Creating a Model Village Center: Strategies for Success

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Executive Summary

As the push to move away from the sprawl and strip-mall phenomenon that has dominated development over the past 50 years becomes more pervasive, towns and cities need to have a set of strategies that help restore the vibrancy in town center areas. Since the industries that once brought people to downtowns for work have mostly left these areas, new methods must be employed to reenergize the center. This research focuses on the work of five cases in Massachusetts and New York, and the methods they have chosen for development and redevelopment. Our research and analysis has led us to the following lessons from each case, which we regard as best practices for maintaining or improving the energy and vibrancy of a town center or downtown area.

Visioning is critical, particularly for the enhancement and redevelopment of a center. Visioning should include as many people as possible, and the facilitators of this process should take every opportunity to ensure that the process is adequately accessible to everyone.

Amesbury, Massachusetts has been exemplary at achieving this process, and due to the success of its visioning, has revitalized their downtown from the post-industrial ghost town it once was to a place of purpose where its citizens take great pride.

Community participation in the visioning process was critical because it gave those in charge of redevelopment sustained support throughout a process spanning decades. Since the community had such a strong impact on the future of their downtown, they served as a driver of redevelopment and provided support when setbacks occurred. As changes continue - though incrementally – most of the community is still behind the effort, knowing that it is with best intentions and public imagination in mind that a new vibrancy is slowly but surely growing Amesbury.

Zoning, reflective of vision, should control design and functionality of the space. If zoning produces results contrary to the vision of the center, the bylaws need to be altered in order to achieve the vision. Vision should never be constrained by zoning.

This has been achieved particularly well in Park Slope, New York, and Amesbury, Massachusetts. In 2003, the Park Slope Civic Council finally won a 12-year battle to implement "downzoning," which includes height restrictions, setback requirements, and sign design standards. Much of the community felt that the new 12-story buildings alongside Prospect Park were damaging the character of the larger neighborhood, and the Park Slope Civic Council pushed for restrictions on developers in certain parts of Park Slope. Consistency of the setback along commercial streets improved the continuity and maximized the walkability of the streets. Design standards for signs keep the commercial areas from degrading the historic, Victorian character present in Park Slope. The previous zoning did not maintain the community vision of success, and inevitably the zoning had to change if the vision was to be realized. The intense community support throughout the 12 year process kept the issue from being disregarded and was critical to its success.

Amesbury has also used this method to its benefit, and in 1999 the Planning Board and Design Review Committee adopted "Amesbury's Design Guidelines" for future development in the center. The guidelines serve as a tool developers can use to contribute to the downtown while still respecting the architectural heritage and historic significance of the community. Design criteria includes standards for site planning, architectural style, character, building height, façade, window treatment, roof treatment, piers, cornices, canopies, porches, building materials, colors, signs, window boxes, planters, street furniture, and vendors (Amesbury Design Standards, 1999). Setting a clear standard for developers allows them to build within the framework of an established setting and interpretation of success.

Finally, the developers in Mashpee Commons wanted their development to look like an organic New England Town Center that had developed over decades. This feeling was actually attained by careful work on the developer's part, including visits to old town centers and taking measurements of sidewalks, building height, and noting materials to ensure that Mashpee Commons met the same scale and design feeling as those historic town centers. This special attention to detail and meticulous planning allowed for a quality development with impeccable design standards to be executed. Without a strong vision from the developer, the resulting development would not have such success in invoking a historic character.

Historic preservation is necessary to maintain the character of a center.

Many of the cases studied take into account the importance of history in their current success. Lexington's Revolutionary War history provides it with additional tourist markets that many places do not have. It is in their best interest to capitalize on this position by preserving historic buildings and expanding the historic feel of the center to expand the energy brought to the center by tourism.

 Amesbury is able to maintain its industrial character because it has creatively reused many of the old mills for housing and maintains standards for developers, promoting the historic character. Without an emphasis on maintaining these buildings, it is possible that mills would be torn down in favor of new structures incompatible with the industrial character.   Many of the mills needed extensive rehabilitation, both for visual and structural purposes and in order to meet code to become housing units. While some may regard tearing down and building anew as less troublesome, the community felt the preservation was well worth the investment.

Park Slope prides itself on having a Victorian character, and the quality of housing is one of the main reasons people move there. Since development is regarded as a right in New York, it was necessary for Park Slope to create a Landmarks District in order to impose standards for development and design changes in this area. The Park Slope Civic Council is trying to expand this district to protect the character in as great an area as possible.

Branding and marketing is critical for developing a sense of place and bringing people to the community.

Northampton has been extremely successful at creating an image for the city and using that image to attract people. This can be seen visually through

the Northampton flags on lampposts on Main Street, the garbage retrieval conducted by people on bikes, and the artwork on the sides of buildings. The branded feeling invokes a lively, artsy, eclectic center. People from places like New York City and Boston (among many others) are drawn to Northampton because of its reputation as a unique and interesting place.

Marketing is necessary to advertise a center's image in order to attract not only tourists, but new residents and businesses as well. Northampton has done this by aggressively applying for "Best of" lists, such as those sponsored by the American Planning Association, the National Historic Trust, and the New York Times. Indeed, appearance on these lists has aided Northampton's success, as we found very few people in our travels that were not familiar with Northampton and its reputation.

Community involvment, public sector planning, and private sector funding- the formula for success.

Possibly the most important lesson derived from this work, this new relationship expresses a way to evaluate the potential for success of development based on the interaction of three key groups. Any redevelopment needs a shared commitment from these three players, and without it the development will be significantly lacking in some way.

The community is responsible for providing the vision of what they want their center to include, how they want it to look and feel, and how these results should come about. The public should actively participate, and the public sector should work to alleviate barriers preventing equal participation. In return for active participation on the community's part, government will be able to work with the private sector to meet the community's needs.

The government sector, particularly the planning office, is responsible for representing the vision of the community and creating a structure, through zoning and regulation, that ensures this vision. In return, their legitimacy in office is intact, and more importantly, they will have the support of the community behind them as development projects go forward.

The private sector is responsible for making development happen - in conjunction with the vision structured by the public sector - with their investment dollars and innovative practices. Government should work with private investors, both to ensure that investors' ventures are consistent with the town's vision and to help their projects come to fruition. In return for meeting the community's demands, investors have a consumer base.

In Northampton, the revitalization of the downtown in the 1980s would not have been possible without the cooperation and shared commitment of all three of these groups. In the 1970s, many of the buildings in Northampton's Central Business District had vacant upper floors. Engineers recommended some of the buildings be demolished, but the community fought to keep the existing structures. The public sector shared this vision, but had little money to restore the buildings, many of which were in disrepair. Acknowledging the community's desires, the government sought private investment that would restore these buildings rather than simply tear everything down. Because of the commitment of private investors to rehabilitate these

buildings, the upper floors are now filled with residents and businesses, and downtown Northampton has gained a new vibrancy and remarkable local business presence.

Amesbury is another example of this shared commitment, as seen in the Planning Office's concerted effort to involve the community in the planning process. Many members of the community used this opportunity to express their needs, including a comfortable, vibrant, social downtown that is safe for pedestrians while maintaining a historic character. The Planning Office responded appropriately, including implementing design standards that would maintain the historic character that many felt was important to maintain. The private sector provided much needed funding that the government simply did not have, providing quality developments in which businesses could thrive. The community expressed what it wanted, the public sector upheld the vision through zoning and design standards, and the private sector provided the money to realize these visions.

Mashpee Commons is a less successful example of this shared commitment, mainly because the developer was in a unique position to play a larger role than usual in the development. The developers provided enormous amounts of money to businesses to build out their space within the development. Since the developers had the funds to execute these measures and used special permitting and development incentives like 40B to increase the density of the development, the Planning Office and community in Mashpee had very little role in the shaping of Mashpee Commons. While Mashpee Commons is beautifully designed and serves as the town's only central commercial area, the scale of the development is not suitable for the rural infrastructure on Cape Cod and will cause traffic and wastewater problems, among other issues, that the public sector and the community will have to mitigate.

In Park Slope, community participation was integral for the passing of zoning changes in 2003. Since the Planning Department finally recognized and legitimized the desires of the Park Slope community to maintain their historic, Victorian character, it set standards for developers to work within. The community organizing groups, however, need to improve their relationship with private investors and developers, who see them as anti-growth. These groups are not anti-growth; rather, they desire growth on their terms that does not disrupt the social fabric. If this relationship is improved, development will be more successful and welcomed by the public.

Finally, in Lexington, the development of Lexington Place is an example of this successful relationship. The government recognized that the center was in need to increased energy, and a way to improve this would be to allow residences within the Central Business District. The public voted in a town meeting, and approved the Planning Office to make the zoning change allowing for a 30-unit residential development. The developer is constructing the new building in a way that suits Lexington Center's historic character, but using innovative design that allows the building to be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certifiable.

Success will look different everywhere you go, based on the desires of the community and the capacity for those desires to come to fruition. Taken together, these lessons provide the tools necessary to ensure the greatest attention is paid to the needs of the community - in the most inclusive way possible - in the process of development.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Why Planning? Why Now?

This project is born out of a growing need for Americans to reflect on our use of space and the unsustainability of our sprawling suburbs. Sprawl became popular after WWII, with the advent of affordable automobiles and cheap fossil fuels, and has dominating the work of developers, planners, engineers, and architects ever since. In addition to the changes associated with increased automobile ownership, the Federal Housing Administration and Veterans Administration loan programs made it cheaper for many to build a new house rather than continue to pay rent close to the center. This made many financially able to buy their own property, and the construction of the Interstate Highway System allowed people to live further away from work and commercial areas (Duany, et al, 2000).

Sprawl created divisions of space based on use, with homes being sectioned off from commercial areas, which are separated from work areas. This phenomenon has shown many unforeseen problems we will be forced to mitigate for years to come. These problems include an enormous amount of resource use- including oil, water, and land- traffic congestion, social inequity, and isolation of social groups (Duany, et al, 2000). Because sprawl has had such a pervasive negative effect on society, many practitioners are responding by making efforts to reenergize town centers and downtown areas. This has been quite challenging as many of the industrial jobs that once provided downtowns with a large population have moved overseas to reap the benefits of cheap labor and fewer environmental controls.

With this loss of jobs came further exodus from downtowns and town centers by those who could afford to live in suburban areas, leaving behind a poor, isolated population. Vacant housing, empty storefronts, and an ever-increasing vulnerable population developed in many centers. The sprawling suburbs became a place of escape for those with means, and the pathology of downtowns as vacant, scary, and dying places was perpetuated. Now that the ill effects of sprawl are so readily obvious, the push for mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly, culturally vibrant centers is making a comeback, though putting such changes into practice remains an uphill battle. We are thus writing this report at a critical time. We in the field of planning have the potential to mitigate the environmental, health, social, and land use impacts of sprawl while regaining the benefits of natural, dense development that has shown to be sustainable since the dawn of civilization. Creative development in places like old airports or military bases has made use of brownfields abandoned by sprawl (Calthorpe and Fulton, 2000). The good news is that many communities, organizations and local governments are pushing to rehabilitate dying centers and develop new high-density, mixed-use communities. The bad news: we as planners and policymakers have yet to find the best way to go about this endeavor. While we all may share a similar view of wanting to reinvigorate downtowns and town centers, there is no clear definition of what words like "reinvigorate," "vibrant," or "successful" look like in practice. Different people have different values, and so the notion of creating (or recreating) a successful center may not develop in the same way from place to place. It is for this reason that there has yet to be a universally applicable theory. While there are several competing views regarding successful downtowns, revitalization techniques, and participatory roles, our job is to find the ones that are most successful in the cases we study, and create a set of tools that are transferable and draw from both theory and practice.

The Five Case Studies

Lexington, Massachusetts, *Traditional New England Main Street*

Amesbury, Massachusetts, *Post-Industrial Revitalized Town Center*

Northampton, Massachusetts, *Traditional New England Main Street*

Mashpee Commons in Mashpee, Massachusetts, *New Urbanist Community*

Park Slope in Brooklyn, New York, *Transit-Oriented Urban Neighborhood*

Though our observations of these places were both informative and enlightening, we will not pretend that an accurate assessment of success can be determined strictly through our work. Our assessment can be transformed to recommendations for VHB only through an understanding of the current literature and the ability to take from it valuable lessons.

While there are several leading voices in the debate of what constitutes a successful place, none have seemed to find a way to execute their vision without missing something. It is for this reason that our group has struggled to define success when we look at these cases. Is a place successful when everyone who lives there is rich? What about if there is no racial diversity? Is a place less successful if chain stores exist, even if people remain involved in their community? Difficult questions like these that put us at odds with much of the current literature informing this area of study.

Because there is no uniform, and arguably no correct, answer to any of these questions, we have struggled with the limitations that each of the current schools of thought has in their argument. If there was one clear,

widely transferable definition of success, our project would be simple and unnecessary: simply develop the tools that constitute success and eventually you will obtain it. However, since success means different things to different people at different times and places, we must ground ourselves in the current literature in our field, understand its strengths and weaknesses, and then with this knowledge decide which aspects are most important to focus on (likely varying case by case).

American Planning Association

The American Planning Association (APA) has a loose definition of success based on the awards it gives out to communities, cities, and projects throughout the year. For example, the criteria to become an APA Great Neighborhood includes: being a diverse area, having a central location to a mix of uses, shared ownership (often through community participation), community spaces, local commerce, interesting architecture and design, history and character, and city investment (Hinshaw, 2008). This definition of "great" is very closely related to New Urbanism, but has some slight differences. While all of these concepts are positive, it is easy to point out facets that are missing from their definition of successful. What about the environment? Is a neighborhood "less great" if there is not a recycling program? Is a neighborhood "greater" if there is? This analysis does not consider the environment, and so while it is not a bad definition of successful, it is still not a complete one.

The same argument can be made with the APA's definition of "great streets." Clearly rooted in New Urbanist principles, the definition (Eckdish, 2008) is certainly a good one, but not completely comprehensive. This time, the list does not pay much attention to the nature of the businesses. Are the businesses locally owned? Is a street more successful and more pleasing to the community if there are fewer chains? More chains? It is hard to say, and the answer will be different based on who you ask. It seems as though no matter how many indicators you use, if one list is ap-

plied as a universal definition of success, important aspects will be left out in many cases. This is partly because one cannot achieve a situation where every need is met and every resource maximized while every environmental impact is minimized. If we can achieve this, we have not found a way to do it so that a diverse group of people can have equal access to it.

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American Planning Association Great Streets Criteria

- Provides orientation to its users, and connects well to the larger pattern of ways
- Balances the competing needs of the street — driving, transit, walking, cycling, servicing, parking, drop-offs, etc.
- Fits the topography and capitalizes on natural features
- Is lined with a variety of interesting activities and uses that create a varied streetscape
- Has urban design or architectural features that are exemplary in design
- Relates well to its bordering uses — allows for continuous activity, doesn't displace pedestrians to provide access to bordering uses
- Encourages human contact and social activities
- Employs hardscape and/or landscape to great effect
- Promotes safety of pedestrians and vehicles and promotes use over the 24-hour day
- Promotes sustainability through minimizing runoff, reusing water, ensuring groundwater quality, minimizing heat islands, and responding to climatic demands
- Is well maintained, and capable of being maintained without excessive costs
- Has a memorable character

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Smart Growth

Smart Growth is another approach to development, overlapping with many of APA's criteria. Smart Growth's tenants focus on dense, mixed-use developments that are pedestrian centered rather than automobile dependent. [Box 3] Smart Growth is not as design-focused as New Urbanism (discussed in the next section), and has sprung from a "strong environmental ethic, increasing fiscal concerns, demographic shifts, and more nuanced views of growth" (Emerine et. al., 2006). Its concerns lie in uncontrolled sprawl, brownfields occupation of valuable space, and aban-

doned infrastructure in cities. Smart Growth is sometimes referred to as "slow growth" or "no growth," although this is not necessarily the case – depending, of course, on one's definition of "growth."

Smart Growth looks to alleviate car dependency in sprawling areas, and pushes for density to maximize the use of a space. Though the Smart Growth approach is not the traditional unabated, unregulated sprawl, it certainly allows for other kinds of development; for instance, it strongly encourages redevelopment of brownfields into commercial and residential space. Residents, particularly young couples with children, can benefit from the densely built area. Being able to walk from home to the grocery store, to the bank, to a playground and back home is something that is convenient, healthy, and enjoyable. Many young couples with children are certainly beginning to see the benefits of not living in the sprawling suburbs (Groc, 2007) where every task requires getting into the car. However, in some cases Smart Growth may not provide much relief in that area. One issue that is particularly applicable to this study is the problem of Smart Growth in "unintelligent locations." Dense development is only as successful as the infrastructure it is built on, which can be problematic in rural areas.

