



Town of Barkhamsted

# **Barkhamsted Economic Development Strategy**

**September 30, 2009**



Consulting  
Services, Inc.

Economic Development Analysts & Strategists

## **TOWN OF BARKHAMSTED, CONNECTICUT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

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## **TOWN OF BARKHAMSTED, CONNECTICUT**

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

We wish to acknowledge the time, energy and commitment of all the people who participated in the creation of this ***Economic Development Strategy*** for the Town of Barkhamsted which includes town officials, the Economic Development Study Committee, the Riverton Merchants Association, members of the Barkhamsted Historical Society, town business owners and Barkhamsted residents. Also important was and is the contribution made by the many volunteers and professionals that made the Wilderness Wellness Weekend a success and set the stage for future events.

We also want to acknowledge the people who participated on the three study teams in the process for preparing the prior June 2007 ***Economic Development Study Report***. We also found and concur with the findings of the town survey prepared during that process that there continues to be a strong preference to maintain the town's rural and historic character.

## **SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW**

In 2008, the Town of Barkhamsted initiated strategic actions intended to attract new businesses and economic activity to the town without compromising its rural character. In late 2008 the Town issued a Request for Proposals for two principal tasks:

1. Create a strategy for economic development for the Town, with equal emphasis on the Route 44 corridor and the Village of Riverton, and other portions of the Town found appropriate.
2. Identify and create an initial marketing plan for a series of events for Riverton, which will attract people and showcase the attractiveness of the area.

While these tasks were identified separately, an underlying goal of the project was to tie Riverton more closely together with other portions of the community.

These tasks could be performed separately by individual firms or by one firm. Ultimately the firm of Garnet Consulting Services, Inc. was retained to head this initiative. The Garnet team included Leslie Cosgrove, Cosgrove Development Services and Michael A. Casale, dba Riverton Resources. Garnet is a nationally known economic development consulting firm located in Barkhamsted.

The process of preparing this strategy included:

- Extensive interaction and discussion with the Economic Development Study Committee that served as the project oversight committee throughout the process
- Use of 1-on-1 interviews, focus groups and/or a business survey to find out what's on the mind of business-people in Barkhamsted, both in Riverton and community-wide
- A standing invitation to community residents on the Town's website and by flyers at key locations to contact us with thoughts and ideas
- Three public forums
- A public presentation

- Hands on participation in executing events, in particular the first Wilderness Wellness Weekend held on July 10-12, 2009 and also in planning for Wilderness & Wellness II scheduled for September 18-20, 2009. It was helpful to understand and assess the capability in the community in order to make recommendations for organizational initiatives and for increasing the capacity of volunteers.
- Assistance in writing a grant application. During the process, staff at the Connecticut Main Street Center referred an opportunity for the Town to seek grant funds for Community Cultural Planning and Action Plans from the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation funded through an Initiatives Grant from Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism. Grant funds would be awarded to two communities to produce action plans for underutilized/unrecognized cultural and historic assets (i.e., buildings, historic districts, town greens and parks, etc) in their communities. The Town's focus was on Riverton which would further the planning efforts to date and would provide a seamless transition into the implementation stage. It was a tight time frame, but it was decided to assist the town in this endeavor. Barkhamsted was not funded in this round, but is now well positioned for future opportunities and it is recommended that the Town continue to seek grants to further historic and cultural preservation and revitalization.

The Barkhamsted Economic Development Strategy contains specific actions for achieving success in carrying out the two tasks identified in the Request for Proposal.

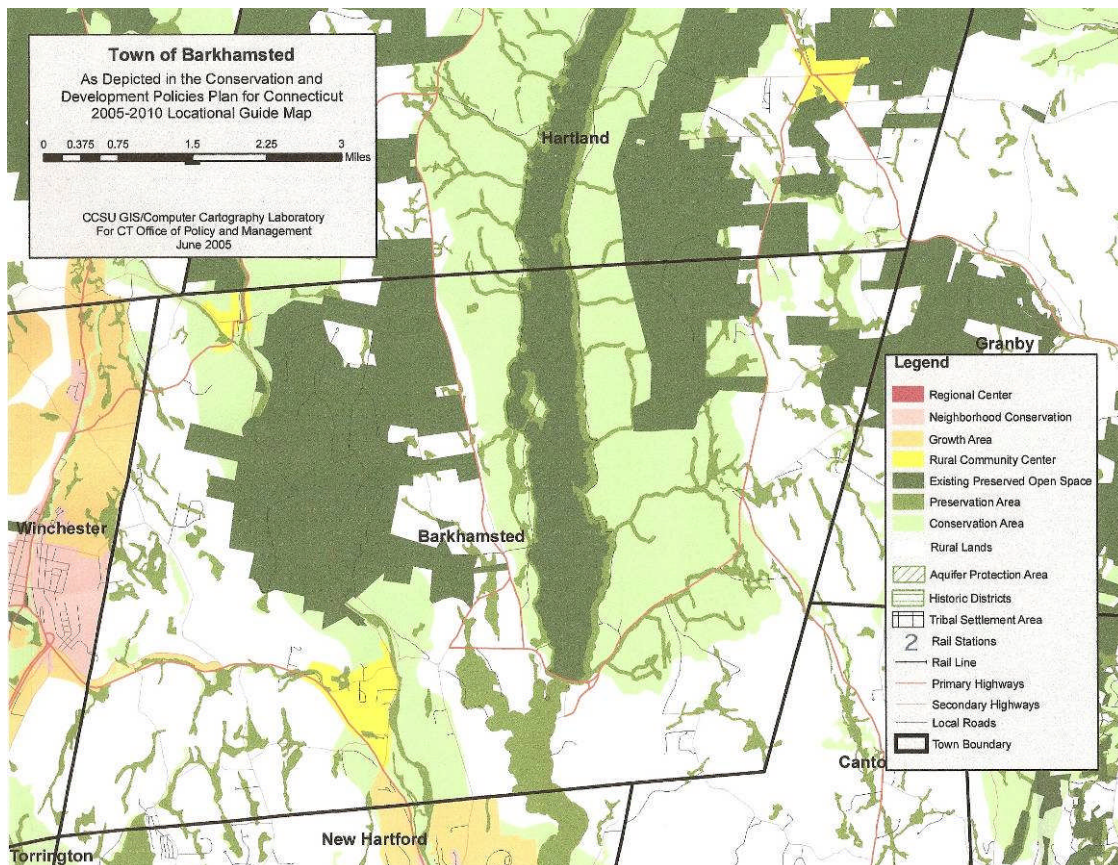
# BARKHAMSTED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

## Introduction

The goal of this project is to stimulate economic development in Barkhamsted and the challenge is to cause more economic activity without noticeable change in community character. From the outset it was important to understand key policies made by the State of Connecticut in its 2005-2010 ***Conservation and Development Policies Plan*** and by the Town of Barkhamsted in its ***Plan of Conservation and Development, 2007***.

Barkhamsted contains four state forests, and fully half of its 36 square miles is protected from development. The Farmington River is one of only six federally designated "wild and scenic" rivers in New England. All of these are assets to the town and should be protected; therefore, any development should be thoughtful and keeping in character with both the Town's natural and historic assets. Furthermore, town officials should take a proactive position when opportunities arise.

**Figure 1**  
**Barkhamsted Area – 2005-2010 Locational Guide Map**  
**Conservation and Development Policies Plan**





### **Essential Issue #1: How to preserve “rural character” and how to address infrastructure needs while implementing this plan**

- Essential to demonstrate early and throughout the process that **we** are sensitive to the character preservation need
- Need to select opportunities that fit the community from the broader range of opportunities
- Emphasize projects that create less vehicular traffic
- Use the Main Street Approach for Village areas
- Visual impact is key – emphasize scale, design, attractive signage, landscaping and use of tools such as earth-berms to hide blacktop
- Infrastructure needs will be dependent on the type of land use and physical characteristics of specific sites



### **Essential Issue #2: Demonstrating a reasonable payback from economic development efforts**

- A shared vision for the management of economic development in the community
- Substantial business participation in the process
- A stronger business climate in the future
- A healthier business portion of the Grand List

## **Methodology and Research**

### **1. Initial Background Research**

- Review of relevant reports, such as the Town of Barkhamsted Plan of Conservation & Development, 2007, Barkhamsted Economic Development Study, 2007, Barkhamsted Zoning Regulations, State of Connecticut Conservation and Development Policies Plan, 2005-2010
- CERC Community Profiles, SiteFinder property listings, Department of Labor Data
- Town of Barkhamsted Assessor's Records, Town Clerk's Register of Trade Names

Key findings in the Barkhamsted Economic Development Study, 2007 (with those particularly relevant to this economic development strategy shown in bold) were:

- **a preference to maintain the town's rural and historic character**
- a strong bias against condominium and apartment development
- **controlled commercial development on the Rt. 44 Corridor**
- **a preference for upgrading infrastructure so long as there were no taxpayer implications**
- a willingness for the Town to purchase land for a dedicated purpose
- an interest in funding recreational facilities
- **a limited willingness to permit incentive programs for future development**
- no strong preference regarding the future development of senior citizen housing
- a willingness to expand the town's educational facilities.



2. Public Forums to obtain input from business owners and residents and to share concepts and findings.
  - January 20, 2009 Riverton Focus Group
  - February 10, 2009 Route 44 Focus Group
  - March 11, 2009 Riverton Forum
3. Economic Development Committee input through monthly or other periodic meetings
  - After each public forum, the Project Team met with the Economic Development Study Committee to report the findings and to obtain input.
4. Riverton Merchants Association input from monthly meetings
5. Other meetings were also held to plan and execute the first Wilderness Wellness Weekend held on July 10-12, 2009 and to plan and execute the second Wilderness & Wellness Weekend II to be held on September 18-20, 2009.
6. Route 44 property database

A review was made of the properties along Route 44 in Barkhamsted from the Assessor's Records. There are 55 separate parcels ranging from .26 to 143.8 acres with a total of 695.76 acres. These 55 parcels have 7 zone classifications including one residential, two business, three industrial and one design district (Pleasant Valley Center.)

**Table 1**  
**Chart of Zones on Route 44**

<b>Residential</b>	<b>Business</b>	<b>Industrial</b>	<b>Special Design District</b>
RA-2	B-1	I-1	PVC
	B-2	I-2	
		I-3	

The Assessor provided the data in an Excel spread sheet with the map, block, lot, property location and address, owner, mailing address, acreage, topographical description and zone. The information was also able to be segregated into properties on the north side and south side of Route 44. It should be noted that not all communities in Connecticut have the data in a format that could be used to analyze potential sites for development.

The descriptions of the parcels include level, rolling, above street and swampy. A windshield tour was made of the properties confirming the descriptions. In addition there were steep slopes and rock outcrops on a number of them.

## 7. Vacant Land Inventory

There were only a few parcels of vacant land along Route 44 that were being marketed by real estate brokers. These parcels are not listed on the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC) SiteFinder system, but had signs on them advertising that they were for sale. These two parcels are on the south side of Route 44 near or on the Barkhamsted-Winsted line.

**Figure 2**



408 New Hartford Road

**Figure 3**



390 New Hartford Road

The two real estate brokers were interviewed. The property at 408 New Hartford Road is a small parcel, .58 acres with the dimensions 187 feet of frontage by a depth of 140 feet. Some of the site has a steep grade and the ability to support a septic system is in question. The property is being offered for \$89,900, or the equivalent of \$155,000 per acre..

The property at 390 New Hartford Road is a 4.9 acre parcel, with 786 feet of frontage is listed for \$499,900, \$102,020 per acre.

During these interviews, it was also learned that there was a signed contract on a parcel of land at Nob Hill and Route 44 and the prospective buyer is interested in constructing a facility in the near future. Another property mentioned as possibly available is the Mallory Brook Farm, LLC located at 112 Old New Hartford Road on 5.3 acres zoned RA2. At 115 Old New Hartford Road there is a 1.68 acre parcel zoned B2.

## 8. Buildings for Lease

There are three buildings for lease listed in the CERC SiteFinder inventory, all of which are owned by Hitchcock Properties LLC and listed with AMS Real Estate LLC.

**Figure 4**  
**Hitchcock Properties LLC**

The Lambert Hitchcock House  
8 Main Street



The house is approximately 3,704 square feet and is listed as office space at a lease rate of \$10 on a triple net basis. There are two floors with 8 ft. ceilings.

Hitchcock Chair Company Warehouse  
13 Riverton Road



The Hitchcock Chair Company Warehouse is listed as having 49,018 square feet for lease which could be used for office or warehousing for a single tenant or by multiple tenants, but the minimum space a tenant could lease is 2,500 square feet. The lease rate is \$3 per square foot on a triple net basis. It is a single story building with 14 foot ceilings, 4 loading docks and 2 drive-in doors.

Hitchcock Chair Factory  
2 School Street



At the present time there are 24,019 square feet available in the Hitchcock Chair Factory for lease at a rate of \$3 per square feet on a triple net basis. Two floors are available and the ceiling heights are 12 feet. The type of use proposed is office or flex space. The smallest space a tenant can lease is 1,000 square feet.

There are two small spaces, one under 2,000 square feet and the other 2,500± square feet for lease at the Mallory Brook Shopping Center. The rental rate is \$10 per square foot. In Pleasant Valley, the Pleasant Valley Store became vacant at the end of August 2009.

9. Barkhamsted Businesses - There are 83 businesses listed in the Town of Barkhamsted Assessor's records.

#### 10. Barkhamsted Business Formations

An indicator of business growth is the filing of trade names. The Barkhamsted Town Clerk provided the following information on business filings of trade names:

**Table 2**  
**Trade Name Filings in Barkhamsted**

<b>Calendar Year</b>	<b>Number of Certificates</b>
2004	31
2005	40
2006	33
2007	18
2008	23
<b>Total 5 Years</b>	145
Average	29
Jan-Mar 2009	6

Source: Barkhamsted Town Clerk

The number of trade names filed usually undercounts business formations in most communities because many small businesses do not register with the local government. Based on national data that indicates an annual business startup rate of 1 business per 150 - 200 people, Barkhamsted's 2008 population of 3,769 would yield 18 - 25 new businesses per year, with actual activity exceeding this number. This data indicates an entrepreneurial spirit in the Town and region that could generate demand for additional space in Barkhamsted in the future as these small businesses grow.

