




Charrette Schedule  
November 5 - 9, 2009

Durham Public Design Workshop Schedule	TIME	Thursday, November 5 DAY ONE	Friday, November 6 DAY TWO	Saturday, November 7 DAY THREE	Sunday, November 8 DAY FOUR	Monday, November 9 DAY FIVE	Tuesday, November 10 DAY SIX
<b>Charrette Team:</b>  Principal-in-Charge, Charrette Leader - Bill Dennis Project Manager - Kara Wilbur Town Planner - Beth Della Valle Transportation Engineering - Rick Chellman Illustrator - Dede Christopher GIS / Planning - Judy Colby-George	8:00 AM	Team Begins Arriving In Durham, NH	Breakfast	Breakfast	STUDIO CLOSED	Breakfast	Remaining Team Departs
	9:00 AM		SITE ANALYSIS	PLAN SYNTHESIS & REFINEMENT		PRODUCTION	
	10:00 AM		TECHNICAL MEETING #1 <i>Transportation</i>	TECHNICAL MEETING #5 <i>Community, Business, Civic Leaders</i>			
	11:00 AM		TECHNICAL MEETING #2 <i>Property Owners / UNH</i>				
	12:00 AM		Lunch In	Lunch Out			
	1:00 PM		CONCEPT PLAN FORMATION	PLAN SYNTHESIS & REFINEMENT		PRODUCTION	
	2:00 PM		Set-up Studio & review base materials	TECHNICAL MEETING #3 <i>Elected Officials, Boards, Committees</i>			
	<b>Studio:</b>  Holloway Commons Squamscott, Cocheco & Piscataqua Rooms 75 Main Street, Downtown Durham		3:00 PM	TEAM SESSION <i>Project Overview with Town staff &amp; committees</i>		TECHNICAL MEETING #4 <i>Police, Fire, EMS</i>	
4:00 PM		Dinner In Set-up for Opening Presentation	CONCEPT PLAN FORMATION				
5:00 PM			Dinner Out	Dinner In			
6:00 PM		OPENING PRESENTATION & HANDS-ON COMMUNITY DESIGN WORKSHOP				Set-up for Closing Presentation & Break Down Studio	
7:00 PM			PUBLIC PIN-UP & REVIEW	PUBLIC PIN-UP & REVIEW		CLOSING PRESENTATION	
8:00 PM			PLAN SYNTHESIS & REFINEMENT	PLAN REFINEMENT DESIGN DEVELOPMENT		DINNER MEETING <i>Debriefing meeting with Town staff and Next Steps</i>	
9:00 PM							
10:00 PM							
Public Mtg.							
Internal Mtg.							

The Charrette schedule and promotional post cards were distributed to the public to generate interest in the public process.

## TOWN OF DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE

# STRATEGIC PLANNING & ZONING REVIEW



## WE NEED YOUR HELP TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF DURHAM.

### HANDS-ON COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARRETTE NOVEMBER 5 - 9, 2009

### OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS ESSENTIAL!

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:  
THE TOWN OF DURHAM AND B. DENNIS TOWN DESIGN

Durham is a historic village dating from the early 1600’s. The first settlement began along the banks of the Oyster River, with farming and lumbering the primary way of life. It wasn’t until the turn of the century that the institution now known as the University of New Hampshire (UNH) was established in Durham, vastly changing the direction of the community. Since that time Durham has grown and evolved as a “University Town”, with a diversity and frequent turnover of population that have become part of the community’s unique character.

With the influence of UNH, downtown Durham, which has developed around the intersection of Madbury and Mill Roads, functions as a center that serves both students and the year-round population.

Though an economic engine for the Town, the University has also created a number of challenges. Lack of affordable housing, loss of single family homes and neighborhoods to student housing, traffic congestion, trash issues, a loss of vitality in the Central Business District, a deficiency of high quality, affordable office and retail space, lack of sufficient taxable properties, and a host of other problems affect the community.

Believing that Smart Growth and New Urbanism strategies could benefit Durham, the Town issued a Request for Proposals (RFP). In June 2009, B. Dennis Town Design (B. Dennis) of Providence, Rhode Island was selected to develop a road map for future development, working with both the private and public sector stakeholders.

From November 5th through the 9th, 2009, an intensive public process known as the “charrette” was held in Durham. B. Dennis worked with the residents and stakeholders of Durham to extract the issues and develop both physical, programmatic, and policy solutions to help Durham more effectively shape its future.

A “charrette” is an intensive, participatory design workshop consisting of a series of meetings, presentations, and interactive sessions in which a community shapes a vision for their future.

This section of the report provides a detailed account of the strategic planning charrette process. Section B provides background information and a targeted analysis of the study area. Section C outlines the elements of the Illustrative Master Plan. Section D provides a review of the Central Business District zoning regulations. Section E outlines implementation strategies to bring the plan to fruition.

When reading this report, it is important to keep in mind that this is a long-range vision for Durham. The plan is not dependent on everything happening at once, and changes are intended to occur incrementally over time.

All of the recommendations in this report are based on over 30 years of experience working with small towns throughout the country.



# DURHAM COMMERCIAL CORE STRATEGIC PLAN

## THE CHARRETTE - OPENING PRESENTATION & COMMUNITY WORKSHOP



Opening presentation on Thursday night.



Hands-On Community Workshop: People work in small groups and present their future vision Durham.

[www.bdennis.com](http://www.bdennis.com)

B. Dennis Town Design; For Illustrative Purposes Only.

The town planning firm, B. Dennis Town Design of Providence, Rhode Island was selected to lead the Durham Strategic Planning Charrette. B. Dennis assembled a multidisciplinary team of professionals from around the country representing the professional specialties necessary to assist the Town in creating a Illustrative Master Plan and supporting documents for creating greater vitality in Durham's Commercial Core.

### THE PURPOSE OF THE DURHAM CHARRETTE

- Strengthen the area economy
- Energize the Commercial Core
- Improve zoning regulations for the Central Business District.

The team included town planners, architects, landscape architects, civil engineers, coding experts, and illustrators. Providing a forum for the exchange of ideas, the charrette offered many unique advantages over the conventional planning process, including providing immediate feedback to the design team and giving a sense of authorship to those who participated in the process. The public design charrette was held at Holloway Commons, on the University of New Hampshire campus, from November 5-9, 2009. The 4-day series of events was kicked off with an opening presentation and hands-on design session.

The opening presentation by Bill Dennis of B. Dennis introduced the design team and explained the principles of New Urbanism, Smart Growth, and how they relate to both the existing Town and the types of improvements that could be made. The

presentation ended with a description of the charrette process and what would be taking place over the course of the four days.

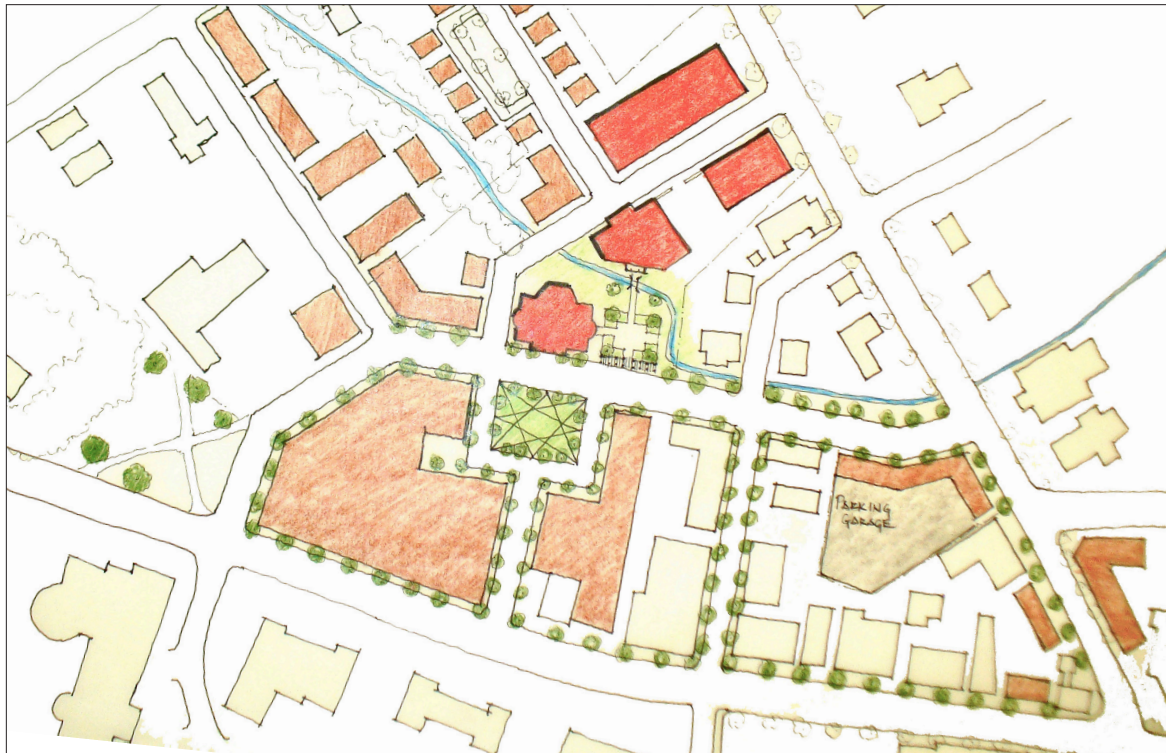
Following the presentation, an interactive Hands-On Community Workshop allowed members of the community to draw their ideas and provide a large amount of information to the design team in a relatively short time period.

Over 50 members of the community separated into groups of 8 to 10 people. Each table was provided with base maps of the Town, the Commercial Core, and the Central Business District, markers, and a member of the design team to act as a table facilitator. Community members were asked to not only voice their concerns and ideas for the future of Durham, they were asked to draw them. People with differing viewpoints and backgrounds worked together and formed consensus on varying issues, while deciding to disagree on others.

Immediately following the hands-on table session, a representative from each table was asked to present their table's ideas to the rest of the participants. This process allowed for the larger group to identify common themes and points of consensus, as well as hear unique ideas for improving the Town. The main themes developed from the Hands-On Community Workshop were:

- Need a town green.
- Address traffic issues, including one-way streets.
- Need space for small businesses to locate.
- Improve pedestrian safety.
- Address student housing in residential neighborhoods.
- Improve connections between UNH and town.





Schematic Downtown Plan A.



Schematic Downtown Plan B.

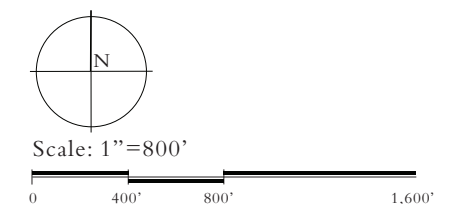


Schematic Downtown Plan C.

Following the Hands-On Community Design Workshop, the design team extracted and synthesized ideas and common themes suggested by the public and incorporated them into schematic plans for the study area, which later informed the final Illustrative Master Plan.

On the evenings of Friday, November 6th and Saturday, November 7th, informal pin-ups were held to solicit feedback from the public on initial designs. These informal presentations permitted both the design team and the community to study various ideas and concepts for the study area. Feedback from the public and other design team members was later distilled and incorporated into the final Illustrative Master Plan. Most importantly, these pin-ups allowed the community to see the Plan as it was being developed and offer immediate feedback to ensure the planning work was on the right track.

The plans above and left illustrate three different design approaches for activating downtown Durham. These preliminary studies stimulated conversation around how to best address traffic flow, infill development, and civic space.





# DURHAM COMMERCIAL CORE STRATEGIC PLAN

## THE CHARRETTE - TECHNICAL MEETINGS / OPEN STUDIO



The public participates in pin-ups and reviews of work to date.



Illustration in progress.



Local kids take part in planning the future of Durham.

On Friday and Saturday of the charrette, B. Dennis Town Design convened five open-door stakeholder/technical meetings including: transportation; property owners and UNH; elected officials, boards, and committees; police, fire, EMS; and community, businesses, and civic leaders. These meetings were well attended by elected officials, interested citizens, business leaders and community groups. Ideas developed and decisions made during these stakeholder meetings were relayed to the design team and incorporated into the Illustrative Master Plan.

The design team's studio space was also open to the public for casual drop-ins by people who could not attend technical meetings or who were interested in observing the process.

The photographs to the left were taken at various points throughout the charrette, showing the public approach to the generation of the Illustrative Master Plan and related documents.



# DURHAM COMMERCIAL CORE STRATEGIC PLAN

## THE CHARETTE - THE CLOSING PRESENTATION



On the evening of Monday, November 9th, the last official night of the charrette, Bill Dennis presented the work generated throughout the week. The draft Strategic Plan was presented as a series of detailed plans, illustrations, supporting graphics, and recommended policy changes.

Though the final night of the charrette, this event was not the end of public involvement. Comments, questions, and concerns voiced after the presentation have been collected and incorporated into the final Strategic Plan, and presented in this document.



People listen closely as the Illustrative Master Plan is described in detail.



The following notes were documented throughout the four day charrette. The notes captured are facts, comments, recommendations, opinions, consent and agreement that town staff/planners, elected officials, and Durham residents have communicated to the B. Dennis team.

### Pre-Charrette Meeting with Town Officials & Staff Thursday, November 5, 2009

Approximately 10 Town officials and staff (Town Council, Fire Department, Business Management, Town Clerk/Tax Collection, Parks and Recreation Department, Library, Police Department) met with the charrette team to talk about the focus of the charrette and general concerns.

#### General Planning Concerns

Town has grown in an unplanned fashion. It has no green like many New England centers.

Town efforts are fractured. It runs from one fire to the next. It has a rich tradition of saying “no”. As a result, there has been little progress. The Town is parochial and passive aggressive. It struggles with visioning.

Fabulous to talk about form based codes – would help economy/lead into mixed uses.

Charrette team noted the Town needs to decide what it wants, then wrap a code around it to provide an objective, faster process.

Important the Town understands what it will specifically get and what it will give up.

#### Pedestrian Connections

Would like to see attention to pedestrians, connect neighborhoods to rest of Town with trails, trolleys.

#### Downtown and Economy

Downtown was more quaint in the 1960s than today – had a toy store, clothing stores, real restaurants. Now, it has a racetrack running through it. Need to rethink the whole thing.

Charrette team noted that Durham’s downtown has all of the pieces and the final report will hopefully show what can be done sequentially.

SWOT, a survey from the business association, documents perceived needs/sites.

Noted there is no place for a small business to locate here. Town has some businesses interested in locating here, and others ready to give up. Most sustainable businesses are those that cater to the year round resident, but it has to be convenient to get there, and park. Never considered businesses catering to regional/national audience. Is there an opportunity to think regionally?

A high percentage of residents are working out of their homes. Are there opportunities for a business center for small businesses to share a common office?

The Town is hoping for new building construction at some point, to bring in more revenue.

#### Mill Plaza

A road to open up Chesley Drive was proposed. Some groups in town were opposed. The proposal was very politically charged. The Planning Board denied expansion of the parking lot (College Brook Greenway – a sacred piece of grass). Many are losing faith with the planning process, after going through proper channels and having nothing happen.

Charrette team noted that plans are not law, which is why we talk about form based codes to

implement the plan. Today, the downtown is a “through-place”, not a destination. With some pleasant changes, attitudes may also change.

If the Town is serious about Mill Plaza becoming a commercial center, Chesley is the connector.

Charette team noted it would look for other possible connections.

#### Student and Workforce Housing

Realize how important planning is to Town work. Would like to see concentration of student housing in the right places, where noise won’t bother others. It is an economic engine.

Charette team noted that in addition to location, the type of housing is important.

Student housing is important, but not in every three-story building downtown. Workforce housing is also important. One reason students want to be in the neighborhoods is that the campus cracks down on them when they live on campus.

Noted a couple of student housing/mixed use projects in Town – Jenkins Court (old hardware store downtown) is packed. Should get some adult housing mixed in. Need to be economically feasible. Some concern about feasibility of mixing adults and students.

Some anxiety about combining different cultures (students/workforce). Downtown over Libby’s Bar, Jenkins Court (commercial on first floor, student housing on upper floors) are well managed buildings, have no problems. Town is grappling with absentee landlords (perception is that they don’t care).

When say mixed use – mistake to locate students next to a hotel. First floor should be retail, second should be office, third should

be workforce housing with students closer to campus on the back side.

#### Parking and Open Space

Town owns green across from Pettee Brook. University owns Store 24 parking lot. Should they swap?

#### Library

The library is 3,000 square feet, which meets about a quarter of their need. There is no children’s room, reading room, office space. The Town lacks a community center. A library is often the lynchpin. The library has looked downtown, but it has never worked out; so now it is looking further out of downtown.

#### Recreation

Recreation fields are not adequate. They don’t need to be downtown. The Department is supportive of open green in downtown and neighborhood parks throughout the Town. Wagon Hill is a gem of a property. The Town has consistently turned down fields that have to be driven to. The University is now saying they are going to close the pool. Town needs to talk about it and recreation facility needs.

### Technical Meeting #1 Transportation Friday, November 6, 2009

(approximately 21 people in attendance)

Town has a Traffic Safety Committee, which is advisory to the Town Administrator. It is largely a reactive body, handling requests for stop signs and other traffic devices, with no regular agenda or set meetings. It works with UNH transportation officials. Most traffic devices, speed limit changes, and traffic ordinance changes require interface with the State. Generally, if a neighbor wants a device

and it doesn’t create a problem, the Committee approves the request. Lately, it has been more careful with crosswalks.

The perception about speeding in downtown is that it is an issue, but the Town cannot lower or enforce a speed limit below 25 mph, except near schools. The biggest problem is Pettee Brook. In the past, the Town has talked about putting in s-curves to slow traffic down. Other problem areas are Maybury and Mill Roads.

The downtown is posted at 25 mph, but the Town doesn’t ticket until 35 mph or more. The Town has placed warning signs for pedestrians in crosswalks. Pedestrians calm traffic when the number of pedestrians crossing Main Street outnumbers vehicles. Streets are narrow; there are markers. There is speeding, but it is not grossly out of line with other places.

There are other types of traffic issues like skateboarding.

The bulk of accidents occur while pedestrians are in crosswalks. It’s against the law for pedestrians to stop/hinder traffic outside of crosswalks. The most dangerous crosswalks are near the post office at Madbury.

The Mill Plaza model said a roundabout near Mill Plaza would help. The Traffic Safety Committee has come around on roundabouts. They like the fact that they require less maintenance than signals.

When the Town considered making Main Street one-way, roundabouts weren’t considered. The alternative was a signal at every intersection, so the Town went with the one-way option.

A lot of people are looping back through the downtown, some looking for parking. Others, who want to go west, have to go east. It is difficult to get to the shopping center and can’t get to one neighborhood. The need for more



through-streets was raised. The charrette team noted that a one-way street system is purely for traffic and that roundabouts are not so great for pedestrians because they provide a constant flow of traffic with no gaps that allow for crossing, suggesting that “square-about’s” calm traffic and are more friendly to pedestrians.

The Council wants some public gathering space.

Roundabouts may affect response time for emergency services, though it would ok to have just a couple of them.

**Technical Meeting #2  
Property Owners / UNH  
Friday, November 6, 2009**

(approximately 21 people, including owners of university apartments and student housing, residents, UNH representatives of student/ economic services, Main Street and Mill Plaza business owners, members of economic development committee )

One participant had a 3,000 square foot office in town for 25 years, but moved to Dover because of lack of land zoned for business development and fact that building code makes it impossible to renovate old buildings. As a result, he lost tenants, he sold the building, and it is now student apartments. This is an issue for all buildings in the zone. It’s not clear if state regulations allow a community to adopt a “renovation” code option. Some said the issue is enabling businesses to build with off-site parking. It’s not an issue of cost.

Some noted the need for office space for University start-up businesses. At Route D Park (University building out past College Woods), there has been talk about a partnership with University, which would retain ownership of land while buildings would be private. Talks fell apart. There is no transit to link up. The University representative said the shuttle could

be extended.

One participant was concerned with the expectation that mixed uses will reduce need to drive. He was also concerned that plans for civic town area are overambitious and said that the downtown is not the proper place. He believes that Coe’s Corner, which is in “current use”, is a great spot. He believes the downtown should be allowed to go up to six stories to help build the tax base, with the fees going to infrastructure improvements that would take pressure off neighborhoods. It would generate money to build at Coe’s Corner. Sewer/water could be extended to the site and would stimulate development on the other side (Stone Quarry, which is zoned for office/hotel). He believes this is a great place for offices and noted that Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is in place there.

One business owner noted that downtown is an undesirable area because of all the students. A lot of neighbors agree.

Another participant indicated that a civic town area at Coe’s Corner would link up with Jackson Landing and the schools. The land between is owned by John Yeager, who is open to allowing trails on his property. In the past, he said he was open to a shuttle right-of-way between the property and the school. The area was proposed for a mini center (it is 50 feet off the road). It was noted that he is offering the land for good lease rates with an option to buy.

Discussion continued about the Coe’s Corner area. Some thought this was a great place for a potential civic complex, offices, possibly a restaurant. Someone noted the possibility of a food service/multimodal (bus transfer) on the corner across the street. The University representative noted that UNH has good transit opportunities. It currently provides two round trips/hour. He said that as long as uses are developed with transit in mind, the University is happy to serve it.

Others expressed concern that a center at Coe’s Corner would empty out the downtown and remove the incentive to invest in redevelopment. He said he needed to know what the market place opportunity is. Some said that the pie is big enough, that the Town has lost a lot of opportunities over the years and that businesses went elsewhere. Some said that the Town needs to retain the integrity of the residential downtown. They said they are walkers. Some noted that the distance between downtown and a new civic area at Coe’s Corner is walkable. The charrette team said that without the University and transit, a new civic center at Coe’s Corner is not recommended. With the University, however, there probably would be enough activity.

Supporters of a new civic center at Coe’s Corner noted the opportunity for a green, opportunity for teens, great convenience to the middle school. They said that it is not compatible to mix younger kids with college students downtown. They noted an active drug trade in Town with high school students getting drugs from UNH. They don’t want to encourage these populations to mingle. Some said they don’t want the library downtown.

The charrette team asked which smaller civic uses could go downtown. Some noted the police station helps moderate behavior – is a civilizing influence. Some said they want a whole civic complex. Others said that whatever is proposed will be brought to the voters to decide.

The market for apartments is soft now because of the economy, but has been the most lucrative opportunity downtown.

Main Street is viewed as old, shabby, needing a face lift. It was suggested that a tax break be given to those who do a face lift. It was noted that the Town has an incentive program now and an economic redevelopment zone for open brownfields sites. One participant noted that the

only rehab on Main Street had a massive cash infusion (Libby’s insurance payout).

Attention turned to traffic along Route 108. Some said safety should be a factor in considering if a civic center should be proposed at Coe’s Corner. The Department of Transportation trims hedges along the road so residents can get out of their driveways safely.

Some said they like the live-work model and with a three story building, you don’t need elevators. Some said they want a mixed use downtown and that if physical improvements are made, elevators should be added. Some said they think town houses may work better than apartments. Some suggested a senior citizen complex downtown by Mill Plaza. The charrette team asked if there is a need for a better buffer with student apartments downtown. It was noted that students have different schedules from others with almost no Friday classes, weekends are extended.

Some said there is a need for a 150 car parking garage downtown. Some said that parking could be dispersed even if with parking structures. Some pointed out a vacant building near the Holiday Inn. Some said that if the Inn doesn’t succeed, it will become student housing. Some noted parking opportunity at Mill Plaza. Others said the property owner is resistant to making changes because they cost money. Some noted that people cannot park there unless they are shopping there and that parking restrictions are enforced. The charrette team suggested that the Town create a parking authority, the best being a public/private arrangement with progressive parking enforcement. A potential overlap with the University was suggested. It was noted that one alternative is metering the entire Town (some areas are not metered but timed). All day student parking was discussed. It was suggested that the best areas for a parking garage include a grade change, which reduces the number of ramps. Some noted available parking. Others

said the Town should build for the future. Others said that there may be enough spaces, but management is the real issue. It was noted that UNH has talked about a parking garage for years. Its master plan for C lot, calling for a six-level garage, may no longer be under consideration.

The session ended with notation that streets/ circulation are a headache with further conversation about roundabouts and returning to a two-way system.

**Technical Meeting #3  
Elected Officials, Boards & Comm.  
Friday, November 6, 2009**

(approximately 21 people, including HDC, Conservation, Rental Housing Commission, Shore Management Commission, State Legislator, Town Council, Zoning Board of Appeals, Library Director/Trustees)

Some noted they would like a location for the Library that somebody is able to walk to. If it is at Coe’s Corner, it could include a path from the school, though there was some concern that the pathway is isolated. Some said they felt it could be made safe and compared it to the situation for walkers now, the Coe’s Corner site is not bad. Some said they would also want a sidewalk along the road and that traffic lights might help address traffic concerns. Some said they want to create a walking downtown and were concerned about expecting the amount of population to walk so far away (Coe’s Corner).

Some said they would like a police-fire-town hall-library-community center with a large function room all together. Others said they were not sure about fire services and the library being together because of noise



issues. Some said there are always noise issues.

Representatives from the library said the Trustees have been grappling with this issue for years. They have consistently wanted to be in the downtown, but it has been fraught with issues. A site at Route 4 has always felt too far away until the Youth Center Initiative. They have been trying to achieve a synergy with potential linkage to the high school. Some noted the Coe’s Corner site is very constrained by wetlands as well as wetlands on the triangle of land across the road. As a result, some said that playing fields in either location would be out of the question.

Some said they would be surprised if the Fire Department would be keen on the Coe’s Corner location as it tries to be in the center of mapped calls, which is right around the campus, student housing, elderly housing. Some noted that noise is always a concern. The charrette team said it needs to know what minimum amount of space is needed for a fire station. The Town Council has been discussing not wanting to split up municipal functions and that the plans they have suggest a maximum build-out of the site.

Some encouraged thinking about what property would be removed from the tax rolls and what the Town will do with its current property (Sale? Keep for other use?)

Some said that downtown development would be helped by a streamlined development process. It was noted that Jim has helped. Questions were raised about how to deal with wet areas and streams

in the downtown (75’ setback). [The state gives urban areas the option of exemption from wetland regulations. The Town has not applied. Though the state has no buffer requirement, alterations of wetlands over 10,000 square feet are regulated by the federal government.] Questions were raised about whether Pettee Brook is a constraint? Some said they liked the idea of water in the downtown and asked if it could be elevated to be a beautiful element.

The charrette team asked if the current Town Hall site works for fire and police. It was noted that the Police Department is currently at the edge of Town. At the Town Hall site, users are always fighting the intersection right out its door. It was noted that the road in front of the existing Town Hall has problems with speed, site distances, and finding openings in traffic. It was also noted that when the Route 4 Bypass came in, it moved through truck traffic out of downtown and perhaps the Town doesn’t need a one-way system anymore. The charrette team noted that an intensely used downtown, one with high density mixed use where people can lie, work, and park once, will naturally calm traffic.

Some called for a stronger pedestrian link at the Marketplace. Some said an economic incentive/advantage is needed to get businesses to provide and support the stronger pedestrian link. The Town recently adopted an economic recovery zone.

There has been talk of a 100-bed hotel with a conference center on Main Street to replace the ATO House.

Some said they want to encourage more

bicycling routes and an application is in the works for “Safe Routes to School”.

Jenkins Court is where the hardware store was. This is an opportunity for mixed use, pedestrian linkages, open space. The Master Plan calls for closing Jenkins Court, but some said the Town may want more connections. The charrette team suggested that it doesn’t have to be an either/or situation. Perhaps bollards could be put up, the road could be occasionally closed or opened.

Some said the roadway pattern should be in concert with UNH’s Master Plan.

Some said The Greens at Madbury Road should be off the board for a civic center. The library and Fire Department would be happy there.

On the topic of architectural design, it was noted that one building has been approved for Jenkins Court, plus another has presented a conceptual design that will tower over Main Street. It was noted that anything recommended has to fit in. Currently there are no standards, except in the Historic District (and have heard comments that they are too strict).

Some expressed concern about how to fill retail spaces on the bottom floors of mixed use buildings. When asked what is driving downtown, the response was student housing. Some suggested that maybe owners might be willing to lose money on retail for a few years. The charrette team encouraged the Town to spend an additional \$3,500 for a Tier 1 Market Study to supplement the efforts of the charrette. Some noted the that

the new business school on Garrison Avenue might be able to do a study.

Some said the downtown needs an up-scale restaurant and a dry cleaners. Some asked how much more the University will expand retail space, which now includes about 35,000 square feet on campus.

Some noted that resolution of the location for a civic center would be good as lack of certainty stops people from pursuing development opportunities.

The meeting closed with a suggestion for siting a civic center near Mill Pond and the elderly complex.

### Technical Meeting #5 Community, Business & Civic Leaders Saturday, November 7, 2009

All court functions are in Dover.

See Donald Shoup, “The High Cost of Free Parking”. Landlords say there is a need for overnight parking for tenants’ guests.

There are 15,000 kids and 15,000 residents in the community; that’s a 1:1 ratio. Some said that more growth is sustainable. Some said the Town needs incubator space wrapped around a parking garage. Some said it needs an office complex. There was support for more than one concept. It was noted that the Town should take advantage of its labor force. Some said it should push for alumni to have a place in downtown. Some noted that there are a lot of businesses in Durham that many don’t see.

UNH has expanded retail on its campus – estimated at 35,000 square feet, which may not include the New England Center and the first floor of Holloway Center. Retail on the campus

includes a grocery, coffee shops, copy/computer stores, web page designer. The University tells parents students don’t need to go into town; everything is on campus and students are encouraged to stay on campus. Some noted that if a retail study is done, it needs to include retail on the UNH campus.

Some said this puts the Town at a tremendous disadvantage because University enterprises are exempt from taxes. It was noted that retail expansion gives on-campus businesses, which don’t have to pay meal & room or property taxes, an advantage over downtown retailers. They said the expansion is compromising the Town’s tax base and is driven by the state.

The charrette team noted that if some of the University’s retail is connected to Main Street, perhaps by a public square, students would reach out to the downtown more. Some suggested working with the University to link dining services to businesses downtown, perhaps beyond dining dollars.

Some noted the need for a solid movie rental business.

Some said introducing more student housing downtown provides a greater market base for downtown. Student housing has been more profitable than commercial or workforce housing. Students want their own bedroom. Some students want to be more in the center of things – downtown.

One landlord shared his RA system for off-campus housing. He hires 25 year olds, graduate students, to walk around his properties at night to deal with noise and numbers. The graduate students point out to tenants the social guidelines in their lease. If it works, great; if not, he calls the police. He said it is effective. The biggest issue is finding a consistent labor pool. He anticipates his tenants will have a social life, but sees his approach as helping them make the



transition to being 21. Some suggested building this into financial aid work study.

One landlord said you can't mix students and families on the same hallways. You need some small distances between them. It was noted that 90' is too close and that 200' was not as disturbing. Some said you can mix graduate students and young adult workforce housing and pointed out the Forest Parks area. Some said graduate students can't afford as much rent as undergraduates.

Some said that downtown is for student housing. Adults don't go downtown Saturday night. Some suggested putting workforce and student housing on the periphery of downtown.

It was noted that the state workforce housing statute allows developers to override zoning/planning regulations that restrict workforce housing. It was noted that Faculty Neighborhood is 1/4 acre lots and has a lot of problems with noise and roaming bands of students at night. Other problem areas are Garden Lane, Faculty Road, and Mill Road.

There are zoning and building code issues. There is a need for a renovation code. There are design issues. For example, if you put student housing facing other residential, don't put outdoor gathering spaces, including decks, facing other residences. Some want design standards for all buildings.

Some believed putting the civic center at Coe's Corner should only be done as a last resort and that the site is not as good as you might think. A pedestrian connection between the library and high school is not needed as much as a connection is needed to the middle school. There was concern about kids walking along Coe Drive as well as through a wooded path.