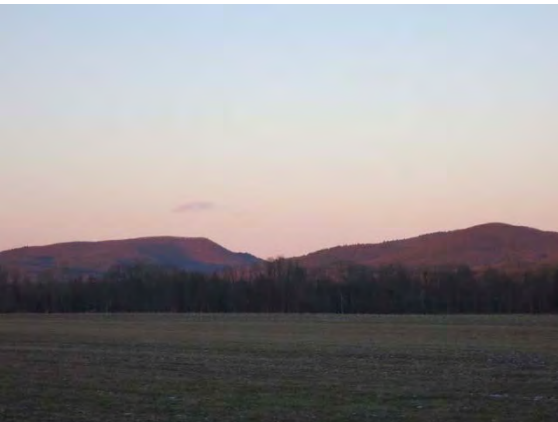




A MASTER PLAN FOR NORTHFIELD

Northfield, Massachusetts
2014



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...and the concerned citizens, business-owners, Town officials and staff who devoted time, energy and imagination to the making of this Plan.

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Appendix A: Summary of Public Input (separate volume)

Appendix B: Inventory (separate volume)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2014 Northfield Master Plan is the result of a twelve-month process and the dedication and hard work of the Master Plan Steering Committee, Town department staff, elected officials, the Consultant Team, AND Northfield citizens. All committed time and shared ideas about what and how to preserve what is best about the Town, and what is important to change in order to positively direct Northfield into the future. The plan's purpose is to define the ways and means for making Northfield a better place to live, work and play. To achieve this purpose, the planning process followed three main steps, outlined below.

VISION & GOALS

The first step involved developing a vision for the future, one that builds on the past, but focuses on moving forward. This vision, presented on page iii, represents what the Town **WANTS** for its future, and a set of goals and related objectives, developed by Master Plan participants, provides a means of fulfilling the vision.

To define the vision, goals and objectives, the Master Plan Steering Committee met a total of 28 times, held three Town-wide public forums, hosted two focused roundtable discussions and three mini-visioning sessions, and conducted visioning workshops with middle and high school students. To complement this, the Consultant Team held interviews with Town department heads, committees, boards and commissions, and met with key business people. Additional discussions took place on a Master Plan Facebook page, as well as through the social media site I-Neighbors.

INVENTORY & ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

Step two involved developing an understanding of the Town's existing resources, or what Northfield **HAS**. The Consultant Team documented

A MASTER PLAN FOR NORTHFIELD

may be viewed in its entirety at
the Town of Northfield website:
www.northfield.ma.us

EIGHT MASTER PLAN GOALS

1. To promote preservation of open space and natural features
2. To promote opportunities for recreation and community gathering
3. To promote economic development town wide
4. To preserve and revitalize Main Street
5. To maintain public facilities, improve public services, and enhance communication
6. To expand housing opportunities and support neighborhoods
7. To enhance transportation and circulation systems
8. To promote Northfield's history and culture

Note: the numbering of the goals, 1 through 8, does not correspond with importance.

these resources by conducting research, reviewing relevant documents, and interviewing Town department heads, and committee, board and commission members. The Consultant Team then assessed the resources, identifying key issues, opportunities and challenges facing the Town. Chapter 3 of the plan includes a summary of this inventory, and Volume II contains the complete inventory documentation.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The final step involved defining **HOW** the vision, goals and objectives can be fulfilled. The Consultant Team and Master Plan Steering Committee met with outside experts, interested parties, Town department heads, and members of the public and developed a series of strategies for achieving the goals, and the result is a detailed implementation plan. This plan, found in Chapter 4, forms the core of the Master Plan by providing specific action steps to take, defining priorities and identifying the individuals and/or organizations needed to carry out the action steps.

UNDERLYING THEMES

During the planning process, six themes emerged – themes discussed by many participants, and mentioned often. They included the following:

Creating more opportunities for community gathering – places to go; places that convey a sense of belonging and a sense of place

Taking a proactive role in communication with potential future owners of the former Northfield campus, and working toward a plan for mutually beneficial re-use

Working to develop a resilient economy, one that connects to natural features, agricultural and historic heritage

Preserving and enhancing the natural and historic features of the

Town, and the ambiance created by these

Supporting the rural landscape through an economy that enhances the viability of working lands and conserves natural lands

Retaining small town character by guiding the look and location of future development so that it is in keeping with the rural and historic features of Northfield

NORTHFIELD VOICES

The plan was developed with input from residents, business owners, Town officials, staff and volunteers, collected in a number of forums. These included:

- 28 Master Plan Steering Committee Meetings
- 3 Town-wide public forums
- 2 Roundtable discussions
- 3 Mini-visioning forums
- Visioning with middle and high school students
- Interviews with department heads, committees, boards and commissions
- Discussion on Facebook page and I-Neighbors social media site

VISION

IMAGINE Northfield... sometime in the future, when...

The Town's **natural and historic features** are preserved, even enhanced and enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. **Historic buildings along Main Street** are protected and restored, and the Town's natural beauty is made more accessible by preserving views, open fields, **farming** activity, and other characteristics that contribute to the Town's rural character. A bike path, marina and park are developed along the **River** that is enjoyed by all. The Town's history and **spiritual legacy** are showcased and appreciated.

The small town feeling is further enjoyed by residents due to the **additional opportunities for gathering** provided by **Town-wide events** as well as a **community park** where people can meet spontaneously. The **Town facilities** such as the library, good schools and the Tool Lending Library are also places where people continue to mingle. **Additional shops restaurants, and art and cultural activities**, provide needed goods and services as well as opportunities to run into people, as do the **sidewalks** that connect to trails and create a system of the open spaces, recreational facilities and connect to the downtown.

Northfield continues to be a **great place to raise children**, but also provides for the increasing **senior population**, and their specific needs are attended to as well as the needs of **young people** for more places to go, more to do. Both seniors and youth benefit from a **shuttle bus** that helps them to get around independently.

Communication between Town government and residents is improved, both **technologically** as well as through increased outreach efforts and more effective dissemination of **information**. This inspires more residents to get involved in Town affairs and therefore, the number of **volunteers** rises. The Town continues to provide **adequate services** and **enforces by-laws** in an equitable manner such that it accomplishes what its residents expect of its government.

Getting around Town is easier and more convenient. Main Street is converted to Town ownership and cars can park along its edges. Traffic is calmed and a gas station comes to Town to service Northfield residents and



The Northfield Senior Center Pavilion is a popular gathering spot in Town. In the future, citizens envision many additional community spaces.

visitors. The Schell Bridge crossing is restored and the two sides of Town are thus better connected.

The former Northfield **campus** is bustling with activity. The new owner is compatible with the Town's values, has made an investment to protect the historic buildings, and provides recreational, art and cultural activities to which Town residents are welcome to participate. The additional population drawn to Northfield by the reuse of the campus has spurred **economic development** especially in the downtown where there are now more places to go and more to do. This attracts visitors to Town who not only enjoy the

increased retail and dining options, but they also visit the Town's natural resources, making Northfield more of a complete destination. **Hiking and biking** are enjoyed by residents and visitors, and there are adequate **playgrounds** and **playing fields** for all.

IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PLAN

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

Thirteen top recommendations have emerged from the planning process. Many of the recommendations fulfill more than one of the eight master plan goals, and the order in which they appear is of no particular significance.

Revisit the existing zoning bylaw. Northfield has survived for decades with a minimal zoning bylaw, with all development subject to special permit. This has discouraged the establishment of businesses and has led to a deterioration of the Town's physical appearance. What's more, it leaves open the type and extent of redevelopment at the Northfield campus. To address the inadequacies in the bylaw, the Town must revisit its existing regulations and make amendments so that interests of its residents are properly protected, and so that any new development or redevelopment is in keeping with the Town's character. Related design guidelines are also an important tool to achieve this end.

Preserve farming and farmland. Agriculture has been a staple of the Northfield community since the time of first human settlement, and continues today in the floodplain on both sides of the Connecticut River. By preserving farms and promoting farming, Northfield can help secure its food supply, bolster its economy, protect its open space, and, at the same time, retain and feature a significant piece of its cultural history.

Preserve and enhance access to the Connecticut River. The Connecticut threads through Northfield, separating the west part of Town from the east. The limited number of boat launches and bridges, combined with tree growth along the river banks, has made the Connecticut nearly invisible to residents and visitors. By expanding access through the clearing of vistas, the siting of boat launches, and the reconstruction of a pedestrian crossing, the Town can better capitalize on this tremendous natural asset.

Increase community gathering opportunities. People in Northfield enjoy getting together, either through electronic and print means, such as I-Neighbors and the Community Newsletter, or at gathering places, such as the

Dickinson Library, Senior Pavilion, Northfield Coffee and Books, Mim's Porch, and the Northfield Creamie. By creating more ways to congregate, the Town can increase social interaction among residents. This, in turn, leads to a more connected and healthier community, one in which residents are more likely to participate in shaping their collective future. Possibilities include the creating pocket parks along the linear common; developing a community park; encouraging private establishments to create more opportunities for residents to gather.

Make Northfield more walkable. With its tree-shaded Main Street lined with historic homes, Northfield is a desirable place for people of all ages – residents and visitors – to stroll. However, the lack of a complete network of sidewalks limits the extent to which pedestrians can safely navigate, and inconsistent shoveling during winter makes walking more unappealing. Improving the pedestrian landscape will require increasing the number of sidewalks, creating more visible crosswalks, enforcing snow removal ordinances, having the Town take responsibility for clearing sidewalks of snow (plowing), planting more street trees, providing site amenities (benches, litter bins), and upgrading lighting.

Preserve & enhance Main Street character. Northfield's Main Street of 19th century wood-frame houses spaced evenly along a linear common, is known throughout the region as one of the most intact historic main streets of its kind. It is also a source of significant local importance and pride. Preserving Main Street's character will involve establishing a Local Historic District, developing design guidelines, and/or revisiting the existing zoning bylaw.

Improve safety. Because Main Street is currently controlled by MassDOT, the Town has very little ability to make physical improvements, implement on-street parking, and/or control truck traffic and braking. In order to make Northfield a safer place for people of all ages, the Town will need to take greater control of the roadway, working with MassDOT in the process. Safety can also be improved through better enforcement of drug laws, and by providing adequate police, fire and EMS facilities.

Capitalize on natural and historic resources. In addition to the beauty they bring to Northfield, the Town's many natural and historic features are also potential sources of economic gain. Opportunities exist to more aggressively and broadly promote these resources to tourists interested in Native

American history, agricultural activities and products, D. L. Moody, the Stearns family of master craftsmen and builders, and also to hikers, rock-climbers, bicyclists, canoe-users and kayakers.

Collaborate with efforts to redevelop the campus. Redevelopment at the former Northfield campus is likely to have a significant impact on the Town, and while residents cannot prescribe its future use, they can become partners in the redevelopment effort. Reviving the Campus Collaborative Committee and/or appointing a local representative to work with current and future owner(s) are two ways of getting involved. Revisiting the existing zoning bylaw is another.

Support the development of locally-owned businesses. Because Northfield is a rural community with the nearest urban centers – Greenfield, Keene, Brattleboro -- more than ten miles away, access to shopping (including purchasing gas) is highly desirable. Locally-owned businesses can fill this niche. By streamlining the permitting process, expanding broadband, and actively recruiting such businesses, Northfield can foster a more business-friendly environment. The establishment of a member-owned and operated cooperative is another form of a desirable local business.

Provide for the needs of residents, especially the growing senior population. The number of seniors in Northfield will grow in the next several decades, and provision must be made for their special needs. These include appropriate housing types and sizes, safe pedestrian ways, alternative forms of transportation, and services related to health and wellness. In addition to seniors, residents of all ages will benefit from having a well-supported school system, well-maintained roads and public utilities, and a host of local businesses that cater to basic needs.

Increase communication. Northfield's population of 3,000 spreads across both sides of the river and clusters into five neighborhoods. This dispersed pattern, coupled with the lack of river crossings and insufficient broadband coverage, complicates communication between residents and Town government. As the Town moves forward, it must improve the means and frequency of communication so that its citizens are equally informed about local decisions and events affecting their lives, and so that residents feel more connected to their Town government and to each other.



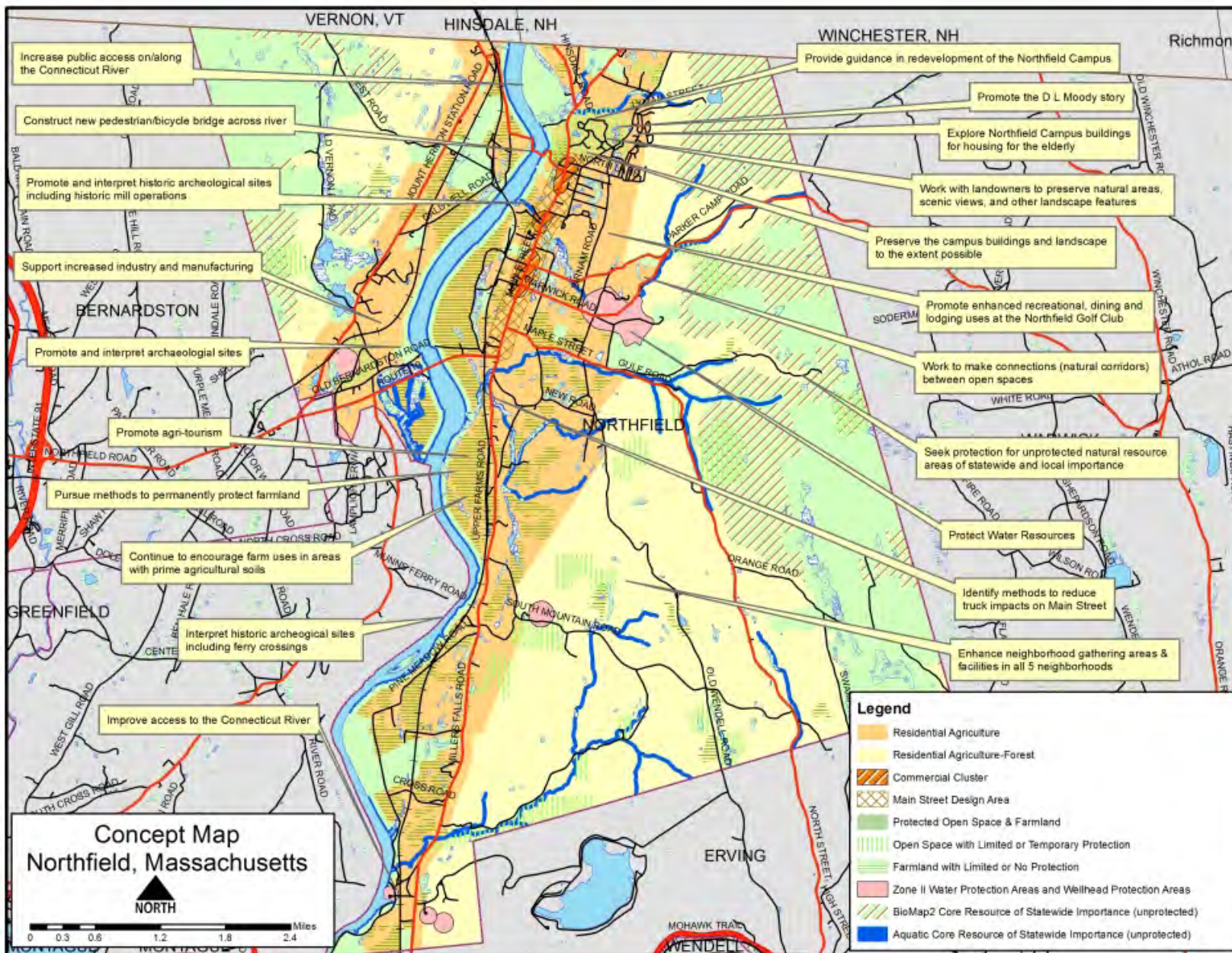
Support for locally-owned businesses is critical to ensuring a positive economic future for the Town.

Foster sustainability. Each of the twelve key recommendations described above point to one final recommendation which permeates all future efforts of the Town, as outlined in the Master Plan, that of fostering a sustainable community. In Northfield, sustainability means preserving farmland, natural features, and historic resources, while, at the same time capitalizing on these resources for economic gain. It means supporting local businesses, and encouraging growth of businesses that can fulfill the needs of the local population. It means creating community gathering opportunities and improving communication amongst its residents. It means taking steps to improve safety and provide a healthy living environment for its citizens.

PLAN CONCEPT: PROPOSED FUTURE LAND USE & OTHER RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS

The maps on the following pages illustrate Northfield's future land use if the recommendations of the Master Plan are implemented. Major features are listed below, and others are called out on the map.

- Currently protected open space areas and permanently protected farmland
- Unprotected farmland that may be at risk from future development if actions are not taken to permanently protect it
- Existing and potential low density residential/forest use
- Existing and potential residential/agricultural use
- A Local Historic District along Main Street with design guidelines to promote the architectural integrity of the area and to enhance its appeal to visitors
- As many as three "commercial cluster" areas along Main Street, with associated design review.



RIPE APPLES



The following is a **partial** list of “ripe apples” or no or low-cost and relatively easy-to-implement actions. By undertaking these immediately, the Town will foster a belief in the planning process, and will provide momentum for implementing the plan. Making improvements quickly and visibly builds credibility for the Master Plan and also pays tribute to the individuals who committed time and thought to the planning process. The list has been organized according to the eight master planning goals. For a complete list of “low-hanging fruit,” see Chapter 4 of the plan.

PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE & NATURAL RESOURCES

- Encourage more farms to enroll in the APR program or other agricultural protection programs
- Support regional efforts to make connections between open spaces
- Remove “paper roads” from NMH forest land/support additional conservation efforts in the forest
- Promote agricultural use by disseminating Northfield farms map, soil map, and other informational materials
- Continue effort to acquire the Mill Brook property/develop into a nature preserve
- Identify scenic views, roads and byways and other special places
- Explore ways to improve the stewardship of the Northfield Town Forest, King Philip’s Hill, Brush Mountain, and other potential protected land
- Monitor surface water quality of Town’s sources of drinking water

OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION & COMMUNITY GATHERING

- Provide barricades for housing block parties
- Develop an event to celebrate farm life
- Encourage creation of gathering places along the linear common on both public and private land
- Coordinate with the Recreation Commission to incorporate the Town’s recreation goals in the relicensing negotiations with FirstLight Power
- Sponsor hikes to historic sites and lesser known trails
- Develop trail maps for all trails in Northfield and connecting towns; disseminate maps

- Facilitate the building of a canoe/kayak launch ramp at Bennett Brook Wildlife Management Area
- Form a working group to develop a program defining the needs for a community park

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOWN-WIDE

- Encourage establishment of businesses that serve community needs (pub, gas station, “anchor business,” etc.)
- Promote small, locally-owned business development
- Supply prospective candidates for sale and/or re-use of the Northfield campus with materials outlining the Town’s goals and objectives
- Write and place articles about Moody in magazines and other tourism publications
- Write and place articles about the Stearns buildings and other historic architecture in Northfield

MAIN STREET

- Look to other towns of similar size and character for successful design guideline models
- Invite other towns to speak in Northfield about their experience in developing design guidelines
- Improve safety at critical crosswalks by installing flags
- Develop a pro-active relationship with the new campus owner/occupant by restarting the Campus Collaborative Committee and/or designating a Town representative to participate in the negotiation process for campus re-use, promoting Town goals to the future owner/occupant, encouraging redevelopment and describing and promoting the historic aspects of the campus to local and regional audiences
- Encourage local businesses to hold events and provide opportunities for residents to gather

MUNICIPAL FACILITIES, PUBLIC SERVICES, COMMUNICATION

- Send out volunteer recruitment forms with Town mailings and recognize volunteer contributions
- Review board/committee structure in the interest of efficiency and eliminating any duplication of effort
- Duplicate and post information posted at Town Hall, in also in West Northfield

- Expand use of local cable TV for dissemination of information and expand information sharing on Town web site
- Provide bike racks outside public buildings and encourage private establishments to do so

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

- Enact a slight zoning amendment to allow attached units by special permit
- Form a Town Housing Committee to explore housing issues

TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION

- Establish a “Safe Routes to School” program
- Coordinate with Bernardston to continue to provide senior van service
- Provide volunteer ridesharing options to serve residents without vehicles
- Encourage drivers to register with MassRides/NURide to receive discounts for services
- Consider providing pedestrian flags at crucial crosswalks

NORTHFIELD’S HISTORY & CULTURE

- Seek inclusion on websites and in publications of regional tourism organizations, e.g. Massachusetts Scenic Byways
- Utilize venues (visitor centers/information booths) of neighboring towns for placing information about Northfield’s historic and cultural resources

1 INTRODUCTION

The Town of Northfield, Massachusetts stands at a crossroads in its long history. Natural resources, including the Connecticut River, broad alluvial floodplains, wooded uplands, streams and ponds, have attracted humans for centuries, providing soils for farming, water power for mills, and hardwoods for building construction. Equally seductive has been the spiritual quality of the landscape – one where, before the 17th century, Native peoples found solace, and where, in the 1800s, evangelical Dwight Lyman Moody chose to host religious gatherings and to found the Northfield Schools. For over 100 years, the private institution factored largely in the Town’s economy, providing jobs on campus, and fueling spin-off businesses along Main Street. When the campus closed in 2005, local employment suffered and business activity declined, and left vacant was a large, privately-owned site located at the northern end of Main Street, with an unknown.

The campus aside, residents of and visitors to Northfield enjoy many other assets. As the only town in Massachusetts spanning the Connecticut River, Northfield draws water-users, including kayakers, canoeists, and fishing enthusiasts. The hillsides above the river and trails traversing them provide opportunities for hiking, Nordic skiing, snowshoeing, and bird watching. And the places in between, including farms along the floodplains, orchards, and historic Main Street, tell a long story of human interaction, from the time of the Native “Squakeag Plantation,” to the raising of sheep, to the operation of mills, to the construction of the Northfield Inn and Schell Chateau, to the establishment of a world-renowned evangelical retreat. Northfield is a true natural and historical treasure.

These assets, combined with community willingness, offer potential for making Northfield a better place to live, work and play. Opportunities exist to enhance access to the river; to broaden the network of trails; to spread the word about the centuries-long history. Possibilities exist for strengthening physical and social connections with more community gathering spaces and expanded broadband services. Active farms and small businesses can become better positioned to sustain the needs of the local population. Thus, the Town’s challenge in planning for the next twenty years is to imagine itself



Over the next twenty years, Northfield faces the challenge presented by the desire to retain its rural and historic character and, at the same time increase opportunity for economic growth. It must envision a future for itself without the presence of the Northfield campus of the Northfield Mount Hermon Academy.

without the presence of the Northfield campus, and to do so by capitalizing on the potential that these assets hold.

To accomplish this, Town officials, civic leaders, business-owners and residents have spent 2013 working together to create the foregoing master plan. The plan’s purpose is threefold: (1) to establish a long-term vision for Northfield; (2) to establish priorities for fulfilling this vision; and (3) to create a step-by-step guide to decision-making about future development and change. The plan will qualify Northfield for State funding, and will provide the Town with a clear direction and set of achievable goals.

NORTHFIELD, YESTERDAY AND TODAY

The rich, alluvial floodplain of the Connecticut River in the area that would become Northfield drew humans before the early 1600s, when Native peoples – the Squateags – came to the area to farm, fish and hunt. The first Europeans came in the 1630s to set up a fur trading post, and by the mid-1600s purchased land and engaged in farming. The first settlement, known as Squateag Plantation, was organized around a “Town Street” leading in the north-south direction (today’s “Main Street”) and was abandoned and demolished during King Philip’s War (1675-1676). Settlers re-built again in 1680, only to vacate the area ten years later at the dawn of Queen Anne’s War (1702-1713).

When permanently settled in circa 1713, the Town was given a new name – Northfield – in honor of its location as the northernmost settlement on the Connecticut River in Massachusetts. For the next 100 years, the population remained small (less than 1,000), with the economy centered on farming along the river and manufacturing (saw and grist mills) on the Mill Brook. By the end of the 18th century small villages had begun to emerge around the farming centers, including West Northfield and Northfield Farms. The first bridge to span the river in Northfield was built in 1811, but functioned for just ten years. From 1820-1900, ferries served as the only means of crossing the river.

By the mid-1800s, the railroads had been extended from Northfield, providing service to both the east and west sides of the river from points north and south. This new form of transport not only spurred the growth of agriculture, but also laid the groundwork for the Town to become an educational, religious and recreational center. Fueled by the imagination of native son Reverend Dwight Lyman Moody, Northfield became home to the Northfield School (Seminary) (1879), the Northfield Hotel (1888), as well as a center for Moody’s summer religious conferences. In 1889, he met Francis R. Schell who followed Moody to Northfield and in 1903 constructed a massive summer home – the Chateau -- adjacent to the Northfield Hotel. Schell went on to finance the construction of a reverse cantilever structure over the Connecticut River near the Chateau, the “Schell Bridge.”



Northfield’s Main Street is one of its oldest historic resources, dating to the mid-1600s and the first European settlement of the Town. It retains its historical integrity to this day.

The Northfield School expanded during the 20th century, constructing many new buildings and together with the Hotel, came to dominate the Town’s economic landscape. However several events of the mid-1900s led to eventual change. Both the Inn and Chateau were demolished (1963 and 1977 respectively), and the Schell Bridge closed to vehicular traffic in 1985. Between 1964 and 1971, Interstate 91 was built, providing major highway access from Northfield to points north and south, and expanding residents’ options for employment in Brattleboro, Vermont and Greenfield, as well as in the Five College area (Northampton, Amherst and South Hadley) to the south, and promoting the transformation of the Town into a bedroom community.

Finally, the 2005 consolidation and consequent vacating of the Northfield School campus left a large visual and economic hole in the community, raising residents’ concern about the Town’s future. Despite this loss, Northfield has retained many natural and cultural resources, as well as its early 19th century historic character, sustaining the Town as a desirable place to visit and as comfortable place to live. And, as this master plan demonstrates, the citizens of Northfield have both the imagination and the will to forge a positive future for their community.



The Northfield Hotel, constructed in 1888 by D. L. Moody, served as a recreational destination for visitors into the mid-20th century. It was demolished in 1963, but several historic features, including the stone walls and bridge, remain at the site.

PREVIOUS PLANS AND PLANNING EFFORTS

Northfield last completed a comprehensive, Town-wide master plan, *Pathway to Tomorrow: A Master Plan for Northfield*, in 1977, and updated the plan in 1993. In addition to these, the Town was the subject of several other smaller plans and planning efforts, including regional studies of which Northfield was a part, addressing specific issues within the community. A brief summary of these follows.

- *Northfield's Master Plan Review: A Review and Update to Northfield's Existing Master Plan "Pathway to Tomorrow"* (1989). An update of the 1977 comprehensive master plan, completed by a Town-appointed "Master Plan Review Committee" that scanned the earlier plan and

noted recommendations that had, and had not, been implemented over the course of 20 years.

- *Connecticut River Scenic Farm Byway Corridor Management Plan* (1998), a regional effort of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, this plan focused on promoting the region's economy while, at the same time protecting the Connecticut River Scenic Farm Byway's natural, cultural and historic resources. Implementation of the plan included design and construction of streetscape improvements along Northfield's Main Street. The Connecticut Scenic Farm Byway, designated in 2000, was a result of this plan.
- *Town of Northfield Community Development Plan* (2003), a collaboration between the Franklin Regional Council of Governments Planning Department and a Town of Northfield-based Community Development Committee that laid out a vision for Northfield's future, including creating "Village Center Districts" through a re-zoning effort.
- *Main Street Revitalization Project Conceptual Plan* (2005), an examination of scenarios for upgrading the Main Street streetscape in Northfield, completed by Dufresne & Henry.
- *Main Street Acquisition Study* (2006), a feasibility study for the municipal control of the Main Street portion of Routes 10 and 63, completed by Stantec.
- *Village Center Zoning* (2005 and 2012), two separate attempts to create "Village Center Districts," each proposing different district boundaries, with performance standards for new buildings, including design elements. Both proposals were voted down by Town Meeting on separate warrants.
- *Mill Brook Conservation Area Study, Town of Northfield, preliminary natural resource, acquisition and management assessment* (2006), an assessment of natural resources and management of property owned by Northfield Mount Hermon along the Mill Brook, including recommendations for acquisition, and potential sources of funding, completed by Legacy Partners, LLC.



Northfield has been included in many regional planning efforts to foster sustainability, bolster the economy, and improve transportation.

- *Northfield: A Conservation Vision* (2007), a visioning process, conducted by the Trust for Public Land, aimed at helping residents “sustain the best elements of life” in the Town. Participants identified opportunities to conserve land; outlined sources of funds for conserving land; developed strategies for implementing the conservation vision.
- *Franklin County’s Regional Sustainability Plan* (2010), a region-wide plan to increase/improve housing, expand transportation, encourage economic development, promote energy conservation, protect natural resources, support arts and culture, promote growth in town centers, and improve infrastructure, coordinated by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments.

- *Greater Franklin County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy* (2010), a region-wide plan, developed by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, that aimed to balance preservation of natural and cultural resources with the need to accommodate growth.
- *Franklin County Regional Transportation Plan* (2011), prepared by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, a regional plan to provide safe, efficient mobility for residents, while at the same time preserving the rural character of Franklin County.
- *Northfield Open Space & Recreation Plan* (2012), a comprehensive plan, completed by a Town-appointed committee, that aimed to maintain and improve the variety, quality, and accessibility of recreational facilities important in the 21st century for health and well-being of all residents.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Efforts to create this plan spanned a period of approximately twelve months¹, beginning with the appointment of a Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC) by the Town of Northfield Board of Selectmen. This seven-member group worked alongside the Consultant Team, hired by the MPSC to serve as consultants to the Town. The MPSC also encouraged citizens to join a “Roundtable,” a group of individuals who supported the work of the MPSC and the Consultant Team. In summary the process included the following:

VISION STATEMENT

Through meetings with the MPSC, Roundtable, and interviews with key Town officials and civic leaders, the Consultant Team outlined a vision for the

¹ The Master Plan Steering Committee was appointed by the Northfield Select Board in July of 2012. The Consultant Team began work in January of 2013, and continued for twelve months.

future of Northfield. This statement guided work throughout all phases of the planning process.

INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

To document Northfield’s existing resources (what the Town HAS), the Consultant Team members conducted an inventory of existing conditions of each master planning element:

- Historic and Cultural Resources
- Natural Resources
- Open Space and Recreation Resources
- Housing and Neighborhood Resources
- Transportation Resources
- Public Services and Facilities
- Land Use and Zoning

Team members reviewed previously completed studies, interviewed key individuals, boards and committees, collection Town, regional, State and Federal data, and conducted fieldwork to compile the inventory, and documented findings in seven separate inventory chapters (included in Appendix A: Inventory). For each element, a one-page summary sheet provided a snapshot of the findings (also found in Appendix A).

OUTREACH AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To define the goals for Northfield’s future (what citizens WANT), the Consultant Team conducted a multi-faceted outreach and public participation process, attempting to reach as broad a cross-section of the Town as possible. Highlights include:

PUBLIC FORUM #1. The Consultant Team conducted a Town-wide visioning workshop.

MINI-FORUMS. Members of the MPSC held small gatherings at four separate locations within Northfield in order to involve citizens who did not attend Public Forum #1.



The Master Plan process involved understanding (1) what the Town HAS; (2) what it WANTS; and (3) HOW the Town gets to where it wants to be in the future.

PUBLIC FORUM #2. The Consultant Team conducted a Town-wide public forum at which a series of preliminary goals, objectives and strategies were presented (based on the results of Forum #1 and the Mini-Forums). Participants were asked to affirm and/or modify the goals, and assign priorities to them. The goals were then refined to final total of eight.



Outreach and public participation included three community-wide forums where citizens were asked to respond to possibilities for Northfield's future.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS. Based on the results of Public Forum #2, the Consultant team and MPSC conducted two roundtable discussion, focused on a selection of two of the goals.

PUBLIC FORUM #3. The Consultant Team and members of the MPSC presented the final implementation plan to citizens of Northfield. Further and final revisions were then made responding to the comments received.

ONGOING COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS. Throughout the planning process, citizens took place in discussions about several relevant issues, through Facebook as well as the social media site I-Neighbors.

IMPLEMENTATION

The final step involved defining a means for reaching the goals (HOW Northfield gets there), including refinement of objectives and strategies, and assignment of action steps to persons/entities within the community. After reviewing the implementation plan with the MPSC, the Consultant Team presented a final version at Public Forum #3.

PRESERVING THE PAST AND PLANNING THE FUTURE: ELEMENTS OF A VISION FOR NORTHFIELD

By 2023, Northfield will...

- Have preserved views, open fields, farming activity, and other characteristics that contribute to the rural character
- Have created more opportunities for residents and visitor to access and use the Connecticut River
- Have protected and restored its historic buildings along Main Street
- Have showcased the spiritual legacy and the memory of Dwight Lyman Moody
- Have created more opportunities for community gathering
- Have welcomed and supported the addition of shops, restaurants and cultural activities

- Have created an efficient and effective system of trails connecting to recreation sites and open spaces
- Continue to be a great place to raise children
- Be providing adequate housing, services, and recreation opportunities for its senior population
- Have improved communication between Town government and residents, through upgraded technology and more effective dissemination of information
- Be enforcing by-laws, both existing and new
- Be an easier place to navigate, with better parking facilities, calmer traffic, and via a new crossing over the Connecticut River, replacing the Schell Bridge
- Be collaborating with the new owner/occupant of the campus, assuring that the goals of the Town align with and support those of the campus, and vice versa



Northfield's Main Street is one of the Town's most valued resources, and in the future, citizens wish to see it preserved and enhanced.

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2 NORTHFIELD TODAY: EXISTING CONDITIONS

A master plan needs to be based on facts about a community's assets and existing conditions. It is also useful to know some of the history of how current conditions were created. The existing conditions in Northfield are described in categories useful for making decisions about future development and goals. Opportunities and challenges in each planning category are also listed.

AREA & POPULATION

- Northfield is the **80th smallest of the 351 towns** in the Commonwealth; the population is expected to grow very slowly over the next 20 years.
- Northfield covers an area of **35 square miles** and has fewer people per square mile than 85% of the towns in Massachusetts.
- **Seniors** (65 and older) make up 15% of the population and are expected to increase to 21% by the year 2030.
- Approximately 70% of residents **work outside** the Town.
- About 20% of the population is **school age**.
- 97% of the population is **white**.
- 70% of the households are **families**.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Humans have inhabited Northfield for centuries, drawn to the river and its rich, alluvial floodplains. The Squakeags occupied the area into the 17th



The Dwight L. Moody Homestead sits above Main Street on the northern end of the Town, at the edge of the former Northfield campus.

century. Colonists settled the area twice beginning in the 1670s and before establishing a permanent settlement in ca. 1713.

- **Agriculture** has always been part of the Northfield economy, first as a means of subsistence, and later as a larger-scale producer of crops.
- Historically, the Town has contained **five distinct villages**, the Farms, the Mountain, Main Street, East Northfield, and West Northfield.
- Northfield holds an unparalleled collection of houses designed and built by the **Stearns family**, as well as buildings designed by world-renowned architects on the Northfield School campus.

- For much of the 20th century, two large institutions – **the Northfield School for Girls/Northfield Mount Hermon and The Northfield (Inn)** were the predominant man-made features of the Town, and gave the Town much of its beauty.
- Many of the Town’s historic buildings and landscape remain intact, giving **Northfield’s Main Street** an authentic, early 19th century appearance. The Town’s setting, beneath the broad slopes of Northfield Mountain and overlooking the Connecticut River, furthers this visual appeal.
- Historic and cultural resources have played a central and significant role in many past **Town-wide planning efforts**, from 1977 to the present. Many of these efforts, including establishing the National Register Historic District on Main Street, have been spear-headed by the Northfield Historical Commission.
- Efforts to influence the future of the Northfield campus have been undertaken in a collaborative, cooperative manner, with the establishment of a **Campus Collaborative Committee**.
- The **Northfield Historical Commission** has taken an active role in interpreting, preserving, and advocating for the Town’s historic resources.
- The **Dickinson Memorial Library** serves, in part, as a cultural “hub” for the Town.
- Northfield’s **Local Cultural Council** has both imported programs, and arranged for residents to attend programs in other Towns.
- Northfield has demonstrated flexibility in the face of change for forming new organizations and committees in response to economic, social and cultural shifts.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Opportunity exists to bring heritage tourism to Northfield centered on the legacy of the Squakeags, D. L. Moody, the Schell Bridge, and neighboring institutions that share this history, including Historic Deerfield.
- The Connecticut River provides additional opportunity for eco-tourism and recreation-based tourism.
- The older homes in Northfield, particularly the Stearns houses, provide primary source material for the study of early American architecture.
- By making Northfield a destination for tourism, business development along Main Street is likely to occur.
- Traffic-calming measures on Main Street, including creative parking and crosswalk design will help preserve the historic buildings and provide better access to businesses.
- Historically-sensitive approaches to infill development along Main Street are needed to help insure the long-term protection of Northfield’s character.

CHALLENGES

- Growth impacts and challenges of a new Northfield campus with an adult population
- Financial challenges for private owners to maintain and preserve historic buildings

NATURAL RESOURCES, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

- Northfield has more than 4,005.6 acres of **permanently protected open space and recreation land**. Forty-one percent of Northfield (9,336.5 acres) is some form of protected open space.



Long views across Northfield's agricultural fields are some of the Town's most valued assets.

- The **Connecticut River** is a major feature of Northfield but it is impaired by pollution.
- Northfield, with more than 16,300 acres of woodlands, has large areas of mixed hardwood and pine forest that produce **clean air**, reduce run off and flooding, and moderate climate. Wetland and upland plant communities provide **rich wildlife habitat**, enhance passive recreation experiences, and add visual interest to the landscape.
- Twenty one point five percent of Northfield's 22,633 acres is **steep with** slopes of more than 25% and extremely sensitive to erosion; these steep slopes add visual drama and have potential, although limited, for recreation and education use.

- There are several BioMap 2 **Core Habitat areas** that are protected or partly are protected from future development and several that remain unprotected.
- Northfield has a variety of **recreation resources**, some managed by the Recreation Commission, the School Department, Conservation Commission, the State Forest, and private recreation resources like Northfield Mountain and the golf course.
- Northfield has beautiful **views**, a rich architectural heritage and large areas of forest that provide the scenic infrastructure of the Town. Without protection and careful planning these attractive features could be lost to development.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Prime soils produce the highest yields with the fewest inputs, and farming in these areas results in the least damage to the environment.
- Surveys and meetings in 2011 revealed the desire for recreational swimming facilities, ice skating facilities, and playing fields for school-age baseball, softball and soccer teams.
- Though Northfield has extensive frontage on both sides of the Connecticut River, there currently are no riverbank trails. There is considerable interest in developing such trails, and should that happen these would be convenient for almost all residents of the Town.
- Protecting the Town's BioMap 2 resources should be a priority for conservation.

CHALLENGES

- Development of recreational activities on steep slopes should be carefully controlled to prevent soil erosion.
- Care should be taken to avoid development that would promote soil erosion or detract from the visual appeal of the ridges.
- Protecting water resources will become a more important priority as development occurs on soils that are less conducive to construction.

- Maintaining the biodiversity of Northfield over the long term will likely require the protection of both unique habitats for specific species and networks of habitat across the landscape.
- Maintaining the character of Northfield will increasingly depend on preserving the Town's agricultural land and scenic resources.

HOUSING

- Households are **decreasing in size** (a 3.2% decline from 2000 to 2010).
- The largest growth is in **non-family households** (8.7% from 2000 to 2010).
- Households headed by persons **age 65 or over** increased by 6.7% from 2000 to 2010.
- 100 to 200 more households are expected by 2030, resulting in a need for 100 to 200 **more housing units**.
- **Decreasing household size** will lead to the larger number of housing units needed (200).
- It is likely that **households will continue to decrease**, given current demographic trends.
- Northfield's **housing stock** is overwhelmingly single-family detached units.
- **Housing production** is very slow, reflecting slow population and household growth.
- A yearly average of 5.1 **single-family building permits** was issued from 2003 to 2012.

- **Larger older homes** are quite common. 26% of homes have 4 bedrooms or more.
- 45% of Northfield's homes were **built before 1939**.
- Modest **3 bedroom homes** cost an average of about \$150,000.
- Larger **4+ bedroom homes** cost about \$300,000.
- Houses are **strung out** along Northfield roadways.
- There is almost no **interior residential development** in subdivisions.

OPPORTUNITIES

- If an institution with a moderate size non-adult population moves in to the Northfield campus and houses the population on campus, Northfield population and housing will continue to grow at a slow pace.
- Because of relatively low housing prices for smaller units Northfield has some housing that can be considered affordable. However the State certifies that only 2.1% (27 units) of the Town's housing is affordable. 20 of these units are in Squakeag Village, housing for the elderly, developed in part by the HRA, a regional housing authority.

CHALLENGES

- All of the population, household and housing analyses will become irrelevant if a substantial institution with a large adult population moves into the Northfield campus.
- Smaller 1 and 2 bedroom housing units will be needed to accommodate the growing elderly population and smaller households. Providing such units to elderly households on fixed low-to-moderate incomes, but with more substantial net worth (so they do not qualify for non-market housing) is a special challenge.
- Subdivision regulations and open space cluster housing zoning provisions are likely to remain unused with continued slow growth, since virtually

all new housing is created through the “approval not required” (ANR) process (up to 3 lots at a time).

EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Employment in Northfield has slowly **declined** over the last decade.
- Northfield’s **employment base** is dominated by educational services, even with the sale and shut down of the Northfield campus.
- Other categories of employment show **some diversity**, but they are very small.
- Many of Northfield’s businesses are **conducted at home**.
- **Building and construction and agriculture** are important in the Town’s economic activities.
- **Unemployment** has remained consistently below the state average.
- Northfield has a **skilled and well educated labor force**. One-half of the labor force is in the management, business, science and arts occupations category.
- 71% of the labor force works in the **private sector**, 22% work in government and 7% is **self-employed**.
- Reflecting employment, 44% of the labor force is in **educational services**. Average (mean) household income was \$72,345 in 2011.
- The **poverty rate** is very low (3.5%).
- Average **weekly wages** range from \$943 for educational and health services to \$229 for retail jobs.
- An estimated \$20,000,000 is spent annually by Northfield residents on **retail purchases**.



While Northfield retains several small businesses, much money paid for retail items and services is spent out of Town.

- An estimated \$3,500,000 is spent annually by Northfield residents on **services**. Almost all this money is spent **out of Town** since Northfield has so few retail and services businesses.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Reuse of the Northfield campus with an adult population could be an enormous change agent.
- A concerted village commercial district could provide another effective change agent.
- Some home occupations could expand, finding space in newly built or converted commercial buildings.

- The new solar overlay zone in West Northfield has the potential to attract companies in the alternative energy and “creative economy.”
- Agriculture has the potential to expand *vis-a-vis* the recent “farm to table” movement.
- Agriculture could also expand by growing more recently popular garden vegetables.
- There is ample land for economic activities to expand or newly locate in Northfield.
- The potential industrial park and office park proposals proposed earlier are still valid.
- Northfield has adequate infrastructure to support most types of economic development.

CHALLENGES

- Without any change agents, employment is likely to continue to decline.

TOWN FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Northfield is a very small town and therefore it is difficult to provide cost efficient services and to upgrade facilities; nevertheless its residents have access to a full set of basic services. The condition of the facilities varies and services may need updating.

- The **Pioneer Valley Regional School** accommodates a significant number of choice and tuition students from outside the district; planned improvements including the Land Management Plan at the High School will result in state of the art educational opportunities.
- The **Northfield Elementary School** has experienced a recent decline in enrollments and has a number of facility needs relating to maintenance and changes in technology and pedagogy.

- The **Town Hall building** is in fair condition, but in the near future there will be a need for a space plan for efficient and effective allocation of space, technology and storage. Additionally, funds will be necessary for renovations, upgrades, and historical restoration of the building.
- The **library** is in fairly good condition and has the potential to play a broader role in the community, however its existing space is less than adequate given the library’s vital function.
- The **Police Department** operates out of inadequate facilities in the basement of the Town Hall building.
- The **Fire Department** needs additional space for its equipment.
- **EMS** has found a temporary solution to its facility needs, but will need a permanent facility sometime in the near future.
- The **senior population** of Northfield is increasing and will need additional services. There are two trends: those requiring more health-oriented services and supports and those more interested in wellness and socializing.
- The Town recently voted to join Wired West, a regional cooperative formed to provide universal **broadband access** to its member Towns.
- The Town’s **water** supply exceeds current demand and most likely has the capacity to accommodate future growth. The Water Commissioners are currently developing a plan for improving the system.
- More than half of the **wastewater treatment** system’s capacity goes unused therefore, it is likely that the current plant will suffice even with significant growth and expansion, however, there are certain large scale uses that are required to hook up to a wastewater treatment facility. This is only available in a limited geographic area.
- Northfield has begun taking measures to ensure the future **sustainability** of its natural resources; these include obtaining a Green Communities designation from the state & creating an Energy Committee, and the Transition Northfield Tool Library.



The existing Northfield Fire Department is space-constrained.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Bringing fiber optic access to the Town would result in better broadband service for the community including the 40% of the Town that currently does not have access to any service.
- The Land Management Plan at the Regional High School presents many potential benefits to the students as well as to the community at large.
- Potential additional growth in enrollments could be accommodated at the High School by reducing the number of choice and tuition students.

- The library can provide opportunities for lifelong learning and community gathering.
- The demand is less than the approved withdrawal, therefore, the Northfield Water District appears to have the capacity to support potential additional water demand.

CHALLENGES

- There is a need to upgrade police, fire and EMS facilities, either together in a Public Safety Complex or in separate facilities.
- The Town Hall will need renovation.
- The Elementary School is in need of repairs, updating and renovation.
- There will be a need for additional services for seniors, helping them to age in place by providing a wide range of services including health, wellness and opportunities for socializing. This may include an expanded senior center, a Town Nurse, and an expanded senior van service.
- Lack of sewer capacity may constrain development of some uses, in some locations.

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

- The **average commute time** is 24 minutes, lower than the state average of 28 minutes.
- **Most commute times** are between 10 and 44 minutes.
- **Carpool trips** have decreased by 53% over last 10+ years.
- Northfield has 3,726 **registered vehicles** (1.2 vehicles per person).
- The **Route 10 Bridge** is the only roadway facility across the Connecticut River in operation.

- There is no **gas station** in Town.
- There are no **traffic signals** in Town.
- The **highest volume of traffic** is on Main Street (Rt. 10/Rt. 63) -- 8,200 vehicles per day.
- Traffic **volumes have decreased** in recent years.
- The **High Accident Locations** are at Route 10/Gill Center Road; Route 10/Route 63; and Main Street/Warwick Road/Parker Avenue.
- **Vehicle accidents** increased in 2011.
- **Truck noise** impacts the Town's quality of life.
- **Sidewalks** were recently rebuilt on Main Street.
- **Existing trails** include the Mill Brook Trail, Franklin County Bike Path, Northfield Connector, the Connecticut River Valley Corridor, and many hiking trails.
- No **fixed-route transit service** is provided by Franklin Regional Transit Authority.
- Shared **senior van service** with Bernardston is provided.
- **Medical transportation services** for Franklin County senior residents are provided by FRTA through the MED-RIDE and Mass Health programs.
- **Passenger rail and freight rail service** passes through Northfield. The nearest Amtrak passenger stations are located in Amherst and Greenfield (2013) and Brattleboro, VT.
- There are nine **at-grade crossings** with the railroad and seven grade separations.



Main Street through Northfield accommodates approximately 8,200 vehicles per day, on average.

OPPORTUNITIES

- A new bridge over the Connecticut River is being considered for pedestrian and bicyclists.
- Consider opportunities to increase ride sharing through volunteer program, ride-matching services and park-and-ride lots.
- New college/large residential institution may provide opportunity to provide fixed-route transit service.
- Speed trailer would help police enforce speeding on main roadways.
- Consider bicycle accommodation for selected roadways.
- Town must take over jurisdiction of Main Street from MassDOT if it wishes to redesign roadway for future demand and multi-modal uses and parking.

CHALLENGES

- The single roadway crossing (Rt.10) of the Connecticut River limits connectivity between east and west Northfield.
- No gas station increases vehicle-miles traveled.
- Traffic and pedestrian safety issues may be exacerbated with new college/large residential institution, but are correctable.
- Traffic signal may be needed at intersection of Rt. 10/Rt.63 with new college/large residential institution.
- The demand for senior transportation services will increase over time.
- Limited regulations to control truck traffic and noise

LAND USE AND ZONING

- 78.7% of Northfield is **open land, agriculture, wetlands, or forest**.
- Of the remaining 4,821 **developed acres**, 58.8% is agricultural, 24.0% is residential, 0.9% is commercial, 0.4% is industrial, and 2.5 is recreation and golf course. Other recreation land and activity is associated with schools (institutional). Other developed land (institutional, waste disposal, junkyards, and mining) makes up the remaining 15.4%.
- The Town of Northfield currently has **two principal zoning districts**: Residential-Agricultural (RA) and Residential-Agricultural-Forested (RAF) and three overlay districts: the Floodplain District, the Water Supply Protection District, and the Solar Photovoltaic Overlay District.
- The Town has a **flexible development measure** that includes provisions for multiple family dwellings and by-right Open Space Residential Design which allows smaller lot sizes in exchange for at least 50% of the land being set aside for open space.

- The uses allowed by **special permit** in the two districts include both small commercial uses, such as a gift shop or professional office, and large industrial uses, such as manufacturing or a transportation facility.
- Both districts allow **single-family homes and two-family dwellings** by right and allow, by special permit, for the conversion of a single-family or two-family dwelling to a three to four-family dwelling.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Existing zoning has several provisions that can foster “good” development, such as the Open Space Residential Design provision.
- The Town may want to be more proactive in defining incentives for open space in the Open Space Residential Design regulation – like defining connections between existing open spaces and expanding trail networks.
- Creating a commercial district might encourage some kinds of development that is hindered by the process of going through obtaining a special permit.

CHALLENGES

- Much of Northfield is undeveloped and unprotected from future development.
- Controlling future development will become an increasingly important priority.

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3 NORTHFIELD TOMORROW: PLAN FOUNDATION

Northfield’s Master Plan is built on a foundation of significant public input as well as assessment of existing conditions and the opportunities and challenges that these pose.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A vision and set of goals were articulated by the public in a number of forums (see “Northfield Voices” box). Several underlying themes also emerged from the community conversation. The Plan makes a concerted effort to identify strategies to achieve the goals and to address the underlying themes.

- Vision
- Goals and Objectives
- Underlying Themes

NORTHFIELD VOICES

The Plan was developed with input from residents, business owners, Town officials, staff and volunteers, collected in a number of forums; these include:

- 28 Steering Committee meetings
- 3 Town-wide public forums
- 2 roundtable discussions
- Mini-visioning forums
- Visioning with middle- and high-school students
- Interviews with department Heads, committees & commissions
- Some discussion on Facebook page & I-Neighbors social media site



Participants at Public Forum #2 converse.

A vision of the future was developed by imagining what could be and then figuring out how to get there. The VISION, presented on page 21, represents what the Town WANTS to be like in the future. The GOALS AND OBJECTIVES further articulate this vision and help to provide the framework for developing strategies to work towards achieving the vision.

SIX (6) UNDERLYING THEMES

Several common themes emerged in the community conversation. They seemed to be referred to frequently and by many.

❖ CREATE NEW SPACES AND PLACES

- CREATE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY GATHERING, places to go, places to feel a sense of belonging to Northfield and a sense of community related to a sense of place. People identified a range of possibilities including a Town center, a community park or center, more recreational facilities and more shops and restaurants
- BE PROACTIVE ABOUT COMMUNICATING WITH POTENTIAL FUTURE OWNERS OF THE CAMPUS and coordinate efforts to reach mutually beneficial reuse plans
- WORK TO DEVELOP A RESILIENT ECONOMY that connects to natural features, agricultural and historic heritage

❖ PRESERVE ASSETS

- A desire to PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE NATURAL AND HISTORIC FEATURES of the Town and the ambiance created by these with strong support for the preservation of Main Street, the replacement of Schell Bridge and increased access to the river. A desire to strive to achieve harmony with nature.
- SUPPORT THE RURAL LANDSCAPE: create an economic climate that enhances the viability of working lands and conserves natural lands.
- RETAIN SMALL TOWN CHARACTER by guiding the look and location of future development so that it is in keeping with the rural and historic features of Northfield.



Northfield's rural farm economy is one of the Town's assets to be preserved.

VISION

IMAGINE Northfield... sometime in the future, when...

The Town's **natural and historic features** are preserved, even enhanced and enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. **Historic buildings along Main Street** are protected and restored, and the Town's natural beauty is made more accessible by preserving views, open fields, **farming** activity, and other characteristics that contribute to the Town's rural character. A bike path, marina and park are developed along the **River** that is enjoyed by all. The Town's history and **spiritual legacy** are showcased and appreciated.

The small town feeling is further enjoyed by residents due to the **additional opportunities for gathering** provided by **Town-wide events** as well as a **community park** where people can meet spontaneously. The **Town facilities** such as the library, good schools and the Tool Lending Library are also places where people continue to mingle. **Additional shops restaurants, and art and cultural activities**, provide needed goods and services as well as opportunities to run into people, as do the **sidewalks** that connect to trails and create a system of the open spaces, recreational facilities and connect to the downtown.

Northfield **supports its residents** and continues to be a **great place to raise children**, but also provides for the increasing **senior population**, and their specific needs are attended to as well as the needs of **young people** for more places to go, more to do. Both seniors and youth benefit from a **shuttle bus** that helps them to get around independently.

Communication between Town government and residents is improved, both **technologically** as well as through increased outreach efforts and more effective dissemination of **information**. This inspires more residents to get involved in Town affairs and therefore, the number of **volunteers** rises. The Town continues to provide **adequate services** and **enforces by-laws** in an equitable manner such that it accomplishes what its residents expect of its government.

Getting around Town is easier and more convenient. Main Street is converted to Town ownership and cars can park along its edges. Traffic is calmed and a gas station comes to Town to service Northfield residents and visitors. The Schell Bridge is replaced and the two sides of Town are thus better connected.

Northfield **campus** is bustling with activity. The new owner is compatible with the Town's values, has made an investment to protect the historic buildings, and provides recreational, art and cultural activities to which Town residents are welcome to participate. The additional population drawn to Northfield by the reuse of the campus has spurred **economic development** especially in the downtown where there are now more places to go and more to do. This attracts visitors to Town who not only enjoy the increased retail and dining options, but the also visit the Town's natural resources, making Northfield more of a complete destination. **Hiking and biking** are enjoyed by residents and visitors, and there are adequate **playgrounds and playing fields** for all.



A visioning exercise from the first Public Forum.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The master plan is organized around the following eight (8) goals based on public input and an assessment of existing conditions. **THE ORDER IN WHICH THESE ARE LISTED DOES NOT IMPLY PRIORITY.**

#	MASTER PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
1	<p>TO PROMOTE PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE & NATURAL FEATURES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve natural resources & farmland
2	<p>TO PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION & COMMUNITY GATHERING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize & sponsor community events • Create more community gathering spaces • Increase recreational opportunities • Increase access to the Connecticut River • Create an outdoor gathering/performance space at the Elementary school
3	<p>TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOWN-WIDE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote a farming economy • Increase industry & manufacturing • Support retail & commercial development • Promote recreational, heritage and agri-tourism
4	<p>TO PRESERVE & REVITALIZE MAIN STREET</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve historic character while enhancing economic diversity • Improve livability • Protect the campus buildings and landscape

#	MASTER PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
5	<p>TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC FACILITIES, IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES & ENHANCE COMMUNICATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve communication between government & residents • Maintain and improve Town facilities • Improve public services
6	<p>TO EXPAND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES & SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOODS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage development of housing for an increasing elderly population • Create additional subsidized low and moderate income housing • Devise strategies for further neighborhood development
7	<p>TO ENHANCE TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION SYSTEMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities to encourage pedestrian, bike and rideshare transportation • Improve safety & operations
8	<p>TO PROMOTE NORTHFIELD'S HISTORY AND CULTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broaden public awareness of Northfield's history & culture • Promote stewardship of historic and cultural resources • Promote heritage tourism

THE PUBLIC VOICE



Master Plan Roundtable & Steering Committee Members preparing for Town-wide public forum.

March 6, 2013	Town Hall Auditorium
June 13, 2013	Northfield Elementary School
November 20, 2013	Northfield Elementary School

For a complete list of public forums see Appendix A.

KEY ELEMENTS: A VISION & GOALS FOR NORTHFIELD'S FUTURE

WHAT CONCERNED PEOPLE MOST¹

- Lack of community gathering opportunities
- Lack of citizen participation
- Lack of communication between Town government and residents
- Existing form of Town government
- Level of some Town services
- Lack of by-law enforcement
- Condition of roads and traffic
- Lack of a gas station

WHAT PEOPLE APPRECIATE MOST

- Historic buildings along Main Street
- Natural beauty, including the river, farms, woods, open spaces, Rustic Ridge, views and vistas of these
- Farming tradition/rural character
- Status as only town on both sides of the Connecticut River
- Lifestyle of a quiet, small town
- Dickinson Memorial Library
- Good schools
- Tool Library
- Local retail establishments
- History, including legacy of D. L. Moody/spiritual energy of the river valley

¹ From public input at master plan forums

IF YOU COULD DO ONE THING TO IMPROVE NORTHFIELD...²?

- Create a community gathering place
- Save and restore Schell Bridge
- Change government structure
- Community park/recreation
- Find the right occupant for the campus
- Improve land use regulations and enforcement
- Expand the tax base
- Promote alternative modes of transportation
- Ameliorate traffic conditions
- Enhance connections to the River
- Preserve what we have
- Increase local food production
- Preserve open space
- Increase pride in Town buildings
- Establish a pub
- Establish a gas station

CAMPUS REUSE

Concerns Regarding Campus Reuse	Perceived Potential Benefits of Campus Reuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of opportunity for revenue • Compatibility of mission/heritage • Size/scale • Relationship between owners & Town • Impacts on Town infrastructure • Character • Condition of buildings • Impact of college kids on Town • Financial burden to the Town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential source of tax revenue • Economic stimulus to new & desirable uses • Potential job generation • Preservation of historic buildings • Good neighbors • Opportunity to reuse for needed uses (e.g. senior housing, recreation, community center)

² Responses of participants of Town-wide Forum held on March 6, 2013

STUDENT VOICES³

LIKE MOST:

- walkability
- friendly, safe quality of living in a small town
- quiet at night

LIKE LEAST:

- lack of some amenities at school
- lack of broad cultural opportunities

WOULD LIKE:

- more places, outside and inside (such as eating establishments)
- to gather with friends and family and more cultural amenities



Historic buildings on the former Northfield Campus

³ from a mini-visioning session held with middle school students on May 22, 2013

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

Two roundtable discussions were held to further address key issues identified in the planning process. The purpose of these was to invite experts and interested parties to discuss the issues, identify specific strategies appropriate for Northfield, and to begin to form partnerships to implement these.

TO PRESERVE AND REVITALIZE MAIN STREET

The roundtable was organized around the following goal statement: ***to preserve the historic character and sense of place on Main Street while at the same time promoting greater economic diversity.***

PRIORITIES:

The Roundtable participants identified the following priorities as critical to achieving the goal of Preserving and Revitalizing Main Street and its related objectives.

Preserve historic character while enhancing economic diversity

- Inventory properties along Main Street
- Cluster businesses and be mindful of the balance between the benefits of economic vitality and livability for those living on Main Street
- Develop design guidelines for redevelopment of existing structures and infill development along Main Street as well as in the corridor area

Create a strong sense of place on Main Street

- Increase safety on Main Street (mostly refers to pedestrian, bike and auto safety, but also to enforcing laws regarding the sale and use of illegal substances)
- Upgrade the signs on commercial property and enforce the sign by-law (including regulations regarding temporary structures)
- Increase opportunities for community gathering (both public and private, both indoor and outdoor)

Protect the Campus Buildings and Landscapes

- Develop a proactive relationship with the new campus owner
- Collaborate with the new owners to develop a local historic district, involve them in the process (without discouraging “new suitors”)
- Market the Town well; have a formal Town representation in the negotiation process

TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOWN-WIDE

The roundtable was organized around the following goal statement: ***to promote economic development Town-wide by promoting a business-friendly environment and supporting local businesses.***

PRIORITIES:

The roundtable participants identified the following priorities as critical to achieving the goal of economic development and its related objectives.

Promote a farming economy

- Preserve and promote existing farming by enacting APRs
- Promote the development of agriculture-related businesses and services (including establishing a food coop and creating a Town-run “clearinghouse” for the collection and distribution of farm products (e.g. to schools, restaurants, etc., and promoting farm-to-table restaurants)

Increase industry and manufacturing and support retail and commercial development

- Review existing zoning regulations and update to reflect desire for additional development in specific areas (there was consensus that there is currently too much use of the special permit process and that a pilot area to zone should be considered to gather trust)
- Expand broadband service
- Encourage desirable businesses to cluster in specific locations
- Make traffic and parking improvements on Main Street

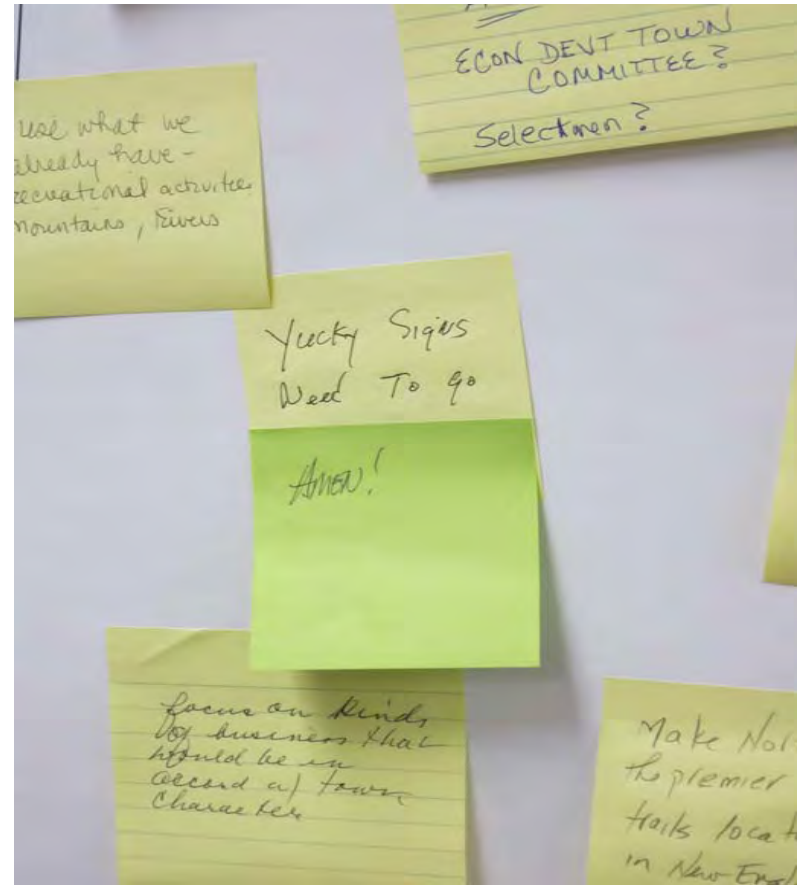
- Promote Northfield’s assets to desirable businesses (including the excellent educational system, well-educated workforce, recreational opportunities and good access to the Town).

Promote Recreational, Heritage and Eco-Tourism

- Create a pedestrian/bike connection across the Connecticut River by promoting the rehabilitation/reconstruction of the Schell Bridge
- Create a welcome booth with exhibit space, storytelling, brochures, and other materials (maps, etc.) actively marketing the Town and its heritage and eco-tourism venues
- Connect the various sights and sites including the Native American history, D.L. Moody story, rural character, hiking/biking/kayaking opportunities, etc. through maps, marketing materials and other branding methods so that Northfield can be understood as a distinct place with a special set of opportunities by outsiders



Public Forum activity



“Goal Station” with public input

WHAT MAKES NORTHFIELD UNIQUE⁴?

It is part of the role of a master plan to try to preserve and enhance those elements that make a community special. Participants in the planning process identified a wide range of features that make Northfield unique. These fell into the following categories:

Physical Setting

- The river splits the Town
- Historic houses
- Schell Bridge
- Northfield campus
- Farms, woods
- Dark night skies
- Open spaces
- Clean air
- Hiking trails
- Farm land
- Rustic Ridge
- Views and varied vistas
- Highland neighborhood
- Natural beauty
- The New England National Scenic Trail
- Mill River Conservation Area

Town Character

- No mass commercialism
- Quaint
- Small town feel
- Caring neighbors
- Friendly folks
- Quiet, safe, rural
- No fast food joints



Heritage

- Moody legacy
- Historical beginnings
- Colonial history
- Spiritual energy of river valley

Lifestyle

- A good place to bring up children
- Active churches
- Knowing one's neighbors
- Walkable downtown

Town and Other Facilities

- Tool library
- Railroad station
- Library
- Good schools
- Golf course
- Pool

Local Establishments

- Mim's
- Farmer's Market
- IGA
- Creamie
- Vegetable stands
- Outdoor movie theater

⁴ Responses of participants of Town-wide Forum held on March 6, 2013

PRIORITIES⁵

Participants in the planning process were asked to identify their priorities. While there was not complete agreement, there was relative consensus on the importance of many of the Plan's feature, and these are reflected in the Plan.

PARTICIPANTS' TOP PRIORITIES

seemed to be around⁶:

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY GATHERING. Residents expressed enthusiasm about creating a “COMMUNITY PARK” with space for fields, swimming, ice skating, tennis and public gathering. They are also very interested in “third places,” establishments such as coffee shops where they can meet, gather and run into one another. **MAIN STREET** seems to be a popular spot.

PRESERVING NATURAL BEAUTY INCLUDING OPEN SPACE, special natural features and with special attention to farm land. This was also related to a desire to enjoy these features with additional **OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION.**

PRESERVING AND ENHANCING HISTORIC CHARACTER was on the minds of many. There was an interest in different aspects of Northfield's history including the Stearns homes on Main Street, Native American history, Schell Bridge, and D.L. Moody's legacy.

INCREASING ACCESS TO THE RIVER and riverfront, connecting both sides of the river (Schell Bridge) and providing a variety of opportunities for enjoyment including views, swimming, biking, walking and boating.

INCREASING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALONG MAIN STREET WITH CARE taken to ensure that the type, look and location are compatible with the historic and Town character of Northfield. There is a desire for the Town to explore reclaiming a portion of Main Street.

⁵ based on participant response in a variety of public forums

An existing and much appreciated “third place” in Northfield



BRANDING NORTHFIELD AS A DESTINATION for historic, agri- and eco-tourism. There seems to be a lot of interest in developing tourism around the unique features of Northfield including the Stearns homes on Main Street, Native American history, Schell Bridge, D.L. Moody, the Connecticut River, forested lands, farmlands, farm-to-table restaurants and recreational activities supported by the Town's natural features including kayaking, hiking, canoeing, rock climbing, skiing, biking, mountain biking, birding, photography, fishing.

PRESERVING THE SMALL TOWN CHARACTER of Northfield is very important to Northfield residents. They would like to see more development, but are very concerned about its location and look. There seemed to be strong support for developing design guidelines to guide future development and redevelopment.

PROVIDING WHOLESOME ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE and trying to make the Town attractive for younger people to move in, was also important to people.

TAKING CARE OF THE COMMUNITY'S ELDERS by providing senior housing, a Town Nurse, transportation, opportunities to socialize and wellness activities was also a priority among participants.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunity exists to:

- Bring **heritage tourism, recreational-based tourism and eco-tourism** to Northfield, centered on the legacy of the Squakeags, D. L. Moody, historic homes on Main Street, the Schell Bridge, the Connecticut River, and other natural resources
- Expand **Northfield's economic activity** through growth of home-based businesses, alternative energy-based businesses, agriculture and the "farm to table" movement, and reuse of the Northfield campus
- Economic development through several sources alternative energy development, the "creative economy, the "farm-to-table" movement
- Attract companies in **alternative energy** and "creative economy" with the new solar overlay zone in West Northfield
- **Reuse the former Northfield Mt Hermon campus** with potential to meet a number of the Town's needs (including increasing the tax base, meeting community needs such as senior housing and opportunities for recreation as well as by providing economic stimulus to additional dining and retail options in Town)
- Provide opportunities for **community gathering** by encouraging private enterprises to create such opportunities as well as by supporting the organization of more community-wide events and undertaking to development of a community park or some other such place
- Reconnect East and West Northfield via the **Schell Bridge** project
- **Expand or newly locate economic activities** (there is ample land and infrastructure to support these)
- Reduce traffic and numbers of vehicles through **ride-sharing**
- **Gain** local jurisdiction over a portion of **Main Street** as a means of increasing on-street parking and accommodating multi-modal uses.
- **Increase** methods of **communication** (including electronic)

KEY CHALLENGES

Challenges include:

- Maintaining the **character of Northfield**
- **Controlling future development** (much of Northfield is undeveloped and unprotected from future development)
- Accommodating an **aging population**, as the senior population of Northfield is increasing and will need additional services and housing (by 2030, 21% of the total population is projected to be 65 years of age or older)
- Protecting **Main Street character** through historically-sensitive approaches to infill development and clustering any commercial activity
- Providing **upgrades to public facilities**, including police, fire, EMS, Town Hall and the Elementary School
- **Limited sewer service**, only available in a limited geographic area may inhibit certain kinds of development, in specific areas in Town.
- Planning for potential **impacts from campus redevelopment**
- Improving Town "**gateways**"
- **Maintaining the biodiversity** of Northfield over the long term will likely require the protection of both unique, habitat-specific species, as well as habitat networks



*A scene from
Northfield's rural
landscape*

(page intentionally blank)

4 IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

The following chapter provides a guide for implementing the Master Plan. It includes:

- An explanation of the implementation plan components;
- A discussion of the role of a “Master Plan Implementation Committee;”
- Recommendations for increasing the Town’s capacity to implement the plan;
- An overview of thirteen top plan recommendations;
- A discussion of the plan concept;
- An implementation plan table, organized around the master plan goals¹;
- A review of Northfield’s existing zoning bylaw; and
- An “element summary matrix” showing how each of the goals is associated with the traditional Master Plan elements (natural resources, open space and recreation, historic and cultural resources, transportation, economic development, housing, municipal facilities and services)

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN COMPONENTS

The implementation plan is organized around eight goals, identified in the shaded box in the right hand column. Under each goal is a series of objectives, or major efforts required to meet the goal. To fulfill each of the objectives, the table cites a set of strategies and associated action steps, which illustrate HOW the Town can meet the objectives and goals.

The plan has identified over 300 recommended action steps, and for each of these, a **LEAD(s)** and **PARTNER(s)** are noted. Lead persons and/or entities will be tasked with directing the action step, with assistance of partners, who

¹ The numbering of the goals 1 through 8 does not correspond with importance.

MASTER PLAN GOALS

Goal 1: To promote preservation of open space and natural features

Goal 2: To promote opportunities for recreation and community gathering

Goal 3: To promote economic development Town-wide

Goal 4: To preserve and revitalize Main Street

Goal 5: To maintain public facilities, improve public services, and enhance communication

Goal 6: To expand housing opportunities and support neighborhoods

Goal 7: To enhance transportation and circulation systems

Goal 8: To promote Northfield’s history and culture

Note: the numbering of goals does not imply priority order.

will initiate the action. Note that where the table suggests potential leads and partners, these persons/entities may change or expand in numbers as the action steps commence. For many of the strategies listed, an entirely new planning process will be needed to define roles and responsibilities of the lead(s) and partner(s).

MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

Critical to plan implementation is the formation of a Master Plan Implementation Committee, whose charge will be to (1) oversee how the strategies and action steps are being carried out; (2) keep the plan up to

date, and (3) provide a status update in an annual “State of the Plan” address to the Town.

INCREASING CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

Successful implementation of the Master Plan will require the Town to provide support of the goals and objectives through the following means:

THE FORMATION OF NEW TOWN COMMITTEES to carry out multiple action steps:

- **Economic Development Working Group**, formed around Goal 3 of the Master Plan, promoting economic development Town-wide, to meet on a bi-annual or quarterly basis with the Implementation Committee to monitor progress and update the Master Plan
- **Main Street Working Group**, formed around Goal 4 of the Master Plan, preserving and revitalizing Main Street, to meet on a bi-annual or quarterly basis with the Implementation Committee to monitor progress and update the Master Plan
- **Zoning Bylaw Revision Committee**, to oversee the re-writing of Northfield’s existing zoning bylaw, as recommended in Goals 1, 3, 4, 6, and 8 of the Master Plan
- **Town Housing Committee**, to address the Town’s expanding and changing housing needs, as identified in Goal 6, to expand housing opportunities and support neighborhoods
- **Visitor Services Committee**, to complement the work of the Northfield Area Tourism and Business Association, in addressing the expansion of recreational, heritage, eco, and agri-tourism in Northfield, as identified in Goals 2, 3, and 8 of the Master Plan.

INCREASING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION by undertaking the following:

- **An expansion of efforts to attract volunteers.** A concerted effort needs to be made to attract more and new individuals to volunteer

on boards and committees, and in other ways to make desired improvements. This effort should extend to citizens living throughout all five of Northfield’s neighborhoods, with particular emphasis placed on those individuals who have not participated in the past.

- **Creation of a volunteer, part-time economic development coordinator**, tasked with promoting small, locally-owned businesses, as well as attracting larger “anchor” and/or technology-based businesses.
- **A rekindling the Campus Collaborative Committee**, to maintain a proactive role the redevelopment of the former Northfield Campus, and assure that the Town’s long-term goals are considered in the process.

THIRTEEN TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

Thirteen top recommendations have emerged from the planning process. Many of the recommendations fulfill more than one of the eight master plan goals, and the order in which they appear is of no particular significance. Recommendations appearing in sidebars emerged as highly significant throughout all Master Plan goals.

Revisit the existing zoning bylaw. Northfield has survived for decades with a minimal zoning bylaw, with all development subject to special permit. This has discouraged the establishment of businesses and has led to a deterioration of the Town’s physical appearance. What’s more, it leaves open the type and extent of redevelopment at the Northfield campus. To address the inadequacies in the bylaw, the Town must revisit its existing regulations and make amendments

REVISIT NORTHFIELD’S EXISTING ZONING BYLAW

...so that interests of residents, including the town’s physical appearance and historic character, are properly protected.

PRESERVE AND ENHANCE MAIN STREET CHARACTER

...so that its historic resources remain intact and changes are made to complement and enhance the historic character.

so that interests of its residents are properly protected, and so that any new development or redevelopment is in keeping with the Town's character. Related design guidelines are also an important tool to achieve this end. For additional discussion of Northfield's existing zoning bylaw, and justification for revising it, see page 133.

Preserve farming and farmland.

Agriculture has been a staple of the Northfield community since the time of first human settlement, and continues

today in the floodplain on both sides of the Connecticut River. By preserving farms and promoting farming, Northfield can help secure its food supply, bolster its economy, protect its open space, and, at the same time, retain and feature a significant piece of its cultural history.

Preserve and enhance access to the Connecticut River. The Connecticut threads through Northfield, separating the west part of Town from the east. The lack of boat launches and bridges, combined with tree growth along the river banks, has made the Connecticut nearly invisible to residents and visitors. By expanding access through the clearing of vistas, the siting of boat launches, and the reconstruction of a pedestrian crossing, the Town can better capitalize on this tremendous natural asset.

Increase community gathering opportunities. People in Northfield enjoy getting together, either through electronic and print means, such as I-Neighbors and the Community Newsletter, or at gathering places, such as the Dickinson Library, Mim's Porch, and the Creamie. By creating more ways to congregate, the Town can increase social interaction among residents. This, in turn, leads to a more connected and healthier community, one in which residents are more likely to participate in shaping their collective future. Possibilities include creating pocket parks along the linear common; developing a community park; encouraging private establishments to create more opportunities for residents to gather..

Make Northfield more walkable. With its tree-shaded Main Street lined with historic homes, Northfield is a desirable place for people of all ages – residents and visitors – to stroll. However, the lack of a complete network of sidewalks limits the extent to which pedestrians can safely navigate, and inconsistent shoveling during winter makes walking more unappealing.

Improving the pedestrian landscape will require increasing the number of sidewalks, creating more visible crosswalks, enforcing snow removal ordinances, having the Town take responsibility for clearing sidewalks of snow (plowing), planting more street trees, providing site amenities (benches, litter bins), and upgrading lighting.

Preserve & enhance Main Street character. Northfield's Main Street of 19th century wood-frame houses spaced evenly along a linear common, is known throughout the region as one of the most intact historic main streets of its kind. It is also a source of significant local importance and pride. Preserving Main Street's character will involve establishing a Local Historic District, developing design guidelines, and/or revisiting the existing zoning bylaw.

Improve safety. Because Main Street is currently controlled by MassDOT, the Town has very little ability to make physical improvements, implement on-street parking, and/or control truck traffic and braking. In order to make Northfield a safer place for people of all ages, the Town will need to take greater control of the roadway, working with MassDOT in the process. Safety can also be improved through better enforcement of drug laws, and by providing adequate police, fire and EMS facilities.

Capitalize on natural and historic resources. In addition to the beauty they bring to Northfield, the Town's many natural and historic features are also potential sources of economic gain. Opportunities exist to more aggressively and broadly promote these resources to tourists interested in Native American history, agricultural activities and products, D. L. Moody, the

COLLABORATE WITH EFFORTS TO REDEVELOP THE CAMPUS

...so that the new owner/occupant understands the Town's goals, and how best to complement and support them.

FOSTER SUSTAINABILITY

...Northfield’s assets are preserved while, at the same time, the social and economic needs of the population are fulfilled .

Stearns family of master craftsmen and builders, and also to hikers, rock-climbers, bicyclists, canoe-users and kayakers.

Collaborate with efforts to redevelop the campus. Redevelopment at the former Northfield campus is likely to have a significant impact on the Town, and while residents cannot prescribe its future use, they can become partners in the redevelopment effort. Reviving the Campus Collaborative Committee and/or appointing a local representative to work with current and future

owner(s) are two ways of getting involved. Revisiting the existing zoning bylaw is another.

Increase economic activity by supporting the development of locally-owned businesses. Because Northfield is a rural community, with the nearest urban centers – Greenfield, Keene, Brattleboro -- more than ten miles away, access to shopping (including purchasing gas) is highly desirable. Locally-owned businesses can fill this niche. By streamlining the permitting process, expanding broadband, and actively recruiting such businesses, Northfield can foster a more business-friendly environment. The establishment of a member-owned and operated cooperative is another form of a desirable local business.

Provide for the needs of residents, especially the growing senior population. The number of seniors in Northfield will grow in the next several decades, and provision must be made for their special needs. These include appropriate housing types and sizes, safe pedestrian ways, alternative forms of transportation, and services related to health and wellness. In addition to seniors, residents of all ages will benefit from having a well-supported school system, well-maintained roads and public utilities, and a host of local businesses that cater to basic needs.

Increase communication. Northfield’s population of 3,000 spreads across both sides of the river and clusters into five neighborhoods. This dispersed

pattern, coupled with the lack of river crossings and insufficient broadband coverage, complicates communication between residents and Town government. As the Town moves forward, it must improve the means and frequency of communication so that its citizens are equally informed about local decisions and events affecting their lives, and so that residents feel more connected to their Town government and to each other.

INCREASE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

...capitalizing on local rural, historic and natural resources, and supporting the development of local businesses.

Foster sustainability. Each of the twelve key recommendations described above point to one final recommendation which permeates all future efforts of the Town, as outlined in the Master Plan, that of fostering a sustainable community. In Northfield, sustainability means preserving farmland, natural features, and historic resources, while, at the same time capitalizing on these resources for economic gain. It means supporting local businesses, and encouraging growth of businesses that can fulfill the needs of the local population. It means creating community gathering opportunities and improving communication amongst its residents. It means taking steps to improve safety and provide a healthy living environment for its citizens.

RIPE APPLES



The following is a list of “ripe apples” or no or low-cost and relatively easy-to-implement actions. By undertaking these immediately, the Town will foster a belief in the planning process, and will provide momentum for implementing the plan. Making improvements quickly and visibly builds credibility for the Master Plan and also pays tribute to the individuals who committed time and thought to the planning process. The list has been organized according to the eight master planning goals.

PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE & NATURAL RESOURCES

- Encourage more farms to enroll in the APR program or other agricultural protection programs
- Support regional efforts to make connections between open spaces
- Remove “paper roads” from NMH forest land/support additional conservation efforts in the forest
- Promote agricultural use by disseminating Northfield farms map, soil map, and other informational materials
- Collaborate with the Regional High School Land Management program and involve students in land stewardship efforts
- Set aside funding each year to assist land protection efforts
- Launch an effort to raise the CPA % from 0.5% to 3.0%
- Apply for relevant state LAND and other grants
- Continue effort to acquire the Mill Brook property/develop into a nature preserve
- Identify scenic views, roads and byways and other special places
- Preserve more woodlands with streams and vernal pools
- Explore ways to improve the stewardship of the Northfield Town Forest, King Philip’s Hill, Brushy Mountain, and other potential protected land
- Monitor surface water quality of Town’s sources of drinking water

OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION & COMMUNITY GATHERING

- Develop a planning kit for those wishing to hold a neighborhood event
- Provide barricades for housing block parties
- Stage a local food festival
- Develop an event to celebrate farm life
- Sponsor re-skilling workshops and “how-to” fairs
- Explore the establishment of a pub on Main Street
- Develop a welcome center on Main Street in an existing space
- Coordinate with the Recreation Commission to incorporate the Town’s recreation goals in the relicensing negotiations with FirstLight Power
- Sponsor hikes to historic sites and lesser known trails
- Develop trail maps for all trails in Northfield and connecting towns; disseminate maps



Mim’s porch and the neighboring Northfield Creamie are two existing gathering spaces. Citizens would like to create more places of this type.

- Form a working group to develop a program defining the needs for a community park

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOWN-WIDE

- Encourage establishment of businesses that serve community needs (pub, gas station, “anchor business,” etc.)
- Promote small, locally-owned business development
- Supply prospective candidates for sale and/or re-use of the Northfield campus with materials outlining the Town’s goals and objectives
- Write and place articles about Moody in magazines and other tourism publications
- Write and place articles about the Stearns buildings and other historic architecture in Northfield

MAIN STREET

- Look to other towns of similar size and character for successful design guideline models
- Invite other towns to speak in Northfield about their experience in developing guidelines
- Improve safety at critical crosswalks by installing flags
- Actively promote Town goals to future owner/occupant of the campus
- Re-start the Campus Collaborative Committee and/or designate a Town representative to participate in the negotiation process for campus re-use, promoting its redevelopment
- Describe and promote the historic aspects of the campus
- Encourage local businesses to hold events and provide opportunities for residents to gather

MUNICIPAL FACILITIES, PUBLIC SERVICES, COMMUNICATION

- Send out volunteer recruitment forms with Town mailings
- Recognize volunteer contributions
- Review board/committee structure in the interest of efficiency and eliminating any duplication of effort
- Duplicate and post Information posted at Town Hall, in West Northfield also
- Expand use of local cable TV for dissemination of information
- Expand information sharing on Town web site
- Convene the By-law Committee and review enforcement protocols (need to add apple in table (#5.1.4.))
- Consider using Town wide internet virtual gathering space (need to add apple in table (#5.1.6))
- Provide bike racks outside public buildings and encourage private establishments to do so

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

- Enact a slight zoning amendment to allow attached units by special permit
- Form a Town Housing Committee to explore housing issues

TRANSPORTATION & CIRCULATION

- Establish a “Safe Routes to School” program
- Coordinate with Bernardston to continue to provide senior van service
- Provide volunteer ridesharing options to serve residents without vehicles
- Encourage drivers to register with MassRides/NURide to receive discounts for services
- Consider providing pedestrian flags at crucial crosswalks

NORTHFIELD’S HISTORY & CULTURE

- Seek inclusion on websites and in publications of regional tourism organizations, e.g. Massachusetts Scenic Byways
- Connect historic and cultural sites through maps/physical markers so visitors are given information about multiple sites to visit
- Utilize venues (visitor centers/information booths) of neighboring towns for placing information about Northfield’s historic and cultural resources
- Enrich the public school curriculum to include segments on Native American, local archaeology, historic architecture, and other aspects of Northfield’s history
- Work with heritage preservation groups and Native American groups to publicize the importance and relevance of the sites and their commemoration
- Write and place articles regarding D. L. Moody heritage, Stearns architecture, etc. in magazines and tourist publications
- Consider installing an outdoor bulletin board for posting of maps, interpretive materials, and events
- Develop a smartphone application that connects visitors to historic and cultural sites

PLAN CONCEPT:
PROPOSED FUTURE LAND USES & RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS

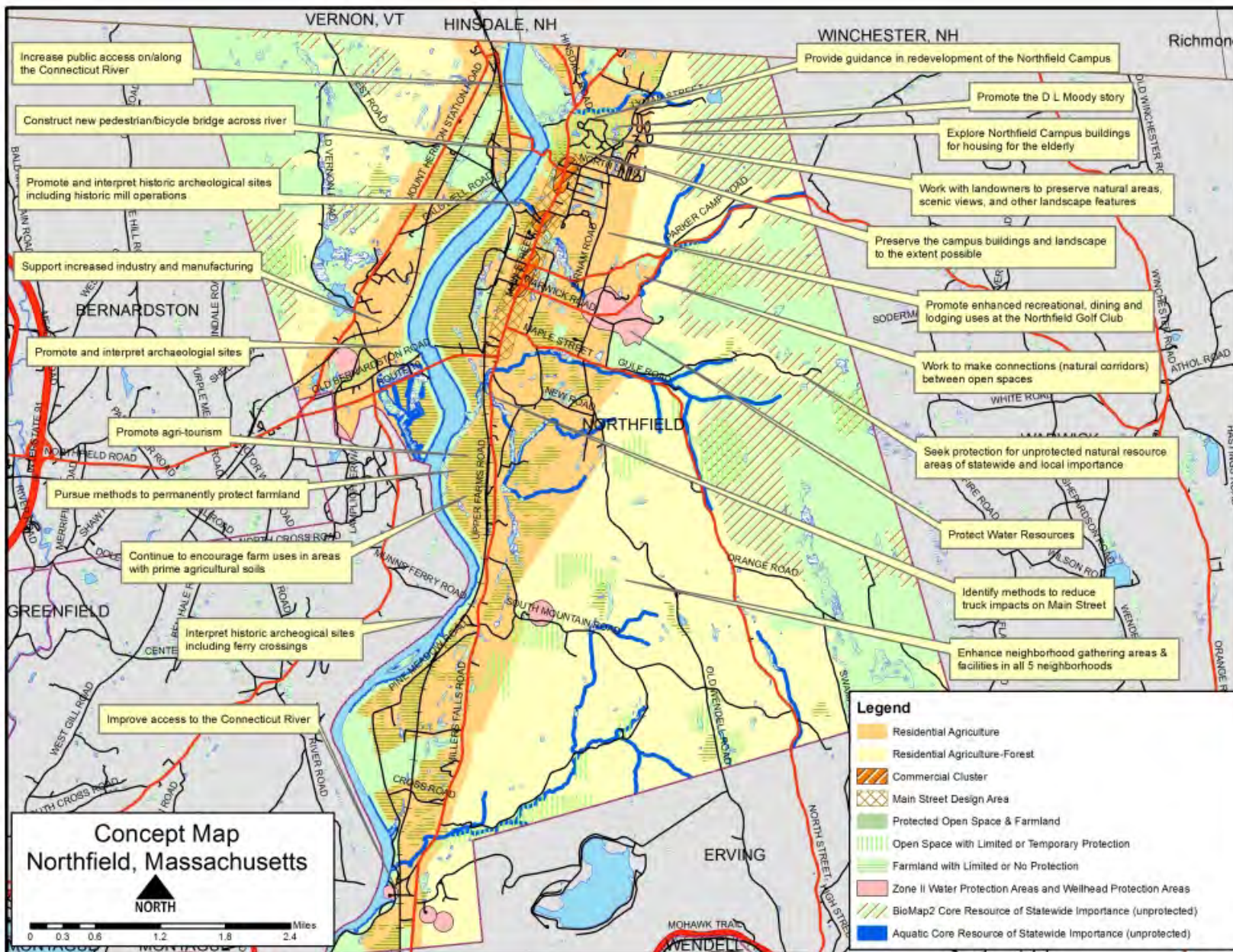
The maps on the following pages illustrate Northfield's future land use if the recommendations of the Master Plan are implemented. Major features are listed below, and others are called out on the maps.

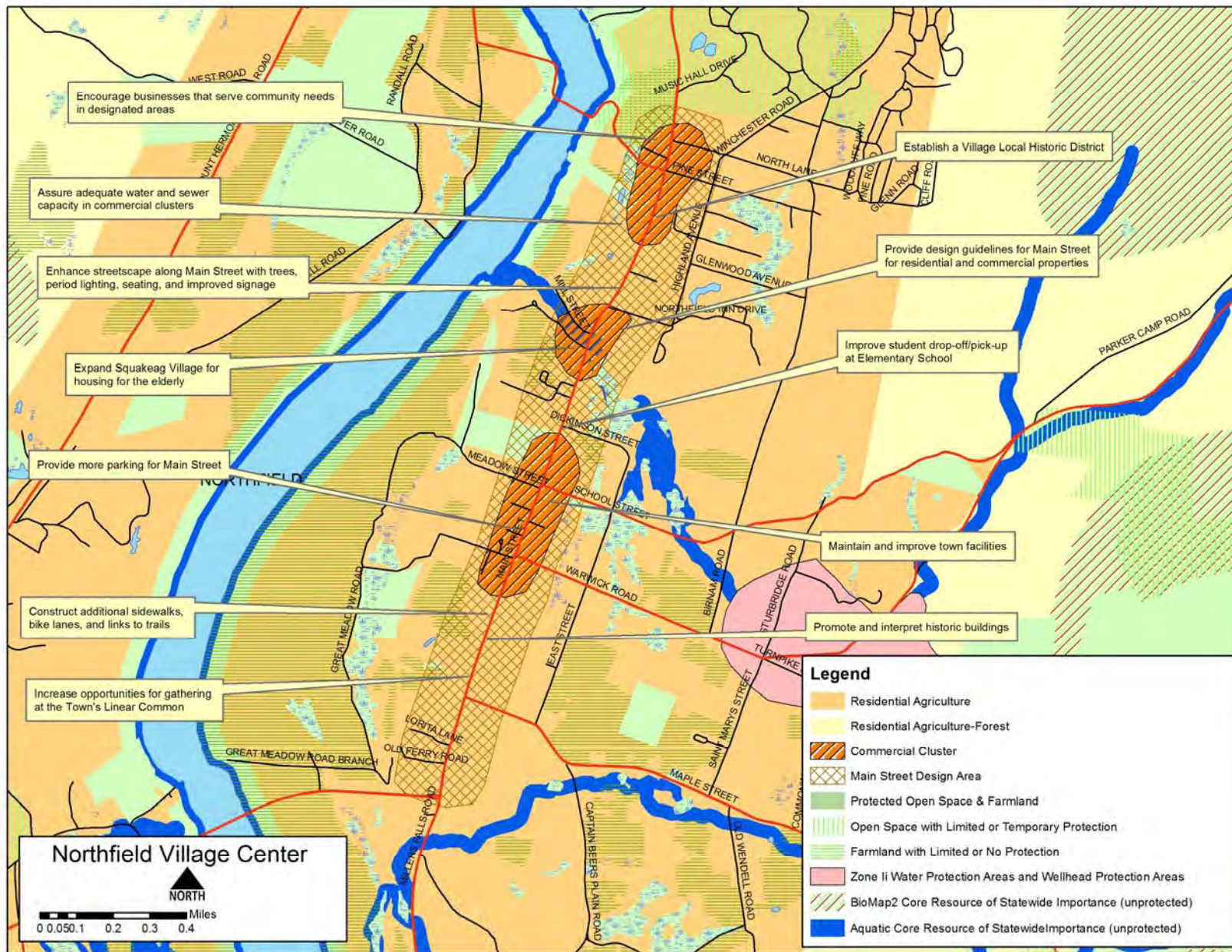
- Currently protected open space areas and permanently protected farmland
- Unprotected farmland that may be at risk from future development if actions are not taken to permanently protect it
- Protection of currently unprotected State-identified areas and corridors that are most critical for ensuring long-term biodiversity
- Existing and potential low density residential/forest use
- Existing and potential residential/agricultural use
- A Local Historic District along Main Street with design guidelines to promote the architectural integrity of the area and to enhance its appeal to visitors
- As many as three "commercial cluster" areas along Main Street, with associated design review

Several recommendations require revisions to the existing zoning bylaw to achieve the Master Plan's goals and objectives. Refer to page 133 for a review of the bylaw and a summary of advantages to making needed revisions.



Northfield's Main Street in early fall.





KEY TO THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN TABLES

The following is a key to the notation used in the Implementation Plan tables. The Implementation Plan is organized around eight goals with accompanying objectives, with separate columns provided for:

- **Strategies** – avenues for achieving the goals and objectives, with cross-referencing to other related strategies throughout the tables (designated by *SEE ALSO*)
- **Existing Resources** – a listing of known relevant organizations and/or other resources
- **Actions** – steps recommended for carrying out the strategies
- **Funding** – including capital costs, operating costs, ongoing maintenance costs, and/or possible sources of funding for the strategies
- **Notes** – Additional information about the strategies, including staffing/new committee requirements and identification of “Ripe Apples”
- **Lead and Partners** – The Town department, board, committee, or other entity considered most appropriate for taking the lead with the strategies; important entities/individuals to serve as partners in the strategies
- **Priority** –
 - #1 = Immediate (1 – 5 years; shaded with gray);
 - #2 = Intermediate (5 – 10 years);
 - #3 = Future/Re-evaluate in 10 years = 10 – 20 years;
 - Ongoing** (continue and support action already in progress);
 - Sustained Effort** (initiate new action step and sustain over time)
- **Ripe Apple** – an action step that is considered to be a “low-hanging fruit” – relatively low cost, low level of effort, with desirable impact(s).



GOAL 1: TO PROMOTE PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL FEATURES

1

GOAL STATEMENT: TO ENSURE THE PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL FEATURES

The last word in ignorance is the man who says of an animal or plant, "What good is it?" If the land mechanism as a whole is good, then every part is good, whether we understand it or not. If the biota, in the course of eons, has built something we like but do not understand, then who but a fool would discard seemingly useless parts? To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering.¹

Natural resources are a major factor contributing to the character of Northfield. Beautiful views, a rich agricultural heritage and large areas of forest provide the scenic infrastructure of the town. Clean water and air are critical for any town's future. Healthy ecosystems and habitats with a diversity of wildlife are necessary for families to live healthy lives and enjoy their surroundings. Measures to protect natural resources are important strategies for the Master Plan. One of the primary ways to help preserve the Town's character is the preservation of natural resources and open space.

OVERVIEW OF KEY POINTS: NORTHFIELD'S NATURAL RESOURCES TODAY

Northfield, with land on both sides of the Connecticut River, contains rural and forested landscapes that have been established, developed, and affected by its human inhabitants over the past several hundred years. The result is a picturesque landscape of rolling hills, floodplains, and rich terraces on both sides of the river.

¹ Aldo Leopold, *Round River: From the Journals of Aldo Leopold*



Farmland, much in the Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program (APR)

Northfield natural resources include:

- More than 16,300 acres of woodlands, large areas of mixed hardwood and pine forest that produce clean air, reduce run off and flooding, and moderate climate.
- Surface water and wetlands (total of 1,484 acres) and upland plant communities that provide rich wildlife habitats, enhance passive recreation experiences, and visual interest.
- Ten miles of the Connecticut River that after years of effort is now safe for boating and swimming.
- Large areas of prime agricultural soils that provide high yields with less use of inputs and less damage to the environment.
- More than 2,800 acres (12.6% of total area) being used for active agriculture (2005).
- 4,866 acres with slopes of more than 25% grade, areas that are extremely sensitive to erosion and add visual drama and potential

GOAL 1: TO PROMOTE PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL FEATURES

for passive recreation and education if carefully developed with trails.

- Parts of 5 BioMap 2 Core Habitat areas deemed critical for ensuring the long-term persistence of rare and other native species and their habitats, exemplary natural communities, and a diversity of ecosystems by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

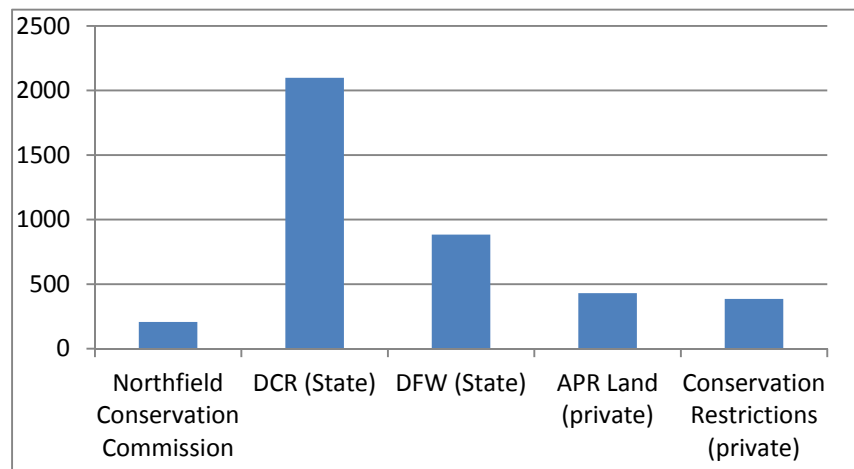
Northfield and its partners have done an admirable job of protecting many of its natural resources. Still many remain unprotected and without ongoing protection efforts and careful planning many of its attractive features could be lost to development.

Northfield has more than 4,005.6 acres of permanently protected open space and recreation land. Forty one percent of the Town (9,336.5 acres) is some form of permanent, limited, or temporary protected open space. Four thousand eight hundred and fifty acres are in Chapter 61, a form of temporary protection.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Northfield has many attributes that are **OPPORTUNITIES** for the future:

- Prime soils that produce the highest yields with the fewest inputs, where farming will results in the least damage to the environment.
- The value of agriculture in Northfield also includes its social and aesthetic contribution to the Town.
- The Connecticut River is a major feature of Northfield and after years of effort is now safe for boating and swimming.
- Northfield has beautiful views, a rich architectural heritage and large areas of forest that provide the scenic resources of the Town. Without protection and careful planning these attractive features could be lost to development.
- The hydropower licenses for the Vernon Dam, Turners Falls Dam, and Northfield Mountain will be renewed in 2018. Recreation, open space, water quality, flow, erosion, and fisheries will all be discussed during the re-licensing process.



Permanently Protected Open Space (acres)

- Northfield, with more than 16,300 acres of woodlands, has large areas of mixed hardwood and pine forest that produce clean air, reduce run off and flooding, and moderate climate. Wetland and upland plant communities provide rich wildlife habitat, enhance passive recreation experiences, and add visual interest to the landscape.
- Northfield sits upon a medium-yield aquifer.
- The Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife has noted the Town of Northfield as having a number of uncommon ecologically significant natural communities within its borders, which support a number of the state-listed rare and endangered species..
- The Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program has mapped several “Priority Habitats of Rare Species” and “Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife” in the Town of Northfield and identified approximately eighty potential vernal pools.
- In the Town of Northfield, there are several BioMap 2 Core Habitat areas that are protected or partly protected from future development and several that remain unprotected.

GOAL 1: TO PROMOTE PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL FEATURES

- With help from more than fifty residents at a public forum, the Open Space and Recreation update steering committee identified priority areas for conservation and nominated “special places” including landscapes and historic areas.

There are a variety of factors that present **CHALLENGES** for the future; these include:

- The Northfield Water District does not own the entire Zone I radius around its wellhead.
- The Grandin Reservoir is located off Louisiana Road in northeastern Northfield. It is owned by the Northfield Mount Hermon School and currently serves the former Northfield campus as well as nearby neighborhoods. Its future is largely dependent on the future of the campus.
- Twenty one point five percent of Northfield’s 22,633 acres is steep with slopes of more than 25% and extremely sensitive to erosion; these steep slopes add visual drama and have potential, although limited, value for recreation and education use.
- Development or recreational activities on steep slopes should be carefully controlled to prevent soil erosion.
- Care should be taken to avoid development that would promote soil erosion or detract from the visual appeal of the ridges.
- Several soils constrain development due to flooding and high water table for most of the year, or shallow depth to bedrock and the presence of hardpan in places. Ledge and steep slopes can also be present.
- While some soils present few limitations for construction they represent a small percentage of the Town’s total area. Development is therefore likely to occur on soils that are less conducive for construction.
- Maintaining the biodiversity of Northfield over the long term will likely require the protection of both unique habitats for specific species and networks of habitat across the landscape and protecting wildlife corridors.





- Using an inventory of scenic resources and unique natural environments in Northfield to provide a basis for setting resource protection priorities.
- Northfield Open Space and Recreation Plan process identified four main types of environmental problems in Town:
 - Need for education and enforcement of existing regulations;
 - Negative impacts of development in the Town and region;
 - Need for protection of the community drinking water supplies in Town; and,
 - Erosion along the Connecticut River.

SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS: STRATEGIES FOR THE PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL FEATURES

PRESERVE NATURAL RESOURCES AND FARMLAND

- Provide opportunities in formal and informal settings for youth to learn the importance of preserving natural resources.
- Assist landowners to protect their land through the APR and other appropriate programs such as conservation restrictions
- Continue to encourage farm uses in areas with prime and agricultural soils and farmland of statewide importance
- Create more specific bylaws to preserve natural resources and farming
- Work with landowners, including Northfield Mount Hermon, to improve and preserve for public enjoyment natural environments such as scenic views and other landscape features
- Work to make connections (natural corridors) between open spaces
- Develop and improve management of open spaces
- Protect water resources

GOAL 1: TO PROMOTE PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL FEATURES

OBJECTIVE 1.1 PRESERVE NATURAL RESOURCES AND FARMLAND						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
1.1.1 Provide opportunities in formal and informal settings for youth to learn the importance of preserving natural resources	Pioneer Valley Regional High School Land Management Plan Stream Teams Library Research Northfield Mount Herman School Christian Redemption Academy Northfield Elementary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperate with Regional High School Land Management Plan Involve students in monitoring water quality Educate Town Boards and Committees 	Grants Town Funding	 This could affect Committee/Commission budgets	LEAD Pioneer Valley Regional School District Greater Northfield Watershed Association PARTNERS All local schools Open Space Committee Conservation Commission	2
1.1.2 Assist landowners to protect their land through the APR and other appropriate programs such as conservation restrictions <i>(SEE ALSO 3.1.1)</i>	Existing Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding (at 0.5%) Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust Franklin Land Trust BioMap 2 – State identified high priority areas for protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set aside funding each year to assist protection efforts Launch effort to raise CPA % from 0.5% to 3.0% Apply for relevant state LAND and other grants for funding activities associated with preserving open space; matching to come from CPA funds Continue to protect forestlands and wetlands, especially unprotected BioMap 2 area 	Community Preservation Act (CPA) State and Federal Grants	  	LEAD Agricultural Commission Open Space Committee PARTNERS Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust Franklin Land Trust State & FRCOG Private Conservation Foundations	1






= RIPE APPLE (no or low-cost, easy-to-implement action)

GRAY SHADING indicates #1 priority strategy

GOAL 1: TO PROMOTE PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL FEATURES

OBJECTIVE 1.1 PRESERVE NATURAL RESOURCES AND FARMLAND (CONTINUED)



Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
1.1.5 Work with landowners, including Northfield Mount Hermon, to improve and preserve for public enjoyment natural environments such as scenic views and other landscape features	<p>Mill Brook area</p> <p>Other important natural and scenic areas</p> <p><i>Open Space and Recreation Plan</i>, 2013</p> <p><i>Mill Brook Conservation Area Assessment</i> 2006</p> <p><i>Mount Grace Land Trust NMH Forest Land Assessment</i></p> <p><i>Connecticut River Scenic Farm Byway Corridor Management Plan</i> (1998)</p> <p>BioMap 2 – State identified high priority areas for protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify scenic views, roads and byways, and other special places Acquire the Mill Brook property Develop the Mill Brook area into a nature preserve Preserve more woodlands with streams and vernal pools Support the Historical Commission and the Historical Society in efforts to preserve the historical character of the Town Provide information on invasive species Support conservation of NMH forests through the Forest Legacy Program or other conservation programs Strive to protect forest lands adjacent to Rustic Ridge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support donation of NMH forest lands 	<p>CPA</p> <p>USDA Forest legacy Program</p> <p>Grants</p> <p>Private donations</p> <p>Scenic Byway Program</p>	  	<p>LEAD</p> <p>Agricultural Commission</p> <p>Open Space Committee</p> <p>PARTNERS</p> <p>Regional Land Trusts</p> <p>Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center</p> <p>FRCOG</p>	1



= RIPE APPLE (no or low-cost, easy-to-implement action)

GRAY SHADING indicates #1 priority strategy

GOAL 1: TO PROMOTE PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL FEATURES

OBJECTIVE 1.1 PRESERVE NATURAL RESOURCES AND FARMLAND (CONTINUED)						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
1.1.6 Work to make connections (natural corridors) between open spaces	Already protected State, Town, and private lands North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperate with Northfield State Forest (DCR & DFW) to make connections Support regional efforts such as the “Quabbin to Cardigan” Program Partner with Mount Grace land Conservation Trust and Northfield Mount Hermon 			<p>LEAD Open Space Committee</p> <p>PARTNERS Mount Grace Land Trust State DCR & DFW Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center</p>	3
1.1.7 Develop and improve management of open spaces	Rustic Ridge & National Register Status NMH Forest Mt. Grace Land Trust Existing and potential protected open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore ways to improve the stewardship of the Northfield Town Forest, King Philips Hill, Brush Mountain, and other potential protected land Draft management plans for potential conservation areas, such as the Mill Brook areas west of Birnam Road Control invasive species Remove Strowbridge Road and other “paper roads” in NMH forest lands 			<p>LEAD Open Space Committee</p> <p>PARTNERS Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust Greater Northfield Watershed Association Volunteer groups</p>	2



= RIPE APPLE (no or low-cost, easy-to-implement action)

GRAY SHADING indicates #1 priority strategy

GOAL 1: TO PROMOTE PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL FEATURES

OBJECTIVE 1.1 PRESERVE NATURAL RESOURCES AND FARMLAND (CONTINUED)						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
1.1.8 Protect water resources	Recharge Area Maps East Northfield Water Company Northfield Water District Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor surface water quality and the Town's sources of drinking water (surface water, groundwater, and medium to high yield aquifers) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support "Stream Team" volunteer monitoring efforts - Work with Board of Health to monitor and clean up sources of pollution - Work with Connecticut River Streambank Erosion Committee • Monitor the FLP Pumped Storage Facility relicensing process • Develop detailed water supply recharge area maps 			<p>LEAD Board of Health Open Space Committee</p> <p>PARTNERS Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust Greater Northfield Watershed Association (GNWA) FRCOG</p>	1



= RIPE APPLE (no or low-cost, easy-to-implement action)

GRAY SHADING indicates #1 priority strategy

GOAL 2: TO PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION AND COMMUNITY GATHERING

2

GOAL STATEMENT: TO PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION AND COMMUNITY GATHERING

“Life without community has produced, for many, a life style consisting mainly of a home-to-work-and-back-again shuttle. Social well-being and psychological health depend upon community. It is no coincidence that the ‘helping professions’ became a major industry in the United States as suburban planning helped destroy local public life and the community support it once lent.”¹

Places to gather together for recreation and other events build community. The relationship between physical activity and health is well established. Physical activity when integrated with everyday life -- “active living²” -- has been demonstrated to be a strong preventive health measure, for both physical and mental health.

Placemaking is a term for the process through which we collectively shape our public realm to maximize shared values. Placemaking involves the planning, design, management and programming of public spaces. More than just creating better urban design of public spaces, Placemaking facilitates creative patterns of activities and connections (cultural, economic, social, and ecological) that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.

¹ Ray Oldenberg, *The Great Good Place*, New York: Paragon House, 1991

² Active living refers to “opportunities for incorporating physical activity into the routines of daily life as well as for sport and recreation. Examples of active living include walking or cycling with children to school; walking, cycling or catching public transportation to work or replacing short car trips to corner shops and parks by walking or cycling.” (from *Shaping Suburbia*, the form and future of our suburbs): <http://www.shapingsuburbia.com/2-suburbia-now/being-active-and-healthy-in-suburbia>



Riverview Picnic Pavilion

Placemaking is how people are more collectively and intentionally shaping our world, and our future on this planet.³

NORTHFIELD’S RECREATION AND COMMUNITY GATHERING RESOURCES TODAY: OVERVIEW OF KEY POINTS

Northfield has a variety of recreation resources and gathering places managed by various public and private entities. Public entities include the Recreation Commission, the School Department, the Library, Conservation Commission, and the State Forest; private resources include churches,

³ See http://www.pps.org/reference/what_is_placemaking/

GOAL 2: TO PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION AND COMMUNITY GATHERING

Northfield Mountain, the golf course, and some small businesses. Northfield’s recreation resources and gathering places include but are not limited to:

- Northfield Elementary School
- Senior Center and Outdoor Recreation Area
- Brushy Mountain Conservation Area
- Town Forest with hiking trails
- King Philip’s Hill with hiking trails
- Pauchaug Boat Ramp
- Connecticut River Greenway State Park
- Pioneer Valley Regional School
- West Northfield Playground (private)
- Northfield Mountain Recreation Area
- Riverview Picnic Area
- Munn’s Ferry Camping Area
- Kidd Island (private) camping and picnicking
- Camp Northfield (private summer camp)
- Northfield Mount Hermon Campus (private)
- Kiwanis Park (private)
- Dickinson Memorial Library and Field Memorial Library
- Town Hall
- Northfield Golf Course and Swimming Pool (private)

Smaller businesses in Town where people gather include as the Northfield Creamie, Mim’s porch, and Northfield Coffee and Books.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Northfield has a variety of recreation and community gathering resources, several of which offer **OPPORTUNITIES** for the future, including the following:

- Several existing sites can be improved and/or expanded to meet future needs
- Extensive frontage on both sides of the Connecticut River offer opportunities for recreation and river access

- The Northfield Mount Hermon campus has fields and other recreation resources that could be available for future recreation and gathering needs
- The hydropower licenses for the Vernon Dam, Turners Falls Dam, and Northfield Mountain all expire in 2018. Recreation, open space, water quality, flow, erosion, and fisheries will all be discussed during the re-licensing process and may offer opportunities for meeting future needs
- Several private venues, like Northfield Coffee and Books, provide opportunities for gathering

There are a variety of **CHALLENGES** for the future of recreation and community gathering; these include:

- Surveys and meetings in 2011 revealed the need for recreational swimming facilities, ice skating facilities, and playing fields for school-age baseball, softball and soccer teams
- The development of a “community park” with playing fields, tennis courts, swimming, playgrounds, ice skating, and other activities for all ages
- There are currently no public tennis courts and only one basketball court available for recreational use
Northfield needs a preschool playground for families and caregivers during the school day when the elementary school playground is reserved for elementary school children
- There currently are no riverbank trails. There is considerable interest in developing such trails, and should that happen, these would be convenient for almost all residents of the Town

GOAL 2: TO PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION AND COMMUNITY GATHERING

SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS: STRATEGIES FOR PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF RECREATION AND COMMUNITY GATHERING

ORGANIZE AND SPONSOR COMMUNITY EVENTS

- Create opportunities for neighborhood events
- Create opportunities for Town-wide events

CREATE MORE COMMUNITY GATHERING SPACES

- Increase opportunities for gathering at the Town's Linear Common
- Establish an arts/cultural center
- Develop a community park that may include playing fields, tennis courts, swimming, playgrounds, ice skating, picnic area, and other activities for all ages
- Develop a pre-school playground
- Develop an outdoor gathering space at the Northfield Elementary School, in the form of a bandstand or pavilion






INCREASE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Develop/acquire needed recreational facilities
- Promote recreational activities for health and enjoyment

INCREASE ACCESS TO THE CONNECTICUT RIVER



- Increase the number of public access points on the Connecticut River, including boat and paddling launching areas

GOAL 2: TO PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION AND COMMUNITY GATHERING

OBJECTIVE 2.1 ORGANIZE AND SPONSOR COMMUNITY EVENTS						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
2.1.1 Support and create opportunities for neighborhood events	Highland Street Halloween	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a planning kit for those wishing to hold a neighborhood event Town can provide barricades for holding block parties 		 	<p>LEAD: Neighborhood organizations or individuals</p> <p>PARTNERS: Transition Northfield Dickinson Memorial Library</p>	On Going
2.1.2 Support and create opportunities for Town-wide events (SEE ALSO 4.2.4, 5.1.6)	Concert Series Community Picnic Special Day in Northfield Church Holiday Fairs NES Fall Fest/Spring Carnival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stage a local food festival Develop an event to celebrate farm life Sponsor re-skilling workshops and “how-to” fairs 		  	<p>LEAD:</p> <p>PARTNERS: Transition Northfield Dickinson Memorial Library Northfield Area Tourism and Business Association Churches</p>	On Going




GOAL 2: TO PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION AND COMMUNITY GATHERING

OBJECTIVE 2.2 CREATE MORE COMMUNITY GATHERING SPACES						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
2.2.1. Increase opportunities for gathering at the Town's Linear Common (SEE ALSO 4.2.2, 4.2.3, 4.2.4)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the creation of gathering places along the Linear Common on both public and private land Plow parking areas at recreation sites in winter 			<p>LEAD: Northfield Area Tourism and Business Association</p> <p>PARTNERS: Businesses Private property owners</p>	1
2.2.2 Increase opportunities for gathering on Main Street (SEE ALSO 4.2.2, 4.2.3, 4.2.4)	Town's Linear Common Public and private spaces adjacent to Linear Common	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the establishment of a pub on Main Street Explore the establishment of a cooperative for food, gas, and other merchandise Strive to be a "Friendly Town" 			<p>LEAD: Northfield Area Tourism and Business Association</p> <p>PARTNERS: Commercial establishments along Main Street Private property owners along Main Street</p>	1
2.2.3 Encourage the establishment of an arts/cultural focus	Local artists Northfield Cultural Council Native American heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reestablish a summer arts/cultural event Explore the development of an arts/cultural center Increase connections between NMH campus and Town events 		See Goal #8	<p>LEAD: Northfield Cultural Council</p> <p>PARTNERS: Northfield Area Tourism and Business Association</p>	2






GOAL 2: TO PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION AND COMMUNITY GATHERING

OBJECTIVE 2.2 CREATE MORE COMMUNITY GATHERING SPACES (CONTINUED)						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
2.2.4 Develop a Community Park that may include playing fields, tennis courts, swimming, playgrounds, ice skating, picnic area, and other activities for all ages	Elementary School playing fields Mill River wetlands Northfield Mount Hermon-(NMH) owned land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Recreation Commission to define current and future recreation needs • Form working group to develop a program defining the needs for a community park • Explore potential location for community park • Identify sources of funding for planning, construction and maintenance of a community park 			<p>LEAD: Recreation Commission Open Space Committee</p> <p>PARTNERS: NMH campus owners FirstLight/Northfield Mountain</p>	1
2.2.5 Develop an outdoor gathering space at the Northfield Elementary School, in the form of a bandstand or pavilion	Northfield Elementary School PTA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a committee of the PTA to explore design and funding for a gathering structure 			<p>LEAD: PTA</p> <p>PARTNERS: Northfield Elementary School Parents Volunteers</p>	1




GOAL 2: TO PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION AND COMMUNITY GATHERING

OBJECTIVE 2.3 INCREASE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
2.3.1 Develop/acquire needed recreational facilities	Northfield Campus fields NMH Golf Course NMH Pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with NCF to negotiate use and/or acquisition of the fields Create and sustain golf, tennis and swimming facilities Coordinate with the Recreation Committee to incorporate Town's recreation goals in the relicensing negotiations with FLP 			<p>LEAD: Recreation Commission Open Space Committee</p> <p>PARTNERS: NCF/future campus owner/occupant Snow & Sons</p>	On Going
2.3.2 Promote recreational activities for health and enjoyment	Existing trail network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop welcome center on Main Street Assist in evaluating and acquiring signage and trailhead kiosks (use these to orient visitors to recreational opportunities Town-wide) Work with the Northfield Highway Department to design and create parking for trailheads Develop trail maps for all trails in Northfield and connecting Towns' trails 	New England and National Trail Programs New England Trail	<p> See Goal #8</p> <p></p>	<p>LEAD: Northfield Trails Association Open Space Committee Recreation Commission</p> <p>PARTNERS: Northfield Business & Tourism Association FRCOG National Park Service</p>	1




GOAL 2: TO PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION AND COMMUNITY GATHERING

OBJECTIVE 2.3 INCREASE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

<p>2.3.2 Promote recreational activities for health and enjoyment (continued)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and disseminate a brochure or printed Northfield Trail Guide • Provide Northfield trail maps online and link to the New England Trail and Northfield Mountain sites • Survey existing trail systems and conduct a needs assessment for their improvement or expansion • Create new trails on public lands or private lands with permission, including plans for their maintenance and management • Promote rock climbing • Sponsor hikes to historic sites and lesser-known trails 				
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GOAL 2: TO PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION AND COMMUNITY GATHERING

OBJECTIVE 2.4 INCREASE ACCESS TO THE CONNECTICUT RIVER						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
2.4.1 Increase the number of public access points on the Connecticut River, including boat and paddling launching areas <i>(SEE ALSO 4.2.2, 7.1.1, 7.1.6)</i>	Schell Bridge (owned by the Town of Northfield) 2 existing boat access points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconstruct a pedestrian crossing at/near the Schell Bridge Establish parks on both sides of the River adjacent to the Schell Bridge Facilitate the building of a canoe/kayak launch ramp at Bennett Brook Wildlife Management Area Work with FirstLight to balance needs Work to establish accessible river-front walkways and river-viewing stations Create a bike path along river Explore building a marina along the riverfront 	MassDOT/FHA		LEAD: Open Space Committee Recreation Commission PARTNERS: Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) FirstLight/Northfield Mountain	2



GOAL 2: TO PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION AND COMMUNITY GATHERING

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GOAL 3: TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOWN-WIDE

3

GOAL STATEMENT: TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOWN-WIDE BY PROMOTING A BUSINESS-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT AND SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES

“Economic development—jobs, income, and community prosperity—is a continuing challenge to modern society. To meet this challenge, economic developers must use imagination and common sense, coupled with the tools of public and private finance, politics, planning, micro- and macroeconomics, engineering, and real estate.”

- *Economic Development Quarterly: The Journal of American Economic Revitalization*

Economic development provides a community with jobs, increases its tax base, and creates opportunities for a wide range of goods and services that can be of benefit to, and enjoyed by, residents and visitors. In order for such development to occur, local resources must be assessed, and market potentials, public financial means, and other forms of assistance evaluated. This section of the implementation plan proposes a set of attainable goals and objectives with the associated strategies and actions needed to enhance local commercial and industrial activities.

NORTHFIELD’S ECONOMY TODAY: OVERVIEW OF KEY POINTS

In a number of public forums, Northfield residents have repeatedly expressed a desire to increase the tax base and to have more “places to go,” especially retail establishments and restaurants. They believe that it is equally important to preserve Town character while, at the same time, increasing economic development and expanding the local economy. The



Lane Construction, located in West Northfield, is one of the town’s largest employers.

following existing conditions pose **CHALLENGES** to expanding the Northfield economy:

- While Northfield has a median household income 18% higher than that of Franklin County as a whole, the Town has steadily lost employment since 2002 and is now down to 877 jobs (second quarter of 2012). Educational services have suffered the most serious decline, due primarily to the closing of the Northfield Campus of the Northfield Mount Hermon School.
- While an estimated \$20,000,000 is spent annually by Northfield residents on retail purchases, and \$3,500,000 on services, almost all this money is spent out-of-town. Northfield loses a significant proportion of its purchasing power to surrounding towns because it has so few retail and services businesses.

GOAL 3: TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOWN-WIDE

- The Town has very little commercial office space, and lacks clusters of offices that often develop around post offices, town halls, court houses and other public buildings.
- Northfield lacks a large “anchor” business, such as a manufacturing operation or large retail store.
- The Town’s zoning allows industrial and commercial uses to be located anywhere (with special permits); economic development can potentially occur on any or all of the available vacant land. The bylaw does not include a specific industrially-zoned district or districts.
- Broadband services currently reach only a portion of the Town’s businesses and residences.
- Without a department/dry goods store and/or large food market, gas station, and pub, Northfield falls short of sustaining its residents’ retail needs.
- The limited infrastructure serving the Town, especially sewer, places some restrictions on future development/redevelopment.

Despite these challenges, Northfield has significant resources that can be seen as **OPPORTUNITIES** to support economic development.

- Northfield has a skilled and well educated labor force.
- *The Town has 300 acres of vacant unused, unforested land as well as 428 acres of open land, brushland, transitional and utility right-of-way land that could be used for economic development.*
- *Northfield has assets that favor industry such as access to an interstate highway and an interstate rail line; and flat, well-drained relatively inexpensive land.*

- *Northfield has adequate infrastructure to support some new economic development, including roadway access to available developable land; adequate water supply; wastewater treatment capacity; electricity (including solar-generated power); broadband communications to a portion of businesses and homes.*
- *There is a potential to capture some of the consumer expenditures with further development of stores, shops and offices in Town.*
- *Opportunity exists to create appealing mixed-used (residential and commercial) establishments in a way that would fit in with the Town’s historic and rural character (for example, in the form L-shapes or squares, with pedestrian-centered landscapes between the buildings). Some of Northfield’s existing buildings could become nuclei of mixed-use type developments.*



The Northfield Creamie, one of the Town’s most popular retail establishments, should be promoted and protected.

GOAL 3: TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOWN-WIDE

- The newly-created Solar Overlay Zone, located west of the Connecticut River, has potential to bring industry to Northfield, in the form of solar and other alternative energy firms.
- With its extensive holding of prime farmlands, Northfield has potential to expand agriculture *vis-a-vis* recent trends in farm-to-table restaurants; in homes with niche market type garden vegetables; through agri-tourism.
- Redevelopment of the former Northfield Campus holds the largest potential for economic growth, as both a major employer, as well as a generator of associated commercial, service, retail, and housing activity.
- Northfield's natural and cultural resources -- including the Connecticut River, miles of hiking trails, the Schell Bridge crossing, Native American history, and legacy of Calvin Stearns and D. L. Moody – offer opportunities to develop a lucrative tourism-based economy.

In summary, employment in Northfield has slowly declined over the last decade. The Town's employment base continues to be dominated by educational services, even with the sale and shut down of the Northfield Campus of the Northfield Mount Hermon School. Other categories of employment show some diversity, but they are very small, and many of Northfield's businesses are conducted at home. Building construction and agriculture are important in the Town's economic activities, but a large amount of purchasing power is lost to surrounding towns because there are few retail and service businesses in Town. Potential exists to increase economic activities through retailing, services, tourism (including heritage, agriculture, and recreation), agriculture and solar energy-related businesses.



"Agritourism has become an important and marketable opportunity for improving the incomes and potential economic viability of small farms and rural communities."

GOAL 3: TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOWN-WIDE

SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS: STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

PROMOTING A FARMING ECONOMY

- Promote existing farming
- Promote development of new farms and farming activity
- Promote development of agriculture-related businesses and services

INCREASING INDUSTRY AND MANUFACTURING

- Develop a pro-industry/manufacturing or industry/manufacturing-friendly environment in the short term (next five years)

SUPPORTING RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Provide more parking on and off Main Street
- Visually enhance the Main Street streetscape
- Encourage establishment of businesses that serve community needs
- Provide design guidelines for Main Street to help new businesses meld aesthetically with the character of Northfield
- Establish greater control over truck traffic on Main Street
- Promote small, locally-owned business development
- Provide guidance and publicize Town interests in redevelopment of the Northfield Campus.

PROMOTING RECREATIONAL, HERITAGE AND AGRI-TOURISM

- Rehabilitate/reconstruct the Schell bridge to create a pedestrian/bikeway connection across the Connecticut River
- Promote long-distance bicycle tours
- Develop a Native American cultural center/museum of Native American heritage
- Promote the Dwight L. Moody story
- Promote the Stearns houses story
- Develop and promote agri-tourism
- Promote enhanced recreational, eating and lodging uses at the Northfield Golf Club

GOAL 3: TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOWN-WIDE

OBJECTIVE 3.1 TO PROMOTE A FARMING ECONOMY						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
3.1.1 Promote existing farming (SEE ALSO 1.1.2)	Existing farmland and farms "Right to Farm Community" designation Local tradition CISA CSA Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create APRs where they are desired. • Work with and learn from the North Quabbin Food and Community Cooperative 	Possible food sales to schools for their nutritious lunch programs	Some Northfield land is owned or leased by out-of-town farmers who will need to be contacted and brought into efforts to promote existing farming	<p>LEAD: Northfield Agricultural Commission</p> <p>PARTNERS: Franklin Regional Council of Governments</p>	1
3.1.2 Promote development of new farms and farming activity (SEE ALSO 1.1.4)	Existing open space suitable for farming "Right to Farm Community" designation CISA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a distribution center for local produce • Create a canning operation for more efficient and cost-effective canning of local produce 	<p>Possible agricultural grants from State</p> <p>MEGA (Matching Enterprise Grants for agriculture program and the Farm Viability Enhancement Program (FVEP))</p>	Need additional signage to direct people to off-Main Street farm stands	<p>LEAD: Northfield Agricultural Commission</p> <p>PARTNERS: Individual entrepreneurial farmers or potential farmers Franklin County CDC</p>	2
3.1.3 Promote development of agriculture-related businesses and services (SEE ALSO 1.1.3)	Existing farms Vacant space on Main Street Local demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a food co-op • Promotion of a "clearinghouse" for the collection and distribution of farm products (e.g. to schools, restaurants, etc., not to be operated by the Town) • Promote farm-to-table restaurants 	<p>Possible agricultural grants from State</p> <p>MEGA (Matching Enterprise Grants for agriculture program and the Farm Viability Enhancement Program (FVEP))</p>		<p>LEAD: Northfield Agricultural Commission</p> <p>PARTNERS: Franklin Regional Council of Governments Local Realtors</p>	2




= RIPE APPLE (no- or low-cost, easy-to-implement measure)

GRAY SHADING indicates #1 priority strategy

GOAL 3: TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOWN-WIDE

OBJECTIVE 3.2 TO INCREASE INDUSTRY AND MANUFACTURING						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
3.2.1 Develop a pro-industry/manufacturing or industry/manufacturing -friendly environment in Northfield	Town Building Inspector Planning Board Franklin Regional Council of Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend existing zoning bylaw to include established industrial zones Prepare a permitting guide for applicants to steer them through the process; streamline the process as much as possible. Expand Broadband service throughout Town Review property tax exemptions and abatements for businesses Promote Northfield to businesses by marketing the educated population/workforce 	Possible federal EDA grants	<p>Need site control to get EDA funding</p> <p>It would be desirable to allow industry by-right in industrial zones, with requirements and standards spelled out in zoning, rather than use the laborious and sometimes subjective special permit process</p>	<p>LEAD: Planning Board</p> <p>PARTNERS: Building Inspector Franklin County Chamber of Commerce</p>	1

GOAL 3: TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOWN-WIDE



OBJECTIVE 3.3 TO SUPPORT RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
3.3.1 Provide more parking on and/or off Main Street (SEE ALSO 4.2.1, 7.2.1, 7.2.3)	The existing very wide right-of-way on Main Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with MassDOT to take over ownership of the Main Street portion of Route 10/63 through a phasing process. Attract a larger “Anchor” retail use 	Town appropriations	Phase One of taking over ownership of Main Street would involve a ¼ to one mile segment centered on the Town Hall area.	<p>LEAD: Board of Selectmen</p> <p>PARTNERS: Town Highway Department, Mass. DOT</p>	1
3.3.2 Visually enhance the Main Street streetscape (SEE ALSO 4.1.1, 4.2.3, 7.2.1, 8.2.2)	The existing extensive linear Town Common	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bury overhead utility lines Plant street trees Introduce traffic-calming measures Enhance street crossings Install period street lights Establish commercial cluster zones within the Main Street, allowing more off-street parking 	<p>Town/Utility Company cost sharing for burying utility lines.</p> <p>Town highway funds</p> <p>Town/volunteer labor to plant trees.</p>	Cluster zones to be part of overall rezoning project.	<p>LEAD: Town Highway Department</p> <p>PARTNER: Planning Board for zoning amendments</p>	1
3.3.3 Encourage establishment of businesses that serve community needs (pub, gas station, “anchor business,” etc.) (SEE ALSO 4.1.3)	<p>Vacant space on Main Street</p> <p>Eager residents/ready market</p> <p>Northfield Area Tourism and Business Association</p> <p>Planning Board</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Streamline permitting process Expand infrastructure, including broadband 	Small Town appropriation for publicizing documents including the master plan that demonstrate a business-friendly Town attitude.		<p>LEAD: Board of Selectmen</p> <p>PARTNERS: Northfield Area Tourism and Business Association</p>	2




= RIPE APPLE (no- or low-cost, easy-to-implement measure)

GRAY SHADING indicates #1 priority strategy

GOAL 3: TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOWN-WIDE

OBJECTIVE 3.3 TO SUPPORT RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT (CONTINUED)						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
3.3.4 Provide design guidelines for Main Street to help new businesses meld aesthetically with the character of Northfield <i>(SEE ALSO 3.3.2, 4.1.1, 4.1.4)</i>	Planning Board Model sign by-laws from other communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare and adopt design guidelines for Main Street Develop and enforce a clear and attractive sign by-law 	Town appropriation for the Planning Board		<p>LEAD: Planning Board</p> <p>PARTNERS: Northfield Historical Commission</p>	1
3.2.5 Establish greater control over truck traffic on Main Street and Mount Hermon Station Road <i>(SEE ALSO 4.2.1, 7.2.3)</i>	Local and State Police Departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More intense speeding ticketing for trucks, including more surveillance by State Police, since it is a State Highway Erect signs discouraging use of engine braking to reduce truck noise 	Possible law enforcement grant of money and/or equipment from the state or federal government		<p>LEAD: Northfield Police Department</p> <p>PARTNERS: State Police</p>	2
3.2.6 Promote small, locally-owned business development <i>(SEE ALSO 3.1.3, 4.1.3, 4.1.4)</i>	Northfield Area Tourism and Business Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add part-time economic development officer responsibilities to an existing staff position or create a volunteer role Expand Broadband 	Possible EDA grant for an economic development officer.		<p>LEAD: Town Meeting</p> <p>PARTNERS: Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen</p>	3
3.2.7 Provide guidance and publicize Town interests in redevelopment of the Northfield Campus. <i>(SEE ALSO 1.1.5, 2.2.4, 2.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.3)</i>	Northfield Campus Collaborative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply prospective candidates for sale and/or reuse of the campus with material outlining the Town's interests and objectives, including the Master Plan. 	A Town appropriation for the Northfield Campus Collaborative		<p>LEAD: Northfield Campus Collaborative</p> <p>PARTNER: Planning Board</p>	1

GOAL 3: TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOWN-WIDE



OBJECTIVE 3.4 TO PROMOTE RECREATIONAL, HERITAGE AND ECO-TOURISM						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
3.4.1 Construct the Schell Bridge to create a pedestrian/bike-way connection across the Connecticut River <i>(SEE ALSO 2.4.1, 3.4.1, 7.1.1)</i>	Schell Bridge and its heritage Historical Society/Museum Friends of Schell Bridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Friends of Schell Bridge to actively promote its construction Obtain needed Selectmen’s action to approve and encourage the bridge and park creation. 	FHA/MassDOT	 Bicycle access could enhance commuting to a new industrial park on the west side of the River Including a riverside park and water access facility at Schell Bridge could “jump-start” additional recreational interest in Town and the region and become a major feature in riverbank trails	LEAD: MassDOT PARTNERS: Friends of the Schell Bridge Board of Selectmen Historical Society/Museum Northfield Recreation Commission	1
3.4.2 Promote long distance bicycle tours <i>(SEE ALSO 5.2.8, 7.1.3)</i>	Scenery Quiet roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Install bike lanes on roadways where shoulders are in adequate Explore setting up designated stations on “Inn-to-Inn” tourist routes 	Possible tie-ins with regional tourism organizations for promotion	Northfield is insufficiently featured in the “Scenic Byways of Western Massachusetts” brochure published by the State	LEAD: Greater Northfield Business and Tourism Association PARTNERS: Franklin Regional Council of Governments	2
3.4.3 Develop a Native American cultural center/museum of Native American heritage <i>(SEE ALSO 8.1.3)</i>	Native American sites throughout Town Artifacts at the Dickinson Library Historical Society/Museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with heritage preservation groups and Native American groups to publicize the importance and relevance of the sites and their commemoration Examine the former Mobil Station site for its potential use or contribution to a Native American cultural center/museum 	National Park Service (funding for battlefield parks)	This could become an important regional and statewide attraction because of growing interest in Native American culture and history. National Park Service support, listings and publicity will draw many visitors.	LEAD: Northfield Historical Society PARTNERS: Native American Cultural and Historic Groups	3



= RIPE APPLE (no- or low-cost, easy-to-implement measure)

GRAY SHADING indicates #1 priority strategy

GOAL 3: TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOWN-WIDE

OBJECTIVE 3.4 TO PROMOTE RECREATIONAL, HERITAGE AND ECO-TOURISM (CONTINUED)						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
3.4.4 Promote the Dwight Lyman Moody story (SEE ALSO 8.1.2)	Northfield Campus Moody birthplace, Homestead, and burial site Rustic Ridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write and place articles about the Dwight Lyman Moody heritage and artifacts in magazines and other tourism oriented publications Reach out to organizations with similar interests like the Moody Bible College in Chicago, Ill. 	Volunteer efforts to write and circulate promotional and informational material		LEAD: Historic Society/Museum PARTNERS: NCF Green Pastures/CS Lewis Foundation	1
3.4.5 Promote the Stearns houses story (SEE ALSO 8.1.5)	Stearns houses throughout Town Historical Society/Museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write and place articles about the influence of the Sterns family and others in the design and construction of Northfield architecture in magazines and other tourism oriented publications 	Volunteer efforts to write and circulate promotional and informational material		LEAD: Historic Society/Museum PARTNERS: Northfield Historical Commission	2
3.4.6 Develop and promote more agri-tourism (SEE ALSO 3.1.3)	Farms and farm stands CISA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct an annual agricultural fair Establish a local agricultural marketing cooperative 	Pooled funding from farm operators through a cooperative MEGA (Matching Enterprise Grants for agriculture program and the Farm Viability Enhancement Program (FVEP))	Some farmers object to having visitors on their property because of possible disturbance to livestock and crops and farm operations	LEAD: Northfield Agricultural Commission PARTNERS: Northfield Area Tourism and Business Association	2
3.4.7 Promote enhanced recreational, eating and lodging uses at the Northfield Golf Club (SEE ALSO 2.3.1)	Northfield Golf Club (recently sold)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and enable plans to include a new clubhouse, restaurant and possible lodging on the site 	New owners of the Golf Club		LEAD: New owners of the Golf Club PARTNER: The Town through its permitting process.	2

GOAL 4: TO PRESERVE AND REVITALIZE MAIN STREET

4

GOAL STATEMENT: TO PRESERVE THE HISTORIC CHARACTER AND “SENSE OF PLACE” ON MAIN STREET WHILE AT THE SAME TIME PROMOTING GREATER ECONOMIC DIVERSITY.

“When we talk about Main Street, we are talking about real people doing real work in real places to revitalize communities and preserve the character of their downtowns and neighborhoods.”

- National Main Street Center¹

A vital, healthy main street is one that provides an aesthetically pleasing, culturally rich, and economically viable place in which to live, work, and play. It is also a desirable place to visit. Highly functioning main streets are ones that have created/achieved the following:²

- **Strong Organization** – partnerships among various groups that have a stake in the main street, including business owners, civic leaders, community volunteers
- **A Positive Self-Image** –an image that conveys a sense of community pride and improves investor and consumer confidence
- **Strong Design** – a distinctive physical character, in both buildings and landscape, that provides a safe and inviting environment for residents, workers, shoppers and visitors
- **Economic Diversity** – an environment that strengthens existing businesses and encourages and supports growth of new and diverse businesses, and in particular, businesses that support the needs of the local population



Northfield’s historic Main Street features several houses built by master craftsman Calvin Stearns.

¹ www.preservationnation.org/main-street. The National Main Street Center, Inc. (NMSC) is a non-profit subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The NMSC’s efforts over the past 30 years to revitalize main streets throughout the country have resulted in billions of investment dollars in job creation and historic building preservation.

² Adapted from the National Main Street Center’s “Main Street Four Point Approach,” www.preservationnation.org/main-street.

GOAL 4: TO PRESERVE AND REVITALIZE MAIN STREET

NORTHFIELD’S MAIN STREET TODAY: OVERVIEW OF KEY POINTS

With its collection of well-preserved early 19th century buildings and linear common, Northfield’s two-mile stretch from the Route 10/63 intersection northward to the former Northfield School campus has the makings of visually appealing, economically successful main street. Consensus exists, on the part of Northfield residents, that revitalization of Main Street is central to the long term health of the entire Town. However, the following conditions in Northfield pose **CHALLENGES** to Main Street revitalization:

- While Main Street incorporates a “linear common,” it does not contain a “space,” such as a Town park, to be used for community gathering
- Main Street is currently a State-owned and maintained highway, and traffic-calming measures and improved parking are needed to help preserve buildings and provide a safe pedestrian environment. The Town must take over jurisdiction of Main Street from MassDOT if it wishes to significantly redesign the roadway
- The Town Hall and Elementary School – both major Main Street hubs – are in need of repairs and upgrades
- Historically-sensitive approaches to infill development along Main Street are needed to help insure protection of character and sense of place
- The existing development process, limited to the issuing of special permit, may hinder creative and historically-sensitive approaches to commercial development along Main Street
- The limited infrastructure serving Main Street, especially sewer, places some restrictions on future development/redevelopment
- Sidewalks are currently plowed (inconsistently) by residents



Parents pick up children from the Northfield Elementary School on a foggy March afternoon.

- The existing residential character of Main Street must be retained in efforts to improve Northfield’s economic health.

The following **OPPORTUNITIES** exist for revitalizing Main Street:

- The older homes in Northfield, particularly the Stearns houses, provide primary source material for the study of early American architecture and therefore have the potential to attract a national academic audience
- The legacy of D. L. Moody, rooted in the former Northfield School campus and on Main Street (e.g. Moody’s church), holds potential for expanding tourism
- Northfield has adequate infrastructure to support commercial and/residential development along Main Street

GOAL 4: TO PRESERVE AND REVITALIZE MAIN STREET

- By amending the current zoning bylaw to incorporate a specifically designed commercial district (such as a “Village Center” zoning district)
- Northfield may proscribe the location, layout, look and nature of future Main Street businesses
- Re-use of the Northfield School campus with an adult population has potential to provide for the Town’s aging demographic, as well as bolster economic activity
- The library has potential to provide greater opportunities for community gathering
- The existing “Senior Pavilion,” located behind Town Hall, has potential for greater use
- Existing commercial establishments, including Mim’s, Rooster’s Bistro, and Northfield Coffee and Books, provide places for community gathering
- The existing network of sidewalks provides pedestrian connections to portions of Main Street
- Develop economic opportunities and cluster commercial activity in designated areas
- Develop performance standards and design guidelines for commercial and residential properties

IMPROVING LIVABILITY

- Increase safety by calming traffic and providing more pedestrian amenities
- Increase connectivity through construction of more sidewalks, bike lanes, and links to adjacent trails
- Beautify the Main Street corridor by introducing more street trees, period lighting, seating, and improved signage
- Increase community gathering spaces by improving access to existing spaces, and developing new spaces

PROTECTING THE CAMPUS

- Collaborate in redevelopment efforts as a means of supporting Town goals
- Preserve the campus buildings and landscape to the extent possible
- Develop a marketing plan to promote Northfield and the campus

SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS: STRATEGIES FOR REVITALIZING MAIN STREET

PRESERVING CHARACTER WHILE ENHANCING ECONOMIC DIVERSITY

- Develop a plan to define the historic character of Main Street
- Recognize the village center district that defines boundaries, building setbacks and dimensions, and uses


GOAL 4: TO PRESERVE AND REVITALIZE MAIN STREET

BUSINESSES ON MAIN STREET IN NORTHFIELD

Businesses on Main Street Source: Registered Business Listing of the Northfield Town Clerk and Infogroup Data Base

Business Name	Business Address
LaSall's - N - Things	Main St
Rock Ridge Farm	2 Main St
Fairview Gardens	8 Main St
Jacque's Cleaning	17 Main St, #5
Joshua B Poole Plumbing & Heating	20 Main St
Northfield Antiques	37 Main St
MIM'S Market	60 Main St
Northfield Creamie	62 Main St
J C Woodworking & Artist	66 Main St
Massage for Health, Sports & Neuromuscular Therapy	70 Main St
Northfield Food Mart	74 A Main St
Northfield Barber Shop	74 C Main St
Pamela Veith Real Estate	75 Main St, # 105
Pro/Casual Too	75 Main St
Bobbies Hair & Nail Salon	75 Main St
Lauries Hair	75 Main St
KLMNC D/B/A The Notch	77 Main St
Centennial House	94 Main St
Starlight Creations	105 Main St
Garden Bee Design and Landscape	105 Main St
Northfield Coffee & Books	105 Main St
Greenfield Co-Operative Bank	144 Main St
Matilda & Nunzi's Emporium	180 Main St
Dr Mikes Auto Care	190 Main St
Wave Lengths	194 Main St
Hair by Irene	194 Main St
Institutional Offices	
Northfield EMS	41 Main St
Northfield Town Hall	69 Main St
Northfield Police Department	69 Main St
Northfield Fire Department	91 Main St
Northfield Elementary School	104 Main St
Dickinson Memorial Library	115 Main St
U. S. Post Office	136 Main St
Mass. Rural Water	168 Main St #2

GOAL 4: TO PRESERVE AND REVITALIZE MAIN STREET

OBJECTIVE 4.1 PRESERVE HISTORIC CHARACTER WHILE ENHANCING ECONOMIC DIVERSITY						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
4.1.1 Develop a plan to define the historic character of Main Street	Historic structures on Main Street Historic Resource Inventory Active Historical Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update existing inventory of properties Explore the possibility of creating a Local Historic District Develop a preservation plan 	CPA ¹	 <p>Main Street should be considered as one large resource, including buildings and landscape</p>	<p>LEAD: Historical Commission/LHD Study Committee</p> <p>PARTNERS: Owner of historic structures Massachusetts Historical Commission</p>	3
4.1.2 Establish a village center district	Planning Board Property owners Zoning Bylaws for Northfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define village center district (including boundaries and dimensions) Develop a participatory education process for informing property owners about the district, prior to taking any votes Work with landlords and business-owners to create a shared vision/set of values Decide how residents/business owners/property owners want the village center to look Maintain the residential character in some locations Designate areas for infill development Enact zoning changes 		<p>District should be deeper than 300 feet in some places, where appropriate, to accommodate building clustering, outdoor pedestrian places and parking in the rear and to the side of buildings.</p> <p>The size of the village center district can increase incrementally, i.e. its initial size can be small, and it can grow over time, as interest and demand increases.</p>	<p>LEAD: Planning Board</p> <p>PARTNERS: ZBA Residents Business-owners FRCOG</p>	2







GOAL 4: TO PRESERVE AND REVITALIZE MAIN STREET

OBJECTIVE 4.1 PRESERVE HISTORIC CHARACTER WHILE ENHANCING ECONOMIC DIVERSITY (CONTINUED)						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
4.1.3 Develop economic opportunities and cluster commercial activity in designated areas	Northfield Area Tourism and Business Association Planning Board Northfield Campus Property owners Commercial cluster and planner unit development bylaws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more incentives to attract services and amenities • Align infrastructure capacity with future demand • Provide more parking as a way of attracting businesses • Revise zoning so that desired businesses cluster in pockets • Revise zoning to allow certain (desired) businesses by right 		Cluster developments should be organized so that residents can walk to stores.	LEAD: Planning Board PARTNERS: Northfield Area Tourism and Business Association Business-owners ZBA FRCOG	2




GOAL 4: TO PRESERVE AND REVITALIZE MAIN STREET

OBJECTIVE 4.1 PRESERVE HISTORIC CHARACTER WHILE ENHANCING ECONOMIC DIVERSITY (CONTINUED)						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
4.1.4 Develop design guidelines for commercial and residential properties (SEE ALSO 3.3.4)	Planning Board Property owners Public buildings Northfield Area Tourism and Business Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and carry out a public education process for informing property owners about the guidelines, and for engaging owners in the design of the guidelines Look to other towns of similar size and character for successful models Invite other towns to speak in Northfield about their experience in developing guidelines Create incentives for owners to occupy historic buildings Provide guidance about the size and scale of ancillary structures visible from the public right-of-way, such as garages and sheds Work with landlords, business-owners, and residents to create a shared vision for Main Street 	Orton Family Foundation/NEA Citizens' Institute on Rural Design ⁱⁱ	   Design guidelines should Include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> redesign of existing buildings Roadways and Streetscape On-street parking and in rear of buildings Open spaces Public areas Signage Include spaces behind Main Street's east side, to provide commercial expansion between Main and East Streets 	LEAD: Planning Board PARTNERS: Property-owners Business-owners Northfield Area Tourism and Business Association FRCOG	1



GOAL 4: TO PRESERVE AND REVITALIZE MAIN STREET

OBJECTIVE 4.2 IMPROVING LIVABILITY ON MAIN STREET

Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
4.2.1 Increase safety (SEE ALSO 7.2.1, 7.2.3,7.2.4)	Main Street Revitalization Project Connecticut River Scenic Farm Byway Project MassDOT Discontinuance Process Other towns that have gone through the Discontinuance process, including South Hadley, Amherst, and Acton DARE Program	Short-Term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve safety at critical crosswalks by installing flags Enforce drug laws Mid-term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce vehicle speed by restriping narrower lane lines and providing bicycle accommodation Install speed feedback signs Improve drop-off/pick-up at school Limit truck traffic/control braking of trucks Long-term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement phase two of the Main Street Revitalization Project Implement streetscape improvements through the Connecticut River Scenic Farm Byway project Negotiate with MassDOT to take local control of Main Street 	Chapter 90 ⁱⁱⁱ Transportation Enhancements Program (TE) ^{iv} Town Capital Budget	 TIP funding is very competitive See Goal #7	LEAD: Board of Selectmen PARTNERS: MassDOT Police Department Town Highway Department Northfield Elementary School FRCOG	1




GOAL 4: TO PRESERVE AND REVITALIZE MAIN STREET

OBJECTIVE 4.2 IMPROVING LIVABILITY ON MAIN STREET (CONTINUED)						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
4.2.2 Increase connectivity (SEE ALSO 7.1.6)	Existing sidewalks Existing activity centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend sidewalks north to the campus Provide bike lanes/racks Provide/improve connections selectively to other destinations (existing centers of activity such as library, post office, Town hall, and trails, recreational areas, campus, etc.) 	New campus owner/occupant MassDOT Town Capital Budget		LEAD: Board of Selectmen PARTNERS: New campus owner/occupant MassDOT FRCOG	2
4.2.3 Beautify the Main Street corridor (SEE ALSO 3.3.2, 7.1.6)	An intact historic streetscape with many early 19 th century homes, a linear common, and street trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bury overhead utility lines Re-plant double rows of shade trees Selectively improve the sidewalk system Install lighting as needed Add site amenities, such as benches Upgrade signs on commercial property and enforce sign by-law Develop a regulation that allows for visually condemning decrepit buildings, including temporary structures (e.g. sheds) Acquire and/or redevelop Mobil station 	Utility companies Town New campus owner/occupant Private owners MassDOT		LEAD: Board of Selectmen PARTNERS: ZBA Town Building Inspector Utility companies Private property owners New campus owner/occupant	2




GOAL 4: TO PRESERVE AND REVITALIZE MAIN STREET

OBJECTIVE 4.2 IMPROVING LIVABILITY ON MAIN STREET (CONTINUED)						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
4.2.4 Increase community gathering places <i>(SEE ALSO 2.2.4)</i>	Existing gathering spaces Available open space(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify public and privately owned spaces used for gathering (e.g. library, Mim’s, Rooster Bistro, Northfield Coffee, etc.), capitalizing on the spaces that already exist Improve access to senior center pavilion Develop pocket parks Obtain additional space for gathering such as a public park Support and promote creation of “third places” in commercial establishments Establish a battlefield park Create a community parking lot that can double as a venue for large events Consider acquiring property adjacent to the Creamie for small (20 people or less) gatherings Discuss acquisition of the former Mobil station property from current owner (church) 	CPA American Battlefield Protection Program/NPS ^v	 “Third Places” are locales for community gathering that differ from the usual sites of home and workplace The wetland area behind the library and adjacent to the golf course (owned by NMH) is one site for such a gathering space	LEAD: Board of Selectmen PARTNERS: Open Space Committee Dickinson Memorial Library NHM Council on Aging Kiwanis	2







GOAL 4: TO PRESERVE AND REVITALIZE MAIN STREET

OBJECTIVE 4.3 PROTECT THE CAMPUS BUILDINGS AND LANDSCAPE						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
4.3.1 Collaborate in redevelopment efforts to support Town goals	Existing zoning bylaw Former Northfield Campus Campus Collaborative Committee National Christian Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend current zoning bylaw to promote desired goals/uses Actively promote Town goals to future owner/occupant Re-establish the campus collaborative committee Designate a Town representative to participate in the negotiation process for campus re-use Develop a pro-active relationship with the new owner/occupant 			LEAD: Planning Board PARTNERS: Board of Selectmen/Appointed Town Representative Campus Collaborative Committee Adjacent property owners	2



GOAL 4: TO PRESERVE AND REVITALIZE MAIN STREET

OBJECTIVE 4.3 PROTECT THE CAMPUS BUILDINGS AND LANDSCAPE (CONTINUED)

Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
4.3.2 Preserve campus buildings and landscape to extent possible	Campus landscape and buildings Historical Commission Massachusetts Historical Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a local historic district for the campus and adjacent related historic properties Place preservation restrictions on campus buildings with the greatest historic significance (restrictions to be held by the Town of Northfield) Nominate the campus to the National Register of Historic Places Seek designation for the campus as a National Historic Landmark 		 (Begin process)	LEAD: Northfield Historical Commission PARTNERS: Massachusetts Historical Commission National Christian Foundation/new occupant/new owner	1
4.3.3 Develop a marketing plan to promote Northfield and the Campus (SEE ALSO 8.3.1)	Campus landscape and buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe and promote historic aspects of the campus through brochures and informational materials Encourage redevelopment Promote Northfield to prospective occupant(s)/owner(s), including education, recreation, history, and other positive features of the Town 		  	LEAD: Northfield Area Tourism and Business Association PARTNERS: NCF/New Owner/New Occupant(s) Green Pastures/CS Lewis Foundation	1



= RIPE APPLE (no- or low-cost, easy-to-implement measure)

GRAY SHADING indicates #1 priority strategy

GOAL 4: TO PRESERVE AND REVITALIZE MAIN STREET

ENDNOTES

ⁱ Established in 2000, the **Community Preservation Act (CPA)** is a smart growth tool that helps communities preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities. When enacted, it allows a community to create a local Community Preservation Fund, raised through the imposition of a surcharge of not more than 3% of the tax levy against real property, and municipalities must adopt CPA by ballot referendum. Northfield successfully passed the CPA in 2008 at a surcharge rate of 3%, but voters reduced this amount to 0.5% through a Town Meeting vote in 2009. The rate remains 0.5%.

ⁱⁱ **The Orton Family Foundation/NEA Citizens' Institute on Rural Design.** Established in 1995, the Orton Family Foundation provides resources and technical assistance to small cities and towns grappling with change and searching for solutions. The Citizens' Institute on Rural Design (CIRD) was created by the National Endowment for the Arts in 1991 in conjunction with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and since its inception, has sponsored 60 workshops aimed at enhancing the quality of life and economic viability of rural areas through planning, design, and creative placemaking. CIRD brings together rural community leaders in two-and-a-half-day workshops to address design issues ranging from downtown revitalization, arts-based development strategies, heritage preservation, and land and agricultural conservation to growth management, transportation, and subdivision design. Experts in planning, architecture, landscape architecture, historic preservation, transportation, economic development, creative placemaking, and related fields are invited to participate as appropriate. These experts are engaged to work specifically on the issues identified by a community through the problem-solving lens of design. CIRD works with communities with populations of less than 50,000. This includes towns in a non-metropolitan county or in a metropolitan county on the urban fringe. Past organizations that have hosted a workshop include university community design centers, chambers of commerce, county governments, main street organizations, local preservation organizations, historical societies, and other 501(c)(3) groups. (<http://arts.gov/partnership/citizens-institute-rural-design#sthash.uwaCoCV5.dpuf>)

ⁱⁱⁱ **Chapter 90 Program.** The Chapter 90 Program was enacted in 1973 to entitle municipalities to reimbursement of documented expenditures under the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws (MGL), Chapter 90, Section 34, Clause 2(a) on approved projects. The funding supports capital improvement projects for highway construction, preservation and improvement projects that create or extend the life of capital facilities. (<http://www.mhd.state.ma.us/default.asp?pgid=content/stateaid01a&sid=about>)

^{iv} **Transportation Enhancements Program.** A program of the Federal Highway Administration, Transportation Enhancement (TE) (soon to be replaced by the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)) offers funding opportunities to help expand transportation choices and enhance the transportation experience through activities related to surface transportation, including pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and safety programs, scenic and historic highway programs, landscaping and scenic beautification, historic preservation, and environmental mitigation. (http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_enhancements/)

^v **The American Battlefield Protection Program.** The American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) promotes the preservation of significant historic battlefields associated with wars on American soil. The goals of the program are 1) to protect battlefields and sites associated with armed conflicts that influenced the course of our history, 2) to encourage and assist all Americans in planning for the preservation, management, and interpretation of these sites, and 3) to raise awareness of the importance of preserving battlefields and related sites for future generations. The ABPP focuses primarily on land use, cultural resource and site management planning, and public education. It is administered by the National Park Service. (<http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/abpp/>)

GOAL 4: TO PRESERVE AND REVITALIZE MAIN STREET

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GOAL 5: TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC FACILITIES, IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES, AND ENHANCE COMMUNICATION

5

GOAL STATEMENT: TO MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE TOWN-OWNED FACILITIES, AS WELL AS THE SERVICES THE TOWN PROVIDES, AND TO MEET CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS, INCLUDING THAT OF ENHANCED COMMUNICATION WITH NORTHFIELD RESIDENTS.

“Communities that actively seek to become more sustainable need leadership and specific tools to address the long-term needs of their citizenry. Communities, like businesses, must plan to age well over time. [For example,] water quality and quantity questions are complex. Each community with water, wastewater and solid waste issues must have the financial stability, managerial competence and technical oversight to match their immediate and projected needs, decrease pollution, and protect community health and well-being in a sustainable manner.”¹

This goal is about maintaining and improving the public facilities and services that the Town of Northfield provides to its residents and business owners. As the Town undergoes demographic changes as well as potential growth due to the reuse of the campus, municipal services may need to change to reflect these *changing community needs*. *Aging facilities will need to be replaced and/or upgraded. Town services will need to be adjusted and adapted to meet codes, and to take advantage of advances in technology and new methods for increasing efficiency. New services and facilities may be needed to accommodate a growing elderly population. These changes will impact the way in which services are provided, the buildings which house them, as well as their capital needs, and therefore, the Town budget. As a small town with finite resources, Northfield must continually face the challenge of funding municipal and school services.*

¹ From: Sustainable Infrastructure for Small System Public Services, RCAC http://www.rcac.org/assets/green_infra/gig.pdf



The Town Hall building is in need of repair and renovation.

OVERVIEW OF KEY POINTS

Northfield is a very small town (the 80th smallest of the 351 towns in the Commonwealth); nevertheless its residents have access to a full set of basic services (fire, police, EMS, buildings, cemeteries and road maintenance, public library, public schools, water and sewer), some of which are private or quasi-public. There are a number of people in Town volunteering in a variety of roles. Some functions are not entirely formalized. More recently, there is a reported difficulty in recruiting volunteers for services that have traditionally been provided by volunteers (e.g. fire, EMS). As the Town grows -- especially with the potential for growth inherent in the reuse of the campus -- some of these functions may need to become less casual and larger scale. For example, some of the services that currently rely on

GOAL 5: TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC FACILITIES, IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES, AND ENHANCE COMMUNICATION

volunteers may need to be provided by a professional staff in the future. Additionally, regionalizing services may help to make them more cost effective.

Some of the Town’s facility needs (both in terms of maintenance and space) have been deferred and will therefore have to be addressed in the near future, especially if they are to serve an increased population (in the event of a major reuse of the campus). The re-instated Building Maintenance position at the Highway Department has reportedly begun to make a difference in cost effective repairs and preventive maintenance.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Northfield’s public facilities are in fair to good condition with varying degrees of maintenance. Future facility and service needs include:

- There is a need to upgrade police, fire and EMS facilities, either together in a Public Safety Complex or in separate facilities.
 - The **Police Department** operates out of inadequate facilities in the basement of the Town Hall building.
 - The **Fire Department** needs additional space for its equipment.
 - **EMS** has found a temporary solution to its facility needs, but will need an upgraded facility sometime in the future.
- The **Regional High School building** is in good condition and planned improvements including the Land Management Plan at the high school will result in opportunities for students and the community at large. The regional high school accommodates a significant number of choice and tuition students from outside the District. Potential additional growth in enrollments could be accommodated at the H.S by reducing the number of choice and tuition students.
- The **Elementary School building** is in need of renovation and updating.

The **Town Hall building** is in relatively good condition, but in the near future there will be a need for a space plan for efficient and effective allocation of space, technology and storage. Additionally, funds will be necessary for renovations, upgrades, and historical restoration of the building.

- The **library** is in fairly good condition and has the potential to play a broader role in the community by providing more and varied opportunities for life long learning and community gathering.
- The **senior population** of Northfield is increasing and will need additional services. There will be a need for services that help seniors to age in place by providing a wide range of supports including those related to health, wellness and opportunities for socializing. These may include an expanded senior center, a Town Nurse, and an expanded senior van service.
- Work continues to bring **broadband access** to all neighborhoods in Town. Some areas lack access to any high-speed connection, leaving them at a distinct educational and commercial disadvantage.
- The Town’s **water** supply exceeds current demand and most likely has the capacity to accommodate future growth. Northfield Water District Commissioners are currently developing a plan for improving the system.
- More than half of the **wastewater treatment** system’s capacity goes unused therefore, it is likely that the current plant will suffice even with significant growth and expansion, however, there are certain large scale uses that are required to hook up to a wastewater treatment facility. This is only available in a limited geographic area. Lack of sewer capacity may constrain development of some uses, in some locations.
- Northfield has begun taking measures to ensure the future **sustainability** of its natural resources; these include obtaining a Green Communities designation from the state and creating an Energy Committee; and the Transition Northfield tool library.

GOAL 5: TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC FACILITIES, IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES, AND ENHANCE COMMUNICATION

RELEVANT DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The following demographic trends are important to consider when projecting the future need for public services and facilities:

- Northfield's population is expected to grow very slowly over the next 20 years.
- The **senior population** of Northfield is increasing (by 2030, 21% of the total population is projected to be 65 years of age or older) and will need additional services. There are two trends: those requiring more health-oriented services and supports and those more interested in wellness and socializing.

SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS: STRATEGIES FOR PLANNING FOR FUTURE NEEDS FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND RESIDENTS

- Review the structure of Town government
- Broaden volunteer participation on municipal boards and committees
- Establish a clear channel of communication between government and residents
- Improve enforcement of land use regulations
- Continue to work to bring broadband access to the entire community
- Promote opportunities for community gathering



The Senior Pavilion is available for community use.

MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE TOWN FACILITIES

- Plan/Phase improvements to public properties
- Provide adequate facilities for municipal offices
- Provide adequate facilities to accommodate the needs of Public Safety functions
- Ensure that municipal equipment storage needs are adequately accommodated & that communication systems are better coordinated
- Provide adequate indoor & outdoor educational facilities in order to continue to support excellence in education
- Provide adequate facilities for a growing senior population
- Continue to provide library services, adapting to new technologies & providing varied programming to meet community needs & desires

GOAL 5: TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC FACILITIES, IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES, AND ENHANCE COMMUNICATION

- Improve infrastructure to support alternative modes of transportation
- Control the quality & quantity of Stormwater runoff

IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES

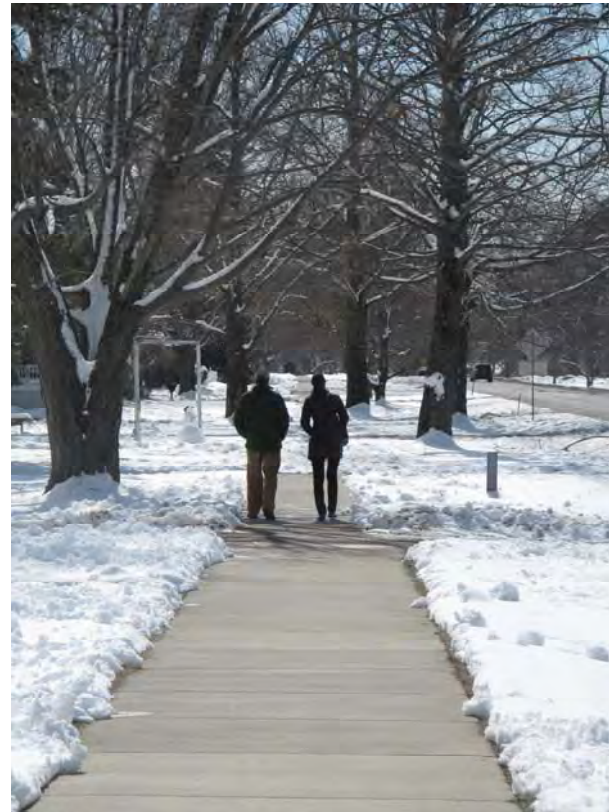
- Improve the ability of residents to travel without needing an automobile
- Explore need for additional services for an increasing elderly population
- Plan for the possibility of potential growth & consider alternative ways of extending sewer service
- Plan for possibility of potential growth & ensure the future availability of water
- Expand availability/access of public meeting space

“A lot of people in Northfield are very proud of the Town’s ability to be self sufficient and provide services in a very cost effective way by relying on volunteers for much of these.”

- *Northfield Resident at Public Forum*


“It’s getting harder and harder to recruit volunteers... what will happen if the campus is redeveloped – we won’t be able to provide services only with volunteers.”

- *Northfield Town Department Head*



The sidewalks are currently the responsibility of residents and are not always shoveled.

GOAL 5: TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC FACILITIES, IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES, AND ENHANCE COMMUNICATION


OBJECTIVE 5.1 IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND RESIDENTS						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
5.1.1 Review the structure of Town government		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the findings of the Town Governance Committee (SEE ENDNOTES) Compare to other small towns in the region and consider advantages & disadvantages of alternative structures 			<p>LEAD: Town Governance Committee</p> <p>PARTNERS: BOS Town Administrator</p>	On Going
5.1.2 Broaden volunteer participation on municipal boards and committees		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send out volunteer recruitment forms with Town mailings Recognize volunteer contributions Recruit volunteers from all parts of Town Review board/committee structure in the interest of efficiency and eliminating any duplication of effort 			<p>LEAD: BOS</p> <p>PARTNERS: Town Committees</p>	1



= RIPE APPLE (no- or low-cost, easy-to-implement measure)

GRAY SHADING indicates #1 priority strategy

GOAL 5: TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC FACILITIES, IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES, AND ENHANCE COMMUNICATION

OBJECTIVE 5.1 IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND RESIDENTS (CONTINUED)						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
5.1.3 Establish a clear channel of communication between government and residents	Town website Community Newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand information sharing on Town website Consider designating a column in the community newsletter Information posted in front of Town Hall should be duplicated and posted in West Northfield Increase interaction between BOS and other Committees Expand use of local cable TV for dissemination of information (SEE ENDNOTES) 			<p>LEAD: Town Administrator</p> <p>PARTNERS: BOS Town Departments Local cable TV Community Newsletter</p>	1
5.1.4 Improve enforcement of land use regulations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene the By-law Committee and review enforcement protocols Support Building Inspector's charge to enforce upkeep of properties 			<p>LEAD: By-law Committee</p> <p>PARTNERS: Building Inspector</p>	On Going



= RIPE APPLE (no- or low-cost, easy-to-implement measure)

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GOAL 5: TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC FACILITIES, IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES, AND ENHANCE COMMUNICATION

OBJECTIVE 5.1 IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND RESIDENTS (CONTINUED)						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
5.1.5. Continue discussions to bring broadband access to Town		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with the state and regional entities including the Wired West cooperative in order to expand access to Broadband for the entire community 			<p>LEAD: BOS</p> <p>PARTNERS: Wired West</p> <p>Massachusetts Broadband Initiative</p>	On Going
5.1.6. Promote opportunities for community gathering (SEE ALSO Goal 2)	Senior Pavilion Day of History Arts Celebration Celebrate Northfield Winter Day Halloween Rag Shag Parade Memorial Day Parade Farmer’s Market at Trinitarian Church iNeighbors social media site (currently has approximately 220 members)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider using Town-wide internet virtual gathering space Increase Town-wide events Consider developing a Town Common/Park Promote development of Community gardens Encourage placement of benches along Main Street (e.g. “adopt-a-bench” program, etc.) 			<p>LEAD: BOS Town Administrator</p> <p>PARTNERS: Open Space Committee</p> <p>Recreation Commission</p> <p>Transition Northfield P rivate commercial establishments (e.g. Drive-in movie theater, Mim’s, Northfield Coffee and Books, Creamie, etc.) churches</p>	1
5.1.7. Increase awareness regarding need to be sustainable	Transition Northfield FRCOG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote FRCOG’s Sustainable Franklin County vision and goals Explore regional solutions Work with youth to develop materials & events geared at increasing community awareness 	Green Communities designation will make Town eligible for grant funding		<p>LEAD: BOS</p> <p>Town Administrator</p> <p>PARTNERS: FRCOG</p> <p>Transition Northfield</p> <p>Schools</p>	On Going



= RIPE APPLE (no- or low-cost, easy-to-implement measure)

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GOAL 5: TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC FACILITIES, IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES, AND ENHANCE COMMUNICATION

OBJECTIVE 5.2 MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE TOWN FACILITIES						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
5.2.1. Plan/Phase improvements to public properties (SEE ALSO 8.2.2.)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Capital 5-year Plan for Municipal Facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Deferred Maintenance Plan (& relate to a Capital Plan) Review Town facilities for ADA compliance Promote Sustainability Measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue Green Communities designation Retrofit Town buildings for energy efficiency Promote Solar Overlay District Improve efficiency of Transfer Station (SEE ENDNOTES) 	Green Communities designation will make Town eligible for grant funding		<p>LEAD: Highway Department</p> <p>Energy Committee</p> <p>Town Administrator</p> <p>PARTNERS: Town Departments</p> <p>Finance Committee</p> <p>Transition Northfield</p>	1
5.2.2. Provide adequate facilities for municipal offices		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renovate Town Hall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop space plan to increase efficiency of space utilization. 	<p>Town Meeting appropriation</p> <p>CPA funds</p> <p>Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MHC)</p>		<p>LEAD: Highway Department</p> <p>PARTNERS: Town Hall Master Plan Committee</p>	2
5.2.3. Provide adequate facilities to accommodate Public Safety functions (specifically the needs of Fire, Police and EMS)	<p>Police Department in basement of Town Hall</p> <p>Fire Department in outdated facility</p> <p>EMS in temporary facility</p> <p>Public Safety Complex Study (2002)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore possibilities of accommodating public safety space and equipment needs in one facility or in separate. Consider augmenting the Police Department with volunteers Explore option of regionalizing Police services 	Town Meeting appropriation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider expanding & renovating existing Fire Department building to accommodate Fire Dept. needs Explore option of purchasing property adjacent to current EMS facility to house combined Police/EMS facility 	<p>LEAD: Public Safety Facilities Committee</p> <p>PARTNERS: Police Department</p> <p>Fire Department</p> <p>EMS</p>	1



= RIPE APPLE (no- or low-cost, easy-to-implement measure)

GRAY SHADING indicates #1 priority strategy

GOAL 5: TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC FACILITIES, IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES, AND ENHANCE COMMUNICATION

OBJECTIVE 5.2 MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE TOWN FACILITIES (CONTINUED)						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
5.2.4. Ensure that municipal equipment storage needs are adequately accommodated and that communication systems are better		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide adequate facilities for Highway Department <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore ways of increasing Storage for Highway Department vehicles & equipment (SEE ENDNOTES) Update communication system to coordinate with Public Safety 	Town Meeting appropriation	Currently some equipment remains outdoors which causes premature wear and tear	LEAD: Highway Department PARTNERS: Public Safety	2
5.2.5. Provide adequate indoor & outdoor educational facilities in order to continue to support excellence in education	Land Management Plan underway with volunteer leadership Elementary School is in need of repairs, updating and some renovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support implementation of Land Management Plan at the high school Undertake renovations to the Northfield Elementary School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support School Utilization Committee's efforts to complete 5 year plan Develop a renovation plan phasing improvements and expenditures 	Town Meeting appropriation Some state funding available (MSBA)		LEAD: Regional School District Northfield Elementary School Elementary School Committee PARTNERS: Transition Northfield Agricultural Commission School Utilization Committee	On Going



= RIPE APPLE (no- or low-cost, easy-to-implement measure)

GRAY SHADING indicates #1 priority strategy

GOAL 5: TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC FACILITIES, IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES, AND ENHANCE COMMUNICATION

OBJECTIVE 5.2 MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE TOWN FACILITIES (CONTINUED)


Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
5.2.6. Provide adequate facilities for growing senior population (SEE ALSO 7.1.4.)	Existing Senior Center in basement of Town Hall Senior Pavilion Senior van shared with Town of Bernardston	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore need for expanded Senior Center <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review and update 2002 Feasibility Study for a new Senior Center - Consider alternative sites Continue to expand amenities (including community garden) and programming at Senior Pavilion Consider acquiring and running a demand/response senior van 	Town Meeting appropriation	.	LEAD: Council on Aging PARTNERS: BOS	2
5.2.7. Continue to provide library services, adapting to new technologies and providing varied programming to meet community needs and desires	Main library located on Main Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Dickinson Memorial Library's efforts at improving the facility and expanding services. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support Library's efforts at planning events - Consider Sunday hours - Explore ways of better serving more remote areas of Town (e.g. on-lone, bookmobile, etc.) - Reach out to non-users (especially in W. Northfield & Farms area) 	CPA funds Mass. Historical Commission (Mass. Preservation Projects funds) Some state funds available Town appropriation		LEAD: Library PARTNERS: Town Departments	1



= RIPE APPLE (no- or low-cost, easy-to-implement measure)

GRAY SHADING indicates #1 priority strategy

GOAL 5: TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC FACILITIES, IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES, AND ENHANCE COMMUNICATION

OBJECTIVE 5.2 MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE TOWN FACILITIES (CONTINUED)						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
5.2.8. Improve infrastructure to support alternative modes of transportation (SEE ALSO 7.1.3, 7.2.1, 3.4.2)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand sidewalks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a sidewalk improvement plan - Consider having Highway Department plow sidewalks in winter. Maintain/expand trails <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider having Highway Dept. plow trail parking lots - Provide adequate signage, maps, information Publicize trails and maps on internet Promote biking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide bike lanes where safe and possible - Provide bike racks outside public buildings - Encourage private establishments to provide bike racks 	Town Meeting appropriation		LEAD: DPW PARTNERS: Open Space Committee Recreation Commission Tourism Committee	1
5.2.9. Control the quality & quantity of Stormwater runoff, essential to the overall health of the Town's residents & natural resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Stormwater Management Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assess Four Mile Brook Watershed - Develop Comprehensive Plan (estimated 600 catch basins) - Explore use of sustainable Stormwater management practices 	EOEA/DEP Grant (possibly)		LEAD: Highway Department PARTNERS: Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs Massachusetts Dept. of Environmental Protection	2



= RIPE APPLE (no- or low-cost, easy-to-implement measure)

GRAY SHADING indicates #1 priority strategy

GOAL 5: TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC FACILITIES, IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES, AND ENHANCE COMMUNICATION

OBJECTIVE 5.3 IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
5.3.1 Improve the ability of residents to travel without needing an automobile (including seniors, youth and those wishing to avoid car travel) <i>(SEE ALSO 7.1.4.)</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support current efforts to expand senior van service and consider expanding further to serve Northfield youth 	Could consider regional option		<p>LEAD: FRTA</p> <p>PARTNERS: Council on Aging</p>	1
5.3.2. Explore need for additional services for increasing elderly population <i>(SEE ALSO 7.1.4. 6....?)</i>	<p>Council on Aging</p> <p>Senior Center</p> <p>Senior Housing</p> <p>Senior Pavilion</p> <p>Regional Housing Authority</p> <p>Non-profit housing organizations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore need for additional senior services including Town Nurse and an expanded senior van service Increase outreach services/home visits to isolated seniors Expand subsidized housing options for over 55 and seniors 	Would require Town Meeting appropriation	<p>Two trends identified: need for more health-oriented services and an interest in wellness and socializing</p> <p>(Explore the possibility of reusing campus building(s))</p>	<p>LEAD: Council on Aging</p> <p>PARTNERS: Library</p> <p>Regional Housing Authority</p>	1



= RIPE APPLE (no- or low-cost, easy-to-implement measure)

GRAY SHADING indicates #1 priority strategy

GOAL 5: TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC FACILITIES, IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES, AND ENHANCE COMMUNICATION

OBJECTIVE 5.3 IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES (CONTINUED)						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
5.3.3. Plan for the possibility of potential growth and consider alternative ways of extending sewer service		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore ways of increasing sewage capacity Consider establishing a Sewer Enterprise Fund (SEE ENDNOTES) Consider use of on-site sewage treatment plants for large-scale commercial and/or light manufacturing or industrial uses 	On-site sewage treatment plant funds itself	Service is currently available in a limited geographic area that may inhibit certain kinds of development in specific areas in Town.	LEAD: Sewer Department PARTNERS: Private developers	2
5.3.4. Plan for the possibility of potential growth & ensure the future availability of water		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Plan for Future Water Improvements - Support Northfield Water District's efforts to develop a plan for upgrading the system (SEE ENDNOTES) 	Town currently pays user fees		LEAD: Northfield Water District PARTNERS: East Northfield Water Company	2



= RIPE APPLE (no- or low-cost, easy-to-implement measure)

GRAY SHADING indicates #1 priority strategy

GOAL 5: TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC FACILITIES, IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES, AND ENHANCE COMMUNICATION

ENDNOTES

5.1.1. Town Governance Committee

A committee has recently been formed to review the effectiveness of the existing governing structure. These issues are not at the core of the master plan's scope. They are however, related to the extent to which implementation of the recommendations depend on the Town's governing bodies. Therefore, it will be important to review the findings of this committee.

5.1.3. Some Ideas collected from public (at forums) regarding improving communication

- Create more awareness regarding Town website
- Consider an on-line interactive bulletin board
- More and regular mailings about key issues, especially Town Meeting warrants, to all households
- Blast emails from government, chat once a week with different representatives
- Provide some sort of incentive to participate in Town meetings
- Make budget easier to understand with more in-depth explanations provided for large sum items
- Move Board of Selectmen around to different locations in East and West Northfield
- Have BOS publish entries in a community newsletter
- Encourage use of respectful tone in discussions between Town officials and residents
- Develop "Living in Northfield" packet for residents (including a focus on newcomers) and include invitation to Town Meeting (with explanation of participation, easy to understand budget explanation, etc.)
- Use social media (i.e. iNeighbors) to disseminate information

5.2.1. Improve efficiency of Transfer Station

- Explore ways of working with the surrounding towns and Franklin Solid Waste District to make recycling process self sufficient (pay for itself)
- Consider increasing composting activity and consider bailing in order to generate income
- Regionalizing may help funding
- Generating income from composting activity and/or bailing could help carry costs

5.2.4. Highway Department Storage needs

Consider using the "red building" located behind the Fire Station for equipment storage (good location because it is on the side of the River where most of the equipment is needed). This would be able to happen only when the Fire Department obtains a facility that meets their equipment storage needs (the red building currently stores the ladder truck).



= RIPE APPLE (no- or low-cost, easy-to-implement measure)

GOAL 5: TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC FACILITIES, IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES, AND ENHANCE COMMUNICATION

5.3.3. Sewer Enterprise Fund:

“Enterprise fund accounting enables a community to identify the operating cost of providing a service, to plan for capital improvements and to set rates sufficient to cover those costs. It allows payments for indirect costs to flow from the enterprise to the general fund to reimburse the Town for the time spent by Town employees on enterprise activities. A surplus, or retained earnings, can be built up, accumulate interest and once certified by DOR used to fund operating, capital, or debt service costs associated with the sewer operation.” (from: Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services, Town of Northfield, Financial Management Review, February, 2011, page 20.

5.3.4. Water System Improvement Plan:

The new plan will:

- Identify location of a new well (the Mill Brook Aquifer is a potential well site)
- Identify other potential sites for additional supply
- Replace mains throughout
- Identify rate² increases (will be necessary as last time was in 1996)

²The average household currently pays approximately \$400 per year.



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GOAL 5: TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC FACILITIES, IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES, AND ENHANCE COMMUNICATION

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GRAY SHADING indicates #1 priority strategy

GOAL 6: TO EXPAND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOODS

6

GOAL STATEMENT: TO PROVIDE A BOADER RANGE OF HOUSING TYPES AND PRICES AND TO BUILD A GREATER SENSE OF IDENTITY AND COHESION FOR NORTHFIELD’S EXISTING FIVE NEIGHBORHOODS.

“Overall, sense of place, place attachment, place dependence and place identity can all be combined, bridged, and connected to form and define the concept of home as identity which is integral to the future of housing.”¹

Housing is a basic necessity for existence. It is also a primary means of personal identification. Where people live (their neighborhood and town), and in what type and condition of housing they live, contributes greatly to people’s sense of identity.

A desirable housing mix in neighborhoods provides a strong sense of place through harmonious architecture, pleasant landscaping design on each lot or housing cluster, and enough variety in design to provide interest and identity. Maintenance of both the exterior and interior of homes also helps provide a sense of a healthy neighborhood. A mix of demographic and socio-economic characteristics of neighborhood residents aids in contributing additional interest and identity. A range of housing sizes, styles, types and values provides opportunities to achieve a mix of income groups. Social interpersonal networks are also very important in establishing and maintaining neighborhood health.

Housing is the largest category of developed land use in Northfield. It accounts for 64% of developed land in Town (not including farm land).



Typical older, larger homes on Main Street.

Northfield is large (22,634 acres or 35.37 square miles) and has five distinct neighborhoods, each with their own identity and history of development.

NORTHFIELD’S HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS: OVERVIEW OF KEY POINTS

- Northfield’s housing stock is overwhelmingly single-family detached units.
- Housing production is very slow, reflecting slow population and household growth.
- A yearly average of 5.1 single-family building permits were issued from 2003 to 2012.

¹ Laura L. Lein, *Housing and Society*, Vol. 36, No. 2, 2009, p. 169.

GOAL 6: TO EXPAND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOODS



Smaller housing units (apartments) over commercial space

- Larger older homes are quite common. 26% of homes have 4 bedrooms or more.
- Modest 3 bedroom homes cost an average of about \$211,000. Larger 4+ bedroom homes cost about \$300,000.
- Houses are strung out along Northfield roadways. There are several small subdivisions in outlying areas of Town and the interior has been slowly filling in.
- Over half of the housing stock can be considered affordable, especially for Northfield residents and also for Franklin County residents.
- There are a number of housing financial assistance programs available to potential home buyers.
- All of the population, household and housing analyses will become irrelevant if a substantial institution with a large adult population moves into the Northfield campus. The East Northfield and Town Hall neighborhoods will be especially impacted.
- Households are decreasing in size (a 3.2% decline from 2000 to 2010).
- The largest growth is in non-family households (8.7% from 2000 to 2010). (Non-family households are unrelated individuals living together.)
- Households headed by persons age 65 or over increased by 6.7% from 2000 to 2010.

- 100 to 200 more households are expected by 2030, resulting in a need for 100 to 200 more housing units.
- It is likely that household size will continue to decrease, given current demographic trends.
- Decreasing household size will lead to the larger number of housing units needed (200).
- 55% of Northfield's homes have been built since 1939.
- Each neighborhood has its own meeting space, but some are in distinct need of upgrading.
- Eighty percent of Northfield residents moved into their current homes before 2005, indicating a stable and non-transient population.
- There will be very substantial growth in the elderly population (50% by 2030). This will create a market for more one and two bedroom units, which currently make up about 1/3 of the Town's housing stock.

HOUSING MARKET: SALES

There is an active but not very extensive housing market in Northfield. About 35 homes per year are sold, out of a housing stock of 1,392 units (in 2010). Of the 1,391 units 1,226 were occupied year-round in 2010. Of these 974 were owner-occupied and 252 were renter-occupied. Twenty-nine homes currently on the market average \$210,855 in asking prices. In 2011 twenty-four homes sold for an average of \$205,807. In 2012 twenty-nine homes sold for an average sales price of \$158,821; and through Oct. 22nd 2013 twenty-two homes were sold with an average price of \$235,105. The homes currently on the market are mostly moderate size three bedroom homes. The recently sold homes are also moderate sized, averaging 3.75 bedrooms.

Residences in Northfield are strung out along its roadways. There is little residential development back from the major roads in Town. The only clustered residential development is a major residential development clustered around the campus.

Residential development strung out along the roadways is typical of rural communities where such development occurs via the "approval not required" (ANR) process, one, two or three lots at a time. Northfield has

GOAL 6: TO EXPAND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOODS

provisions in its zoning bylaws for cluster residential development, by means of creating subdivisions. The Town has subdivision regulations which have resulted in several small developments over the past twenty years. Subdivision development is not expected to expand in the future if the slow pace of residential development is maintained. There is still ample roadway frontage vacant land in Town. If however, reuse of the Mount Hermon campus spurs increased residential development, subdivisions may be proposed.

HOUSING MARKET: RENTALS

The rental market in Northfield is not extensive. There were 252 renter-occupied units in 2010. The table below shows housing rent levels.

3 – 4 Bedroom Detached House	\$1,500
2 – 3 Bedroom Attached House (Duplex)	\$875 - \$900
3 Bedroom Apartment	\$800
2 Bedroom Apartment	\$700 - \$900
1 Bedroom Apartment	\$550 - \$750
Studio Apartment	\$400

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

While Northfield has only 2.1% of its housing rated as affordable by the state in its inventory of housing that can be counted toward meeting a 10% affordability requirement in order to avoid having a “Comprehensive Permit” Chapter 40B housing development thrust on it, much more of Northfield’s housing stock can be considered affordable, using the guidelines from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and used by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development.²

² Housing affordability for public housing eligibility is determined by family (household) size and income. The basic requirement is that the income of

There have been no Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permit applications in Northfield.

There are only 27 units of subsidized housing in Northfield. Twenty of these are housing for the elderly in Squakeag Village. The Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority has currently issued 9 Section 8 Rental Vouchers for Residents of Northfield. The waiting list for housing in Squakeag Village is 2 to 3 months for residents of Northfield, and for military veterans. There are only 2 applicants from residents on the waiting list. The waiting list for non-residents is several years. There are 55 applicants on that list.

NEIGHBORHOODS

East Northfield is the area around the Northfield Campus of the Mount Hermon Academy. It is an area of stately large “Victorian” homes on the land just around the campus, and small cottages up on the “Ridge” east of the campus. Highland Avenue there is a principal street and most like a close-knit urban neighborhood, complete with sidewalks and a neighborhood feel. It is bounded on the north by the campus and to the south by the golf course. The entire area in the northeast is commonly referred to as “East Northfield.”

Many of the cottages were summer homes, now converted to year-round occupancy. Others remain summer (seasonal) homes. A seasonal water supply carried in surface level pipes serves the area. The streets that provide access are steep and twisty. The area is heavily wooded. Many occupants of the neighborhood have lived in their present homes many years and associate the area with the campus and its architecturally distinguished

families or households does not exceed 80% of the metropolitan or area-wide median household income. For Northfield this figure is \$58,500 for a family of three, and \$65,000 for a family of four. Families below these levels are considered low income.

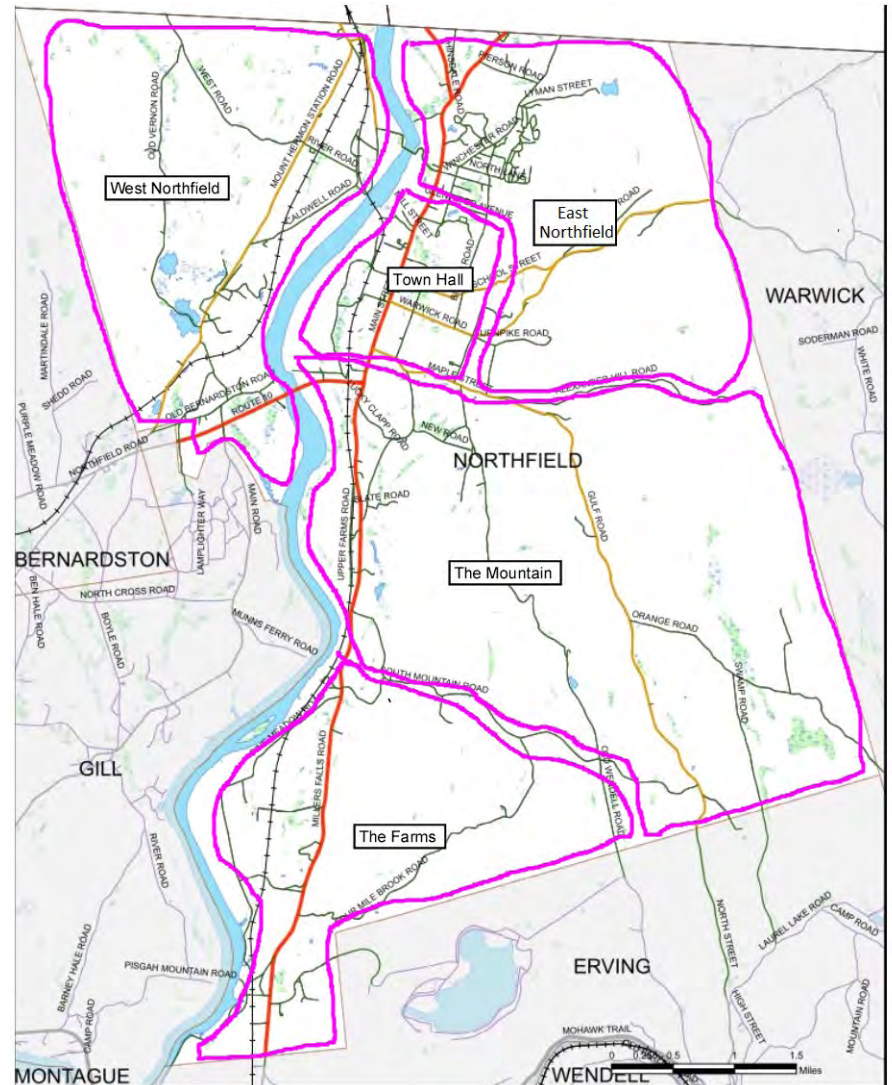
GOAL 6: TO EXPAND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOODS

buildings, and the Moody home which is another landmark, and a meeting place for neighborhood events. As mentioned, it is an area where some residential development is clustered off of main roads.

West Northfield is a very sparsely settled area that suffers from lack of access to the other four neighborhoods across the Connecticut River. It is primarily a farming and residential area with stunning views to the east along Route 142. Most of the agricultural land has been conserved and protected by APRs and is still farmed. On the south end are two sand and gravel companies, one of which, Lane Construction, is the Town’s largest employer and has been very generous in supporting Town activities.

The closing of the Schell Bridge made a relatively short walk across the river to the post office and grocery store a twelve mile roundtrip drive. Its advantages are its closer access to I-91 and the Pioneer Valley Regional School (grades 7 to 12) is located there. It also serves as a gateway to the remaining campus of the Mount Hermon Academy in adjacent Gill. West Northfield is the existing location of a solid waste transfer station and the planned location of an industrial park with an existing solar energy zoning overlay to attract industry in the “creative” economy. Neighborhood meetings are held in a clubhouse maintained by the West Northfield Playground Association.

Town Hall is the neighborhood along Main Street containing the Historic Town Common District and lands just west (down to the river) and east of Main Street. This neighborhood contains most of the Town’s scant commercial establishments and government functions, such as Town Hall, a Senior Center, the Library, and the Police and Fire Departments. There are sidewalks along Main Street with its very large right-of-way and subsequently set-back homes and buildings, giving the area a “stately” image. The neighborhood is walkable. The two-mile sidewalk along the linear Town common is a popular walking area for residents and visitors. The most distinguishing features of the neighborhood are the large historic homes built on both sides of Main Street. The Town Hall neighborhood contains more residential land than any of the other neighborhoods. Meetings are held in the Town Hall.



Northfield’s neighborhoods.

GOAL 6: TO EXPAND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOODS

The Mountain is the neighborhood area east of Main Street, south of Maple Street and north of South Mountain Road. It is an area of more recently built homes with younger families. It is still sparsely settled with homes spread out along its road, but it is the area of most recent housing growth in Town. It has some small scale agriculture and it supported a small logging industry in the 19th Century. There are some historical artifacts of past agricultural and logging activities. Meetings have been held at the private Linden Hill School, which was sold to Redemption Christian Academy and is private secondary school.

The Farms Neighborhood is located in South Northfield along the Connecticut River where there are extensive level fields that have been farmed for hundreds of years. Its older modest homes are built along Miller’s Falls Road and Pine Meadow Road. Some newer also modest homes have been built on prime agricultural land. The homes along the roadways give the impression that the area is more developed than it really is. There is very little development away from the main roads. Neighborhood meetings are held at the Field Memorial Library, a small library, owned and operated by Farms residents.

Each neighborhood has places where meetings can be held, allowing for resident interactions, and there are recreation facilities in each of the neighborhoods. Each neighborhood does not have a public school. Northfield Elementary School (grades K -6) is in the Town Hall neighborhood, and the Pioneer Valley School (grades 7 – 12) is in the West Northfield neighborhood.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Challenges for housing and neighborhood development include:

- The existing imbalance in size (more large homes, fewer small ones);
- There is not much housing construction and the housing market is small;
- Housing does not sell quickly, suggesting a low demand for what is available; and
- The rental market is small, narrowing the choices for residents.
- There is a critical need for affordable housing for seniors living on fixed incomes, but do not qualify for non-market rate housing because their net worth is above eligibility requirements.

Opportunities include:

- The population is aging, creating a future demand for more diversified (smaller) types of housing;
- There is a possibility for preserving open space through cluster zoning (most desirably creating the smaller units needed by the elderly);
- There is ample land for housing but care should be taken to keep future housing off of prime agricultural land. Northfield has been very active in conserving agricultural and forested areas, and will continue to do so, but there are still opportunities for additional housing throughout Town.
- Greater awareness of the Town’s and other organization’s resources in the Town and region could be better enabled by more frequent use of modern communications and interactions technology.

GOAL 6: TO EXPAND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOODS

SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS: STRATEGIES FOR PLANNING FOR FUTURE NEEDS TO EXPAND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOODS

TO ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOUSING UNITS FOR AN INCREASINGLY ELDERLY POPULATION

- Identify appropriate areas for smaller homes (e.g., areas where residents can walk to shops and services)
- Encourage attached units to save land and reduce costs
- Identify and work with for-profit and non-profit developers who are interested in smaller attached housing units

CREATE ADDITIONAL SUBSIDIZED LOW AND MODERATE INCOME HOUSING AND MODERNIZE THE EXISTING FACILITY

- Expand and modernize the existing Squakeag Village Housing for the Elderly
- Identify a site for low and moderate income non-elderly family housing
- Identify sites for non-profit affordable housing developers

DEVISE STRATEGIES FOR FURTHER NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND INTERACTIONS AND STABILIZATION

- Increase communication between neighborhood residents is a way of enabling neighborhood development

GOAL 6: TO EXPAND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOODS

OBJECTIVE 6.1 ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOUSING UNITS FOR AN INCREASINGLY ELDERLY POPULATION						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
6.1.1 Encourage development of smaller housing units	Parcel maps and assessors records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with identified property owners to determine interest levels in selling land and/or creating smaller housing units, e.g., accessory apartments Identify appropriate areas for smaller homes (e.g., areas where residents can walk to shops and services) Explore flexible zoning bylaw options for converting historic homes into condominiums and or town houses for senior downsizing choices 	Small town appropriation for agent to do the research and contact work.	<p>Possible use of an intern in a real estate studies program.</p> <p>Classes or some form of advice and instruction for first-time home-buyers would aid in increasing demand for smaller units.</p>	<p>LEAD: Planning Board</p> <p>PARTNERS: Local Realtors</p>	3
6.1.2 Encourage attached units to save land and reduce costs	Planning Board through its special permit process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slight zoning amendment to identify attached units and where they are permitted by special permit. (Section IX Flexible Development) Work with applicants for residential special permits to create attached homes Identify, invite to Northfield, and work with, developers who are interested in smaller attached housing units 	Non-needed. To be done in normal work load.	(The Town needs to allow more by-right housing development options in the zoning bylaw)	<p>LEAD: Planning Board</p> <p>PARTNERS: Local Realtors</p>	2



= RIPE APPLE (no- or low-cost, easy-to-implement measure)

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GOAL 6: TO EXPAND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOODS


OBJECTIVE 6.1 ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOUSING UNITS FOR AN INCREASINGLY ELDERLY POPULATION						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
6.1.3 Explore possibilities for reuse of Northfield Campus buildings for housing for the elderly	Planning Board through its special permit process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include appropriate new or remodeled housing units on the Northfield Campus. 	Non-needed. To be done in normal work load	The Town needs to allow more by-right housing development options in the zoning bylaw	<p>LEAD: Planning Board</p> <p>PARTNERS: Northfield Campus Collaborative</p> <p>NCF</p> <p>New campus owner/occupant</p>	2



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GOAL 6: TO EXPAND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOODS

OBJECTIVE 6.2 CREATE NEW AND MODERNIZE EXISTING LOW AND MODERATE INCOME HOUSING						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
6.2.1 Expand and modernize the existing Squakeag Village Housing for the Elderly	Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (FCHRA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form Town Housing Committee Work with FCHRA 	Federal and State grant and low interest loan housing programs	<p>There is room on the site for expansion. It extends west to the railroad tracks and there is a roadway on the north side of the property allowing access to the rear of the lot. As part of modernization of existing units an elevator needs to be added.</p>	<p>LEAD: Town Housing Committee</p> <p>PARTNERS: Planning Board and the FCHRA</p>	2
6.2.2 Identify a site for low and moderate income family housing	Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form Town Housing Committee Work with FCHRA 	Federal and State grant and low interest loan housing programs		<p>LEAD: Town Housing Committee</p> <p>PARTNERS: Planning Board and the FCHRA</p>	1
6.2.3 Identify sites for non-profit affordable housing developers	Regional non-profit housing groups like HAP Housing in Springfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form Town Housing Committee Work with HAP and other groups like the Habitat for Humanity organization 	Federal and State grant and low interest loan housing programs	<p>There are possibilities for increasing housing demand by better enabling young families and other first-time home-buyers through classes about home buying and programs to encourage home ownership</p>	<p>LEAD: Town Housing Committee</p> <p>PARTNERS: Planning Board HAP</p>	3



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GOAL 6: TO EXPAND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOODS

OBJECTIVE 6.3 DEVISE STRATEGIES FOR FURTHER NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT, INTERACTIONS AND STABILIZATION						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
6.3.1 Town Hall Neighborhood	Current major meeting facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a Community Center 		<p>Increased neighborhood participation and activities could be aided by better and more frequent information about the Town's resources and facilities. This is true for all neighborhoods.</p> <p>See also Goal 2</p>		
6.3.2 Northeast Northfield Neighborhood	Northfield Campus and historic homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserve existing large historic homes 		See also Goal 2		
6.3.3 The Mountain Neighborhood				See also Goal 2		
6.3.4 The Farms Neighborhood	Prime farm land Field Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserve balance between prime farm land and commercial and residential development 		See also Goal 2		
6.3.5 West Northfield Neighborhood	Pioneer Valley Middle and High Schools West Northfield Playground Association			<p>See also Goal 2</p> <p>Most of the open space is protected by APR or forest restrictions, but there is still land for single-family residential units off the main roads</p>		



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GOAL 7: TO ENHANCE TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION SYSTEMS

7

GOAL STATEMENT: TO PROVIDE SAFE AND EFFICIENT FACILITIES FOR RESIDENTS, VISITORS AND BUSINESSES FOR ALL TRANSPORTATION MODES

“From trucks, to cars, to bicycles, to feet, a community’s street system accommodates many modes of transportation. Each street within the system has many functions and is designed to carry out these functions as effectively as possible.”

Dan Burden, Streets and Sidewalks, People and Cars, April 2000

An efficient transportation system is one that provides well maintained facilities for all of its users. While most towns have relied on an auto-centric transportation system beginning in the early 20th century, there has been a recent shift to provide a better balance between automobile travel and non-auto travel alternatives including walking, bicycling, transit and ridesharing. Walking and biking facilities not only promote more social interaction in the community, but provide opportunities for exercise for the entire population. An efficient transportation system will serve the following users:

- Commuters who must drive to their drive jobs
- Residents who travel to Town to shop, get services and eat
- Parents with young children
- School children
- Teenagers
- The elderly
- Residents without vehicles
- Businesses
- Farmers
- Tourists and visitors



Northfield’s Main Street provides access to residents, businesses, the Elementary School and through traffic.

- Through-traffic including trucks
- Emergency services
- Town services

It is noted that the Town’s users and demands may change in the future, especially if the NMH Campus is developed into a college, and that it is important to recognize and plan for those changes.

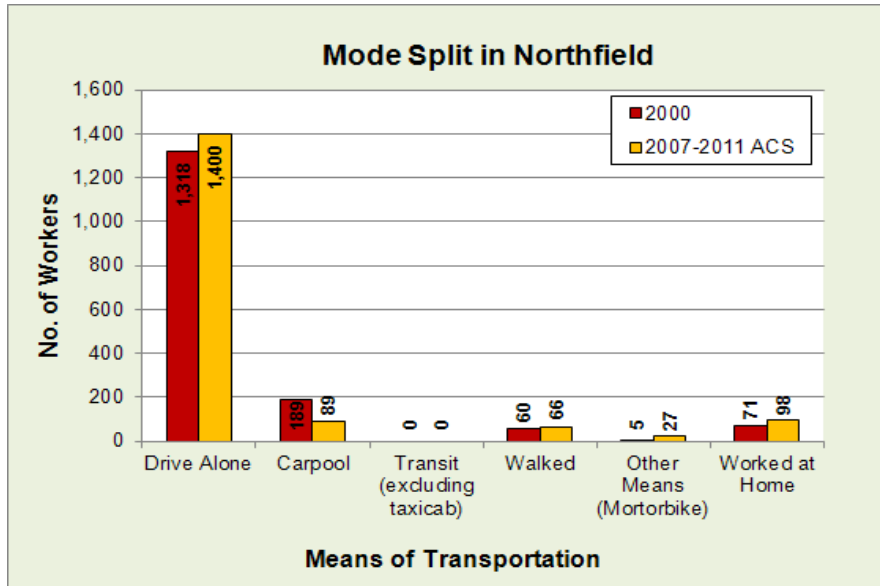
GOAL 7: TO ENHANCE TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION SYSTEMS

NORTHFIELD'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM TODAY: OVERVIEW OF KEY POINTS

Northfield's transportation system is generally adequate to accommodate the current needs of residents, employees, and visitors. Main Street continues to be the life blood of Northfield and serve a wide variety of land uses including residential, commercial, institutional, and through-travel. Conflicts occur as different users with different purposes use the same facility. Existing travel characteristics in Northfield include:

- Average commute times for Northfield workers is 24 minutes, less than the state average
 - 83% of Northfield workers drive alone, which is common for rural communities
 - Carpool trips have decreased by 53% between 2000 and 2011
 - There are more vehicles than people in Northfield (1.2 vehicles per person)
 - Route 63, Route 10 and Route 142 are major roadways in Town. The closest regional highways are located in Bernardston (I-91) and Erving (Rt. 2)
 - Main Street experiences the highest traffic volume in Town with approximately 8,200 vehicles per day
 - Traffic volumes on most roadways in Town have decreased over the last few years which is typical of most communities
 - There is no fixed-route transit service for the general public. Northfield shares senior van service with Bernardston to provide regional transit service for seniors
 - Passenger rail and freight services pass through Northfield but do not make stops.
- The following conditions in Northfield pose **CHALLENGES** to transportation system:
- The Route 10 Bridge is the only open facility that provides vehicle access over the Connecticut River. It is typical of towns to have only one structure over the river, but Northfield is the only town in Massachusetts to be bisected by the river. As a result, West Northfield is not well connected to the rest of the Town east of the river.
 - There is no gas station in Town which is an inconvenience for residents and can increase vehicle miles traveled.
 - The three highest accident locations in Town are 1) Route 10/Gill Center Road/Main Street; 2) Route 10/Main Street/Route 63; and 3) Main Street/Warwick Road/Parker Avenue. There are geometric deficiencies at each of these locations that include alignment and configuration of roadways and restricted sight lines.
 - MassDOT owns and maintains Main Street in Northfield. The posted speed limit on Main Street ranges from 35 MPH in the center area to 55 MPH. No on-street parking is allowed on Main Street. The 35 MPH speed limit is relatively fast for a center area and is exacerbated because the road appears wide open to motorists because no parking is allowed. The high travel speeds present a safety issue because of the pedestrian crossings, commercial driveways and elementary school located in the center. The Town would need to take over jurisdiction of Main Street from MassDOT if it wishes to redesign the roadway.
 - Large trucks generate noise impacts on Main Street which are difficult to regulate and mitigate
 - There is no park-and-ride lot in the immediate area.

GOAL 7: TO ENHANCE TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION SYSTEMS



Transportation Mode of Northfield Workers

The following are **OPPORTUNITIES** for improving the transportation system:

- MassDOT has agreed to work with the Town to implement measures to improve safety on Main that can be made in the short-term. These include providing speed feedback signs to motorists and restriping the lane lines to narrow the travel lane to encourage lower travel speeds. Bicycle accommodations can also be provided by shifting the existing travel lane lines.
- There are opportunities to fund long-term safety, livability and streetscape improvements along Main Street. These include:

- Main Street Revitalization Project. Phase 1 of this project was completed which includes the replacement of sidewalks along Main Street. Phase 2 improvements include safety improvements at Main Street/Parker Avenue/Warwick Road; Main Street crosswalks and lighting; new sidewalk and signage; and replacement trees. Some of these improvements could be funded through the Franklin Transportation Planning Organization Transportation Improvement Program process.
- Construction of Streetscape Improvements in Northfield through the Connecticut River Scenic Byway project. Conceptual improvements along Main Street have been developed and submitted by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments as part of the Year 2006 National Scenic Byways Program.
- To make more significant changes to Main Street in the long-term would require the Town to take ownership of a portion of Main Street from MassDOT through the Discontinuance Process. Town ownership would allow the Town to, if deemed necessary, allow on-street parking and provide traffic calming measures which may justify lowering the posted speed limit.

- The Town has begun discussions with MassDOT to construct a new pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the Connecticut River near the existing Schell Bridge
- Northfield can stripe bicycle lanes on selected roadways under Town jurisdiction.
- There is an opportunity to coordinate and identify new transportation infrastructure that would be needed if the NMH site is occupied by a new college. This would include the need for new sidewalk, bicycle lanes, and shuttle. These programs are not detailed specifically in this Master Plan. A separate planning/implementation

GOAL 7: TO ENHANCE TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION SYSTEMS

process will need to be established once a college has been identified.

SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS: STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING TRANSPORTATION SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO ENCOURAGE PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE AND RIDESHARE TRANSPORTATION

- Coordinate with MassDOT to construct a new pedestrian/bicycle bridge across the Connecticut River
- Establish a Town Safe Routes to School Program through MassDOT and the FRCOG
- Develop a Town Bicycle Plan to identify and implement new bicycle accommodations on Town-owned roadways
- Continue to partner with Bernardston to ensure that senior van service is provided to Northfield residents
- Coordinate with FRCOG to identify potential locations for regional park-and-ride lots
- Increase connectivity through construction of more sidewalks, bike lanes, and links to adjacent trails
- Develop a volunteer rideshare program to serve residents without vehicles

IMPROVE SAFETY AND OPERATIONS


- Increase safety and improve livability by implementing Main Street safety, revitalization and streetscape improvements
- Work with MassDOT to improve geometrics, signage and pavement markings at Route 10/Gill Center Road/Main Street and Route 10/Main Street/Route 63



Main Street in Northfield

- Coordinate with MassDOT and FRCOG to identify methods to reduce truck impacts on Main Street
- Improve student drop-off/pick-up operation at Elementary school

GOAL 7: TO ENHANCE TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION SYSTEMS


OBJECTIVE 7.1 PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO ENCOURAGE PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE AND RIDESHARE TRANSPORTATON						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
7.1.1 Coordinate with MassDOT to construct new pedestrian/bicycle bridge over Connecticut River (SEE ALSO 2.4.1, 3.4.1)	Schell Bridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with MassDOT bridge engineers 	MassDOT and Federal	Ownership and maintenance of structure to be determined	<p>LEAD: Board of Selectmen</p> <p>PARTNERS: MassDOT</p> <p>Friends of Schell Bridge</p> <p>DCR</p> <p>FRCOG</p>	1
7.1.2 Establish Safe Routes to School Program	Parents and teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with FRCOG to submit application to MassDOT/MassRides Consider providing crossing guard(s) at critical locations 	Federally funded and administered through MassDOT/MassRides		<p>LEAD: School principal</p> <p>PARTNERS: Town Police Department</p> <p>MassDOT</p> <p>FRCOG</p>	1
7.1.3 Develop Bicycle Plan (SEE ALSO 3.4.2, 5.2.8)	Local bicyclists and riding clubs/groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify where bicycle accommodations can be implemented on Town-owned roadways Identify standards Bicycle racks 	MassDOT/MassBike Federal funds available for implementation		<p>LEAD: Town & MassBike Pioneer Valley</p> <p>PARTNERS: FRCOG</p> <p>MassDOT</p> <p>Northfield Area Tourism and Business Association</p> <p>Tri-State Bike groups and in Western MA</p>	3



= RIPE APPLE (no- or low-cost, easy-to-implement measure)

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GOAL 7: TO ENHANCE TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION SYSTEMS

OBJECTIVE 7.1 PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO ENCOURAGE PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE AND RIDESHARE TRANSPORTATON (CONTINUED)						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
7.1.4 Coordinate with Bernardston to continue to provide senior van service (SEE ALSO 5.26, 5.3.1, 5.3.2)	Town of Bernardston	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify future demand needs for senior service Coordinate with Bernardston Consider other options 	Town, FRTA		<p>LEAD: Senior Center</p> <p>PARTNERS: BOS Council on Aging Bernardston FRTA</p>	1
7.1.5 Coordinate with FRCOG to identify park-and-ride lot location		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with FRCOG and MassDOT to identify potential locations for a new regional park-and-ride lot to serve Northfield 	MassDOT/FRCOG Federal funds may be available for construction		<p>LEAD: FRCOG</p> <p>PARTNERS: FRTA, State</p>	3
7.1.6 Increase connectivity though construction of more sidewalks, bike lanes, and links to adjacent trails where needed (SEE ALSO 4.1.2, 4.2.2, 4.2.3, 5.2.8)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop plan to identify needs and prioritize 	MassDOT/Town		<p>LEAD: Highway Dept</p> <p>PARTNERS: MassDOT FRCOG</p>	2



= RIPE APPLE (no- or low-cost, easy-to-implement measure)

GOAL 7: TO ENHANCE TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION SYSTEMS

OBJECTIVE 7.1 PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO ENCOURAGE PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE AND RIDESHARE TRANSPORTATON (CONTINUED)						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
7.1.7 Provide ridesharing options to serve residents without vehicles	Residents with vehicles willing to provide rides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a volunteer rideshare program and post requests through electronic social media and in designated public areas such as the senior center, library and Mim's Drivers caR register with MassRides/NURide and receive discounts for services 	None required		<p>LEAD: Senior Center</p> <p>PARTNERS: FRTA, MassRides/NURide</p>	1



= RIPE APPLE (no- or low-cost, easy-to-implement measure)

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GOAL 7: TO ENHANCE TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION SYSTEMS

OBJECTIVE 7.2 IMPROVE SAFETY AND OPERATIONS						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
7.2.1 Improve safety and livability on Main Street (SEE ALSO 3.3.2, 4.2.1, 5.2.8, 8.2.2)	Main Street Revitalization Project Main Street streetscape improvements through the Connecticut River Scenic Byway project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with FRCOG and MassDOT to get projects listed on TIP and secure funding Reduce vehicle speed by restriping lane lines and providing bicycle accommodation Install speed feedback signs Consider providing pedestrian flags at critical crosswalks 	MassDOT		LEAD: Highway Dept PARTNERS: BOS Police Department MassDOT FRCOG	1
7.2.2 Improve safety at state maintained intersections		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Route 10/Gill Center Road/Main Street and Route 10/Main Street/Route 63 Work to reduce state route sign clutter 	MassDOT/FRCOG		LEAD: MassDOT PARTNERS: FRCOG	2
7.2.3 Identify measures to reduce truck impacts on Main Street and Route 142 (SEE ALSO 3.2.5, 4.2.1)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with MassDOT and FRCOG Research truck brake laws in MA and other states Take noise measurements 			LEAD: BOS MassDOT PARTNERS: FRCOG	1



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GOAL 7: TO ENHANCE TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION SYSTEMS

OBJECTIVE 7.2 IMPROVE SAFETY AND OPERATIONS						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
7.2.4 Improve student drop-off/pick-up operation at Elementary school (SEE ALSO 4.2.1)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with MassDOT when Main Street is repaved or restriped Ensure that redesign/repavement of parking lot in rear of school meets objectives Coordinate with Main St. Improvements 	MassDOT/Town Potential funding through Safe Routes to School program		LEAD: Highway Dept PARTNERS: Police Department, MassDOT, Northfield Elementary School PVRSD	1



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GOAL 7: TO ENHANCE TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION SYSTEMS

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GOAL 8: TO PROMOTE NORTHFIELD'S HISTORY AND CULTURE

8

GOAL STATEMENT: TO PROMOTE THE RICH, DIVERSE HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES OF NORTHFIELD, INCLUDING NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORY, HISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY, EARLY 19TH CENTURY AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE, AND D.L.

MOODY, AS A MEANS OF FOSTERING APPRECIATION, STEWARDSHIP, AND INCREASED TOURISM.

“History is a guide to navigation through perilous times. History is who we are and why we are the way we are.”

- David McCullough¹

Over the past several decades, communities across America have come to realize that their historic and cultural resources are some of their greatest economic assets. Charleston, South Carolina, as an example, has seen tremendous economic growth, in large part because of many-year effort to save and restore its collection of antebellum architecture, and promote this collection to tourists from throughout the world. While on a much smaller scale, Northfield, with its early 19th century buildings, linear common, Native American history, and legacy of D. L. Moody, has potential to further capitalize on its historic resources. Such an effort is known as “heritage tourism,” and it has been proven nationwide to expand public awareness of history, and to fuel local and regional economic growth.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines heritage tourism as “traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stores and people of the past.” It can include historic

¹ David McCullough is an American author, narrator, and historian, and a two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award and a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the United States' highest civilian award.



Northfield's Main Street in ca. 1890. Elm trees towered over the roadway, and clapboard houses stood behind the trees. While the elms have perished, the houses remain, and provide fine examples of early 19th century American architecture and craftsmanship.

resources as well as cultural and natural ones, and successful heritage tourism efforts share the following characteristics:²

- **Collaboration** – a joining of local and regional entities willing to partner in the effort;
- **Appropriateness for the Community** – an effort of the scope and scale that serves community needs;
- **Desirable Programming** – an ability to make the resources desirable to tourists as unique destinations within a region;

² Adapted from “Heritage Tourism,” a web-based publication of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, www.preservationnation.org.

GOAL 8: TO PROMOTE NORTHFIELD'S HISTORY AND CULTURE

- **Quality and Authenticity** – an ability to tell an accurate and true story, and one that is worth telling;
- **Irreplaceable Resources** – an ability to preserve and protect – through both physical and regulatory means – the historic buildings, structures and landscapes.

NORTHFIELD'S HISTORY AND CULTURE TODAY: OVERVIEW OF KEY POINTS

The clapboard-clad historic homes and even rows of shade trees lining both sides of Main Street grab visitors' attention when entering Northfield; travelers take in a snapshot of 19th century American architectural history in a two-mile stretch. Largely out of sight however, are many other equally important historic and cultural resources, including Native American settlement sites; remnants of once-prominent historic buildings; the spiritual legacy of D. L. Moody. These "hidden" resources, while rich and diverse, are often passed over by tourists, vacationers, leaf-peepers, and other visitors. Guidebooks and regional tourism campaigns either make cursory mention of them, or dismiss them altogether.³

In public forums and during focused discussions, residents of Northfield have noted that by better promoting these historic and cultural resources, the Town can broaden public appreciation of them and, at the same time capitalize on them as a means of bolstering the local economy. The following conditions in Northfield pose **CHALLENGES** to promoting these "hidden" historic and cultural assets:



Northfield's Main Street today has been marked with a "welcome sign" noting the date of the Town's founding. Signs are one means of promoting historic resources.

- The sensitive nature of Northfield's Native American sites, including sacred spots, burial grounds and settlement locations, requires that they be protected from uncontrolled public access.
- Access to historic archaeological sites,⁴ including those containing the Northfield Inn; Schell's "Castle," and eventually the Schell

³ www.fodors.com/world/north-america/usa/massachusetts/sturbridge-and-the-pioneer-valley/northfield. In contrast, the WPA Guide to Massachusetts, published in 1937 by the Federal Writers' Project, included 2-1/2 pages devoted to Northfield's history and cultural resources, including a driving tour that took in 9 sites and culminated at the Lookout.

⁴ "Historic archaeology" in America is distinguished from "archaeology" through its focus on post-European settlement. The Society for Historic Archaeology defines the field as "the study of the material remains of past societies that also left behind some other form of historical evidence." Scholars work on sites that "document early European settlement and its effects on Native American peoples, as well the subsequent spread of the frontier and later urbanization and industrialization."

GOAL 8: TO PROMOTE NORTHFIELD'S HISTORY AND CULTURE

Bridge, is limited by unmanaged vegetative growth and/or poor roads/pathways.

- Historic homes are largely privately-owned, limiting access to the public for tours and to academics for study of 19th century American architecture/building techniques.
- While the Northfield Campus, Birthplace, Homestead, burial site and other resources evoke the legacy of D. L. Moody, much of his story remains untold. No single building or institution has been devoted to the interpretation of Moody.
- While the Northfield campus retains several spaces that could be used for exhibitions and/or performances, these are not available for regular public use.

The following **OPPORTUNITIES** exist for better promotion of the Town's historic and cultural resources:

- Greater interpretation, through education programs, tours, seminars, and other means, of Native American history; historic archaeological sites (including mill sites along Connecticut River tributaries; historic ferry crossings; railroad stations; former farmsteads) historic architecture (including the Stearns family homes); D. L. Moody
- Expanded public relations and programming between local historical organizations and regional ones
- Development of tourism around the D. L. Moody story and legacy
- Improved stewardship of publicly-owned buildings and landscapes, and privately-owned buildings
- Recognition of individual property owners' efforts to preserve historic buildings

- Expanded cultural programming through use of Campus facilities (performance and exhibition)



Extant historic resources as well as historic archaeological sites (such as the former site of the Northfield Inn) both can contribute to heritage tourism efforts.

SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS: STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

BROADENING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF NORTHFIELD'S HISTORY AND CULTURE

- Provide opportunities for visitors to learn about Northfield's history
- Showcase and interpret D. L. Moody and his legacy
- Rekindle Northfield's Native American history and its interpretation
- Promote and interpret historic archaeological sites

GOAL 8: TO PROMOTE NORTHFIELD'S HISTORY AND CULTURE

- Promote and interpret the design and artisanship of historic buildings, including the Calvin and Samuel Stearns family of master builders


PROMOTING STEWARDSHIP OF HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

- Develop initiatives for property owners to maintain historic buildings
- Preserve publicly-owned buildings and landscapes
- Develop a multi-year, incremental approach to preserving buildings and landscapes Town-wide

PROMOTING HERITAGE TOURISM

- Brand Northfield as a historic and cultural destination
- Broaden historic and cultural offerings for visitors
- Collaborate with regional heritage tourism efforts

GOAL 8: TO PROMOTE NORTHFIELD’S HISTORY AND CULTURE



OBJECTIVE 8.1 BROADEN PUBLIC AWARENESS OF NORTHFIELD’S HISTORY AND CULTURE						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
8.1.1 Provide opportunities for visitors to learn about Northfield’s history	Existing historic and cultural resources Historical Commission Historical Society/ Museum Cultural Council Northfield Mountain Visitor Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a welcome center to serve as a clearinghouse of information about Northfield’s historic and cultural resources Create a website, associated with the welcome center, and linking to cultural and historic resources 	Mass. Cultural Council (Cultural Facilities Fund) ⁱ	Welcome center will also serve as a hub for recreational and agri-tourism 	LEAD: Newly-formed “visitor services” committee PARTNERS: Historical Commission Historical Society/Museum Cultural Council Open Space Committee Agricultural Commission Northfield Area Tourism & Business Association	1
8.1.2 Showcase and interpret D. L. Moody and his legacy	Northfield Campus DL Moody Birthplace, Homestead, and burial place (Round Top) Rustic Ridge Green Pastures/CS Lewis Foundation Trinitarian Congregational Church Christian Redemption Academy Historical Society/ Museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include materials about DL Moody and his legacy at the welcome center and on the associated website Enrich the public school curriculum to include segment(s) on Moody 	National Christian Foundation (NCF) ⁱⁱ CS Lewis Foundation ⁱⁱⁱ Private Foundations Mass Humanities ^{iv}		LEAD: Newly-formed “visitor services” committee PARTNERS: Rustic Ridge Association NCF Historical Society/Museum	2



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GOAL 8: TO PROMOTE NORTHFIELD’S HISTORY AND CULTURE

OBJECTIVE 8.1 BROADEN PUBLIC AWARENESS OF NORTHFIELD’S HISTORY AND CULTURE (CONTINUED)						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
<p>8.1.3 Rekindle Northfield’s Native American history and its interpretation (SEE ALSO 3.4.3)</p>	<p>Native American sites throughout Northfield, including Beers’ Plain and King Philip’s Hill</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Native American history committee, or subcommittee of the Historical Commission Include materials about Native American history at the welcome center and on the associated website Create a mini-exhibition or interpretive site at the library or Town Hall focusing on Native American History Enrich the public school curriculum to include segment(s) on Native Americans in the Northfield area Connect to regional efforts to promote/interpret Native American history, including those based in Greenfield and Deerfield 	<p>Local Tribe(s) Mass Humanities</p>	<div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 100px;">   </div>	<p>LEAD: Newly-formed “visitor services” committee</p> <p>PARTNERS: Native American history enthusiasts Historical Commission</p>	<p>2</p>




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GOAL 8: TO PROMOTE NORTHFIELD’S HISTORY AND CULTURE

OBJECTIVE 8.1 BROADEN PUBLIC AWARENESS OF NORTHFIELD’S HISTORY AND CULTURE (CONTINUED)						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
8.1.4 Promote/interpret historic archaeological sites	Former mill sites along Connecticut River Tributaries Schell “Castle” Northfield Inn Schell Bridge (in time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include materials about local historic archaeology at the welcome center and on the associated website, and at the existing visitor center at Northfield Mountain • Construct outdoor kiosks with interpretive information (photos and text) at the historic archaeological sites • Enrich the public school curriculum to include segment(s) on local archaeology • Offer Northfield’s historic archaeology sites as laboratories for academic research • Enrich the public school curriculum to include segment(s) on archaeology 	Mass Humanities		<p>LEAD: Newly-formed “visitor services” committee</p> <p>PARTNERS: Friends of the Schell Bridge Historical Commission Historical Society/Museum FirstLight/Northfield Mountain Recreation Center U. Mass. Archaeological Services and Archaeology Department Monadnock Institute (Franklin Pierce University)</p>	2
8.1.5 Promote/interpret the craftsmanship of the Stearns family and others in the design and construction of American architecture in Northfield <i>(SEE ALSO 3.4.5)</i>	Historic architecture throughout Northfield, including the Stearns houses Vernacular Architecture Forum American Institute of Architects (AIA) U. Mass. master’s program in Historic Preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include materials about the Northfield’s historic architecture, including the Stearns houses, at the welcome center and on the associated website • Engage students of history and architecture in the study of the houses 	Mass Humanities		<p>LEAD: Historical Society and Historical Commission</p> <p>PARTNERS: Vernacular Architecture Forum University of Massachusetts AIA Stearns house owners</p>	2



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GOAL 8: TO PROMOTE NORTHFIELD'S HISTORY AND CULTURE

OBJECTIVE 8.2 PROMOTE STEWARDSHIP OF HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
8.2.1 Develop incentives for property owners to maintain historic buildings	Inventory of historic resources Historical Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a revolving loan fund Establish National Register Districts along Highland Avenue and at Rustic Ridge Establish an historic plaque program Offer historic preservation Tax Credits 	CPA		<p>LEAD: Historical Commission</p> <p>PARTNERS: Local bank(s) Board of Selectmen/Town Meeting Property owners along Highland Avenue and at Rustic Ridge</p>	1
8.2.2 Preserve publicly-owned buildings and landscapes (SEE ALSO 3.3.2, 4.2.1, 5.2.1, 7.2.1)	Town Hall Dickinson Memorial Library Schell Bridge Historic Town Common	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restore full match to CPA Invest in efforts to preserve Town Hall Continue to invest in the Dickinson Memorial Library as a community hub and cultural center Collaborate with MassDOT in the reconstruction of the Schell Bridge Assume control of the Main Street portion of Routes 63/10; Restore the Common through a combination of highway improvements and streetscape enhancements 	Massachusetts Historical Commission Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund ^v CPA FHA/MassDOT Town capital budget		<p>LEAD: Board of Selectmen</p> <p>PARTNERS: Town Departments Friends of the Schell Bridge MassDOT</p>	1



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GOAL 8: TO PROMOTE NORTHFIELD'S HISTORY AND CULTURE





OBJECTIVE 8.2 PROMOTE STEWARDSHIP OF HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES (CONTINUED)						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
8.2.3 Develop a multi-year, incremental plan to preserving buildings and landscapes Town-wide	Historical Commission Inventory of historic resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a Town-wide comprehensive preservation plan • Update inventory of historic resources • Conduct a community-wide survey to establish preservation priorities • Prepare a phased set of recommendations 	CPA		<p>LEAD: Historical Commission</p> <p>PARTNERS: Property owners Town Meeting Open Space Committee</p>	1



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GOAL 8: TO PROMOTE NORTHFIELD'S HISTORY AND CULTURE




OBJECTIVE 8.3 PROMOTE HERITAGE TOURISM						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
8.3.1 Brand Northfield as a historic and cultural destination (SEE ALSO 3.4)	Northfield's historic and cultural resources Northfield Area Tourism and Business Association Franklin County Chamber of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a logo to be used on signs, banners, and in web-based and print materials • Create a website dedicated to promoting Northfield history and culture, providing links to local resources, and offering a regularly-updated calendar of events • Approach MassDOT to obtain destination signage on highway • Write and place articles regarding D. L. Moody, Searns architecture, etc. in magazines and tourist publications • Consider outdoor bulletin board for posting on maps and interpretive materials, as well as events • Utilize parking at trailheads to provide orientation signs to cultural and historic sites 	Mass. Cultural Council Northfield Cultural Council	   	<p>LEAD: Northfield Area Tourism and Business Association</p> <p>PARTNERS: Historical Society/Museum MassDOT Open Space Committee Highway Department</p>	1



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GOAL 8: TO PROMOTE NORTHFIELD’S HISTORY AND CULTURE

OBJECTIVE 8.3 PROMOTE HERITAGE TOURISM (CONTINUED)						
Strategy	Existing Resources	Actions	Funding	Notes	Lead & Partners	Priority
8.3.3 Collaborate with regional heritage tourism efforts (SEE ALSO 3.4)	Northfield’s historic and cultural resources Historical Society/ Museum Pioneer Valley History Network Franklin County Chamber of Commerce Brattleboro & Keene tourism organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek inclusion on websites and in publications of regional tourism organizations, e.g. Massachusetts Scenic Byways Connect sites through maps/physical markers so visitors are given information about multiple sites to visit Utilize venues (visitor centers/information booths) of neighboring towns for placing information about Northfield’s historic and cultural resources 		  	<p>LEAD: Northfield Area Tourism and Tourism Association</p> <p>PARTNERS: Historical Society/Museum Massachusetts Scenic Byways Franklin County Chamber of Commerce</p>	1



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GOAL 8: TO PROMOTE NORTHFIELD'S HISTORY AND CULTURE

ENDNOTES

ⁱ The Cultural Facilities Fund is an initiative of the state council on the arts (Massachusetts Cultural Council) that promotes the acquisition, design, repair, rehabilitation renovation, expansion, or construction of nonprofit cultural facilities in Massachusetts. All grants from the Fund must be matched with cash contributions from the private or public sector. (<http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/facilities/facilities.htm>)

ⁱⁱ The National Christian Foundation (NCF) is the largest Christian grant-making foundation in the world, and as of the writing of this master plan, owned the Northfield Campus of the Northfield Mount Hermon School. (<http://heartland.nationalchristian.com>)

ⁱⁱⁱ The CS Lewis Foundation is dedicated to “advancing the renewal of Christian thought and creative expression...” and accomplishes this through education programs, conferences, retreats and other related activities. In September 2013, the foundation purchased Green Pastures (on the campus of the former Northfield School), and is developing the facility as a study center. (<http://www.cslewiscollege.org/cslewisfoundation/>)

^{iv} Mass Humanities, a state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities, provides financial support for programs that use history, literature, philosophy and other humanities disciplines to enhance and improve civic life throughout Massachusetts. (<http://www.masshumanities.org>).

^v The Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund of the Massachusetts Historical Commission is a state-funded 50% reimbursable matching grant program that supports the preservation of properties, landscapes, and sites (cultural resources) listed in the State Register of Historic Places. (<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcmppf/mppfidx.htm>)



GOAL 8: TO PROMOTE NORTHFIELD'S HISTORY AND CULTURE

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ZONING

Zoning is one of the Town's most important tools for guiding future use. Northfield has survived for decades with a minimal zoning bylaw, with all development subject to special permits. This has discouraged the establishment of businesses and has led to a deterioration of the Town's physical appearance. Moreover, it leaves open the type and extent of redevelopment at the Northfield Campus. To address the inadequacies in the bylaw, it is recommended that the Town revisit its existing regulation and make amendments enabling the interests of its residents to be better served.

Major zoning issues that need to be addressed are:

- Allowing more uses by-right so the Planning Board is not overworked in reviewing special permit applications, especially if development begins to occur a faster pace,
- Keeping residential/agriculture districts with proper protection enabling property owners to receive financial aid in their agricultural pursuits,
- Enabling and at the same time controlling the splitting up of large homes into smaller units,
- Allowing for multi-generational housing to accommodate Northfield's aging population,
- Identifying areas that are most suitable for smaller single-family housing units,
- Creating a village center and other commercial zoning districts that preserve the existing character of development along Main Street while enabling and encouraging appropriate commercial and residential mixed uses.

TEN WAYS ZONING CAN BENEFIT NORTHFIELD

A more comprehensive zoning by-law is needed in Northfield to provide a higher order of protection from unwanted development and to encourage and enable the types and locations of land uses desired by the Town. Presently there are only two zoning districts (residential-agricultural – forested and residential-agricultural) and two overlays (for flood plain and groundwater protection) in Northfield. Almost all zoning decisions are

TEN WAYS ZONING CAN BENEFIT NORTHFIELD

- 1 Promoting desirable uses
- 2 Protecting property values
- 3 Fostering public dialogue
- 4 Preserving farmland
- 5 Limiting sprawl
- 6 Limiting incompatible uses
- 7 Regulating floodplains
- 8 Promoting economic development
- 9 Minimizing litigation
- 10 Protecting Town investment

made through the use of special permits, which can be a laborious and somewhat uneven process,

Zoning is the principal tool to implement the Master Plan prepared by professional planning consultants, at an expense to the taxpayers, and steered by a very able committee of Town citizens. The steering committee held public meetings throughout the process of developing the plan to ensure that the wishes and hopes of the residents were represented in the content of the plan. The plan recommended the following be achieved through zoning:

- Preserving Northfield’s character (including historic & rural characteristics);
- Promoting desirable uses;
- Conserving and protecting property values by preventing incompatible land uses from locating where they produce unwanted impacts;
- Encouraging efficient and orderly development patterns;
- Facilitating adequate public investment in improvements; and
- Preserving the availability of prime farmland, parks and open space.
- Preserving the ability of agricultural landowners to apply for grants and loans to continue and enhance their agricultural activities.

PROMOTING DESIRABLE USES: Creation of a more vibrant and active village center, and control over uses associated with redevelopment of the Northfield Campus are two very important goals of the Master Plan. Both need to be enabled by more specific zoning.

PROTECTION OF PROPERTY VALUES: Without land-use regulations the value of property can be significantly affected in a negative way. If a neighboring property owner decides to start an industrial business, such as a salvage yard immediately adjoining a residential property, a city, school, daycare center, or a county park, without proper zoning requirements the residential and civic uses have no recourse.

PUBLIC DIALOGUE: The zoning bylaw provides an opportunity to express ideas and voice concerns about the establishment of new uses. The zoning bylaw, through the rezoning and special permit hearing processes, provides a platform for public input.

PRESERVATION OF PRIME FARMLAND: There is a concern that conversion of agricultural land to other uses will slowly erode the valuable agricultural base of the Town both in the production of raw materials and value-added products. Zoning helps discourage non-farm development in agricultural areas. This also minimizes conflicts and incompatibilities between agricultural and non-agricultural uses.¹

¹ In Northfield, it is important that some flexibility be provided in agriculturally-zoned lands so that farmers can continue to receive incentive grants and participate in programs to preserve land, improve farming practices, etc. By targeting zoning changes in the center of the Town (Main Street) and retaining the existing agricultural zones (RA and RAF), this flexibility can be sustained.



With well-thought-out amendments to the existing bylaw, Northfield could improve the visual character of its streetscape, including the design and placement of commercial signs.

LIMITING SPRAWL: Zoning helps establish and continue land-use patterns that are logical and convenient and historically appropriate. Northfield Center is quite unique and important historically. The pressure for non-contiguous low-density residential development within and outside the center puts pressure on the Town to increase services such as secondary road maintenance and improvements, public safety, schools including transportation, and emergency services. The costs of these rural services leads to higher taxes. Zoning helps communities use public resources efficiently, which results in saving the Town money.²

LIMITING INCOMPATIBLE USES: Zoning is the major legal means of regulating the use of land. It requires public review, should an incompatible use choose to set up shop on the lot next door. Consider the consequences should one of the following businesses locate right next to your rural home, church, school, or City:

- Adult Entertainment Themed Business
- Salvage Service or “Junk Yard”
- Bar or Tavern
- Animal Rendering Plant

FLOODPLAIN REGULATION: The zoning ordinance has regulations prescribed by the DNR and FEMA thereby assuring its participation in the NFIP and resulting lower cost flood insurance to Town residents with structures in the floodplain. In addition these regulations ensure that the general public doesn't bear the burden for expenses related to flood-related emergency services and losses which can be prevented by zoning. Yes, these issues can be covered by stand-alone bylaws, however incorporating them in zoning provides a uniform framework for administering the regulations.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Various Town and regional organizations are interested in economic development in Northfield both to bolster the Town's tax base as well as for the purpose of attracting desired uses in Town. Commercial and industrial companies looking to invest in Northfield want assurances that land-use policies will not change once a location is selected.

They are also interested in where the Town would like them to locate. More highly specified zoning provisions will provide the assurance and guidance needed.

LITIGATION: Everyone understands that in today's highly litigious society people and organizations often sue one another. Defense of a lawsuit can be very expensive and land-use related cases are no exception. For example, farmers are often concerned about the expansion of residential uses in close proximity to their operations because people often don't understand that dust, odors, and other aspects of modern farming practices will impact the enjoyment of their property. Zoning, with its setback and use regulations, can help defray litigation between property owners by preventing incompatible uses from locating next to each other.

STRENGTHENING ZONING TO CONTINUE TOWN AND PUBLIC INVESTMENTS: Development and implementation of the zoning bylaw includes a large investment by the Town to ensure that a sound framework for future growth is put in place. The investment includes countless hours spent by many who volunteered their time on related committees, boards and commissions as well as fees paid to professional consultants and planners. In addition, policies, forms and procedures required to implement the bylaw were developed by Town staff and department heads. The Town has also paid for staff training and development to ensure that citizens are served professionally. And, other third party professionals including attorneys, bankers, engineers, surveyors, developers, real estate and insurance agents have invested time in learning the regulations and permitting systems in order to serve their clients. A clear zoning by-law protects these investments.

² Limiting sprawl in Northfield will help fulfill one of the goals of the effort, throughout Franklin County, to create sustainable communities, as identified in the Franklin Regional Council of Governments' study, *Sustainable Franklin County*, “concentrate new growth near town centers and focus on infill development.”

ZONING RESOURCES INCLUDE:

- The existing zoning bylaws for Northfield (called the Protective Regulations Bylaw and dated August 2008);
- Model zoning bylaws available from various state and regional agencies to cover the variety of topics covered under zoning;
- An extensive set of newer zoning provisions adopted by communities in Massachusetts and other states;
- Advice on zoning available from state and regional agencies, and non-profit organizations such as the Audubon Society and Trustees of the Reservation; and
- Expert zoning consultant services available from law and town planning firms.

MASTER PLAN ELEMENT SUMMARY MATRIX

GOAL & RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	Historic and Cultural Resources	Open Space, Recreation, and Natural Resources	Housing and Neighborhoods	Economic Development	Transportation and Circulation	Public Services and Facilities	Land Use and Zoning
GOAL 1 TO ENSURE THE PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL FEATURES							
1.1.1 Provide opportunities for youth to learn the importance of preserving natural resources							
1.1.2. Assist landowners to protect their land through the APR and other appropriate programs							
1.1.3. Continue to encourage farm uses in areas with prime agricultural soils and farmland of statewide importance							
1.1.4. Create more specific bylaws to preserve natural resources and farming							
1.1.5. Work with landowners to improve and preserve for public enjoyment scenic views and other landscape features							
1.1.6. Work to make connections (natural corridors) between open spaces							
1.1.7. Develop and improve management of open spaces							
1.1.8. Protect water resources							

MASTER PLAN ELEMENT SUMMARY MATRIX

GOAL & RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	Historic and Cultural Resources	Open Space, Recreation, and Natural Resources	Housing and Neighborhoods	Economic Development	Transportation and Circulation	Public Services and Facilities	Land Use and Zoning
GOAL 2 TO PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION AND COMMUNITY GATHERING							
2.1.1 Support and create opportunities for neighborhood events							
2.1.2 Support and create opportunities for Town-wide events							
2.2.1 Increase opportunities for gathering at the Town’s Linear Common							
2.2.2 Increase opportunities for gathering on Main Street							
2.2.3 Encourage the establishment of an arts/cultural focus							
2.2.4 Develop a Community Park that may include playing fields, tennis courts, swimming, playgrounds, ice skating, picnic area, and other activities for all ages							
2.2.5 Develop an outdoor gathering space at the Northfield Elementary School, in the form of a bandstand or pavilion							
2.3.1 Develop/acquire needed recreational facilities							
2.3.2 Promote recreational activities for health and enjoyment							
2.4.1 Increase the number of public access points on the Connecticut River, including boat and paddling launching areas							

MASTER PLAN ELEMENT SUMMARY MATRIX

GOAL & RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	Historic and Cultural Resources	Open Space, Recreation, and Natural Resources	Housing and Neighborhoods	Economic Development	Transportation and Circulation	Public Services and Facilities	Land Use and Zoning
GOAL 3 TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOWN-WIDE							
3.1.1 Promote existing farming							
3.1.2 Promote development of new farms and farming activity							
3.1.3 Promote development of agriculture-related businesses and services							
3.2.1 Develop a pro-industry/ manufacturing or industry/ manufacturing-friendly environment in Northfield							
3.3.1 Provide more parking on and/or off Main Street							
3.3.2 Visually enhance the Main Street streetscape							
3.3.3 Encourage establishment of businesses that serve community needs (pub, gas station, “anchor business,” etc.)							
3.3.4 Provide design guidelines for Main Street to help new businesses meld aesthetically with the character of Northfield							
3.3.5 Establish greater control over truck traffic on Main Street and Mount Hermon Station Road							
3.3.6 Promote small, locally-owned business development							
3.3.7 Provide guidance and publicize Town interests in redevelopment of the Northfield Campus.							

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GOAL 3 TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOWN-WIDE (continued)							
3.4.1 Construct the Schell Bridge to create a pedestrian/bike-way connection across the Connecticut River							
3.4.2 Promote long distance bicycle tours							
3.4.3 Develop a Native American cultural center/ museum of Native American heritage							
3.4.4 Promote the Dwight Lyman Moody story							
3.4.5 Promote the Stearns houses story							
3.4.6 Develop and promote more agro-tourism							
3.4.7 Promote enhanced recreational, eating and lodging uses at the Northfield Golf Club							

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GOAL 4 TO PRESERVE AND REVITALIZE MAIN STREET							
4.1.1 Develop a plan to define the historic character of Main Street							
4.1.2 Establish a village center district							
4.1.3 Develop economic opportunities and cluster commercial activity in designated areas							
4.1.4 Develop design guidelines for commercial and residential properties							
4.2.1 Increase safety							
4.2.2 Increase connectivity							
4.2.3 Beautify the Main Street corridor							
4.2.4 Increase community gathering places							
4.3.1 Collaborate in campus redevelopment efforts to support Town goals							
4.3.2 Preserve campus buildings and landscape to extent possible							
4.3.3 Develop a marketing plan to promote Northfield and the campus							

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GOAL & RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	Historic and Cultural Resources	Open Space, Recreation, and Natural Resources	Housing and Neighborhoods	Economic Development	Transportation and Circulation	Public Services and Facilities	Land Use and Zoning
GOAL 5 TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC FACILITIES, IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES, AND ENHANCE COMMUNICATION							
5.1.1 Review the structure of Town government							
5.1.2 Broaden volunteer participation on municipal boards and committees							
5.1.3 Establish a clear channel of communication between government and residents							
5.1.4 Improve enforcement of land use regulations							
5.1.5 Continue discussions to bring broadband access to Town							
5.1.6 Promote opportunities for community gathering							
5.1.7 Increase awareness regarding need to be sustainable							
5.2.1 Plan/phase improvements to public properties							
5.2.2 Provide adequate facilities for municipal offices							
5.2.3 Provide adequate facilities to accommodate Public Safety functions (specifically the needs of Fire, Police and EMS)							
5.2.4 Ensure that municipal equipment storage needs are adequately accommodated and that communication systems are better							
5.2.5 Provide adequate indoor & outdoor educational facilities in order to continue to support excellence in education							

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GOAL & RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	Historic and Cultural Resources	Open Space, Recreation, and Natural Resources	Housing and Neighborhoods	Economic Development	Transportation and Circulation	Public Services and Facilities	Land Use and Zoning
GOAL 5 TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC FACILITIES, IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES, AND ENHANCE COMMUNICATION (continued)							
5.2.6 Provide adequate facilities for growing senior population							
5.2.7 Continue to provide library services, adapting to new technologies and providing varied programming to meet community needs and desires							
5.2.8 Improve infrastructure to support alternative modes of transportation							
5.2.9. Control the quality & quantity of stormwater runoff, essential to the overall health of the Town's residents & natural resources							
5.3.1 Improve the ability of residents to travel without needing an automobile (including seniors, youth and those wishing to avoid car travel)							
5.3.2 Explore need for additional services for increasing elderly population							
5.3.3 Plan for the possibility of potential growth and consider alternative ways of extending sewer service							
5.3.4 Plan for the possibility of potential growth & ensure the future availability of water							

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GOAL & RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	Historic and Cultural Resources	Open Space, Recreation, and Natural Resources	Housing and Neighborhoods	Economic Development	Transportation and Circulation	Public Services and Facilities	Land Use and Zoning
GOAL 6 TO EXPAND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOODS							
6.1.1 Encourage development of smaller housing units							
6.1.2 Encourage attached units to save land and reduce costs							
6.1.3 Explore possibilities for reuse of Northfield Campus buildings for housing for the elderly							
6.2.1 Expand and modernize the existing Squakeag Village Housing for the Elderly							
6.2.2 Identify a site for low and moderate income family housing							
6.2.3 Identify sites for non-profit affordable housing developers							
6.3.1 Devise strategies for further development, interactions and stabilization of the Town Hall neighborhood							
6.3.2 Devise strategies for further development, interactions and stabilization of the Northeast Northfield neighborhood							
6.3.3 Devise strategies for further development, interactions and stabilization of the Mountain neighborhood							
6.3.4 Devise strategies for further development, interactions and stabilization of the Farms neighborhood							
6.3.5 Devise strategies for further development, interactions and stabilization of the West Northfield neighborhood							

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GOAL & RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	Historic and Cultural Resources	Open Space, Recreation, and Natural Resources	Housing and Neighborhoods	Economic Development	Transportation and Circulation	Public Services and Facilities	Land Use and Zoning
GOAL 7 TO ENHANCE TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION SYSTEMS							
7.1.1 Coordinate with MassDOT to construct new pedestrian/ bicycle bridge over Connecticut River							
7.1.2 Establish Safe Routes to School Program							
7.1.3 Develop Bicycle Plan							
7.1.4 Coordinate with Bernardston to continue to provide senior van service							
7.1.5 Coordinate with FRCOG to identify park-and-ride lot location							
7.1.6 Increase connectivity through construction of more sidewalks, bike lanes, and links to adjacent trails where needed							
7.1.7 Provide ridesharing options to serve residents without vehicles							
7.2.1 Improve safety and livability on Main Street							
7.2.2 Improve safety at state maintained intersections							
7.2.3 Identify measures to reduce truck impacts on Main Street and Route 142							
7.2.4 Improve student drop-off/pick-up operation at Elementary school							

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GOAL 8 TO PROMOTE NORTHFIELD'S HISTORY AND CULTURE							
8.1.1 Provide opportunities for visitors to learn about Northfield's history							
8.1.2 Showcase and interpret D. L. Moody and his legacy							
8.1.3 Rekindle Northfield's Native American history and its interpretation							
8.1.4 Promote/interpret historic archaeological sites							
8.1.5 Promote/interpret the craftsmanship of the Stearns family and others in the design and construction of American architecture throughout Northfield							
8.2.1 Develop incentives for property owners to maintain historic buildings							
8.2.2 Preserve publicly-owned buildings and landscapes							
8.2.3 Develop a multi-year, incremental plan to preserving buildings and landscapes Town-wide							
8.3.1 Brand Northfield as a historic and cultural destination							
8.3.2 Broaden historic and cultural offerings for visitors							
8.3.3 Collaborate with regional heritage tourism efforts							