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Tenants of Smart Growth

- Mixed land uses
- Compact, high-density building design
- Range of housing opportunities
- Walkable neighborhoods
- Attractive communities with a strong sense of place
- Preserve open space, farmland, and critical environmental areas
- Provide a variety of transportation choices
- Make development decisions fair, practical, and cost effective
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions

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New Urbanism

New Urbanism is a set of planning and design techniques that aim to take on "placeless sprawl," increasing separation of races and incomes, environmental degradation, and loss of culture and heritage as communities. It is a design-focused form of Smart Growth. New Urbanism seeks to reinvigorate this lost sense of identity in community and place while incorporating environmental sustainability so these virtues may be realized for generations to come (Charter, 2001). New Urbanism has proved to be marketable, and it can provide many consumers with the type of development they want but have traditionally not had access to (Blasingame-Custer, 2007).

The planning and design techniques at the neighborhood level (most useful to this study) call for a mix of uses, including commercial, civic, residential, and public space. This mix of uses, in a densely built context, allows for people to meet their needs and access to various services without the use of an automobile. New Urbanism includes very specific design techniques to make the new areas feel connected, walkable, socially engaging, and safe. After all, it is the "buildings, views, and public spaces that are often the heart and soul of a community" (Segedy and Daniels, 2007).

Increased community interaction arises from an emphasis on engaging with public and private spaces. Pedestrians live close access to necessities and have priority over automobiles. Ideally, New Urbanists call for alternative transportation to be implemented, though there are some cases, such as Mashpee Commons, where a New Urbanist community exists without significant public transportation (Charter, 2001).

New Urbanism offers specific advice for designing a mixed-use community center. The center should incorporate an architectural style that reflects on the local history, culture, and geography (Charter, 2001). While the ideas of New Urbanism have great potential to help us move from the current sprawling, faceless developments we currently encounter in society, there are several reasons why New Urbanism is not the foolproof solution to current development. Kristen Day (2003) explores several of these reasons.

First, while New Urbanism directly cites increasing separation by race and economic status as a current problem that needs to be overcome, there are very few suggestions by New Urbanism that actually support diversity. The main solution to this problem, according to New Urbanism, is through providing a range of housing prices so people of various economic levels can live in the area (Charter, 2001). While this seems helpful, it does not always translate to reality. A land trust is an innovative and successful (Ross, 2007) way to create and sustain affordable housing, but New Urbanism does not offer this as something to establish at the outset of revitalizing a community.

Middle-class dwellers in the neighborhood may have assumptions about

low-income residents and why they need special treatment. Popular culture equates poorer people with increased crime, and so safety is an issue for higher-income residents, regardless of their unfounded basis for judgment (Day, 2003). Further, lower-income residents may be leery of moving in because of the lack of affordable uses within the retail center and perhaps inadequate access to public transportation allowing them to access those things they need (Day 2003). Affordable housing should be less about design touted by New Urbanists and more about suitability, functionality, access to transit and basic needs, and tailored to a broad range of needs (Dillon, 2006).

One of the main tenants of New Urbanism is reestablishing the community that is lacking in so many contexts of society today. This community, says New Urbanism, should be diverse, economically, racially, among others (Charter, 2001). The problem with this is that the term "community" itself has become so overused and is so unclearly defined that it is difficult to understand when one has actually achieved a "community," and the idea of community means different things to different people (Ross, 2000).

When people buy into a New Urbanist development, it is usually master-planned by a group of people with a specific target audience in mind. When people move to this community they have an expectation of living with similar, like-minded people (Krohe Jr., 2007). While this is certainly considered a community, it takes away from the diversity that New Urbanism is attempting to achieve. Because the term "community" is defined with people of a particular market in mind, it is inherently exclusive and therefore cannot maximize diversity.

While New Urbanists genuinely seek to make improvements in communities, is it their decision to choose which communities are endangered? There is no "philosophical checklist"(Clark, 2005) for what constitutes an endangered community, not to mention that what some may see as an

area in great need of repair fail to see what those living there consider great attributes. Often the great thing about these "endangered places" is the strong sense of community the residents have, regardless of the physical appearance. This causes conflict between the community New Urbanism attempts to achieve and the physically unpleasing (to some) yet strong community it removes.

Second, Day (2003) explains that physical changes may not be the best solution to social problems. While New Urbanism may be able to improve access to goods and services is for many people, it does not solve the greater issue of poverty, lack of jobs, and inaccurate racial and social pathologies. To some, the idea of spending public money on physical alterations of an area to make it more walkable and conducive to public gathering rather than job training, educational trust funds, or micro loans for small businesses is a major misjudgment (Pyatok, 2000).

Day (2003) cites other faults with New Urbanism, including questioning whose local history and culture should be accepted as the form for the community. Who gets to identify the local relevant context? Are planners the best people to do so? The same argument can be made for the center, which may be designed with a specific group of people in mind. Failing to take all the people using the space into account may result in people feeling further excluded.

Lastly, while New Urbanism touts public participation as a necessary step in being successful, it is important that those implementing these techniques make the process open and accessible to all the diverse groups proponents are trying to include. Diverse groups may not feel educated enough or comfortable around authority to participate, and so special attention must be given to where these meetings are held, advertisement, and making people feel welcome once they are in the meeting.

New Urbanist design brings several benefits to an area, and many of the redesigned communities are dramatic improvements on what existed previously. However, New Urbanism is simply an improvement and not a complete representation of what it takes to be successful. Many of the problems it recognizes are not actually solved through New Urbanist recommendations - particularly issues of affordability and access.

As one can see from this discussion, determining one set of indicators for success will never be comprehensive, and the value of the indicators will change depending on who assesses a particular place. Our group feels strongly that there are several quality indicators to pull from Smart Growth, the American Planning Association, New Urbanism, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), and others. We also recognize that these indicators, when assessed in reality, will look different from place to place, and lack adequate emphasis on important factors of sustainability. It is for this reason that each case will emphasize certain indicators to measure their success, based on the needs and desires of individual communities.

Throughout our study of these cases we have developed a theoretical model to assess success without critiquing what it looks like. It is not a foolproof model, and will need further development and consideration within a greater body of literature, but it has served this project well and we feel it has practical applications in other places. The "Public, Private, People" model seeks to analyze the relationships forged between these three groups in either a redevelopment or new development process. Graphically, these relationships can be understood as a triangle.

This figure reflects the relationship necessary between each of the main players regarding redevelopment, and each player has a responsibility to the other parties, and serves to benefit from these parties. The community is responsible for providing the vision of what they want their center

to include, how they want it to look and feel, and how these results should come about. The public should actively participate, and the city or town should work to alleviate barriers preventing equal participation. In return for active participation on the community's part, government will be able to work with the private sector to meet the community's needs.
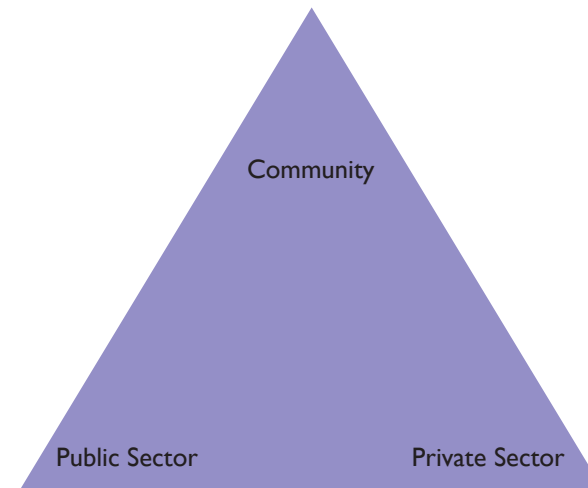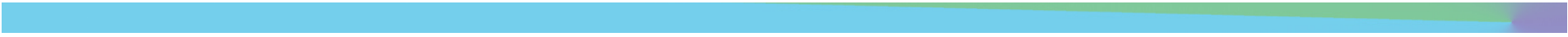
Figure 1.1

The government sector, particularly the planning office, is responsible for representing the vision of the community and creating a structure, through zoning and regulation, that ensures this vision. In return, their legitimacy in office is intact, and more importantly, they will have the support of the community behind them as development projects go forward.

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We will visit this model at the end of each chapter to reflect on how the relationships between these groups have affected the current development in each case. If there is an example of a solid relationship between the three groups, we will discuss the positive impacts. If there are facets of the relationship that need work, we will give recommendations for improvements that should be made.

Chapter 2:
Lexington, Massachusetts
Traditional New England Main Street

Figure 2.1

Lexington is a suburb of Boston located about 10 miles north of the city. Lexington was first settled in 1642 and was incorporated as a town in 1713. Lexington Center includes roughly 16.5 acres along Massachusetts Avenue, and serves as the town's "living room," where people shop, congregate, and socialize (McCall-Taylor and Yanosski, 2008). During our visit to Lexington Center, we met with Town Planner Maryann McCall-Taylor and Economic Development Officer Susan Yanosski to help us better understand the current situation in Lexington.

The heart of Lexington Center has been designated as the Central Business District (CBD), which is intended to maintain a mix of uses offering a wide variety of goods and services. The CBD designation signifies the role of Lexington Center as the focus of civic, cultural, retail and service activity in the town. Its contribution to the history, culture, and image of the town requires special development standards not appropriate for other locations in the town.

The majority of the retail establishments in the town center are lined along Massachusetts Avenue, in the traditional New England town center form. The center has various services available, including restaurants, spas, salons, banks, and coffee shops. There is not much variety to the appearance of the buildings, and it can tend to look somewhat like an upscale outdoor mall. The similar looking storefronts all have a historic character, often built with brick, indicative of the feeling evoked to emphasize Lexington's heritage. No stores in the center are flashy or eclectic on their own, but taken together, the image created is aesthetically pleasing. The Planning Department realizes that there are both benefits and limitations to having a center that is so consistent within itself, and would like the town center to have more "ordered chaos" along the lines of Davis Square (McCall-Taylor and Yanosski, 2008).

The Battle Green, located at the western edge of the Central Business District, serves as a public open space, along with a large green in front of the former train depot. During our visit on a Friday at lunchtime, the streets had pedestrian traffic of all ages, including many high school students and people on their lunch break. The open space is utilized year round, indicated by the footprints in the snow in February as well as a lively soccer game in Depot Square during our April visit.

Figure 2.2

The maximum height of buildings has been restricted to two stories since 1984 in order to control density of development in the town center. Before that, building height was unlimited, and as a result there remain some three-story buildings in Lexington Center. The height restrictions make it difficult for additional development on the main road, as one and two-structures already line the street. However, turnover of businesses is frequent enough that those looking to start a business can acquire space in a reasonable amount of time.

Office uses are not encouraged in the business district, principally because they require parking spaces occupied for hours at a time, as opposed to one hour or less for retail like spas, salons, bookstores, and coffees shops. Offices would also compete economically with desirable retail spaces, which could be used to bring a greater variety of retail to the downtown. Like zoning in many other mixed use areas in the country, office space is not permitted on the first floor. However, office space has increased in number recently as it is difficult for businesses to maintain retail space in Lexington Center.

The village center appears to be moving towards compact and more intensive development oriented towards pedestrians. Most off-street parking will be in a few larger lots serving a variety of stores, rather than

specific lots designated for individual stores. This strategy lends itself well to a mixed-use development, where the close proximity of businesses encourages people to leave their cars and enjoy the character of a human scale, well-connected space. Uses that interrupt the continuity of the pedestrian circulation and shopping patterns, such as first-floor office and residential uses, are discouraged, while emphasis is placed on maintaining sidewalks and street furniture. Although there are few residents in Lexington Center, residential neighborhoods are located off Massachusetts Avenue, and so the center is of walkable distance to many residents. In recent years, Lexington Center has lost much retail, including Gap, Thunder Sports Store, a cheese shop, a record store, a toy store, a used bookstore, a florist, and a department store. Sometimes the lack of profit pushes businesses to leave, but in the case of Gap, it was the close proximity of the Burlington Mall. There, businesses do not have to adhere to design standards of any sort, have a cheaper rent per square foot, and can offer free parking. In addition, the consumer base for the Burlington Mall is much bigger than Lexington Center.

Some of the storefronts remain empty from businesses that have left. In such a situation, ensuring a variety of businesses is difficult. As a result, there are many banks and salons, but little variety of anything else. Lack of enough restaurants was an issue discussed by both Maryann Mc-Call-Taylor and Susan Yanosski, along with a need for a greater

Figure 2.3

variety of retail in general. The lack of variety is exacerbated as the center loses much activity after 6:00 pm. There is not enough "night-life" to keep people downtown into the evening, and it is doubly hard for new retail to

remain open later hours, as there are not other businesses doing the same that can support and provide established foot traffic for the new business.

Several opportunities exist for businesses in the Center to improve their success. Business owners need to capitalize on markets that have disposable incomes, two of which are largely ignored: young people and tourists. While we were in Lexington Center, we observed many high school students walking around during their open period. There are very few places where they could spend their money, buy lunch, or just sit down and be social. Businesses can take advantage of this population by offering student discounts, selling products more linked with the interests of high school students, or, in the case of coffee shops, provide evening or weekend entertainment that would appeal to this crowd.

While there are some tourists who come through the area, Lexington is not a destination for most, but rather a brief stop along the Freedom Trail. On our visit, we were surprised by the lack of historical references in most of the businesses, even though the area itself was designed to maintain this historical character. If businesses could lure tourists to spend their money in Lexington, by acknowledging the historical context as not just a design but also something to market, Lexington Center could greatly increase its economic activity. The Center could become a more desirable place for additional businesses to open and bring in a better mix of retail and restaurants.

This is not to say that nothing is done to attract tourists to Lexington. Tourists crowd Lexington on Patriot's Day each year to see the Battle of Lexington reenactment and other events. Lexington Depot, managed by the Lexington Historical Society, is available for rental by non-profit groups, businesses, and residents in Lexington, and provides a sizeable event space in the town center. The former train depot is a unique place to hold an event. Each Tuesday from June through October, a Farmers Market oper-

ates behind the Lexington municipal buildings. It has been successful since its inception in 2005, with about 900 people visiting each week (McCall-Taylor and Yanosski, 2008).

Part of the success of Lexington Center is due to its walkability and human scale. Sidewalks along Massachusetts Avenue were widened and street trees and benches were added based on the recommendations of the "Plan for Lexington Center" in 1966. Broad sidewalks, products on display outside stores, tree-lined streets, and on-street parallel parking serving as a buffer encourage people to walk around the town center. The Minuteman Bike Trail also passes through Lexington along Massachusetts Avenue, making Lexington one of the only places we studied that is both easily and safely accessible by bicycle.

Figure 2.4

In addition to bicycle access, there is other alternative transportation available in Lexington. Lexpress, a local bus service, runs six routes connecting residential areas to the town center. This service helps people who cannot drive a car – primarily the elderly, disabled, and those too young to drive – gain access to the town center, further contributing to downtown vibrancy (McCall-Taylor and Yanosski, 2008). Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) bus services connect Lexington Center with the Alewife Station on the Red Line. This is convenient for the many people who live in Lexington and work in Boston.

Figure 2.5

Even with the alternative transit options, widespread use of automobiles is evident in Lexington. With this use of automobiles comes a need for parking spaces. In spite of the existence of many parking lots and on-street spaces, locating these spaces off down the street or behind a row of buildings can be difficult. On our first visit to Lexington, it took us over 25 minutes to park. There are few signs directing people to available spaces away from the main parking lots near Massachusetts Avenue, and some of the lots lack a well-lit, walkable path to the main street. Lexington could benefit from a program that increases use awareness of parking spaces available (Litman, 2006). McCall-Taylor and Yanosski (2008) explain that the parking solution in Lexington Center may not be to add more spaces, but rather to help people understand where the existing available spots are located. The vast majority of the lots are metered and accessible for any place in the downtown, which is a much better use of space than, for example, having parking designated for a bank sit empty all weekend while people cannot find parking for a restaurant (Litman, 2006). Some spots are a few blocks down from the center, a very short walk; yet despite the cars circling the main parking lots in the CBD, we found many of these spaces were available just a few blocks away.

Affordability is a significant problem in Lexington, regarding both commercial space and residences. As far as we found, no mechanism is in place to help entrepreneurs start or maintain a business. This leads to frequent turnover and open storefronts, though Lexington had a small number of vacancies compared to the other cases studied. In Lexington's case, the high turnover and affordability issue has resulted in lack of variety of commercial uses.

Housing rental rates are quite expensive and there is a shortage of available housing (as is true in most places). Low-income residents and young people have trouble staying in Lexington, causing them to move further and further outside of town. As a result, businesses in Lexington Center find it difficult to attract and maintain workers. Lexington Place, the new residential development currently under construction in Lexington Center, will incorporate 10 percent of its units as affordable, but considering this only totals 3 units, it will do little overall to solve the affordability problems.

Lexington Yesterday, Lexington Today

Lexington began as a quaint farm town, providing much of the greater Boston area with produce. In 1846, the extension of a railroad line from Boston to Depot Square in Lexington (and beyond) allowed more people living in Lexington to access the industrial jobs in the city, leading to population growth. Gradual growth continued for decades, and after World War II population increased dramatically, bringing new construction in the town center.

In 1956, the Lexington Historic District Commission was established to maintain the town's architectural integrity, particularly the inherent diversity of style found in the neighborhoods surrounding Lexington Center. Lexington's Central Business District sits within the Battle Green Historic District, one of four of the town's historic districts, and the Historic District Commission reviews color, façade, and signage changes made there.

