

Results of the Placemaking Workshop Pelham Town Center October 19, 2006

On October 19th, 2006 approximately 40 people gathered at St. Patrick’s Church for a Placemaking Workshop facilitated by Projects for Public Spaces (PPS) and Tom Warne, consultants for the New Hampshire Department of Transportation. The intent was for Pelham residents to evaluate how well the roadway corridors leading to the Town Center perform and to identify opportunities that exist along those corridors. The ideas generated will help define the context of the area and guide the development of options to improve the transportation system in Pelham.

After a presentation by Tom Warne and PPS, participants went outside to conduct a Place Audit exercise around seven locations, shown below. The Place Audit form is shown on the following two pages.

Participants were asked to evaluate how the places currently performed in terms of Access & Linkages, Uses & Activities, Comfort & Image and Sociability. They interviewed people who they encountered in the area and then came up with opportunities for improvements in the short and long term. Finally each group was tasked to write a problem statement for their site.



Placemaking through Transportation



New Hampshire Department of Transportation

This exercise is intended to be used as a tool to evaluate how well streets and adjacent land uses are performing as Places, and identify opportunities for enhancing them in the future.



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LOCATION: _____

A EVALUATE THE PLACE (10 minutes)

Evaluate how well this site performs as a place.

ACCESS, LINKAGES & INFORMATION ← DISAGREE AGREE →

Pedestrians can easily walk to and through the place.	1	2	3	4
Pedestrian access is safe and convenient:				
- Sidewalks connect to adjacent areas;	1	2	3	4
- Crosswalks are well marked;	1	2	3	4
- Crossing distances are minimal.	1	2	3	4
Taking transit is easy:				
- Stops and stations are easy to find;	1	2	3	4
- Stops and stations are easy to get to on foot;	1	2	3	4
- Maps and schedules are readily available.	1	2	3	4
Bicycling is easy:				
- Routes are safe and convenient;	1	2	3	4
- Routes are well marked;	1	2	3	4
- Storage is adequate.	1	2	3	4
Automobiles do not detract from the pedestrian experience.	1	2	3	4
There is adequate directional signage, maps and location information.	1	2	3	4
Autos are able to use the facility safely and efficiently.	1	2	3	4

SUM of ANSWERS = _____

AVERAGE ANSWER (Sum: _____ /13) =

COMFORT & IMAGE ← DISAGREE AGREE →

The road is attractive and fits its surroundings.	1	2	3	4
Amenities are operable, well located, and consistent in design:				
- Seating;	1	2	3	4
- Telephones;	1	2	3	4
- Waste receptacles;	1	2	3	4
- Lighting fixtures;	1	2	3	4
- Restrooms.	1	2	3	4
The road respects and highlights important natural and scenic features (parks, rivers, wetlands, agricultural land, forests, mountains, etc).	1	2	3	4
It respects and highlights important community features (skylines, boulevards, historic places, etc).	1	2	3	4
It feels safe and well cared for:	1	2	3	4

SUM of ANSWERS = _____

AVERAGE ANSWER (Sum: _____ /9) =

USES & ACTIVITIES ← DISAGREE AGREE →

There are opportunities to use the place for active recreational experiences (e.g. walking, shopping, access to boating, fishing, hiking).	1	2	3	4
Uses are easily visible and inviting for drivers and pedestrians.	1	2	3	4
Populated areas (a commercial street or residential area) have many different activities occurring.	1	2	3	4
The road enhances the setting of and access to local businesses and cultural institutions.	1	2	3	4
Continuity of street-level uses makes for a pleasant walking experience.	1	2	3	4

SUM of ANSWERS = _____

AVERAGE ANSWER (Sum: _____ /5) =

SOCIABILITY ← DISAGREE AGREE →

People use the place regularly by choice.	1	2	3	4
There are places to gather / there is evidence of people in groups.	1	2	3	4
Strangers make eye contact; people smile and display affection.	1	2	3	4
Chance encounters happen frequently, as people tend to run into someone they know.	1	2	3	4
There is a mix of ages, sexes and ethnic groups which generally reflects the community at large.	1	2	3	4
People bring their friends and relatives to see the Place or they point to key elements with pride.	1	2	3	4

SUM of ANSWERS = _____

AVERAGE ANSWER (Sum: _____ /6) =

AVERAGE ANSWER OF ALL AREAS

AVERAGE ACCESS, LINKAGES & INFO _____
 AVERAGE COMFORT & IMAGE _____
 AVERAGE USES & ACTIVITIES _____
 AVERAGE SOCIABILITY _____
 SUM of ANSWERS = _____

AVERAGE of ALL (Sum: _____ /4) =

C INTERVIEW (5 minutes)

Ask one or two people in the place you evaluated what they like about the place and what they would do to improve it. If a particular issue from the ratings above has emerged, ask them their opinion about it.

THEIR ANSWER(S):

D PROBLEM STATEMENT

Return to the workshop room, sit with your group, and reach consensus on a Problem Statement that:

- is 2 to 3 sentences;
- includes problems & needs related to transportation, community and environmental concerns;
- does not pre-figure solutions;
- is not mode-specific.

B Identify the Opportunities of this Place

(25 minutes)

List below, by category, the opportunities that exist in this place. Add others not mentioned. Include both short-term, low-cost opportunities and long-term changes.

1. What do you like best about this place as a whole?
2. List a few things that you would do to improve this place that could be done right away and that wouldn't cost a lot.
3. What 3 changes would you make to this place in the long term that would have the biggest impact?
4. What local partnerships or local talent can you identify that could help implement some of your proposed improvements? Please be as specific as possible.

What Makes a Great Place?

In evaluating more than 1,500 public spaces around the world, Project for Public Spaces (PPS) has found that successful ones have four key qualities: they are accessible; people are engaged in activities there; the space is comfortable and has a good image; and finally, it is a sodable place: one where people meet each other and take people when they come to visit. PPS developed The Place Diagram as a tool to help people in judging any place, good or bad:



Imagine that the center circle on the diagram is a specific place that you know: a street corner, a playground, a plaza outside a building. You can evaluate that place according to four criteria in the red ring. In the ring outside these main crite-

ria are a number of intuitive or qualitative aspects by which to judge a place; the next outer ring shows the quantitative aspects that can be measured by statistics or research.

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Location 1: Intersection of Windham Rd (NH 111A) and Nashua Rd



Evaluation

Access & Linkages	1.5
Comfort & Image	2.0
Uses & Activities	1.0
Sociability	2.5
Average	2.0

Opportunities

What do you like best about this place as a whole?

- country setting
- wide open area, green grass
- church bell
- sense of community, openness of the community

What few things could be done now at low cost to improve this place?

- town communications
- traffic flow
- 4 way stop
- police traffic control
- better signage for community features (town hall)
- where is the center of town
- connection of community resources (e.g. library to senior center)

What changes would you make in the long term?

- create a historic district in the center of town
- create mixed use zoning
- general store (old Atwood Property)
- Bus service from Lowell to Pelham

Problems

Traffic flow, light

Pedestrians crossing

- no sidewalk
- not pedestrian friendly
- no friendly to bicycles

No definition as the center of town

No definition of place

Problem Statement

There is a traffic problem and there is no sense of place. No direction that this is the center of Town.

Location 2: Intersection of Main Street and Common Street



Evaluation

Access & Linkages	1.95
Comfort & Image	1.4
Uses & Activities	1.4
Sociability	1.2
Average	1.5

Opportunities

What do you like best about this place as a whole?

- landscaping in front of historic building
- brick sidewalk in front of historic building
- size/scale of building (fit context)
- granite features (common, church, old library)
- common well maintained & exists
- actual town center exists
- grass separates road from sidewalk

What few things could be done now at low cost to improve this place?

- banners/signs/welcome
- benches/seats
- picnic area
- implement on-street parking on Common Street

What changes would you make in the long term?

- landscape & improve sidewalks w/distinct treatment
- ornamental lighting
- improved traffic flow
- connectivity to recreation areas

What local partnerships could be used to help implement these changes?

- civic groups
- private properties/local businesses
- VFW
- DOT
- Churches
- Town organizations
- Boy scouts
- Pelham Garden Club

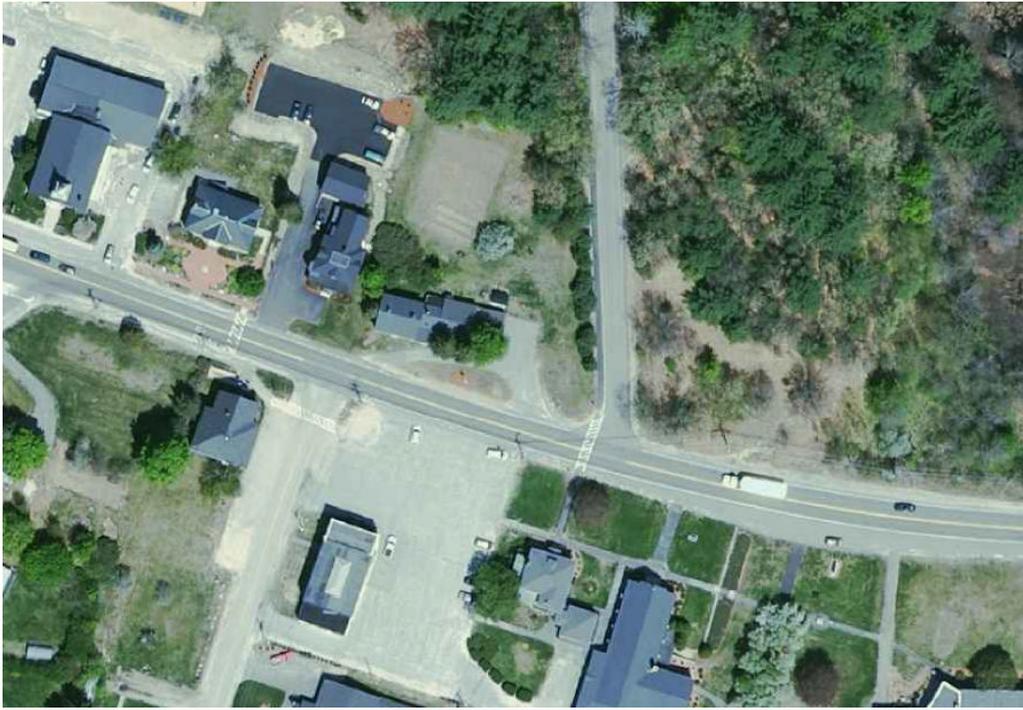
Problems

- inadequate pedestrian facilities
- traffic safety (poor)
- no bike routes/facilities
- lack of destination/no reason to stop
- lack of parking
- poor sidewalks
- poor/lack of lighting
- no indication entering town center/lack of gateway/town center
- speed on Windham Road
- lack of connectivity to recreation areas (Beaver Brook, Police Station Park)

Problem Statement

Main Street & the common area lack destinations & activities that attract pedestrians & groups of people. Inadequate (safe) pedestrian features, the lack of bicycle routes and on-street parking & poor lighting are not conducive of a typical town center. Enhanced gateway features, as well as improved connectivity to recreational area (signage & landscaping) are needed to help identify the town center and calm traffic.

Location 3: Main Street near St. Patrick's Church and School



Evaluation

Access & Linkages	1.5
Comfort & Image	2.0
Uses & Activities	2.5
<u>Sociability</u>	<u>2.0</u>
Average	2.5

Opportunities

What do you like best about this place as a whole?

Buildings, trees, brook, wetland, quaint

What few things could be done now at low cost to improve this place?

Reduce shoulder in front of church/school

- soft shoulder or colored pavement
- landscaping
- stone wall
- reduce freeway effect
 - cobbled sidewalks
 - narrow lanes – striping
 - reduce frontage of parking lots
- entrance & exit!
 - edge landscaping

What changes would you make in the long term?

Walkways

- Beaver commons to Senior Center
- Across bridge
- Lighted at night

New Bridge

- beautiful
- sidewalks, look-out

Riverwalk

- to old bridge street (loop)
- park-let at bridge @ brook

What local partnerships could be used to help implement these changes?

- church
- Feds (transportation enhancement \$)
- DOT
- Boyden Landscaping
- Bike Walk Alliance

Problem Statement

No safe walking, bicycling, lighting roadway not inviting to the town center, highway speeding area, roadway too wide.

No definition marking entrance into town, to slow people down (such as landscaping, sidewalks, narrower lanes, or bridge treatment)

Location 4: Marsh Road from Old Bridge Street to Town Hall



Evaluation

Access & Linkages	1.3
Comfort & Image	1.4
Uses & Activities	2.0
Sociability	2.1
Average	1.7

Opportunities

What do you like best about this place as a whole?

- village green
- library
- Dennis Lyons Park
- Easy access to police station
- Park area next to fire station
- View of church, town common sidewalk

What few things could be done now at low cost to improve this place?

- more trees
- more crosswalks that are visible
- better signage @ fire station/park entrance
- better lighting

What changes would you make in the long term?

- Eliminate fire station
- sidewalk on both sides
- Reconfigure intersection & get traffic out of commons area
- Underground utilities

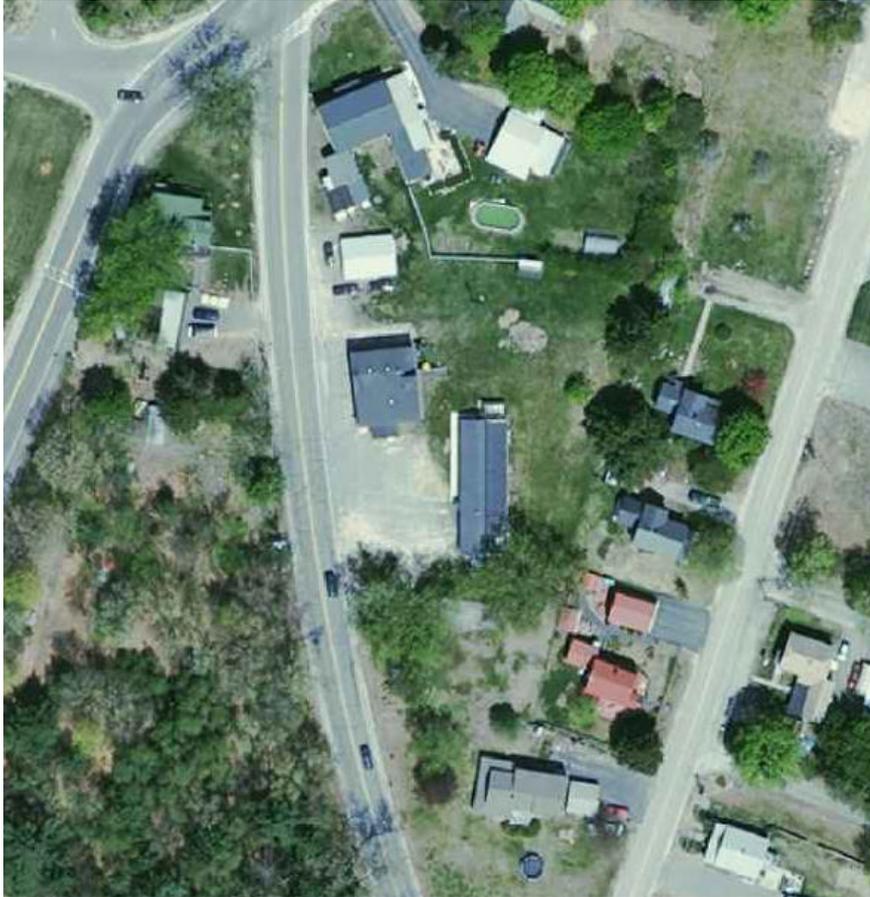
What local partnerships could be used to help implement these changes?

- church
- utility co.
- town
- state DOT
- homeowners
- garden club
- historical society

Problem Statement

There are multiple intersections with too many curb cuts, too close together that are unable to handle the traffic detracts from historical character of the town center. This area is not pedestrian friendly and lacks connectivity, adequate signage and lighting.

Location 5: Old Bridge St. (NH 111A) from Marsh to Woodbury



Evaluation

Access & Linkages	1.0
Comfort & Image	1.5
Uses & Activities	1.0
<u>Sociability</u>	<u>1.0</u>
Average	1.1

Opportunities

What do you like best about this place as a whole?

- Abbott Bridge
- Gibson's Cemetery stonewall
- Town Hall Annex
- Wooded lot – corner of Gibson
- Town center

What few things could be done now at low cost to improve this place?

- Pick up brush on east side of Old Bridge Street north
- Cut back brush on Old Bridge (Woodbury – NH 38) for sight distance out of Woodbury
- Better signage for directing to Town Center & Town Hall

What changes would you make in the long term?

- Sidewalks & park benches, landscaping
- Park on Town land at Gibson & Old Bridge Street N
- Historic style lighting & underground utilities
- Visual cues/Traffic calming to let drivers know they are entering a Town Center

What local partnerships could be used to help implement these changes?

- Pelham (Town)
- Verizon
- Lorenz garage
- Residents
- Citizens Bank
- Salem 66
- Use Boy Scouts for clearing possible building park by Gibson Drive
- Eagle Project

Interview:

- With Resident of Town Center:
- Loves center – convenient to schools
- Too much/fast traffic
- Traffic signal
- Does not feel safe walking/no sidewalks

Problem Statement

This area of Pelham lacks pedestrian connectivity, because it has no sidewalks, benches, lighting, landscaping or other pedestrian amenities. The roadways lack any demarcation telling drivers they are entering a Town Center resulting in high speeds and hazardous conditions for vehicles and pedestrians.

Location 6: Intersection of Marsh & Gibson at the Village Green



Evaluation

Access & Linkages	1.2
Comfort & Image	1.4
Uses & Activities	3.0
<u>Sociability</u>	<u>2.0</u>
Average	1.9

Opportunities

What do you like best about this place as a whole?

- landscape
- open
- historic site (town hall)
- green (grassy)

What few things could be done now at low cost to improve this place?

- better directional signage
- crosswalk to town hall
- pedestrian signing, lighting
- combined sign for town services
- slow speeds starting before high school

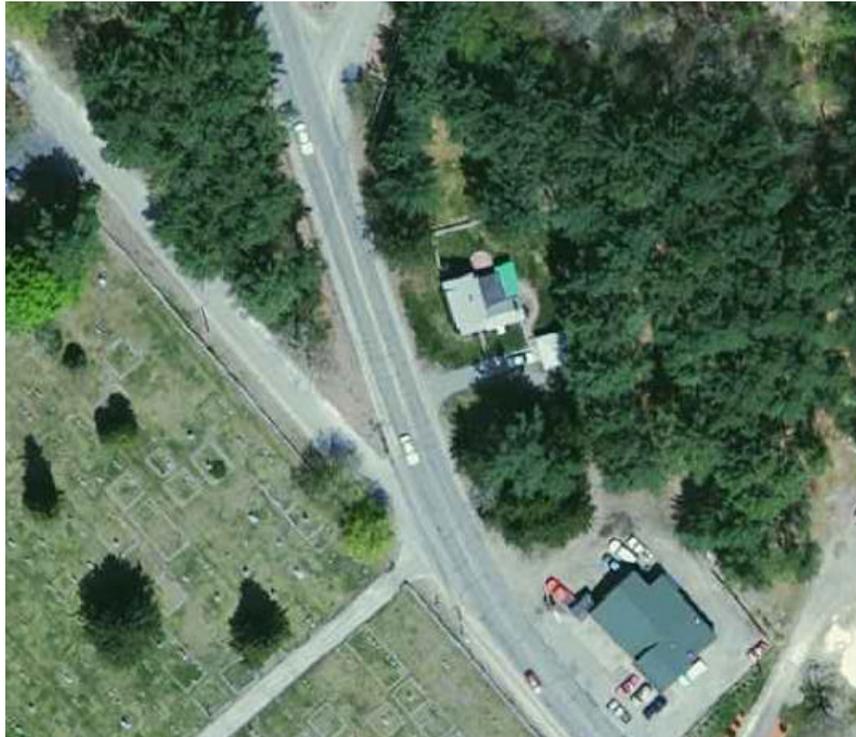
What changes would you make in the long term?

- move sidewalk
- add landscaping, ornamental lighting, "bump outs"
- gateway environment
- stone walls park area on town land abutting Gibson Drive
- benches/seating on village green/park & green area

Problem Statement

The area of the intersection of Gibson Drive and the Village Green is not pedestrian/bicycle friendly what with the lack of crosswalks, lighting, high traffic flow and speeds, nor does it inform people of the facilities location on the village green, the historic nature of the stone foundation, or any meaningful direction of where the road leads to particularly Route 38.

Location 7: Intersection of Old Bridge Street and Gibson Drive



Evaluation

Access & Linkages	1.2
Comfort & Image	2.0
Uses & Activities	1.2
<u>Sociability</u>	<u>1.0</u>
Average	1.35

Opportunities

What do you like best about this place as a whole?

- rural setting

What few things could be done now at low cost to improve this place?

- monument landscaping
- sidewalks, Gibson Road 2-way

What changes would you make in the long term?

- traffic calming, Gibson Road 2 way
- gateway treatment to town center

What local partnerships could be used to help implement these changes?
- businesses, community services

Problem Statement

Our task should be to ease traffic congestion and speed, create a more pedestrian friendly walking area and make a more visible roadway for motorists.