#### 11. Home Based Businesses

Many of the business listed in the trade name filings are home-based. In the United States, over 90 percent of home-based businesses are sole proprietorships and home-based businesses are the predominant form. Homes are, in effect, do-it-yourself business incubators, which collectively provide start-ups with an entry point into the business world.

Barkhamsted is a good place for many home-based businesses. The environment is good and the proximity to the airport is excellent. As a business location it is improving with better access to high speed internet. Cellphone service reception is still lacking in certain areas of town.

## Research Findings

### 1. Why should Barkhamsted support economic development?

The following reasons were identified at the second focus group although they were also echoed during the entire process in developing an Economic Development Strategy for the Town of Barkhamsted. There was a willingness to support quality economic development projects of the right scale that would fit in with Barkhamsted and not have a negative impact on the rural and historic character of the community.

- Reduce residential tax burden by having more businesses paying taxes to the Town
- Improve employment opportunities for Town residents
- Allow residents to obtain desired goods and services locally
- Provide a sense of community
- Bring more visitors
- Contribute to the quality of life

### 2. Strengths and Weaknesses of Barkhamsted as a location for business

At the second focus group, the strengths and weakness of Barkhamsted were identified particularly in terms of a location for business. While some of the strengths and weaknesses were attributed to Barkhamsted, others were related to the region and to the State of Connecticut. This topic was also discussed with local businesspeople and the consulting team added its own observations from evaluating many other communities.

**Table 3**  
**Chart of Strengths & Weaknesses**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Road network (US 44, Routes 8, 219, others)</li><li>• Natural surroundings</li><li>• Recreational opportunities – river, lake, Sundown, roads good for biking</li><li>• Traffic count on US 44</li><li>• Low crime &amp; poverty</li><li>• Separation from city problems</li><li>• Beauty of the Town</li><li>• Proximity to Bradley</li><li>• Little local competition</li><li>• Northwest Connecticut Community College</li><li>• Available labor</li><li>• Good schools</li><li>• Town website</li><li>• Community minded people</li><li>• Lack of signs and visual clutter</li><li>• Library</li><li>• Open space</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Low customer base</li><li>• No water or sewer</li><li>• Lack of business land</li><li>• Wetlands along US 44</li><li>• Route 44 congestion, safety and appearance</li><li>• Distance from a major city</li><li>• CT is not business-friendly</li><li>• The current economy</li><li>• Competition from other communities/ states/counties</li><li>• No local paper (lack of advertising opportunities)</li><li>• Costs (of living, of electricity)</li></ul>

### **3. Issues shaping economic development in Barkhamsted**

The following were issues shaping economic development in Barkhamsted that were identified at the second public forum. Again some of these were regional in nature, but many of them were specific to Barkhamsted.

- Lack of public transportation
- Impacts of potential extension of Route 8 as divided highway to the north
- What to do about Riverton – tourism potential
- State Forests – tourism potential
- MDC and State Forests use up 50±% of Town's land area
- Vacant business space in the region (not much locally)
- Finding appropriate land use balance
- Maintaining community character
- Energy costs

### **4. Opportunities for economic growth**

These opportunities were identified at the second focus group and were looked at in a more comprehensive manner during the planning process.

- Use the Town's open space as the focal point
- Recreational activities (both outdoor and indoor)
- Town is farm-friendly (except for sign regulations)
- Agribusiness
- Alternative energy
- Attracting travelers
- Home-based businesses
- Reuse of the Hitchcock property
- Development of the landfill property

### **5. Overarching principles guiding future economic development**

- A. Good land use regulations and processes are vital to retaining and attracting quality economic development projects while preserving the character of the community and must be in place to gain the trust of residents to support economic development.
- B. Historic Preservation plays an important role in retaining the character of the community.

### **6. Other findings**

- A. The property known as the Riverton Fairgrounds, owned by The Union Agricultural Society of Barkhamsted, Colebrook & Hartland, Inc., is a key piece of property and critical to Riverton and to the Town of Barkhamsted as a whole as a location for events. The organization is celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> year anniversary which is significant. It has the

designation (501)(c)(5) by the Internal Revenue Service and its purpose is to promote agriculture. In the past, this property has not been used as effectively as it might have been. While the organization has active members and its purpose has been the same since inception, there may come a time when there are not active members and the property could be sold to a developer. It is recommended that the Town of Barkhamsted enter into an agreement for the Right of First Refusal should this property ever become available.

- B. The Lambert House and its location is a key property in Riverton. The Town should consider purchasing, leasing or leasing with an option to buy the property and use it for the arts and related uses or other uses supported by the market that can have a positive impact on the economic health of the Village and Town.
- C. Commercial development in Barkhamsted is currently limited by a lack of public utilities. While small scale development may be possible with wells and septic systems, soils characteristics in some areas may not be suitable for septic systems. Prior discussions with New Hartford and Winsted about extending sewer mains that connect to their sewage treatment plants should be continued to support appropriate development.
- D. Wireless telecommunications capabilities in Riverton must be improved both for business people who come to Riverton, but also for visitors.
- E. Public restroom facilities in Riverton are necessary to support increased visitor traffic.



## Riverton

Riverton, located in the northwest portion of Barkhamsted, is a 19<sup>th</sup> century village that is known nationally for its trout fishing and draws fishermen from around the country. The main area located between the Still River and the Farmington River has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. It was the home of the Hitchcock Chair Factory, founded in 1818 by Lambert Hitchcock. For many years up until 2006, the company operated a furniture factory and showroom which drew an estimated 30,000 visitors and shoppers annually.

There are still businesses that operate in Riverton and it remains a special place to those who live there or visit. A public forum was held on January 20, 2009 to begin the process of defining the Riverton of the future. This forum was facilitated by Kimberly Parsons-Whittaker of the Connecticut Main Street Center, with the consultant team assisting.

### 1. Vision Statement

A vision statement is critical to convey the character and identity of a sense of place. The process of visioning is used as a tool to gain consensus and to articulate a vision that would describe the place in the future. The group in attendance was asked to list terms that would describe Riverton in the year 2020 and created the following list:

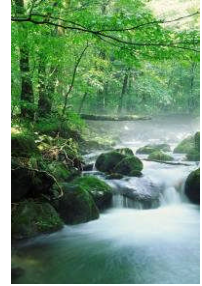
**Table 4**  
**Terms that will describe Riverton in 2020**  
(Grouped by similar or related theme)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Quintessential New England charm</li><li>▪ 19<sup>th</sup> Century village charm</li><li>▪ Lambert Hitchcock Heritage</li><li>▪ Village cluster (live/work)</li><li>▪ Residential/business balance</li><li>▪ Appropriate adaptive reuse</li><li>▪ Scenic riverfront setting</li><li>▪ Natural serenity</li><li>▪ Retains its intimacy</li><li>▪ Holiday charm</li><li>▪ Easy access to river and forests</li><li>▪ Riverwalk</li><li>▪ Walkability</li><li>▪ Convenient access (Routes 44 &amp; 8, airport)</li><li>▪ Regional destination</li><li>▪ Connections with surrounding resources (campground, dam, forest)</li><li>▪ Outdoor recreation</li><li>▪ Outdoor waterfront dining</li><li>▪ Fishing &amp; boating</li><li>▪ Historical hikes</li><li>▪ Hike, bike, canoe &amp; eat</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Bustling small businesses</li><li>▪ Eclectic mix</li><li>▪ Business collaboration (cross promotions, sense of family)</li><li>▪ Spirit of entrepreneurship</li><li>▪ Executive retreats</li><li>▪ Guided tours</li><li>▪ Romantic getaways</li><li>▪ Live performances</li><li>▪ Amphitheater concert series</li><li>▪ Mix or arts, music and culture</li><li>▪ Spend the day</li><li>▪ Return trips</li><li>▪ Weekend packages</li><li>▪ Seasonal family activities</li><li>▪ Special events [seasonal]</li><li>▪ Appeals to all ages</li><li>▪ Handicapped friendly &amp; accessible</li><li>▪ Socially, environmentally advanced</li><li>▪ Accessible parking</li><li>▪ Bathroom facilities</li><li>▪ Multi-use fairgrounds</li></ul>
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After the list was created, two groups were formed and asked to develop a vision statement for Riverton using the terms and themes on the list. Each of the vision statements was similar and the consultant team blended them into the following:

### **Vision for Riverton 2020:**

*Nestled near the headwaters of the Farmington River in Connecticut's Litchfield Hills, Riverton is a quaint, historic village with 19<sup>th</sup> century charm providing a natural serenity in a warm, welcoming environment for active, community-minded people of all ages. Its unique blend of shops, arts, entertainment, outdoor recreation, and opportunities to relax make it an ideal location to live, work, play, visit, and run a business.*



## **2. Positioning & Branding**

### *Economic Engine*

The first step in redefining Riverton and greater Barkhamsted for vibrant, sustainable and logical economic development is to harness and "own" what's already there. In other words, to use what is commercially valuable, viable and marketable.

### *Growth Trends*

The green, wellness and adventure industries are expanding exponentially—responding to growing demand for environmental conservation, preventative healthcare, adventure travel, and a return to simpler lifestyles.

Riverton is best suited—and situated—geographically, culturally and commercially to capitalize on these growth trends by "positioning" itself with this overall campaign theme:

Riverton  
*It's Right Here™*

The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines a brand as a "name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of other sellers. Branding is also important for communities. According to the Connecticut Main Street Center, the advantages of a strong brand identity lead to:

- Greater awareness of the community (thus more people will be potentially interested in visiting and shopping there)
- Greater potential interest in supporting the community from marketing, communications and funding partners

### 3. Strategic Framework for Events

Beginning with a focus on weekends, Riverton will attract individuals, groups, organizations and companies with a kinship to our environment, culture and lifestyle.

#### Goal

Prosperity with Preservation

#### Objectives

- Encourage "like-minded" visitors
- Enhance our quality of life
- Ensure a prosperous future

#### Strategies

- Implement a series of events to support the "It's *Right* Here" positioning
- Integrate green, wellness and adventure activities into each event
- Economically, link each event to fellow merchants
- Cooperate with like-minded organizations, groups and individuals
- Lead by design and discipline

#### Tactics

- Fly Fishing and Fishing Derby
- Wilderness & Wellness Weekends
- Concerts and Shows
- Riverton Rewards Card and Brochure
- New Riverton Website (to reflect branding and positioning)
- Executive Retreats
- Fundraising Events
- Pre/Post-Event Publicity
- Corporate Sponsors
- Creation of "Friends of Riverton" organization

### 4. Tactics Descriptions

1. **Fly-Fishing** – The Wild & Scenic Farmington River offers world-class fly-fishing. Riverton is one of the finest fly-fishing destinations in the United States, but it's one of Riverton's best-kept secrets. Fly-fishers are traditionally a discerning group, somewhat elitist in their love for the sport and their choice of their surroundings. They would be likely to spend time and money in Riverton, especially if there were activities to occupy a spouse not interested in the sport.

To draw attention to Fly-Fishing, we will position Riverton as the place to **Fly Right**.



- **The Fly Market** -- the World's First Flea Market for Fly-Fisherman. Attract amateur fly-fisherman, working with appropriate RMA members and local angler associations.



The World's First  
**Fly Market**<sup>TM</sup>  
Riverton, Connecticut

**Fly Fishing Flea Market**

Riverton Center • July 11, 2009 • 8am-3pm  
visit [www.rivertonct.com](http://www.rivertonct.com)



- **Fishing Derby** – We will continue to expand on the equity established in the annual Fishing Derby.

## 2. **Wilderness & Wellness Weekends**

Riverton's wilderness assets are well-known and understood. These assets will form one of two strategic "silos" from which economic growth can occur. The other silo is wellness, defined as follows: *"Wellness is a multidimensional state of being describing the existence of positive health in an individual as exemplified by quality of life and a sense of well-being."*

Wilderness & Wellness Weekends are three-day celebrations occurring three times a year -- May, July and September. Weekends embrace events representing each of the strategic silos, as reflected on the poster and schedule on the following page.

Antiques Show • Cooking Demos

Hiking • Canoeing • Concerts • Wellness Walk



Healing Arts • Fly-Fishing • Glass Blowing Demos

**Wilderness & Wellness  
Weekend II • Sept. 18-20, 2009**

visit [www.rivertonct.com](http://www.rivertonct.com)

Biking • Food • Kayaking • Art Show

Friday 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Sunday 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

**Riverton**  
Nestled between Wilderness and Wellness

## Schedule of Events September 18-20, 2009

### Friday

6 - 8 p.m.

Champagne Preview  
Antiques Show\*  
Riverton Fairgrounds  
Art Show - Lambert House

6 - 8 p.m.

### Saturday

9 a.m. - 10 a.m.

9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Noon - 2 p.m.

Noon - 4 p.m.

Noon - 6 p.m.

Noon - 3 p.m.

1 - 5 p.m.

Noon - 5 p.m.

Noon - 1 p.m.

Noon - 1 p.m.

1, 1:30, 3 & 3:30

1 - 2 p.m.

2 - 4 p.m.

4 - 5 p.m.

2 p.m.

4:30 - 6:30 p.m.

7:30 p.m.