In 1966, the Lexington Planning Board and the Committee to Study the Revitalization of Lexington produced a report called "Plan for Lexington Center." This plan made recommendations for creating a profitable Central Business District that would retain Lexington's historical heritage while still allowing the town to grow economically. To the Lexington community, it was (and still is) integral that the town's notoriety as the site of the first shots of the Revolutionary War remains intact, and that this heritage heavily influences the character of the town center. The recommendations in the 1966 plan aimed to preserve and highlight that history, and were the last major changes to zoning in Lexington.

Today Lexington Center is relatively vibrant and is undergoing new construction, as described later in this chapter. The Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Historic District Commission, and Historical Society work together to ensure continued growth in the center that does not compromise the historical integrity cherished by the community.

Lessons

The first major lesson we drew from Lexington is the importance of establishing a committee that will oversee and ensure the preservation of historic characteristics and other important aspects of the area. As applicable in other places, the oversight could be to ensure the survival of any type of design; since Lexington has such strong ties to its history, it is natural that this is the character they would like to maintain and market. Lexington established the Historic District Commission (HDC), which is responsible for approving all exterior architectural changes to buildings and structures. The Lexington Historic District Commission has strictly managed all buildings in the Historic District. Residents and businesses that wish to make some exterior alterations, including a color change or display of signage, are required to apply for hearing by the commission. For example, natural materials such as wood, glass, brick, and stone are preferred, while synthetic materials such as vinyl or plastic and usually aluminum are regarded as inappropriate materials. Such thorough building management efforts can be applied in other communities relatively easily. Other changes necessitating approval include demolition, construction, renovation, any alteration of facades, color changes, and the addition of signs.

Figure 2.6

Lexington's town center is fully encompassed in the Historic District, which means all exterior architectural changes must go through the (HDC) approval process. The commission will then recommend materials, colors, size, and other architectural changes that will best fit in with the existing characteristics of the center. The commission can refuse colors because the change will not fit in with surrounding properties. The architecture and age of the property can also influence the changes that will be approved. Committee oversight is a simple way to control design in a center in order to maintain a specific character.

The next lesson involves the importance of incorporating residential units into the town center. As more and more people moved from centers to suburbs over the past decades, downtowns and town centers suffered from lack of energy and vibrancy. Lexington recognized this, and in 2005, rather than allowing their center to fail, changed part of their Central Business District (CBD) to a "planned commercial" space to allow for residential units in a traditionally absent in a CBD area. The zoning change – which encompasses only the parcel on which Lexington Place sits – was voted into existence by the community.

Source: Town of Lexington   Figure 2.7

The current development in Lexington Center is Lexington Place, which will be three stories tall and include roughly 30 residential units. The height restriction was also changed for Lexington Place in order to maximize the number of residential spaces built while still fitting in with Lexington's current town center feel. Amenities such as a library, common kitchen, and compact fitness space will be provided. Of the 30 units, three units will be affordable. Lexington Place is being built according to LEED

Figure 2.8

standards and will be certified (see Appendix 4 for the LEED checklist for Lexington Place). The building will use fewer resources, including energy, water, and materials, than most code-conforming residential buildings. Its location alone enables reduced automobile usage, as residents are located in Lexington Center.

The "Public, Private, People" model may show weaknesses in the relationships between the major players in the development of Lexington Center; however, it also demonstrates the origins of the success of one case within Lexington. The current development assessed in this scenario is the construction of Lexington Place, a 30-unit residential facility with a fitness center located on Massachusetts Avenue in the heart of Lexington Center. The construction of Lexington Place is clearly going to bring a renewed sense of vibrancy to the CBD, particularly because the center is desolate after 6 pm and there is no nightlife. Having a population in the center at all times will help it become more than a 9 to 5 place.

Many people are excited about this construction and are already on a waiting list for the future spaces. This helps to dispel the myth that centers are dying because people do not want to live in them. There is a market for mixed use, but sometimes a town's zoning prevents this market from existing. Lexington's change to the zoning of the town center has allowed the residential market to flourish and serves as a successful way to reenergize their town center.

Town meetings were used to discuss the zoning change that would allow for residential units in Lexington Center. It was approved by the public, who obviously felt that it was a necessary step to reenergize their town center, and served as a secondary means of providing additional affordable units within close proximity of the center. Once the change was approved, the government altered the zoning appropriately, and the developers are capitalizing on this market and building the facility. Lexington Place will be LEED certified, bringing innovative elements to the project. The façade is designed in a way that makes to look like a traditional New England style building, meaning the developer is working in a way that produces a green building without disrupting the greater character of the downtown. Though it is one story higher than the other buildings in the center, it does not disrupt the character or the human scale because so much attention has been paid to other details of design. In this example, the relationship between all three parties seems to be positive, helping to make Lexington Place a successful, green, ten percent affordable development.

Green Design at Lexington Place

Of all the construction studied in this project, Lexington Place is the only one including green design elements that are certifiable by Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards. Some of the green design standards include being built near existing public transportation, access to green spaces, limiting turf use, keeping a basic landscaping design, building at a density over 20 units per acre, exceeding Energy Star for Homes, and installing high performance fireplaces. According to the Lexington Place Development Team, Oaktree Development and Line Company Architects, Inc., these measures will lead to a higher level of comfort for residents, as well as substantial savings in energy costs.

Chapter 3:
Amesbury, Massachusetts
Post-Industrial Revitalization

Figure 3.1

Amesbury is located in Northern Massachusetts, near the border of New Hampshire, and covers an area of roughly 13.6 square miles. Located in Essex County, Amesbury was settled in 1642 and incorporated as a town in 1668. The town began as a farming community, but soon developed into an industrial town because of its proximity to the Powwow River. The 90-foot drop in the falls provided water power for sawmills and gristmills. Amesbury was the first place to produce machine-made nails, built ships, later produced carriages (known around the world for their craftsmanship), and finally produced hats before the vast majority of industry left to move south and abroad.

Amesbury's rich industrial history gave it a thriving economy as well as making it a place where people could live and prosper. However, Amesbury experienced the same fate as other industrial towns in America, and faced decades of downturn. The last of the industries left with the onset of the Great Depression, and since then the number of jobs and level of vibrancy of the downtown has never quite recovered, though recent revitalization efforts have brought businesses back and helped to reinvigorate the vibrancy of the downtown.

Today, Amesbury is still working to reenergize the downtown and make Amesbury a place people desire to live and visit. Much of this revitalization can be attributed to effort on the part of local government and public participation. The town center is a quaint place with the pervasive feeling of an old industrial center. The main streets are curved, surrounding a group of mills along the river. Today, these mills have been transformed into residences, factories, and restaurants. Beside the river among the mills is a public space that allows people to congregate and enjoy the aesthetics nestled behind the primary commercial zone on the other side of the street.

This historical character is maintained because of the design of the buildings. Much of the infrastructure is old and recovered, as opposed to being torn down and new structures built. The Victorian style of the structures looks classic and welcoming. The downtown

Figure 3.2

has a variety of businesses, including restaurants, clothing shops, toyshops, cafes, some hobby shops, and a bar. There are a number of storefront vacancies downtown - more than other places we visited. While the

downtown on a whole is quite pleasing and enjoyable to visit, there are small sections that are suffering from a lack of store-fronts. Nipun Jain, Amesbury's Director of Planning, mentioned that high rents make it difficult for independent, locally based stores to stay in business. There are very few chain stores in Amesbury, and this makes it difficult to form a

Figure 3.3

foot-traffic anchor downtown for local stores. Since not many of the businesses draw a crowd from outside Amesbury, the area's consumer base is not as high as needed to maintain a greater number of businesses.

Parking is not one of the most pressing issues in Amesbury, though it could use some improvement. They have a covered parking lot located close to the downtown, but it has several drawbacks. It is leaking from the upper floor due to cracks in the foundation and is not well lit. Because of this, people do not want to utilize this space. During our visit, we noticed that very few cars were parked in the covered lot, even though it was during the winter.

Jain (2008) expressed that plans were being discussed regarding giving businesses an incentive to fund spaces in a public lot at a

Figure 3.4

cheaper rate than providing their own personal spaces, but this plan has not come to fruition. In theory this plan sounds like a great strategy for developing public parking and creating revenue to maintain it, but it is not clear why this plan has not been implemented.

Amesbury is connected to the greater region by alternative transportation. There are buses that go through Amesbury to other neighboring communities through the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority. Busing to Newburyport connects with direct service to Boston. Bike lanes are absent from the roads in downtown, and Jain notes that it will be a long-term process to get the public on board for adding bike lanes. It is enjoyable for pedestrians to walk through Amesbury, with several crosswalks in the streets, wide sidewalks, ample public space, and plenty of benches.

Traffic Calming: Aiding Pedestrian Comfort in the Downtown

Amesbury has used traffic calming as a way to improve the accessibility of its center to pedestrians. At the recommendation of VHB in revitalization efforts, these calming measures have made the downtown more walkable, safer for pedestrians, and taken the emphasis off vehicle travel while still allowing cars to access and function in the area. The use of one-way streets on the main commercial roads, a 20 mph speed limit, and traffic circles keep vehicles in motion without overwhelming the area. Parallel parking on both sides of the main roads encourages drivers to leave their cars and walk, and also serves as a buffer between pedestrians on the sidewalk and cars driving on the street. The town's cobblestone crosswalks are not only attractive, but also easy for drivers to see and thereby safer for pedestrians.

Lessons

Encouraging the community to partake in visioning processes is critical to redevelopment. Jain (2008) stresses the importance of taking the time and energy to understand community input because revitalization is an in-depth and incremental process that needs sustained support for success. The more investment the community puts into the vision, the more likely they are to continue supporting the initiative, even when there are setbacks. The visioning process should involve as many people as possible, should address the needs of the community, and should be taken seriously by the planning office.

The Importance of Visioning

Visioning is critical in developing and maintaining a successful community. Visioning should include as many people in the community as possible. The visioning process should take place over an extended period, giving people ample opportunity to process the strengths and needs of their community. Visioning could be done at town meetings, charettes, or any other type of meeting open to the public. The process should take place in a setting in which people feel comfortable. This may require choosing several different locations to make the greatest number of people feel welcome to participate. Successful visioning translates the common themes voiced by the community into attainable measures. Additionally, a community that feels it has had an input in the visioning can in turn provide sustained support to keep projects moving through incremental redevelopment.

The visioning process by Amesbury residents has resulted in greater access to public space, deeding private spaces for public access, traffic calm-ing measures to maximize pedestrian accessibility in the downtown, and preserving the historic character in the downtown. It is important to realize that all people may not have desired these things, but they are within the means of the planning office to achieve and serve to improve the

Figure 3.5

quality of life of those utilizing the downtown. It made financial sense and would provide a marketing opportunity to preserve the historical aspects of the downtown.

Once a vision is articulated, it should be codified as much as possible so developers understand the boundaries of their design. There is often a disconnect between what residents expect and what zoning allows for, which leads to problems with developers. People may see developers as coming in and destroying the fabric of a community when often they are acting within the provisions allowed by the zoning.

Developers look to zoning as the blueprint for what they can create in an area. If the zoning does not reflect the vision of an area, the zoning needs to be changed. The zoning should mandate design that evokes the desired character. If the zoning and design standards are clear and thorough, the developer will understand the framework in which they are operating. Even with strict standards, developers will build as long as they can easily obtain and understand the standards.

Amesbury wants to maintain its industrial center character, and their zoning and design standards clearly reflect this. There are no density require-

ments, so long as the character remains intact. The Subway sign does not look traditional, yet it is still recognizable. This shows that chains can exist in a down-town trying to preserve their historical character so long as design standards tell an investor how to act.

Figure 3.6

Design Standards in Amesbury

Amesbury's Design Standards, approved by the Planning Board and Design Review Committee in 1999, clearly reflect the desires of the community in future development. Regarding new construction design, the code calls for compatibility with existing older buildings as the key to maintaining the industrial character, especially in terms of compatible scale, color, proportion, and texture. New construction should complement, but not stand out from the environment that surrounds it. Colors should be chosen in relation to adjacent buildings and should consider how daylight will change the appearance of the color.

Other recommendations include: strongly discouraging front parking lots; landscaping and lighting of unfilled setback areas; and attractive rear and side access to encourage the use of back parking lots, walking, and use of alleys. Human scale development is encouraged and large façades are not regarded as fitting in with the character of the downtown. Downplaying large façades can be achieved through the use of trim, awnings, eaves, windows, complimentary colors, and special pedestrian access to ground floors of larger buildings. These elements allow developers to build while maximizing the benefit to the town as being something they desire that maintains character.

Reusing buildings is often more beneficial than simply tearing them down and building again. Amesbury reuses many of its old buildings, and it has done a phenomenal job of maintaining the historic character. The original level of density remains and, particularly in an old industrial center, the place is walkable, thanks partly to built-in pedestrian connections.

Figure 3.7

Examples of Reuse

top left- restaurant built in between to industrial buildings
bottom left- coffee and epresso bar in the old train depot
top right- restaurant along the river in an old industrial building
bottom right- gymnastics studio in the old movie theater

Evaluating Amesbury in the Public, Private, People Model, we find a relatively successful relationship between the three groups. In an effort to revitalize this post-industrial center, the government took the citizens' opinions to heart and made sure they were a critical element in the visioning process. The government then developed strict design standards and zoning, and private developers provided the millions of dollars needed to fund projects the town never could afford on its own.

Figure 3.8

the perceived needs of the community? What if this development would create much needed affordable units with walkable access to downtown? Is it the greater community's right to block this access? These questions need to be considered in addition to simply looking at the relationships between groups that seem to be working well together.

Figure 3.9

In one case, the government helped the developers by paying to bring a building up to code and then the developers built the spaces out. However, the community is not happy with a townhouse development that developers built just outside the center via special permit. This has hurt the relationship between the government and the community somewhat. However, it does beg the question: at what point are the overriding economic interests of the government (in this case, for tax base) more important than

Chapter 4:
Northampton, Massachusetts
Traditional New England Main Street

Figure 4.1

Rt. 91 runs through part of Northampton and buses connect the city with Springfield and the Five Colleges, but there is no longer a functioning train station in Northampton.

Downtown sits on gradually sloping terrain and centers on a curving main street rather than a grid. Although most of the buildings are attractive, historical, multi-level brick structures with storefronts at street level and apartments or offices above, the design is far from uniform. Many of the buildings are original 19th century structures and have unique detailing, a variety of colors and textures in building materials and storefronts, and often differ in height. Other than several new one-story buildings (such as the CVS store that Northampton cites in its design guideline as a negative example of development), most of the commercial buildings on Main Street have apartments or offices upstairs.

Figure 4.2

Northampton is located in Western Massachusetts – near Springfield, but perhaps more importantly, near UMass-Amherst and the other members of the Five Colleges consortium. Smith College, an independent women's liberal arts college and one of the Five Colleges, is located in downtown Northampton. The town is situated in the Connecticut River valley between tall wooded hills and the Holyoke Range State Park. U.S.

Figure 4.3

Another important aspect of Northampton's unique local flavor is the prevalence of locally owned businesses. The majority of businesses in the Central Business District – from restaurants to clothing retail to groceries – are locally owned. Many of these businesses have been open for decades in the same building. This is another unusual feature for a small New England city, especially one with higher rent prices than many cities of similar scale.

Hidden Gems: Making Use of Alleys

Alleys are another point of design that strengthens the connectivity, walkability, and success of businesses in a downtown area. The alleys that connect the fronts and backs of buildings in Northampton's Central Business District do so in a way that is inviting and safe. Rather than being dark and forgotten places, many of the alleys and side streets are desirable for pedestrians, with murals painted on the alley walls or shops located along the side streets. Providing proper lighting, keeping the alleys clean, and visibly showing there is more for the pedestrian on the other side makes alleys desirable. Connecting parking lots to the main streets via alleys is also convenient for pedestrians and makes parking their car and walking more efficient than driving and parking in multiple locations. Because of safe alleys, ample crosswalks, and well-maintained sidewalks, Northampton is very well connected for pedestrians.

Street parking is available along the busier streets downtown, but the majority of parking spaces are located in a lot and parking garage behind the main street's buildings. Several stores have their storefronts facing into the parking lot, and alleys and side streets connect the lot with the main commercial area. An elevated walkway also connects the parking garage with the street level stores. Businesses do not have individual parking lots, which encourages walking throughout the downtown. The use of the parking spaces is also maximized since there are no restrictions as to who can park where.
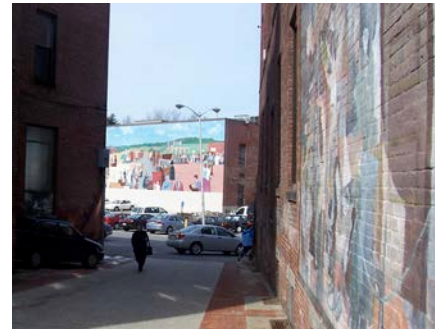
Figure 4.4

Figure 4.5

Northampton has a reputation for artistic character and a vibrant cultural scene; these, in turn, are closely tied to a local community of artist, as well as Smith College and nearby University of Massachusetts in Amherst, two of the city's main employers. Northampton is home to several busy music and art venues, another unusual feature for a city of about 30,000. Northampton's success in image, reputation, aesthetics, and citizen participation owes much to its artist community. Many artists, who are typically less affluent than most, have been able to move to Northampton because of relatively low rent prices. However, those prices are increasing, and some artists have left for more affordable places such as nearby Holyoke. The rent prices may also cause financial stress for locally owned businesses, which face the threat of chain intrusion. A high-end garment chain

is already planning to move into a space across the street from a decades-old local store selling very similar products.

