

Appendix A

*Civic Initiative for a More
Liveable New England -
Central Village Case Study*

*Westport Master Plan * 2004*

Appendix A

Civic Initiative for a More Livable New England

Central Village Case Study Westport, Massachusetts

NOMINATION FOR NEW MAYFLOWER COMPACT AWARDS
GROWTH MANAGEMENT IN SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS
May 20, 2002

INTRODUCTION

In September of 2000 the Westport Planning Board and the Town's Master Plan Update Committee applied to the Boston Society of Architects *et al* to have Westport as one of its case studies in a Regional Charrette entitled "How We Live, A Civic Initiative for a Livable New England" to be held in April 2001. Westport's Central Village was selected as one of the case studies for the charrette. In March 2001 the "Westport Central Village Case Study Problem Statement" was submitted (see **Exhibit #1**, below).

Exhibit #1. WESTPORT CENTRAL VILLAGE CASE STUDY PROBLEM STATEMENT

(Submitted by the Westport, Massachusetts Planning Board and the Westport Master Plan Update Committee)

Westport's Central Village is in transition from the sleepy "main street" with a small cluster of buildings that it was at the beginning of the twentieth century to a busy market and local government center spread along $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile on Main Road. **General growth and planning issues in the village concern choosing a direction for the future that will meet citizen objectives for the town center. However, the objectives have yet to be fully defined and it is hoped that the case study can clarify them by examining future growth alternatives and evaluating how each addresses current village issues.** For example: The advantages and disadvantages of a compact village versus a linear village will be perceived by the way each addresses the current village issues. With the completed comparison matrix in hand and with sketches illustrating what each alternative would be like, citizens will have a basis for choosing a future direction for village growth. This is illustrated by the following matrix:

ISSUE	ALT. 1 LINEAR CENTRAL VILLAGE	ALT. 2 COMPACT CENTRAL VILLAGE
CIRCULATION/TRAFFIC/CURB CUTS-Safety, new roads		
PARKING-Visual Screening, sharing, Town parking, site plan review		
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS/OPPORTUNITIES-Land form wet land		
WATER SUPPLY-Reliance on wells, ground water contamination		
WASTE WATER-High water table-failed "perc" tests		
HOUSING-Existing, new affordable & elderly housing		
PEDESTRIAN ACCESS-No recognition presently, shuttle from future Town parking		
TOWN FACILITIES-New fire & police stations, town yard location, new town green		
HISTORIC RESOURCES-How to be protected & integrated		
UNRELATED LANDUSE-Active farms in Business Zone		
GROWTH POTENTIAL-Where? In each alternative		
ZONING CHANGES-Recommended for each alternative		
ESTIMATED INVESTMENT TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES		
OTHER ISSUES-Arising from discussion		

The “Executive Summary Updated Master Plan”, prepared by the Master Plan Update Committee and accepted by Town Meeting last spring, identifies the following goals and objectives for the villages:

- Develop strategies to enhance Westport’s Villages and prevent strip development and sprawl.
- Configure a village business zone.
- Encourage condominiums, apartments and smaller house lots of appropriate scale within villages, as infrastructure permits.
- Develop a plan for village growth that accommodates new businesses needed to serve emerging neighborhoods.
- Prepare detailed plans for each of the villages that investigates: alternatives for concentrated village growth, new streets, reducing curb cuts, signage controls, walkways linking the various activities, introducing affordable multi-family and/or elderly housing, and regulations which require screening view of parking from public ways.
- Investigate options for local sewer and water infrastructure within villages.

Consideration of building a “town green” might also be added to the study for Central Village.

Recently the Committee has been asked, “What is so bad about continuing linear village development as we have it?” It is a response to this question, in the light of the stated objectives of the Executive Summary, which the Planning Board and Master Plan Update Committee are asking the Civic Initiative Case Study to address.

