



FORUM ON THE FUTURE: THE HAMILTON DOWNTOWN CHARRETTE

Prepared for:
Town of Hamilton
Downtown Charrette Steering Committee

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Hamilton's Downtown is a significant asset, from many perspectives. The Downtown provides a combination of community-serving uses that include civic, retail, commercial, and residential components. Generous open spaces – both private and public – border the Downtown and include parks and recreation destinations. Neighborhoods extend from the Downtown's edges in several directions.

The Downtown is “connected”. It hosts a commuter station linking the town to the region. It has grown along both sides of a Main Street that is a segment of the historic North Shore roadway linking Boston and Beverly to Ipswich and other communities further north. Due to its location, the Downtown serves a much greater area than Hamilton alone. It hosts students from neighboring Wenham at the Winthrop School as part of the shared school district. Its businesses rely on customers from Wenham, Essex, Beverly, Ipswich and other nearby communities.



The Town has recognized the importance of the Downtown and the need to manage its future. Building upon important goals that have been incorporated into the Hamilton Master Plan, an initiative was undertaken by the Town through its Economic Development Committee. A special task force that was created to host a forum on the future of the Downtown through a workshop process called a “charrette”. The Charrette Steering Committee guided this process to explore many key questions about the future of the district, including:

- Economics - What is the economic role of the Downtown, and how can the Town assist in ensuring a successful retail and commercial environment? How should the Town's regulations support desirable land use patterns and shape future redevelopment?
- Residences - What is the best relationship between the Downtown and residential uses? How should the district be viewed from both the existing neighborhood fabric and the potential for new housing within or near the Downtown?
- Infrastructure - What actions should the Town undertake to provide an appropriate infrastructure system for the future? How should the Town address the framework of streets and sidewalks, parking, and circulation for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists? What additional benefits can be gained from the presence of a commuter rail station in the town center? What can be done to provide appropriate utilities, particularly in regards to sanitary sewer?

- Municipal Uses and Land – The Town is a major landowner in the Town’s center; what policies and outcomes should it pursue regarding its current facilities and potential changes in the future?
- Amenities and Design – How can the Downtown become an even more attractive and interesting place?

This report summarizes the results of the community-based process which focused discussion and solicited creative ideas about the Downtown. The process was centered on the charrette, which took the form of a town-wide workshop. The process included a series of interactive meetings and discussions which preceded that forum.

Section I of this document summarizes the process that was undertaken and provides useful background information concerning the Downtown.

Section II of this document provides a written and graphic summary of the concerns and ideas that emerged from the community during the public participation process, including the charrette workshop. This information has been prepared to provide a record of the contributions from the participating citizens of Hamilton and the stakeholders in the Downtown.



Section III of this document presents a series of observations and recommendations regarding the Town’s stewardship of the Downtown, including steps that may be taken to respond to the issues that have been raised and manage the future of the district.

The charrette process was facilitated by a professional team from The Cecil Group, a professional planning and design firm with a substantial background in planning for New England’s village and town centers. The Cecil Group was also responsible for compiling this report.

Focus Area

The discussions undertaken in preparing for the charrette revealed differing perspectives regarding the limits of the Downtown. While there are clearly defined zoning and jurisdictional boundaries in effect that delineate the core commercial areas, the process benefitted from expanding the focus area by bringing a broadening the consideration of the land and use relationships.

The focus area defined for the purposes of this process is indicated in the following diagram. It includes the commercial and retail core area spanning between Linden Street and Asbury Street between Willow Street and Main Street, and along southwest side of Main Street. The focus area encompasses the MBTA Station and the parking adjacent to it. The Winthrop School, “old Library”, and the Town’s Public Safety complex are included

FIGURE 1: FOCUS AREA



within the focus area. The focus area extends into the edges of the residential neighborhoods around the Downtown which are linked to it by streets, paths and sidewalks.

Downtown Hamilton is highly unusual as a business district that borders an adjacent municipality. As a practical matter, the Downtown also serves as a business district for residents in Wenham. This focus area included portions of this the bordering municipality, so that the relationships among the neighboring land uses could be considered. In this regard, Wenham town officials were invited to participate in the stakeholder meetings and charrette process, and Hamilton participants were encouraged.



Background

Planning Precedents

The Downtown Charrette process was initiated within the context of preceding plans and studies.

In great part, the Downtown Charrette initiative is intended to advance the implementation of relevant recommendations contained within the *Town of Hamilton Master Plan*. This document provides a comprehensive framework of planning principles, policies and directions.

The current *Master Plan* was completed in 2004 and provides guidance regarding the future of the Downtown Area. The *Master Plan* recognizes the value and importance of the Town's center as a vital business district and gateway to the community. It recognizes the need to reconsider aspects of the Town's zoning regulations so that the district can be successful, without expanding the limits of the commercial areas. The design quality of the Downtown is underlined, and methods to enhance the character of the area are suggested. These considerations are highlighted as one of the Guiding Principles of the *Master Plan*:

Downtown Hamilton. In support of a downtown that thrives as the town's business, social and cultural center, Hamilton's zoning will provide maximum

flexibility as to use and dimensional requirements in the Business District and regulate appearance, operation and safety through site plan and design review. (page xii)

The *Master Plan* indicates a range of other issues need to be addressed. These include specific observations that the parking requirements in the zoning need to be refined to provide a practical approach to supporting desirable uses and development patterns. The Plan recommends that the Downtown streets, sidewalks and paths be improved and that solutions be found to the inadequate sanitary sewer system in the area. The Town should prepare dedicated elements of a Capital Plan for the Downtown to direct the community's reinvestments.

In view of the range of issues and the need to provide a coordinated approach, the Master Plan called for the creation of an Economic Development Committee, which was accomplished. The role of this Committee was projected to include:

Sponsoring a public review, reassessment and update of the 1980-1982 Downtown Plan working in conjunction with the Planning Board and the (proposed) Department of Planning and Community Development. (page xxiii).

The Town's Economic Development Committee has consequently helped sponsor the Downtown Charrette as public forum for the entire community, and enlisted the assistance of other members of the Town's leadership to serve on the special Steering Committee that guided this process.

The Town also commissioned the preparation of a *Low Impact Guide to Development* (2006) which provides information regarding best practices to advance environmental sustainability; concepts for Downtown improvements and should be considered in light of its recommendations.

History of the Downtown

The character of Hamilton's Downtown has emerged in concert with the overall character and the economic base of the Town.

Linked to the region by the "Old Bay Road" which evolved into Main Street/Route 1A, the town center was the site of a rail depot in 1840; the center was known as the Hamilton Depot and became the center of business and commerce. Like most other major towns in the region, trolley car lines were extended into the town center, strengthening local links to neighboring communities until being replaced by the automobile.