History of the Arts in Northampton

Northampton has a long history and reputation as a center of the arts, from the 19th century praise of illustrious visitors such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry James up to travel writer John Villani's recent rating of Northampton as America's best "Small Arts Town." Jenny Lind called it the "paradise of America;" artist Thomas Cole found the town's blend of city and nature the "picturesque" ideal. Smith College has helped to ensure an artistic presence since its founding in the 1800s. The Academy of Music (still municipally owned), built in 1890 and one of the nation's oldest standing theatres, has hosted such figures as Harry Houdini, Mae West, and Boris Karloff, and continues to be a busy arts event space today. More recently, Northampton is known as the birthplace of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, and the Northampton Independent Film Festival and Paradise City Arts Festival have drawn visitors since 1995.

Northampton's Office of Planning and Development plays a crucial role in bringing together the city's community groups, local investors, and public funding. Private investors have paid for much of the rehabilitation of buildings in Northampton, but the planning office has helped many of them gain public funding for projects, sometimes leveraging public funds in order to attract investors. The city's willingness to spend some money improving the city with pavement projects (such as

Figure 4.6

new sidewalks and lights) has paid off, and its willingness to allow the artist community to leave its stamp on the city – literally, in the case of murals in alleyways – has helped Northampton gain its reputation as a haven for the arts. Smith College has certainly played a crucial role in building this image as well. The college also adds to the city's cultural scene by hosting its own events and contributes to the aesthetics of the place with attractive architecture.

According to Wayne Feiden, Northampton's Director of Planning and Development, a major reason Northampton has been able to keep the downtown center as the city's hub of activity is that the zoning calls for storefronts on the first floor in the commercial area, then allows office, residential or commercial use of upstairs spaces. The presence of apartment space adds to the bustle of the downtown and provides additional spaces that can be made affordable in order to expand economic diversity. Finding alternative uses for preexisting infrastructure is another important success in Northampton. In the 1980s several schools in the area had closed and there was disagreement about what to do with them. While the major push was to tear them down and build something else, the schools were instead redeveloped for residential use. These residents are very close to the town center, allowing walking access to all their necessities. Feiden cites this as being very important to the center, as these people are the mainstay of business on "a snowy Wednesday evening" when others are not willing to drive and are too far away to walk.

The city certainly prefers local businesses to chains in the central business area, but Feiden admits that chains cannot be prevented from moving in. Contrary to some small towns in parts of New England (Maine in particular), Northampton does not have any specific provisions prohibiting chains, but has still managed to largely keep local businesses as the dominant presence in Northampton.

Chains are becoming a greater presence in Northampton, however, and much of this is due to rising rent prices. Small businesses often need low-rent spaces and will settle for a spot with less foot traffic if rent is more affordable. These spaces are typically located just off the main street on one of the side streets. Chains, however, are often willing to pay more in order to set up in a busy area, generally on the main thoroughfare. Keeping rent prices low is important for maintaining a mix of local businesses, and Northampton has done so by doubling its central commercial area over the past two decades. The city continues to look for ways to increase available retail space through an expanded commercial zone and thus bring rent prices down.

Figure 4.7

Limiting the number of chain stores downtown is one of the most important challenges facing Northampton. The abundance and success of locally owned businesses comprises a critical part of the city's character – the same character which attract tourists, who in turn provide the business to keep those businesses going.

The town must confront the question of how to do handle this. Is there a good way to keep most chains out without strictly forbidding them? Might this result in empty storefronts?

The economic success of Northampton may be more fragile now than in recent decades. The difficulty here, and anywhere relying on fluid factors such as successful local businesses and low rent prices, is in maintaining the balance between preserving local character and keeping the place economically sturdy.

Lessons

Northampton has a long reputation not only as an arts destination, but also as a unique, eclectic, and active place to live and visit. The image of a liberal, socially aware community with a feminist influence is thanks to both the presence of Smith College and the local artist community; Northampton's success in packaging and marketing this image is thanks largely to a sustained branding undertaking on the part of the city.

"Best of": Northampton's Branding Successes

Great Places in America Award for Main Street - American Planning Association, 2007

Top Adventure Town in Massachusetts- National Geographic Adventure Magazine, September 2007

Best Place for Retirees, #1 - New York Times, 2007

Top 25 Arts Destinations- American Style Magazine, 2000 - 2008

Best Downtown Shopping District Award of Excellence- Retailers Association of Massachusetts

Best Places to Live – Big Small Towns- Boston Magazine, April 2001

Top 10 Family Friendly Towns- Parenting Magazine, May 1997

The Planning Office and Chamber of Commerce make a concerted effort to market their city by applying for "best of" lists as if they were applying for grants. Most recently, the National Historic Trust, the American Planning Association, and the New York Times have recognized Northampton as an exemplary community. Their work has paid off, too, as evidenced by the amount of weekend tourism there from New York, Boston, and

Figure 4.8

other parts of New England. Northampton is well regarded beyond New England as well. "There's no question that there's a cachet," Feiden (2008) says.

However, Feiden (2008) adds that this kind branding success doesn't take care of itself. Although sometimes an appearance on a list can lead to interest from other groups or media outlets, Feiden says many towns make the mistake of then relaxing rather than following up with a sustained branding effort. "I definitely think you can lose people," he says, which is why Northampton continues to aggressively bill itself to magazines that do rankings – and continues to maintain a widespread image as an interesting, lively, artistic downtown with notable restaurants, shopping, and culture.

Northampton came to be this way thanks to a shared commitment on the part of city government, community groups, and private investors. In the 1970s, many of the upstairs levels of the historic brick buildings in Northampton's Central Business District were empty. Those spaces are zoned for either residential or commercial use, and the city certainly wished to bring in tenants, but it was not until private investors committed money to rehabilitate the buildings that this could happen. The artist community moved in and continues to maintain an active presence in town affairs, and the downtown became much

Figure 4.9

more vibrant as a result of the focused investments of the 1980s. Another example of one of these investments is the reuse of public school buildings downtown. When the schools left the buildings, the city decided to bring in the help of investors to help convert the buildings into residential use, helping to bring more foot traffic to the downtown area.

Community involvement was critical in bringing about Northampton's rehabilitation in the 1980s, and it continues to factor prominently into the city's character and function today, especially from the artist community. Private investors have played a critical role in funding rehabilitation and businesses, and government has showed a commitment to retaining the essential character of Northampton. None of these three players could single-handedly have brought Northampton the success it now enjoys; rather, the city's revival and sustained success have come about because all three parties acted with a shared interest in improving downtown Northampton.

These groups acted with not only common interests but with a shared commitment, and often in coordination. The planning office has especially had a hand in some of the rehabilitation efforts funded mainly by private investors, helping to make specific projects possible. However, the office's hand in community and private improvements has not been heavy; Feiden (2008) says it "facilitates," rather than "coordinates," these projects. Additionally, the planning office encourages entrepreneurial spirit by giving awards to individuals who have helped to improve downtown Northampton.

This shared relationship is indicative of our "Public, Private, People" Model. The sustained and cooperative effort from all three of these players had made it possible for Northampton to grow with a unique character, support its businesses, and make intelligent development decisions that ensure greater access to the downtown.

Chapter 5:
Mashpee Commons, Massachusetts
New Urbanist Development

Figure 5.1

The Development of Mashpee Commons

The site of Mashpee Commons was first developed in the mid 1960's as the New Seabury Shopping Center, a strip mall featuring single story buildings surrounded by a parking lot. During that time (and even today) this was a typical style of development for the Cape. However, by the 1980's, the site's strip mall was deteriorating. John Renz, Mashpee Commons Vice President, says

Source: Unknown   Figure 5.2

that the current site of Mashpee Commons could have become a one million square foot mall with the permitting existing at the time – and the developers could have finished it in six months. But Buff Chase, the son of the original developer, and his partner, Douglas Storrs, had a different vision for the land. They created a plan to transform the site into a traditional mixed use New England town center. This new development would not be a typical shopping center, but it would serve as the town of Mashpee's town center – a place for open air shopping, entertainment, and public gathering.

Beginning in 1986, Chase and Storrs began the development of the 255-acre site. They held numerous public meetings to discuss the design. Over 360 people attended. Initially, it was difficult to convince the town that a traditional New England-style center could be a success. Andres Duany, who helped to come up with the site plans, came to talk to the town about the design and apparently was nearly booed out of the room. The developer could only give their word that the project would be a success, and within the year construction had begun.

Among planners, architects and designers, Mashpee Commons is grouped with some of the most well-known examples of New Urbanist developments. It is highly regarded for its meticulous design standards and architecture. As the developer claims in their informational materials, "Mashpee Commons' neo-traditional design is award-winning, national and internationally recognized, and has also been used as a model for regional and national development."

The small, rural town of Mashpee is located on Cape Cod in Massachusetts. Mashpee Commons is a private 40B project located in Mashpee and now serves as the town's commercial center. Mashpee Commons draws a large audience from all parts of the state and Rhode Island.

Figure 5.3

The first phase of the development, consisting of three blocks, was completed in 1988. The existing buildings from the New Seabury Shopping Center were rehabbed, with their rooflines altered and new facades created. Developers Buff Chase and Douglas Storrs made sure that the space would feel human scale. They looked at historical examples and measured the heights of the buildings, the widths of the streets and sidewalks, and examined the traditional architectural styles. The original site was hardly recognizable by the end of the first phase.

Since the completion of the first phase, Mashpee Commons has changed dramatically. In addition to the retail and office space, the developers have added residential units above a number of the buildings and live/work units as well. In 1993 they expanded the Commons across Route 151 and added North Market Street, which includes more offices and retail,

Figure 5.4

such as a Stop and Shop, Blockbuster, and a Green Design Center. Over the years they have improved parts of the Commons and additional buildings have been added. Even today buildings are being redone, such as the department store that was left from the New Seabury shopping center.

Future phases will focus on residential development. Their master plan has since been expanded to include six interrelated neighborhoods which will contain over 380 residential units. Sixty-five percent of the land will be protected as open space. The developer explained, "The intent is to build mixed-use neighborhoods with housing, offices, stores, civic buildings, and

Source: Mashpee Commons   Figure 5.5

open space in a traditional New England form - controlled by a strict site and architectural design code."

While it is unclear when these next phases will be completed, it is clear that they will change the feeling of Mashpee. Hopefully, through further success, Mashpee Commons will continue to serve as positive example for growth on Cape Cod and elsewhere.

From our own visit, it was clear to us that Mashpee Commons has, in many ways, captured the feeling of a New England town center. Once you enter the development you feel as if you have been transported back in time. The modernity of the place is balanced with traditional architecture, human scale buildings, and walkable streets lined with trees, benches, and lampposts. Driving down route 28 or 151 the Cape feels extremely rural, so Mashpee Commons seems to come out of nowhere. The site's access is limited to those who drive. While it is characterized as a New Urbanist or Smart Growth development, the lack of walkability (except for the 60-70 people who currently live there) clearly challenges the overall

"smartness" of the place. However, this type of development is nonethe-less preferable to the typical strip mall you might see elsewhere.

Living in Mashpee Commons

Mashpee Commons currently has 56 functioning residential units: 40 above Talbots, 13 above Pottery Barn, and 3 live/work units. The tenants appear to be fairly diverse, including a variety of singles, couples, retirees, students, and a number of mentally dis-abled adults who attend the nearby River School. About 20 percent of the residents work in Mashpee Commons. The units range from 700 sq. ft. studios to 1,400 sq. ft. 1 bedrooms and the rents range from $700 to $1400 a month.

There isn't a clear target audience for Mashpee Commons. While used by tourists and seasonal residents in the summer, locals also frequent the shops. Sales at Christmas are similar to those in July or August. According to the developer, Mashpee residents visit the site an average of 23 times every 90 days. Because there isn't another town center or shopping area in Mashpee, residents come for many of their needs. Many people from outside the Cape also frequent Mashpee Commons because it is about the same distance as driving to a retail establishment of the same scale in another direction. Mashpee Commons, though not immediately sur-rounded by a large population, pulls consumers from a much larger radius than typical shopping centers. Because of this, Mashpee Commons has a stable consumer base year-round.

Figure 5.6

Mashpee Commons offers a large variety of upscale retail stores (over 90), including locally owned, regional, and national chains. In addition to the retail, there are many other types of stores and services. These include a number of restaurants, a post office, medical offices, banks, a movie the-ater, attorneys' offices, a CVS

Figure 5.7

pharmacy, a dry cleaner, and many others. Currently, there are between 60 and 70 people living in the Mashpee Commons residences. While Mashpee Commons is privately owned, the developers try to activate the space like a public town center. They hold events during the warm months, such as parades, free concerts, and festivals. They offer free Wi-Fi throughout the property and public gathering spaces, such as plazas with benches and tables. While many of the business are chains, the place does have a local community feeling to it. The Starbucks has local artwork on the walls and they have community boards to post events. Throughout the week local musicians perform and gain free exposure.

While most of the shopkeepers live within about a ten-mile radius of Mashpee Commons, many of the sales people live farther away. The rent is high in Mashpee, which makes it difficult for the employees to live locally. However, once the future residential phases are complete there may be more employees living within walking distance from the Commons.

Another issue is that lease rates are very high for the tenants, both residen-tial and commercial. This makes it dif-ficult for mom and pop businesses or smaller stores to open, let alone stay in business. This has been especially diffi-cult for the live/work units, because the

Live/work units Figure 5.8

rents are high and they have small retail spaces. There are some vacan-cies in Mashpee Commons, which is attributed to affordability, as well as some national chains slowing down their expansion in the current unstable economy.

Lessons

Mashpee Commons is deed restriction-driven by design and architecture. Deed restrictions can protect spaces from changing or falling outside the specifications, such as architectural codes. The developer put forth strict guidelines that would need to be followed for the residential and commercial properties. Land was given to the town in exchange for their approval and agreement to enforce these restrictions. The deeds, accepted by the Cape Cod Commission and the Mashpee Zoning Board, hold the condition that the restrictions will carry over when the properties are sold. A "neighborhood architect" working for the developer will oversee all new development.

having one architect, the space feels very diverse in terms of its buildings. They used different materials and designs for the buildings, but they all go together well.

Design Successes

• Drive-throughs are prohibited. The developers try to encourage as much walking and human interaction with the space as possible.

• Vehicles were meant to have a difficult time maneuvering through the parking lots and roads, in order to encourage people to park their car once and walk everywhere they needed to go. Not only have the design been successful for this purpose, but it also keeps cars from driving too fast and makes the place more visually interesting. The streets are based on a grid, but the entrances curve as they get closer to the center.

• The spaces all feel very public. There are benches outside many of the stores and the windows are all low, allowing a window shopper a clear visual of what is inside. The walkways are all connected well and plazas are spaced throughout the Commons.

Figure 5.9

The developer has clearly articulated and controlled design standards for all aspects of the property, including the public spaces, commercial buildings, and residential units. While there is uniformity in quality of design, there is a great deal of variation. This gives the area the feeling that everything developed organically from many different developers, rather than from one plan. The developers initially wanted a different architect for every building, to give the space a very organic feeling. While they ended up

The developer works with their tenants, especially the locally owned business, to make sure that they are keeping up with the standards and that they are fiscally accountable. Though there is more design flexibility than in the past, tenants are still strongly encouraged to consider consistency of design and character of those around them.

Figure 5.10

One reason that the development has been successful is because it was not built all at once. It took over twenty years to get where it is today and it will have many more years in the future before it is completed. They built everything in stages and thought it through very carefully. Before building any of the residences, they completed the first phase of commercial development. They also were willing to change things when they saw that improvements were needed. Initially, most of the buildings looked the same. The develop-

Figure 5.11

ers realized that the uniformity was limiting them, so they began using different building materials to separate the spaces.

Inducement Payments and Pottery Barn

When the development was in its initial stages, the developer gave tenants deals on their rent, such as percentage rent leases or significant discounts. Most importantly, the developer offers advice and on-site support for businesses. The developers have chosen their tenants very carefully and helped them to succeed with their businesses; as a result, Mashpee Commons' commercial spaces have not had a high turnover rate.

The developers used inducement payments to attract high-end tenants such as Pottery Barn. Not only were these payments used to attract the tenants, but they were also used for specific designs. With such high design expectations, some of the money given to certain tenants was used to create their façades. For example, Pottery Barn was given $800,000 to build out their space, but was required to build its façade exactly as the developer wanted it. With this investment from the developer, there are a substantial number of high-end retail stores that entice consumers to travel to Mashpee Commons. This helps independent local stores to thrive, because the high-end retail serves as an anchor for independent businesses who would not normally draw such a large audience.