End of Exhibit #1

In April 2001 an information packet (see **Exhibit #2**, below and Map A-1 Town-Wide Map) was submitted, intended to be a brief of existing conditions for charrette participants.

Exhibit #2



CENTRAL VILLAGE

Westport, Massachusetts

Case Study



Submitted By:

The Westport Planning Board and Master Plan Update Committee - April 12, 2001

PLANNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To accommodate village growth while preserving and enhancing the Town's environmental and cultural heritage. Surrounding wetlands and topography limit east-west development. Existing valued farmland occupies portions of the Business Zone (See Map A-2 Central Village Existing Land Use). Valued buildings from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries (See Map A-4 Westport C.V. Historic Buildings) are important to the village character.
2. To consider opportunities, benefits, and constraints of adding to the village infrastructure. Should there be new streets added to the village to provide development sites near the center of the village? Should local piped water supply from a Town well, and wastewater lines to a package treatment plant be considered? (A number of wells have been contaminated and surrounding open land has had failed "perc" tests.)
3. To consider changes (improvements) to Central Village access by introducing a new interchange on Route 88 and/or by adding local roads. Hix Bridge Road and Adamsville Road provide the major links to the east and west respectively. They collect traffic moving north-south on Route 88 and on several local roads as well as serving as an inter-community link to Dartmouth (east) and Tiverton and Little Compton, Rhode Island (west). Charlotte White Road, to the north of the Village and oriented east/west also collects north-south traffic bound for Central Village.
4. To consider local circulation improvements within the village by limiting curb cuts, introducing Town parking to be shared by businesses, and by providing pedestrian paths linking business and government facilities.
5. To provide sites for senior assisted living and affordable housing at a village density within walking distance of shopping.
6. To review Town facilities in the village and recommend locations for new facilities. A new larger fire station is being studied on the north side of Hix Bridge Road west of Route 88. A new & larger Police Station is needed. Should a Town Green be considered? Should the Town Yard (public works) be located away from the village?
7. To help the Town decide on future growth by considering alternative village forms for their responsiveness and compatibility with the above goals and objectives, and for their cost effectiveness.

STUDY BOUNDARY

The village is entirely within the Central Village Business Zone, which is to be the study area. Main Road runs north-south and provides the only access. The Business Zone follows Main Road extending east and west 1000 feet on each side of the road. It runs from 1,000 feet north of the Kirby Road intersection with Main Road to the Cornell Road intersection in the south. Between Kirby Road and Hix Bridge Road the Zone extends eastward beyond the 1,000 feet to Route 88. The Zone also includes all corners of the Hix Bridge Road-Route 88 intersection. It is possible that the study will consider land to the west of the Business Zone if new access is thought to be required.

See Map A-3 Westport C.V. Central, (curb cuts, businesses) and Map A-5 Westport Central Village 4/12/2001 (topography and wetlands). Numerous photos of businesses, residences and government and institutional buildings, submitted for the charrette as part of Exhibit #2, have been omitted from the current document.

ECONOMIC INFORMATION

There has been little economic analysis completed of the activities of Central Village. Generally for the Town, farming and commercial fishing are the longstanding industries. While they are struggling, they remain the keystone of the economic activity. Beyond these, the Town's natural and cultural resources, which presently attract tourists and summer residents, need to be emphasized as the principal attraction.

For Westport, the general economic goal is to increase business opportunities within the Town that protect, preserve, and enhance its natural and historic/cultural resources, and preserve the various aspects of its Massachusetts heritage landscape. Other objectives for economic growth are to: identify growth potential for existing enterprises; identify generic enterprises that could be invited to settle in Westport in harmony with Town vision; identify support activities to enhance opportunities available to the Town. The Central Village economic objective is to accommodate growth in business and Town government activities and added housing while maintaining its New England Village character. In some sectors Central Village has become a regional market center. The principal food/dry goods supermarket, several banks, the medical clinic, the drug store, and several specialty shops pull customers from the adjacent towns of Dartmouth, MA and Tiverton and Little Compton, RI. The following is a list of major shops, Town government facilities and churches/organizations.