Wellness Walk - Riverton Park  
Glass Blowing Workshops  
Greenwood Glass Blowing Studio  
Wyatt Whiteman  
Colonial Cooking Demo  
Fire Pit behind Rose's Kitchen  
Antiques Show\*  
Riverton Fairgrounds  
Hitchcock Chair Restoration &  
Stenciling Decoration  
Still River Antiques  
Healing Arts - Lambert House  
Art Show - Lambert House  
Duck Walk Bake Sale  
Lambert House Portico  
Goulet Pony Cart Rides - Fairgrounds  
Concerts & Activities - Riverton Center  
Face Painting with Sabrina  
Kristen Graves - Folk & Pop  
Dan Butterworth & His Marionettes  
Next Generation Musicians  
Barry Thompson Acoustic Duo  
Greg Hoffman - Acoustic Blues  
Concert at Riverton Church  
Brilliant Broadway \*  
Buffet at Firehouse\*  
Buffet & Broadway\*  
Concert at Riverton Church  
Brilliant Broadway \*

### Sunday

9 - 10 a.m.

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Noon - 1 p.m.

Noon - 1:30 p.m.

Noon - 4 p.m.

Noon - 5 p.m.

Noon - 1 p.m.

1 - 3 p.m.

3 - 4 p.m.

4 - 5 p.m.

Wellness Walk - Riverton Park  
Antiques Show\*  
Riverton Fairgrounds  
Wyatt Whiteman  
Colonial Cooking Demo  
Fire Pit behind Rose's Kitchen  
Face Painting with Sabrina  
Riverton Church Bake Sale &  
Ham Dinner\* Riverton Grange  
Art Show & Healing Arts  
Lambert House  
Concerts at Riverton Center  
Dark Horse - Bluegrass  
The Traveling Trout - Country  
Doug Mahard - Contemporary  
C-Side Alley Folk-Rock & Acoustic

\*Admission Fee



### 3. **Concerts and Shows**

Wilderness & Wellness Weekends, the River event, and Friday night concerts demonstrate the diversity and depth of musical and theatrical talent in the area. They also support the opportunity Riverton has to attract top talent who, despite limited facilities, would play and perform here. In conforming to the culture of the community and our positioning and branding, concerts and shows would help turn Riverton into a bit of a musical Mecca . For example: Riverton Roundup (Country); Fiddle-Paddle (Bluegrass); Natural Flow (jazz) and ...



### 4. **Riverton Rewards Card and Brochure**

The non-profit designation established for the Riverton's Merchant Association creates new opportunities for collaboration and integration. Each merchant has a responsibility to support the others. To encourage that mutual support as well as to generate sales and repeat visits, the RMA will implement the Riverton Rewards card program. The Rewards Card will entitle visitors to special discounts on products, services and events. The card will be offered free of charge in exchange for name and address to support future mailings, etc. Each card will be accompanied by the Riverton Rewards Brochure explaining the program and describing Riverton and its event calendar. It will also be tied to other forms of promotion such as the "Eat Right in Riverton" logo shown below.



### 5. **New Riverton Website**

The new branding and positioning tied to *It's Right Here* and "Wilderness & Wellness" will be translated to a new website more in keeping with the fresh creative tone of our poster art.

**6. Executive Retreats**

Small and mid-size businesses will find Riverton the ideal backdrop for corporate outings as they look for alternatives to expensive, lavish resorts. The simple serenity of Riverton is uniquely suited to the economic climate of the times. The Lambert House, The Riverton Inn and the Hitchcock Furniture Factory provide the facilities necessary to attract groups of 10 to 40 individuals for 1-3 day outings. Executive retreats would bring weekday revenue from executives with higher spending potential, who would likely return on weekends with family and friends.

**7. Fundraising Events**

Our gently rolling, scenic eight-mile loop, combined with the spacious capacity of the People's Forest and accessible merchant services, make Riverton uniquely suited to host charity fundraising events, like walk-a-thons, bike-a-thons, hike-a-thons, kayak- and canoe-a-thons, and fishing tournaments. In time, we envision Riverton as *the Fundraising Capital of Connecticut*.



**8. Pre-/Post-Event Publicity**

Limited marketing funds require the use of non-paid media to promote Riverton and its events. As Riverton events expand and, increasingly, represent our strategic silos, we will refine our capacity to create newsworthy events and stories, both prior to and following the events. Simply stated, there will be stories within stories within stories, each connecting with visitors we seek to attract. [See Press Release in Appendix A]

**9. Corporate Sponsors**

Each successful event can be repeated and/or annualized. Wilderness & Wellness Weekend (WWW)I led to WWWII. Brilliant Broadway I became Brilliant Broadway II. The Fishing Derby is an annual institution, renowned around the region. Where there is passion and affinity, there is potential for sponsorship. For example, look what Simsbury has done with the Talcott Mountain Music Festival, with each concert attracting thousands of people, and each sponsored by many corporate donors. To support our funding needs, we will seek corporate or other corporate sponsors. In some cases, one event may attract multiple sponsors (i.e. title: \$2,500; presenting \$500) sufficient enough to eliminate out-of-pocket costs for promotion and implementation.



## **10. Friends of Riverton**

Sustaining a quality events program will require time, money and human resources. To prosper with preservation, groups of concerned and passionate people must come forth to do their part. Some may have the time. Others may have the money. Mechanisms to invite and allow their participation must be formalized and organized. In addition, mechanisms to raise funds are required, designated for creating and promoting events and compensating the professional talent often needed to develop and manage the program. The key to securing support is to find individuals whose passion aligns with their volunteer effort. Likewise, among the merchants, assign a supervisory role where the event coincides with their commercial interest.

## **5. Increase capability of the Riverton Merchants Association by becoming a public-private partnership as a 501(c)(3) or establishing a new entity such as "Friends of Riverton"**

The Riverton Merchants Association (RMA), operating since the 1970s, is principally comprised of merchants and businesses located in Riverton. Although it is a small group, the members have established a good working relationship with each other and are committed to keeping the village a viable area.

If the RMA or the Friends of Riverton were organized as a 501(c)(3), individuals making a donation would be eligible to claim it as a charitable donation when filing their income tax return. According to staff at the Connecticut Main Street Center, the eight designated Main Street Communities in Connecticut have the 501(c)(3) status which is also the most common type of nonprofit Main Street program across the country, as it enables these organizations to accept funds from foundations and other entities that will only give to nonprofits. A 501(c)(6) designation would allow the organization to operate more like a Chamber of Commerce.

It is anticipated that income to the RMA/Friends of Riverton will be derived from membership/donations from Barkhamsted businesses and residents.

## **6. Adopt the Main Street Approach**

The Connecticut Main Street Center (CMSC) follows a national model called the Main Street Approach to Downtown Revitalization™, which Riverton should adopt. Developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the program advances economic development within the context of historic preservation and advocates public-private partnerships to ensure lasting success. The mission of Connecticut Main Street Center is to help build economically vibrant, traditional main streets as a foundation for healthy communities by providing training to its network of public and private partners and by advocating for positive change. Communities can use the Main Street method without being an official Main Street community.

To augment the present composition of the RMA, additional representation from the Town, local organizations, institutions, employers and citizens is recommended. This will give the RMA the additional volunteers to help carry out its program.

While some communities have the budget and staff to become a designated Main Street Community, it is recognized that Barkhamsted is not in this category, but the recommendation is that the newly formed public private partnership of the RMA/Friends of Riverton use the following Main Street Four Point Approach™ to Downtown Revitalization:

- Organization - increasing the civic value of downtown
- Promotion - increasing the social value of downtown
- Design - increasing the physical value of downtown
- Economic Restructuring - increasing the economic value of downtown

Four committees are usually formed based on these approaches.

Maintaining membership in the Connecticut Main Street Center allows access to the **Downtown Resource Center**, a program developed by CMSC for people who are working to revitalize Connecticut's downtowns and commercial districts and access to:

- Technical assistance and on-site consulting from national experts
- Trends, "best practices" tools, and a members-only web site
- Network of peers and information-sharing events
- Statewide alerts and advocacy on downtown issues

The RMA should implement the recommendations in these four areas made in the Connecticut Main Street Onsite Visit Report, September 2008. A copy is included in Appendix B.

For further information go to [www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org) and [www.ctmainstreet.org](http://www.ctmainstreet.org)

## 7. Build on Existing Events

There are many possibilities here. As one example, Halloween activities already take place in Riverton at the firehouse on an annual basis and for many years exciting activities were scheduled for both adults and children.

**Goal:** Build on existing events/themes and collaborate with organizations, groups and individuals to bring new vitality into the community in a cost-effective manner.

**Objective:** Create one or more special events and activities during the month of October to celebrate Halloween.

**Concept:** Residents, business owners and organizations throughout the Town of Barkhamsted would be asked to create a display with a witch, ghost, scarecrow or other Halloween creature to celebrate Halloween during the entire



month of October. All would be eligible for an award. For residents, there would be three age groups (12 and under, 13-18 and 18+) that would be eligible for awards.

Since Pleasant Valley is a gateway to Riverton, businesses and residents in the Pleasant Valley Center and along West and East River Roads would be invited to participate as Halloween display locations as part of the Barkhamsted Halloween Walk. Residents and business owners in Riverton would also be invited to participate as display locations.

#### **Action Steps:**

- Establish a Town of Barkhamsted web page entitled Halloween in Barkhamsted
- Post invitation on web site to residents, business owners and organizations to participate in the Halloween Walk
- Post entry form on web site
- List calendar of events for Halloween activities on web site
- Post example of an entry on web site
- Invite the Riverton Merchants Association to create a web page (Halloween in Riverton) much like their Christmas in Riverton page.
- Create a promotion piece listing the events in a format similar to that of the Wilderness & Wellness Weekend

The following are other Halloween activities that could take place in Riverton or elsewhere:

- Halloween Story Hour(s)
- Pumpkin Decorating Demonstrations & Contest
- Special Olympics Ghoulish Walk
- Ghost Stories around the Bonfire
- Presentation of Halloween Display Awards



#### **8. Create New Events**

The Wilderness & Wellness Weekends were new events and due to the initial success, a second one is about to be implemented. Other events such as creating a Puppet Festival are being explored.

#### **9. Events Calendar**

The following is an example of existing and proposed events that could be listed on the Events Calendar. A master calendar should be placed on websites of both the Town of Barkhamsted and the Riverton Merchants Association. As new events are planned, tentative dates should be placed on the Northwest Connecticut Art Council's calendar and when finalized, properly designated.

##### **January**

##### **February**

- Artisans' Cooperative Open House

##### **March**

- Daffodil Festival
  - Easter Parade \*
  - Easter Egg Hunt\*

## April

- Fishing Derby
  - Fisherman's Breakfast
  - Chef Demonstrations/Cooking Trout

## May

- Maypole Decorating
- Wilderness & Wellness Weekend
- Charity Fundraiser

## June

- Puppet Festival

## July

- Wilderness & Wellness Weekend
  - World's Largest Fly-Market
- Concerts

## August

- Shakespeare Theatre Under the Stars
- Farmers' Market
- Concerts

## September

- Riverton Grange
- Wilderness & Wellness Weekend
  - Antiques Show

## October

- Riverton Fair
- Halloween Walk

## November

- Walking Weekend (Riverton & Town)

## December

- Christmas in Riverton
  - Live nativity with area churches

\*Event in month of holiday

## 10. Buy Local

Today more than ever supporting your local businesses is more important than ever. Local businesses pay taxes that support the school system. For every \$100 spent at a local business, \$68 will stay in the community, but if the same amount is spent at a national chain, only \$43 stays in the community (Source: the 3/50 Project discussed below).

Other benefits include:

- Local jobs are created
- Local entrepreneurship is supported
- Less gasoline is used in securing the goods
- More variety is created
- Business support for local causes

A recent awareness of the importance of buying local was from the creation of the 3/50 Project with its full website launched in March 2009. The **3/50 Project** promotes stronger local economies through support of independent retailers and the consumers who shop with them. In under four days, the movement went viral, thanks to Twitter, Facebook and many bloggers nationwide. A copy of the flyer is provided in Appendix C. For further information about the program go to [www.the350project.net](http://www.the350project.net)

Public awareness is key to buying local. The program is easy to implement and it would be a good one for the Economic Development Commission when formed and the Riverton Merchants Association to work on together.

Another aspect is to promote the purchase and consumption of local produce. The Litchfield Hills Food Systems, Inc. has developed a program supporting eating local foods because they are healthier. Program elements include Healthy Beginnings, a cutting edge pre-K curriculum program for children; Chef-In-Residence at the Market (demonstrations of cooking unusual foods); Sustainable Agriculture Student Art Center at the Market (children learn about foods through activities); and Happy Feet, Healthy Food (teaching about good health, nutrition and exercise.) These are worthwhile programs that could be duplicated/modified in Riverton and Barkhamsted

## **Town-Wide Action Agenda**

This section of the report presents a series of suggested initiatives to promote economic development in Barkhamsted, with particular emphasis on the U.S. 44 corridor.

The following are organizational, marketing and development initiatives that have been developed to carry out this economic development strategy. In addition, there is one initiative for future consideration. These initiatives are primarily focused on economic development, but also include some that are important for retaining and preserving the rural and historic character of the community. These go hand in hand.

Volunteerism is an important component in the implementation of this strategy. Barkhamsted has a limited budget, but it is blessed with talented people and it will be important to identify new people with the necessary critical skills. Many of the initiatives will not require an outlay of money from the Town, but there are some that the Town should invest in, with the intention of obtaining a return on the investment.