Chain Stores- A Necessity for Development?

Consistency in Mashpee Commons has not only helped with their reputation, but it has recently been a large draw for local independent chains. While the development is not gaining many new national chains at the moment, many local businesses are choosing to be a part of the development because they know that they will be in a good environment. Because the chains currently in Mashpee Commons will continue to attract consumers, independent stores are now more comfortable moving in because steady foot traffic is already in place. Chains are necessary in this case to be the anchor of the development so independent stores can also sustain themselves. There are also set standards and expectations associated with chains, such as operating hours and professionalism, and the local chains are benefiting from this consistency.

While we often hear planners endorsing density, it is not always the best choice. There need to be structures in place to handle increased density and larger populations. As many cities have found, development does not pay for itself. Municipal services usually have to be expanded and new schools may need to be built.

Both the developer and the town of Mashpee recognize that 40B has given the project an extreme amount of flexibility. While it is useful for gaining much needed affordable housing, the town has concerns. There are wastewater and increased traffic mitigation issues that are not being addressed by the developer. The special permitting attained by the developer allows for such high density in a rural area because the project is 40B. While the affordable housing units gained are necessary, they will come at a great environmental cost.

The town of Mashpee is concerned that their current municipal services will not be able to handle the future neighborhoods in Mashpee Commons. The town estimates that they will need $3-4 million for managing the increased wastewater. They are already seeing an increase in nitrogen levels and they do not have the resources to manage these levels. Federal

monies used to pay for 90% of wastewater services, but the majority of this is now the responsibility of the municipality.

Density is commendable for many reasons, but when population increases so quickly the municipal services can be pushed beyond their limit. However, the developer has and will continue to phase their development. As Jon Renz (2008) said, "These neighborhoods have been partially constructed in a phased manner to meet the needs of the community at a rate that reflects the area's growth." While Mashpee Commons has its own wastewater treatment plant- that the new neighborhoods will be connected to- the town has many concerns.

This project has also shown us that Smart Growth is not always completely "smart." Within the development you have a completely walkable and human scale space. However, geographic location is important. Mashpee is rural and there is no connectivity for walking or biking within the town. Since the site is bordered by Route 151 and 28, they are surrounded by speeding cars. They have been unable to slow down the areas around Mashpee Commons and this has affected the connectivity of the two shopping areas. There is very little connectivity for walking or biking. The walkability will change once there are almost 400 residential units adjacent to the site - it will actually be walkable for the people who live there. However, the majority of the residents will probably drive elsewhere to work and anyone coming to the Commons will be driving. In general, the development will still be focused around automobiles, which does not serve the purposes of Smart Growth. Contributing to the issue of Smart Growth is the fact that public transportation is very limited. There is a bus that goes from Hyannis to Woods Hole and a bus that is by appointment only. In general, the Cape is a place of rural sprawl, which makes it very difficult to have efficient public transportation there.

While the design of Mashpee Commons is hailed nationally, some flaws need to be addressed. Some of their buildings don't have elevators to the second floor and this has limited the types of businesses that can rent there. With the American Disabilities Act (ADA) they have had a more difficult time filling their office spaces. Many businesses want or are required to have handicap accessibility. Unfortunately, it doesn't make sense financially for the developer to invest in elevators at this time.

Evaluating Mashpee Commons in the "Public, Private, People" model shows that there are definite relationships that need to be improved in order to avoid hardships for the residents and government in Mashpee. Because the developer is making decisions on their own accord, without particularly taking the government or residents into account, the result is a beautifully designed and controlled New Urbanist development that will potentially do more environmental harm than economic good. The relationships between the government and the developer need to be greatly improved, including coming to an agreement about what measures need

Green Design Center

While green design is limited in Mashpee Commons, the developer has made some efforts to take an active role in it. A new addition to their tenants is the Green Design Center, a store that focuses on helping people green their homes. They sell eco-friendly products, such as paints, cleaning supplies, and building materials. John Renz also shared with us that they bought two windmills to place on the Talbots' roof, but have had difficulty getting approval from the planning board. While their focus on environmental options seems limited, he also said that they are looking into storm water retention.

Figure 5.12

to be taken to mitigate the environmental impacts, and how these mitigations will take place.

Additionally, the developer is not considering green design for any of the new development. This would be a great opportunity to share the costs of building a dense development and mitigating the environmental impacts. The residents should pressure their local government to at least engage in discussion about how to address the many issues with this development. Currently, the relationship between the town planner and the developer is estranged at best, which is much of the reason why solutions have been slow to develop.

Chapter 6:
Park Slope, New York
Transit Oriented Urban Neighborhood

Figure 6.1

Park Slope is a neighborhood located in the western section of Brooklyn, New York. While its boundaries are continually expanding and being (unofficially) redefined, the neighborhood is bounded by Prospect Park West to 4th Avenue and Flatbush Ave. to 15th Street (Community District Profiles, 2008). Taking its name from Prospect Park, the neighborhood is now known for its historic character, liberal residents, and community participation.

Because of its location, Park Slope is considered a transit-oriented neighborhood. Served by the State of New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Park Slope has multiple subway stops throughout the neighborhood- 4th Avenue, 7th Avenue, 15th Street, and at the Grand Army Plaza. There are also accessible buses, bike lanes, and sidewalks throughout the area. People have many transportation options, and for many, owning a car is unnecessary, even if one works in a different part of the city. One reason people likely maintain ownership of their cars is so they can go grocery shopping, which can be difficult on public transit, particularly with children.

The American Planning Association named Park Slope a "Great Neighborhood" in 2007 (Hinshaw, 2008). The basis for their judgment to include Park Slope resonated with our group. In places like Park Slope in New York City, community activism is high, with many people dedicated to maintaining safe and clean streets, parks, and playgrounds. Commercial streets teem with family-owned businesses that take as much pride and responsibility for keeping the neighborhood up as residents do. Park Slope has seen an amazing amount of new investment, particularly in the form of people renovating and upgrading the blocks of brownstone dwellings so characteristic of this slice of Brooklyn (Hinshaw, 2008).

Figure 6.2

The community impact on the maintaining architectural and historical features (Park, 2007) is unique to any other case in this analysis, and so we thought this factor would be interesting to look at more closely. As Amanda Burden, director of the Department of City Planning in New York City, said,

"Park Slope is a neighborhood that embodies urban vitality, with its rich history, unparalleled brownstone blocks, great cultural institutions, shops and restaurants, and vibrant civic and street life. We are honored that APA has recognized the attributes that make Park Slope such a wonderful place" (Park, 2007).

The general feeling in Park Slope is quite welcoming. The grid streets are easy to navigate and are filled with people walking their dogs, taking their children to school, or sitting on their stoops. The human scale development makes private spaces feel almost public, making a tour of the neighborhood enjoyable and welcoming. There is a general sense of pride and individuality throughout the neighborhood. The area is clean and people seem to put extra effort into their property, whether with gardens, door colors, or even the decorations on their garbage cans. The housing lines the streets going east to west and the avenues going north to south are lined with a large variety of shops, offices, restaurants, and other services.

Figure 6.3

Figure 6.4

A strong housing stock is necessary to attract residents who will move to Park Slope and stay there. Ken Freeman (2008) considers the housing stock to be one of Park Slope's greatest strengths, as it brings people to Park Slope and keeps them there. These people, taking pride in their area and wanting to preserve it, are often some of the most active members of the community in regards to questions of development and preservation. The historic buildings play a large role in the attractiveness and unique character of the streets, but this also has to do with the efforts people have put in to their own spaces. People's doors are often painted different colors. On their steps or porches people have gardens, painted garbage cans, or perhaps their bikes. The residents have even kept up the street trees. They may have flower boxes, stones, chain, or wooden boxes around them. Whatever material used, the important thing is that they have been cared for.

Figure 6.5

While there are many cars around, the neighborhood is very walkable and it is easy to get the train or bus from a number of stops. Traffic is a major problem in Park Slope, and parking is a virtual nightmare. A traffic study conducted in recent years showed that 40 percent of the cars driving in Park Slope at any given time were circling the neighborhood looking for parking (Freeman 2008). Alleviating the parking problem is always a hot button issue among community groups. There are no parking restrictions in Park Slope, nor is there a limit to the number of cars residents can have in the neighborhood. Additional parking metering was intended to take effect with Mayor Bloomberg's congestion pricing, but for now that plan has been taken off of the table by city government.

Attempts to mitigate parking issues creatively include finding ways to keep other transportation options open to people. Even transit-oriented areas have problems getting people out of their cars. One example of this is grocery shopping. The new Whole Foods, intended to open in the coming years, is being increasingly pressured by the Park Slope Civic Council to provide shuttle buses from the subway stops in Park Slope to the future grocery store, located on the outskirts of the neighborhood (Freeman, 2008). While this does not necessarily reduce current car use to alleviate the traffic problem, it does improve the ability for those utilizing public transit to continue to do so in a more accommodating way.

Figure 6.6

Even considering the hustle and bustle of a major city, our walk through Park Slope was relatively calm and enjoyable because of a measure the City implements- fines for honking your car horn. The first thing most people attribute to cities are their traffic jams and the noise of horns. With the threat of a $350 fine, which Ken Freeman (2008) asserts is a reality, the vast majority of honking is eliminated and pedestrians can actually enjoy their time outside. In addition, it is a safety measure as people only use their horns when there is an actual emergency situation to avoid, rather than out of frustration.

There are very few boundaries between private and public spaces, making the lack of green space scattered throughout the neighborhood (aside from Prospect Park, which abuts the entire southeast edge of Park Slope) less problematic that we originally considered. When you walk down the street, you walk
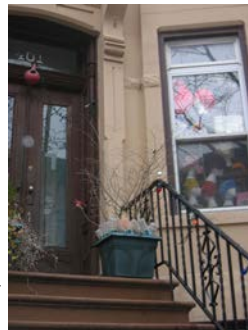
Figure 6.7

right up against residents' steps. You can see what people have put in their windows or what they have put on their stoop. This makes the neighborhood feel more like a community: while people's homes are still private space, they aren't hidden down a long driveway or behind a fence.

While there is variety among the buildings, there is also consistency. Different materials have been used, but they all go together well. For example, many houses have different types of railings and fence posts that go along the sidewalk, but they all flow together very nicely.

Figure 6.8

Park Slope was farmland until the early 1800's when it was connected to Manhattan by ferry service. In the 1850's a local lawyer and railroad developer, Edwin Clarke Litchfield, bought up large amounts of land in the area and then sold parcels off to residential developers. A portion of his land was bought by the City to complete the southern portion of Prospect Park. By the 1880's the area was being quickly developed with mansions along the park and brownstones throughout the neighborhood.

Park Slope saw a great deal of decline in the 1950's due to suburban sprawl and over time it became a working class area. Over time housing vacancies began to rise and an abandoned housing stock began to overtake the area. However, by the 1960's a movement of revival had begun. A small group of roughly fifteen were solely responsible for the major push to protect the architecturally intricate housing that had been abandoned and was deteriorating.

Surviving "Urban Renewal"

Throughout the 1950s and '60s, various cities throughout the United States underwent "urban renewal" as a way to restore vibrancy to centers. Unfortunately, this meant the leveling of many historical structures and beautiful neighborhoods that can never be replicated. There are countless examples of the tragic impacts of urban renewal, where much was lost in comparison to the development gained. Park Slope, however, was not one of these places. Throughout this time, many of the housing properties throughout Park Slope were abandoned and suffered from grave deterioration. The automatic response was to tear them down and build something new, but some community members wanted to restore the properties' Victorian character rather than see them fade into history. A group of roughly 20 activists fought the government in a grassroots effort to restore the housing rather than level it. They fought bank redlining of housing properties, allowing investment in the properties. They planted thousands of trees throughout the neighborhood, bringing back a welcoming character and making the area more attractive. The activists also launched an annual House Tour, allowing others to explore the history and beauty evident in the Park Slope homes. Due to this sustained effort, the Victorian homes in Park Slope survived urban renewal and now serve as one of the main reasons people choose to move to Park Slope. Without the dedication of this small group of people, Park Slope would be a very different place today.

By the 1990's, with rents in other parts of the city skyrocketing, wealthier people moved alongside the working class (Freeman, 2008). While rent stabilization has helped to keep some of the working class and immigrant population in the neighborhood, over the last ten to fifteen years, demographics have changed considerably. Many people would say that Park Slope is a victim of gentrification; others might call it a haven for yuppies. However, there has been an immense effort to combat the negative effects of gentrification.

As with many of our other cases, high turnover rate of businesses is another problem Park Slope is facing. Much of this is due to the near tripling of rental rates in the past 10 years. Rents are currently so expensive that chains are the only ones who can afford them. Locally owned businesses cannot afford to stay, and so banks and cell phone stores take their place. This hurts the character of the neighborhood, and while some banks and cell phone stores are certainly necessary, the influx of them is more than the neighborhood wants to sustain. The City is currently considering zoning to limit the number of banks, real estate establishments, and cell phone stores in the city (Freeman, 2008).

Figure 6.9

During our visit to Park Slope, we met with Ken Freeman, the President of the Park Slope Civic Council (PSCC). This organization is run entirely by volunteers and currently has a membership of about 600 households. The PSCC has been in existence since the 1950's, and without the organization, Park Slope would not be what it is today. In the group's words, "[we] nurture, defend, celebrate, and invigorate this community we call home" (Park Slope Civic Council, 2008).

In 1973, PSCC secured their neighborhood's future when they won designation of the Park Slope Historic District. In 2003 they helped protect the neighborhood's character in their push for the City's first "downzoning" (Freeman, 2008), discussed later. In 2007, they took the first steps toward expanding their historic district, a continuing project. In addition to these actions, the PSCC helps to fund and plan many of the neighborhood events and takes efforts to increase the neighborhood's livability and sustain and enrich the values that it possesses.

Creating a Model Village Center:

Uniform Land Use Review Procedure

Uniform Land Use Review Procedure is meant to ensure that new structures fit into the character of the area, but the Whole Foods Corporation, which is constructing a new store on the edge of Park Slope, is using a loophole to avoid the procedure. By constructing the building below grade, they can build an 80,000 sq. ft. store and 450-space parking lot without any of the public input ensured by ULURP. Normally, any project over 10,000 sq. ft. must go through the review process.

This action, however, has not stopped the Park Slope Civic Council from getting involved and making suggestions to Whole Foods, albeit with much less strength than if backed by ULURP. The suggestions include a traffic study to understand where the cars will be coming from, which intersections will be most impacted, and if there should be an alternative route designed for access to the store. PSCC also asks that Whole Foods provide many covered bike racks so shoppers have a safe, dry place to leave their bike when they shop. In addition, PSCC asks that Whole Foods fund two shuttle buses from the nearby transit lines so people have an option besides automobile to get to the store. The walking distance from the nearest transit line is close to one mile, which would be very difficult to manage while simultaneously carrying groceries and managing children – not to mention New York's varied weather conditions.

Lessons

Community activism, particularly through membership and support of community groups, has been integral to the successes in Park Slope. People are actively involved in retaining and improving the character of the neighborhood, and this is displayed in many ways. One way this is done is through the investment in the local economy rather than chain stores. The Park Slope Civic Council has a "Buy in Brooklyn" local shopping campaign, which does not prohibit chains but rather emphasizes the many benefits of supporting the local businesses. In addition, the Park Slop Food Co-op serves to provide residents with healthy, local foods not always accessible at large grocery stores.

The 5th Avenue Committee works to preserve, protect, and build affordable housing within the neighborhood (5th Avenue Committee, 2008). Their mission to promote economic and social justice in several neighborhoods throughout Brooklyn has allowed many people who could not typically afford housing in this area (due to rising costs, particularly through the past 10 years) to remain as part of the community.

Ken Freeman (2008) asserts that while 5th Avenue Committee has many successes in expanding the economic demographics of the area, there is still high turnover in the rental housing (5th Avenue Committee, 2008). This is an admirable effort on the part of these community groups, by far the strongest of any case we studied. Park Slope is also the only case where a community group was solely dedicated to the securing of affordable housing, a major limitation to our study.

Park Slope Programming

Ken Freeman credits the "Buy in Brooklyn" campaign with helping bring about greater reinvestment of residents' dollars into the community, sponsorship of Little League teams by businesses, a healthier relationship between business owners and customers than their chain counterparts, and a greater sense of care for the community on the part of the local businesses who live and work in Park Slope (Freeman, 2008). This is essence of the Buy in Brooklyn campaign. It is not about blocking chains, but rather celebrating the great assets of local businesses.

The Park Slope Food Co-op has over 12,000 members from Park Slope and its surrounding neighborhoods, and their mission emphasizes healthy residents, environmental preservation, diversity, and equality. As a "buying agent for the community rather than a selling agent for industry" (Park Slope Food Coop, 2008), the Park Slope Food Co-op serves as the ultimate customer-service business, providing precisely those products the co-op members would like.

