This presentation summarizes the process and results of the Village of Greenwich Vision Planning that took place in the fall of 2009.

The project was initiated by the village for two main reasons. First, the vision created would provide the foundation for the creation of an updated Comprehensive Plan. Second, the vision plan would create goals and action strategies that the community could begin to work on immediately to address identified concerns and opportunities.

The project was facilitated by the Center for Community Design Research (CCDR) which is a part of the Department of Landscape Architecture at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse. Also participating was Kathy Dorgan, a planning consultant.

The project was funded by a grant from the Historic Saratoga-Washington on the Hudson Partnership.
What is vision planning and why is it important?

• Vision planning is a community based process in which community members work together to create a common vision for their future.
• Through a series of workshops and other events, a shared understanding of values, assets and resources, challenges and opportunities develops.
• The community considers alternative ways to achieve their vision.
• And out of the process should come real actions in the form of projects, plans and policies that will move the community towards its vision.
Parts of a Vision Plan

• Vision Statement
  – Goals
  • Action Strategies

• Physical plan that illustrates how the vision can be achieved

• Vision plan typically consists of multiple parts.
• Click – the Vision statement is a broad statement that encapsulates how the community would like to be able to describe itself in the future.
• Click - Goals – There are a series of goals that the community defines to achieve the vision. Goals typically build on strengths and resources, address concerns and weaknesses, and take advantage of opportunities.
• Click - Action Strategies are developed under each goal and are specific actions that the community will undertake and accomplish. They may be projects, programs or policies – and may be short term or long range. They are definable and measurable and each should have a plan to accomplish it.
• Click - The vision projects that the CCDR facilitates typically have a graphic plan that illustrates how the vision can be achieved physically in the community.
The Greenwich Vision Process

- Village tour
- Review of documents
- First workshop – early October
- Second workshop – late October
- Final workshop – early January 2010

The CCDR began working with the village in the summer of 2008. Faculty and students toured the village with members of the advisory committee. One of the grad students went to the Fall Harvest Festival and distributed a survey that asked several questions about existing conditions and possible improvements.

The first workshop which was held in early October sought to understand the values, concerns and opportunities in the village.

During the second workshop in late October we were able to modify and confirm what was shared in the first workshop.

- We reviewed and discussed possible goals and ideas for the draft vision statement.
- The ESF design students presented studies that illustrated alternative ways to address issues, concerns and opportunities and apply village planning principles to implement the vision as physical changes. Participants had the opportunity to review and discuss those studies.

At the third workshop in early January 2010 the final draft vision, goals and action strategies were presented. We also reviewed the strategic areas plan which illustrated areas and connections in the village that are important to improve using a series of guiding principles.

- At that workshop, we also brainstormed action plans for a couple of priority action strategies.
What we have come to understand

• Strengths and Resources
  – The people
  – Community spirit
  – The natural beauty
  – Landscape features
  – Walkability
  – Village character

• Through this vision process community members have come to understand many things about Greenwich.

• Strengths and resources were identified. These are the things that you want to build on.
What we have come to understand

• Confirmed
  Sacred places

• Sacred places are those places that hold special meaning for the community. These are places that you want to protect and pass on to future generations.

• High on the list of sacred places in the village are Main Street, the library, the Battenkill, village hall and Mowry Park.

  • Reasons places are sacred vary but in Greenwich, the major themes include their place in the village history, historic structures or that they are places of community gathering and shared memories.
What we have come to understand

• **Community Concerns**
  – Business sustainability
  – Teen actions and activities
  – Uncontrolled development
  – Type of development
  – Loss of character

• Concerns are issues or problems that you want to try to address or change
  • Community members identified the issue of business sustainability; they want to keep business open
  • Concern about teen drug and alcohol use, lack of places and activities for them
  • Anticipation that there will be unchecked or unplanned development and growth
  • And concern for type of development – like big box retail that will threaten Main St.
  • And related is the loss of the small town character
We wanted to have a better understanding of the existing state of commercial activity in the village and asked people at the workshops as well as business owners.

The detailed list of responses is on the poster in the notebook.

Strongest sector appears to be food and beverage – such as restaurants, delis

Followed by retail which includes the small shops as well as Kmart

Tourism fueled by the Battenkill, fall foliage, the retreat house

Real estate business

Click - The opportunities seemed to take advantage of the natural resources of the river and the surrounding landscape as well as increasing tourism, particularly museums, hotels/places to stay

Also more emphasis on Culture and the Arts, primarily oriented towards residents,

Food and beverage with specific ideas for businesses such as a microbrewery, bakery, cafe on Main Street, family restaurant

People thought there were also additional opportunities for agriculture in the form of a farmers market, community garden, hops farming, agritourism

It is important to consider how to create and maintain a diverse economy that fits with the scale and character of the village.
What we have come to understand

- Commerce – what do business owners think?

- From a survey of business owners we found that they appreciated the pass through traffic
- They were concerned about empty storefronts, parking availability, uninviting villages entries, low traffic and competing with chain stores and malls.
  - Some of these challenges are within the power of the businesses and community to try to change, some are more difficult.
- They believe that the most useful improvements would be to the pedestrian environment – making the walking experience more pleasant, attractive, comfortable and safe.
  - They also want to address parking problems and we assume it is availability of off street parking and visibility
- Business owners want to have a diversity of businesses that are complementary and supportive of each other, not competing
What we have come to understand

**Underutilized Resources**
- Mill site
- Railroad site
- Rock Street Park
- Land behind post office
- Lower Main St
- Municipal complex
- Battenkill

Underutilized resources are resources already present in the community that are not being used to their potential.

You can see that most of these are clustered in the lower part of Main Street and down by the river.

This is logical because the former river related industry no longer exists. This though presents incredible opportunities to rethink the relationship to the river and the reuse of riverfront properties.

Other underutilized resources include the former IGA site, the village hall and the school property.
• Relationship between Sacred Places and Underutilized Resources

• It is informative to analyze the relationship between different aspects that make up our communities.

• In combining the sacred places mapping with the underutilized resources we notice several things:
  • The cluster of sacred places around the municipal heart of the community is already well utilized with the exception of the village hall.
  • Just about all other sacred places are related to underutilized areas, with a number of places considered both Sacred Places as well as underutilized:
    • Main Street, the river, the Dunbarton Mill site, the Battenkill RR, and Rock Street Park
    • The school and its grounds
  • One thing that this might tell us is that in making plans to better utilize underutilized resources, you must take into consideration the value these place hold in the community. Redevelopment needs to be sensitive to the reasons why places are sacred and how those characteristics can be preserved or protected in addition to being better utilized.
Greenwich Vision Plan

• Composed of:
  – Vision Statement
    • Goals
    – Action Strategies

Now let’s move onto the review of the Vision Statement
• We discussed ideas for the vision statement at the second workshop. These ideas came from what we had heard from community members through the workshop, surveys and our observations.
• Participants selected the big ideas that they thought should be in the vision
• We then analyzed those responses to create the final draft vision statement.
Draft vision

The Village of Greenwich is a rural riverfront community that appreciates, stewards and sustains its many resources.

Its vibrant, walkable commercial district is at the heart of a diverse economy that supports residents, welcomes visitors and invites return.

Development exhibits respect for the traditional compact village characteristics, and the history, historic buildings, cultural resources and natural setting.

The community encourages strong families and close community relationships to reinforce residents of all ages.

• This is how you would like to be able to describe the village in the not to distant future.

• We know that to some extent this describes the village now, but you need to take action to keep what you have and better utilize and steward your many resources.
Greenwich Vision Plan

• Composed of:
  – Vision Statement

• Goals
  – Action Strategies

• Now let’s move onto review of the goals and their related action strategies
In workshop 2 we had a goals activity to determine if the preliminary goals that we had developed seemed appropriate and relevant.

We divided into four groups. Each person wrote on post it notes three improvements that they would like to see occur within the next 5 to 10 years in Greenwich.

Then these improvement suggestions were placed in one of the six goal categories.

Later, the CCDR documented and tallied the desired improvements from all of the groups.

To a certain extent, the results are quantifiable but there is some crossover between goals in what participants were describing as desired improvements.

The most suggested Improvements were related to a stronger village economy.

The next two related to community relationships and community image.

Further down on the list were strengthening connections to the river and pedestrian connections within the village.

Lowest ranking goal was related to celebrating the village’s history – possibly people feel that your historic resources are secure, well protected and acknowledged.

Based on the desired improvements and the discussion during workshop 2, the wording and emphasis of several of the goals was revised.

The final goals were presented in workshop 3 and are described over the next 6 slides.
Goals - Economy

• Establish a sustainable diversified village economy, strengthening the Main Street business district as the center of commercial activity and bringing appropriate new uses to strategic underutilized sites.

• Based on the responses from those that participated in the vision workshop process, the health and viability of Greenwich’s economy is closely tied to achieving the overall vision.

• There must be diverse business and commerce so that the village economy is not relying on one particular industry.

• However, it is important that the viability of Main Street not be undermined or compromised by actions taken to strengthen or improve other areas that might contribute to the village economy.
Goals - Community

• Strengthen the sense of community, pride and belonging in residents of all ages

• It came out very clearly in the workshops that one of the great strengths of the village are the people that live and work here. It is these individuals, families and organizations that provide the foundation for achieving the vision.

• However, there was concern expressed that some of the youth of the community are struggling and turning towards unhealthy activities. There was a strong desire to find ways to engage all members of the community, especially teenagers, providing them with support, access to resources and involving them in responsible activities that will challenge them and utilize their talents.
Goals - Image

• Encourage care, maintenance and improvement of public and private properties that reflect a shared pride in the village.

• Community members are very proud of Greenwich, its buildings, institutions, history and events.

• Comments for desired improvements were related to care, maintenance and appearance of properties.

• Workshop participants were troubled by properties and areas that are vacant or have the appearance of not be cared for.

• Actions towards achieving this goal should be based in an understanding of why properties are not being cared for, and trying to structure solutions that are based on that understanding.
Goal - River

• Establish strong physical and visual connections to the Battenkill and incorporate the river as an active, vital corridor within the village.

• The Battenkill was identified as both a sacred place and an underutilized resource. It is a beautiful natural feature that literally drove important aspects of the village economy for many years. There are a number of ways that it could again be tapped as a resource to the village and its presence should be acknowledged and celebrated.

• Any redevelopment or new development associated with the river must respect the value it holds to community members, for recreation, environmental health and history.
Goal – Pedestrian Connections

• Reinforce the village as a walkable community and strengthen pedestrian oriented connections to civic, commercial and recreational resources.

• Like many villages, Greenwich is inherently walkable due to its dense structure, compact size and existing sidewalks.

• Participants wanted to make it an even better place to walk and bicycle, by improving and strengthening the characteristics that encourage those forms of movement. Other desired improvement spoke not only about these characteristics but also to reducing the reliance on individual automobiles to move around the community and to places beyond.
Goal - History

- Respect and market the historic and traditional characteristics that define Greenwich (including the history and historic structures, and the traditional village scale, development patterns and relationship to the agricultural landscape).

- History and tradition are integral to both the image and reality of Greenwich. Unlike some communities, many of the historic structures and landscapes still exist; some are well cared for and some need appropriate care and attention. It is also rich in historical events, stories and traditions.
- It is important to identify and understand the characteristics that define the village, and to protect and utilize them as the model for new or redevelopment, and to be able to communicate the economic value of these characteristics to potential developers and building owners.
Parts of a Vision Plan

• Composed of:
  – Vision Statement
  • Goals
  – Action Strategies
  – Physical plan that illustrates how the vision can be achieved

• So far in the presentation we have reviewed the vision statement, and the goals,
• We will come back to the action strategies
• But first we'll focus on the development of a plan that illustrates how the vision and goals can be used to guide physical change in the village
• Many vision plans are described only in words. But beyond words, it is important to think about the vision and goals as tools to determine the types of physical change and improvements that are appropriate, and also as a way to evaluate proposed changes that are brought forward by developers, groups in the village or the village government.
  • Always ask the question – Will this proposal help us achieve our vision?
• Over the next several slides we'll look at a summary analysis of the physical conditions and structure of the village.
• This is an image of the entire village. The red ellipse highlights the southern portion of the village, located in the Town of Easton. Those that participated in the workshops and our analysis focused on the more densely developed portion of the village north of the Battenkill and located in the Town of Greenwich.

• However, it is critically important in the near future to develop a vision for the southern portion of the village. It has a rural agricultural character and tradition that is valued by the community but in the future may be subject to development pressure. This should be addressed in the village comprehensive plan.

• The remainder of the community design discussion focuses on the northern half of the village.
• In addition to what was shared at the workshops, the students and faculty of the CCDR observed sections of the village based on what they had heard from community members about issues and concerns.

• From the analysis of the existing characteristics, there were three primary principles that guided the initial planning studies.

  The first principle is to clarify the entry sequence and important nodes. It is derived from the observation that the entry areas into the village (shown with green filled circles) are weak and are not contributing to a positive or welcoming sense of entry and arrival.

  The internal nodes are stronger but points of decision along the main path of visitor travel are unclear.
• It is evident through the workshop discussions and the observations that the Main Street commercial area is inconsistent in many ways.
• Upper Main St is fairly successful in terms of its storefronts and activity, and improvements to the pedestrian environment are easy to imagine.
• The lower section has much less activity, several buildings and storefront are vacant and in poor condition. There is less to draw people to this end.
• Reactivating the lower section of Main Street is particularly important because it is also an important entrance to the commercial district and you want to capture people’s interest immediately.
The third principle involves physical reconnection to the river with initial focus on the Mill Hollow area.

Click – The area between village and river was formerly occupied by industrial land uses. The existing mix of former and current industrial and some residential is in various states of repair and has a haphazard appearance.

In Mill Hollow there is potential to connect to the river and is also an opportunity to strengthen lower Main St.

Understanding the best use of this area and the desired character and relationship of land uses is important and will require additional study.

Click - Other opportunities:
- Dunbarton Mill site (privately owned)
- Rock Street park
- Land behind post office (privately owned)
• In response to this analysis, in workshop 2 we reviewed four alternative ways to accomplish the vision in physical design form.

• Community participants had the opportunity to choose two of the four strategies to hear about and discuss in more detail.

• After a brief presentation participants recorded their comments, categorized into those they thought had potential and those that they had concerns with.

• After the workshop, the CCDR organized those comments and analyzed them to understand the range of ideas that community members thought would be appropriate to pursue, those that were attractive but maybe more long term, and those that caused some other concerns.

• We synthesized the preferences and concerns into one diagram that illustrates the big ideas or the Strategic Areas that should be considered in putting the vision in place on the ground.
Village entries are shown in tan on the diagram.

These areas should introduce and emphasize the characteristics and qualities that communicate the image of Greenwich as a cherished rural Village; a densely developed hamlet within, but distinct from, a beautiful agricultural region. Some ideas to consider to accomplish this concept:

• Buffer views of existing suburban type development (characterized by large open expanses of parking lot) at entrances and discourage that type of development anywhere in the village in the future.

• Highlight the historic homes and buildings in the entry corridor, encouraging better visibility of their features from the sidewalk and street by removing overgrown foundation planting and evergreen trees; plant continuous rows of street trees in the lawn strip to signal the change to village scale and slow driving speed.
Strategic Areas

- Village entries and parks

The triangle parks and the village commons are an important part of the village history and contemporary image. They are shown on the diagram in light green.

- They are integral to the entry experience and they should be considered as part of the continuous corridor landscape along with the beautiful private homes.
Wayfinding Intersections are marked with white circles on the diagram:
• Visitors have few cues about where they are and what may be of interest as they enter and move through the village.
• The intersections identified and the approaches to them are logical areas to begin to establish a coordinated and well designed wayfinding system.
• This should include properly scaled, visually interesting and legible signage
• But wayfinding should go beyond signs to include other cues such as special paving and highlighting of crosswalks, detailed and interesting planting and landscape features approaching intersections.
Strategic Areas

• Main Street Commercial area

The Main Street Commercial Area is shown in red on the diagram.

• While parts of the Main Street commercial area appear well cared for and vital, other sections have vacant lots and stores and appear uncared for.
• The wayfinding intersections should be redesigned and highlighted to provide a clear sense of arrival and exit at both ends of the business area.
• There should be features and cues to encourage drivers to slow down, park and stay awhile.
• There should be a continuity of care and activity along the entire street coupled with unique highlights, such as outdoor artwork, attention to interesting buildings, views to the river and attractive places to sit, to entice people to stop and explore the entire street.
• Emphasize features that encourage walking, window shopping and return visits such as street tree planting, seasonal planting, well crafted facades and business signage, interesting window displays and well maintained sidewalks.
Main Street Parking:

• While there is fairly generous on-street parking and some individual businesses have parking for patrons, there is no publicly available off-street parking.

• Centrally located within the business area, the large vacant interior lot on the west side of Main Street in the block between Hill Street and John Street presents a good opportunity for development of a public or shared parking lot. (this is shown in blue-gray on the diagram)

• For it to function at its fullest potential, design considerations must include screening from adjacent residential properties, well lit and attractive pedestrian connections to Main Street, on-site treatment of stormwater runoff, and clear communication of its location and availability.

• **Create a comprehensive parking strategy** - Consideration of a central lot’s development should be part of a comprehensive parking strategy that identifies and addresses both typical parking demand as well as special event parking.
Views to the Battenkill:
• Within the developed areas of the village, there are few views to the Battenkill from public roads or sidewalks. Where they exist they should be preserved and enhanced. (Some possible locations are shown with white arrows on the diagram)
• Places with potential for views of the river, especially along Main Street where visitors are more likely, should be identified and considered for improvement to strengthen visual connections to this valued resource.
Strategic Redevelopment Sites:

• Sites that were identified as strategic opportunities and potential catalysts for other redevelopment include the Dunbarton Mill site, Mill Hollow and the former IGA site, as well as renovation of the Village Hall. (These are shown in light blue on the diagram)

• Alternative approaches and possibilities for reuse should be considered in relation to their potential to contribute to achieving the Village Vision and Goals. Benefits and costs must be understood, and particular concerns were expressed about displacement of people and historic artifacts as well as their positive or negative impact on the Main Street commercial district.
Battenkill Railroad and Buildings:

• The railroad is an active presence along the Battenkill corridor in Greenwich and there is potential for increased economic contribution. (its location is highlighted with the yellow line on the diagram.)

• It’s operations must be understood and considered in the redevelopment plans for Mill Hollow and the Dunbarton Mill site.
Village Street Walking Routes:

• Walking to destinations as well as for recreation and exercise is an activity that is already supported in the village by the existence of sidewalks and the density of development.

• The routes shown (in red) are possibly those that should receive priority for improvements that would strengthen pedestrian connections between the neighborhoods and existing destinations (such as Main Street and the school campus) and to new destinations and attractions such as the Dunbarton Mill site, Mill Hollow.

• These routes could form the basis for a walking tour of the village designed for visitors and village schoolchildren.

• Several sections correspond with important entry corridors, which increase their priority for improvements.
Future Riverfront Park and trail system:

• Expanding the village park system to include parks in several places along the Battenkill can provide desired public access to the river, which has been identified as an underutilized resource and opportunity in the village to improve quality of life and attract visitors.

• Identified sites (shown in light green adjacent to the river) include the existing Rock Street Park, the privately owned land behind the post office, Mill Hollow and the river islands. A connecting path system is shown in darker green.

• Now we’ll look at how this type of system might be phased
In the near term, priority should be given to improvements to Rock Street Park to provide the setting for recreational activities for different age groups. The recreation and exercise options of the riverfront parks can be greatly expanded by creating a system of riverfront related walking and biking routes. In the short term, this system can include a combination of improvements to selected existing streets and creation of trails on public property, through easements or purchase of private property.
Strategic Areas

- Riverfront parks and trails – mid term

As strategic sites such as the Dunbarton Mill site and Mill Hollow are redeveloped, consider requiring that public waterfront access be incorporated into redevelopment of waterfront sites through easements or improvements contributed to the community by the developer.
Strategic Areas

• Riverfront parks and trails – long range

• Riverfront Trails long term: While it would require considerable resources, a trail system along the river that provides access to the river islands and connects the Dunbarton Mill site and Mill Hollow along the river would be a unique and potentially well used attraction in the village.
• That completes our review of the big ideas and important physical components of the villages vision plan.
• There is no one way to accomplish your vision but the ideas illustrated through this diagram will give you a place to start
• The plan view illustrates the relationship between the various ideas and how they work together
• This diagram with written description has been prepared in poster form and should be considered an important part of the vision plan.
Parts of a Vision Plan

• Composed of:
  – Vision Statement
  • Goals
  – Action Strategies
  – Physical plan that illustrates how the vision can be achieved

• In the review of the Strategic Areas Diagram we looked at how the goals can be accomplished through physical change in the village.
• But in order to move a vision plan forward we need to identify the action strategies to accomplish these and other changes.
• The CCDR documented and presented some ideas for action strategies to begin implementation.
• They were based on was recommended by community members through the workshops as well as a few we have added from our observations and experience.
• At the workshop we did an activity through which participants selected what they felt were priority action strategies.
• The next six slides document all of the action strategies and the results of the activity.
• All of these components are also documented on an 11 x 17 vision handout that you will find easier to read than these slides.
Goal: Reinforce the village as a walkable community and strengthen pedestrian oriented connections to civic, commercial and recreational resources.

- Complete an inventory of walking conditions throughout the Village, identifying strategic streets with sidewalks or paths for improvement based on the existing conditions, estimated costs and importance of street or path as a village connector, and developing a plan and budget for the improvements.

- Work at the regional level to investigate the potential for a regional public transportation system.

- Continue working closely with the state Department of Transportation and state government representatives to ensure that projects within their responsibility will contribute to and support the Village's vision, in particular the goals of reinforcing a walkable community and respecting and marketing the historic and traditional characteristics that define Greenwich.

- Create a "Friends of the Barrenkill Railroad" group that helps to maintain and support existing and future development of the rail line based around its ability to relieve truck traffic congestion and its potential as a historic tourist attraction.
Goal: Establish strong physical and visual connections between the village and the Battenkill and incorporate the river as an active, vital corridor within the village.

- Prepare a plan to guide the improvement of Rock Street Park so that this site will support a variety of activities for youth and adults and enhance its location as a riverfront open space.
- Consider the temporary use and improvement of vacant riverfront related land for seating, gathering and overlook areas to increase visual access.
- Prepare an exhibit revealing the Battenkill's history and connection to Greenwich to be displayed in the Village.
- Conduct a comprehensive waterfront feasibility study that determines potential public access of waterfront properties, including current ownership status, existing environmental conditions, appropriate use and activities for each property, economic and other costs and benefits, and potential for hydro-electric power on one or more properties.
Goal: Strengthen the sense of community, pride and belonging in residents of all ages

- Convene a multi-generational committee to identify needs and develop plans for programs of year round and affordable activities for all ages and to advise the village on the facility needs and possible location for recreation, leisure and other activities.

- Convene a steering committee with representatives of village government, local business, the school district and other stakeholder organizations that is responsible for guiding implementation of the Vision Plan and continuing to grow community involvement.

- Develop programs and services for teens, such as employment programs, mentoring services, support groups, and a service-learning program through which they can be involved in implementation of the vision.

- Initiate a feasibility study that examines the reuse of vacant or underutilized buildings as places for community activities in the Village, including identifying sites and buildings, investigating ownership, assessing location, condition and physical characteristics, identifying appropriate activity matches, and determining improvements, costs and timing.
Goal: Encourage care, maintenance and improvement of public and private properties that reflect a shared pride in the village

- Set up a mechanism to assist building owners and homeowners in repairing and rehabilitating their properties, including understanding and addressing the issues and challenges preventing them from doing so now.

- Review, update and enforce village codes that address building and site condition and appearance.

- Develop strategies to alleviate the sense of vacancy in empty storefronts in the interim before they are occupied, which may include regular window washing, minor repairs and façade improvements, temporary window displays, and seasonal planting to enliven the sidewalk.

- Continue to provide pedestrian amenities and signs of caring along upper Main Street and extend to lower Main Street, including seasonal displays, gardens, potted plants, benches, and public art.

- Prepare a plan for comprehensive (potentially phased) capital improvements to the sidewalk and other pedestrian spaces along the Main Street corridor, focusing on safety and maintenance (e.g. replacing heaving or cracking sidewalks, reducing crossing widths for pedestrians, installing pedestrian scale lighting) as well as comfort and interest (e.g. places to sit in sun and shade, street trees for shade and continuity, well designed and informative signage).

- Create a committee or task force charged with investigating ways to integrate sustainable practices into village operations, building renovations, energy use, waste handling and other areas of village life.

- Initiate a participatory vision design process to determine alternative approaches for use of the village owned property around the reservoir.
Goal: Establish a sustainable diversified village economy, strengthening the Main Street business district as the center of commercial activity, and bringing appropriate new uses to strategic redevelopment sites.

- Conduct an inventory of the condition, characteristics and preliminary cost for renovation of vacant buildings, homes and lots within the village, giving initial priority to the lower section of Main Street.

- Develop a strategy to address vacant properties that includes a comprehensive market study to determine the types of uses and redevelopment that would be economically viable and appropriate to the village setting, with emphasis on Main Street and other strategic sites (the IGA site, Knapp plaza, Dunbarton Mill and Mill Hollow area).

- Based on the results of the market study, develop a multi-year marketing plan to attract the uses and development identified in the market study.

- Continue to support existing businesses in downtown Greenwich, producing educational materials to encourage residents to utilize local businesses, marketing that highlights the unique characteristics of the village, and organizing year round events that appeal to both residents and visitors.

- Prepare a parking study for downtown Greenwich which considers the desire to create a Main Street that favors pedestrian activity. The study should include a survey of the location and quantity of existing parking, identification of parking demand at different times, identification of potential sites for off-street parking and research into alternative effective parking approaches that have been used in other pedestrian-oriented village settings.

- Consider green and sustainable light industrial use of underutilized sites that builds on local resources.

- Explore opportunities for community supported economic development through cooperative businesses.

- Collaborate with nearby municipalities to develop a regional tourism plan.
Goal: Respect and market the historic and traditional characteristics that define Greenwich (including the history and historic structures, and the traditional village scale, development patterns and relationship to the agricultural landscape).

- Organize community events to commemorate historic events that occurred in or relate to the Village of Greenwich.

- Create a committee or organization to understand and educate building owners about the opportunities available for making improvements within the Village of Greenwich’s Historic District (listed under the State Register of Historic Places), and seek to expand those opportunities by seeking recognition under the National Register of Historic Places.

- As an important historic structure, prepare a feasibility study and a plan to renovate the Village Hall, including determining the best uses for the spaces within.

- Prepare a study defining the characteristics of Main Street and the Village that the community would like to preserve and enhance with future development and renovations.

- Develop guidelines for future development and renovations that reflect the study's defined desirable characteristics.

- Incorporate the guidelines for future development and renovations into the Village's comprehensive plan.

- Develop and implement a plan for growth in the Village that preserves the traditional village scale and development patterns and the distinct edge between the developed land and the surrounding agricultural landscape.
• You may be wondering at this point, so how do we get all of this done? Where do we even start? The Vision Plan includes a Vision Statement, Goals (6 to start with), and Action Strategies (lots), but what do we do with it all? What do we do first?

• It is recommended that you develop an action agenda

• This is a guide for implementation of the action strategies that you have thought of during the vision planning process. This agenda could include sequence, timing, and responsibilities to get projects implemented. It can be general and flexible, but the village or a steering committee should try to develop an action agenda or plan to determine to decide where to start and how to proceed.
There are several categories of projects that can emerge from a Vision Plan

- Projects may occur simultaneously
- Short term and long range
- Each project needs an Action Plan

• First, it’s important to understand that there are a variety of projects and types of projects that can come directly from a Vision Plan or become evident or necessary as a community proceeds with implementation.

  • It is good to have a mix of projects types, scale and time frames.
  • Short term, immediate actions that can be implemented with locally available resources provide encouragement and proof of progress that are visible to the community. Long periods of time between actions related to downtown revitalization can result in lost interest.
  • Longer term, more complex projects may require extensive planning, research and coordination to bring together all of the necessary people and funding resources.

• We’ll review the broad categories of projects that are associated with your Vision Plan

• Before you really start working on a project, it should have an Action Plan to guide and focus implementation.
Projects should contribute to achieving the Vision Plan

• Planning Studies

• Guidelines and Standards

• Design and Construction Projects

• Community Initiatives

•[click] Now that you are done with your Vision Plan, the last thing most people want to do is become engaged in another planning study. However, it may be necessary to have additional information and research to determine appropriate actions and cost to implement certain recommendations, for example you may need to conduct a:
  • Feasibility study to renovate village hall
  • Or to determine new uses and market viability for the Dunbarton Mill site
  • Feasibility study to do streetscape improvements

•[click] Guidelines and standards are documents that describe and illustrate the type and appearance of development that is appropriate. These are becoming a common strategy as community members realize that there are better options for new development or reconstruction than what has been typical in the last several decades. For example you might develop:
  • Architectural Guidelines for Main St
  • Maintenance guidelines

•[click] Design and construction projects—New construction, renovation or redevelopment may be the most visible type of project that occurs as a result of a vision plan, such as:
  • Improvements to Rock Street Park
  • Façade and building renovations

•[click] Community initiatives and programs—these may be ongoing or regularly occurring, or one time events that serve as outreach or promote information and interest in a project or may be an improvement project or initiative in its own right, such as a cleanup along the river, or developing a year round recreation program.
Action Agenda Considerations

• What is each project’s value to the community?

• Is there a logical sequence for the projects?

• What are the resource requirements and constraints?
  – Money
  – People
  – Leadership

Here are some other factors to consider when creating your Action Agenda:

• Consider the value to the community of each project. What are the community’s priorities?

• Ask whether there is a logical sequence for your projects. Most certainly, it will be necessary to complete some projects before others can be started. This seems intuitive, but it will be helpful to list them in a sequence.

• Resource requirements and constraints are another important factor. Depending on the resources available in your community, including money, people power, and leadership talent, there is very likely a limit on what you can do at any point in time.

• Finally, estimate how long your various projects will take. This will suggest opportunities for sequencing, parallel processing and staggering.

• Above all, be realistic. Balancing your desired results with the time and the resources available will be an important step in effectively achieving your goals.
Finally, consider this useful tool for planning and prioritizing. For each potential project that you anticipate, rank it both for value to the community and for difficulty of implementation (resources required, cost, complexity, etc.).

- Those that are high in value and easy (or inexpensive) to do are “no brainers”
- Those that are high in value but expensive or difficult to do will take more planning and effort on the part of your team or community leaders to accomplish them. But they have high long term value and need to be tackled over time.
- Those that have lower value but are relatively easy (or inexpensive) to do might make good projects for community groups or local businesses.
- And those that are relatively low in value and hard or expensive to do…put them on the back burner, and reconsider if they should be done at all.
Action Steps: Creating an Action Plan for each Project

• Define tasks (What?)
• Describe techniques (How?)
• Determine resources needed (Who? With what?)
• Develop time frame (When? How long?)

• We just reviewed the purpose and approach to develop an Action Agenda to determine the sequence and source requirements of specific projects. When you are ready to start a project, it is a good idea to develop an Action Plan to guide the process.

• While there might be a steering committee’s to set the overall action agenda, each project on that agenda might have its own committee. The project committee should work through the process of creating an action plan.

• To some this may seem like a waste of time, especially when there is the desire to just get started - or it seems like an action plan will be difficult to develop with a group of people with different ideas,

  • But we have all probably worked on projects that have not been well thought out from the beginning and have ended up redoing tasks or spending time on the wrong things, and may not end up where we had thought or hoped we would be, whether it be a construction project, a planning study or a special event.

  • While creating an action plan is not a guarantee that a project will be successful, it will provide a shared roadmap for everyone involved and can be modified based on experience and changes that will invariably occur along the way.

• During the final workshop, we broke into a couple of smaller groups and developed an outline action plan for two of the priority strategies. These are documented in the project notebook.
Please consider **staying involved** in the future of the Village of Greenwich

- Your continued involvement is more important than ever as you complete the vision plan and move into implementation.
- If you don’t hear from the village or the vision committee in the near future, contact village hall and ask how what’s happening with the vision plan and how your and other in the community can be involved. Make sure that what you have helped create moves into creative and appropriate action.