Town of Barkhamsted Action Agenda	
Topic Area: Organizational Initiative	
<b>Initiative #1:</b> Establish an official Economic Development Commission (EDC) as allowed under Connecticut General Statute CGS § 7-136.	
<b>Background Information</b> <p>According to Connecticut General Statute CGS § 7-136, any town, city or borough, may establish by ordinance an economic development commission for the promotion and development of the economic resources of that municipality. In 1981, the Town of Barkhamsted established an Economic Development Commission of seven (7) members appointed by the Board of Selectmen for the promotion and development of the economic resources of the Town. Each member will serve for a period of five (5) years and a schedule was given for creating terms.</p> <p>According to CGS § 7-136 powers and responsibilities of an EDC include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conduct research into the economic conditions and trends in its municipality, shall make recommendations to appropriate officials and agencies of its municipality regarding action to improve its economic condition and development, shall seek to coordinate the activities of and cooperate with unofficial bodies organized to promote such economic development and may advertise and may prepare, print and distribute books, maps, charts and pamphlets which in its judgment will further its official purposes.</li><li>• Annually prepare and transmit to the legislative body of its municipality a report of its activities and of its recommendations for improving such economic conditions and development.</li></ul> <p>Any municipality which establishes an economic development commission may annually appropriate for its purposes a sum not exceeding one-twentieth of one per cent of the last-completed grand list of taxable property.</p> <p>Barkhamsted already has established the wording in its ordinance and has had such a commission in the past. Volunteerism is important and there is the opportunity to tap the talent in the community. Barkhamsted does not have staff devoted to economic development and does not have the money to pay for such staff, therefore it is important to identify people who are committed to the economic health of the community and retain them in this volunteer capacity.</p>	
Major Action Steps and Schedule	
Action Steps	Schedule
1. Discuss recommendation with Board of Selectmen.	10/09
2. Identify qualities and qualifications needed	11/09
3. Ask Town Committees for Names of Potential Candidates.	12/09
4. Prepare preliminary budget and discuss with Board of Finance.	01/10
5. Appoint members to the Economic Development Commission.	02/10
6. Review responsibilities including those identified in the Economic Development Strategy.	03/10

<b>Responsibility</b>							
<b>Primary:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Board of Selectmen</li> </ul>		<b>Support:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Board of Finance</li> <li>▪ Town Committees</li> </ul>					
<b>Resources Needed</b>							
<b>Funding:</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Possible Sources</b>				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Membership in CEDAS and Main Street</li> </ul>	\$600/year	Town Budget				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Program support</li> </ul>	\$400/year	Town Budget				
<b>Other:</b>							
<b>Performance Measures</b>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Action Steps carried out according to the schedule.</li> </ul>							
<b>Timeframe</b>							
This Initiative is:							
<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Short-term (1-2 years)</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate-term (3-5 years)</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Long-term (5+ years)</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continuing</td> </tr> </table>				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Short-term (1-2 years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate-term (3-5 years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term (5+ years)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continuing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Short-term (1-2 years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate-term (3-5 years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term (5+ years)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continuing				
Establishing and appointing members to an Economic Development Committee is a short-term initiative, but it is anticipated that the Commission will operate on a continuing basis for many years.							
<b>Additional Information</b>							
It is recommended that one member of the Economic Development Commission sit on the public private partnership of the Riverton Merchants Association (RMA)/Friends of Riverton when it is created.							



<b>Town of Barkhamsted Action Agenda</b>			
<b>Topic Area: Organizational Initiative</b>			
<b>Initiative #2:</b> Establish a master contact list of all Barkhamsted businesses using the Executive-Pulse software available free from Northeast Utilities.			
<b>Background Information</b>			
<p>Identifying business owners and maintaining contact with the business community is an important facet in a business retention program. A new system has been developed and is in use across the country. Northeast Utilities has purchased the program and is making it available to communities in their service area. The ExecutivePulse (E-Pulse) software streamlines survey development, data collection and analysis and allows the users to look at customer data in new ways to make strategic decisions about how to best apply economic, community and workforce development resources.</p> <p>The training sessions are on-demand and will be provided by Northeast Utilities. The number of people and proposed dates are needed to set up a session which is conducted like a webinar and lasts about an hour for a small group.</p>			
<b>Major Action Steps and Schedule</b>			
<b>Action Steps</b>			<b>Schedule</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact Northeast Utilities to set up E-Pulse training session</li> <li>Prepare list of businesses with key information.</li> </ul>			<p style="text-align: center;">1st Q 2010</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2nd Q 2010</p>
<b>Responsibility</b>			
<b>Primary:</b>		<b>Support:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Development Commission</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First Selectman</li> </ul>	
<b>Resources Needed</b>			
<b>Funding:</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Possible Sources</b>
	None needed		
<b>Other:</b>	Volunteer time of commissioners		
<b>Performance Measures</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actions steps are carried out according to schedule.</li> <li>The system is in place and an effective communication system is in place with Barkhamsted's business community.</li> </ul>			
<b>Timeframe</b>			
This Initiative is:			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Short-term (1-2 years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate-term (3-5 years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term (5+ years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Continuing
<b>Additional Information</b>			
For further information about the E-Pulse system, go to -- <a href="http://www.executivepulse.com/">http://www.executivepulse.com/</a>			

Town of Barkhamsted Action Agenda			
Topic Area: Organizational Initiative			
<b>Initiative #3:</b> Add an Economic Development tab to the Town’s website. Populate this section of the website with information necessary to promote economic development such as a community profile, available sites and buildings, forms necessary for business operations, etc.			
<b>Background Information</b> Using the town’s website is an effective and efficient way of disseminating information. The Town enjoys a wonderful reputation for the natural surroundings and is known primarily as a residential community. I t should be conveyed that the town is interested in helping its existing businesses expand and attracting new businesses that are compatible with the character of the community. The Town website should have links to other organizations such as the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, the Connecticut Economic Resource Center and the Northwest Connecticut Chamber of Commerce and the Northwest Connecticut Economic Development Corporation.			
Major Action Steps and Schedule			
Action Steps			Schedule
1. Post a letter written by the First Selectman on the home page of website inviting businesses to locate in town. It should include the preface that while the community is primarily a residential one, it welcomes the opportunity for existing businesses to expand in Barkhamsted and for new businesses to locate in the community.			4 <sup>th</sup> Q 2009
2. Ask permission of organizations to which to hotlink.			4 <sup>th</sup> Q 2009
2. Add an Economic Development tab to the Town’s website.			4 <sup>th</sup> Q 2009
3. Obtain information on commercial and industrial sites from commercial and industrial real estate brokers and post on website and create a hotlink with the Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC).			1 <sup>st</sup> Q 2010
4. Post applicable business forms on the website in a down-loadable format.			2 <sup>nd</sup> Q 2010
Responsibility			
Primary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>First Selectman</li></ul>		Support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Webmaster</li><li>Commercial &amp; industrial real estate brokers</li><li>Barkhamsted Town Staff</li></ul>	
Resources Needed			
Funding:	Item	Amount	Possible Sources
	Should be included in normal website maintenance		
Other:			
Performance Measures			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>See schedule</li></ul>			

### Timeframe

This Initiative is:

☒ Short-term  
(1-2 years)

☐ Intermediate-term  
(3-5 years)

☐ Long-term  
(5+ years)

☒ Continuing

### Additional Information

As an example, see: <http://www.farmington-ct.org/TownGovernment/EconomicDev/> .

## **Town of Barkhamsted Action Agenda**

### **Topic Area: Organizational Initiative**

**Initiative #4:** Educate the public on the importance of historic preservation which supports and encourages economic development and add a Historic Preservation tab to the Town's website. Populate this section of the website with information necessary to promote historic preservation. Develop hotlinks with appropriate historic preservation organizations and resources.

Apply to the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism for a grant to prepare a Historic Resource Inventory.

Develop a demolition delay ordinance as a tool to protect historically and architecturally significant resources.

### **Background Information**

An overarching principle guiding future economic development is that preserving the character of the community is paramount and historic preservation plays an important role in retaining the character of the community. List historic sites in the community, types of historic designations, *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, educational articles about vinyl siding, Weatherization Guide for Historic Buildings [www.preservationnation.org](http://www.preservationnation.org) that can help property owners choose the most effective energy improvements for historic buildings.

Develop hotlinks with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation and the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism. Using the town's website is an effective and efficient way of disseminating information. Also include a link to the Barkhamsted Historical Society.

Only a windshield inventory has been done of Barkhamsted's properties built before 1950 and the first step in a community's preservation planning process is to identify, describe and locate buildings, structures, objects, areas and sites that are of historical, architectural, or archaeological importance. Up to a \$20K grant is available for preparing such inventory.

There are two national historic districts in town, Barkhamsted Center Historic District consisting of 5 structures and the Riverton Historic District located primarily between the Farmington and Still Rivers. The Riverton Historic District consists of 103 resources of which 85 contribute to the historic character of the village. There is no guarantee that any one of the structures will remain. While existing owners are sympathetic to retaining the buildings, there is no guarantee that future property owners will feel the same. A building owner in any zone in town can apply to the Building Inspector for a permit to demolish a building and in 30 days the structure can be gone. The cost of the permit is \$10.22 per thousand of cost for demolition.

A demolition delay ordinance is a tool that municipalities can use to protect the historically and architecturally significant resources. The State of Connecticut has enabling legislation which allows towns to impose a waiting period (recently amended to not more than 180 days, but it could be a shorter period) before granting a demolition permit. This waiting period would allow interested parties to explore alternatives to demolition and provide "a window of opportunity for preservation".

<b>Major Action Steps and Schedule</b>			
<b>Action Steps</b>			<b>Schedule</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add a historic preservation tab on the webpage.</li> <li>• Ask organizations for permission to add hotlinks.</li> <li>• List information described in background information.</li> <li>• Apply to the Connecticut Commission on Culture &amp; Tourism for a grant to prepare a historic resource inventory.</li> <li>• Research model demolition ordinances and discuss with preservation organizations.</li> <li>• Prepare a demolition ordinance and take necessary steps for implementation.</li> </ul>			4 <sup>th</sup> Q 2009 4 <sup>th</sup> Q 2009 4 <sup>th</sup> Q 2009 2 <sup>nd</sup> Q 2010  3 <sup>rd</sup> Q 2010  4 <sup>th</sup> Q 2010
<b>Responsibility</b>			
<b>Primary:</b>		<b>Support:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ First Selectman</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Webmaster</li> <li>▪ Economic Development Commission</li> <li>▪ Riverton Merchants Association</li> <li>▪ Barkhamsted Historical Society</li> <li>▪ Barkhamsted Town Staff</li> </ul>	
<b>Resources Needed</b>			
<b>Funding:</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Possible Sources</b>
None needed	Review of ordinance by attorney	Unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ General Fund or Pro Bono</li> </ul>
<b>Other:</b>			
<b>Performance Measures</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ See schedule.</li> </ul>			
<b>Timeframe</b>			
This Initiative is:			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Short-term (1-2 years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate-term (3-5 years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term (5+ years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Continuing
<b>Additional Information</b>			
As examples, see: <a href="http://www.cttrust.org">http://www.cttrust.org</a> and <a href="http://www.preservationnation.org">www.preservationnation.org</a>			

<b>Town of Barkhamsted Action Agenda</b>			
<b>Topic Area: Organizational Initiative</b>			
<b>Initiative #5:</b> Increase capability of the Riverton Merchants Association by becoming a public-private partnership as a 501(c)(3) or establishing a new entity such as "Friends of Riverton".			
<b>Background Information</b>			
Connecticut Main Street communities that have obtained the 501(c)(3) status are exempt from federal taxes, and contributions given to them are deductible by donors for income tax purposes. In addition, the overwhelming majority of private foundations in the U.S. award grants only to organizations that have this particular tax-exempt status. It is possible to have two organizations, one with the 501(c)(6) status and another with the 501(c)(3) status and it is also possible to have the same members serve on both.			
<b>Major Action Steps and Schedule</b>			
<b>Action Steps</b>			<b>Schedule</b>
1. Go to <a href="http://www.probonopartnership.org/Newsletter_Registration.htm">http://www.probonopartnership.org/Newsletter_Registration.htm</a> to fill out the short registration form.			09/09
2. Attend the short session at the CT Association of Nonprofits on Wednesday, September 23 <sup>rd</sup> from 3:00 – 5:00 at 280 Trumbull St., 28 <sup>th</sup> floor			09/23/09
3. Prepare documents and submit to IRS			11/09
<b>Responsibility</b>			
<b>Primary:</b>		<b>Support:</b>	
▪ Riverton Merchants Association		▪ First Selectman	
<b>Resources Needed</b>			
<b>Funding:</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Possible Sources</b>
	Seminar	No cost	Donations
	Gasoline	\$20	
	Review of documents by attorney	\$500	
<b>Other:</b>			
<b>Performance Measures</b>			
▪ See schedule ▪ Duly certified public private partnership by 09/2010.			
<b>Timeframe</b>			
This Initiative is:			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Short-term (1-2 years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate-term (3-5 years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term (5+ years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Continuing
<b>Additional Information</b>			
<b>"Starting a Nonprofit: Myths and Realities."</b> The next session is at the CT Association of Nonprofits on Wednesday, Sept. 23 <sup>rd</sup> from 3:00 – 5:00. Attending this workshop is an excellent way to understand what your obligations and duties will be if you start a new nonprofit, and what kinds of other approaches there may be. Other sessions will also be scheduled.			

