

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION & OUTREACH A PRIORITY

(For backup and detailed information, see Appendix A9.)

Crafting the Master Plan with Community Participation was a high priority from the beginning and will remain so for the following reasons:

- Participation fosters ownership and communication.
- Ultimately, York’s citizens, businesses and their elected leaders must “own” the Master Plan.
- Communication is as important as design, because a lingering sour taste by stakeholders who feel not included or not heard can spoil the potential to implement a good plan.
- Community support is essential for moving the project forward in later stages. The community will be called upon for sustained involvement of many types at many levels and over many years.
- Improvements will last for decades, so their design should truly fit needs and aspirations. Designs that grow from significant user participation are typically better matched to their purpose.
- There is great power to be tapped when a community participates, then aligns behind a unified concept, proceeds on a shared path, and focuses its precious financial and human resources for a common purpose.
- Community participation proactively builds incremental understanding among citizens along the way, rather than reactive fear to a final product presented at the end. Proactive incremental understanding often shifts skeptics from negative to neutral positions.
- Graphic visual information gets everyone on the same page, leading to common understanding, rather than internal private images.

The following topics are addressed in this chapter:

- 9.1 Meetings and Events
- 9.2 Many Opportunities for Community Participation
- 9.3 YVSC Working Meetings Open to the Public
- 9.4 Special Meetings
- 9.5 Community Design Workshops
- 9.6 Outreach & Buzz
- 9.7 Recommendations



Citizens working together to design the village center.

9.1 MEETINGS AND EVENTS

This chart summarizes all of the Meetings and Events held. Please see the following pages for additional information.

	Meetings		Events
	York Village Study Committee Meetings (all public)	Special Meetings	Community Design Workshops
July	7.3.14 YVSC #1 7.17.14 YVSC #2 7.28.14 YVSC #3		
August	8.7.14 YVSC #4 8.21.14 YVSC #5		
September	9.4.14 YVSC #6 9.18 YVSC #7		
October	10.2.14 YVSC #8 10.16.14 YVSC #9	10.15/16.15 Business leaders, Property Owners and Merchants. 24 one-on-one interviews to gain information to guide the funding strategy	Saturday 10.4.14 Community Design Workshop #1, 3 hrs 60+ attendees
November	11.6.14 YVSC #10 11.20.14 YVSC #11	11.18.14 Non Profit Community Leaders (York Hospital, York Library, Museums of Old York, First Parish Church) 11.20.14 Water District, Sewer District, Public Works Department	Saturday 11.22.14 Community Design Workshop #2, 2 ½ hrs 80+ attendees
December	12.4.14 YVSC #12 12.18.14 YVSC #13	12.8.14. BOS Presentation	
January	1.15.15 YVSC #14 1.22.15 YVSC #15	1.30.15 Emergency Services (Fire, Police and Ambulance) 1.30.15 Veterans (VFW and Legion)	
February	2.5.15 YVSC #16 2.19.15 (no TDRC)		Saturday 2.7.15 Community Design Workshop #3, 2 ½ hrs 100+ attendees
March	3.5.15 YVCS #17 3.19.15 YVSC #18		
April	4.2.15 YVSC #19 4.16.15 YVSC (no TDRC)		
May	5.7.15 YVSC #20		5.11.15 BOS Presentation
Totals	(21) York Village Study Committee Meetings	(30) Special Meetings	(3) Community Design Workshops 240+ attendees

9.2 MANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

This master plan was guided by significant input from many sources, including from 20 working meetings with the York Village Study Committee, one-on-one interviews with many Business Leaders, Property Owners and Merchants plus meetings with Non-profit Community Leaders, Emergency Services, Veterans and Utilities. Altogether, over 240 people attended three Design Workshops.

Overall there was an unusually high degree of engagement and collectively, the contributions were critical to ensure the plan truly reflects the community. Notably, there was consensus that recognized the social, cultural, and economic importance of a vibrant downtown. This in turn allowed the conversation to constructively focus on **how** to revitalize downtown, rather than to ineffectively debate **whether** downtown should be revitalized

Information exchange followed an iterative pattern throughout – sharing information > listening to feedback > adjusting > sharing new and revised information > listening to new feedback, etc. Specific concepts were “tested” with the YVSC, then after guidance, presented to citizens for feedback. Below is an outline summary of all community participation.

9.3 YVSC WORKING MEETINGS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Over the course of this 11 month project, the York Village Study Committee (YVSC) and The Downtown Revitalization Collaborative (TDRC) conducted 20 intensive working meetings open to the public, typically from 8:30 to 10:00am at the York Public Library. These joint meetings ensured a close working relationship and coordination of activities between the two groups.

In addition to interested citizens coming to learn more or share concerns, many of these meetings included invited guests from town departments and boards, utility districts, business and property owners, and citizen’s groups such as Cycle York.

9.4 SPECIAL MEETINGS

In addition to bi-monthly working meeting, the YVSC and TDRC also conducted many special meetings.

- **Business Leaders, Property Owners and Merchants**

On Oct. 15 and 16, 2014, TDRC’s Economist met one-on-one with members of the village business community to talk about their experiences in the village, including many of the issues previously identified: parking, walkability, economics, their Village identity and the potential for grant-writing in support of Village revitalization. All of this information helped guide the funding strategy.

- **Non Profit Community Leaders** On Nov. 18, 2014, we met with the York Hospital, York Library, Museums of Old York and First Parish Church to learn how their organizations interact with physical aspects of the village center and understand how proposed improvements might impact and be impacted by them.

- **Utilities** On Nov 20, 2014, we met with the Water District, Sewer District, Public Works Department, Central Maine Power Time Warner Cable and Fairpoint representatives to learn existing conditions and understand how different utilities might impact and be impacted by the surface improvements.

- **Board of Selectmen** On Dec 8, 2014, we made a 50 percent complete update presentation to the York Board of Selectmen.

- **Emergency Services** On Jan. 30, 2015, we met with representatives from both Fire departments, Police and Ambulance Services to better understand their needs relative to emergency vehicle movement and their preferences relative to lane widths and intersection design.

- **Veterans Organizations** On Jan. 30, 2015, we met with the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion to discuss how to protect and honor the monument. After understanding the issues related to intersection design including traffic movement and pedestrian safety, attendees were amenable to the possibility of shifting the monument and promised to bring the issues back to their organizations.

9.5 COMMUNITY DESIGN WORKSHOPS

In addition to open-to-the-public working meetings, YVSC and TDRC purposefully engaged citizens by inviting them to three interactive Community Design Workshops. The purpose was to inform, to obtain feedback, and to foster a collaborative neighborly atmosphere where we could discuss the future of their Village center. The events are summarized below and described in greater detail on the following pages.

Community Design Workshop #1 (October 4, 2014)

A Saturday morning three hour interactive event in three parts: presentation + small group activity + small groups reporting on their activity. The focus was to lay groundwork for design by identifying what makes a good village, community values, and their convergence. Small groups looked at points of arrival and destinations they frequent when in the Village, pedestrian connectivity options, natural features and open spaces, special events they either enjoy or would like to see, and ideas about models of successful revitalization. Data from the six small groups are factored into the developing Master Plan. More than 60 people attended.

Community Design Workshop #2 (November 22, 2014)

A Saturday morning 2½ hour interactive event in three parts: presentation + small group activity + small groups reporting on their activity. Results from the first workshop were reported and answered the question "did we hear you?" Attendees were asked to review three options for traffic circulation, parking, and open space at the heart of the village. More than 80 people attended.

Community Design Workshop #3 (February 7, 2015)

A Saturday morning 2½ hour interactive event in three parts: presentation + small group activity + small groups reporting on their activity. The focus was recapping Workshops #1 and #2 (summarizing technical and planning efforts, reviewing master plan diagrams) to get all attendees on the same page, then introducing, reviewing and referencing the Preferred Concept. More than 100 people attended.

- ***York Street Tee Intersection Concept Favored*** - People attending this workshop were strongly disposed to the 'York Street Tee' design which brings traffic coming down Long Sands Road to a 90 degree connection with York Street. Interactive Computer modeling of the alternatives also supports this option as the best for minimizing traffic back-ups in the Village. In addition to improved traffic flow, the audience was also enthused about the sense of open space and its potential as a great place for people.
- ***East End of York Street Business District*** - The workshop also brought attention to the narrowest and most challenging portion of York Street, the area between the Berger and Ciampa buildings. Sketches for various roadway design options were presented and people were asked to assess their value. The preferred design would allow sidewalks and parallel parking on both sides of the street, shared bike/auto travel lanes, street trees and lighting.
- ***Public-Private Partnership for Parking*** - Discussion at the workshop highlighted the opportunity that would be presented if private parking lot(s) behind the rear of York Street business buildings and the Library property could be utilized. There was a great deal of encouragement from attendees to create a partnership wherein the Town of York and the owners might reach an accord to combine and rationalize the parking areas in this location.

9.6 OUTREACH

Over the past three years, the YVSC has conducted significant public outreach at voting places and community events such as MarketFest. The committee recognizes continuing importance of this outreach to the success of this revitalization effort.


Outreach is a multi-step process of building public awareness and interest in the project, helping to ensure that people are given every opportunity to buy into the revitalization of the Village, and helping to increase the probability of a positive result when related warrants come to a vote.

Specifically, the goals of Outreach are to help citizens:

- stay informed and in the loop,
- understand the topics and consequences to them,
- get excited about possibilities,
- and feel included in the process.

9.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Maintain momentum to assure that the Master Plan remains a Town priority**
- **Sponsor engaging community-wide events to keep people informed and involved**
- **Continue outreach to maintain a high profile**
- **Use related activities to keep public focus on the Master Plan**
- **Maintain connections with stakeholders and special interest groups**



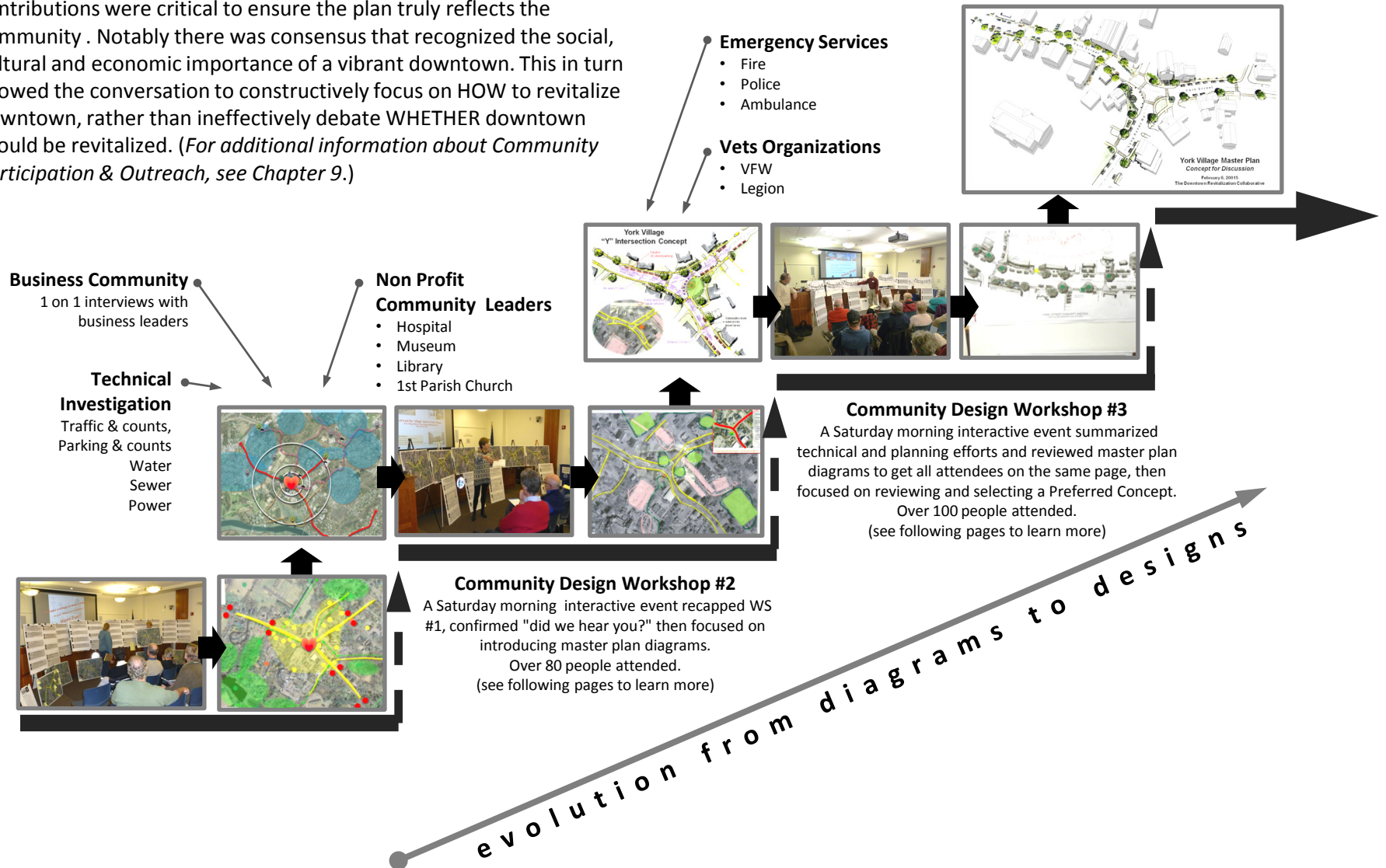
The poster features a black background with white text. At the top, it reads "York Village Community Design Workshop #3". Below this is a row of three photographs: a statue on a pedestal, a landscaped garden area, and a storefront with a green awning. At the bottom, it says "Saturday, February 7 at 10 am", "All Welcome", "York Public Library", and "www.YorkVillage.org".

York Village Community Design Workshop #3

Saturday, February 7 at 10 am
All Welcome
York Public Library
www.YorkVillage.org

From Diagrams to Designs with Community Participation

One of the cornerstones of revitalization is community participation. From the start of this Master Plan, community participation was a priority. The plan was guided by significant input from multiple sources, who shared their thoughts and interest. Overall there was an unusually high degree of engagement and collectively their contributions were critical to ensure the plan truly reflects the community. Notably there was consensus that recognized the social, cultural and economic importance of a vibrant downtown. This in turn allowed the conversation to constructively focus on HOW to revitalize downtown, rather than ineffectively debate WHETHER downtown should be revitalized. (For additional information about Community Participation & Outreach, see Chapter 9.)



Community Design Workshop #1, October 4, 2014

Village Design Workshop #1
October 4, 2014
Small Group Hands on Activity



Village Design Workshop #1
October 4, 2014
Small Group Hands on Activity


2 **Arrival**
is experiencing the distinct beginning of the village.

- Where does the village begin? Why?
- Think qualitatively – what shifts or changes clue us to village arrival?
Using red dots on the plan, identify where arrival clues should occur.
- Imagine how better or new Arrivals might enhance the village and reinforce the vision.

3 **Anchors & Destinations**
are cultural, civic, commercial or spiritual icons & destinations that help define a community's identity. In addition, "3rd places" (neither home nor work) offer places to pause, gather and linger.

- What and where are village Anchors and Destinations?
Using yellow dots on the plan, identify the most significant. Are any lacking? Why?
- Imagine how improved or new Anchors might enhance the village and reinforce the vision.

Village Design Workshop #1
October 4, 2014
Small Group Hands on Activity



Village Design Workshop #1
October 4, 2014
Small Group Hands on Activity

4 **Village Pedestrian Connectivity**
allows people to safely get to, from and between Destinations.

- Is there a clear, convenient and safe network connecting Anchors & Destinations? Why? Why not?
What works, and what does not?
- Using yellow strips, identify 3 improved or new connections that should receive top-priority.*
- Imagine how Connections might enhance the village and reinforce the vision.

5 **Natural Features, Recreation & Open Space**
are essential to Quality of Life.

- Using green dots and strips, identify Features & Open Space in and around the village.*
- Are there undiscovered or unused features?
- Imagine how a network of Features, Trails & Open Space might enhance the village and vision.

6 **Village Special Events & Activities**
such as parades, festivals, celebrations and markets, bring people together and help define community identity.

5 min

- What Special Events and Activities occur in the village? List them and their season.
- Imagine how improved or new Special Events and Activities might enhance the village and vision.



- Winter - Christmas (parade), Festival of Lights
- Spring - Memorial Day (parade), Village Firemen's Muster (parade)
- Summer – Book sale at Library, Movies, Concerts – 4th of July
- Fall - Halloween Parade, Market Fest, Turkey Trot
- More events for residents


7 **Models of Success**
of villages that "work" well are informative and inspiring for others.

10 min

- Identify a villages or villages that work well. Why?
- How does York Village compare?
- Identify 3 things that might help make York Village a model of success for others.

- Kennebunk:** historic nature emphasized, pedestrian friendly, revitalization: lights, storefronts, flowers, sidewalks"
- Kittery** great example of restructuring. Focus on parking once and walk from there.
- Portsmouth** – Sidewalks, lights, crosswalks, parking
- Newburyport:** shops, food, walkability, beauty, off-street parking





SUMMARY OBJECTIVES for YORK VILLAGE REVITALIZATION

- Create 21st century function along with cherished historic qualities.
- Balance competing pedestrian and vehicular needs.
- Foster economic prosperity.
- Put the "village" back in York Village.

Community Design Workshop #1, October 4, 2014

Village Design Workshop #1
October 4, 2014 *Small Group Hands on Activity*

Village Design Workshop #1
Composite Design Diagram from All Groups

Village Design Workshop #1
Community Input & Common Themes

TRAFFIC CALMING & VEHICLE SAFETY.
Slow traffic through the village
Clarify traffic patterns so that vehicle movement is more predictable

PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE SAFETY.
Provide a safe, continuous sidewalk network between Village, neighborhoods and Town destinations
Improve pedestrian crossings
Mitigate potential hazards between vehicles, bikes and pedestrians
Improve bike path pavement markings & signage

PARKING
Provide safe, convenient parking in the Village
Consider opportunities to enhance off-street parking

Village Design Workshop #1
Community Input & Common Themes

STREETScape & BEAUTIFICATION
"It's the little things that count."
Partner with local businesses and community groups to beautify the village
Move overhead utilities underground
Provide signage, street lighting, landscaping and pedestrian amenities
Integrate parks and open spaces

ASSETS & OPPORTUNITIES.
Emphasize history as a key asset and opportunity for the future
Support existing businesses
Integrate new businesses to fill existing gaps in products and services
Develop a Village that is supportive for residents, locals and tourists
Enhance trail network and improve use of Town land for recreation and green spaces

Community Design Workshop #1, October 4, 2014

Village Design Workshop #1

October 4, 2014
Small Group Hands on Activity



2

Arrival

is experiencing the distinct beginning of the village.

- Where does the village begin? Why?
- Think qualitatively – what shifts or changes clue us to village arrival?
- Using red dots on the plan, identify where arrival clues should occur.
- Imagine how better or new Arrivals might enhance the village and reinforce the vision.

3

Anchors & Destinations

are cultural, civic, commercial or spiritual icons & destinations that help define a community's identity. In addition, "3rd places" (neither home nor work) offer places to pause, gather and linger.

- What and where are village Anchors and Destinations?
- Using yellow dots on the plan, identify the most significant. Are any lacking? Why?
- Imagine how improved or new Anchors might enhance the village and reinforce the vision.

6

5 min

Village Special Events & Activities

such as parades, festivals, celebrations and markets, bring people together and help define community identity.

- What Special Events and Activities occur in the village? List them and their season.
- Imagine how improved or new Special Events and Activities might enhance the village and vision.



- Winter - Christmas (parade), Festival of Lights
- Spring - Memorial Day (parade), Village Firemen's Muster (parade)
- Summer – Book sale at Library, Movies, Concerts – 4th of July
- Fall - Halloween Parade, Market Fest, Turkey Trot
- More events for residents

7

10 min

Models of Success

of villages that "work" well are informative and inspiring for others.

- Identify a villages or villages that work well. Why?
- How does York Village compare?
- Identify 3 things that might help make York Village a model of success for others.

- **Kennebunk:** historic nature emphasized, pedestrian friendly, revitalization: lights, storefronts, flowers, sidewalks"
- **Kittery** great example of restructuring. Focus on parking once and walk from there.
- **Portsmouth** – Sidewalks, lights, crosswalks, parking
- **Newburyport:** shops, food, walkability, beauty, off-street parking



Village Design Workshop #1

October 4, 2014
Small Group Hands on Activity



4

Village Pedestrian Connectivity

allows people to safely get to, from and between Destinations.

- Is there a clear, convenient and safe network connecting Anchors & Destinations? Why? Why not?
- What works, and what does not?
- Using yellow strips, identify 3 improved or new connections that should receive top-priority.
- Imagine how Connections might enhance the village and reinforce the vision.

5

Natural Features, Recreation & Open Space

are essential to Quality of Life.

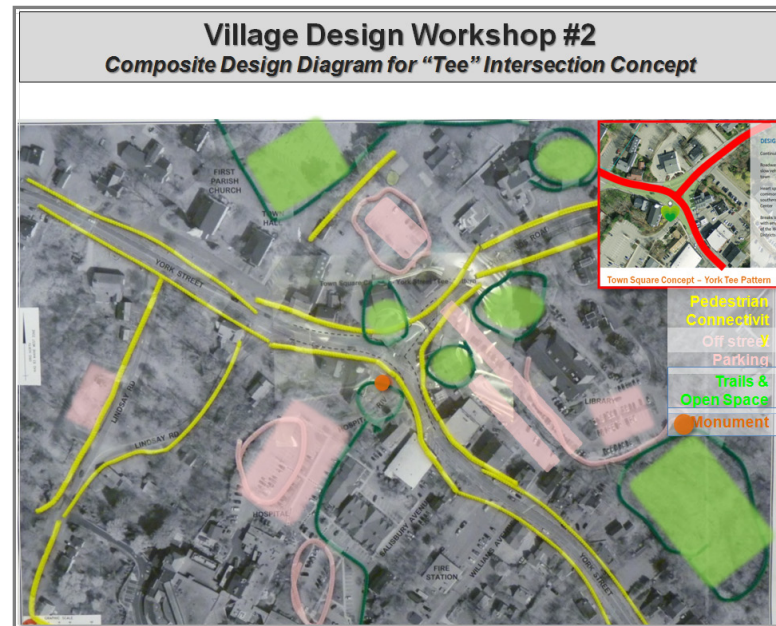
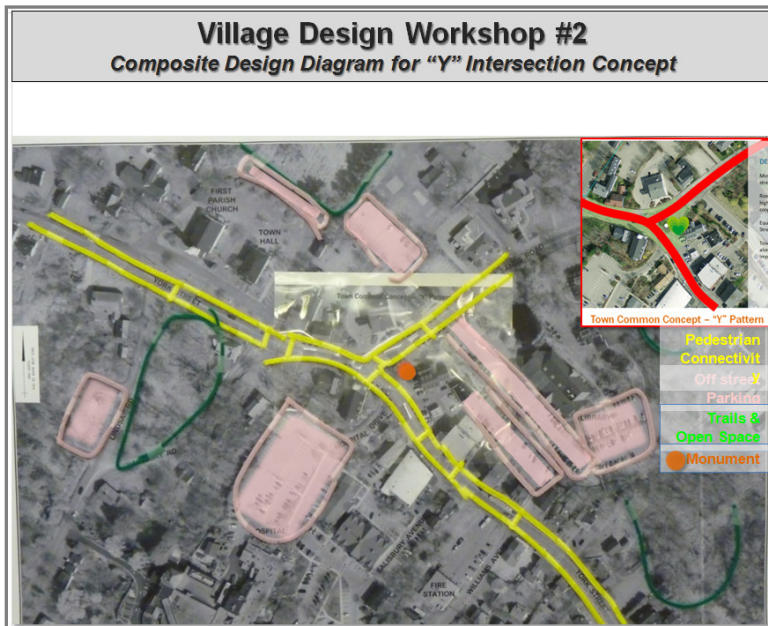
- Using green dots and strips, identify Features & Open Space in and around the village.
- Are there undiscovered or unused features?
- Imagine how a network of Features, Trails & Open Space might enhance the village and vision.



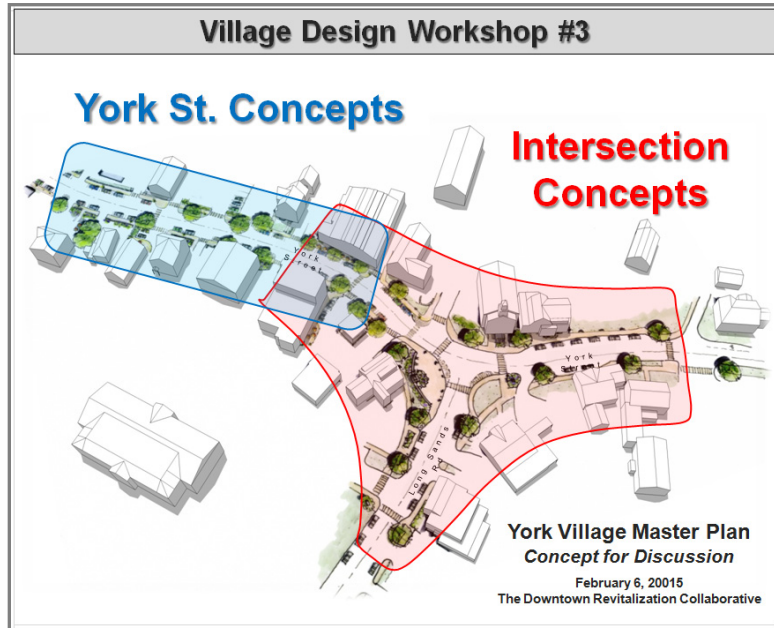
SUMMARY OBJECTIVES for YORK VILLAGE REVITALIZATION

- Create 21st century function along with cherished historic qualities.
- Balance competing pedestrian and vehicular needs.
- Foster economic prosperity.
- Put the "village" back in York Village.

Community Design Workshop #2, November 22, 2014



Community Design Workshop #3, February 7, 2015



Complete Streets Choices and Trade-offs
Designs that balance traffic, sidewalks, parking, bikes, lights and trees are called Complete Streets. How our village streets function and look today are the consequence of choices and trade-offs made a half century ago. Likewise, choices and trade-offs we make through our current Master Plan will set the stage through the next half century for our children and their children.

Complete Streets Choices & Trade-offs

Designs that balance traffic, sidewalks, parking, bikes, lights and trees are called Complete Streets.

How our village streets function and look today are the consequence of choices and trade-offs made a half century ago.

Likewise, choices and trade-offs we make through our current Master Plan will set the stage through the next half century for our children and their children.

1
15 min
Intersection Concepts ("Y" or "Tee")

- Which intersection concept are you most excited or concerned about? Why?
- Think qualitatively over the next half century, which concept makes choices and trade-offs/gains and sacrifices that strike the best balance between pedestrians, streetscape and vehicles? Why?
- Help inform the Master Plan - which is your Preferred Concept?

Summarize here. If more space is needed use pad.

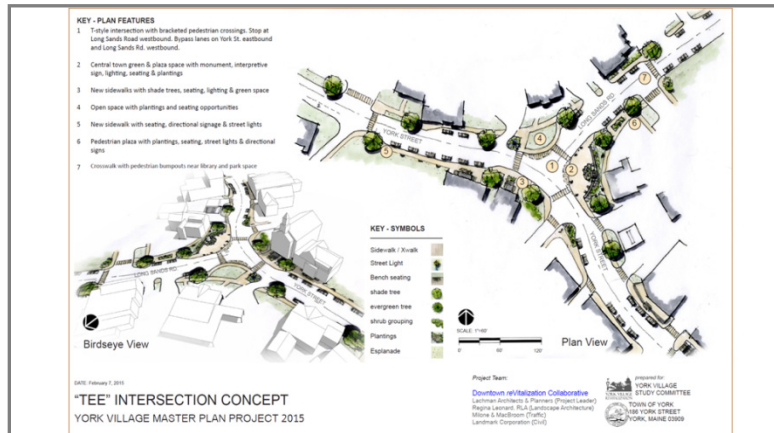
2
25 min
York Street Concepts (from Berger to Bagel)

- Think qualitatively over the next half century, what about the plan most excites or concerns you?
- Keeping Complete Streets Choices and Trade-offs in mind, do you think the plan strikes the best balance between pedestrians, streetscape and vehicles?
- If changes might improve the it, please so indicate on the plan:
 - sidewalks & crosswalks – use yellow color dots (yellow dot)
 - on-street & off street parking – use red color dots (red dot)
 - trees & green space – use green color dots (green dot)
 - benches/tables – use blue dots (blue dot)

Summarize here. If more space is needed use pad.

3
5 min
Wrap Up

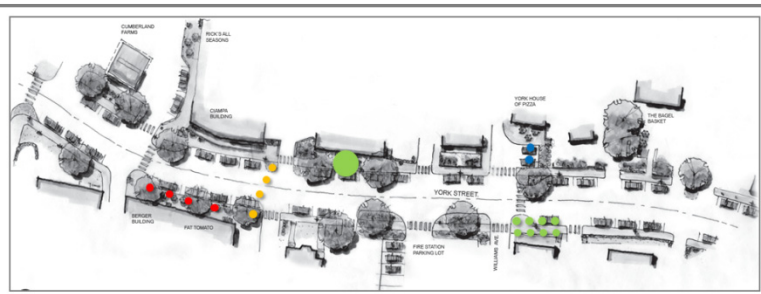
- Quick Straw Poll – Support the Town proceeding towards implementation? Yes, Undecided, No
- Select a Spokesperson (not the facilitator). Review and help prep for the presentation.
- Add group number and names & move back to meeting room – bring boards & easel!



1
15 min
Intersection Concepts ("Y" or "Tee")

- Which intersection concept are you most excited or concerned about? Why?
- Think qualitatively over the next half century, which concept makes choices and trade-offs/gains and sacrifices that strike the best balance between pedestrians, streetscape and vehicles? Why?
- Help inform the Master Plan - which is your Preferred Concept?

Summarize here. If more space is needed use pad.

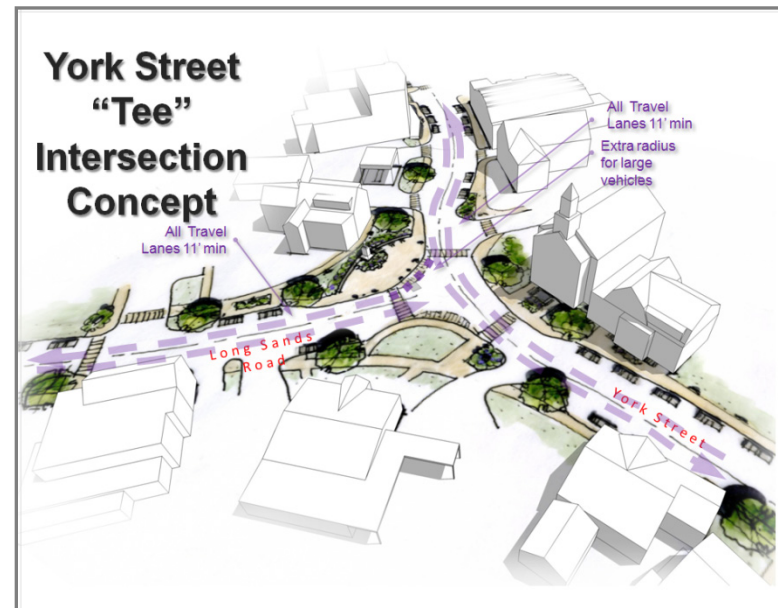
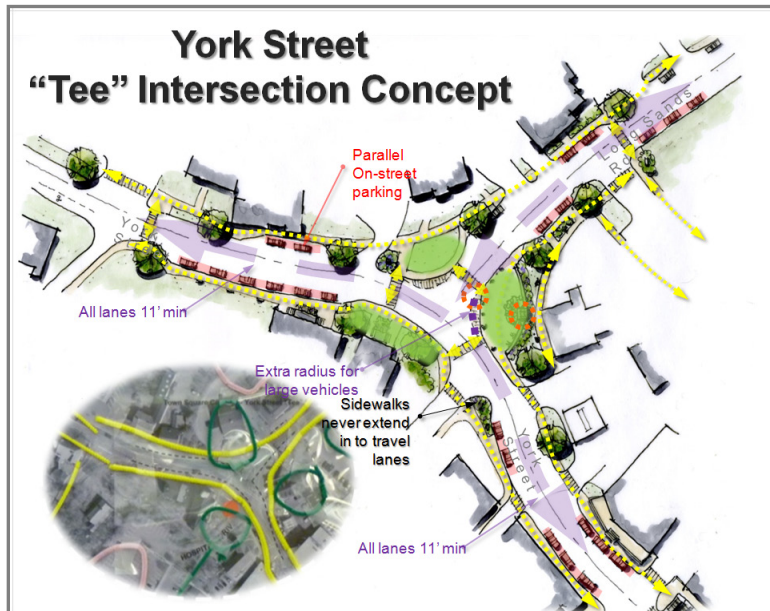
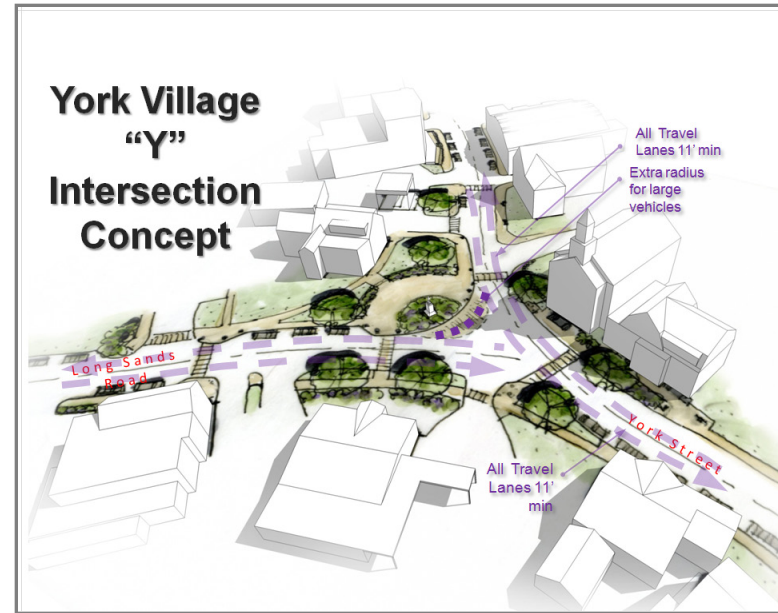
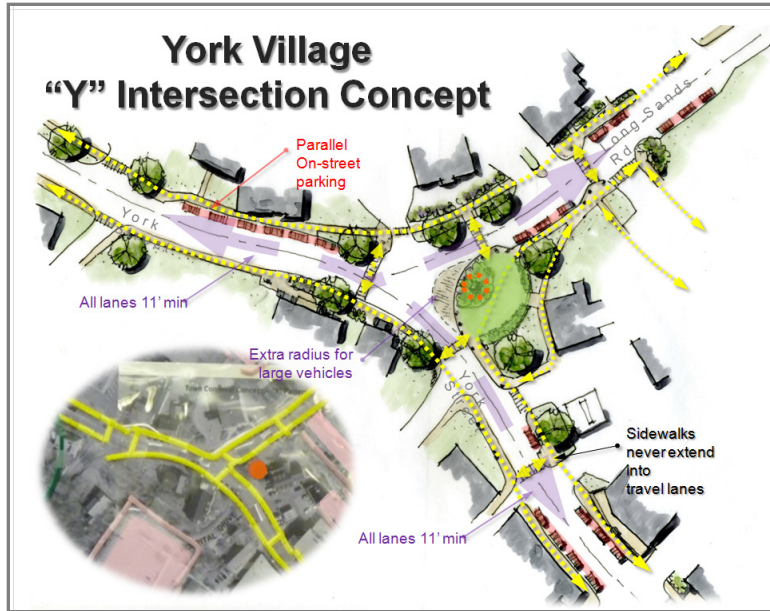


2
25 min
York Street Concepts (from Berger to Bagel)

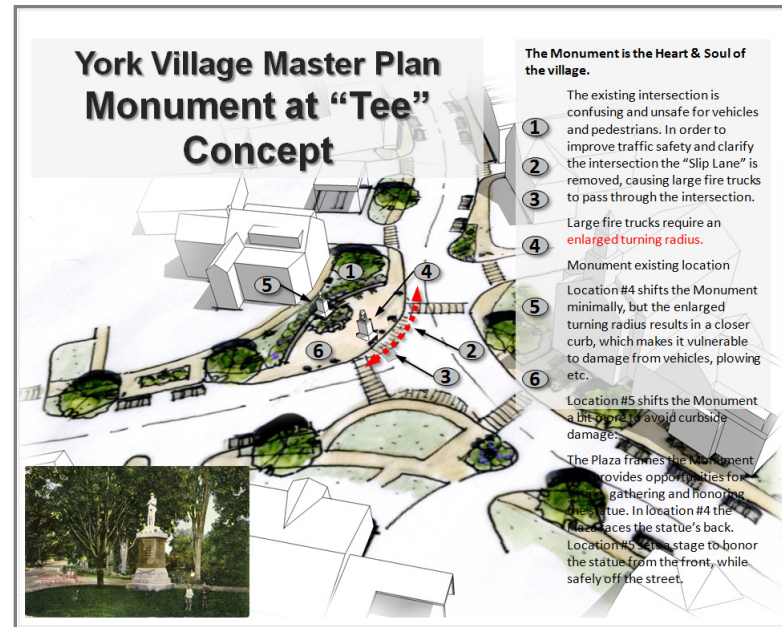
- Think qualitatively over the next half century, what about the plan most excites or concerns you?
- Keeping Complete Streets Choices and Trade-offs in mind, do you think the plan strikes the best balance between pedestrians, streetscape and vehicles?
- If changes might improve the it, please so indicate on the plan:
 - sidewalks & crosswalks – use yellow color dots (yellow dot)
 - on-street & off street parking – use red color dots (red dot)
 - trees & green space – use green color dots (green dot)
 - benches/tables – use blue dots (blue dot)

Summarize here. If more space is needed use pad.

Community Design Workshop #3, February 7, 2015



Community Design Workshop #3, February 7, 2015



Community Design Workshop #3, February 7, 2015