Businesses serving the immediate region--

- Lees Market, an independent full service supermarket
- Westport Apothecary
- Westport Medicine Center, a medical clinic
- Compass Bank
- Sovereign Bank

Other businesses probably with range beyond town boundary market area--

- Country Woolens, clothing
- Partners - gifts, books, homemade baked goods, etc.
- The Westporter - catering & restaurant
- Westport Federal Credit Union

and with a more local focus--

- 2 Dental Offices
- Offices for lawyers, real estate, travel
- Restaurant & pizza shop
- Service shops, 2 dry cleaning, 2 hair cutting, etc.
- Service Station & variety shop

Government functions

- Town Hall
- Town Hall Annex, some Town offices, Community building and adjacent playground
- Town Yard east of Town Hall
- Police Station
- Fire Station

Churches/Organizations

- St. John the Baptist Church and Christian Education Center
- Quaker Meeting House
- Grange

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS

Elderly assisted living and/or affordable housing, under a comprehensive permit, may be proposed for open land behind businesses fronting on the west side of Main Road approximately opposite Lees Market. In addition, the Medical Center is filled to capacity and may be seeking additional or new space.

A new fire station is being studied on a site north of Hix Bridge Road just west of Route 88.

End of Exhibit #2

The charrette was held April 27th, 28th, and 29th, 2001 at Northeastern University. Westport's case study was one of eighteen or so and was the most rural. Nearly all of the cases were in the Boston Metropolitan Area but Westport's location on the edge of urban sprawl had special significance. Participants in the Westport case study were:

Timothy Gillespie, Planning Board Chairman
John Montano, architect and Planning Board member
David Wallace, architect and Planning Board member
Gregg Swanzey, Master Plan Update Committee, Westport
Jefferson Bull, Master Plan Update Committee, Westport
Shannon Goheen, Landscape Designer, Cape Cod
Andre Fisk, Land Use Planner, Maine
Jennifer Hrabchak, Planner, MIT Doctoral Candidate

Two visions for Central Village's future were developed at the charrette. These were presented to the community on September 20th. A newspaper article under the heading of Westport Forum (9/3/01) announced the meeting along with a flyer sent to residents, business and property owners in the Business Zone. A follow-up newspaper article about the meeting was circulated. These are displayed in **Exhibit #3**, below, along with a letter received from a local business owner.

Exhibit #3 WESTPORT FORUM (9/3/01)

The Master Plan Update Committee is holding an information meeting on Central Village planning on Thursday, September 20th at 7:00 PM in the first floor meeting room of Town Hall Annex. All residents, particularly those living and working in the Central Village Business Zone, are encouraged to come.

Last spring in this column there was a report about an up-coming three-day planning charrette to be held in Boston at the end of April entitled, "How We Live: A Civic Initiative for a Livable New England." A charrette is a term used by architects for an intense day and night work effort concentrating on producing solutions to a particular design problem. The focus of this charrette was dealing with various ramifications of urban sprawl.

Westport's Central Village planning was one of a dozen cases studied by a group of over a hundred architects, planners, economists, lawyers, etc., as well as citizens from each of the case study communities. Five members of the Master Plan Update Committee, including three from the Planning

Board, participated in the Central Village planning effort and they were assisted by three planners from elsewhere in Massachusetts and Maine.