The evolution of the Downtown can be traced through some of the traditional buildings and architecture that remain. Despite the expansion of businesses that are reliant on automobile traffic and access and their need for large parking lots, segments of tight streets and building-lined sidewalks which remain recall a pedestrian-friendlier environment and the historic New England qualities of a small town center.

*A Downtown parade, 1893
(photo from Hamilton, Images
of America, Annette V.
James, Arcadia Publishing,
2002)*



Characteristics of the Town and Downtown Today

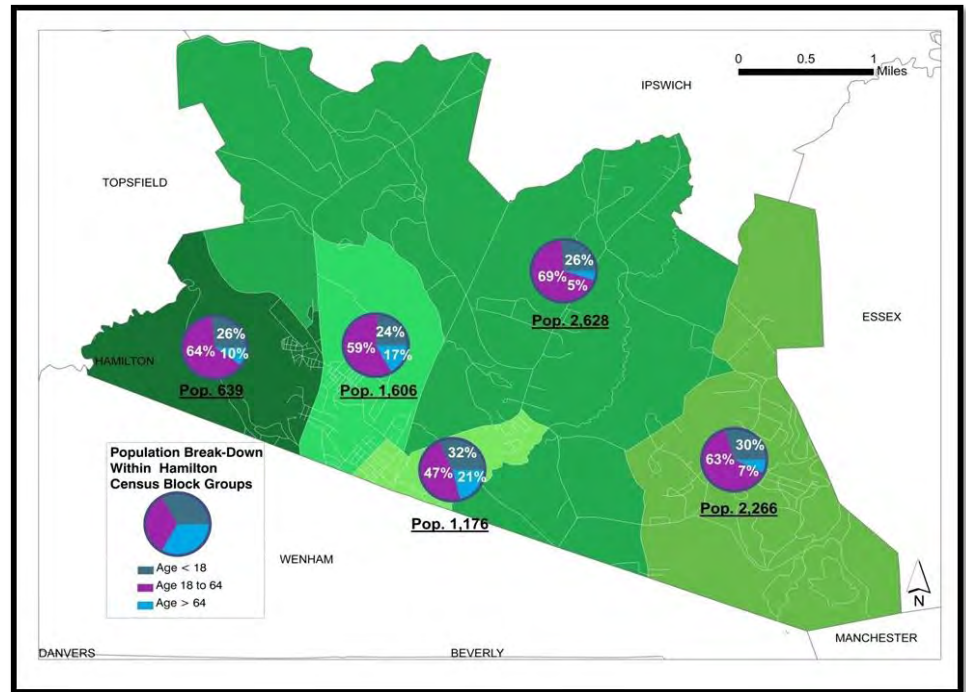
In preparation for the charrette, The Cecil Group prepared an overview of the characteristics of the Town and of the Downtown. This included undertaking site walks and assembling photographs of the district. The Cecil Group reviewed demographic and statistical data. A brief profile was then presented and discussed as an introduction to the workshop.

Salient information and related observations included the following, drawn largely from the U.S. 2000 Census Data:

- The total population of the Town as recorded in the last census was 8,315 individuals. Based on the experience of The Cecil Group, communities with such small populations in a metropolitan region normally cannot support a wide range of convenience stores and other services within their commercial centers. However, Hamilton's center provides a number of stores and businesses that fit this category (grocery store, pharmacy, liquor store, convenience store, and the like). In addition, there is a notable concentration of destination and specialty retail and restaurants in the Downtown.
- Hamilton's ability to support such a relatively large range and number of Downtown retail and restaurant establishments is in part due to the fact that it also serves as a convenient commercial center and destination for patrons from neighboring areas, notably Wenham. Wenham lacks a significant commercial center and its population (over 4,440 in 2000) contributes to the vitality of the district.
- Average incomes in Hamilton (along with Wenham and other nearby communities) are high relative to regional averages. As a consequence, there is more disposable

income available to convert into sales by local businesses, if they provide the types of goods and services needed.

- The population within the Town is dispersed. While there is a relatively higher concentration within the neighborhoods near the Downtown, the total population within these areas would not normally be able to support a vital commercial district. The great majority of patrons of the Downtown will rely on auto access, reaching the town center along the major arterials that connect the Town and other communities. The availability of adequate and convenient parking areas will be critical to the area’s businesses if they are to be successful.



- Mean travel to work time noted in the census date is 32.7 minutes for Hamilton residents (the US average was 25.5 in 2000). This is higher than the national average, and reflects an important characteristic of the Town: linked to the greater Boston area, it is nevertheless relatively remote from employment centers. Commuters have been increasingly using the MBTA commuter rail service over time, rather than driving. Statistics assembled by the MBTA through 2007 indicate an increase of 63% in the number of passengers boarding the train at the Hamilton Depot relatively to ridership levels just 6 years earlier.
- In studies undertaken by The Cecil Group at other suburban rail stations and town centers, the rail ridership does not directly contribute to the sales and commercial activity in a town center, because commuters relatively rarely shop, dine or use adjacent services as part of their trip to and from the train. Rather, they make separate trips to shops, restaurants and other uses. As a result, it is very important to separate and isolate commuter rail parking from the parking that is needed to support Downtown businesses.
- However, there are many important indirect benefits and opportunities associated with a central rail depot. For example, the visibility of businesses and their signage to

the commuting population aids in establishing identity and attracting customers at other times of day and during the weekend.

- The ability to walk to both a rail station and also walk to a commercial center is a very desirable relationship that is increasingly attractive to many residents in the greater Boston region and is being advanced through new development in many communities. The convenience of being able to walk to both work and the town center enhances housing values and enlivens a commercial district. The traditional commuter villages throughout the northeast often featured clustered housing near the train station; today this is termed “transit-oriented development”.
- There is little reason to suggest that there is a large and underserved market for retail and services that would support a significantly expanded development. Population growth statistics do not indicate any major shifts in the future, the Route 1A corridor does not support the high traffic volumes required for large retail enterprises, and there are nearby competing locations which are more convenient to a larger population of potential customers. These competitive locations include North Beverly and the commercial areas around the Route 128 interchange with Route 1A, as well as business locations in Ipswich to the north.
- The Cecil Group has noted in other communities that there is increasing demand for small business locations in suburban town centers for professional and other services. In part, this is due to contemporary information technology is supporting a far more geographically dispersed business locations than in the past. Lifestyle choices also contribute to this increased demand. While this trend may provide opportunities for some expansion in commercial office space in the Downtown, the extent of such business needs will likely be limited. This will be due to the relatively small size of the residential population within Hamilton and surrounding towns that may be advantaged by locating their businesses or finding employment in the Downtown.

Topical Issues

In addition to the longstanding issues that were raised in the Town’s *Master Plan*, this workshop process included discussions about topical issues that have arisen and which may require the Town to craft policies, prepare plans, and make decisions. These topics included:

- Winthrop School – As part of its responsibilities in managing and planning the joint school system, the Hamilton - Wenham Regional School District has been considering possible scenarios in which the use of the Winthrop School facilities would no longer be required. In the event that such a conclusion is reached, the Town needs to consider the best future use of the land and its relationship with the adjacent Downtown.
- Business Turnover/Property Sales – There are several properties in the Downtown that have either been offered for sale or which are considered likely candidates for sale. In addition, business turnover is opening some occupancies in the Downtown. In this environment, the Town should consider regulatory and/or other roles that it may play in setting land use goals, promoting the business environment, and providing for parking and other necessary circulation or infrastructure improvements to support the district.

- Wenham Land Use and Development – Potentially developable open land lies adjacent to Hamilton’s Downtown across the Wenham Town boundary. In view of shared interests of the two communities, Hamilton’s planning for its Downtown should consider the possible scenarios for the future of the bordering areas in Wenham as a basis for pursuing coordinated and mutually beneficial outcomes.

Process

The process employed by this initiative consisted of the following steps:

- Consultation – The Charrette Steering Committee solicited proposals and selected The Cecil Group to serve as its consultant in facilitating the process. The Cecil Group met with the Steering Committee to discuss issues, establish goals for the process, and establish an overall agenda of meetings.
- Preparation – The Cecil Group reviewed relevant planning information and visited the area with members of the Steering Committee.
- Focus Group Meetings - To prepare for the charrette workshop, three informal preparatory meetings were held to discuss key issues and opportunities for the Downtown, so that the subsequent charrette workshop could be effectively organized and supporting information assembled.
- Information and Invitations – Announcements and invitations were widely distributed by the Steering Committee.
- Charrette Workshop – A town-wide forum was held to collect ideas and consider possible futures for the Downtown.
- Town Meeting Briefing - A hand-out was prepared summarizing the Downtown Charrette and a briefing conducted as part of the October, 2009 Town Meeting.
- Final Report and Meetings – This report summarizes the results of the process, and follow-up briefings were held with the Board of Selectmen and with the Charrette Steering Committee.



SECTION II: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Focus Group Meetings

In preparation for the Downtown Charrette, The Cecil Group, with assistance from the Hamilton Charrette Steering Committee, organized a series of focus group meetings. These were informal meetings that were intended to engage those individuals who were interested and available to help prepare the ground for the charrette. This was accomplished through discussions that considered various perspectives of the Downtown's problems and potential. The meetings were advertised as public meetings, and all meetings were open to anyone who wished to attend. In addition, an outreach process was conducted to contact and send invitations to representatives from various stakeholders in the Downtown, to ensure that a range of participation. The sessions were organized around three themes, based on the perspectives of different constituencies.

To understand the perspectives of the three main groups of stakeholders, focus group meetings were organized with the following themes and predominant participants:

- Meeting 1- Businesses and commercial property owners
- Meeting 2 - Neighbors and residents of the town center area
- Meeting 3 - Town boards, commissions and committees

Meetings 1 and 2 took place on August 4th. Meeting 3 occurred on August 6th. All three meetings were very well attended and were held at the Old Library on Bay Road. These events provided important opportunities for gathering initial perspectives regarding key issues and opportunities for the Downtown; the feedback from these meetings provided the Cecil Group with a basic understanding of the opinions within the community and helped guide the planning for the charrette.

Participants were encouraged to share their opinions on a variety of topics related to the Downtown. Topics included:

- Commonly used terms for the business district and the physical limits of the Downtown
- Positive aspects of Downtown Hamilton
- Elements of concern for the various stakeholders
- Factors that influence the success of businesses
- Communities that could serve as models for Hamilton

The following provides an overview of the discussions that took place during the focus group meetings. A more detailed summary of the Focus Group Meetings is provided in Appendix A.

Meeting 1: Business and Commercial Property Owners

During Meeting 1, approximately fifteen local business owners, business managers, and commercial property owners were in attendance. In general, participants expressed pride in the quality and convenience that Hamilton’s businesses offer and shared the belief that most of the shopping needs of the community can be satisfied within Hamilton. Participants also mentioned that customers come from the surrounding communities to shop in Hamilton and that customers from Boston and the North Shore are also common.

Many participants stated that their sales remained level throughout the year and that tourists are not a significant source of revenue. The availability of parking, the relationships between residents and businesses, and what impact the creation of signage bylaws would have on the success of businesses were some of the topics of conversation during the meeting.



Meeting 2: Downtown Hamilton’s Residents and Neighbors

Ten area residents participated in Meeting 2. Overall, residents expressed appreciation for Downtown Hamilton and shared their desire to protect and enhance the village-like feel of the area; this is reflected through several residents’ preference to call the Downtown area “The Village”.

Residents expressed concerns regarding several issues including pedestrian safety, the impact of noise and light pollution on residential areas, traffic flow, and parking within the residential neighborhoods. In general, the participants expressed a desire to understand what type of economic development may occur in the future and how that development would impact the residents of the area.

Meeting 3: Town Boards, Commissions and Committees

The third meeting focused on Hamilton’s Town government and drew approximately 24 participants from various Town entities. When asked to identify Hamilton’s business assets, participants provided many comments. A sample of the assets that were named include: commercial diversity, MBTA Commuter Rail access, open space, and a balanced mix of uses.

The concerns voiced by participants at the meeting touched upon a wide range of topics: concerns about sewer capacity limits, the conflict between commercial growth and residential areas, the possible impact of development on water table levels, the current zoning ratios for parking, and future uses for several properties that are vulnerable to change. A substantial amount of discussion focused on the structure of the Town’s tax base and the importance of the contribution to the tax base represented by business and commercial uses, as well as appropriate new development that creates a net fiscal benefit

to the Town. In this regard, models of other communities were discussed, including the initiatives to create transit-oriented development and to provide age-restricted or senior housing.

Downtown Charrette: A Community Planning Workshop

On Saturday September 26th, the Town of Hamilton held the Hamilton Downtown Charrette at the Winthrop School on Bay Road. The two and one-half hour workshop focused on the future of Downtown Hamilton and created the opportunity for community members to share their visions and to generate ideas on how to make those visions a reality. The goal of the workshop was to start the process of identifying what types of changes, if any, community members would like to see and how a plan for those changes may be created.

The public had been notified of the charrette through a variety of methods including: announcements posted at Town Hall, an article in the local paper, fliers at local business locations, and an email notification that was sent to Town Agencies, the Save Our Schools group, and the Enough is Enough group. Approximately 40 community members participated in the charrette.

Presentation

The charrette began with introductions and a powerpoint presentation. The presentation was crafted to provide the participants with a foundation of shared knowledge including helpful historical, economic, demographic and land use information gathered from available sources.

Case studies from three communities with similar issues were presented to provide comparative observations about various methods used and successes that have been achieved in managing the vitality and quality of town and village centers. The case studies included Manchester-by-the-Sea, Concord, and Hingham. Each community is a commuter suburb of Boston with a rail depot and a traditional town center. The following observations were made regarding these communities and the relevance to Hamilton's circumstances.

Manchester-by-the-Sea

This north shore community has a relatively small population (about 5,000) but also enjoys relatively high income levels relative to most New England towns. Like Hamilton, it is somewhat isolated from surrounding communities and commercial districts, and supports a fairly wide range of convenience goods and services in the town center. The Town has accomplished a substantial streetscape and open space improvement program that included placing utilities underground. The Town has also supported new development within the town center that combines affordable rental housing as part of its overall housing plan and retail uses within the same building, which helps subsidize rents.

Concord

Concord has three village centers. The Town recently sponsored a town-wide visioning process very similar to Hamilton's Downtown charrette initiative. The historic Concord Center is broadly recognized as an attractive example of a traditional town center in terms of the pedestrian-friendly characteristics, architecture and relationship of civic, commercial uses and open spaces. The Town's two other centers are clustered around MBTA commuter rail stations (Thoreau Depot and West Concord Village Center).

Historic Concord Center provides a mix of services and goods that rely largely on the patronage of townspeople and nearby communities, combined with a mix of special destination shops. Townspeople have been concerned that this center is increasingly specialized and does not cater to the typical shopping or service needs of residents. However, as a practical matter, the commercial district cannot expand to provide additional development of any significance, because it is tightly restricted by protected historic lands and properties and surrounding residential development.

Leading from that process, Concord is now engaged in a comprehensive process to reconsider the zoning in the West Concord Center area. The prospective zoning would encourage appropriately scaled transit-oriented development including housing and seek to preserve and strengthen the mix of convenience and specialty shops and services that the Town values.

Hingham

Hingham is a larger community than Hamilton, but also enjoys relatively elevated average incomes. It has a traditional village center that is surrounded by low scale residential neighborhoods. This Town has elected to exclude an MBTA rail station within its traditional center. The mix of uses has limited convenience shopping opportunities, but is more focused on food, beverage and specialty shops. The Town has employed earmarked funding from state legislature to provide streetscape improvements to create a more attractive and pedestrian-friendly district. However, the district has a shortage of adequate parking convenient to many storefront businesses. The Town has undertaken several planning initiatives to consider how additional parking might be provided in the future.

Visual Preference Survey

A visual preference survey followed the presentation. In general, visual preference surveys use images to help people understand and clarify their preferences for various environments in order to inform their choices for the future. Factors influencing these "environments" include architectural styles, open spaces, and streetscapes.

Purpose

The integration of a visual preference survey into this charrette provided participants with the opportunity to explore their preferences for the physical environment in the context of the Downtown and the overall image of the Town. This exercise was also designed to foster discussion and thinking about design elements and the relationships between various possible uses within Hamilton’s Downtown environment.

Format

Participants were shown a variety of images which were divided into three separate categories:

- Buildings and Architecture
- Streetscape
- Landscape and Open Space

The survey was comprised of 35 images taken of locations throughout New England; each category contained ten or fifteen images. Each image was displayed for approximately 10 seconds to elicit immediate responses from participants. Participants were asked to rate each image based upon its appropriateness for their personal vision for Downtown Hamilton. They were encouraged to base their response on their general impression of the image without reacting to specific elements within the image. The scoring range ran from 1 – 5. The number 1 corresponded to a very desirable image and the number 5 corresponded to a very undesirable image. A sample portion of the scoring sheet that was distributed is provided below.

	Very Desirable	Desirable	Neutral	Undesirable	Very Undesirable
Image 1	1	2	3	4	5
Image 2	1	2	3	4	5

The images displayed in the visual preference survey and the comprehensive results are provided in Appendix B.

Observations

The images provided to the participants consisted of examples of architecture, site design and open space that exemplify different styles and characteristics. The compiled expression of relative preferences provides an interesting basis for reflection and a few preliminary observations:

- Scale – The selection of buildings deliberately included a selection of one-story, two-story and three-story buildings that represented different building types and mix of uses. Some of the multi-story examples were “layered” and had obvious storefront commercial or retail uses on the lower level with possible some other use (residential or commercial) above. Other some of the examples were more apparently composed

of a single uses. The participants did not seem to make preference distinctions based on scale, but rather on the architectural character of the overall building composition.

- Architectural Styles – There appeared to be some clear preferences expressed about architectural styles. Contemporary architecture styles tended to score poorly. The example of an art-deco era diner also scored poorly.
- Materials – Wood frame and shingle or clapboard sided buildings seemed clearly to be preferred relative to masonry or other materials.
- Forms – Buildings with relatively simple pitched roofs seemed nearly uniformly preferred relative to flat-roofed buildings.
- Streetscape – The streetscape images tended to receive similar scores, with one exception. Images of broad sidewalks received very positive responses.
- Landscape Character – The responses to the landscape and open space images are difficult to interpret. In some cases, relatively formal plantings gained a positive response, while in other cases they were poorly received. Contemporary design and more “urban” examples of spaces and planting seemed less compelling than other images, as well.

After the Visual Preference Survey was completed, participants were randomly split into four groups. A facilitator and note-taker was assigned to each group. Each group took part in two planning exercises: Identifying Goals and Objectives and Mapping Opportunities and Issues

Identifying Goals and Objectives

Purpose

The purpose of this exercise was to provoke participants to share their visions of the future of Downtown Hamilton and define the goals and priorities the community should focus upon to make that vision a reality.

Process

The facilitator circulated within the group and asked participants to share their goals and priorities one at a time while a list of those goals and objectives was created. It was explained to each group that the activity was not intended to create debate and no consensus was to be reached; this was simply an opportunity for people to express their individual opinions.



While participants were free to share comments related to any issue within the Downtown, the facilitators encouraged the groups to also include goals and objectives related to specific topics:

- Mix and Type of Land Uses
- Parking and Circulation
- Design Character

The groups spent approximately 20 minutes generating their list of goals and objectives for the district, without distinction regarding their relative importance or support within the group. The next step in the process allowed participants to “vote” on their top choices. Each participant was provided with 5 stickers representing a positive “vote” expressing a preferred goal or objective; one “no” vote was also provided in order to indicate a goal or objective that they strongly disagreed with. This provided the opportunity to rank and compare the thoughts of all of the participants.

Results

Each of the four groups generated comments across a broad range of topics. Through analysis of each group’s comprehensive lists, several common themes appeared. As a result, the ten most common themes for the goals and objectives from the entire session were identified and are displayed below.

Top Themes for Goals and Objectives

- Add commercial uses to create retail variety and economic opportunities
- Explore development potential at several areas along Willow Street
- Improve parking options and enforce parking regulations
- Improve the streetscapes throughout Downtown
- Pay attention to traffic (speeds and changes in traffic flow) and create a system for managing it
- Make a plan for growth: maximize what Hamilton offers while maintaining the small town feel and rural village architecture
- Support local businesses with better signage and with improved services and access
- Improve pedestrian connections between the different areas of Downtown
- Create architectural standards to encourage a consistent design theme for Downtown
- Create diverse housing choices

For a comprehensive list of the goals and objectives generated by each group, refer to Appendix C.

Observations

This exercise is designed, in part, to identify shared goals that can be the basis for creating consensus or taking actions that may have broad support. The exercise is also designed to identify topics where disagreements are likely to occur. The method also provides insights into whether the goals of the community are likely to be concentrated on a limited number of topics, or spread among many considerations.

The results suggest that there are a broad range of topics that the participants recognize as important to the future of the Downtown. The distribution of “priorities” among many topics occurred within each of the four work groups, and re-emerged when the results among all participants was compiled. The most prevalent shared priorities addressed uses within the downtown. There were advocates for certain mixes of uses, development of particular sites, and support for senior housing. Following in importance were a cluster of priorities advocating improvements in the infrastructure of the Downtown, including parking, sewer, lighting standards, bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements, and improved connections. A third notable segment of opinion focused upon the visual qualities of the Downtown, underlining the desirability of a rural village character.

Most goals and objectives that gained positive expressions of support appear to be consistent with one another.

However, the method that was employed evoked conflicting choices about the potential for mixing residential and commercial uses. Several individuals indicated that they do not favor mixing these two uses in planning for the future.

Mapping the Opportunities and Ideas for the Future

Purpose

This exercise gave the participants the opportunity to work together and create a shared vision for the future of the Downtown by representing their ideas on large-scale aerial photographs. The groups were facilitated by planning and design professionals from The Cecil Group staff. The results of the four break-out groups were then presented and discussed in a final, shared session.

Process

Participants were provided with a variety of materials to use as they crafted a visual example of their vision for the Downtown. Materials included a 30” x 40” aerial photo of Hamilton and small markers representing a variety of uses and planning elements that might be provided in various locations. The participants then set about arranging visions for the district, supplementing the use markers with drawings and diagrams.



- Streetscape Improvements
- Parks and Open Space
- Parking
- No Parking
- Civic Uses
- Shops
- Office
- Mixed Use
- Housing

Samples of these “use markers” have been included as thematic graphics below and have been distributed throughout this document. The members of each group worked collaboratively, placing use markers and making notes on the aerial photograph, to create a vision of Hamilton that they generally supported. Where there were dissenting opinions, these were acknowledged and noted during the subsequent overall group discussion.



Observations: Compiled Ideas

Each group generated many suggestions for Hamilton. A great many common ideas emerged, along with some distinctive concepts that were expressed. on the following page represents a collection of a few of those comments. Images of each group’s final map can be found in Appendix D.

The Cecil Group has assembled a composite diagram of key ideas, which is provided in the following graphic.

FIGURE 2: IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

VISIONING EXERCISE - MAPPING ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN DOWNTOWN HAMILTON

During the Charrette participants had the opportunity to share their concerns and visions for downtown Hamilton. Topics of conversation generated by the participants ranged from discussing ways to encourage visitors to explore Hamilton, how to increase connectivity between all areas of the downtown, how to maximize the area's potential while maintain its identity and more. Many issues and opportunities were discussed; those listed here represent a collection of a few of the comments.

1. If the Wenham property along the town line becomes available for reuse, mixed use development could be encouraged with a buffer of greenspace along 1A.
2. To encourage visitors to explore all of Hamilton's retail options, signage could be improved along Railroad Avenue and 1A.
3. The addition of mixed use along Linden Street near the intersection of Linden Street and 1A could provide a valuable expansion to the business area.
4. If reuse becomes an option for McRae's property at Railroad Avenue and Willow Street many possibilities exist: a neighborhood park, housing, parking, or shops.
5. Improving the streetscapes along 1A and Railroad Avenue could create a more inviting environment.
6. Creating a more functional parking system in the neighborhood between 1A and Willow Street by improving the layout of the parking lots could enhance the traffic flow and encourage more business patrons to visit the area.
7. Pedestrian and vehicle circulation might be enhanced with through-block links.
8. Creating a walking and bike path adjacent to the rail road tracks could improve connections within the downtown and enhance the larger pedestrian network.
9. Improving the streetscape and providing opportunities for additional commercial uses to occur along the northern end of Willow Street would enhance the area's shopping and business options.
10. To improve pedestrian safety traffic control measures could be implemented at the Asbury Street and Bay Road intersection.
11. Some of the parking problems could be resolved by increasing the parking capacity of the area through the creation of a parking deck at the MBTA lot.
12. Improving the landscaping at Hamilton Crossings could encourage people to walk across 1A and visit the other areas of the downtown.
13. Creating the possibility of adding shops near the corner of Walnut Road and 1A could provide more continuity to the retail options along 1A.
14. The pedestrian environment and safety could be improved by providing additional crosswalks along 1A where possible.
15. Creating a walking and bike path along the utility easement near Walnut Road could bring people downtown and enhance the larger pedestrian and biking network.
16. Reusing the Old Library for a senior center or a mixed use development could add to downtown Hamilton's vitality.
17. If the Winthrop School property becomes available for reuse, a combination of mixed use at the front of the site and new housing at the back of the site would expand the boundary of the downtown and provide new housing and retail options.



SECTION III: STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides the Town with our professional recommendations concerning the steps, schedules and responsibilities that would be associated with implementing the general visions that were expressed by the participants in the planning process. Suggestions of key actions, tools, time frames and responsibilities for proceeding with municipal actions to implement the vision are provided.

In general, these recommendations confirm and reinforce the goals established in the *Town's Master Plan*. They suggest that the Town should formally establish a working committee that will serve as the stewardship entity for coordinating the Town's policies and actions within the Downtown. This entity should be charged with preparing the strategic master plan for the Downtown, and be provided with adequate time and resources to undertake a community-based process leading to specific recommendations on the many issues facing the district. In addition, the Downtown Charrette revealed a number of short term actions that the Town should undertake in order to support the role that the district plays in the life of the Hamilton community.

Downtown Strategy Plan

The range of issues raised in the Downtown Charrette requires the crafting of a coordinated strategy. This should take the form of a focused planning initiative to create a Downtown Strategy Plan.

The need for a master planned approach derives from the interrelationship among the many components of a vital, successful town center. The land use strategy, for example, needs to be consistent with the economic goals and practical needs of desirable commercial and civic uses. Community investment planning must provide the physical solutions and financing methods to improve the sewer infrastructure to support the desired range and level of uses, or private sector reinvestment can be blocked. Business, residential and civic uses will require appropriate quantities and locations of parking, along with methods to share parking spaces where possible and appropriate. The parking strategy must take into account existing and future commuter parking demand and parking patterns, so that they are consistent with the community's vision for the Downtown. Streetscape and bicycle improvements need to be integrated with any improvements in the streets and circulation. The Town's regulations need to be refined to become aligned with the overall land use and development strategies. Methods to manage site and building design quality are needed to enhance the value of the Downtown land and businesses and ensure appropriate relationships with residential uses.

The planning process needs to provide a higher level of data gathering and evaluation to inform the municipal decisions about the Downtown than is available today. This Downtown Strategy Plan should build on the participation and engagement of the citizens of Hamilton and the stakeholders in the Downtown, assemble specific tools, and assign responsibilities to enhance its vitality, economic and civic role. The Plan should include:

- Land use and economic strategy – This component should assemble the land use and development strategy to retain and attract vital businesses, appropriate housing if desired, and other complementary uses to strengthen the Downtown as a mixed use center.
- Streetscape and open space vision – A clear vision should be assembled regarding the improvements and design characteristics of the Downtown streetscape and open space. This should articulate a list of specific locations and initiatives to create a more pleasant and attractive environment for pedestrians and bicyclists, and address lighting.
- Circulation and parking strategy - This component should provide a series of specific, phased recommendations to improve access and safety and provide for the appropriate amount of well-located and well-managed parking to serve the various uses in the Downtown. The circulation and parking strategy should also include a signage strategy to support the parking and circulation patterns.
- Environmental strategy – Hamilton’s Downtown strategy should define specific and appropriate methods to strengthen the sustainability of the Downtown, in line with the Town’s Master Plan and other policies.
- Design strategy – The Downtown Plan should contain a strategy to enhance design quality and define the methods through which this will be achieved. The strategy should consider the potential application of design guidelines for signage, buildings and site improvements. The strategy should prepare draft guidelines for those aspects of the Downtown that the community chooses for application.
- Zoning and regulation recommendations – The Downtown Plan should provide specific recommendations to amend or enhance the Town’s zoning and regulatory to match the land use, development and design strategies.
- Action plan and funding strategy – The strategy must link actions to resources and assign responsibilities. This should include the Town’s own regulatory framework and investments in the town center, and support its ability to attract and focus state or federal funds to support its initiatives.

The Downtown Strategy Plan should also provide a forum and method to resolve a series of key issues and ideas that have been raised during the charrette process.

- Contingency planning and the Winthrop School - The Plan should establish the Town’s contingency strategy for the facilities and land currently occupied by the Winthrop School, in the event that the school district elects to locate its functions elsewhere.
- Housing and mixed use choices - The strategy should reach resolution regarding the amount and type of new development and mix of uses that might be invited into the Downtown, particularly in regards to the opportunity to host transit-oriented housing choices, senior housing, and mixed-use development combining different types of uses.

Short Term Actions

The Town should proceed with short term actions to set the stage for preserving and enhancing the vitality of the Downtown:

- Downtown Committee as the stewardship entity – The Town should formally establish an organized stewardship group to provide active leadership in the ongoing process of strengthening the Downtown. This entity should include representation from Town boards, committees or commissions and both area business and resident participants. This committee should guide the preparation of the Downtown Strategy Plan. This committee should also coordinate initiatives and communication regarding other short-term policies, plans and actions associated with the Downtown.
- Sanitary sewer improvements study – The Town should fund and undertake the necessary studies to create a package treatment plant to better support existing and future uses in the Downtown including self-sustaining methods for capital and operating costs.
- Short-term zoning adjustments – Certain zoning provisions need to be adjusted to allow desirable projects to proceed. For example, the current parking standards require project-by-project accommodations that are impractical and inconsistent with Town goals.
- Parking enhancements and management – The Town should seek to acquire property that may become available to the extent that it can enhance the parking supply in the Downtown, and review the Downtown parking regulations and enforcement to support the compatibility of the Downtown with surrounding residential areas.
- Hamilton/Wenham planning and coordination – The Town should continue a collaborative approach with Wenham in regards to the land use planning and development initiatives that affect mutual interests. In this regard, the stewardship role of the Downtown Committee should include regular communication responsibilities, and prepare policy recommendations for the Board of Selectmen in the event that specific issues or opportunities arise.



APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS – MEETING NOTES

HAMILTON CHARRETTE FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS MEETING NOTES

Meeting Dates:	August 4, 2009 and August 6, 2009
Meeting Topic:	Discussion of opportunities and issues associated with the expansion of the Hamilton Business District and planning for Town-Wide Charrette in September
Meeting Location:	Old Library on Bay Road, Hamilton, Massachusetts
Project:	Hamilton Charrette #29013.00
Attendees:	Various Stakeholders in the Hamilton Community
Prepared by:	Steven Cecil and Meghan Grafton
Copies:	Hamilton Charrette Steering Committee, Project File

The Town of Hamilton is holding a Town-wide planning workshop (also known as a “charrette”) in September to focus on opportunities to improve the downtown and business district of Hamilton, including roles and actions the Town might initiate. A Town Steering Committee has been formed to guide this process. The Town has engaged The Cecil Group, a professional planning firm, to facilitate this process. The charrette is being planned as a town-wide meeting that will attract anyone and everyone who is interested in participating.

As part of the preparation for the fall charrette, three informal meetings were organized to provide opportunities to learn about key issues and topics related to the downtown from several perspectives. These informal discussions are helping to inform the agenda for the fall charrette, representing a useful cross-section of the community who were available during the summer. The comments are being used to prepare the agenda and topics for the town-wide charrette in the fall. Each of the three meetings focused upon the perspective of a different group within the Village Center: Meeting #1 was focused on business and commercial property owners, Meeting #2 was focused on Hamilton residents and Meeting #3 was focused on representatives from various Town boards, committees, commissions and the like.

These informal meetings were held during the week of August 3rd. Meetings #1 and #2 took place on August 4th and Meeting #3 took place on August 6. Each of the three meetings was facilitated by Steven Cecil of The Cecil Group.

The notes from the meetings are divided into three sections – one for each meeting. Steve Cecil posed a number of questions/topics to the participants during each meeting and the participants’ answers were recorded. The questions/topics are underlined in the following sections and the feedback is listed as bulleted points. These notes provide a general summary of the topics of conversation and concerns shared by the participants. They are intended to reflect the general responses from the groups and are not a comprehensive record of each meeting.



Section I: Meeting #1 Notes

Approximately 15 people attended this afternoon meeting at the Old Library on August 4th. Participants included Hamilton business owners, commercial property owners, business managers, several residents and members of the Charrette Steering Committee.

After brief introductions, Steve Cecil discussed how the plans for the September Charrette were initiated, the Cecil Group's role in the planning process, and the purpose of the three pre-meetings. The following notes record the questions and discussion topics posed by Steve Cecil and the general responses from the group.

Terms for the business area of Hamilton:

- South Hamilton
- The Shops
- Hamilton Crossing
- The Village
- Railroad Avenue

Positive aspects of Hamilton's business area:


- Many businesses are thriving.
- Strengths of Hamilton businesses include quality and convenience.
- While there are a number of strong "visible" businesses in Hamilton, there are also many small businesses that have less visibility and more targeted to specific customers (not necessarily "drive by" customers).
- Hamilton businesses can fulfill the shopping needs of most of the residents.
- The Hamilton businesses draw customers from many local communities including Ipswich, Beverly, Wenham, and Essex. Some businesses draw customers from as far away as the North Shore and Boston.
- Significant growth has occurred-doubled from 1980 to 2000

Influences on Businesses:

- Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary events
- Polo/Horse Shows
- Tourism? (does not create a significant increase in business)
- Beach Traffic? (does not create a significant increase in business)

Concerns of Businesses:

- Parking
- 

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- Railroad Ave
 - MBTA Commuters
 - Housing Authority
 - Shopping Center is not experiencing problems with parking
 - The lack of parking is not hurting most businesses except possibly the bike shop (which is moving to a new location)
 - Sewer capacity
 - Real estate taxes (one of the highest in MA)
 - Relationships between residents and businesses
 - Signage Bylaws/Visibility/Definition with business district
 - Retail Space - low vacancy but also low demand for space

Questions from participants:

How does Hamilton's business percentage compare with other communities?

Would a change in signage bylaws create more visibility for businesses and therefore more success?

Models for Hamilton

- Concord - compact business district, close proximity to residential neighborhoods, large mix of businesses, downtown residential options
- Newburyport - strong pedestrian network
- Belmont Center
- Westborough

Participants for September Charrette:

Residents within and outside of business area

Commercial stakeholders

Government officials

Topics for Charrette:

Economic development goal

Compatibility of uses

Scale of business district: height and size

Traffic

Noise and light pollution

Creation of events for drawing people to the neighborhood (seasonal celebrations/festivals)



Section II: Meeting #2 Notes

The second meeting took place at 7:00 PM at the Old Library on August 4th. Approximately 10 people attended the meeting and the attendees included residents, Selectmen and Charrette Steering Committee members.


After brief introductions, Steve Cecil discussed how the plans for the September Charrette were initiated, The Cecil Group's role in the planning process, and the purpose of the three pre-meetings. The following notes record the questions and discussion topics posed by Steve Cecil and the general responses from the group.

Terms for the business area of Hamilton:

- Downtown
- The Village
- South Hamilton

Concerns of Residents:

- Trucks behind the shopping center
 - Noise and light pollution
 - Water table levels and the impacts of development
 - Lack of safe crosswalks
 - Identity of Hamilton - what it is now, what it will be
 - Excessive parking on residential streets
 - Commuters avoiding parking fee at MBTA lot
 - Food pantry customers
 - Double parking on narrow streets is problematic
 - Noisy trucks from landscaping business in the residential neighborhood
 - Speeding mail trucks
 - Drivers who don't stop at the stop sign at Railroad Ave (1 way) and Willow St
 - The Willow/Asbury intersection is not good for pedestrians.
 - Orientation on Willow Street
 - Mixed-use buildings (residential above commercial)
 - This may encourage a demographic that could pose problems
 - Goal for 40B (margin - outer areas)
 - Focus on revenue
-

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- The commercial area is the dumping ground for what the outer residential areas don't want within their neighborhoods(Smart Growth=Downtown Dumping)
 - Protection for open-space and conservation restrictions has received priority
 - The downtown area deserves a balance with green-space
 - There are multiple residential groups with distinct perspectives within the downtown area: families/retirees/open space advocates
 - High taxes are causing some people to move from/avoid moving to the downtown area
 - Do not want the downtown consumed by high-end boutiques-want to encourage a resident-friendly business area (Boutiques vs. Bakeries)

Questions from participants:

Will encouraging development drive away residents?

Single family homes within the downtown area have remained residential and haven't been converted to commercial spaces-what does that imply?

More commercial development in downtown will not be the sole solution to balancing Hamilton's budget. So, how will that fact influence the decisions for development?

Models for Hamilton

- Topsfield
- Manchester-by-the-Sea
- Wenham - small town (not necessarily a positive model in everyone's opinion)
- Essex - congestion, relaxed zoning regulations (a model of what should not happen to Hamilton)

Participants for September Charrette:

Hamilton Wenham Green

Open space advocates

Kids/School Groups

Wenham Selectmen and interested residents

Rotary Club members

Topics for Charrette:

The current versus the desired "look and feel" of Hamilton

Expansion of commercial zoning district





Section III: Meeting #3 Notes

The third and final meeting took place at 7pm at the Old Library on August 6th. Approximately 24 participants representing various entities within the Hamilton Town government were in attendance as well as one Wenham Selectmen.

As with the first two meetings, Steve Cecil provided a brief introduction of the project, the purpose of the three pre-Charrette meetings, and a description of the Charrette process. The following notes record the questions and discussion topics posed by Steve Cecil and the general responses from the group.


Terms for the business area of Hamilton:


- Downtown
- The Square

Important components of Hamilton's image:

- Scale
- Commercially diverse
- Access to the MBTA Commuter Rail
- Open Space and the Park
- Community House
- Balance of Mixed Uses
- Value the commercial area

Concerns of Businesses (from the perspective of the Town representatives):

- Residential tax revenue % (limiting commercial growth)
 - Septic capacity
 - Conflict between commercial growth and residents
 - Groundwater/water table
 - Commuter parking
 - Zoning ratios for parking
 - Traffic in residential areas
 - Critical mass for commercial uses
 - Mix of stores
 - Expansion of business district
 - Boring
 - Future of the Post Office
- 

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- Potential change in use for School Property and the Old Library and the financial concerns for both towns
 - Reuse of Hansberry property and other properties within the downtown area
 - Youth see both towns as one in the same but older residents see them as separate entities
 - Is there flexibility for development outside of the downtown area?
 - Affordable housing

Models for Hamilton

Hingham - scale and traffic flow

Manchester - by-the-Sea

Beverly Farms


Participants for September Charrette:

Large land owners

Schools

Seniors

New residents



APPENDIX B: HAMILTON DOWNTOWN CHARRETTE – VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY RESULTS

HAMILTON DOWNTOWN CHARRETTE – VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY RESULTS

BUILDINGS AND ARCHITECTURE



B1 Average Score: 1.95



B2 Average Score: 3.68



B3 Average Score: 2.38



B4 Average Score: 3.92



B5 Average Score: 4.16



B6 Average Score: 2.16



B7 Average Score: 1.77



B8 Average Score: 2.76



B9 Average Score: 4.24



B10 Average Score: 2.14



B11 Average Score: 2.24



B12 Average Score: 4.35



B13 Average Score: 3.57



B14 Average Score: 3.92



B15 Average Score: 2.38

HAMILTON DOWNTOWN CHARRETTE – VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY RESULTS

STREETScape



S1 Average Score: 2.70



S2 Average Score: 2.34



S3 Average Score: 1.89



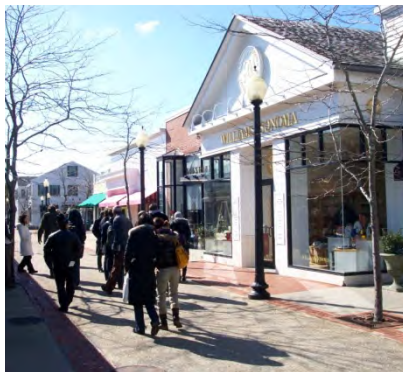
S4 Average Score: 2.41



S5 Average Score: 2.58



S6 Average Score: 2.03



S7 Average Score: 2.62



S8 Average Score: 2.59



S10 Average Score: 2.92



S9 (out of order due to size) Average Score: 2.59

HAMILTON DOWNTOWN CHARRETTE – VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY RESULTS

LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACE



L1 Average Score: 2.49



L2 Average Score: 2.76



L3 Average Score: 2.40



L4 Average Score: 2.27



L5 Average Score: 2.81



L6 Average Score: 2.03



L7 Average Score: 3.97



L8 Average Score: 1.78



L9 Average Score: 2.92



L10 Average Score: 1.97

APPENDIX C: HAMILTON DOWNTOWN CHARRETTE - COMPILED GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

HAMILTON DOWNTOWN CHARRETTE - COMPILED GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following table provides a comprehensive listing of all goals and objectives listed by participants. The numbers listed to the side of the comments display how many yes or no votes each comment received during the voting portion of the small-group exercise.

Goal / Objective	Yes Votes	No Votes
Art gallery, bakery, tack shop, bookstore/café, sports, antiques	7	
Senior housing in downtown (cluster , low-rise)	6	1
Uses that generate revenue (commercial)	6	
Senior housing at Winthrop School site	6	
Corner of Railroad Avenue and Willow Street – development potential	5	
Asbury Avenue/Willow Street site development	5	
Keep the rural village architecture	4	
Septic improvements	4	
Improve parking	4	
Remove power lines (underground or behind)	4	
Bike and pedestrian safety (at Talbots on Walnut and 1A)	4	
Mixed use	4	
Inn	4	
Lighting standards	4	
Connect downtown to the parks	4	
Do not mix residences and businesses	3	4
Sleepy bedroom community – not built up, keep the Village	3	1
Make downtown more connected	3	
More pedestrian friendly	3	
Infill housing	3	
Reuse the Winthrop School site and incorporate it into the downtown	3	
Study the impact of traffic and create a system of controlling it	3	
Replace Winthrop School with mixed-use	3	
Cultural locations (museum, theatre)	3	
Promote a consistent design theme (on Railroad Avenue)	3	
Redesign police station	3	
Increase tax base	3	
Walnut and Bar Road – development potential – Gulf Station	3	
More destination stores (antiques, tack)	2	
Diverse housing choices	2	1
Development as a joint venture with Wenham	2	
Make large parking areas less ugly	2	
Distribute smaller parking lots – not big ones	2	
Solve sewer problems	2	
Traditional New England “look and feel”	2	
Higher density downtown for economic purposes – streetscapes with green – not so much parks and open space	2	
Streets and sidewalks with pedestrian amenities (chairs, flowerboxes)	2	
Still a small country town-keep it that way	2	
Maximize what we have	2	
More efficient train gate	2	
Improve the Railroad Avenue streetscape	2	
Support local businesses with better signage and with improved services and access	2	
Coordinate with Wenham on Haley property	2	

HAMILTON DOWNTOWN CHARRETTE - COMPILED GOALS AND OBJECTIVES (CONTINUED)

Create bike paths	2	
More commercial activity	2	
More vitality, not integrated	2	
More streetscapes with flowers	2	
More two story development	2	
Landscaping	2	
Better traffic control (speed)	1	
Parking that is visually discrete	1	
Bike friendly	1	1
Provide affordable housing	1	
Concentrated and efficient parking structure	1	
Use existing parking and have people walk – don't create more parking lots	1	
Places for people to sit	1	
Keep buildings low	1	
Healthy street trees downtown	1	
Wider sidewalks and more trees	1	
Reach a "critical" mass of users	1	
Chatham-esque	1	
Need more parking	1	1
Be sensitive to downtown residents	1	
Minimize noise and light pollution	1	
Buy Cummings Avenue property for parking	1	
Join 300 Main Street, etc with shopping mall	1	
Willow Street commercial?	1	
Change parking requirements	1	
Green energy initiatives	1	
Planned growth	1	
Combine the two halves of downtown	1	
Utilities/Wires – straight poles and higher	1	
Railroad track cleanup – visual and accessible	1	
Outside dining	1	
Mixed heights – respect residential uses	1	
Senior center	1	
Parking areas	1	
Septic system – package	1	
Town Hall moved downtown	1	
Railroad Avenue should be pedestrian only		5
Senior housing in old Library		2
Put parking on "back side" of downtown		1
Greater and more dynamic uses		1
More office space		
More small boutique stores		
Not another North Beverly		
Create a destination place – Downtown as a place to go		
Openspace incorporated into downtown		
No parking structures unless low and attractive		
Possible parking near McCrae and Hansbury lots		
Street cleaning		

HAMILTON DOWNTOWN CHARRETTE - COMPILED GOALS AND OBJECTIVES (CONTINUED)

Improve bike-ability (clean streets)		
Don't force everything downtown		
Area should be dominated by pedestrians		
Height – 3 stories max		
Fewer gas stations		
More gathering places		
More defined street edge		
Clarify parking regulations and enforcement		
Maintain and maximize field space		
Move the traffic flow away from the residential neighborhoods		
Emphasize equestrian theme		
Mixed use at Hansbury		
Parking is okay?		
Open streets – no curbs, signage		
The design and feel should be craftsmen style (19 th / early 20 th century)		
Improve Railroad Avenue for offices		
Walk-able downtown		
Improve streetscape		
Identifiable town center		
Retail variety		
Green initiatives		
Restaurant with a view		
Parking and pedestrian strategies for businesses		
CDC and EIDC for commercial development		
Architectural building and site design guidelines		
MBTA parking alliance		
Traffic calming in neighborhoods		
Coordinate with Wenham's development planning along 1A		
Provide vehicular access along utility easement with parking areas to support retail		

APPENDIX D: HAMILTON DOWNTOWN CHARRETTE – MAPPING ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

HAMILTON DOWNTOWN CHARRETTE - MAPPING ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Group 1

HAMILTON DOWNTOWN CHARRETTE - MAPPING ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Group 2

HAMILTON DOWNTOWN CHARRETTE - MAPPING ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Group 3

HAMILTON DOWNTOWN CHARRETTE - MAPPING ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Group 4