Town of Barkhamsted Action Agenda			
Topic Area: Organizational Initiative			
Initiative #6: Develop an incentive policy as a tool to attract business capital investment to the Town of Barkhamsted.			
Background Information			
Communities today are competing in a global marketplace and those seeking to expand and diversify the commercial tax base do so by retaining existing businesses that want to expand and by attracting new business and investment into the community. Increasingly, an incentive policy is a necessary tool in the toolbox.			
Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) 12-65b, 12-65h (as amended) and 12-81t allow municipalities to enter into an agreement with owners or lessees of certain real property within the community to fix or defer tax assessments on real and personal property for a certain period of time.			
It is recommended that Barkhamsted develop a Business Incentive Policy and have the “economic development tool” in place before negotiating with a proposed developer. This will allow for agreement within the community and not put a proposed developer at center stage.			
Major Action Steps and Schedule			
Action Steps			Schedule
1. Research Connecticut General Statues (CGS) 12-65b, 12-65h and 12-81t.			3 <sup>rd</sup> Q 2010
2. Identify other communities that have developed Business Incentive Policies and discuss their experiences with developers using this economic development tool.			4 <sup>th</sup> Q 2010
3. Form a committee made up of a member of the Board of Selectman, Board of Finance and Economic Development Commission.			1 <sup>st</sup> Q 2011
4. Write a Draft Business Incentive Policy.			2 <sup>nd</sup> Q 2011
5. Present to Board of Selectmen & Prepare Ordinance.			3 <sup>rd</sup> Q 2011
Responsibility			
Primary:		Support:	
▪ Economic Development Commission		▪ Board of Selectmen ▪ Board of Finance	
Resources Needed			
Funding:	Item	Amount	Possible Sources
	Consultant Review/Assistance	\$750	▪ EDC Budget
Other:			
Performance Measures			
▪ Action steps are carried out in sequence and by specific target dates.			



### Timeframe

This Initiative is:

☒ Short-term  
(1-2 years)

☐ Intermediate-term  
(3-5 years)

☐ Long-term  
(5+ years)

☐ Continuing

### Additional Information

Many Connecticut communities have adopted incentive policies under the applicable state statutes. These policies should be obtained and reviewed. As examples, see:

[http://www.ci.east-hartford.ct.us/Public\\_Documents/EastHartfordCT\\_Building/incentive](http://www.ci.east-hartford.ct.us/Public_Documents/EastHartfordCT_Building/incentive)

[http://www.torringtonct.org/Public\\_Documents/TorringtonCT\\_EcDev/abatement.pdf](http://www.torringtonct.org/Public_Documents/TorringtonCT_EcDev/abatement.pdf)

Town of Barkhamsted Action Agenda			
Topic Area: Development Initiative			
<b>Initiative #7:</b> Support the development of a business park at the Regional Reuse Disposal District One (RRDD #1).			
<b>Background Information</b> The Regional Reuse Disposal District has proposed the development of a small business park comprised of seven buildings totaling 38,000 square feet on 7 lots. This proposed development appears to be in conformance with the State of Connecticut’s 2005-2010 Conservation and Development Policies Plan. There are currently no lots in Barkhamsted appropriately zoned for business that are desirable for development and available.  At the present time there are no performance standards for businesses identified in the Planning & Zoning Regulations. Prior to consideration of a business park, performance standards should be adopted addressing objectionable elements such as noise and vibration, smoke and dust, odor and other forms of air pollution, heat, cold and dampness, electromagnetic or other disturbance, glare, liquid or solid refuse or wastes, and dangerous, injurious, noxious, fire explosive or other hazards.  Developmental Covenants and Restrictions should be developed and recorded in the land records to assure quality of design and property management.			
<b>Major Action Steps and Schedule</b>			
<b>Action Steps</b>			<b>Schedule</b>
1. Request that the Planning and Zoning Commission develop performance standards, adopt them and put in place before subdivision approval is granted for the proposed development.			09/09
2. Support development of the business park including arrangement of sewer service from New Hartford.			As needed
<b>Responsibility</b>			
<b>Primary:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Planning &amp; Zoning Commission</li></ul>		<b>Support:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Board of Selectmen</li><li>Economic Development Commission</li><li>Regional Refuse Disposal District #1</li></ul>	
<b>Resources Needed</b>			
<b>Funding:</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Possible Sources</b>
	Consultant develops performance standards	\$2,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Town budget</li></ul>
<b>Other:</b>			
<b>Performance Measures</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Development of business park approved by 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2009</li><li>Infrastructure development completed by 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2010.</li></ul>			

### Timeframe

This Initiative is:

☒ Short-term  
(1-2 years)

☐ Intermediate-term  
(3-5 years)

☒ Long-term  
(5+ years)

☐ Continuing

### Additional Information

For information on development of business parks, see *Business Park and Industrial Development Handbook*, Second Edition (2001), Urban Land Institute (ULI) Development Handbook Series, Washington, DC, 202-624-7000, [www.uli.org](http://www.uli.org)

<b>Town of Barkhamsted Action Agenda</b>			
<b>Topic Area: Development Initiative</b>			
<b>Initiative #8:</b> Identify sites most suitable for development along the US 44 corridor that combine adequate size, limited physical constraints (particularly topography and wetlands), good accessibility and potential to provide or obtain needed utilities including sewer services from Winsted or New Hartford.			
<b>Background Information</b>			
Route 44 is a location for potential future development, but many of the sites are limited by physical constraints or are too small for development. The data base which provides some basic information, is available and it has been segregated into properties on the north and south sides of Route 44. Additional work is necessary to identify sites with greatest development potential and ascertain the interest of property owners in business development of these sites.			
<b>Major Action Steps and Schedule</b>			
<b>Action Steps</b>			<b>Schedule</b>
1. Identify parcels that are of adequate size or can be combined to an adequate site.			3 <sup>rd</sup> Q 2010
2. Evaluate physical conditions on a GIS system if available.			4 <sup>th</sup> Q 2010
3. Contact the property owner(s) and ask about willingness to develop and/or combine parcels with another owner.			4 <sup>th</sup> Q 2010
4. Determine how the site can best be used, coverage and utilities needed and determine feasibility.			1 <sup>st</sup> Q 2011
5. Meet with Planning & Zoning Commission to review.			2 <sup>nd</sup> Q 2011
6. List sites for development on CERC's SiteFinder Inventory and elsewhere as appropriate.			3 <sup>rd</sup> Q 2011
<b>Responsibility</b>			
<b>Primary:</b>		<b>Support:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Economic Development Commission</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning &amp; Zoning Commission</li> <li>▪ Board of Selectmen</li> </ul>	
<b>Resources Needed</b>			
<b>Funding:</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Possible Sources</b>
<b>Other:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff Time</li> <li>▪ EDC Members' time</li> </ul>		
<b>Performance Measures</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ See schedule.</li> </ul>			
<b>Timeframe</b>			
This Initiative is:			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Short-term (1-2 years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate-term (3-5 years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term (5+ years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Continuing
<b>Additional Information</b>			
See the master list of Route 44 sites prepared as part of this study.			

<b>Town of Barkhamsted Action Agenda</b>			
<b>Topic Area: Marketing Initiative</b>			
<b>Initiative #9:</b> Create a Barkhamsted/Riverton merchants' electronic marketing newsletter with weekly updates promoting merchants and events.			
<b>Background Information</b>			
Electronic newsletters are cost effective both in terms of time and money and the way to reach multiple markets. It is an excellent way of promoting "buying local" and to keep the public informed about what is happening and for opportunities for merchants to reach consumers in a cost effective way.			
<b>Major Action Steps and Schedule</b>			
<b>Action Steps</b>			<b>Schedule</b>
1. The Economic Development Commission and the Riverton Merchants Association should meet jointly to discuss their ideas and capability of producing an electronic marketing newsletter.			2 <sup>nd</sup> Q 2010
2. If there is not the capability among the groups, seek out a volunteer and or contact the community college and request the services of an intern who has the talent and would like to have the experience.			3 <sup>rd</sup> Q 2010
<b>Responsibility</b>			
<b>Primary:</b>		<b>Support:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Economic Development Commission</li> <li>▪ Riverton Merchants Association</li> </ul>			
<b>Resources Needed</b>			
<b>Funding:</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Possible Sources</b>
	Additional research is necessary		
<b>Other:</b>			
<b>Performance Measures</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Electronic newsletter established by 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2010.</li> </ul>			
<b>Timeframe</b>			
This Initiative is:			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Short-term (1-2 years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate-term (3-5 years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term (5+ years)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continuing
<b>Additional Information</b>			
As an example, see Heart of Danville weekly E-News: <a href="http://www.downtowndanville.com/newsletter.html">http://www.downtowndanville.com/newsletter.html</a>			

<b>Town of Barkhamsted Action Agenda</b>			
<b>Topic Area: Marketing Initiative</b>			
<b>Initiative #10:</b> Create a monthly electronic Barkhamsted economic development newsletter to be distributed to interested parties and available from the Town's website. Consider a contact program such as Constant Contact for management of this newsletter			
<p align="center"><b>Background Information</b></p> <p>Maintaining contact with the business community (both existing businesses and prospects) is important and the Constant Contact management system is a cost effective and efficient system.</p>			
<b>Major Action Steps and Schedule</b>			
<b>Action Steps</b>			<b>Schedule</b>
1. Contact constantcontact.com and review responsibilities and costs			2 <sup>nd</sup> Q 2010
2. Prepare budget			2 <sup>nd</sup> Q 2010
3. Integrate the content and implement the system			3 <sup>rd</sup> Q 2010
4. Contact a cross section of the business community and determine if it is an effective communications tool.			Ongoing
5. Make adjustments as necessary.			Ongoing
<b>Responsibility</b>			
<b>Primary:</b>		<b>Support:</b>	
▪ Economic Development Commission		▪ First Selectman	
<b>Resources Needed</b>			
<b>Funding:</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Possible Sources</b>
	Subscription to Constant Contact	\$180 Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Town budget</li> <li>▪ Fundraiser</li> </ul>
<b>Other:</b>	▪ Volunteer time to accumulate news and publish regular newsletters		
<b>Performance Measures</b>			
▪ See schedule			
<b>Timeframe</b>			
This Initiative is:			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Short-term (1-2 years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate-term (3-5 years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term (5+ years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Continuing

### **Additional Information**

See Farmington, CT (<http://www.farmington-ct.org/TownGovernment/EconomicDev/>) as an example.

For information on Constant Contact, see:

<http://www.constantcontact.com/pricing/pricing-plans.jsp> .



## **Town of Barkhamsted Action Agenda**

### **Topic Area: Future Initiative**

#### **Initiative #11:** Items for Future Consideration

#### **Background Information**

In addition to the initiatives presented above, the Economic Development Study Committee considered and recommended deferring the following until an Economic Development Commission is established and further study can occur:

- A. Establishment of a Design Advisory Committee and publishing a Design Guidelines Handbook
- B. Application for designation of the Town in the Preserve America program and becoming a Certified Local Government (CLG).

It was noted that in the previous Barkhamsted Economic Development Study, 2007, there was a recommendation to establish an architectural review process in zones that include a mix of residential and commercial uses in order to maintain the village character. In addition, under Article I, 193-2 the second purpose of the Barkhamsted Zoning Regulations is to conserve the value of buildings and property.

The Vermont Land Use Education & Training Collaborative has a 4-page publication on Design Review which may be helpful in future discussion of this issue. It is included in Appendix D of this report. According to the publication, design regulations also have been shown to have economic benefits—they allow for higher densities of development, increase property values, and create attractive neighborhoods and communities that encourage new investment.

For communities such as Barkhamsted that are concerned with maintaining a character they cherish, "Design Matters".

"Travel teaches you many things, not the least of which is that the world doesn't have to be ugly. ... While good design can mean more tourists, increased jobs, a better tax base, increased property values, and a better quality of life, bad design or no design can lead to polarization and citizen opposition to new development. Without doubt, there would be far less opposition to new developments, of all types, if builders, developers, and public officials paid more attention to the appearance, design, and compatibility of the new development with the existing natural and architectural character of our communities." (Source: Edward T. McMahon, *Planning Commissioners Journal*, No. 21 (Winter 1996). Mr. McMahon is a noted planner, attorney, and former president of "Scenic America".

<b>Major Action Steps and Schedule</b>			
<b>Action Steps</b>			<b>Schedule</b>
Upon establishment of the EDC, it should be asked to undertake a study of these issues.			
<b>Responsibility</b>			
<b>Primary:</b>		<b>Support:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Development Commission</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning &amp; Zoning Commission</li> <li>First Selectman</li> </ul>	
<b>Resources Needed</b>			
<b>Funding:</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Possible Sources</b>
<b>Other:</b>			
<b>Performance Measures</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Study of these items completed by 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2011</li> </ul>			
<b>Timeframe</b>			
This Initiative is:			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Short-term (1-2 years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate-term (3-5 years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term (5+ years)	<input type="checkbox"/> Continuing
<b>Additional Information</b>			
<p>See <a href="http://www.townofsimsbury.com/public_documents/simsburyCT_Downloads/community_design/DesignGU.pdf">http://www.townofsimsbury.com/public_documents/simsburyCT_Downloads/community_design/DesignGU.pdf</a> as an example for Guidelines for Community Design.</p> <p>See <a href="http://www.vpic.info/pubs">www.vpic.info/pubs</a> for additional information on the Vermont Land Use Education &amp; Training Collaborative.</p>			

## Summary of Town-Wide Action Agenda Expenses

The Town-Wide Action Agenda set forth in the prior pages recognizes the budget limitations confronting most small towns, particularly in light of the recession from which the country is only beginning to emerge.

**Table 5**  
**Summary of Town-Wide Action Agenda Funding Needs**

<b>Initiative</b>		<b>Cost</b>
1	Establish an Official Economic Development Commission	\$1,000/year
2	Business Contact List	0
3	Town Website Economic Development Tab	0
4	Historic Preservation	Unknown
5	Establish the "Friends of Riverton"	\$520
6	Economic Development Incentive Policy	\$750
7	Business Park at RRDD#1	\$2,000
8	US 44 Developable Sites Identification	0
9	Barkhamsted/Riverton Merchants Electronic Marketing Newsletter	Research Needed
10	Barkhamsted Economic Development Newsletter	\$180/year
11	Items for Future Consideration	0
	Approximate First Year Cost	\$5,000 - \$8,000

# **BARKHAMSTED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

## **APPENDICES**

- A. Sample Pre/Post Event Press Release
- B. Connecticut Main Street Center On-Site Visit Report for Riverton
- C. Buy Local Flyer
- D. Vermont Land Use Education & Training Collaborative Design Review Publication

## **Appendix A**

### **Sample Press Release**

**For Immediate Release**  
**June 29, 2009**

#### **WILDERNESS-WELLNESS WEEKEND™ IN RIVERTON, CT JULY 10-12**

**BARKHAMSTED, CT** – The village of Riverton, in the Town of Barkhamsted, CT, will host the first in a series of *Wilderness-Wellness Weekends*, starting Friday, July 10 and ending Sunday July 12.