Through ground-up planning and community involvement, community groups have been able to gain momentum on many different issues within the community. It seems that with an initial group of committed citizens, it can become the standard for people to be involved in their community. We wonder if and how communities can engage citizens to this degree elsewhere. We do not know if the characteristic of the members is additional free time, money, or perhaps part of the persona of those who live in a larger city. However, we do know that community involvement has been successful in other places as well, and that it is a key ingredient in developing a vibrant community.

Figure 6.10

Historic preservation has also been a major component in making Park Slope successful. Since the housing stock in Park Slope has helped make it so an attractive place, it is imperative that measures are taken to preserve it. Expanding the Landmarks District has helped to protect many of the Victorian style houses throughout the neighborhood. Being part of the Landmarks District adds another layer of protection to the buildings because any changes must be submitted for approval.

In 2003, the zoning in Park Slope underwent changes that have greatly affected future development in the neighborhood. Expanding the Landmarks District was central to the zoning changes. It also included height limitations and called for greater consistency in storefront protrusion. The public had a significant hand in the matter, particularly through the Park Slope Civic Council. The rezoning took over 12 years to come to frui-

tion, and now serves as a model that nearby neighborhoods are trying to emulate.

The current state of 4th Avenue shows the need for protection of character and historic structures. Not currently protected by the Landmarks District, 4th Avenue has a completely different feeling than the rest of Park Slope. Though it is located on the edge of the neighborhood, its lack of any protection makes it an aesthetically undesirable location to walk through. Some developers put residential space on the first floor of their structures, which creates holes in the continuity of the street. Because there is less continuity between commercial spaces, people

Figure 6.11

2003 Park Slope Rezoning

The rezoning, known as "downzoning" includes a height restriction of 50 feet for all areas above (but not including) 4th Avenue all the way to Prospect Park. This height restriction was necessary because of what Ken Freeman calls the "sore thumb" issue. All of the buildings on a street are of one height, and then a developer would come and build an extremely tall building, which sticks out and does not look aesthetically pleasing. Since 4th Avenue is not limited by this height restriction, developers can build up to 12-story buildings, much of the new development is occurring there.

Another aspect of the rezoning is the idea of "contextual zoning." This guideline requires that a storefront must match the structures on either side so there is consistency. The point is to avoid one storefront sticking out into the sidewalk and preventing people from seeing what is available down the road. The consistent look is also more pleasing to the Park Slope residents, and it is a fair compromise since it does not inhibit a business from having a unique storefront (those are encouraged) but rather one that takes away from view of another by the sheer size of their own. The rezoning also regulates the size of windows, as well as having trees planted in front of the buildings.

Creating a Model Village Center:

are less likely to continue down the street. The building heights, facades, and textures are also significantly varied, and you can tell that the effect of the whole street was not taken into account when constructing individual buildings.

One major aspect missing from the rezoning is the affordable housing component. Freeman (2008) discussed that the PSCC has taken no official stance on affordable housing, mainly because they did not want to add any other confusing elements to the zoning issues at the time it was being approved. Because it was so important that the 2003 provisions be ratified, Freeman (2008) emphasized the need to keep the demands as simple as possible, so the entire package was not denied because it was trying to cover everything. Just because the affordable housing component was not included in 2003 does not mean it will be ignored, especially since there is a separate community group dedicated to securing affordable units.

Taking the "Public, Private, People" model into account, you can see that there is an improving but still strained relationship between the community and the government offices. The fact that it took 12 years for the Park Slope Civic Council to secure zoning changes for their neighborhood shows a valiant effort on their part, but also an unreasonable amount of disregard for community input on the part of the NYC Department of Planning. Considering how educated, active, and passionate the Park Slope Civic Council is on a whole, the Planning Office should give them more discretion and trust the PSCC with the changes they want made.

In addition, the relationship between the PSCC and developers should be improved. Much of this is due to the at odds relationship that has formed between community groups and developers throughout the years. Developers and investors want nothing to do with community groups because they think community groups are anti-growth and want to keep any devel-

opment out. While there are probably some community groups touting something akin to this principle, the PSCC is not one of them.

Freeman (2008) asserts that the PSCC is not anti-growth, but rather wants growth on their terms. This means developers should be required to adhere to strict guidelines and design standards in order to ensure the preservation of what many consider a great place to live. This relationship could stand to be improved, and potentially to the benefit of areas currently unprotected by the Landmarks District, such as 4th Avenue. Clearer communication between the PSCC and investors about what kind of development the community wants might make up for the slow-moving approval of the NYC Department of Planning.

Chapter 7:
Recommendations for VHB
"The Guide for a Successful Town Center"

Based on our observations of five case studies, as well as research within the literature of the field, we have compiled a list of recommendations we feel are most easily transferable to other communities. Following the transferable lessons is a brief description of further considerations not adequately addressed by any of the cases studied.

Visioning is critical, particularly for the enhancement and redevelopment of a center. Visioning should include as many people as possible, and the facilitators of this process should take every opportunity to ensure that the process is adequately accessible to everyone. Amesbury, Massachusetts has been exemplary at achieving this process, and due to the success of its visioning, has revitalized their downtown from the post-industrial ghost town it once was to a place of purpose where its citizens take great pride.

Community participation in the visioning process was critical because it gave those in charge of redevelopment sustained support throughout a process spanning decades. Since the community had such a strong impact on the future of their downtown, they served as a driver of redevelopment and provided support when setbacks occurred. As changes continue - though incrementally — most of the community is still behind the effort, knowing that it is with best intentions and public imagination in mind that a new vibrancy is slowly but surely growing Amesbury.

Zoning, reflective of vision, should control design and functionality of the space. If zoning produces results contrary to the vision of the center, the bylaws need to be altered in order to achieve the vision. Vision should never be constrained by zoning.

This has been achieved particularly well in Park Slope, New York, and Amesbury, Massachusetts. In 2003, the Park Slope Civic Council finally won a 12-year battle to implement "downzoning," which includes height restrictions, setback requirements, and sign design standards. Much of the community felt that the new 12-story buildings alongside Prospect Park were damaging the character of the larger neighborhood, and the Park Slope Civic Council pushed for restrictions on developers in certain parts of Park Slope. Consistency of the setback along commercial streets improved the continuity and maximized the walkability of the streets. Design standards for signs keep the commercial areas from degrading the historic, Victorian character present in Park Slope. The previous zoning did not maintain the community vision of success, and inevitably the zoning had to change if the vision was to be realized. The intense community support throughout the 12 year process kept the issue from being disregarded and was critical to its success.

Amesbury has also used this method to its benefit, and in 1999 the Planning Board and Design Review Committee adopted "Amesbury's Design Guidelines" for future development in the center. The guidelines serve as a tool developers can use to contribute to the downtown while still respecting the architectural heritage and historic significance of the community. Design criteria includes standards for site planning, architectural style, character, building height, façade, window treatment, roof treatment, piers, cornices, canopies, porches, building materials, colors, signs, window boxes, planters, street furniture, and vendors (Amesbury Design Standards, 1999). Setting a clear standard for developers allows them to build within the framework of an established setting and interpretation of success.

Finally, the developers in Mashpee Commons wanted their development

to look like an organic New England Town Center that had developed over decades. This feeling was actually attained by careful work on the developer's part, including visits to old town centers and taking measurements of sidewalks, building height, and noting materials to ensure that Mashpee Commons met the same scale and design feeling as those historic town centers. This special attention to detail and meticulous planning allowed for a quality development with impeccable design standards to be executed. Without a strong vision from the developer, the resulting development would not have such success in invoking a historic character.

Historic preservation is necessary to maintain the character of a center. Many of the cases studied take into account the importance of history in their current success. Lexington's Revolutionary War history provides it with additional tourist markets that many places do not have. It is in their best interest to capitalize on this position by preserving historic buildings and expanding the historic feel of the center to expand the energy brought to the center by tourism.

Amesbury is able to maintain its industrial character because it has creatively reused many of the old mills for housing and maintains standards for developers, promoting the historic character. Without an emphasis on maintaining these buildings, it is possible that mills would be torn down in favor of new structures incompatible with the industrial character. Many of the mills needed extensive rehabilitation, both for visual and structural purposes and in order to meet code to become housing units. While some may regard tearing down and building anew as less troublesome, the community felt the preservation was well worth the investment.

Park Slope prides itself on having a Victorian character, and the quality of housing is one of the main reasons people move there. Since development is regarded as a right in New York, it was necessary for Park Slope to create a Landmarks District in order to impose standards for development

and design changes in this area. The Park Slope Civic Council is trying to expand this district to protect the character in as great an area as possible.

Branding and marketing is critical for developing a sense of place and bringing people to the community. Northampton has been extremely successful at creating an image for the city and using that image to attract people. This can be seen visually through the Northampton flags on lampposts on Main Street, the garbage retrieval conducted by people on bikes, and the artwork on the sides of buildings. The branded feeling invokes a lively, artsy, eclectic center. People from places like New York City and Boston (among many others) are drawn to Northampton because of its reputation as a unique and interesting place.

Marketing is necessary to advertise a center's image in order to attract not only tourists, but new residents and businesses as well. Northampton has done this by aggressively applying for "Best of" lists, such as those sponsored by the American Planning Association, the National Historic Trust, and the New York Times. Indeed, appearance on these lists has aided Northampton's success, as we found very few people in our travels that were not familiar with Northampton and its reputation.

Community, public sector planning, and private sector funding- the formula for success. Possibly the most important lesson derived from this work, this new relationship expresses a way to evaluate the potential for success of development based on the interaction of three key groups. Any redevelopment needs a shared commitment from these three players, and without it the development will be significantly lacking in some way.

The community is responsible for providing the vision of what they want their center to include, how they want it to look and feel, and how these results should come about. The public should actively participate,

and the public sector should work to alleviate barriers preventing equal participation. In return for active participation on the community's part, government will be able to work with the private sector to meet the community's needs.

The government sector, particularly the planning office, is responsible for representing the vision of the community and creating a structure, through zoning and regulation, that ensures this vision. In return, their legitimacy in office is intact, and more importantly, they will have the support of the community behind them as development projects go forward.
The private sector is responsible for making development happen - in conjunction with the vision structured by the public sector - with their investment dollars and innovative practices. Government should work with private investors, both to ensure that investors' ventures are consistent with the town's vision and to help their projects come to fruition. In return for meeting the community's demands, investors have a consumer base.

In Northampton, the revitalization of the downtown in the 1980s would not have been possible without the cooperation and shared commitment of all three of these groups. In the 1970s, many of the buildings in Northampton's Central Business District had vacant upper floors. Engineers recommended some of the buildings be demolished, but the community fought to keep the existing structures. The public sector shared this vision, but had little money to restore the buildings, many of which were in disrepair. Acknowledging the community's desires, the government sought private investment that would restore these buildings rather than simply tear everything down. Because of the commitment of private investors to rehabilitate these buildings, the upper floors are now filled with residents and businesses, and downtown Northampton has gained a new vibrancy and remarkable local business presence.

Amesbury is another example of this shared commitment, as seen in the Planning Office's concerted effort to involve the community in the planning process. Many members of the community used this opportunity to express their needs, including a comfortable, vibrant, social downtown that is safe for pedestrians while maintaining a historic character. The Planning Office responded appropriately, including implementing design standards that would maintain the historic character that many felt was important to maintain. The private sector provided much needed funding that the government simply did not have, providing quality developments in which businesses could thrive. The community expressed what it wanted, the public sector upheld the vision through zoning and design standards, and the private sector provided the money to realize these visions.

Mashpee Commons is a less successful example of this shared commitment, mainly because the developer was in a unique position to play a larger role than usual in the development. The developers provided enormous amounts of money to businesses to build out their space within the development. Since the developers had the funds to execute these measures and used special permitting and development incentives like 40B to increase the density of the development, the Planning Office and community in Mashpee had very little role in the shaping of Mashpee Commons. While Mashpee Commons is beautifully designed and serves as the town's only central commercial area, the scale of the development is not suitable for the rural infrastructure on Cape Cod and will cause traffic and wastewater problems, among other issues, that the public sector and the community will have to mitigate.

In Park Slope, community participation was integral for the passing of zoning changes in 2003. Since the Planning Department finally recognized and legitimized the desires of the Park Slope community to maintain their historic, Victorian character, it set standards for developers to work within. The community organizing groups, however, need to improve their

relationship with private investors and developers, who see them as anti-growth. These groups are not anti-growth; rather, they desire growth on their terms that does not disrupt the social fabric. If this relationship is improved, development will be more successful and welcomed by the public. Finally, in Lexington, the development of Lexington Place is an example of this successful relationship. The government recognized that the center was in need to increased energy, and a way to improve this would be to allow residences within the Central Business District. The public voted in a town meeting, and approved the Planning Office to make the zoning change allowing for a 30-unit residential development. The developer is constructing the new building in a way that suits Lexington Center's historic character, but using innovative design that allows the building to be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certifiable.

Further Considerations

While these lessons are integral to the regaining a sense of vibrancy in town centers and downtowns, we feel that on a whole our cases missed two major areas necessary for success.

The first area is affordability of both residential and commercial spaces. Some of the cases, such as Mashpee Commons, instituted 40B to provide affordable housing, but this still comes up short, especially considering that the affordable units may not actually be built for another twenty years. Rents continue to increase, particularly as a center becomes a more desirable place to live and raise a family, and so this problem must be mitigated through measures that will ensure equal access to these areas. If affordability is not considered in current and future redevelopment projects, it will only serve to displace a large portion of the population from the many benefits of living in a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly center, and to make commercial space prohibitively expensive for locally owned businesses. Our hope is that VHB will consider strategies with their clients

that maximize the number of affordable units in proximity to town centers.

The second area not adequately addressed in our cases is the use of green design in development. While almost all of our cases had some kind of construction currently in progress, Lexington Place was the only project meeting LEED certification. Today, it is of utmost importance that buildings be constructed with sustainable materials and in the most environmentally friendly way possible. A new development like Mashpee Commons, particularly because of its high density in a rural location, should be taking every measure possible to reduce the overall footprint the development has in the area. Touted as a Smart Growth project, the traffic and waste-water issues alone bring to question whether this development is in fact environmentally "smart."

VHB should help clients understand the affordable green design strategies available. Every reasonable green design option should be presented to clients in order to give them a proper understanding of the potential they may not have known existed. Green design will improve the longevity of buildings, signifies a responsible long-term investment in the community, and can be used for marketing purposes to attract new people and businesses. There is no reason not to encourage and support green design with future clients; the challenge is finding the green design strategies most suitable and practical for each particular community.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

We feel that our work will assist VHB in better serving their clients and will give them creative and necessary tools integral to town center re-development. Our work is certainly not an exhaustive list of the strategies necessary for creating successful town centers; further study is necessary, particularly regarding best practices for executing some of our lessons. For example, there are many ways to go about a visioning process, and deciding which one is best for the community and actively engages the greatest number of people will be a challenge for each client VHB works with.

An important area in need of further study is how to integrate affordable housing into development. There are several methods available, including programs like 40B, but each has yet to consistently meet the demand for affordable housing. Focusing a study on the equitable development of housing in town centers would be useful for VHB. Simply understanding the full needs of the community they are working in will help alleviate some of this. Consulting future clients on how to best integrate affordable housing to meet the needs of their individual community is necessary, but unfortunately successful tools are still being developed.

Even with these limitations, we feel our work is a useful contribution to the field. Our use of a model that relies on a relationship between the community, government, and private investors is a notion largely missing from much of the literature we studied. However, it has served us as a helpful and accurate way of assessing the relationships most in need of improvement to attain goals set forth by the government and the community. Further study of this balance, discussing it within the larger body of theoretical literature, and its application in other cases will solidify a larger contribution to the field.

This project has challenged our thinking about development, partnerships, and the potential of cities and town centers to bounce back from the decades of rampant and unchallenged sprawl development. It is our hope that these lessons are truly useful to VHB and will have a lasting impact on communities well into the future.

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Appendix 1: Methods

This project is the compilation of work produced by Samuel Anderson, Soichiro Nakahashi, Christina Ungaro, and Julia Wolfson. Our client is Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (VHB), who "[provides] multidisciplinary planning, design, engineering, and consulting for some of the nation's most complex infrastructure and development initiatives" (Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, 2008). VHB, based in Watertown, Massachusetts, provides several services, including but not limited to planning and urban design, civil engineering, landscape architecture, transportation planning, environmental restoration, and sustainability (Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, 2008). Specifically, we worked with Ken Schwartz, Director of Planning at VHB, and Ralph Willmer, Senior Planner at VHB to compile a set of best practices and principles necessary in order to create successful, human scale communities.

The product our client anticipates receiving is a guide, in electronic form that can be easily distributed, that highlights the components necessary for creating or revitalizing a downtown or village center. The goal is to give VHB the "best of the best" information, informed from competing views in literature as well as our own findings, so VHB can continue to improve its consulting practice in planning, design, and zoning for downtown areas. The analysis will also address whether or not there is a "right mix" for a successful center regarding housing, office, retail, and institutions.

In addition to this report, we have created a PowerPoint presentation to serve as a deliverable product. This presentation highlights the many lessons learned from each of our cases studies, including how each defines – and helped us to define – success. It will be used by VHB for the educational purposes of the current planning department, other employees at VHB, and future planners who work for the company.

We began our project by meeting with Ken Schwartz and Ralph Willmer at the VHB office in Watertown. There we discussed the necessary steps to successfully completing this project so VHB could have the greatest benefit. We were given an initial list of examples to think about in compiling our original list of potential cases to focus on. These original examples included Lexington, Amesbury, Wellesley, Concord, Mashpee, and Arlington, all in Massachusetts. There were also some examples nationally, including Celebration, Florida, and Fort Collins, Colorado.

Within the larger list of potential cases were categorical breakdowns that each case should fall into. Those breakdowns, which have developed further as research ensued, include: Traditional New England Main Street, Transit Oriented Center, Lifestyle Communities, and Post-Industrial Redevelopment.

A Traditional New England Main Street "is the center of the community, typically composed of a cohesive core of residential, civic, religious, and commercial buildings arranged along [one] main street…" (Key Benefits for the Village Center District, 2006) and include places like Lexington, Concord, and Wellesley, Massachusetts.

Transit-oriented development of "compact, walkable communities centered around high quality train systems" (Transit Oriented Development, 2008), with mixed uses of commercial and residential areas designed to increase access to public transit. Transit oriented centers include Arlington Center, Virginia and Park Slope in Brooklyn, New York.

Lifestyle centers are mixed-use commercial developments that include the functions of a shopping mall, evoking the feeling of a social setting (Marcec, 2005). Lifestyle centers include Belmar, in Stapleton, Colorado and the Promenade Shops at Saucon Valley near Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Post-industrial redevelopment, a narrow interpretation of revitalized town center, includes those places that formerly had a vibrant economy through manufacturing. As these manufacturing plants move elsewhere, the loss of jobs and money often leaves the downtown in great need of enhancement. Some places, such as Amesbury, Massachusetts, have experienced this loss and have been largely successful in revitalizing their downtown.

Our group compiled 27 cases in these categories and then narrowed to our initial goal of 8 cases (See Appendix 3). Cases were eliminated for various reasons. These included lack of information available on the Internet, excessive similarities to other cases, lack of diversity, unclearly defined center, distance, making a visit difficult, and, in the case of new developments, lack of adequate completion for analysis. For a complete list of specific reasons for each case's removal, please see Appendix 1.

The 8 cases chosen were 1) Lexington, MA 2) Amesbury, MA 3) Northampton, MA 4) Mashpee Commons, Mashpee, MA 5) Park Slope, Brooklyn, NY 6) Fort Collins, CO 7) Baldwin Park, FL and 8) Belmar, Lakewood, CO. Lexington was chosen for its reputation of having a vibrant town center, its historical significance, current construction in the downtown district, and because it was recommended by VHB. Amesbury was chosen because it has a rare story of revitalizing of the downtown, including several brownfields sites, and was touted by VHB as a very interesting case to look at.

Northampton was chosen because it is culturally vibrant and for its abundance of thriving locally owned businesses and the absence of chains in the downtown. We chose Mashpee Commons because it is widely acclaimed as a successful New Urbanist Development, its mixed use of buildings, and its high design standards. Park Slope was chosen because of its proximity to a public transportation system, the economic and racial diversity in the neighborhood, which is much higher than any other site

we visited, and because of the strong community participation in planning practices.

We chose Fort Collins because it was on several lists as being a top place to live among different demographics, most notably newlywed couples and retiring couples. In addition, Fort Collins utilizes innovative codes in zoning that VHB had interest in exploring. Baldwin Park was chosen because it is a new community being developed on the site of an old naval base. It is considered brownfield redevelopment and was of interest to VHB. Finally, we chose Belmar because it is an example of an emerging lifestyle center, and has been adopted by the residents of Lakewood, Colorado as their downtown.

After we began our site visits, it was determined that the quality of our work would be sacrificed by including sites that we could not visit. Because we gained so much insight from observing the site and speaking face to face with planners, developers, and community members, we felt our project would not be enhanced by the low-depth analysis we would be forced to give those places too far for travel. For this reason, our group chose to remove Baldwin Park, Fort Collins, and Belmar from the analysis.

With our cases chosen and ongoing research of the literature ensuing, we set up visits to each of the sites. Our priority was to meet with influential people from each place to help us better understand our observations, as well as address the many questions we had that could not be answered by a site visit alone. Table 1 lists the places visited, those interviewed, and present group members.

Each site visit consisted of a two to three-hour walkthrough of the center, taking pictures, and conducting the interviews, which lasted about one to two hours each. Each interviewee was asked about the successes and challenges of their town center, the role of planning, developers, and the

community in changes to the town center, current issues, future development, green design, specifications in zoning, design standards, and overall lessons from their work. This information was then compiled with our early research and observations from the visit, and then synthesized into successes, challenges, and recommendations. A detailed analysis of each of the five cases is in the report.

Table 1: Site Visits

Site	Date Visited	Interviewee(s)	Group Members Present
Mashpee Commons, MA	February 28, 2008	Tom Fudala, Mashpee Town Planner Jon Renz, Vice President of Mashpee Commons	Soichiro Nakahashi Christina Ungaro Julia Wolfson
Lexington, MA	February 29, 2008	Maryann McCall-Taylor, Director of Planning, Lexington Susan Yanosski, Economic Development Officer	Samuel Anderson Soichiro Nakahashi Christina Ungaro
Amesbury, MA	March 6, 2008	Nipun Jain, Director of Planning, Amesbury	Soichiro Nakahashi Christina Ungaro Julia Wolfson
Northampton, MA	March 7, 2008	Wayne Feiden, Director of Planning and Development	Samuel Anderson Soichiro Nakahashi Christina Ungaro Julia Wolfson
Park Slope, NY	March 14, 2008	Ken Freeman, President, Park Slope Civic Council	Soichiro Nakahashi Christina Ungaro

Appendix 2: Case Study Demographics and Checklists

Lexington, Massachusetts

Traditional New England Main Street

Demographics	
Total population	30,355
Median age, % under 5, 18+, 65+	43.7%, 5.7%, 73.6%, 19.0%
% White, Black/ Af. Am, Am. Indian, Asian/PI, Hispanic/ Latino	86.1%/1.1%/10.9%/ 1.4%
Total housing units	11,333
Vacant housing units	223

Social Characteristics	
% High school graduates or higher	96.3%
% Disabled persons	12.1%
% Speak language other than English at home	18.8%

Economic Characteristics	
% In labor force	64.7%
Mean travel time to work	27.0
Median family income	111,899
% Individuals below poverty level	3.4%
Median home value	417400
Single family owner occupied homes	8382
Persons per square mile	

Land Use	
Housing in CBD	9 units
Commercial units in CBD	yes
Banks	14
Grocery Stores	No
Retail	15 retail shops
Open space	Depot Square, Hastings Park
Library	Cary Library
Town hall	Cary Hall
Government agencies	Town Government
Social services	

Planning Characteristics	
Description of planning office/board/ town planner	Planning Dept. and Board
Master plan	Plan for Lexington Center - 1966
Design guidelines	yes
New development occurring	Yes-Lexington Place
Presence of urban furniture	yes
Green design	Lexington Place
Historical Preservation	yes
Minimum lot size	No Requirement
Parking requirements	yes, most for restaurants

Transportation	
Public transportation	Bus(MBTA), and Lexpress
Bike lanes	Yes- Minuteman bike lane
Sidewalks	yes
Speed limits	

Site Visit Observation Checklist
Lexington, Massachusetts

Yes	?	No	Functionality
x			Mixed uses
x			Public transportation access
x			Bike-friendly
x			Bike racks
x			Bike lanes
x			Pedestrian-friendly
x			Sidewalks
x			Crosswalks
x			Housing proximity
	x		Employment proximity
		x	Compact development
x			Connectivity (both streets and walkways)
x			Access to public spaces
		x	Accessible parking

Yes	?	No	Design
x			Visible presence of design standards
x			Visually interesting
x			Historic preservation
x			Possesses a unique character
x			Construction in progress
x			Consistency of scale between buildings
x			Interaction of buildings and streetscape
		x	Use of existing natural features
x			Street trees
x			Landscaping

Yes	?	No	Social and Cultural Aspects
		x	Presence of everyday-life buildings
x			School
x			Post office
x			Library
x			Government buildings (courthouse, town hall, etc.)
x			Hospital/health care
x			Law enforcement
x			Religious centers
x			Open space/parks
x			Event spaces
x			Other public areas
x			Benches
		x	Outdoor tables
x			Entertainment venues
	x		Mix of people using the public spaces
x			Public art

Yes	?	No	Environmental
x			Smart location
x			Water access
x			Wastewater infrastructure
x			Waste baskets
x			Recycling bins
x			Green design
		x	Brownfield redevelopment
	x		Conservation of wetlands, farmland, or habitats

Yes	?	No	Economic
		x	Emphasis on retail
x			Emphasis on office space
x			Majority chain retail
x			Majority local retail
x			Presence of office space
x			Mix of stores
x			Vacancies

Amesbury, Massachusetts

Post-Industrial Revitalized Center

Demographics

Total population	16,542
Median age, % under 5, 18+, 65+	36.7
% White, Black/ Af. Am, Am. Indian, Asian/PI, Hispanic/ Latino	97.2%, 0.6%, 0.2%, 0.6%, 0.9%
Total housing units	6,607
Vacant housing units	245

Social Characteristics

% High school graduates or higher	87.6%
% Disabled persons	18.4%
% Speak language other than English at home	6.7%

Economic Characteristics

% In labor force	70.7%
Mean travel time to work	27.9 minutes
Median family income	$62,875
% Individuals below poverty level	27.9 minutes
Median home value	$180,000
Single family owner occupied homes	5.9%
Persons per square mile	

Land Use

Housing in CBD	yes
Commercial units in CBD	yes
Banks	yes
Grocery Stores	In Newburyport
Retail	yes- a variety
Open space	yes
Library	Amesbury Public Library
Town hall	yes
Government agencies	yes
Social services	yes

Planning Characteristics

Description of planning office/board/ town planner	Town Planner and planning board
Master plan	Developed by VHB
Design guidelines	Very strict design guidelines
New development occurring	yes
Presence of urban furniture	yes
Green design	considered
Historical Preservation	yes
Minimum lot size	
Parking requirements	No, street/ garage parking available

Transportation

Public transportation	yes
Bike lanes	None
Sidewalks	yes
Speed limits	25 mph or less

Site Visit Observation Checklist

Amesbury, Massachusetts

Yes	?	No	Functionality
x			Mixed uses
x			Public transportation access
		x	Bike-friendly
		x	Bike racks
		x	Bike lanes
x			Pedestrian-friendly
x			Sidewalks
x			Crosswalks
x			Housing proximity
x			Employment proximity
x			Compact development
x			Connectivity (both streets and walkways)
x			Access to public spaces
x			Accessible parking

Yes	?	No	Design
x			Visible presence of design standards
x			Visually interesting
x			Historic preservation
x			Possesses a unique character
x			Construction in progress
x			Consistency of scale between buildings
x			Interaction of buildings and streetscape
x			Use of existing natural features
x			Street trees
		x	Landscaping

Yes	?	No	Social and Cultural Aspects
x			Presence of everyday-life buildings
		x	School
x			Post office
x			Library
x			Government buildings (courthouse, town hall, etc.)
		x	Hospital/health care
x			Law enforcement
x			Religious centers
x			Open space/parks
x			Event spaces
x			Other public areas
x			Benches
x			Outdoor tables (there are spaces for tables, but they were not out in winter)
x			Entertainment venues
x			Mix of people using the public spaces
x			Public art

Yes	?	No	Environmental
x			Smart location
x			Water resources
		x	Waste baskets
	o		Recycling bins
	o		Light pollution
x			Air quality
		x	Green design

Yes	?	No	Economic
x			Brownfield redevelopment
x			Emphasis on retail
		x	Emphasis on office space
		x	Majority chain retail
x			Majority local retail
x			Presence of office space
x			Mix of stores
x			Vacancies

Creating a Model Village Center:

Northampton, Massachusetts

Traditional New England Main Street

Demographics	
Total population	28,978
Median age, % under 5, 18+, 65+	37.3; 4.1%, 83%, 13.8%
% White, Black/ Af. Am, Am. Indian, Asian/PI, Hispanic/ Latino	90% , 2.08%, 0.3%, 3.18%, 5.24%
Total housing units	12405
Vacant housing units	525

Social Characteristics	
% High school graduates or higher	80.4%
% Disabled persons	16.5%
% Speak language other than English at home	12.5%

Economic Characteristics	
% In labor force	68.9%
Mean travel time to work	20 min.
Median family income	$56,844
% Individuals below poverty level	9.8%
Median home value	$144,600
Single family owner occupied homes	5,082
Persons per square mile	841

Land Use	
Housing in CBD	Yes - apartments, condos over stores
Commercial units in CBD	mostly 1st floor storefronts
Banks	Yes, several
Grocery Stores	Specialty/upscale grocery in CBD
Retail	Mostly local
Open space	Yes
Library	Yes
Town hall	Yes
Government agencies	Yes
Social services	Yes

Planning Characteristics	
Description of planning office/board/ town planner	Planning office
Master plan	yes
Design guidelines	Yes - set of recommendations
New development occurring	Not much
Presence of urban furniture	Yes
Green design	Yes, some
Historical Preservation	Yes
Minimum lot size	None
Parking requirements	Businesses contribute towards common parki

Transportation	
Public transportation	Bus
Bike lanes	Yes
Sidewalks	Well maintained, wide, attractive
Speed limits	generally 30mph

Site Visit Observation Checklist

Northampton, Massachusetts

Yes	?	No	Functionality
x			Mixed uses
x			Public transportation access
x			Bike-friendly
x			Bike racks
x			Bike lanes
x			Pedestrian-friendly
x			Sidewalks
x			Crosswalks
x			Housing proximity
x			Employment proximity
x			Compact development
x			Connectivity (both streets and walkways)
x			Access to public spaces
x			Accessible parking

Yes	?	No	Design
	x		Visible presence of design standards
x			Visually interesting
x			Historic preservation
x			Possesses a unique character
		x	Construction in progress
		x	Consistency of scale between buildings
x			Interaction of buildings and streetscape
x			Use of existing natural features
x			Street trees
x			Landscaping

Yes	?	No	Social and Cultural Aspects
x			Presence of everyday-life buildings
x			School
x			Post office
x			Library
x			Government buildings (courthouse, town hall, etc.)
	x		Hospital/health care
x			Law enforcement
x			Religious centers
x			Open space/parks
x			Event spaces
x			Other public areas
x			Benches
x			Outdoor tables
x			Entertainment venues
x			Mix of people using the public spaces
x			Public art

Yes	?	No	Environmental
	x		Smart location
x			Water access
	x		Wastewater infrastructure
x			Waste baskets
x			Recycling bins
	x		Green design
x			Brownfield redevelopment
x			Conservation of wetlands, farmland, or habitats

Yes	?	No	Economic
x			Emphasis on retail
		x	Emphasis on office space
		x	Majority chain retail
x			Majority local retail
x			Presence of office space
x			Mix of stores
		x	Vacancies

Mashpee Commons, Mashpee, MA

New Urbanist Development

Demographics

Total population	12,946 (60-70 in Mashpee Commons)
Median age, % under 5, 18+, 65+	40.6, 5.9%, 75.3%, 18.6%
% White, Black/ Af. Am, Am. Indian, Asian/PI, Hispanic/ Latino	90.2%, 2.8%, 2.9%, 0.6%, 1.6%
Total housing units	8,325
Vacant housing units	3,069 (36.8%)

Social Characteristics

% High school graduates or higher	92.8%
% Disabled persons	17.8%
% Speak language other than English at home	5.7%

Economic Characteristics

% In labor force	64.1%
Mean travel time to work	26.9 minutes
Median family income	56,702
% Individuals below poverty level	5.5%
Median home value	$168,900
Single family owner occupied homes	3,801
Persons per square mile	354.6

Land Use

Housing	40 units in Mashpee Commons
Banks	3
Grocery Stores	1
Retail	over 90 stores
Open space	yes
Library	yes
Town hall	no
Government agencies	no
Social services	yes

Planning Characteristics

Description of planning office/board/ town planner	planning office w/ director of planning
Master plan	yes
Design guidelines	yes
New development occurring	yes
Presence of urban furniture	yes
Green design	no
Historical Preservation	no, but building reuse and renovation
Minimum lot size	R-3 40,000, R-5 80,000, C-1,2,3, 40,000
Parking requirements	residential: 2/ unit, comm: 4/ 1000 sq. ft

Transportation

Public transportation	limited
Bike lanes	no
Sidewalks	yes- limited to the Commons
Speed limits	none in Commons, 25-50 mph outside