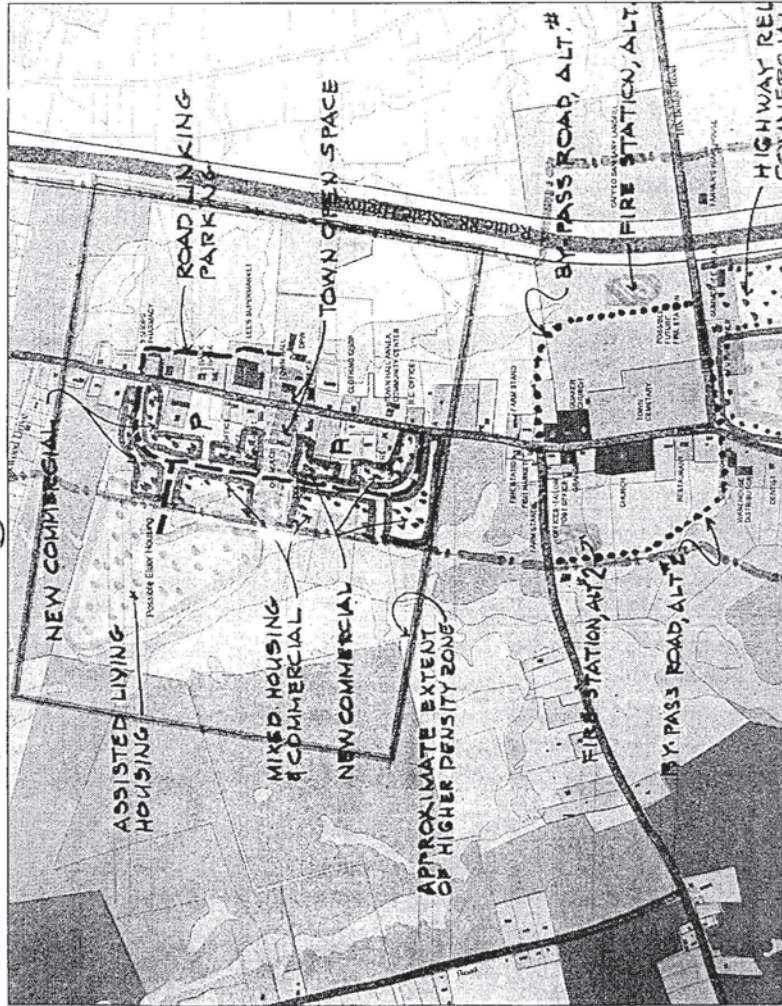
Most of the case studies involved large and complex portions of urban or suburban municipalities. Central Village was the smallest and least urban of the lot. However, the charrette organizers believed it was a worthy subject because the village is typical of a number of towns in Southeastern Massachusetts that are feeling the pressures of sprawl reaching out from Boston and Providence. The earlier that impacted towns can prepare for oncoming growth, the better their chances are to protect and enhance the resources that are valued. As the center of town government and shopping, the Village is one of our areas facing growth pressures. How residents want it to be in the future is an issue the Master Plan Update Committee is concerned about.

Two sketch plans for the future shape of Central Village were produced at the charrette- a linear growth scheme and a compact growth scheme. The linear plan has village activities continue to expand along Main Road. The compact growth plan favors village expansion to east and west of Main Road in the vicinity of Town Hall. Both plans suggest moving the southern boundary of the Business Zone northward to reduce the spreading out of village functions. The advantages and disadvantages of the schemes have been preliminarily evaluated by considering the capability of each to accommodate: anticipated growth, shared parking, fewer curb cuts on to Main Road, shared localized water and sewage treatment using package systems; creation of open space, protecting farms in the existing Business Zone and other factors. These sketch plans have advanced the Master Plan Update Committee's thinking about Central Village.

Existing conditions such as land use in the entire Business Zone as well as traffic, the number of curb cuts, and number of parking spaces serving businesses, and building age were inventoried and mapped in preparation for the charrette.

The Committee's next step is to get community reaction to the sketch plans. They are meant to stimulate resident discussion, to create ideas for their revision, to reflect more accurately the way we want the village to be in the future. We look forward to seeing you on the 20th, when the plan sketches will be described and your comments will be welcomed.

Residents comment on Central Village Master Plan



This closeup of the proposed compact scheme for Central Village shows more open space around Town Hall, a connecting road behind Town Hall that leads to other parking lots, and assisted living housing. The lower portion of the map shows two possible sites for future fire stations and two possibilities for bypass roads.

By Peggy Aulisio

A "compact scheme" for Central Village was the clear preference of the nearly 70 local residents who attended a public meeting on Thursday, Sept. 20. The compact design calls for a denser business area than the linear business center that exists now. A continuation of the linear scheme was the other alternative presented.

David Wallace, who is a member of the Master Plan subcommittee on Central Village and a member of the Planning Board, led the public forum and presented the concepts the committee has come up with so far.

The Central Village business area extends from Ellie's Place at 1402 Main Road to the intersection with Kirby Road. The width is constrained by wetlands on each side and varies, but runs about 500 feet on each side of Main Road in some locations.

The Central Village subcommittee is just one of several that are working on a Master Plan, or long-term vision, for the town. The Master Plan was undertaken to help Westport prepare for the intense growth pressures that are occurring in the region. Mr. Wallace said the Master Plan will help the town steer that growth in a direction residents can support.

Some of the ideas for a Central Village call for adding more green area around Town Hall to make it more parklike. Some plans call for the town yard, which is behind Town Hall, to be moved, although a new location hasn't been selected. Adding green areas around Town Hall would make the Central Village area more appealing, Mr. Wallace said.

One problem in the Central Village involves all the "curb cuts" or entrances and exits from stores and businesses. As traffic increases, the curb cuts cause traffic to stop frequently, which can result in more accidents. One idea the subcommittee is suggesting calls for more parking behind buildings, such as Lees and the Town Hall, with connector roads between them.

Mr. Wallace said the subcommittee has also discussed adding a parallel road to Main Road. The exact location hasn't been determined yet, but one possible design shows a road that would intersect with Adamsville Road.

If a new fire station is built on Adamsville Road, the parallel road could make it easier for fire trucks to come and go without dealing with the already busy intersection at Main Road and

(MORE)

Adamsville Road.

Any road that is built has to deal with the constraints of private property, however, Tim Gillespie, who serves on the Central Village Master Plan subcommittee and is chairman of the Planning Board, said that if the plans in some areas look a little lopsided, it's because every effort was made not to intrude on private property.

Once a Central Village concept was approved, the town could ease zoning requirements to allow for higher density. The zoning could allow for diminished front and side yard setbacks, resulting in a look more like Westport Point. Sidewalks would also be added.

One resident, who said he liked the compact village plan, said, "I want to be able to walk to things."

Mr. Wallace said the committee wants to keep the three farms in particular that add to the character of Central Village. They are Wood Farm, Paul Costa's farm and Village Corn Crib.

Plans for the Central Village also include the possibility of town sewer and water. Putting

those in place could solve some of the town's problems with private wells in the area, Mr. Wallace said. He said the town water would probably come from one or two deep town wells.

Affordable housing is another component of the Central Village plan. Mr. Gillespie said that establishing specific zoning would make it possible for the town to control how affordable housing looks. He said, "It empowers the town to control our destiny rather than leave it in the hands of developers."

Mr. Gillespie also said the plan helps the town concentrate activities in the village area while preserving more open space in the countryside.

Mr. Wallace said the town will have to determine the investment needed to make its plans a reality. But he said that much of the investment could come from developers, who will be happy enough to have the opportunity to build in such a prime business area.

"We have to do it piecemeal," Mr. Wallace said, "but you've got to have this total vision."

received
4/9/01

Partners Village Store

999 Main Road
P.O. Box 3051
Westport, Ma. 02790
29 March 2001

David Wallace
Master Plan Update Committee
Westport, MA

Dear Mr. Wallace.

Congratulations on your very organized meeting for the Central Village Business Community on March 20. I hope that we will be able to participate again in the future. I commend you in your necessary efforts to prepare for the inevitability of the future and the changes that will come. The following are some of the thoughts I have had since the meeting.

I would like new businesses encouraged to use existing buildings rather than replacing them with impersonal structures. Also the ability to maintain some of the existing open space that now exists would help to maintain the more rural character as additional commerce encroaches. Requirements for setback, landscaping and lighting would also be beneficial.

Signage is very important to legislate to allow for visibility and desired style and placement while discouraging more of the Cumberland Farm type. An attractive centralized map indicating area businesses would help to unify the area and serve as both promotion and information. Good locations for such a map would be the Town Hall and Lees Supermarket.

Parking is probably one of the biggest problems faced by Central Village businesses. In our case it is limited by septic system placement. If possible, joint parking behind some of the smaller adjoining businesses would be more attractive. Also the possibility mentioned at the meeting of making Town Hall parking available and clearly designated.

Sidewalks from the most commercially populated area by the Commons to the Corn Crib would serve as another unifying feature and promote safe walking. Another might be from Fred & Ann's down to Gooseberry Health Foods. I have walked that stretch and traffic is a deterrent.

Septic systems are a convenient regulating force, which should be continued as long as possible to provide control over future expansion. The controlling benefits of septic systems outweigh any benefits it might provide such as increased parking space and water and land use. Does the Town currently have or need regulations for septic system failure or contamination by businesses?

Thank you and good luck.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J Hall", written in black ink.

Jennifer Hall

Phone: 508 636-2572 fax: 508 636-2529 email: info@partnersvs.com

End of Exhibit #3

Visions for the Future of Central Village, Westport, MA

Two visions were developed at the charrette for the future of Central Village. The intent of the Planning Board was to present them, along with the response to the matrix of the case study problem statement, to residents and business people. A direction for future growth could then be selected and means of implementation prepared to achieve the vision. The preparation of the two alternative visions was an important first step for the town in guiding growth in the village. The visions are one, Linear Village, and two, Compact Village.

Vision One (See Map A-6 Linear Village Alternative)

The **Linear Village** vision is a continuation of the present village form, which runs along Main Road in a north-south direction. To minimize sprawl leading to strip development it proposes: establishing a Village Zone within the Business Zone that would reduce lot size side yard and front yard requirements to achieve a density similar to the 19th century villages; encouraging the “filling in” of open lots and farm sites near the center of activity at Town Hall and Lees Supermarket; and introducing sidewalks and a localized water and sewer system to serve the central area. Areas for senior and affordable housing have been located near the center to the west of Main Road and along Hixbridge Road.

Two new roads are proposed. One to the east of Main Road interconnecting existing parking areas at Town Hall, Lees Market, Compass Bank, Westport Apothecary, and the Commons Mall. This gives shoppers an alternative route to Main Road when driving among these popular destinations. The second road proposal offers a new connection between Adamsville Road and Hixbridge Road. Presently drivers have to use Main Road for this east-west movement and it can cause traffic congestion. It is anticipated that this will worsen with time. Two possible locations for the new road are indicated and the choice of which to build would depend in part on the location of a proposed fire station. It could offer a second emergency path for fire engines.

On Hixbridge Road between Main Road and Route 88 the plan indicates a site for mixed-use commercial and senior and/or affordable housing. Near the southwest corner of Hixbridge Road and Route 88 businesses could focus on beach traffic to and from Horseneck Beach State Park. A small park setting for Town Hall is proposed to develop a symbolic focal point in the linear Central Village. Village zoning is recommended to allow for building, which adds to the village character.

Vision Two (See Map A-7 Compact Village Alternative)

The **Compact Village**, vision two, builds upon the present village center by expanding it to the west. A new street is created running parallel to Main Road for new shops and other business activity. Housing would be encouraged in this area as well. Shared parking would be provided in the center of the newly formed “blocks”. It is proposed that the new street be linked visually to Town Hall with a park located between it and Main Road directly in front of Town Hall. It would extend around Town Hall and become focal point and gathering place. Senior and affordable housing is proposed to the west & north of the new street. Sidewalks would be located throughout the center to connect new shops and existing shops, housing and other activities. A town operated well and packaged sewage treatment plant would serve the center area.

As in the Linear Vision a new road is proposed to link existing parking areas at Town Hall, Lees Market, Compass Bank, Westport Apothecary, and the Commons Mall to reduce shopper driving on Main Road.

Also similar to the linear vision a new road is introduced to serve traffic and as an emergency route between Adamsville Road and Hixbridge Road to ease traffic on Main Road. Denser village housing is encouraged along Hixbridge Road mixed with commercial uses and at the southwest corner of Hixbridge Road and Route 88 highway oriented business could develop to serve beach goers heading for and coming from Horseneck Beach State Park. New zoning allowing for village density through altering front, side, and rear yard requirements has been recommended in the compact village scheme, but it would be configured to lead to a more compact village form.

Smart Growth

The two visions promote “ Smart Growth” in the following ways:

- Respects environmental constraints of wetlands east and west of Main Road;
- Encourages viable higher density mixed use zoning where work, shopping and living can co-exist;
- Limits propensity for area to become a sprawling strip;
- Provides for elderly and affordable housing;
- Provides for open space & symbolic focus at village center;
- Enables new building opportunities while honoring the historic nature of Westport;
- Mitigates existing traffic safety issues;
- Provides shared parking to encourage increased pedestrian circulation; and
- Provides local packaged water& sewage systems infrastructure.

A summary of features of the two visions follows:

Vision 1: Improved Linear Town Center

- Expand commercial space through infill on agricultural sites and other open land
- Shorten/narrow business district to contain development
- Expand higher density affordable and market rate housing
- Create sidewalks through district to encourage walking
- Ease traffic with Hix Bridge/Adamsville link
- Water & Sewage infrastructure extends along Main Rd.
- New park at Town Hall

Vision 2: Compact Town Center

- Expand commercial/mixed use opportunities around existing retail concentration
- Create focal point at town hall with new town green
- Expand higher density affordable and market rate housing within walking distance to center
- Create shared parking, sidewalks to encourage walking
- Ease traffic with new Hix Bridge/Adamsville connection
- Shorten business district boundary to ensure compact center
- Create zone allowing higher village density
- Water & sewer infrastructure serves village density zone efficiently because of its compact configuration.

There remain a number of obstacles to be overcome to achieve one of these visions. They are:

Obstacles

Time:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Vision must be chosen- Consensus building is slow- Developers do not wait- Gaining Town Meeting support
Zoning:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Existing zoning must be changed to introduce a new “Village” Zone.
Money:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Buy land, build infrastructure, hopefully developers can be directed to do this
Private Landowners:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Implementation depends on their cooperation
Wetlands:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Constrain east-west expansion but allow more room to west
Limited Water Resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Need for public water supply & sewage treatment through local town wells and local package sewage treatment systems
Width of Main Road:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Setback of existing structures may cause problems installing sidewalks

The following next steps are envisioned to progress toward a Central Village plan for the future:

Westport Charrette-This has been held see below and newspaper article. (Exhibit #3)

Master Plan Integration-This is in process.

Zoning changes-future Town Meetings.

Revisions and adoption of CIP for public infrastructure

Consider RFP and work with assisted living facility developer and new businesses

Step one has been taken. In September an informational meeting was held to which all Town residents were invited, particularly those who lived and/or worked in Central Village. Business owners and landowners were among the participants. After presenting the two visions along with a preliminary evaluation regarding the success of each in dealing with the issues, a good discussion ensued. A straw vote taken at the end of the meeting indicated that the Compact Vision was an overwhelming favorite of those present. The next step is the incorporation of the visions, with a recommendation, into the Town Master Plan Update presently being prepared.

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