The *Wilderness-Wellness Weekend* celebrates Riverton's natural beauty, historic heritage, and extensive outdoor-recreation activities. Riverton is located at the headwaters of the Wild and Scenic Farmington River, near the People's State Forest and the American Legion State Forest.

Don Stein, First Selectmen of Barkhamsted said, "If you and your family love the great outdoors, there's something here for everyone: camping, fishing, hiking, biking, kayaking and canoeing—all for little to no money!"

The Riverton Merchants' Association encourages visitors to be sure to take in the glassblowing studio located in an old church. Stop by the antiques store featuring restored Hitchcock furniture. Grab a bite at the General Store or dine at the village's charming restaurants. Stay over night at the historic Riverton Inn. Or take a quiet walk back in time through a quaint, 19<sup>th</sup> century New England village.

The *Wilderness-Wellness Weekend* starts Friday evening, July 10, at 6:00 PM, with a free concert by *Mad River Crossing*, singing nostalgic classics with Bluegrass flair.

Saturday activities begin at 8:00 AM, with *The World's First Fly Market™*—a flea market for fly-fishing where club members from Trout Unlimited and other local anglers will exhibit, sell and trade fly-fishing equipment. The *Fly Market* runs from 8AM to 3PM Saturday, with a casting demonstration, a kids casting clinic, a talk on the proper handling of fish, and a professional fly tyer, who will demonstrate his craft.

Saturday afternoon July 11, take in a free concert from 1:00-3:00 PM, featuring the country, folk, and bluegrass sounds of *The Traveling Trout*. From 4:00-5:00 PM, Greg Hoffman will entertain visitors as they walk among the charming shops and by the river.

At 7:00 PM the Riverton Church will be the host site for the newly released family musical, *Letters to Daddy™*. This 75-minute theatrical production stars nine "amazing tweens", who dance and sing songs for life-lessons of inspiration. Tickets are \$3.00 for children and \$5.00 for adults. ([www.letterstodaddy.com](http://www.letterstodaddy.com))

Also on Saturday, over one dozen area artists will exhibit their work in the *Arts and Posies Gallery/Reception*, to be held from 2:00-5:00 PM with light refreshments in the historic Lambert Hitchcock House. The *Arts and Posies Gallery* will continue on Sunday, from 12:00-5:00 PM.

Sunday festivities begin with a riverside worship service offered by the Riverton Church at 10:00AM. The service will be followed by a walk through the village and a Farmer's Market, from 1:00-5:00 PM, featuring fresh produce from area growers. The Farmer's Market will include gardening clinics by Master Gardener, John Krish, and pony rides and lemon ice for children.

Enjoy more music on Sunday from 1:00-3:00 PM with area artists. From 4:00-5:00 PM, the Riverton Church will be the host site for *Brilliant Broadway*™, featuring cast members from Broadway's *Phantom of the Opera* and *Cats*, singing a collection of Broadway classics. Tickets for Brilliant Broadway are \$5 for children and \$7 for adults.

Sunday's *Wilderness-Wellness* program encourages visitors to take a bike ride on the shaded, 8-mile loop of the Farmington River. Hikers can choose from miles of trails in Peoples and American Legion State Forests or take a leisurely stroll around the village. There will also be paddling demonstrations on the Farmington River from 3:00-5:00 PM and, as always, the Farmington provides world class trout fishing.

"The *Wilderness-Wellness Weekend* reflects a growing appreciation for a simpler, more natural way of life." says First Selectman, Don Stein.

Tickets for *Letters to Daddy* and *Brilliant Broadway* are available at the Riverton General Store and at [www.letterstodaddy.com](http://www.letterstodaddy.com). For more information about Riverton's Wilderness-Wellness Weekend, including a complete schedule of events, with a listing of local merchants, please visit [www.RivertonCT.com](http://www.RivertonCT.com), or the town website [www.barkhamsted.us](http://www.barkhamsted.us).

**Contacts: Don Stein (860) 379-8285 or Mike Casale (203) 470-1722**

**Appendix B**  
**Connecticut Main Street Center On-Site Visit Report for Riverton**





[www.ctmainstreet.org](http://www.ctmainstreet.org)

## CONNECTICUT MAIN STREET CENTER ON-SITE VISIT RIVERTON AUGUST 19, 2008

*"The New England village is a physical and historic representation of community. Anchored by a village center, the New England village is walkable, provides a strong mix of uses, conveys a distinct sense of place....successful New England villages remain living, active places. The modern village integrates contemporary uses into the historic fabric of the community...."*

*-Smart Growth/Smart Energy Toolkit*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Town of Barkhamsted joined Connecticut Main Street Center in July, 2008. Membership in CMSC provides opportunities, at various levels of commitment, for communities that want to learn how to implement a comprehensive revitalization program. CMSC membership is open to all municipalities, commercial neighborhoods, organizations and individuals who are interested in revitalizing their commercial districts.

The Onsite Visit is often the first activity that new CMSC member communities will access. In August 2008, CMSC staff spent one half-day in Riverton to make an initial assessment of the physical conditions, business mix and how the district is managed today. CMSC staff uses this initial assessment to determine, with you, the best course of action in moving forward.

### **OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Riverton section of Barkhamsted is a small, traditional New England village center with the Farmington River running through it. It is a gem aesthetically and offers a lot of potential for attracting residents and visitors to enjoy its quaint beauty. It also boasts an attractive but underutilized property -- the Hitchcock Chair factory -- which is ripe for a thoughtful re-use. The town leadership has made Riverton a priority and would like to see it become a place that attracts people to gather and is home to thriving businesses.

The town leaders have developed an economic development study group made up of: town leaders, merchants, planning and economic development commissioners and interested citizens. Members of this group with whom we met appear to be genuinely interested in working to improve Riverton.

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[www.ctmainstreet.org](http://www.ctmainstreet.org)

The Planning and Zoning and Economic Development Commissions, through their creation of a Special Design District, have already shown they are thoughtful about restoring the physical, social and economic value of Riverton.

It is imperative that Riverton focus first on its existing assets: the river is but one. Others include the Hitchcock properties, the traditional general store, a custom fly/tackle shop, a world-renowned glass-blower, and the fairgrounds to name a few. The fact that Riverton holds the last agricultural fair in the state each autumn is noteworthy. These elements make Riverton what it is today and that unique identity deserves to be celebrated even as Riverton continues to evolve over time.

Additionally, with 45% of its land reserved for open space through the state and MDC, Barkhamsted has the unique opportunity to focus on Riverton instead of worrying about protecting open space in town which many communities must spend time and money to achieve.

Alongside these assets, challenges exist as well. On the weekends, parking can be difficult, the factory's empty buildings beg the question, "what will go in there next?", and balancing the cultural and historic nature of Riverton with any future development is on residents' minds.

As a first step, we would recommend a visioning workshop (CMSC can facilitate) where key stakeholders and residents "declare your intentions" for Riverton. The resulting "Vision Statement" will declare a point of view that will help inform future zoning and land use decisions as well as what demographics you want to attract to your village center and how best to do so.

The recommendations that follow focus on some short-term next steps, including recommendations for promotion and marketing of the downtown; business development, networking and retail promotion; and civic engagement strategies, designed to involve a wider group of citizens in decisions that affect the future of Riverton. The implementation of these recommendations will necessitate more partners being part of the revitalization process. Attachments following this report are intended to assist in the identification of those partners.



[www.ctmainstreet.org](http://www.ctmainstreet.org)

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING: BUSINESS RETENTION, EXPANSION & ATTRACTION**

1. Conduct, or update, a business and building inventory of downtown, noting property owner and contact information, square footage, etc. Incorporate a photo inventory and interface with Town GIS system (if applicable). This information can be used to attract developers as well as businesses that are looking to expand or relocate.
2. Engage the State Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regarding the Hitchcock properties to clearly identify any environmental challenges that might affect the redevelopment of these properties.
3. Keep Hitchcock property owners and management informed of Riverton's evolving vision, regulatory policy changes, etc. Consider assisting the owners of the Hitchcock properties to advertise the space for lease/sale. This allows you to help guide the best uses for the space.
4. Survey the "users" of Riverton: residents, employees, visitors. Methods and opportunities include zip code surveys at downtown events, short questionnaires coordinated with downtown retail and restaurants, etc. Surveys are tools that can be used to estimate sales potential, sales leakage to other areas and can help inform a future, more scientific market analysis of downtown. Consider applying for a Preservation of Place grant through CT Main Street Center for a niche market study.
5. Review and evaluate land use and zoning regulations and permitting processes that impact business growth in Riverton with the intent on matching regulations to your goals for Riverton -- making downtown a customer-friendly environment for property and business owners who want to be part of a vibrant Village Center while also maintaining the established character of the downtown.
  - a. Ensure that those who want to improve their properties feel as though "Town Hall" wants to work with them, within existing regulations.
  - b. Examine and update zoning regulations in preparation for appropriate development.
6. Encourage business-to-business networking, communications and support. A natural outgrowth of business networking is often cross-promotions – businesses that promote other businesses to their customers ("No, I'm sorry we don't carry greeting cards...but the Antique Boutique next door has a very unique selection").
7. Create and host a "future developers" tour of Litchfield Hills communities with the Litchfield Hills Council of Elected Officials, the Litchfield Hills visitor bureau, and the Northwest Economic Development Association.



www.ctmainstreet.org

## PROMOTION: RETAIL, EVENTS & IMAGE

1. Public Relations and Retail Promotion:
  - a. Catalogue your downtown assets (architecture, destinations, natural and recreational sites) with a photo inventory of businesses, buildings and attractions;
  - b. Create a Downtown Business Directory which includes special attractions & destinations;
  - c. Create a map with restaurants and businesses on it – CT Main St Center has some good samples to share.
  - d. Coordinate a Welcome Program for new and expanding businesses.
2. Events:
  - a. Develop an inventory of existing Riverton events, which could then be turned into a sponsored Calendar of Events;
  - b. Examine the purpose, target audiences and results of these existing events;
  - c. Consider possible new events strategically, with thought given to target audience, goals of the event (retail? image enhancement? holidays? etc.).
  - d. Consider moving some of the existing town events into Riverton (eg the cancer walk, bicycle ride, etc)
  - e. Approach Orvis, Cabellas, and other like businesses to host a fishing expo.
3. Image Development:
  - a. Assemble a "branding team" that will engage in the brand development process and who will review and act on recommendations in the attached presentation "Developing an Image, a brand and a position";  
NOTE: *ENGAGING LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS INTERESTED IN BUSINESS, MARKETING, AND GRAPHIC ARTS COULD PROVIDE A FRESH PERSPECTIVE AND SATISFY THEIR COMMUNITY SERVICE REQUIREMENTS.*
  - b. Develop tourist packages with dining/lodging options and activities to capture the "relax, romance, outdoors & shopping" attractions of your region.

## DESIGN: PHYSICAL & VISUAL ELEMENTS

1. Consider application/nomination for Certified Local Government (CLG) status and Historic Register nomination for the Town Center district. The CLG program provides technical assistance and small grants to local governments seeking to preserve their unique historic character. *Contact Mary Donohue at the CT Commission on Culture & Tourism, History Division for complete information.*
2. Explore preservation grant opportunities through the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism (CLG, etc.) as well as *Preserve America* status with the National

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Park Service, which offers grants to designated communities (*Simsbury is Connecticut's newest Preserve America community.*) For more information, visit <http://www.preserveamerica.gov/index.html>

3. Complement your Special Design District Table of Uses by creating design guidelines (CT Main St Center has some samples) to ensure that regulatory guidelines and standards allow you to achieve your goals rather than act as a barrier to achievement.
4. A short-term design fix: use the fence at the fairgrounds to direct people through the downtown to enter the fair
5. Partner with the Riverton Grange to discuss the connections through the fairgrounds such as a walking path.
6. Work with CT Department of Environmental Protection to inquire about restoring the bridge railing.
7. Conduct a parking inventory – identify all parking spaces in Riverton. This can inform a future signage program directing residents and visitors where to park. (CMSC has some examples to share).

## **ORGANIZATION: PUBLIC OUTREACH & EDUCATION**

\*Note: based on staff and volunteer capacity, you will likely need to create and strengthen these and other partnerships in order to successfully implement a comprehensive revitalization program.

1. Partnerships:
  - a. Continue to strengthen the town's relationship with the Litchfield Hills Council of Elected Officials, the Litchfield Hills visitor bureau, and the Northwest Economic Development Association.
  - b. Reach out to organizations in town (Merchants association, Jr. Womens, Grange, Little League, Lions, Historical society, Cub scouts, etc) to partner for project implementation.
  - c. Consider creating a partnership with Northwest Community College to design an intern program; interns could help with: a building inventory, communications, developing design guidelines, researching grant opportunities, website re-design, etc
  - d. Build your volunteer base more formally – match their time, talent and interest with your needs.
  - e. See the attached "Developing a Steering Committee" and "Committee Basics" for ideas on other individuals and organizations to involve. At this point in your revitalization journey, we don't expect you to create formal committees; these documents can simply help identify the types of individuals who will likely share your commitment to "bringing Riverton back".



[www.ctmainstreet.org](http://www.ctmainstreet.org)

2. State and Federal:
  - a. Research grant opportunities at local, state and federal level; some ideas: STEAP, USDA rural (for housing, small business, etc), recreational tourism, etc
  - b. Reach out to the state to discuss barriers to commercial boat launch opportunities
3. Media:
  - a. Add a Riverton page to the town website which promotes the village center and informs visitors how they can get involved in downtown revitalization. Also, link to other sites and ask other sites to link to yours for greater visibility.
  - b. If there is a local cable access tv station, consider creating a reel of information and events or developing a ½ hour program that spotlights businesses, activities, etc in Riverton. This program can serve to promote and inform. A host will be needed and guests lined up around specific topics. (*Simsbury Main Street Partnership has developed a weekly show, "Spotlight on Main Street", which you might want to explore.*)
  - c. Use the existing town newsletter to highlight events and businesses in the downtown.

## TRAINING AND NETWORK PARTICIPATION

1. Target appropriate public and private sector representatives to attend Connecticut Main Street Center's Downtown Revitalization Institute (DRI) workshops. Information and registration at [www.ctmainstreet.org](http://www.ctmainstreet.org).
2. Consider inviting Connecticut Main Street Executives, and outstanding public sector partners, to Barkhamsted to present their downtown challenges and opportunities and how the Main Street program has worked to address them (*CMSC recommends Waterbury - Carl Rosa and Simsbury - Sarah Floroski*)

### Attachments follow:

1. **Forming a Steering Committee & Main Street Partners**
2. **Main Street Committee Basics**
3. **Main Street Promotional Strategies: *Developing an Image, a Brand and a Position* (see separate PDF)**



[www.ctmainstreet.org](http://www.ctmainstreet.org)

Attachment 1.

## Developing a Main Street Steering Committee

### Introduction

The success of a downtown revitalization effort depends largely upon **establishing a leadership group who has the ability to identify and mobilize resources, build volunteer support, and maintain a clear focus on the downtown's needs and opportunities.** This leadership group, or Steering Committee, is a core group (7-10 members) of private and public sector stakeholders in your community who represent the traits and talent needed to lead the charge on the revitalization of your downtown.

### Finding & Developing Good Leaders

The Main Street program was built on the premise that local citizens work together to shape the future of downtown. Take some time to identify the potential leaders in your own community. Do you have:

- ♦ Graduates of local leadership programs?
- ♦ Outspoken proponents of downtown revitalization?
- ♦ Existing merchants or property owners?
- ♦ Recently retired civic leader or elected official who is well-respected?

### Traits

Individually, Steering Committee members **provide leadership for the downtown program, serve as advocates of downtown revitalization, and support the effort by serving with responsibility and with dedication.** In identifying and recruiting your Steering Committee, you will look for the following personal and professional traits:

- ♦ Passion for downtown and the Main Street concept
- ♦ Team player
- ♦ Has time to commit
- ♦ Willing to raise funds
- ♦ Enlightened self-interest (realizes that a healthy downtown is good for him/her, as well as the whole community)





[www.ctmainstreet.org](http://www.ctmainstreet.org)

### **Sources of Partnerships**

*The list below provides a general starting place for identifying who might be potential candidates for the Main Street Steering Committee in your community.*

#### **The Municipality:**

- City/Town Manager's Office
- Offices of Planning & Zoning, Economic Development, Neighborhood Services, Parking Authority, Housing, etc.
- City/Town Recreation Department, Tourism Office
- Departments of Public Safety, Public Works, Building Inspector, Fire Marshal
- City/Town Commissions & Boards

#### **Local Organizations & Agencies:**

- Neighborhood Revitalization Zones (NRZs)
- Regional/Local Chamber of Commerce
- Heritage or Preservation Trusts, Historical Societies
- Neighborhood Associations, Civic Organizations
- Youth agencies
- Merchants' Association

#### **Downtown and Area Employers:**

- Hospitals, Health facilities, social services
- Banks and Financial Institutions
- Realtors
- Local developers and contractors
- Corporations, Manufacturing
- Local Media: print, radio, TV
- Downtown business owners
- Downtown property owners
- Downtown employees (including any State employees)
- Design Professional Firms (Architects, etc.)

#### **Institutions and Destinations:**

- Cultural Institutions: Museums, Theaters, Arts Council
- Restaurants, Hotels
- Library
- YMCA
- Senior Center
- Schools: public, private, parochial, colleges/universities, adult education
- Churches, Synagogues, faith-based entities and organizations
- Anchors unique to your location (casinos, arts, sports, etc.)

**Citizens throughout your city or town**



## Connecticut Main Street Center Main Street Committee Basics

### Initial Activities for all Committees:

- Attend appropriate Downtown Revitalization Institute Workshops, presented by CMSC
- Carefully review the National Main Street Committee Handbook and review the attached one-page overview for each committee
- Recruit a diverse group of members for each committee, including key municipal staff as appropriate
- Determine your committee chair or co-chairs (the board of directors will determine how chairs are to be selected)
- Review the National Main Street Center's (NMSC) catalogue to purchase the most appropriate publications
  - The local Main Street organization may find that it is fairly easy to get a one-time grant for \$2,000 in order to purchase many items in the NMSC catalogue
  - Consider partnering with your library to create a downtown revitalization section in the library and keep these publications there (your library may also have some budget money to help purchase these items)
- Each committee should do a walking tour of your district
- Start collecting photographs from places you visit to create a journal of good ideas
- Start exploring the Internet for resources beginning with the National and Connecticut Main Street Centers' websites ([www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org) & [www.ctmainstreet.org](http://www.ctmainstreet.org)). Each has a number of links to related and useful websites

### Candidates for Committee Membership:

Consider these sources in your own community for committee members:

#### **Design**

Design professionals: *architects, landscape architects, etc.*  
Municipal Depts: *Public Works, Planning*  
Historic Preservation organizations

Garden Club, Beautification Committee  
Local College programs: *Design, Engineering, Art, Urban Planning, Public Administration, Fashion Merchandising*

#### **Economic Restructuring**

Chamber of Commerce  
Banks  
Small Business Specialists or SBDC  
Library

Municipal Depts: *Economic or Community Development, Economic Development Commission*  
Local College programs: *Business, Marketing, Economics, Urban Planning, Public Administration*

#### **Promotion**

Retail business owners / Merchants Association  
Library  
Media  
Public Relations, Graphic Design, or Advertising  
Firms  
Chamber of Commerce

Municipal Depts: *Public Information Officer, Recreation*  
Local College programs: *Marketing, Advertising, Graphic Design, Performing and/or Fine Arts*

## The Design Committee

Historically, downtown was a physically engaging place. Buildings and signs communicated style and detail. Sidewalks, lighting and public spaces created a comfortable, attractive streetscape. Downtown emphasized pedestrian activity but accommodated vehicular traffic.

Over the past thirty years, however, downtown's physical environment has deteriorated: buildings have been poorly maintained and/or inappropriately remodeled; streetscape elements have been neglected; and cars have displaced pedestrians. As its character has diminished, downtown has become less inviting and, therefore, less competitive.

Design is about restoring downtown's character and identity as the foundation for restoring downtown's commercial competitiveness, because these physical qualities are what differentiate downtown from all other commercial districts. Ultimately, downtown's marketability depends on its unique "sense of place."

### The Design Committee's job is:

- Educating yourselves and others about - "what is good design and why is it important?"
- Providing good design advice
- Planning downtown's future development - guiding growth and reshaping regulations
- Motivating others to make changes - creating incentives, providing tools and targeting key projects

### Activities (\* Denotes activities to be done first.)

#### Field Trips to Learn/Photo "Best Practices"\*

##### Design Audit\* (with CMSC staff)

Photo inventory: historic, present day

Building inventory

Audit categories:

- General appearance
- Public spaces
- Traffic & parking
- Pedestrian environment
- Gateways
- Streetscape
- Signage
- Wayfinding
- Built environment
  - Architectural/historical significance
  - Orientation to the street
  - Interiors and exteriors

#### Design Education & Awareness\*

Act as a resource referral\*

Hold workshops and information sessions\*

#### Ordinances, guidelines, plans

Review and revise, or develop zoning and design tools

#### Design incentives

Façade grant programs

Signage grant programs

Historic District establishment (if applicable)

Certified Local Government application

#### Tracking measures of success\*

## **The Economic Restructuring Committee**

Downtown's competitiveness has diminished over the past thirty years – a decline precipitated by the “cycle of disinvestment.” As downtown has become less competitive, business activity has slowed. Many businesses have closed or moved, creating vacancies. Rents have decreased and property owners have invested less in upkeep. In this downward spiral, diminishing business activity and decreasing property values have fed on each other until downtown's economy has stagnated.

Economic Restructuring is about restoring downtown's economic health. Initially, this process focuses on assisting existing businesses – helping them improve management, marketing and customer services. In the long run, “restructuring” downtown's economy means reconfiguring the mix of goods and services so that downtown is economically balanced, adaptable and competitive. At the same time, Economic Restructuring focuses on working with property owners to reinvest in their buildings to enhance the marketability (and value) of downtown real estate.

### **The Economic Restructuring committee's job is:**

- Learning about your district's current economic condition and identifying opportunities for market growth
- Strengthening existing businesses and attracting new ones
- Finding new, or more appropriate, economic uses for under-performing or vacant buildings and vacant lots
- Developing financial incentives and capital for building rehabilitation and business development

### **Activities (\* Denotes activities to be done first.)**

#### **Downtown Assessment**

Building inventory (see Design)\*  
 Business inventory (see Promotion)\*  
 Base data collection:\*
 

- ◆ Vacancies, rental rates\*
- ◆ Past surveys, plans\*
- ◆ Downtown tax base, employee base

 Review/create zoning map/regs\*  
 Review business permitting process\*  
 Conduct market analysis

#### **Business Retention/Expansion**

Develop relationship with CMSC Business Development Specialist\*  
 Block captain program\*  
 Educational seminars & workshops\*

#### **Business Attraction**

Create new business owners orientation packet w/ info on downtown  
 Determine feasibility of attraction program  
 Develop incentive package

#### **Real Estate Development**

Adaptive reuse, historic preservation  
 In-fill (new buildings)  
 Community Initiated Development  
 Develop incentive package

#### **Tracking Measures of Success\***

## The Promotion Committee

In its “heyday”, downtown served a clearly defined local market, so downtown promotional activities were relatively simple – the occasional sale, ads in the local paper, etc. For the most part, individual businesses “marketed” themselves.

However, the retail marketplace has changed dramatically. Consumers are now offered increasing choice – not only in what to buy but in how to buy it. The volume of commercial “noise” has increased to the point at which the average consumer is subjected to thousands of advertising messages per day.

This dynamic environment has rendered traditional promotional practices obsolete. Businesses can no longer afford to promote themselves individually. In order to stay competitive, downtown must collectively rethink how it defines, attracts and keeps its customers. This process, called Promotion, focuses on developing and implementing a clearly articulated strategy for marketing downtown in much the same fashion as major retailers or shopping malls market themselves.

### The Promotion Committee’s job is:

- To understand the changing market – current and potential shoppers and your competition
- To identify downtown assets – including people, buildings, heritage and institutions
- To define your market niche(s) - your unique position in the marketplace
- To create new image campaigns, retail promotions and special events to lure people downtown

### Activities (\* Denotes activities to be done first.)

#### Public Relations

Identify downtown assets\*:

- ♦ refer to SWOT analysis\*
- ♦ refer to design photo inventory\*

Create a downtown business directory, including special attractions (see ER)\*

Coordinate “welcome” program for new and expanding businesses (w/ER)

#### Image Development

Develop position statement based on market analysis provided by ER Committee

Develop downtown graphics program:

- ♦ Logo and tag line\*
- ♦ Banners and signage
- ♦ Merchandising opportunities
- ♦ Collateral materials\*

#### Events

Develop inventory of existing events\* (potential calendar outgrowth)

Self education\*

Examine purpose, goals & results of existing events\*

Determine appropriate new events to consider/implement (i.e. holiday/4<sup>th</sup> quarter retail activities)

#### Advertising

Develop campaign for downtown & support events/promotions

#### Track Measures of Success \*

## The Organization Committee / Board of Directors

In most communities, “downtown revitalization” has been undertaken not as a cohesive endeavor but as a series of singular, unrelated projects, i.e. specific organizations trying to achieve their own objectives. These projects have been limited in scope and duration because, in and of itself, any one project (or any one group) can’t address the full range of issues associated with downtown revitalization.

To be effective, downtown revitalization cannot be a haphazard undertaking or a set of disparate projects. It requires collaboration, focus and continuity. Organization is about bringing these qualities to a community’s downtown revitalization efforts by integrating diverse interests in the community and focusing them on a shared, long-term agenda for restoring downtown’s physical beauty and economic viability.

### The Organization Committee’s job is:

- **Public Relations & Communication:** promoting the work of the Main Street organization
- **Advocacy & Education:** educating the community on the Main Street Four Point Approach™ and the need for a comprehensive management program for revitalizing downtown
- **Outreach & Partnership Development:** developing active partners and an increasingly engaged volunteer base

### Activities (\* Denotes activities to be done first.)

#### Communication/Education

Create a mailing list of potential stakeholders\*  
 Public relations (see Promotion):  
     Develop press list and contacts\*  
     Media kits\*  
     Newspaper column  
     Press releases\*

Publish and distribute newsletter (see Promotion)\*  
 Publish and distribute a program brochure  
 Speakers bureau/slide show\*  
 Regular updates to elected officials and town staff\*  
 Promote workplans\*  
 Website (see Promotion)  
 Main Street mixers  
 Plan annual meeting  
 Produce annual report  
 Downtown revitalization library

#### Volunteer/Partnership Development

Implement membership campaign\*  
 Recruitment\*  
 Orientation\*  
 Training\*  
 Retention/recognition & thanks\*

#### Tracking Measures of Success\*

## Appendix C Buy Local Flyer

### BUY LOCAL

The following is an example of a recent Buy Local Program that was launched in March 2009. The concept, which is being used in Washington, CT among other places, supports locally owned, independent businesses and their hometown communities.

3

What three independently owned businesses would you miss if they disappeared? Stop in. Say hello. Pick up something that brings a smile. Your purchases are what keeps those businesses around.

50

If half the employed population spent \$50 each month in locally owned independent businesses, it would generate more than \$42.6 billion in revenue.\* Imagine the positive impact if 3/4 the employed population did that.

68

For every \$100 spent in locally owned independent stores, \$68 returns to the community through taxes, payroll, and other expenditures. If you spend that in a national chain, only \$43 stays here. Spend it online and *nothing comes home*.

1

The number of people it takes to start the trend...*you*.

*Pick 3. Spend 50. Save your local economy.*

*Visit the [350project.net](http://350project.net)*



## **Appendix D**

**Vermont Land Use Education & Training Collaborative Design Review Publication**



**Statutory Authorization:** 24 V.S.A. §§4410, 4414(1)(E), 4433, 4464

**Type:** REGULATORY

**Related Topic Areas:** Growth Centers; Downtown Revitalizations; Historic Preservation;  
Land Use & Development Regulations; Zoning Regulations

# Design Review

6

## Overview

Formal planning in the United States has long been concerned with the quality and design of the public realm. The first modern example of unified urban design was demonstrated at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, in the form of architect Daniel Burnham's "Great White City." This exhibition spawned a nationwide City Beautiful Movement that promoted the functional and visual integration of the built environment, emphasizing the design of public spaces, including public parks, buildings, monuments, and streetscapes. Advocates of the City Beautiful Movement, led by prominent businessmen, were among the first to recommend laws that would require integrated street design through the regulation of building heights and setbacks.

As zoning evolved over the twentieth century, however, the use or function of land took precedence over the form of development. National zoning models called for the separation of uses, connected through an expanding network of streets, highways, and commercial strips, which now dominate our auto-oriented landscape. The local regulation of aesthetics and design was considered questionable at best: it was often argued that aesthetics fell outside the purview of local zoning and that design requirements discouraged new growth and development by adding to the cost of construction.

In the past twenty-five years—in large part in response to the national "franchising" of local landscapes through formulaic architecture—there has been renewed interest in regulating the design of development to



**The higher densities of compact pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods—whether a downtown street or village green—require a harmonious approach to design and a high quality of construction. By establishing standards for siting, layout, and building and landscape design, towns can create a shared template for new development that enhances the quality of proposed neighborhoods.**

protect the character and sense of place that is unique to each community. As Edward T. McMahon, a noted planner, attorney, and former president of Scenic America, has observed: "Without thoughtful attention to design, a town will become 'Anywhere USA.' Design of a community

communicates what it is."

Design regulations also have been shown to have economic benefits—they allow for higher densities of development, increase property values, and create attractive neighborhoods and communities that encourage new investment.

Most states, including Vermont, now specifically allow for local design regulation to protect the character of urban, village, and rural landscapes. Design regulations, as all local regulations, must conform to an adopted municipal plan.

## Application

One of the most effective ways to protect community character, including the character of the built environment, is to regulate the siting, layout, and design of new development and construction. Design is always a consideration, if not always identified and regulated as such:

- Design elements are inherent in even the most basic zoning requirements, including lot size, setback, coverage, building height, and off-street parking standards.
- Site plan review offers an additional tool to more carefully regulate site layout and design—including the placement and orientation of buildings in relation to neighboring parcels, local streets, internal site circulation, and parking areas.
- Conditional use review under zoning can be used to address the visual or aesthetic impacts of development and include related site layout,

### Design Matters

“Travel teaches you many things, not the least of which is that the world doesn’t have to be ugly. ...

While good design can mean more tourists, increased jobs, a better tax base, increased property values, and a better quality of life, bad design or no design can lead to polarization and citizen opposition to new development. Without doubt, there would be far less opposition to new developments, of all types, if builders, developers, and public officials paid more attention to the appearance, design, and compatibility of the new development with the existing natural and architectural character of our communities.”

Source: Edward T. McMahon, *Planning Commissioners Journal*, No. 21 (Winter 1996).

design, buffering, and screening requirements.

- Subdivision regulations also typically include basic design criteria for the layout and design of lots, streets, open space areas, and supporting infrastructure.

**Design Review Districts.** The Vermont Planning and Development Act (24 V.S.A. Chapter 117) more specifically allows for design review in association with the designation of “design review districts,” which, in statute, are very broadly defined. Design review districts, in their development and application, are in many respects similar to historic districts, which are also allowed under Chapter 117. (See related topic paper.) Design review districts, however, are much more flexible in their scope and application. They can be used to protect the character of downtowns and residential neighborhoods, to promote the redevelopment of commercial strips and business districts, and to integrate the pattern and form of development in designated new town centers and growth centers.

Design districts are often defined as overlay districts that regulate the design of development in one or more underlying districts, in accordance with stated district purposes and objectives. In Vermont, design districts often include, or overlay:

- historic village or neighborhood districts
- downtown and central business districts
- commercial and industrial districts, including industrial and office parks
- gateways that mark the entrance or transition to village and urban centers
- rural landscape districts
- viewshed districts

In 2006, around thirty Vermont municipalities have enacted some form of design review. Design review regulations are frequently used to meet the local planning commitment required for state designation as a downtown, village, or new town center under the Vermont Downtown

### Where Do Design Review Districts Belong?

24 V.S.A. §4414(1)(E)

A design review district may be created for any area containing structures of historical, architectural, or cultural merit and other areas where there is a concentration of community interest and participation, such as a central business district, civic center, or similar grouping or focus of activities. These areas may include townscape areas that resemble in important aspects the earliest permanent settlements, including a concentrated urban settlement with striking vistas, views extending across open fields and up to the forest edge, a central focal point and town green, and buildings of high architectural quality, including styles of the early nineteenth century.

Program (24 V.S.A. §793[1]).

In short, a design review district:

- encompasses an area containing structures, townscapes, or landscapes of historical, architectural, or cultural merit;
- is defined by boundaries identified under local zoning;
- includes enforceable design criteria, or standards, that address specific design considerations; and
- is administered by the appropriate municipal panel specified in the regulations, often in association with an advisory design review board or committee.

Once a design review district is designated under local zoning, no structure may be erected, reconstructed, substantially altered, restored, removed, demolished, or changed in use or type of occupancy without local review and approval by the planning commission, zoning, or development review board.

**Design Plan/Report.** Design review regulations—because they are so broadly defined in statute, but so specific in their local application—take time, effort, and often some outside expertise to develop. Under Chapter 117, the planning commis-



sion is responsible for preparing a report that describes “the particular planning and design problems of the proposed district” and sets forth a “design plan” that includes recommended planning and design criteria to guide future development.

The purpose of this report is to document the design context for the district, including design issues that need to be addressed in the regulations and the standards of review. The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation has published a *Design Resource Guide* (1997), which provides useful guidance for report preparation.

Community involvement at this stage is critical for the process to gain public support. A variety of “visualization” techniques are available for this purpose, including:

- *Neighborhood tours and forums*, led by knowledgeable community members or experts, highlight and provide feedback on design issues within targeted areas of the community.
- *Design charrettes* are intensive, facilitated community design workshops that focus on the layout and design of a particular area or neighborhood and include, as participants, both community members and experts from a variety of fields.
- *Visual preference surveys* are group surveys that use images of different

forms and densities of development to determine which are most acceptable to the community.

- *Visual simulations*, which include photographic or computer-generated simulations and modeling, show what new design features or elements will look like in relation to their setting and context.

The planning commission must also hold a warned public hearing on the design report prior to forwarding it to the legislative body with a recommendation to adopt design regulations.

**Design Standards.** The regulations should include clear, enforceable design standards that are specific to the setting, context, and character of the district and are consistent with district objectives. Only through the application of clear standards can local review panels render consistent, predictable decisions and avoid charges of subjectivity that are common in design review. The standards should be tailored as needed to meet community objectives without being so restrictive that they’re unacceptable to local property owners and voters. Again, community and property owner involvement is critical.

The following types of standards are often found in design regulations and are illustrated in more detail in associated guidelines.

- *site layout and design standards*, including standards for the placement and orientation of buildings and parking areas in relation to adjoining structures, streets, and greens
- *building height, scale, and massing standards*, including standards that regulate the overall size, volume, and form or shape of buildings in relation to their context
- *building design standards*, including standards for roof shapes and lines, facades and fenestration (window and door openings), materials, color, and architectural details
- *streetscape standards*, including “build-to” lines and standards for street design, street lighting, trees, street furniture, pedestrian sidewalks or

## Standards or Guidelines?

**Design standards** are enforceable review standards that are used to achieve district objectives and are specified in the regulations.

Many communities also develop **design guidelines** that illustrate and explain design concepts and provide guidance in meeting applicable design standards. Often guidelines are published as a separate guide or handbook that may be referenced in the regulations or simply used as a planning and educational tool.

The report prepared by the planning commission, if presented in detail, can serve as the district design handbook.

paths, and transit stops

- *landscaping standards*, including the type and placement of landscaping elements around buildings and parking areas, within streetscapes, and for screening
- *sign standards*, including number, location, height and area, lighting, and materials

## Design Review Commission.

Chapter 117 also allows for the municipal appointment of an advisory design review commission to include members with expertise in the fields of architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning, historic preservation, and related disciplines, a majority of whom should reside in the community (§4433[4]). The design review commission is authorized to assist the planning commission in preparing design district reports and related standards and guidelines. The design review commission, if authorized under local regulations or by resolution of the legislative body, can also serve in an advisory capacity under related regulatory proceedings (§4464). Accordingly, the design review committee may:

- review applications and prepare recommendations under applicable design review criteria;
- meet with the applicant, interested parties, or both;

## Report Preparation

1. Define preliminary district boundaries.
2. Establish district design goals and objectives.
3. Decide on a common design vocabulary.
4. Prepare base maps.
5. Conduct historic, land use, and visual surveys or inventories of the proposed district.
6. Identify and describe district design problems and objectives (context).
7. Develop design review standards and guidelines.

Source: Adapted from the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation’s *Design Review Resource Guide* (1997).

## Form-Based Zoning

**Form-based zoning**—developed and promoted by urban designers and architects as an alternative to standard “Euclidean” or dimensional zoning—emphasizes form over function. The basic premise of form-based codes is that the regulation of physical form, rather than use, is key to producing a better built environment.

**Conventional zoning**, because it focuses on density and the separation of uses rather than design, has been held responsible in large part for the proliferation of “cookie-cutter” subdivisions, commercial strips, low density development and sprawl. “Smart codes” and other types of form-based zoning, on the other hand, are contextual in nature. They focus on regulating the form or design of development in relation to its context. Form-based zoning places primary emphasis on building orientation, types, dimensions, facades, and streetscape design rather than uses or densities of development, and typically exhibits the following characteristics:

- Standards are defined for districts, including downtowns, neighborhoods, or transportation corridors that call for

integrated design. Transect-zoning, developed by Andres Duany, one of the founders of New Urbanism, defines design standards for zones along a transect or cross section of the community that extends from an urban core to outlying rural areas. Standards for the pattern and form of development vary by district, based on a district’s design context or location along the urban-rural transect.

- Standards emphasize the form of the built environment, rather than density and use, recognizing that uses may change over time, but buildings endure. Form-based codes rely heavily on illustration and graphics, rather than text, to present design concepts and standards.
- Design standards don’t preclude—and therefore allow—a mix of uses and housing types located within close proximity to each other.
- Greater attention is given to the design of the public realm—including streetscapes, parks, and other public spaces—and how these are defined in relation to the built environment.

The preparation of form-based codes typically involves:

- An inventory and analysis of existing conditions, including existing building

types and design elements.

- An intensive, collaborative public visioning and design charrette process that includes both design professionals and local community members.
- Defining districts based on inventories of existing conditions and the proposed design context established through the public charrette process.
- Developing district standards, including standards for layout (streets, blocks, building placement, height) and for building design (building and frontage typologies, architectural details).
- Illustrating standards in a format that is graphic, jargon free, and easy to understand and apply.

Form-based codes do not readily address the impacts of land use, and can be very expensive to develop, especially on a town- or citywide basis. As a result form-based zoning is rarely adopted in its pure form, except as it may apply to new town or growth centers. Form-based zoning is not specifically enabled for use in Vermont, as in some states, but many of the principles and processes associated with form-based zoning can be applied under local design review.

- conduct site visits and perform other fact-finding as needed to prepare recommendations;
- inform applicants in advance of a public hearing of negative recommendations and suggest remedies for addressing deficiencies in the application; and
- present recommendations to the appropriate municipal panel prior to or at the warned public hearing on the application.

## Considerations

Design is inherent and should be considered, in the development and application of all local land use regulations. The designation of design review districts under zoning allows a community to establish and apply locally relevant and acceptable design regulations that can be administered by existing commissions and boards. Additional administrative capacity is

not usually required, though additional expertise is often needed to develop design standards and guidelines and to help administer the regulations. The appointment of a design review commission can be used to tap the expertise of local community members and to involve more people in the design review process.

Aesthetic standards—and architectural standards in particular—are often considered overly restrictive but are gaining acceptance for use in historic, downtown, and village districts and in communities that are attracting national chains. All design standards and guidelines should be presented in enough detail to provide clear and consistent guidance to boards and applicants; illustrated standards and guidelines are especially helpful. Without clear standards, design review can be arbitrary, subjective, and subject to legal challenge.

## Resources

Many excellent examples of design standards and guidelines are available nationally (see [www.vpic.info](http://www.vpic.info) for access to these and other examples). Vermont examples include:

- Bennington’s Design Standards for their Planned Commercial District (available online)
- *Design Guidelines for Manchester’s Commercial and Historic Districts*
- *Designing Your Corner of Vermont*, Vermont Arts Council
- Burlington’s series of design papers, presented by topic
- *Vermont Interstate Interchange Planning and Development Design Guidelines*, Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs