garden a reality, generating broad public investment in its outcomes and tremendous civic energy around partnerships. Even the name given to the garden by the community – "Fresh Start Community Farm" – demonstrates its symbolic meaning to the city. As one recent status report observes, "With every plot planted, radishes and lettuce are springing to life, tomato and pepper trans-plants are taking root, and the neighborhood is changing." The Grow a Neighborhood initiative that has sprung out of the garden is generating additional momentum for a series of programs that reinforce the sense of place in Newport. People are noticing this energy – as the team was told by local officials, a group of students will be choosing Newport this summer because of its commitment to urban agriculture. As it was summed up for the team, "We could go to Detroit and do urban gardening, or we can go to Newport."





WORKING TOGETHER FOR A VIBRANT DOWNTOWN

Most importantly, Newport is getting results. Following the most severe recession since the Great Depression, Newport has nine new businesses in the downtown, a remarkable accomplishment. In 2009, the R/UDAT team heard excessive complaints about the condition of the downtown, and the issue of loitering and its impact on public safety concerns. Two years later, the downtown appears lively and vibrant, and those concerns have declined dramatically. As Mayor Monette stated during a RUDAT workshop, "As a city, we took a more proactive role regarding foot traffic and keeping it clean." The city also led some important actions that have supported the downtown, including the establishment of a form-based code and the passage of tax incentives for downtown development. As the Mayor noted, "We knew we couldn't provide additional funding, so we came up with a municipal tax stabilization program." As a result, the city is moving closer to some of its larger goals, such as having a Tasting Center downtown, fueling additional retail activity and making the city an attractive destination. People outside the community are seeing a tangible difference in the downtown. As one stakeholder observed, "Main Street has improved and people enjoy coming here now." The spirit of partnership has been pervasive in downtown Newport. Baan Thai restaurant captures that spirit well. Beyond the group of principle investors who have opened the establishment, the restaurant utilized a community share initiative to raise funds for its first year of operations, drawing on resources all over the city and leveraging public interest in the downtown restaurant scene. Newport's successful designation as an accredited Main Street program gives it additional cache and positions it for resources as well. As one resident observed, "That kind of energy is so attractive."

CIVIC LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

Two years ago, the R/UDAT Team observed that there were few organizations outside of local government that could successfully convene the community and facilitate partnerships and collaboration. Though the Newport City Renaissance Corporation led the R/UDAT effort locally, few other organizations were as invested in the city's turnaround initially. At the time, the team recommended the creation of 'Collaboration Newport' to help facilitate partnerships, seeing a gap in the community's capacity to move from planning to implementation without strong civic leadership. Two years later, Newport City Renaissance Corporation has emerged as a lynchpin in the city's civic infrastructure, bringing diverse partners together to work on a host of issues. As one stakeholder commented, "we are getting so much communication between groups now." Another participant observed that NCRC has made significant organizational strides as well, remarking that "there is a definite connection between Newport's energy and the strength of the organization." However, the team found that the seeds of new initiatives are beginning to nourish a broader civic leadership that will have benefits for all. As one stakeholder concluded, "A lot of things are happening under the surface. It takes time, and you have to have structure in place. People are seeing that now. That gives us momentum. That's what this town has now."

THE FIRST SIGN OF LONG-TERM BENEFITS

In fact, the team found many signs that the City is already beginning to see benefits that will continue to reinforce the momentum that has taken hold around the downtown. During the R/UDAT workshops on the downtown, participants observed that “we are starting to attract young people. Main street is going strong, and the Grow a Neighborhood program is creating additional opportunities.” This sentiment was reinforced by young professionals the team heard from during the process. The story of one local college student is illustrative of what is beginning to happen in Newport:

“I’m a student at Champlain College. I stayed in Burlington last summer, rather than come home. I was taken aback this year when I found out that I could get two internships in my major here in my own town, and I love being here.”

Another young professional concluded that, “The things happening here (downtown) have literally caused me to decide to live downtown.” People outside of Newport can see tangible changes that are impacting their perception of the city. As one participant observed, “I’ve lived in Derby for 10 years. At the time we moved here, the attitude was that you’d rather live in Derby. Now, you have the Grow a Neighborhood program, you have street fairs taking place. It’s night and day. It’s profoundly different. It’s fantastic to see. When you juxtapose other communities’ struggles with Newport’s success, it’s just incredible.” Newport’s momentum is impacting a wide area. One participant noted that, “The energy and what is being generated here is affecting the entire region. We need to build on that and make it regional.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

The R/UDAT would like to offer the following recommendations as Newport moves forward with implementation:

CONTINUE TO EXPAND THE PROCESS

During the last two years, Newport has excelled at leveraging scarce resources effectively through vision, robust partnerships and volunteerism. The team believes that the City can reach an even greater level of involvement and participation by expanding the process to include new stakeholders – particularly youth. In fact, the team sees signs that some of this is already beginning to occur through the Grow a Neighborhood Program and other initiatives. The team believes that an even greater level of involvement, and a broader scope of inclusion, will yield larger returns on the city’s investments by unlocking new ideas and civic energy from across the community and the region. The Community Garden is a great example of a broad partnership that identified a wide array of parties whose interests aligned – the community should continue to apply this model to its larger long-term goals to achieve success. Newport can take its success to the next level with continued focus on this principle.



BUILD COMMUNITY BY SUPPORTING SPACES FOR IT

The built environment has a direct relationship to a community's ability to generate participation and a collaborative culture. Public spaces nourish civic interaction, help build social capital and productive relationships, and create a platform for the maintenance of community ideals. Without a doubt, the most exciting public space that Newport has created in the past two years is its Community Garden – both as it brings together people from across the City to work together, and in how it has been programmed. Many of the new downtown business establishments are contributing to civic culture by serving as important 'Third Places' where people can gather and interact. Cafes, coffee shops, bookstores and bakeries can all serve important civic purposes beyond their business interests. The downtown, Newport's 'living room', already plays an important role in bringing citizens together and projecting the City's image to both residents and visitors. The city streets can become important civic spaces by enhancing the pedestrian realm and supporting alternative purposes beyond solely vehicular use. And Lake Memphromegog, Newport's most iconic public space, can support a range of civic roles by having a stronger relationship with the city and allowing more access to its residents and visitors. People are drawn to strong public spaces, and Newport can build a wealth of public assets by continually supporting their development and improvement.

MEASURE YOUR PROGRESS

The old axiom of progress, "what gets measured gets done," has never been more true. Now that Newport has had some significant initial victories and is making progress toward its vision, the Team recommends that it put in place a measurement system to track community progress toward key goals, measure improvements to key quality of life indicators, and make appropriate adjustments in its strategies as it moves forward. Communities across the country are implementing a range of civic indicator programs and performance management systems to track key indicators. The team recommends that Newport study some existing models, but design a series of indicators "the Newport Way," by engaging the entire community in their design, collection, and analysis. There are a number of resources the community can utilize as it moves forward on an indicators process. The National Neighborhood Indicators Alliance at the Urban Institute provides a host of information, links to community indicator programs, and resources that can assist with implementation. The Jacksonville Community Council, Inc. is the longest serving civic organization leading an indicators process, and provides one effective long-standing model. Finally, the American Planning Association has recently published *Assessing Sustainability: A Guide for Local Governments*. These resources can help inform Newport's efforts, but the process should be designed to reinforce local values and priorities.





Newport has a great 'civic canvass' downtown.



Neighborhood Art Project in Seattle

CONTINUE MODEST EXPERIMENTS

One of the most exciting developments over the past two years has been Newport's increasing comfort level with small civic experiments. A lot of big things are closer to reality because of the 'small steps', the modest investments the community is making. For instance, the Team was pleasantly surprised to see local civic leaders organizing chairbombing and yarnbombing interventions. These small interventions signal that Newport is a creative community that is open to new experiences and

people, and has a strong sense of place and civic purpose. The community has demonstrated that it has the level of organization, commitment, and energy to make exciting things happen with small investments, and the team would like to encourage Newport to pursue even more of these activities moving forward. Efforts to engage in other public space interventions, such as public art in the downtown, street space interventions, and related activities that reinforce the community's identity and signal the City's newfound momentum and energy will continue to feed larger interest in development and long-term investment in Newport.

CONTINUE TO BUILD MOMENTUM

Strong communities are able to continue to build momentum for success and create a virtuous cycle of collaboration, implementation, measurement, and goal setting towards their vision. Since the 2009 R/UDAT, Newport has had a series of successes that continue to build momentum for implementation of its long-term vision. It has become an accredited Main Street Program. It won a host of awards and recognition, including a Green Mountain Award for commercial district revitalization from the state's Commerce and Community Development Agency. Community representatives presented their story at the 2010 National Main Streets Conference, and were a featured mention in the keynote address of the 2011 Main Streets Conference, being highlighted as a national success story. Newport's story was profiled in a supplement to a recent edition of Next American City magazine as well. The team recommends that Newport leaders continue to leverage the work that has been done to obtain recognition and funding for additional steps in its implementation process. The team understands that the community is already working on a series of grant applications related to downtown revitalization, complete streets, and other initiatives. We fully support these grant proposals, and believe they will yield significant benefits for the community. In addition, we recommend that Newport begin to position itself to compete for designation as an All-America City. The All-America City Awards are an annual competition, often called the 'Olympics of the Community Movement', that recognize the most innovative communities in America who are working together to develop creative solutions to key issues they face. It has been over four decades since a Vermont community received the designation. The team believes that Newport has made remarkable progress during the past two years, and is positioning itself to compete for this award. The designation brings with it legitimization of Newport as a special place, increased civic pride and visibility, and the economic benefits that ascribe to winners of the prestigious designation.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



BUILDING A PATHWAY TO PROSPERITY

Since 2009 economic development efforts in Newport have been strategically focused primarily on downtown. As a result, downtown Newport has experienced a resurgence with the adoption of the form based code and the location of new restaurants, creating more vitality in downtown. The community has been very successful in applying and receiving grants for key projects, including studying the feasibility of establishing a commercial kitchen and branding and marketing the Farm Trail. The selection of Newport by Edan Ice Cider for a tasting center will be an asset for downtown and lead to an increase in tourism. Recent adoption of the tax stabilization policies will also help to foster more business development throughout the community. Economic development related accomplishments since 2009 include the following:

- Tax stabilization and other incentives – these are important tools to have when retaining or attracting targeted business.
- RBEG application for commercial kitchen – utilizing locally grown agriculture products will enable small businesses and entrepreneurs to flourish in a shared commercial kitchen.
- Securing the RBEG grant for the Farm Trail – the farm to table experience is a key opportunity that the community is leveraging to their advantage.
- Waterfront Plaza – proposed hotel conference center will drive new tourism dollars to Newport and help capitalize on the natural beauty of the area.
- Tasting Center Feasibility Study – capitalizing on the form based code to allow for manufacturing and distribution of the product, tasting and on site sales within the same space.
- Regional collaboration relating to marketing – working with Jay Peak to cross market Newport and the year-round Jay Peak recreation area.

Following two days of meetings with local leaders, coupled with learning about recent accomplishments and listening to the desires of the community, it is apparent that there remain a number of opportunities for the community to pursue in order to enhance job creation and expand the local tax base.



ONGOING CHALLENGES

The challenges that are typical of a rural community are no different in Newport. These challenges include the lack of employment opportunities, retaining educated residents, and inadequate telecommunications infrastructure for high speed internet. Currently, there isn't a comprehensive economic development strategy in place to serve as a roadmap for the investment of time and financial resources in order to strengthen and diversify the Newport economy. Equally challenging is the limited amount of staff involved in economic development today. A larger economic development agenda will certainly require additional expertise and financial resources for successful implementation.

With the prospect of attracting manufacturing and bio-tech firms, coupled with establishing Newport as the hub of fresh food distribution and the opening of the Waterfront Conference Resort, it is paramount that the highway system connecting Newport to the rest of the state be improved. In all likelihood the anticipated increase in traffic will put further strain on this critical infrastructure. Better signage leading the way to Newport would also be beneficial.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create an economic development position within the Newport City Renaissance Corporation, who will work closely and collaboratively with other staff of the Newport City Renaissance Corporation and focus on the broader economic development agenda.
- Undertake a strategic planning process to adopt a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Follow the Economic Development Administration (EDA) guidelines for the creation of a CEDS. Include projects within the CEDS which could benefit from EDA funding. These projects must show potential job creation and could include infrastructure improvements to a business park or waterfront development and creation of an incubator, to mention a few.
- Continue to take a proactive approach to overcoming the deficiencies in the telecommunications infrastructure. Seek out infrastructure grants and identify service providers to attract. Continue to expand the reach of existing public wireless throughout the downtown to create an amenity that can be accessed for free.
- Begin a dialog with the Vermont Department of Transportation and identify critical highways connecting Newport to key markets which require upgrades and/or maintenance. Work to include those projects on the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for funding.

FOCUS ON OPPORTUNITIES

While there is still work to be done in downtown Newport, economic development initiatives should be broadened and include the allocation of time and resources towards fostering jobs in “basic” industry through recruitment, encouraging entrepreneurship, marketing the brand of Newport, and capitalizing on the creation of an agricultural industry cluster. Based on existing efforts and the pursuit of new opportunities, a series of recommendations have emerged for Newport, which are designed to foster collaboration and job creation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. LEVERAGE YOUR AGRICULTURAL ROOTS

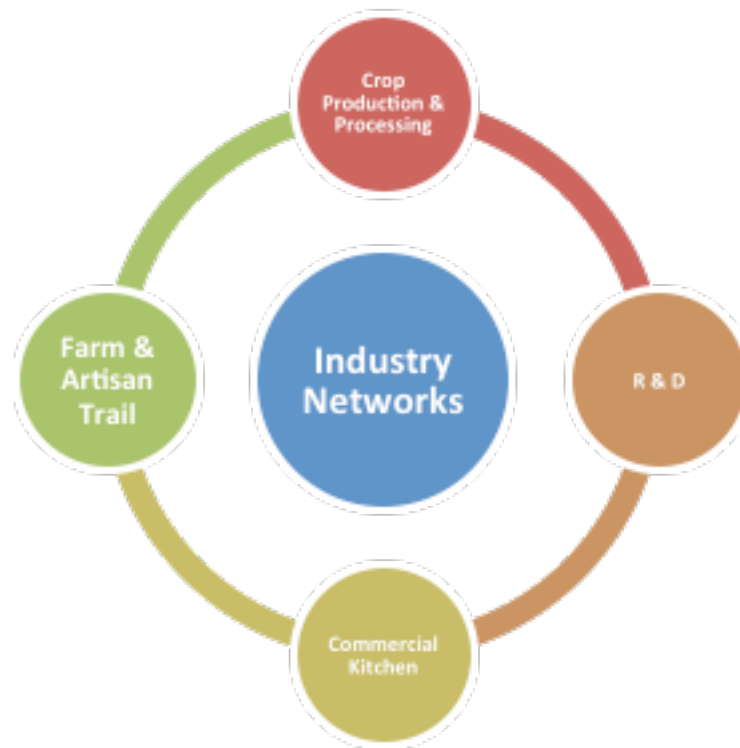
a. Fully develop an Agricultural Industry Cluster – an industry cluster is a network of firms within the region that benefit from business-to-business relationships and share common markets, labor pools, technologies, supplier industries and institutional support services, such as educational institutions or other specialized education and training programs. Newport has the opportunity to leverage their agricultural roots (no pun intended) by coalescing industry leaders and relevant data and guiding policy. The outcome is the generation of prospects for recruitment/expansion or product development.

b. Tap into USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) – Work with local producers and help them tap into agricultural research that enhances the development of new technologies. Accessing this research could help local producers further develop and commercialize a new product, process or service. As an example, by entering into a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) a commercial firm can further develop and commercialize ARS technology with its own technology.

c. Establish a Commercial Kitchen – The 2009 plan recommended exploring the feasibility of establishing a commercial kitchen as an approach to enhance local entrepreneurship. Newport still has the opportunity to leverage value added agriculture by providing the opportunity for entrepreneurs to access a commercial kitchen and rent the ovens, stoves and food processing equipment that will enable them to prepare their food products. These finished products can then be sold at the Newport Farmers Market as well as directly to local restaurants, thereby capitalizing on the “farm to table” experience for diners.

d. Cultivate Agritourism – The RBEG grant to establish the farm trail will further define Newport as the destination for travelers. An inventory of food producers, animal farms, greenhouses/gardens, and farmer markets, combined with things to do, places to stay and where to dine in Newport will foster agri-tourism. These agritourism experiences might include :

- Outdoor recreation (fishing, hunting, wildlife study, horseback riding).
- Educational experiences (cannery tours, cooking classes, or wine tasting).
- Entertainment (harvest festivals or barn dances).
- Hospitality services (farm stays, guided tours or outfitter services).
- On-farm direct sales (u-pick operations or roadside stands).



2. DEVELOP THE FRAMEWORK FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Newport would be wise to develop the framework for facilitating local entrepreneurship. An entrepreneurship program could help bolster many of the strategies to leverage your agricultural roots. Services and programs that are needed by start up and small young businesses include technical assistance with business plan development, networking opportunities, and training sessions on topics such as marketing, merchandising, financial management, and human resources, to name a few. A community that has an established entrepreneurial climate could then graduate to implementing an “economic gardening” program, which has proven to be successful in other markets.

- a. Create a Micro Loan Program – The availability of capital is of paramount importance to any business establishment. Creation of a micro-loan program should be entertained by Newport. Initial capitalization of this fund could come from the sale of City land and perhaps matched with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding.
- b. Provide Incubator Space – Providing work space that budding entrepreneurs can utilize that will allow them to network with other like minded business owners in a collaborative fashion.
- c. Assist Home Based Business – Many communities today are attempting to understand the number and the nature of home based businesses so that they can create the right type of programs and services to help them prosper. By helping them grow, the opportunity exists for them to create jobs and expand into commercial, office or industrial space within the community.

3. BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION (BRE)

A key component to any successful economic development program is the provision of business retention and expansion services. It has been written that anywhere from 40 to 80 percent of new jobs are created by existing business. Understanding your local businesses and their needs is the foundation of a successful program. A business visitation program is the cornerstone of a BRE program, and there is a wealth of literature available discussing how to create a business retention team, what questions to ask local business establishments, what warning signs to look for, what programs should be offered, etc. A BRE program is an adjunct to any entrepreneurship program, given that the types of programs offered are universally needed by both entrepreneurs and existing businesses.

4. CAPITALIZE ON FOREIGN TRADE ZONE STATUS

An application for FTZ status is currently underway for Newport city. Having a FTZ designation can be a catalyst for the attraction of industry which can take advantage of the Zone. The primary benefit for companies locating in a FTZ is the deferral of duty on the product, so long as it is exported outside of the U.S.

- a. Target Industry Identification – Economic development organizations across the country desire to pinpoint the industries that have the highest probability of expanding or locating in their region or community. Time and resources are limited and economic developers and policy makers alike recognize that a strategic approach to targeting these industries will yield greater returns to the community. Questions such as, what are the attributes of the community that businesses desire; what weaknesses need to be remediated to achieve greater success; does our labor force possess the education and skills that are needed by the targets we have identified; and are the industries that we selected poised for growth. These are the questions that should be raised as you begin to identify the industries for recruitment. Completing a targeted industry analysis for the Newport region maybe a worthwhile exercise to undertake.
- b. Create a Business Park at the Newport State Airport – A series of improvements have been proposed for the Newport State Airport, which is an underutilized regional asset. These recommendations range from expanding the runway to converting airport land into an aviation related business park. A business park with FTZ status combined with the amenities of a regional airport will be a valuable asset to Newport for base industry attraction. To facilitate converting the land, Newport leaders should work with the State and the Northeastern Vermont Development Association.



5. ENHANCE THE DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE

a. Improve the Merchandising Mix – As noted in the 2009 report, Newport should pay close attention to the merchandise mix of tenants in downtown in order to reduce trade leakage and attract residents from outside the immediate area as well as tourists. Preparation of a merchandising mix gap analysis may be useful in understanding what offerings should be included or strengthened, such as restaurants and entertainment, fresh and prepared foods, clothing, etc. and what could be supported within the trade area.

b. Incorporate Arts and Entertainment – a vibrant downtown can boast of a variety of art and entertainment options that appeal to both residents and visitors alike. In 2001 Maryland adopted an Arts and Entertainment District as a statewide policy strategy for enhancing economic vitality. This has resulted in an increase in occupancy rates, commercial activity and overall property values in many districts. While the state of Vermont may not have similar policies, Newport might consider something similar for downtown.

c. Cross Market with Jay Peak Resort and Downtown Merchants – capitalize on the thousands of tourists that visit Jay Peak by encouraging visitation to downtown. Providing shuttle service between Jay Peak and Downtown during the peak season(s) will increase the exposure of downtown and augment foot traffic that all tenants could benefit from.

Example

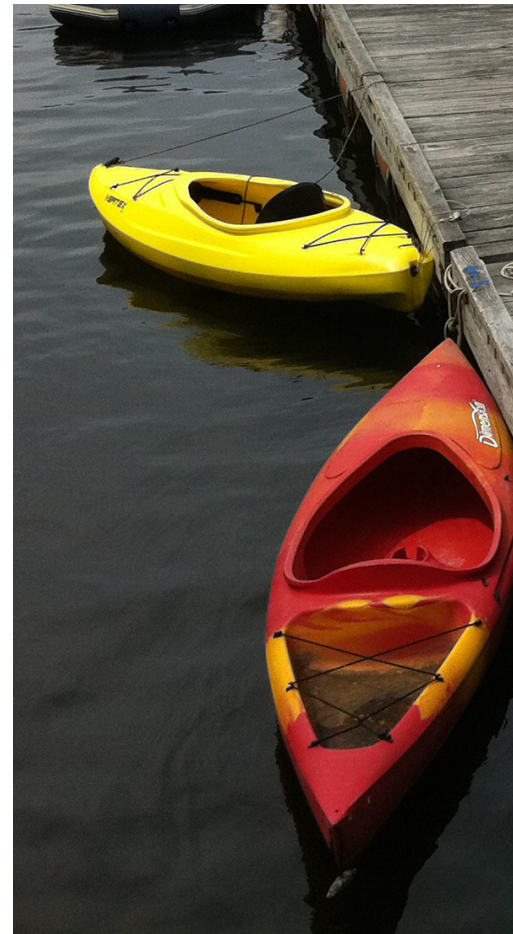
Benefits available to designated entertainment districts within Maryland include:

- Property credits for construction or renovation of buildings that create live-work space for artists and/or space for arts and entertainment enterprises,
- Income tax subtraction modification for artistic work sold by qualifying residing artists, and
- Exemption from the Admissions and Amusement tax.





WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT



RECONNECT

The natural beauty and waterfront location of Newport has been its strength for generations. As with many communities Newport has not been immune to political and economic changes, nor their influences on the local population's livelihood from generation to generation. Over the years this impact has sometimes been positive and yet other times negative. Regardless of the changes, one element that has not changed Newport's character is its physical location and historic relationship with Lake Memphremagog.

NEWPORT'S ACTIONS SINCE 2009 ARE SPEAKING FOR THEMSELVES. YOU ARE WALKING THE TALK!

During the past two years a positive dialogue among residents and community leaders alike has resulted in the rediscovery of Newport's treasure: "The Lake". The community has recognized and realizes the important role the Lake can play in Newport's transformation. During the R/UDAT Team's return visit, team members have observed how the community has successfully initiated and engaged in many of the recommendations presented by the 2009 R/UDAT pertaining to the waterfront.

The team's review summarizes two days of observations and local dialogue from the return visit, and focuses on the following:

- Accomplishments to Date
- Continued efforts to Connect
- Projects in Progress
- Challenges and Opportunities
- Rethinking and Updating Previous Concepts



ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

Newport's has achieved some significant accomplishments. These accomplishments are both large and small involving policy, recreational programming and successful solicitation of state and federal funding.

B.I.G. GRANT [BOATING INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT]

The city successfully obtained funding from US Fish and Wildlife to expand the City Marina to incorporate additional slips for transient dockage. This is a highly visible sign to visitors indicating that Newport is interested and capable of providing first class boating services and dockage serving the international boater.

KAYAK AND CANOE PROGRAM

A rental program has been created and is in place at a variety of locations. Both city parks and downtown waterfront locations now offer an inexpensive way to get on the water for visitors or residents alike. This attraction has multi-generational appeal. It introduces today's youth to a safe and enjoyable form of water recreation and also starts to define ways in which people of all ages can pursue an affordable and healthy life style. It clearly demonstrates that Newport is a waterfront community maximizing public access to the lake.



COMMUNITY YOUTH PROGRAM

A Community Youth Program has been started to educate and develop boating skills for the youth of Newport. A marvelous way to introduce the next generation of sailors to the Lake and help them to enjoy and respect this valuable resource, Lake Memphremagog.

PONTOON BOAT

The city parks and recreation department has developed a pontoon boat service as an inexpensive way for the average citizen to get out on the water. You don't have to be a boat owner to be able to go out and explore the lake. More importantly, you can access the water and view the city from the water with a new perspective and appreciation.

WAYFINDING

Newport has successfully installed a simple signage system helping people understand how to navigate points of interest, recreational opportunities, parking, and simply find a view.

FORM BASED CODE [WATERFRONT SECTION]

The recently developed form based code has a section pertaining to the waterfront. The intent here is to clearly be able to communicate design and planning guidelines and development parameters to potential investors and developers, allowing the community vision to define future development opportunities.

WOOF ON THE WHARF!

The expansion of food and beverage service on the waterfront is another successful step forward. It provides an inclusive way to attract and animate the waterfront. It provides a reason to make the waterfront a destination . . . a reward for being adventurous.



THE ONGOING EFFORT TO CONNECT

Newport has made great strides to develop better local connections and maximize regional connections.

The development of physical connections down to the waterfront should continue to be of a high priority. Their execution should exhibit good design and strive to provide universal access wherever possible. The promotion of regional tourism and bike tours is being supported by the provision of waterfront amenities and services. It is critical that Newport continue implementing this model to build its reputation as a desirable destination - whether from a U.S. or Canadian perspective.



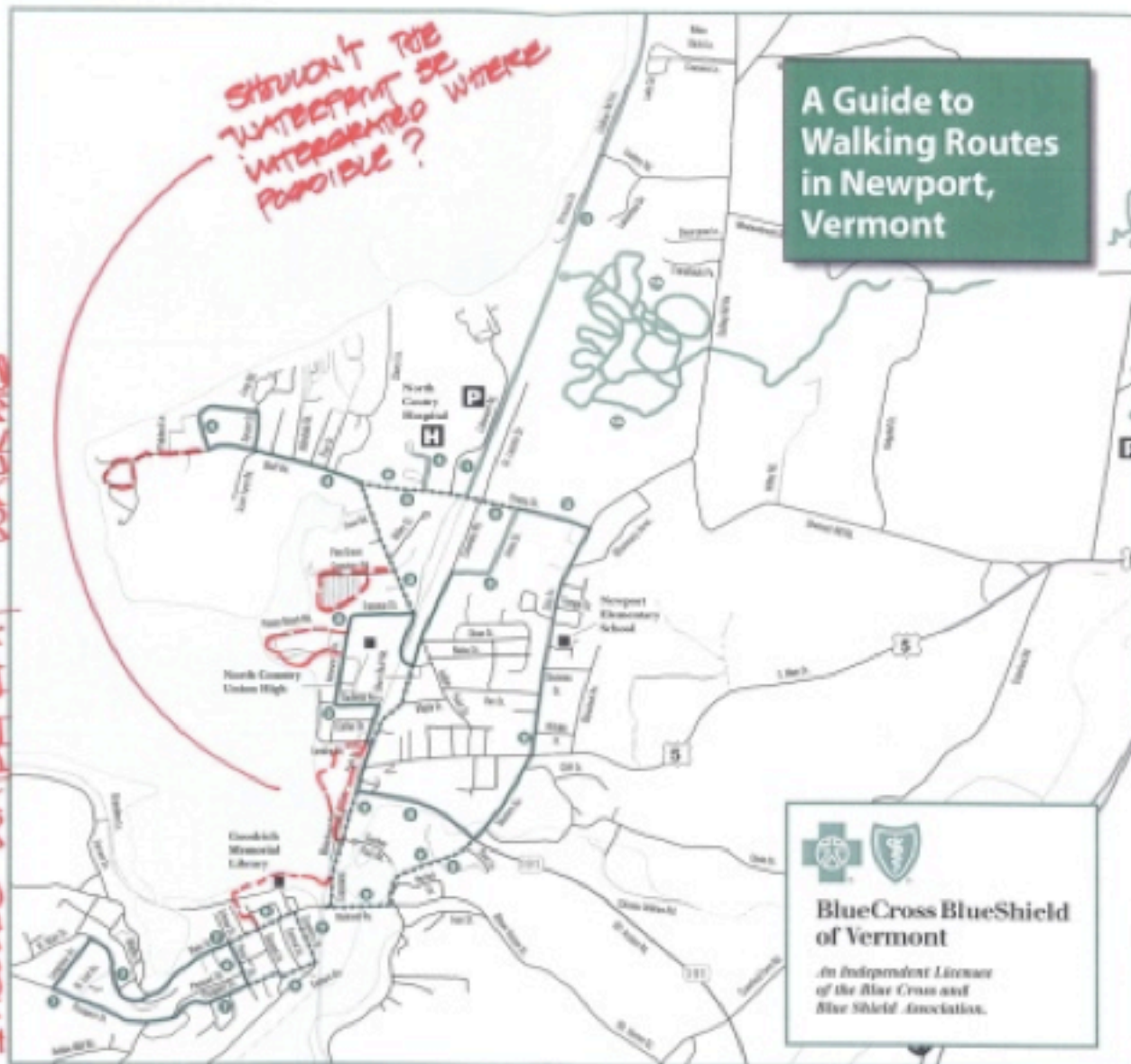
Continue to upgrade local street connections and be sensitive to universal mobility. Visual accessibility to the water is equally important. Wherever possible, capitalize on creating overlooks.

Know your audience. It is important to know what their needs are across a spectrum of possibilities that includes everything from the right kind of food offerings to the balance between light and shade.

It is critical to coordinate and update all trail and pedestrian maps so they incorporate the waterfront destinations and lakefront amenities. Show people how to get there!

* WHEN REPRINTING THIS MAP INCLUDE WATERFRONT WALKING

SHOULDN'T THE WATERFRONT BE HIGHLIGHTED WHERE POSSIBLE?



Newport Walk Index

1. Bike Path

3.8 miles to the Canadian Border
Park at North Country Hospital. One way, you will need to turn around and come back. Sluggish in the springtime.

1A. Primeau Trails

Trail length depends on route
Off the Bike Path. All trails have distance markers. Open to all non-motorized traffic. Please, no bikes during mud season.

2. City Loop

3.5 miles

A good walk with a couple of pleasant hills. A nice trip around the city.

3. North Country High School

2.5 miles

Takes you past the high school and Hospital.

4. Shaded Walk

1 mile

Path at the hospital. A nice quiet walk with low traffic, partly on sidewalks.

5. Gardner Park

1.2 miles including three bridges

A nice tour of Gardner Park.

6. Short-Bar-Sweet

0.7 miles

Depending on which way you go, there is one steep section. Great for those days when you don't have a lot of time.

7. Highland Avenue

2 miles

All sidewalks except for Longview Avenue. Counterclockwise includes some steep climbs.

8. Quarry Trails (insert)

For those that enjoy a bit of a hike!

At the top of Darling Hill you are rewarded with a gorgeous 360 degree view that includes the Lake Memphremagog and Willoughby Gaps. Please be courteous and respectful when using these trails.

A Rewarding Hike:

Derby Line Trail (not shown)

Begins behind the Derby Elementary School, in Nelson's Cornfield. It goes across the WVT (Memphremagog Ski Touring Foundation) bridges, spanning John's River. Then up the hill on Regis DeLo's land. Beautiful view of Derby Line and Storefront.



BlueCross BlueShield of Vermont

An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

VERMONT
Blueprint for Health

Smart choices. Powerful tools.

IN PROGRESS

In addition to celebrating the accomplishments, it is important to point out the many projects that are well on their way. This applies to active planning and the initial preparation for what will ultimately be implemented. Newport is positioning itself for future success by taking these steps.

NEWPORT BELLE

Newport is in the process of overcoming the initial setback it experienced when the Coast Guard did not certify the Newport Belle. This vessel is an important tool for the future waterfront, since it can be utilized to create a water touring experience. The team recommends that officials work to understand the classification and fee structure that the Belle can meet, and explore other ways to redefine the use of the boat which the Coast Guard can approve.



SAILING PROGRAM

Continue to develop the youth sailing program. The team recommends that the City explore expanding the program to include sailing from both the city parks and the Marina. It is also important to consider how the program can have a visible presence in the community and can provide convenient access and walkability for the children from the residential neighborhoods. This level of access will also promote visitation from the parents and attract tourists.



PROUTY BEACH MOVE

The team supports the idea of moving the beach to another location that provides a better orientation. This will enhance exposure and improve water quality.

ANTIQUE BOAT PARADE

The team recommends that Newport continue to create water dependant events. It is important to be consistent in scheduling events from a seasonal and calendar perspective. Consistency helps visitors schedule their annual plans and helps the organizers develop communications and marketing and plan for the needed resources.

BIKE PATH

The team recommends that Newport continue to develop incremental expansion towards both ends of the Downtown Crescent. The goal is to create a logical flow along the waterfront and be able to experience a trail from Farrants' Point to Prouty Beach.



CHALLENGES

If it was easy and there were no challenges it would be done! There are challenges in Newport's collective vision which require patience and the need to identify priorities. It is important that civic leaders maintain a positive outlook and define an approach to complex challenges that break down a problem into achievable projects or phases.

US CUSTOMS

There has been many a discussion regarding the challenges of making the border crossing friendlier and drawing more international tourists. This needs to be a continued goal. However, this should not constrain your creativity regarding the promotion of water based activities within the U.S. portion of the Lake and adjacent shoreline. The border crossing is an impediment, but it should not lead the city to abandon its strategy regarding increased international tourism.

FUNDING

Funding will continue to be a challenge. Programs will come and go, but it is important for Newport to be vigilant and aggressively continue to monitor cycles of available programs. Be flexible in the phasing so that as funding sources are discovered Newport can take advantage of these opportunities. The team recommends that Newport develop a system to monitor all volunteer and in kind services so it is easy to document local match contributions.

COORDINATED COMMUNICATION

Whether it is an event, promoting a program or identifying community assets or resources, Newport should continue to develop clearinghouse strategies and easy to find information sites. The solution should integrate both high tech and low tech strategies to communicate with as broad a collaboration as possible. However, local leaders should keep it simple and consistent to be effective.

ONGOING EDUCATION

Public education about hospitality needs to be an integral part of the community's culture. Educate the community so you can be great ambassadors to your visitors.

EXCURSION BOAT AND DOCK

The Dock has been designed. The next step should be to strategize how to fund it and make building it a priority. The large boats need a reason to come to Newport.

LONG TERM MAINTENANCE

It is never too early to think about long-term maintenance and operations. Create both short- and long-term plans for special and highly visible projects. The community will want its waterfront projects to be well maintained, nurtured and beautiful for future generations. In order to accomplish this project champions need to start thinking long term about endowments and legacy campaigns.

CELEBRATING SUCCESSES

At the end of every successful effort no matter how small it is, there needs to be acknowledgement, a celebration and a thank you. Every project will have a story share it.



OPPORTUNITIES

As the “to -do “lists evolve and you feel comfortable with your accomplishments engage new help and cultivate new champions. This way you will promote constant renewal. An important aspect of renewal the process of refreshing your direction and continuing to allow your vision to grow.

Keep ideas fresh and constantly identify new opportunities. Sometimes it is an idea whose time has come and sometimes it is recasting or refining an initial accomplishment. Refinement and growth brings positive change, natural evolution and stability.

INCREASE EVENT PROGRAMMING

Continue to evolve your programming. Identify your key challenges, what isn’t working, and develop new strategies to overcome them.

STRATEGIC CROSS PROGRAMMING

Always coordinate and look for opportunities that become greater than the sum of any of the parts.

EVENT COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION

Don’t compete with yourselves. Make your efforts maximize their yield through synergy and partnership.

LOW IMPACT BMPs

Every event and investment should set a goal of using Best Management Practices and have low impact on the social and environmental quality of the community.

ESTABLISH FRIENDS GROUP/ENDOWMENT

The Waterfront is one of the most valuable community treasures. Start to investigate organizational structures and identify options which will best serve the long-term stewardship of the lakefront.

CULTIVATE THE WATERFRONT “SENSE OF PLACE”

As you’re promoting and improving the waterfront, every investment and physical enhancement needs to contribute to the placemaking of Newport’s Lakefront.

GREEN THE WATERFRONT

All projects and operation of programs on the waterfront need to strive to make it a “greener,” sustainable lakefront.

INTEGRATE ART

Promote and integrate art in the public realm. Develop a strategy to integrate artists in the design process. Strive to have meaningful integration of the art to avoid “Plop Art” that doesn’t contribute to sense of place.



RETHINKING AND UPDATING PREVIOUS CONCEPTS

The team's two-year visit and evaluation provided an ideal opportunity to rethink what works and where there are opportunities to improve on previous ideas.

An area that has had very little momentum since the R/UDAT is the South Bay, Black river and the Clyde. The team believes Newport should take advantage of its regional water trails and natural areas to start expanding "Newport's Water Experience".

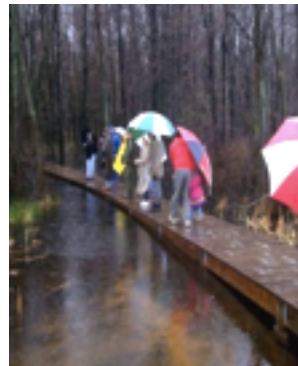
The team has identified some additional thoughts to focus on the following:

- South Bay
- Gardner Park
- Working Waterfront
- Waterfront Plaza
- Downtown Connections [Field Avenue, Custom House plaza]

SOUTH BAY AND THE RIVERS

The South Bay and Rivers needs to be the focus of new discussion to address the potential of providing better access to naturalized areas. Newport can capitalize on providing a unique experience that complements the downtown's urban experience and expands the community's offering to extend visitors' length of stay.

The primary opportunities are water-based outdoor recreation, trail/boardwalk development, bird watching and passive engagement with nature. These are easily phased and incrementally manageable from a funding perspective. They also have significant value from a regional trail linkage.



RETHINKING AND UPDATING PREVIOUS CONCEPTS

Gardner Park is a primary activity center for local and regional recreational sports. It has been referred to as a gateway to downtown and as Newport's "Central Park". A number of things have happened during the past two years. The most significant items include the concern over future flooding and the potential relocation of the historic Barn.

The Team has identified several items for Newport to consider:

1. The Barn relocation needs to be rethought. An important aspect of that is the need for someone to organize a task force to evaluate new options.
2. The idea of outdoor performances and structures to support a range of activities can be resolved through the use of movable seasonal structures.
3. The Park should be designated as part of the downtown boundary to differentiate Gardner Park from neighborhood, school or specialty waterfront recreational areas.



WORKING WATERFRONT

The recent R/UDAT visit opened up conversations regarding the Poulin Mills buildings. There was renewed discussion on the importance of the facility from both a heritage and employment perspective. A strong desire was expressed to celebrate the agricultural heritage and actually enhance the grain silos with graphics that identify the family name and create a graphic expression indicating the use of the building and associated grains.

The second conversation was to express Newport's "Working Waterfront". This acknowledges the Poulin Mills, the railroad and the historic boat docks. It was felt that there should be stronger support to implement the Municipal Tour Boat Dock. This would celebrate the Lakefront's heritage and create an important tourism attraction. The Dock would also clearly communicate to the Canadian tour boats that Newport is open for business.



WATERFRONT PLAZA

There was great enthusiasm and interest in the possibility of moving the Waterfront Plaza Development forward. The desire is a mixed use residential and commercial development with a small Hotel serving the downtown.

As this discussion continues it is important to understand the benefits of form based code and the opportunity to truly integrate public access along the lakefront creating an experience on the lakefront unrivalled in Vermont. Think only of the neighbors to the north and how these communities interact with their urban waterfronts in Magog, Toronto or Montreal.



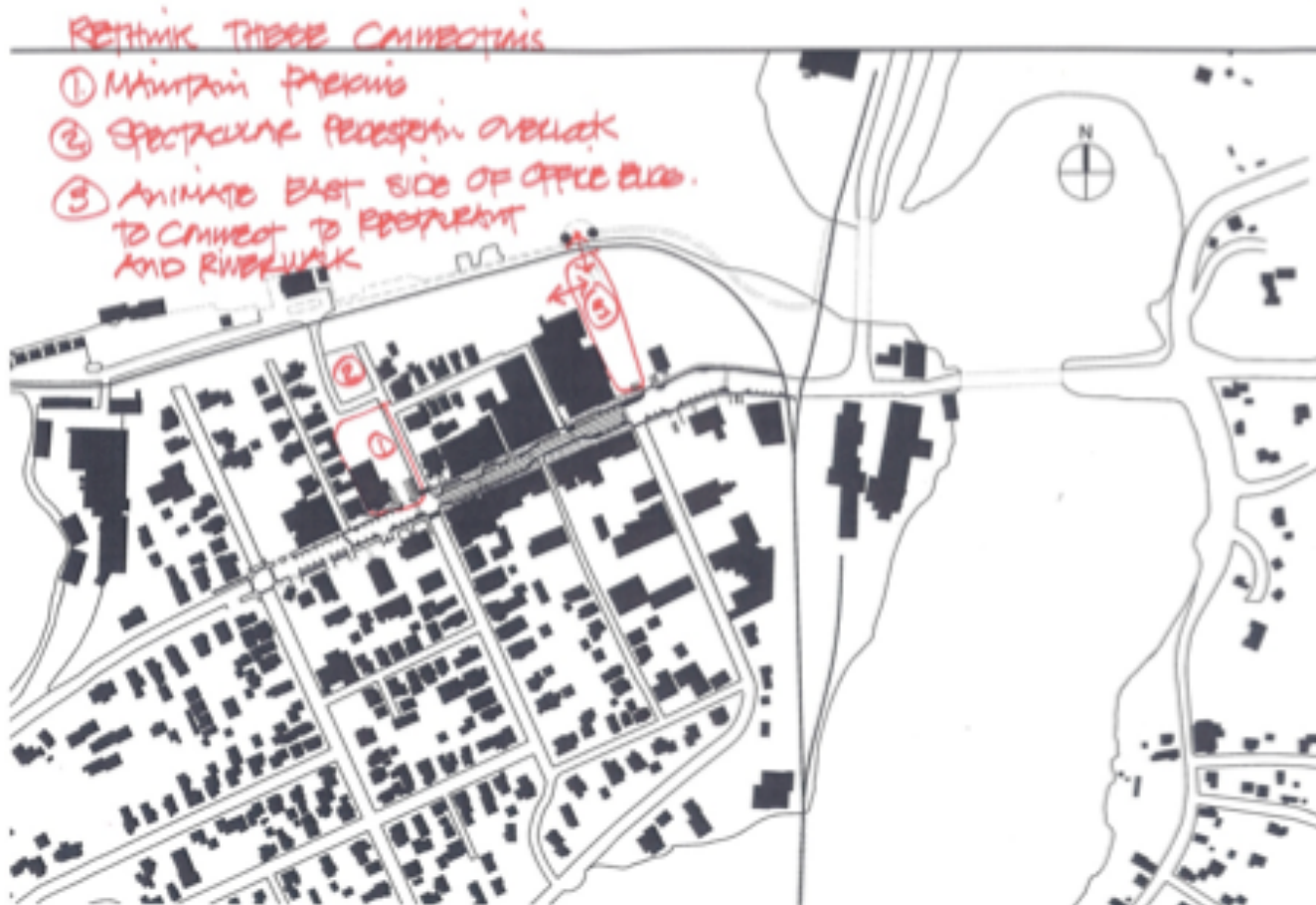
RETHINKING THE DOWNTOWN WATERFRONT CONNECTIONS

As we revisited downtown it is worth continuing to discuss the three areas indicated on the map below.

1. Parking between the Old Armory and the Library

This is an area that was identified as a possible location for a civic plaza with the incorporation of a new a pavilion structure. Consider maintaining the parking that serves two major public buildings on Main Street. Keeping the parking there would require better landscape treatment of the edges with an attractive masonry wall and appropriate plant material.

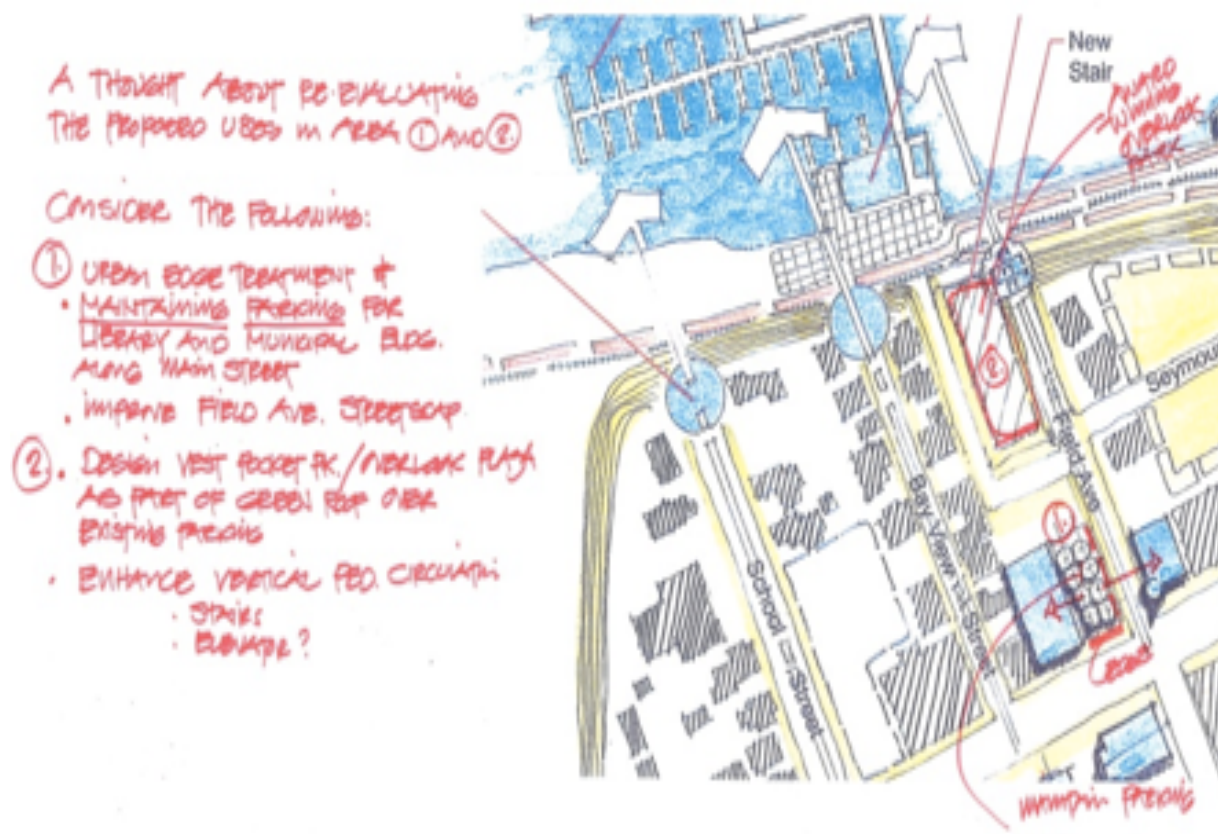
2. This would free the area Nr. 2 up where it was proposed to relocate the parking overlooking the waterfront. It would be more beneficial to make the overlook an important public space and improve on the vertical circulation investing in improvements that would increase the universal access of the trails, Gateway Center and marinas. The improved pedestrian access would also enhance moving tourists from the marina/boardwalk to the downtown.



3. Introduce the Farmers market into this area ASAP. Also consider an architectural modification of the movable Café roof on the east side of the Emory Hebbard Building.

There is a real challenge in trying to animate the space along the Hebbard building on the North – South Axis and connecting the restaurant [Belvedere's] on the north side of the Building. The State building does an excellent job introducing storefront opportunities along Main Street; however it presents a great challenge along the east elevation.

This results in low pedestrian activity/movement towards the lake. Any business or restaurant then faces the challenge of attracting customers all on its own. If there were more activity with the presence of a farmers market and food vendors, a recognizable pattern would start creating a logical link to Main Street and eliminating the current void [especially at night]. A longer term solution is to rethink the movable café roof serving the downstairs cafe. Although it is novel for the lower dining space it contributes towards a disconnect between the Lake, Main Street and any restaurant/ commercial business located on the north side of the building. This needs to be a creative architectural commercial infill solution that could help promote connectivity, resulting in a more vibrant pedestrian environment. We realize that the greater challenges is in modifying the State Office Building and the related costs.



RECOMMEND BELVEDERE RESPONDENT TO
MAIN STREET + ANIMATE

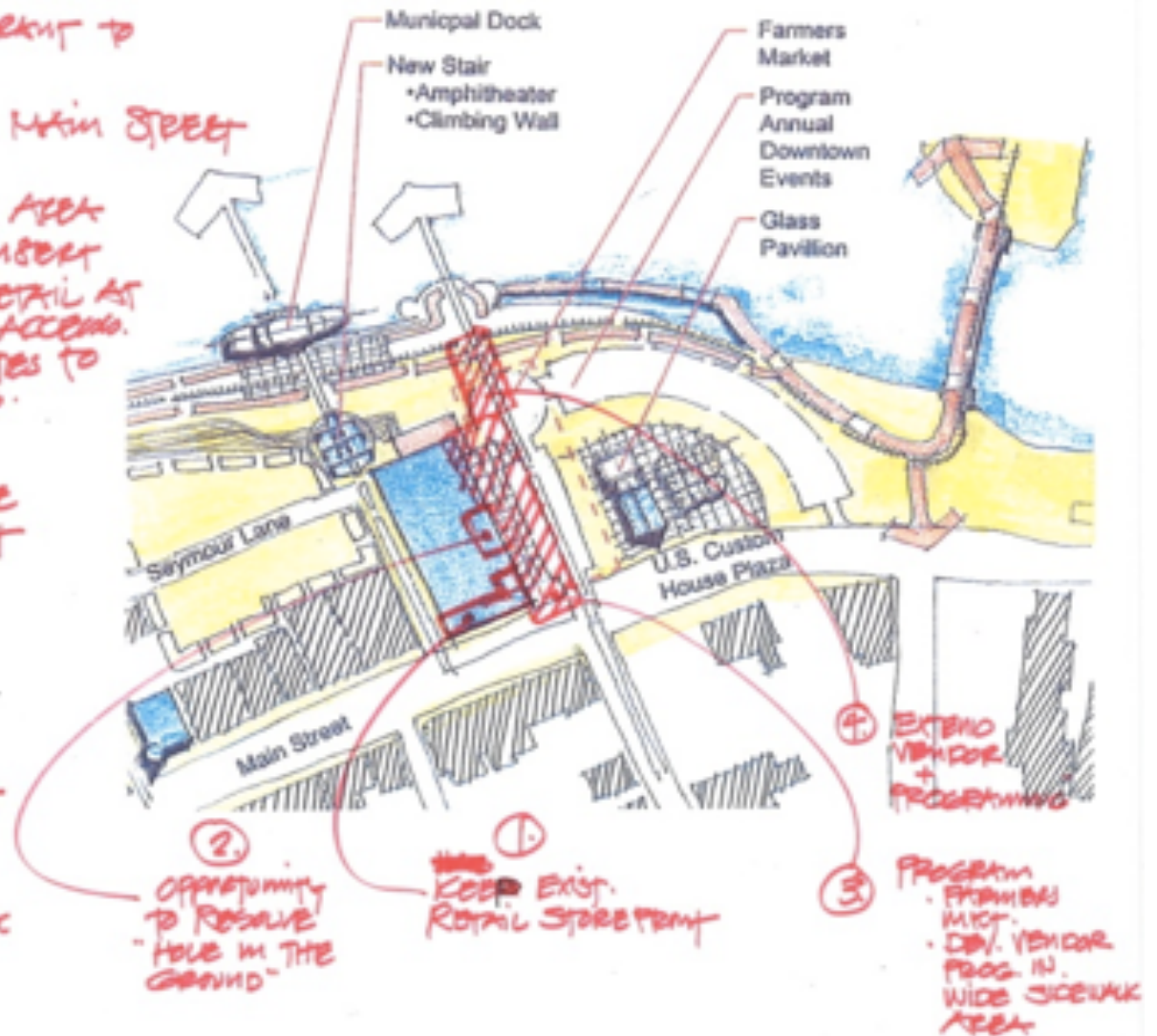
① MAINTAIN SPLENDOR ON MAIN STREET

② REIMAGINE THE SUNKEN CAVE AREA
• ARCH. BIG IDEA IS TO INSERT
GLASS LOOK FOR FOOD/RETAIL AT
STREET LEVEL/SIDEWALK ACCESS.
• SUNKEN CAVE CONTRIBUTES TO
VOID ALONG THE BUILDING.

③ BRING IN MARKET & FOOD
VENDORS TO ENGAGE PEOPLE
AND LEAD TO WATER FRONT
AS WELL AS CONNECT TO
BELVEDERE

④ VENDORS CAN CONNECT
UP TO BOARDWALK!

⑤ MOVE FARMERS MARKET
AS ORIGINALLY SUGGESTED.
(CAN ACCOMMODATE
MARKET STALLS - SIDEWALK
TRUCK SALES - PARKING
SPOTS.



This is an effort to report collective thoughts and observations dealing with the progress of recommendations of the R/UDAT panel on Newport's Waterfront.

Newport is doing an outstanding job and the team looks forward to the continued success and ongoing transformation of your waterfront.



A VIBRANT
DOWNTOWN

ASSESSING MAIN STREET

Follow the Main Street Model was a recommendation of the original 2009 R/UDAT report in regards to downtown. This was focused on building capacity within Newport City Renaissance Corporation (NCRC) and the City of Newport.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Established new businesses in a down economy
- Implemented tax stabilization program
- Strengthened individual committees within NCRC
- Developed strong relationships with the National Main Street Center and the Vermont Downtown Program
- Made presentations about Newport and regional and national conferences
- Involved youth in the organization

CHALLENGES

- Keeping an excited board, staff and stable of volunteers
- Maintaining a strong, collaborative city-NCRC relationship
- Retaining established businesses

DISCUSSION

Main Street has been an incredibly successful program for hundreds of communities across the country. And Newport's program, NCRC, has successfully built capacity within its own organization. But there are always lulls in a program, especially after periods of success. Some community members may feel the heavy lifting has been done, and others focus on other activities. It's at this point that an organization has to keep up the pace. Developing new board members, keeping a continuum of knowledge and experience among current members, and maintaining solid communications with the community are even more critical now.



Many downtown organizations are not as fortunate to have the relationship with local government as NCRC has been. Like the internal workings of the organization, this partnership between NCRC and the City of Newport must be continually fed and maintained. Again, some may feel that much of the hard work has already been accomplished, but this is no time to rest on your laurels. Continued communication and partnering between the two entities are key, and they should each be looking for more opportunities to work together. The city is much healthier with these entities working closely together.

Finally, many existing businesses have been around for a while, and some property owners are either ready to retire or have become burned out. In a city this size, the loss of one significant business can have a dramatic impact on the entire community. It's important to offer as much assistance as possible to keep these businesses since retaining an existing business is much easier than recruiting a new one. Some things as simple as a shop-sitter program might give owners enough time to run errands or take a break without feeling like they need to shut down completely.

NEXT STEPS

- Contact Vermont Downtown Program and National Main Street Center for examples of successful board development and retention programs. Learn from them.
- NCRC board and staff meet with city officials, both elected and appointed, to determine the best methods and levels of communication and collaboration between the two entities.



ENGAGE IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Engage In Historic Preservation was the second recommendation of the 2009 report. The focus was to develop technical resources that would encourage historic preservation and to distribute those resources and information adequately.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Applied for Certified Local Government status
- Explored incentives for historic rehabilitation projects
- Encouraged appropriate property restorations

CHALLENGES

- Identifying priority projects and grant opportunities
- Communicating preservation principles to owners and contractors

DISCUSSION

Downtown Newport is a designated historic district. Every development activity or special event that takes place downtown utilizes these unique assets, whether they're recognized as being historic or not. Being an historic downtown means using these assets to enhance every action. The city has taken the first steps to this end by applying to become a Certified Local Government, which means they take responsibility for identifying and protecting these resources but also that they are eligible to receive financial assistance to accomplish this. The first order of business should be to determine what the most significant preservation needs are and apply immediately to receive grant funding to accomplish that task. Historic preservation is often perceived as being too restrictive or burdensome to be an effective economic development tool. But these are myths, and preservation has often been the key to successful redevelopment where nothing else has worked. All data suggests that property in historic districts commands higher prices and retains property values better than non-historic districts. Preservation is also a tool that can provide sufficient gap funding to complete a great project that retains a community's heritage. Use it.

NEXT STEPS

- Apply for CLG grant funds this year, either to assess the capacity of downtown buildings to accommodate new upper floor uses, to install historic signage, or to develop online walking tour brochures or smartphone applications.
- Assemble a simple brochure identifying all incentives for redevelopment, including historic tax credits and encouraging their use.



DEVELOP APPROPRIATE INFILL

Develop Appropriate Infill was the third recommendation from 2009. The focus here was to amend the existing zoning code to allow for a more dynamic downtown.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Convened all stakeholders to consider changes to the current zoning
- Educated themselves on best practices of form based code (FBC)
- Implemented FBC, only after significant community discussion
- Generated significant interest among developers and entrepreneurs
- Completed schematic design for “Complete Streets” concept downtown

CHALLENGES

- Funding for “Complete Streets” implementation
- Adequate testing/review of complete streets design
- Periodic review of FBC to make certain it works
- Continued education of FBC to staff and planning commission

DISCUSSION

This is where Newport and NCRC have made the biggest strides since 2009. It was a monumental task, and was accomplished only through coordinated efforts of the city, the downtown organization and the greater community. You did it right. You have become a model not only for Vermont, but for all of New England. And the rewards are just starting to be realized. The key here is to keep the momentum moving forward. Review periodically. Don’t be frightened when a project allowed by the code might not be quite what you want. Hold firmly to the standards and you’ll continue to be rewarded by interested developers, creative entrepreneurs and a more dynamic downtown. And continually re-educate new city leaders, planning commissioners, and citizens about form-based code so that they don’t revert to static zoning codes.

For those new ideas you’re embarking on, keep them coming, but keep your nose to the grindstone. Maintain a regimented process to test these new ideas. You’ve become the regional leader in sustainability downtown, so make sure you’re not implementing policies that are trendy but won’t stand up to the test of time. Reach for the stars, but be realistic about what you can accomplish. Take smaller steps first, with pilot projects that will give you an idea how things will really work out.

In terms of the “Complete Streets” design, it is critical at this point to make sure you get some additional peer review of the proposed work. Curb bulb-outs work very well to provide a safer pedestrian environment by shortening the distance pedestrians have to maneuver across a street and by calming vehicular traffic. But back-in angled parking may be a novel concept in the region and may be less successful, especially if there are only a handful of such spaces in the area. Downtown is still very much a pedestrian AND vehicular environment. You should encourage more pedestrian activity, but don’t eliminate the vehicles. Shifting traffic lanes is also a great way to calm traffic and provide wider sidewalks for amenities such as outdoor cafes. But be sure the shift is done in the right location to provide the most benefit. It might be best in Newport to push all of the wider sidewalks to the north side of Main Street so that there is a longer season for outdoor dining where they won’t be in a constant shadow.

NEXT STEPS

- Distribute the “Complete Streets” conceptual drawing to sustainable transportation experts for an assessment and feedback. Modify the plans if needed.
- Apply for funding to begin implementation of those parts of “Complete Streets” that are sound, i.e.; narrowed street crossings, better lighting and signage, and any needed re-routing of utilities.



CELEBRATE NEWPORT'S CULTURAL HERITAGE

Celebrate Newport's Cultural Heritage was the fourth recommendation from the 2009 report. This was focused on developing signage, tours, open houses and other events associated with Newport's heritage and architecture. It also focused on a primary project – moving the Coventry Street Barn.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Wayfinding and welcome signage
- Engaged agricultural heritage with farm to table initiatives
- Completed first Taste of Newport
- Beginning to emphasize lake culture
- Bilingual marketing



CHALLENGES

- Not putting all eggs in one heritage basket (agriculture)
- Barn is still in place and significantly endangered
- Not fully embracing the lake

DISCUSSION

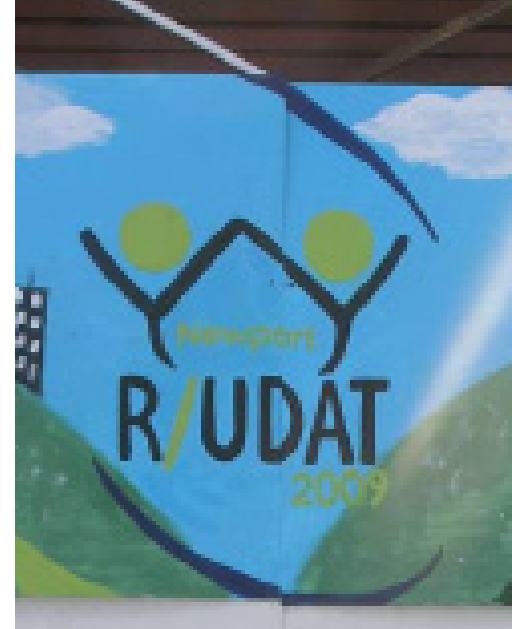
You've made great strides in enhancing the exposure to your agricultural heritage with a large focus on local produce and value-added products. This is an extremely important base for a small town focusing on sustainability. And the benefits from this association and its spin-offs will be great. But remember that agricultural sustainability is common to many northern New England communities, and a big focus for several Vermont cities. You aren't unique in that respect. But where you are unique culturally is your connection to Lake Memphremagog. Either historically as a resort destination, or currently as an international waterway, the lake is the biggest key to a successful future. Capitalizing on that asset will set you apart from nearly every other New England community. And that capitalization should be a mix of things you do now that are successful (ice house communities, AquaFest) and those that you haven't yet tried. Potential hotel/resort development will enhance those aspects of your heritage that have been put aside for decades, and will provide for new opportunities. Just make sure that everyone in the community has an opportunity to use the lake (and adjacent waterways like South Bay) in the same way that visitors do. If you create an environment that your citizens enjoy first, visitors (and future citizens) will also enjoy it. You can begin by finding creative ways to promote water activities with everything else you do, even if it's as simple as announcing local contest winners on the lake boardwalk, or giving away free hotdogs there on a Sunday afternoon.

Most of your architectural heritage is sound and in no danger of being destroyed. But there remains one piece of your history that will soon be a memory if some action is not taken. The Coventry Street barn was a key focus of the 2009 R/UDAT even though it doesn't play a role in the downtown. It is a significant resource that deserves every effort to salvage it. Work with those non-profits who are focused on agricultural sustainability to find an alternative use for it; storage of materials, local market venue, production facility. Then get a commitment to move it or dismantle it and store it for future reconstruction. Only as a worst case scenario consider deconstructing it and offering the materials to other historic barn owners in the region who might need replacement materials.

NEXT STEPS

- Expand "Designated Downtown" boundaries to include Gardner Park.
- Begin marketing a lake/park/waterway activity with all other promotions.
- Get an estimate from a local building mover for moving the barn, and an estimate for disassembling it for future reconstruction.
- Find a partner to lead the charge on saving the barn, and apply for a Vermont historic barn grant to aid in rehabilitation once a location and use has been determined.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



THANK YOU NEWPORT!

The R/UDAT team would like to express its appreciation to the Newport community for its hospitality and collaboration during this process. In particular, we would like to recognize the following organizations and individuals for their leadership and contributions to the process.

- Mayor Paul Monette
- The Jay Peak Resort
- Goodrich Memorial Library
- Patricia Sears, NCRC
- The City of Newport
- The Newport City Renaissance Corporation
- Paul Dreher, City of Newport
- Steve Mason
- Jen Black
- Rick Woodward
- Nikki Tetreault
- Sarah Spencer
- Kyle Therrien
- The Chronicle
- Newport Daily Express
- Orleans County Record
- WMOO92
- North County Career Center
- The Residents of Newport



CHARRETTE TEAM



J. Todd Scott, AIA (Seattle, Washington)

Downtown Revitalization

Todd is a licensed architect who specializes in historic preservation and downtown revitalization. His preservation experience includes stints with Oklahoma City, as historic preservation officer, and with King County, Washington, where he currently provides assistance for historic properties in that county and sixteen suburban and rural communities. He recently completed the intensive level survey of 175 historic barns on the Enumclaw Plateau and 200 historic residential and commercial properties in Kent, both in King County. He has been involved in the rehabilitation of hundreds of structures in dozens of small downtowns as the state architect for Oklahoma Main Street and for DesignWorks, an arts-based design charrette program. Todd also served as community development director and assistant city manager for the city of Astoria, Oregon. He has presented at numerous state, regional, and national conferences on topics ranging from sustainability in design to mounting grass roots campaigns for endangered structures. Todd has served on the boards of various non-profit agencies including heritage organizations, community development corporations, urban renewal authorities, and architectural foundations.

Ed Freer, ASLA (Madison, Wisconsin)

Waterfront Development



Over the course of his 30-year professional career, Ed Freer has built a significant and award-winning portfolio in urban design, downtown and waterfront redevelopment, and community-based planning. Currently a Senior Urban Designer for JJR, he has also worked for HNTB, Seracuse Lawler + Partners, and The Architect Collaborative (TAC). Ed is highly accomplished at facilitating a consensus vision and broad community support for urban design and redevelopment initiatives. He has worked throughout the United States, with project work including: McBride Point,

Madison, WI Capitol West, Madison, WI State Street Strategic Plan, Madison, WI University Research Park, Madison, WI Mashpee Commons, Mashpee, MA Lakefront Master Plan and Lakeshore State Park, Milwaukee, WI Beerline Redevelopment Plan, Milwaukee, WI Central Wharf Redevelopment, Boston, MA

Echo Bay Redevelopment, New Rochelle, NY Riverfront Redevelopment Plan, Paducah, KY Marine District Redevelopment Plan, Seabrook, TX Riverfront and Downtown Urban Design Plan, Sanford, FL Waterfront District Plan, Cleveland, OH Detroit RiverWalk, Detroit, MI Ed has served as a resource member to many civic task forces and professional panels and as a member of national design juries. He has been an urban design resource for the Mayors Institute on City Design, an Urban Waterfront Planner for the ULI – Advisory Panel for San Pedro, CA, and an AIA RUDAT Panelist for Newport, VT. He currently serves as an Advisory Board Member for the Waterfront Center in Washington, DC.

Judie Scalise (Phoenix, Arizona)

Economic Development



Ms. Scalise is Founder and Principal of ESI Corporation, a multi-disciplinary economic development and real estate services firm with corporate offices in Phoenix, Arizona. ESI offers a broad range of economic research, advisory and predevelopment planning services to a clientele consisting of both public and private sector organizations. ESI staff has hands-on experience in commercial, industrial, retail, residential and special-use development through the preparation of market analyses, financial feasibility, project pro forma analysis, corporate site selection, fiscal and economic impact and absorption studies. Our extensive work with local governments and economic development organizations includes the preparation of economic development strategic plans, redevelopment plans, demographic and labor studies, economic base analysis, and target industry cluster analysis. As a Principal of ESI Corp, Ms. Scalise has over 24 years of professional experience in the areas of market analysis, strategic planning, and economic development. She has directed numerous consulting assignments including development impact fees studies, economic and fiscal impact studies, strategic planning, land economics research, and market feasibility. Ms. Scalise holds a B.S. degree in Public Administration from the University of Arizona and is a graduate of the Economic Development Institute at the University of Oklahoma. She holds the professional designation of Certified Economic Developer and is a past Chairman of the International Economic Development Council, past President of the Arizona Association for Economic Development, a member of the California Association for Local Economic Development, the Urban Land Institute and serves on the faculty of Western New Mexico University, Economic Development Course.

AIA STAFF:

Joel Mills

Director, Center for Communities by Design

Joel Mills serves as Director of the American Institute for Architects' Center for Communities by Design. The Center is a leading provider of pro bono technical assistance and participatory planning for community sustainability. Through its design assistance programs, the Center has worked in 55 communities across 32 states since 2005. In 2010, the Center was named Organization of the Year by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) for its impact on communities and contributions to the field.

Joel's career in civic health and governance spans over 17 years, and includes community-based technical assistance, process design, facilitation and training across a number of fields. During the 1990s, Mr. Mills spent several years supporting international democratization initiatives by providing technical assistance to parliaments, political parties, local governments, civic and international organizations. His scope of work included constitutional design and governing systems, voter and civic education, election monitoring and administration, political party training and campaign strategy, collaborative governance, human rights and civil society capacity building. His work has been featured on ABC World News Tonight, Nightline, CNN, The Next American City, Smart City Radio, The National Civic Review, Ecostructure Magazine, The Washington Post, and dozens of other media sources. In December 2010, he was elected to the Board of Directors for the IAP2-USA. He is also a member of the International Association of Facilitators (IAF), the American Planning Association, the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD), and the Mid-Atlantic Facilitators Network.

Erin Simmons

Director, Design Assistance

Erin Simmons is the Director of Design Assistance at the Center for Communities by Design at the American Institute of Architects in Washington, DC. Her primary role at the AIA is to provide process expertise, facilitation and support for the Center's Sustainable Design Assistance Team (SDAT) and Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) programs. In this capacity, she works with AIA components, members, partner organizations and community members to provide technical design assistance to communities across the country. To date, Erin has served as staff lead on over 20 design assistance teams. Prior to joining the AIA, Erin worked as senior historic preservationist and architectural historian for an environmental and engineering firm in Georgia, where she practiced preservation planning, created historic district design guidelines and zoning ordinances, conducted historic resource surveys, and wrote property nominations for the National Register of Historic Places. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Florida State University and a Master's degree in Historic Preservation from the University of Georgia.



