MADISON, NEW HAMPSHIRE DESIGN CHARRETTE

October 12 & 13, 2001

PLAN NH

Acknowledgements:

Sincere thanks go out to those individuals who donated their professional and personal time to the charrette:

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Thank you to all the town members who shared their knowledge and thoughts.

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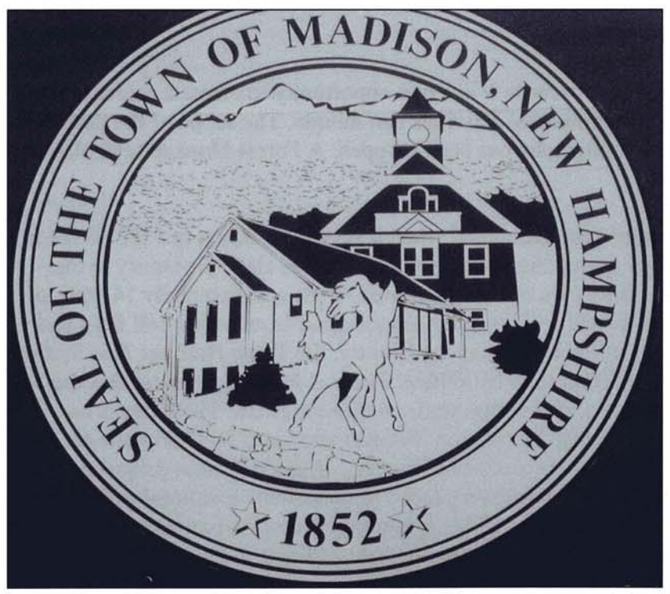
A special thanks goes to Community Market & Deli for supplying the team with such wonderful food and to Adrian Beggs, John Arruda, and Robin Frost for coordinating the charrette.

…and to any others who attended and helped with the charrette, but whose names we may have missed,

Thank you!

Madison, New Hampshire
Design Charrette

October 12 & 13, 2001



Sponsored by:

The Madison Planning Board and
Board of Selectmen

Madison Charrette

October 12 & 13, 2001

Who is Plan NH?

Plan NH is a professional association for those working in the built environment. The organization includes architects, planners, engineers, bankers, contractors, historic preservationists, and others who concern themselves with buildings and communities. It was established to create a forum for bringing together these different professional groups, and as a catalyst to spur interest in community development. Part of Plan NH's mission is to make a positive contribution to New Hampshire communities. One way in which Plan NH does this is through the offer of free design assistance to communities with demonstrated needs.

So what is a Design Charrette, anyway?

Simply stated, a design charrette is a brainstorming session where lots of ideas are brought forth by both professional designers and local citizens, in an attempt to resolve a problem of local interest. Because of the compressed time frame, the conclusions reached are usually conceptual. Conclusions present the relationship of different plan elements, as opposed to the details of how a particular building would actually be constructed.

At their best, charrettes blend the broad experience of design professionals with local citizens' detailed knowledge of their community to produce a plan of action to deal with particular issues of concern to that community. The charrette provides an overall framework within which final solutions can be developed. It sets a tone and gives direction against which future decisions can be measured, as well as presents recommendations that range in cost and scale, from volunteer initiatives that can be accomplished relatively quickly to longer-term efforts that will require funding.

How did Madison end up with a Charrette?

Each winter, Plan NH invites all New Hampshire communities to submit proposals detailing a problem of local interest. Plan NH selects three communities from the submissions to receive a weekend of donated design services. Winning proposals typically address a project that is important to the host community, present an interesting design challenge, and offer a high probability of actually being implemented. A community that is organized and has done some early work on a project scores well. A community whose project seems less likely to be implemented does not fair as well. This past year, Plan NH received two dozen proposals for design assistance. Madison was one of the three communities selected.

Madison's Proposal

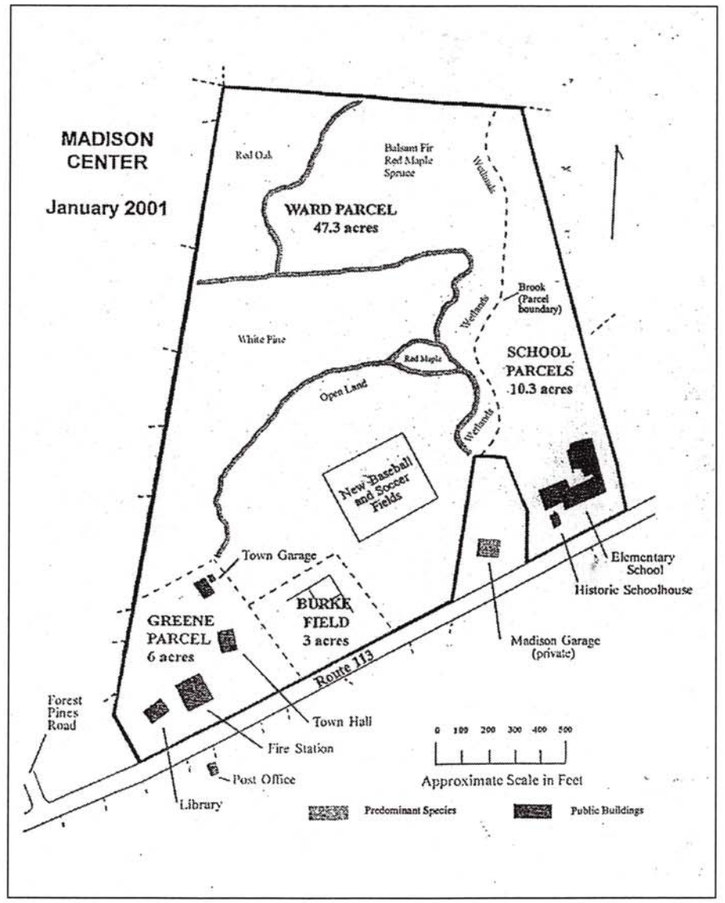
New Town Center

The Town of Madison applied for assistance for a design charrette to generate a comprehensive site plan for a 14 acre parcel (The Ward Parcel) that abuts the Town Hall, Town Library, and Elementary School. The site represents a unique opportunity to create a center for the community and a challenge to accommodate a number of competing interests and priorities.

Town residents identified the project as important because it is a rare opportunity to create a center for the community where recreational, cultural and governmental activities can mingle. The scope of the project is new. The property has been surveyed and the topography has been mapped. A Forest Management plan for the adjoining woodlands has been developed.

Madison is a Town without a center. The center was left behind when it split from Eaton in 1852. What it has accumulated in recent years is a fortuitous aggregation of public buildings in close proximity to one another abutting a 47-acre parcel of land that the Town recently acquired. With approximately 14 acres of cleared land and 33 acres of woodlands, The Ward Parcel is undeveloped apart from a new ball field and a basketball court. This property is contiguous with land housing the Library, the Town Hall, the Fire Station, and the Madison School and is across the street from the Post Office. There is broad agreement that the 33 acres should remain as woodland for use as educational nature trails and hiking paths. The focus is on developing the 14 acres for community purposes. The Recreation, Conservation and Town Properties Committees and the Selectmen and Planning Board are anxious to proceed. Among current proposals are a sports/picnic pavilion, an amphitheater for summer concerts, a gazebo or bandstand, a cultural center, tennis courts, a central venue for Old Home Week, a new building for the Heritage Commission, and a safe refuge for the old one-room school house that is being overshadowed by the new addition to the School. Such are the competing priorities and interests that the Board of Selectmen, with everyone's consent, has placed a moratorium on any further development of the property until a comprehensive site plan has been produced. The site plan should include the adjacent town-owned parcels so that sufficient access roads, parking and utilities are considered.

Two years ago, Madison voters, mindful of their heritage, rejected a new building and instead moved the old Town Hall - very slowly - up the road from an inauspicious site to a small but prominent knoll where it now stands guard over the entrance to the Ward Parcel. In addition to being aesthetically and historically pleasing, the relocation of the Town Hall may also represent the potential of a new era. The present circumstance is a rare opportunity to generate a central site, a civic center for the Town, where people and families may congregate for sports, games, picnics, dances, fairs, musical programs, and ordinary conversation. It is truly a unique opportunity.



Wish List

In anticipation of the Charrette, Madison held a public hearing in August 2001. At the hearing residents identified numerous potential uses and development suggestions for the Ward Parcel with the goal of creating a new Town Center.

Conservation Commission

- Footpaths for walking in wooded area;
- Village Common for front 8 acres with buildings distributed around perimeter, grassed open area, no vehicular traffic;
- Amphitheater and historical building;
- Relocate highway department.

Recreation Committee

- Pavilion - covered enclosure for sheltered activities, food service, toilet facilities for use of various groups;
- Walkway from Elementary School to Library and other Town facilities primarily with safety in mind;
- Parking to be properly designed and located without adversely impacting the use of the site;
- Lighted field to allow nighttime use;
- Tennis courts;
- Drainage for existing ball field and parking, as well as future development.

Old Home Week Committee

- Storage building (20'x40' with 10' lean-to) for storage of equipment;
- Horseshoe pits (8) with space for additional pits;
- Pavilion and picnic area. Pavilion to have running water and bathroom(s) plus stove and seating for 200;
- Walking paths upgraded;
- Parking expansion with marked handicapped spaces;
- Light Burke field for night games;
- Tennis courts;
- Skating rink.

SAU #13

- Pathway from Elementary school to ball fields;
- Emergency evacuation route for Elementary school.

Library Committee

- Relocate highway garage;
- Conservation area in memory of Richard Hocking;
- Tennis Courts (2);
- Pathway from elementary school to library;
- Community center.

Additional Suggestions

- Gazebo;
- Bridle trails;
- Multiuse paths/trails.

What is a Town Center?

During the Charrette, the design team sought to further define the conceptual future of the Ward Parcel. In doing so, they asked residents, "What is a Town Center?" The discussion focused on creating a place where people naturally gather, where there is a reason for coming together.

The team wondered if it made sense to look beyond public facilities in creating a new Town Center. Perhaps looking at residential and commercial opportunities as well, such as affordable housing, ice cream stand/restaurant, etc. The general feeling of those in attendance was that those opportunities would naturally evolve if the Ward Parcel becomes a real gathering place and that it was important to keep that potential in mind when developing the Parcel. In fact, there used to be a restaurant/gathering place at Cobble Pond Farms and it was economically viable so there may be an opportunity there in the future. It was also mentioned that more affordable housing is of course needed throughout the region but it was important to remember that the Town purchased the Ward Parcel for the purpose of recreational use only.

The institutional buildings and activities of the Ward Parcel provide a solid base for a real, full-service Town Center. If the Town creates the institutional and recreational gathering place envisioned for the Ward Parcel, there may be an opportunity to look for private sector partners to develop the commercial and residential components.

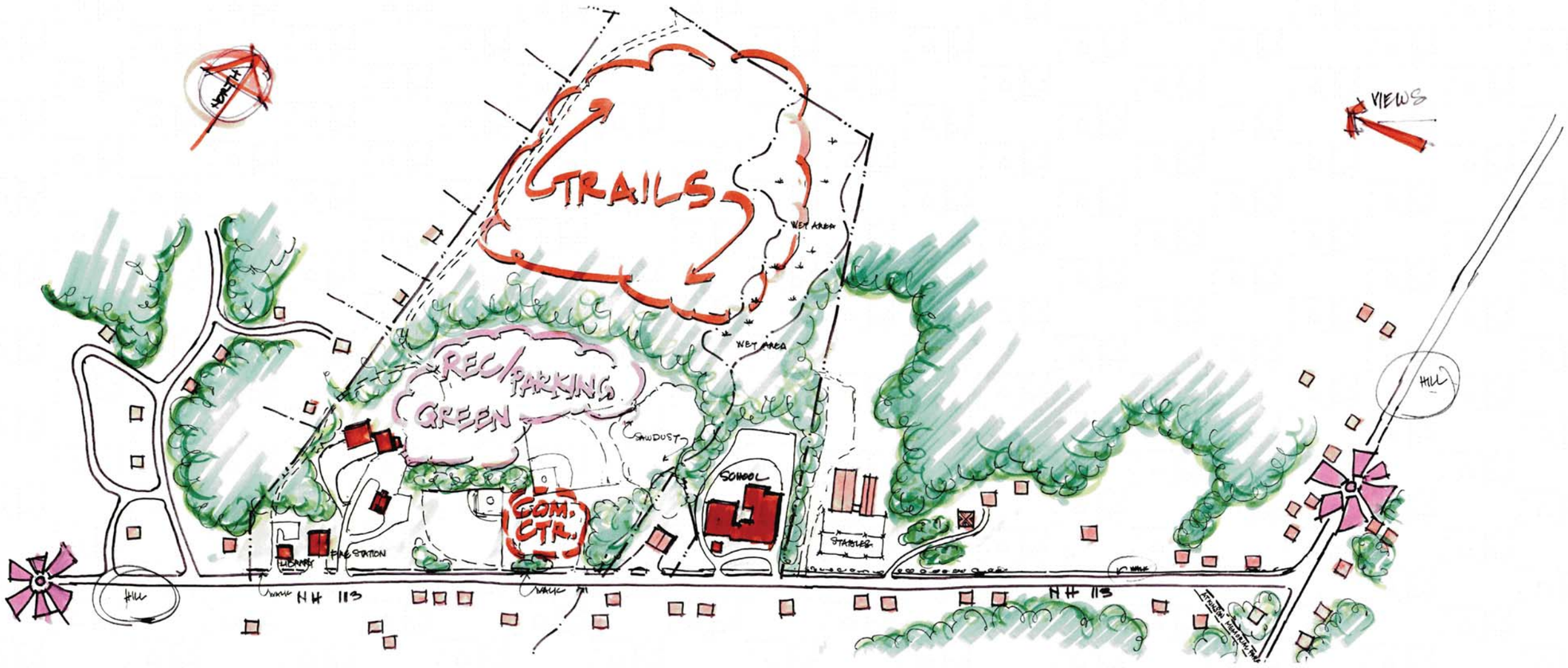
The Ward Parcel

In evaluating the Ward Parcel, it is evident that there are three components to the conceptual master plan:

(1) Open Space Plan;
(2) Trails Plan; and
(3) Community Facilities Plan.

More specifically, the Open Space Plan encompasses the active recreational areas - essentially from the tree line to the road. The Trails Plan addresses the forested area beyond the Open Space, and the Community Facilities Plan focuses on the physical building needs. Further, the primary focus for any development would be the approximately eight acres that comprise the Open Space area.

Conceptual Plan



The conceptual drawing identifies key elements of the new Madison Village Center. Demarcation of the two ends of the new Village Center creates an approximately 1-mile stretch along Route 153. Currently, there are at least three independent traffic patterns. The plan is to weave them into something coherent. The drawing demonstrates how the trail system interconnects with a new community center and recreation center.

A new sidewalk meanders along Route 153 creating non-motorized access between the Library and Madison Corner. This creates an opportunity for people to safely travel along 153 without getting in their car. It will offer options, encourage motorists to slow down, and, with the addition of signage "Welcome to Madison Village," will give one the sense of entering a Village.

Seasons of Usage

The "Seasons of Usage" rendering indicates circulation patterns and delineates seasons of usage within the Village Center. An open pavilion at the "top" of the Ward parcel with recreational horseshoe pits, offers an opportunity for a family picnic. A more extensive pavilion with a kitchen and seating for 75 serves the denser recreation area and provides more competitively oriented horseshoe pits. A gazebo serves as a focal point for the recreation area and creates a forum for community celebrations.

All trails and views from throughout the Ward Parcel lead to this center where basketball courts, tennis courts and a natural amphitheater are also located. Parking is kept away from the activities and an access road brings one to the recreation area but does not loop around the Parcel. Overflow parking for special occasions is accommodated along the access road and on the grass and gravel areas.

Open Space Plan

In reviewing the open space with Gene O'Brien, who has surveyed this property for the Town, the team understood that the soils in the open space area have a silt lense about 12 feet down that is impermeable and keeps the water table up. This presents a drainage problem in many areas but a drainage system has been installed under the new ball field. Any future development of this area would need to expand that system.

The use of the two ballfields is significant as they serve the entire region, not just Madison and in fact, a catering service comes in to serve tournaments. There is also a need for a playground in close proximity to the ballfields to serve families with both small children and children playing in the ball games. Madison's need for tennis courts is evidenced by the fact that the Old Home Week tennis tournament is not even played in Madison but in Chocurua.

Several people pointed out that the maintenance costs of all these recreational facilities is an issue and there are several venues available for skating such as King Pine, Ham Arena, and local Ponds.

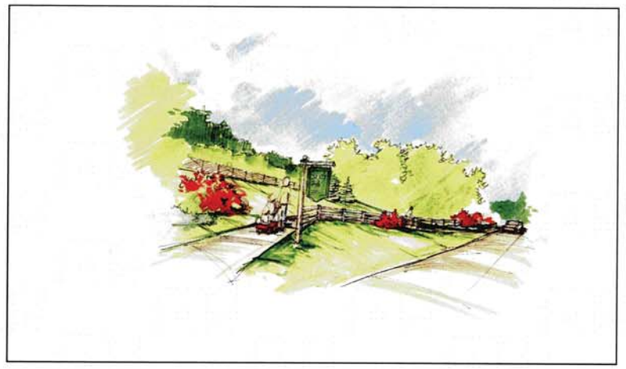
Trails Plan

There is tremendous opportunity for a trail system and passive recreation within the Ward Parcel itself. The design team evaluated the Town and School property for trail opportunities, considered what presently exists, as well as what the potential is and developed a conceptual trail element to the Village plan. The first component of this is a sidewalk/bike path/recreation path along the road.

One of the big obstacles to creating a Town Center in this location is that Rte. 153 is not much of a Main St. There is tremendous truck traffic from Pine Tree Power and Chick Lumber and although the speed limit is 35 mph, vehicles regularly travel at speeds much greater than that. Traffic calming measures are desperately needed if this section of Rte. 153 is to resemble a village center.

During the public session, there was some discussion as to whether sidewalks are appropriate in Madison. In fact, sidewalks already exist in Silver Lake. The opportunity to safely connect the Elementary School with the Library is invaluable even considering that presently buses drop students off at the Library and there are only three walkers at the school. In fact, adults do walk along the road as well, and a sidewalk would facilitate access between all of the municipal facilities along the Ward Parcel. Perhaps even linking Monument Beach in Silver Lake Village (where the existing sidewalk ends) to the Ward Parcel would create not only pedestrian opportunities but also interpretive opportunities related to the Cummings and Kennett families and greater community interaction as well. Perhaps even more importantly, sidewalks are a proven traffic calming measure, which would begin to define the Town Center and slow down vehicles.

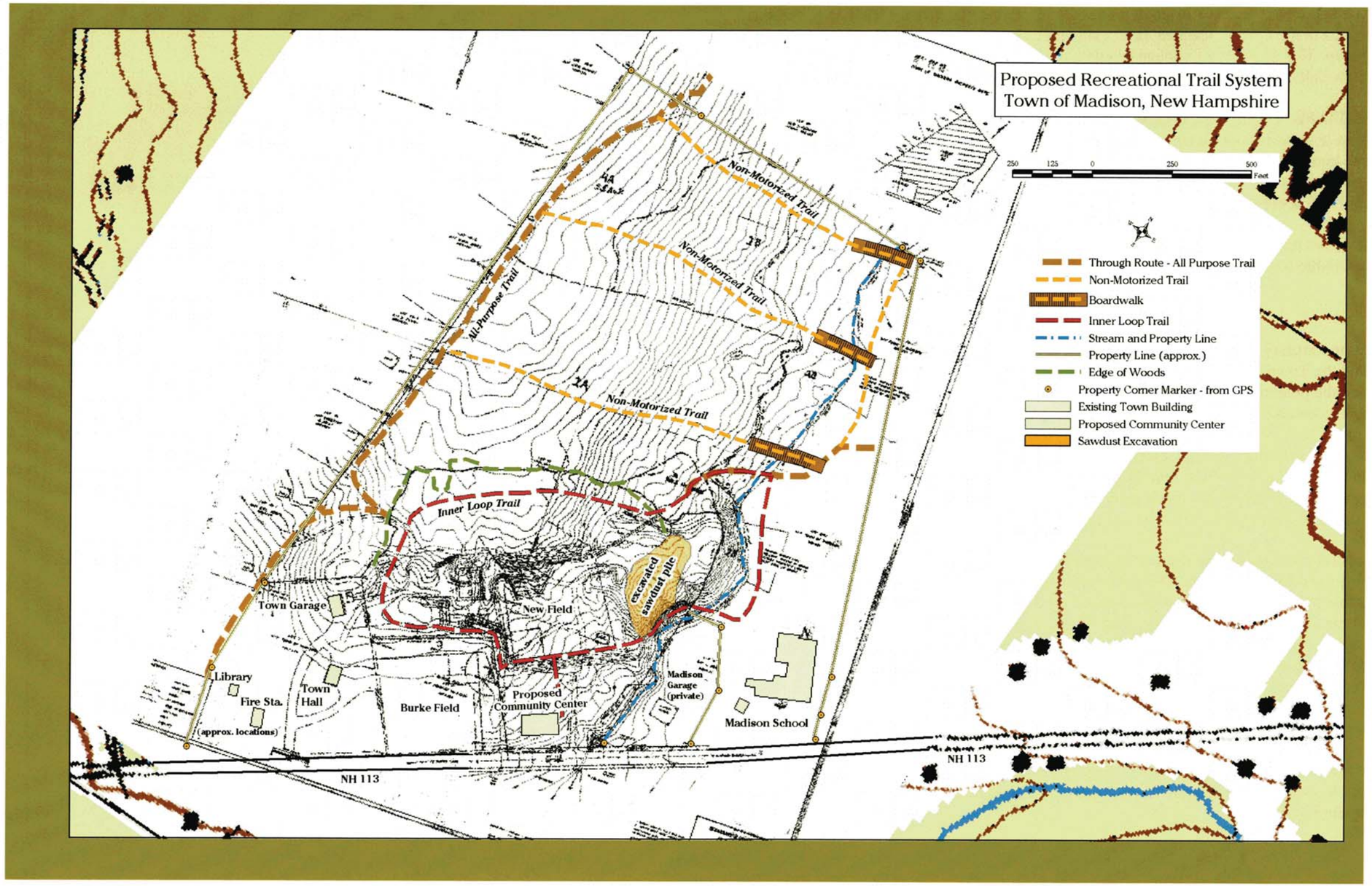
There are several potential funding sources from highway/DOT funds for sidewalks and bike paths and assistance is available from the Office of State Planning and the Regional Planning Commission in working through the DOT requirements.



The second component of the trail system is a network of trails connecting the library, ball fields, and school, as well as a loop trail and forest network consisting of concentric loops. The main corridor trail could serve as access to the power lines and the rail corridor further to the north of the Ward Parcel.

The multi-purpose trail could be developed with stonedust over the existing logging road to create a multi-purpose trail through the woods. This would provide a very durable surface. There is a great deal of potential for trail amenities as well – kiosks, benches, signage/markers. Much of this could be done in stages with a tremendous opportunity for volunteer effort – thus reducing the potential financial commitment.

Trails Map


Proposed Recreational Trail System
Town of Madison, New Hampshire
250 125 0 250 500
Feet
Through Route - All Purpose Trail
Non-Motorized Trail
Boardwalk
Inner Loop Trail
Stream and Property Line
Property Line (approx.)
Edge of Woods
Property Corner Marker - from GPS
Existing Town Building
Proposed Community Center
Sawdust Excavation
Non-Motorized Trail
Non-Motorized Trail
Non-Motorized Trail
All-Purpose Trail
Inner Loop Trail
Excavated sawdust pile
Town Garage
New Field
Library
Fire Sta.
Town Hall
(approx. locations)
Burke Field
Proposed Community Center
Madison Garage (private)
Madison School
NH 113
NH 113

Community Facilities Plan

Another perceived obstacle to creating a functional Town Center is the lack of adequate space for a variety of functions - both in terms of group size and allowable activities. The Elementary School Gym is open to the public during non-school times and is used for Town Meeting, potluck and church suppers but competing uses suggest the need for alternative recreational space, as well as social and cultural gathering space. The Chick room in the library holds about 40 people and the meeting room in Town Hall holds about 20. Several recommendations during the public session and August 2001 public hearing focused on creating a separate Community Center building or renovating the upper floor of the Town Hall to serve a variety of needs such as seniors programs, after-school programs, cultural activities, indoor recreational activities, even wedding receptions.

Community Center

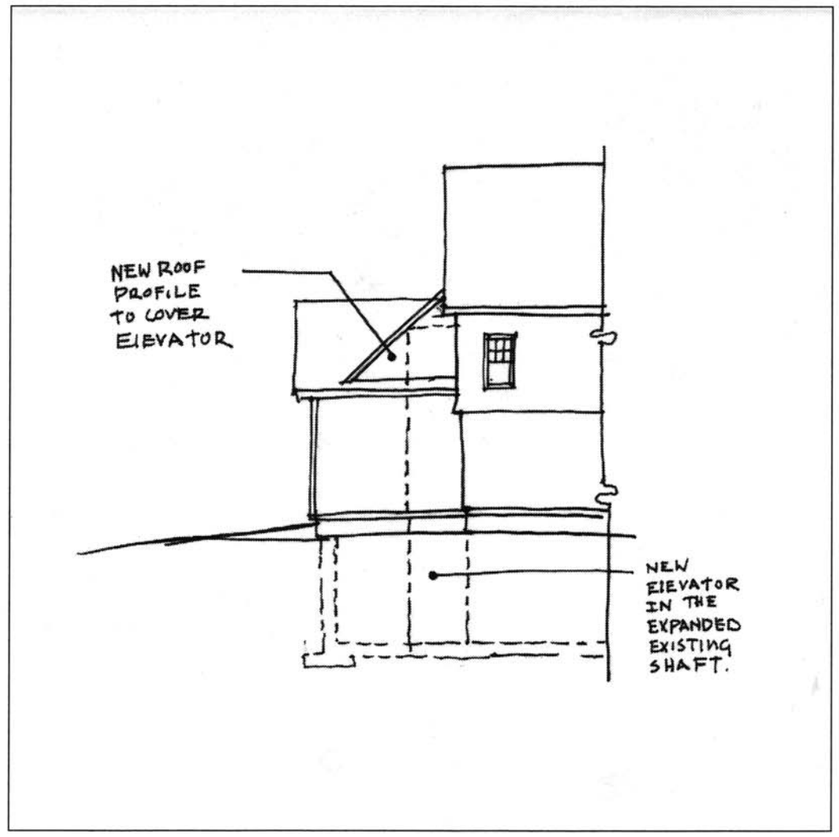
The design team identified the vacant land to the northeast of Burke Field and adjacent to 153 as a prime opportunity for a two story Community Center. The first story is at grade with the road and the second story is at grade with the upper parking lot. This solution keeps the Community Center near the street, which also offers opportunities for commercially viable space. The design concept is a farmhouse style with a green metal roof – carrying forth the green and white theme seen elsewhere along 153, as well as at the Town Offices. The granite blocks found in the gravel pit could be used to create an attractive retaining wall.

The zoning in this area is Village District meaning that limited commercial is permitted so the opportunity does exist for private commercial development to invest in this area. Perhaps part of a new Community Center could be available for lease to provide private investment and commercial opportunities in close proximity to the municipal and recreational facilities.

There has been some discussion in Madison regarding the purchase of the Madison Garage. The asking price is $225,000 but apparently the current owner will not allow the property to be tested for environmental contaminants. This is a major "red flag" and probably a risk the Town does not need to take.

Town Hall

Other discussions addressed simply adding an elevator to the Town Hall to make the second floor "dance hall" functional and accessible. This room could accommodate approximately 100 people and already has a stage. The second floor of the Town Hall offers an excellent forum for social and cultural groups to meet. In fact, area summer theaters are always looking for venues and this could provide a new and exciting opportunity for Madison. All that is needed to bring the space up to code are two means of egress. The existing stairs are probably too steep to meet code but an elevator and an exterior fire escape would meet the minimum code requirements to make the space functional.



Town Garage

Many in Madison would like to see the Town Garage moved to the Transfer Station and still others would like to see another building on same property because the centrally located site at Ward Parcel is ideal for servicing the Town. The current Garage is too small and if it is to stay in the existing location it needs to be expanded. To address the concerns about expanding the Town Garage while still maintaining its central location, the team proposed closing off the front access and moving the access to the side. Grading down to the entry level of the Garage but keeping the existing burm on the side would screen equipment and supplies from view. By building on to the back of the building, six new bays can be added without compromising the recreational or aesthetic value of the Ward Parcel. Fuel storage is relocated and covered. Equipment storage, salt, and sand are all hidden behind the burm. The team estimates that 50 ft still remains between the sand pile and the property line and that it is possible to accommodate two piles - sand and gravel - if necessary.

This solution keeps the Public Works Department in a central location near the Town Offices, hides the equipment, makes the site more aesthetically pleasing, and provides more storage. Further, moving the Town Garage may not be an option at all because of the impending Transfer Station closure.

Pavilion

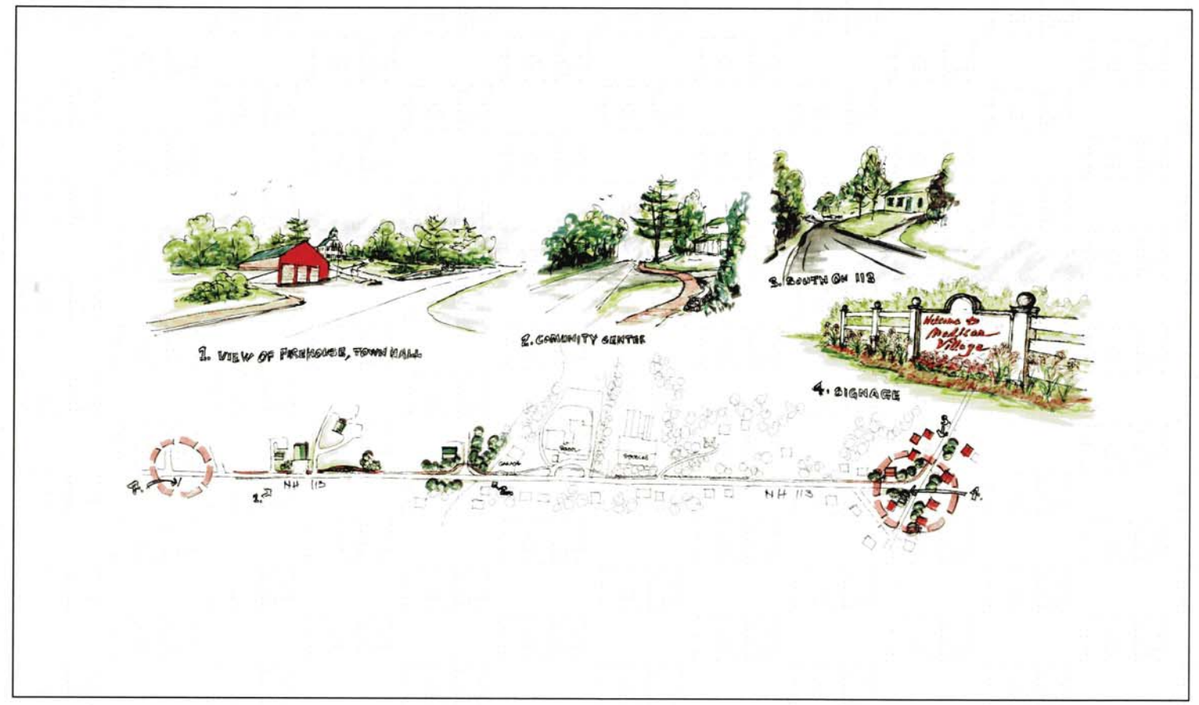
The Pavilion located in the heart of the recreation area near the ballfields offers seating for 75, a kitchen, and bathrooms and is adjacent to the Gazebo.

Open Space Area Before:

Open Space Area After:

Connecting it all Together

Adding a three rail fence and consistent signage throughout the Village Center creates continuity and defines the space while still maintaining the informal atmosphere of Madison. Street trees, informal shrubs such as lilacs, burning bush and forsythia help to further enclose the Village Center and the stretch of 153 thereby slowing the traffic.



Cost Estimates

Trails

Inner Loop Trail (included as sidewalk estimates below)	
Intra site loop (2500 LF of stonedust, 8'x4" over existing gravel base	$ 6,000
Outer loops	
(mostly upgrade of existing logging roads)	$15,000 Allowance
Trails Estimate	**$21,000**

Road Edge

Phase 1:	*The 2000 LF between the Library and the School*	
	1000 LF of 3 rail fence @ $15/LF	$25,000
	20 trees @ $1500/ea	$30,000
	Bushes, etc. ALLOWANCE	$ 5,000
	2000LF Stonedust walkway @ $2.50/LF	$ 5,000
		$65,000
Phase 2:	*The 500 LF between the Library and the Sunoco Station and the 1500 LF between the School and the Corners = 2000 LF*	
	330 LF of 3 rail fence @ $15/LF	$ 8,000
	20 trees @ $1500 ea	$30,000
	Bushes, etc. ALLOWANCE	$ 5,000
	2000 LF Stonedust walkway @ $2.50/LF	$ 5,000
		$48,000
	Road Edge Estimate	**$113,000**

Public Works Garage Upgrade

Excavate site to existing floor grade, relocate materials storage, etc.	$130,000
Upgrade existing facility to create 3 bays – 75'x40' (new bay doors on west side, modify existing entrance, etc.) ($40/SF)	$120,000
Expand existing building to create 3 double deep bays (plus shed storage, etc.)	$250,000
Design/Inspection/Related fees	$50,000
Public Works Garage Estimate	**$550,000**

Recreation Facilities

Gazebo (materials only, volunteer labor)		$10,000
Open Pavilion, 20' x 60' @ $30/SF		$36,000
Pavilion with Kitchen and Bathrooms, 20' x 60'		
700 SF @ $30/SF	$21,000	
500 SF @ $80/SF	$40,000	
		$61,000
Horseshoe Pits, 8, volunteer labor		No Cost
Tennis Court, 60'x20' @ $20/SF		$24,000
Pavers around kitchen/bath pavilion 960 square yards @ $75/SY		$72,000
Dozer time for regrading, 120 hours @ $100/HR		$12,000
Loam and seed 3 acres @ $13,500/AC		$40,500
Recreation Facilities Estimate		**$255,500**

Community Center

Two-story facility built at front of Burke Field lot, 35' x 70'/story @ $100/SF	$490,000
Design and Inspection @ 10%	$50,000
Community Center Estimate	**$540,000**

Town Hall Modifications

Hydrolic Elevator	$ 38,260
Upgrades to Shaft	$ 7,500
Fire Escape (this includes new roof, gwb walls, steel stairway, doors with panic hardware and lights and signage)	$ 9,000
Town Hall Modifications Estimate	**$ 54,760**

The two most critical pieces to remember when reviewing the costs are to approach all things in phases and to look for as many volunteer opportunities as imaginable. It became clear to the design team during the Charrette that Madison has a tremendous history of volunteerism. That spirit can accomplish so much!