Site Visit Observation Checklist

Mashpee Commons, Mashpee, MA

Yes	?	No	Functionality
x			Mixed uses
x			Public transportation access
		x	Bike-friendly
		x	Bike racks
		x	Bike lanes
x			Pedestrian-friendly
x			Sidewalks
x			Crosswalks
x			Housing proximity
x			Employment proximity
x			Compact development
x			Connectivity (both streets and walkways)
x			Access to public spaces
x			Accessible parking

Yes	?	No	Design
x			Visible presence of design standards
x			Visually interesting
		x	Historic preservation
x			Possesses a unique character
x			Construction in progress
x			Consistency of scale between buildings
x			Interaction of buildings and streetscape
		x	Use of existing natural features
x			Street trees
x			Landscaping

Yes	?	No	Social and Cultural Aspects
x			Presence of everyday-life buildings
		x	School
x			Post office
x			Library
		x	Government buildings (courthouse, town hall, etc.)
x			Hospital/health care
x			Law enforcement
x			Religious centers
x			Open space/parks
		x	Event spaces
x			Other public areas
x			Benches
x			Outdoor tables
x			Entertainment venues
x			Mix of people using the public spaces
		x	Public art

Yes	?	No	Environmental
		x	Smart location
x			Water access
x			Wastewater infrastructure
x			Waste baskets
		x	Recycling bins
		x	Green design
		x	Brownfield redevelopment
		x	Conservation of wetlands, farmland, or habitats

Yes	?	No	Economic
x			Emphasis on retail
x			Emphasis on office space
		x	Majority chain retail
		x	Majority local retail
x			Presence of office space
x			Mix of stores
x			Vacancies

Park Slope, Brooklyn, NY

Park Slope, Brooklyn, NY	
Transit Oriented Urban Neighborhood	
Demographics	
Total population	63,001
Median age, % under 5, 18+, 65+	33.7, 6%, 80.0%, 8.3%
% White, Black/ Af. Am, Am. Indian, Asian/PI, Hispanic/ Latino	68%, 8.1%, 0.5%, 5.6%, 26.6%
Total housing units	28,841
Vacant housing units	1,527 (5.3%)
Social Characteristics	
% High school graduates or higher	82.7%
% Disabled persons	18.1%
% Speak language other than English at home	34.2%
Economic Characteristics	
% In labor force	71.9%
Mean travel time to work	39.9 minutes
Median family income	$66,101
% Individuals below poverty level	12.3%
Median home value	$436,000
Single family owner occupied homes	2,166
Persons per square mile	27,018
Land Use	
Housing units	28,841
Commercial units	1,651
Banks	6
Grocery Stores	5
Open space	yes
Library	yes
Town hall	N/A
Government agencies	no
Social services	yes
Planning Characteristics	
Description of planning office/board/ town planner	City Planning Commission
Master plan	yes
Design guidelines	yes
New development occurring	yes
Presence of urban furniture	yes
Green design	yes
Historical Preservation	yes
Minimum lot size	varies
Parking requirements	1 per 1000 sq. ft (commercial zoning)
Transportation	
Public transportation	yes
Bike lanes	yes
Sidewalks	yes
Speed limits	varies- 30mph on the main streets

Site Visit Observation Checklist
Park Slope, Brooklyn, NY

Yes	?	No	Functionality
x			Mixed uses
x			Public transportation access
x			Bike-friendly
x			Bike racks
x			Bike lanes
x			Pedestrian-friendly
x			Sidewalks
x			Crosswalks
x			Housing proximity
x			Employment proximity
x			Compact development
x			Connectivity (both streets and walkways)
x			Access to public spaces
x			Accessible parking

Yes	?	No	Design
x			Visible presence of design standards
x			Visually interesting
x			Historic preservation
x			Possesses a unique character
x			Construction in progress
x			Consistency of scale between buildings
x			Interaction of buildings and streetscape
		x	Use of existing natural features
x			Street trees
x			Landscaping

Yes	?	No	Social and Cultural Aspects
x			Presence of everyday-life buildings
x			School
x			Post office
x			Library
		x	Government buildings (courthouse, town hall, etc.)
x			Hospital/health care
		x	Law enforcement
x			Religious centers
x			Open space/parks
x			Event spaces
x			Other public areas
x			Benches
x			Outdoor tables
x			Entertainment venues
x			Mix of people using the public spaces
x			Public art

Yes	?	No	Environmental
x			Smart location
x			Water access
x			Wastewater infrastructure
x			Waste baskets
		x	Recycling bins
x			Green design
x			Brownfield redevelopment
x			Conservation of wetlands, farmland, or habitats

Yes	?	No	Economic
x			Emphasis on retail
x			Emphasis on office space
		x	Majority chain retail
x			Majority local retail
x			Presence of office space
x			Mix of stores
x			Vacancies

Case Study	General Information			Information about planning	
	Type of Community	Scale	Governance	Planner	Master Plan
Lexington, MA	Historical Town	16.64 sq mi (10650 arce)	Town manager + Board of Selectmen	—	Comprehensive Plan since2002
Arlington, MA	Historical Town	5.5 sq. mi (3517.5 acre)	Town manager + Board of Selectmen	—	—
Concord, MA	Old New England Town	Small town	Town Manager + 5 member Board of Selectmen	Director & 2 staff planners in Planning Div of the Dept of Pln & Land Mngt	Smart Growth Housing Trust Fund
Amesbury, MA	New England village	-	mayor/ city council	One Planner and advisory board	master plan
Wellesley, MA	Old New England Town	Small town	—	—	—
Northampton, MA	Small city Vibrant Downtown Traditional and cultural	town: 35.6 square miles (including 1.1 sq. m. water)	Mayor/ City council	—	Sustainable Northampton Plan
Newburyport, MA	coastal tourist town	8.4 sq. mi.	mayor, eleven-member city council	—	—

Case Study	General Information			Information about planning	
	Type of Community	Scale	Governance	Planner	Master Plan
Mashpee Commons MA	constructed New Urbanist community, retail-oriented with housing	originally 62,000 square feet of retail floor and parking; now 278,946 sq. ft. commercial, 40 residential units above	Town meeting	yes	yes
Pinehills, MA	New developed village center Residential community with comercial center Mixed Use development	3000 acres (about 1000 acres are for residential)	—	Plymouth Planning Board, Master plan Committee, etc	Town of Plymouth Master Plan
Hyannis, MA	Tourist Based Area	Urban Area	—	—	—
South Weymouth, MA	Old Naval Base	—	Mayor and City Council (young elected city council members)	—	—
Freeport, ME	New England village	—	town manager, administrative board	One planner	comprehensive plan
Portsmouth, NH	small coastal city	15.6 sq. mi.	—	—	—
Hanover, NH	Old New England Town	Small town	Town Manager	None listed	None listed

Case Study	General Information			Information about planning	
	Type of Community	Scale	Governance	Planner	Master Plan
Park Slope, NY					
Arlington, VA	small city	–	County Board with departments	citizen advisory board	comprehensive plan and general land use plan
Baldwin Park, FL	New Urbanist Community	1,100-acre site, but only 400 buildable acres (40-acre town center)	–	yes	yes
Seaside, FL	new urbanist- 80 acres, 85% built, charter school, interfaith chapel	–	–	–	–
Ft. Collins, CO	Walkable small city Colledge town Revitalization of Old Town since 1980s	51.12 sq.mi Downtown District Area; roughly 580 acre	City Home rule city with counsil/manager	Planning and Zoning Board, etc	City Plan (Comprehensive city planning since 1995)
Stapleton, CO	New developed community, Mixed use development New Urbanisim development	4700 acre	–	Forest City Enterpises INC	Stapleton Development Plan 1995
Belmar, CO	lifestyle- 1,300 homes or apartments, 22 city blocks of stores, offices, etc.	–	–	–	–
The U.S.	–	–	–	–	–

Case Study	Demographic Data				
	Population	Persons per sq.mi	Diversity	Age Distribution	Average household Size
Lexington, MA	30,355	NA	White:86.1% Black/Af.Am:1.1% Asian/PI:10.9% Hispanic/Latino:1.4%	Median age 43.7 65 and over; 19.0% 18 and over: 73.6% under 5: 5.7%	2.66
Arlington, MA	42,389	NA	White:91.0% Black/Af.Am: 1.7% Asian: 5.0% Hispanic/Latino:1.9%	Median age 39.5 65 and over; 16.8% 18 and over: 81.6% under 5: 6.0%	2.22
Concord, MA	16,993	NA	White: 91.6% Black/Af.Am:2.2% Asian/PI:2.9% Hispanic/Latino: 2.8%	Median 42.2 under 5:5.8% 18 and over: 74.9% 65 and over: 16.5%	2.62
Amesbury, MA	16,450	1,326.30	White:97.2%, Black/Af. Am 0.6%, Asian/PI 0.6%, Hispanic/Latino 0.9%	Median: 36.7 Under 5 6.7% 18 and over 73.9% 65 and over 12%	2.52
Wellesley, MA	26,613	NA	White: 90% Black/Af.Am:1.6% Asian/PI:6.4% Hispanic/Latino: 2.3%	Median 37.6 under 5:7.3% 18 and over: 74.9% 65 and over: 13.9%	2.7
Northampton, MA	28,978	841	White:90.0% Black/Af.Am: 2.1% Asian/PI:3.1% Hispanic/Latino:5.2%	Median: 37.3 under 5: 4.1% 18 and over: 83.0% 65 and over: 13.8%	2.14
Newburyport, MA	17189	NA	White:98.1% Black/Af.Am: 0.4% Asian/PI:0.6% Hispanic/Latino:0.9%	Median: 40.9 under 5: 5.7% 18 and over: 79.3% 65 and over: 14.0%	2.24

Case Study	Demographic Data				
	Population	Persons per sq.mi	Diversity	Age Distribution	Average household Size
Mashpee Commons	12946	354.6(P)	White:90.2% Black/Af.Am: 2.8% Asian/PI:0.6% Hispanic/Latino:1.6%	Median: 40.6 under 5: 5.9% 18 and over: 75.3% 65 and over: 18.6%	2.44
Pinehills, MA	NA (Town of Plymouth) 51,701	NA	NA (Town of Plymouth) White:94.8% Black/Af.Am: 1.9% Asian/PI: 0.6% Hispanic/Latino:1.7%	NA (Town of Plymouth) Median age 36.5 65 and over; 11.2% 18 and over: 74.2% under 5: 6.7%	NA (Town of Plymouth) 2.67
Hyannis, MA	20,097	NA	—	—	—
South Weymouth, MA	53,988	NA	White:94.9% Black:1.4% Asian:0.2%	—	—
Freeport, ME	7,800	224.8	White:97.2%, Black/ Af. Am 0.4%, Asian/ PI 1%, Hispanic/ Latino 0.7%	Median:39.8 under 5:6.2% 18 and over:74.8% 65 and over:12.7%	2.49
Portsmouth, NH	20784	1331.3	White:93.5%, Black/ Af. Am 2.1%, Asian/ PI 2.4%, Hispanic/ Latino 1.3%	Median:38.5 under 5:4.9% 18 and over:82.8% 65 and over:16.3%	2.04
Hanover, NH	10850 (2000) 11151 (+2.8% 2006)	NA	White: 88% Black/Af.Am:1.7% Asian/PI:6.9% Hispanic/Latino: 2.5	Median 22.8 under 5:3.1% 18 and over: 84.9% 65 and over: 13.6%	2.47

	Demographic Data				
Case Study	**Population**	**Persons per sq.mi**	**Diversity**	**Age Distribution**	**Average household Size**
Park Slope, NY					
Arlington, VA	189453 (2000) 199776 (+5.4% 2006)	7,286.70	White:68.9% Black/Af. Am 9.3%, Asian/PI 8.7%, Hispanic/Latino 18.6%	Median: 34.0 Under 5:6.7% 18 and over:83.5% 65 and over:9.5%	2.15
Baldwin Park, FL	about 100,000 people housing units: 2,200 attached dwellings in	High density (100,000 people within three miles)	—	—	—
Seaside, FL	2,000	—	—	—	—
Ft. Collins, CO	118652 (2000) 135481 (+14.2%,2006)	2,549	White;89.6% Black/Af.Am: 1% Asian/PI: 2.6% Hispanic/Latino: 8.8%	Median age 28.2 65 and over; 7.9% 18 and over: 78.5% under 5: 5.9%	2.45
Stapleton, CO	(more than 7,000) Denver 554,636	NA (Denver) 3616	NA (Denver white:65.3% Black/Af.Am:11.1% Asian/PI:2.9% Hispanic/Latino: 31.7%	NA (Denver) Median age 33.3 65 and over; 11.3% 18 and over: 77.0% under 5; 6.8%	NA (number of home; over 3000)
Belmar, CO	—	—	—	—	—
The U.S.	281,421,906 (2000) 299,398,485 (+6.3%, 2006)	79.6	White;75.1% Black/Af.Am: 12.3% Asian/PI: 3.7% Hispanic/Latino: 12.5%	Median age 35.3 under 5: 6.8 18 and over:74.3 65 and over:12.4	2.59

Case Study	Economic Data					
	Average Household Income	Poverty Rate	Unemployment rate	% Vacant Housing	Transit	Mean Travel Time to Work
Lexington, MA	96,825	3.4%	1.60%	2%	Bus Minibus	27.0 min Car: 84.6% Public:6.5% Walk: 1.7%
Arlington, MA	64,344	4.10%	1.50%	2.10%	Bus	29.0 min Car: 74.5% Public:17.8% Walk: 1.8%
Concord, MA	95,897	3.90%	1.10%	3.30%	Commuter Rail Line	28.5 min Car: 82.0% Public:5.2% Walk: 2.8%
Amesbury, MA	51,906	3.90%	2.50%	4%	buses	27.9 min Car: 92.1% Public:1.8% Walk:1.6%
Wellesley, MA	113,686	3.80%	2.20%	3.00%	commuter rail and elderly services	24.3 min Car: 69.9% Public:9.6% Walk: 11.8%
Northampton, MA	41,808	9.8%	2.80%	4.20%	Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (bus service to colleges and nearby towns), other regional bus; rail and bigger bus terminal in Springfield	20 min Car: 77.1% Public: 3.2% Walk: 13.7%
Newburyport, MA	58557	5.20%	2.00%	4.80%	commuter rail to Boston	29.9Min Car:86.8% Public:2.8% Walk:3.0%

Creating a Model Village Center:

Case Study	Economic Data					
	Average Household Income	Poverty Rate	Unemployment rate	% Vacant Housing	Transit	Mean Travel Time to Work
Mashpee Commons	50871	5.50%	2.30%	36.90%	limited buses	29.6Min Car:94.2% Public:1.3% Walk:0.5%
Pinehills, MA	NA (Town of Plymouth) 54,677	NA (Town of Plymouth) 5.4%	NA (Town of Plymouth) 3.0%	(Town of Plymouth) 13.3%	Automobile No public Transportation	—
Hyannis, MA	38,467 (median)	—	(Data of Barnstable) 2.9%	—	limited buses	(Data of Barnstable) 23.7 min Car: 89.4% Public:1.6% Walk: 3.7%
Freeport, ME	52,023	4%	2%	5.90%	none	22.3 min Car:89.1% Public:1.2% Walk:3.9%
Portsmouth, NH	45195	9.30%	2.00%	3.10%	Pease International Airport	21.5 Min Car:86.9% Public:1.5% Walk:4.9%
Hanover, NH	72,470	9.10%	4.90%	5.30%	Advance Transit (commuter bus) and Upper Valley Rideshare	13.9 min Car: 55.3% Public:1.1% Walk: 33.2%

Case Study	Economic Data					
	Average Household Income	Poverty Rate	Unemployment rate	% Vacant Housing	Transit	Mean Travel Time to Work
Park Slope, NY	66,101	12.30%	3.60%	5.30%	subway, buses	39.9 min Car: 18.3% Public: 68.4% Walk: 7%
Arlington, VA	63,001	7.10%	2.00%	2.60%	metrorail, buses	27.3 min Car:66.4% Public:23.3% Walk:5.6%
Baldwin Park, FL	—	—	—	—	—	—
Seaside, FL	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ft. Collins, CO	44459(2000) 45846(2006) (Note: according to Fort Collins' website) 69200 (in 2005)	14.00%	3.80%	3.90%	18 Bus rote	18.5 min Car: 85.5% Public: 1.5% Walk: 3.6%
Stapleton, CO	NA (Data of Denver) 39,500	NA (Denver) 14.3%	NA (Denver) 3.8%	NA (Denver) 4.9%	Bus	NA (Denver) 24.5 min Car: 81.8% Public: 8.4% Walk: 4.3%
Belmar, CO	—	—	—	—	—	—
The U.S.	41994	12.40%	3.70%	9.00%	—	25.5 min Car: 87.9% Public:4.7% Walk: 2.9%

Appendix 3: Land Use Maps

Northampton, MA — Land Use

Legend

Land Use
- Open Space and Recreation
- Industrial
- Residential
- Commercial
- Infrastructure
- Water
- Public
- Roads

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Mashpee Commons, MA — Land Use

Legend

Land Use
- Open Space and Recreation
- Industrial
- Residential
- Commercial
- Infrastructure
- Water
- Public
- Roads

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles