

Hampden Town Center Plan
Public Meeting #1 – Envisioning the Town Center of the Future
July 31, 2018

The Town of Hampden is undertaking a planning effort for the area generally located along Main Road from Western Avenue to Kennebec Road. It includes Western Avenue to about the Route 202 and school entrance intersection. The purpose of this planning effort is to review zoning and infrastructure changes that will enable the development of a Town Center, the vision and goals for which will be defined through this process.

Purpose of the Meeting

The purpose of the first meeting held on July 31, 2018, was to get a sense from the community about what is valued in this area today and what this area could ideally be in the future.

After a brief introduction to the project and an overview of the tasks for the evening by Ben Smith, AICP, of North Star Planning, about 24 participants broke into groups to discuss worksheet questions and review area maps. This work was meant to solicit responses that would:

1. Identify what people value about the area today,
2. Help establish a Vision for the Town Center in the future,
3. Identify the valued places and buildings that are assets to build a future on, and
4. Set some boundaries on what people consider to be either “in” or “out” of the study area.

The Town Center Today

Participants value the hometown feel of the Town Center and the walkability, family friendliness and convenience of this area today. Those characteristics exist in large part because of location of the RSU 22 school campus within the Town Center, the diversity of businesses, including restaurants, the grocery store, hardware and drug stores, places to get coffee and ice cream, and local services including places to get your hair cut, bank, or see a doctor. People like that it is not too big and has a small town feel, but is close both the more rural areas of Hampden and the services and conveniences of Bangor.

People like to walk here and appreciate that there are places to walk to, including the schools and places listed above. People also recreate here, at the pool on Western Avenue, the recreation center at old Hampden Academy, and the town fields off Cottage Road. The schools and old Hampden Academy were called out as some of the area’s most special places.

People are happy that there are no fast food restaurants or big box stores in this part of Hampden, but wish there were more choices for restaurants and retail shopping, along with a community gathering place, like a small park or open area.

The Town Center in the Future

Feedback received at the meeting seems to indicate that residents want the Town Center of the future to continue serving the role it serves today, while building on the specific assets of walkability and good local destinations.

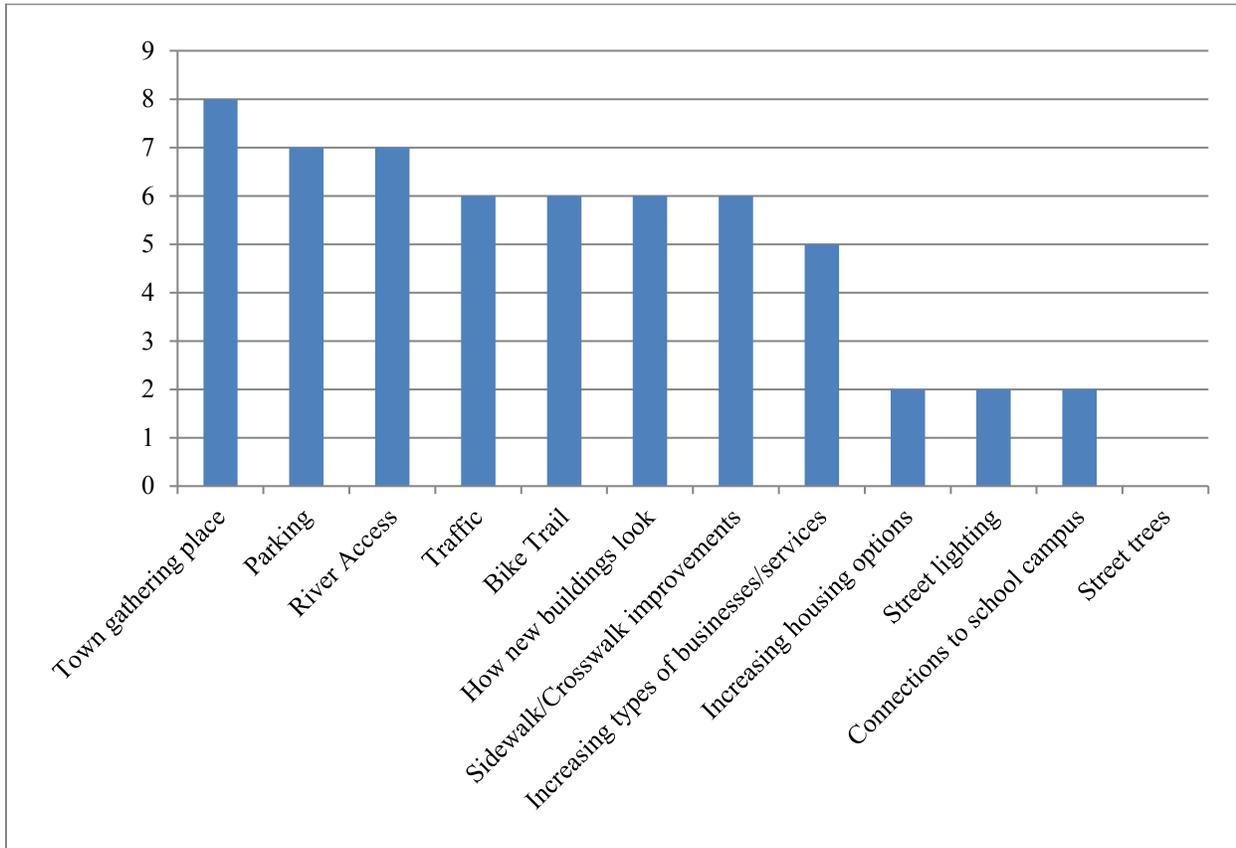
Pedestrian amenities were high on the list and included more sidewalks, street lighting improvements, Town Center signage, flowers, planters, and town owned green space that might contain a landmark or monument that could serve as a community gathering place. Participants expressed a desire for new off-site trails on the east side of Main Road that might provide water access or water views and trails on the west side of Main Road that might provide off-street connections from homes to the schools and businesses.

There was also good agreement on building the number and diversity of locally focused businesses, including more restaurants and places to shop, including the addition of a larger general retail store or a department store.

Finally, the Town Center of the future should encourage quality buildings and site development that emphasizes quality design and landscaping for new development. Participants expressed a strong desire to improving existing building conditions and do more with landscaping along the streets and public spaces.

Most important elements to include in the Town Center Plan

Looking forward to the final plan recommendations, participants were asked to think about the most important topic areas this planning effort should address. The chart below shows how various topics stack up, indicating the level of importance attached to how much emphasis each topic should be given in the final plan.



Complete list of Feedback received from meeting worksheets

Town Center Today

What do you like best about this place?

- The homes and structures are essentially well-maintained and give the appearance that the owners care
- close proximity of schools, groceries, churches, hardware and drug stores - although they are not close enough to each other
- I live close by and enjoy being close to the businesses; home town feel; good schools
- Easy going attitude about town
- Convenience of many retail and professional businesses and sense of community, schools, hometown feel
- Library/access to the river/ rural
- Schools, library, pool, Hannafords
- Home town feel
- Schools, opportunities for kids
- Location - close to Bangor; small-town feel
- Lara H Pool, park & fields, schools; Erikson's hardware & coffee/ice cream
- Grocery and drug store. Ericson's Hardware store. EMMC clinic.
- Walkability to key businesses - restaurants, gas station, eye doctor, etc.
- Schools/community/quiet
- Family friendly; welcomeness; safety
- Convenience
- Quiet, essential services; access beyond

What is here that you like?

- The attitude of the residents toward one another is commendable. We do not have any slums or random sections of town.
- Basic businesses, banks, grocery, hardware, etc.
- Mom & Pop Shops
- Local business/ community support*
- RSU22 and basic conveniences.
- People, local businesses, schools
- Feeling so rural but right in the middle of town. I like the space between houses on my street - lush vegetation, trees.
- Post office and dental clinic
- I'm glad it's small and still semi-small town
- Traffic light
- Family activities; recreational amenities
- Grocery service business
- Grocery, hardware, rec center, salon & spa
- shopping, grocery, repair, personal needs - hair salon
- many of the existing businesses (Erikson's, Pizza Gourmet, medical services, hair studios)

Are there things you're happy are not here?

- Fast-food restaurants
- Big box stores
- I am happy really big business is absent from Town.
- Eye sores and dilapidated businesses need to go; need better restaurants
- Not much here for adults - music venues, restaurants; not much access to river, sidewalks lacking; inadequate PED crossings
- I'm happy there are not a lot of fast-food places, big box stores, billboards, adult-only stores, rowdy bars.
- Lobster pound, homeless shelter, garbage plant. Large box stores (Lowe's Walmart, Target). Bars.
- Rundown buildings
- Big box stores, fast food
- messy building on corner; no restaurants or bars
- Rundown building on corners of Western & Kennebec

What do you like to do here? What makes it special or convenient?

- x-country skiing out my back door
- easy walking area
- Able to walk to everything you need.
- walking, enjoying outdoors
- Outdoor connectivity
- Access to good schools and easy access to Bangor
- Parks Papermill/Reeds Brook/Dorris Dix/VFW; School; Open spaces
- Convenient to Bangor and Belfast
- I like to walk - can walk to stores - around schools
- Take my kids to activities; small-town feel (know business owners); close to other amenities but not here
- Shopping
- I live on Cottage Street. I walked to the Coffee Break for a meeting this morning.
- Schools and recreation for kids
- small-town feel; access to larger amenities nearby
- small town feel
- Nice community to raise children
- natural setting within minutes, quick access to major links
- Live and do business

Town Center in the Future

What do you wish there was more of?

- Park like maintained open space distributed around Town
- A general retail store (like Reny's); There are no close-to-each-other shops
- A few more choices for restaurant fare. Some restaurants are just the same as others with just a different store front. Some are not very good to begin with.

- Aesthetically pleasing buildings at the major intersection; lampights; hanging baskets
- More walkable/less vehicle focus
- Restaurants
- Community space; restaurants
- Greenspace (parks...)
- Sidewalks in good repair; large containers for flowers like in Belfast; better lighting; nice restaurants/brewery
- Public open space, recreational paths (biking and walking), good restaurants; local grocer with quality meats, local produce, etc.; river access; YMCA
- Restaurants and small businesses.
- Space, parking, safe walkways, and a small park
- Restaurants/shops/
- group gathering space; walking, connectivity
- business & parking
- open areas
- more aesthetics at traffic intersection
- Sit down restaurant/pub; apartments

What would you change or add if you could?

- Find a way to eliminate the rundown house at the corner of Rt 9 + 1A
- Town Council should develop an ordinance to better enforce appearance, safety and stability of homes, especially in the Main Rd
- The building at the corner of 1A and Western Ave needs help or should be torn down. The building does not look safe.
- Remove dilapidated building and change zoning laws to build a nicer structure or business
- Centralized parking, community center, sidewalks, bike paths, uniform building appearance
- No
- Restaurants; bar/brewery
- Develop a waterfront; public outdoor walking spaces; more walking than cars, what about parking?
- River access, more public space and recreational trails
- Condemn buildings located at Western Ave and 1A highway.
- I would figure out the impossible and offer a town center route for traffic in addition to the state highways.
- Walking path around school
- pocket parks, monuments, maintained open space @ designated town center
- maintenance ordinance in center of town; animal control
- clean up Western/1A
- Increase walkability

Do you have a favorite place in the Town Center?

- Dorothy Dix Park (not in Town Center) High school auditorium + surroundings
- Not really!
- Schools
- Non-existent
- School property
- Walking around Cottage St. and Canoe Club
- No
- If it's included, the land above the Souadabscook- on the bridge by waterworks
- old Hampden Academy
- Dunkin Donuts, my business, Hampden Academy
- food, flowers

Pick the one word that best describes the Town Center to you.

- Scattered by great
- Heart
- Inviting
- Density/business center
- Hometown
- Dilapidated
- Hard to recognize
- Unknown
- Rt 9 & 1A
- access in/out

How do you know you're in the Town Center?

- Not easily perceived or visually aware!
- It should stay residential feel, not commercial or industrial.
- A sign telling you.
- If you require something, that is where you go!
- Some historic building or item (bell tower, large planter)
- Lights, sidewalks, flags, seasonal décor
- Establish a village green area.
- You'll be in an environment when others share a public space & everyone can see a couple "landmarks" (a fountain, a pocket park, etc.).
- Don't
- Light
- well landscaped & well lit
- area demarcated
- "Downtown" feel

What will you be able to do?

- Continue to live here and contribute to the welfare of our neighbors
- Basic amenities, large variety of eating establishments
- Need better restaurants
- Bike paths, good restaurants
- walk, ride
- Shop, grab a coffee and a loaf of bread, find out current events, etc.
- Contribute
- Build a bridge
- participate in the exchanges
- Find most needs as consumer

What will the Town Center look like?

- The existing roads (1A & 9/202) will continue to exist, but there will also be modest, parallel roads with parking for businesses and a park.
- Inviting/safe/kid-friendly
- X-mas tree
- not sure
- Need public parking

What are the most important elements of a Town Center that this plan should include?

