

York Village Study Committee:
2015 Report

This has been the biggest year so far for the Village Study Committee (VSC). In August, following a competitive RFQ process, the Board of Selectmen authorized hiring the Downtown Revitalization Collaborative of Portland (TDRC) to partner with the VSC. They were chosen by the committee because of their commitment to public involvement in the design process and because of their diverse set of technical skills — urban planning and design, landscape architecture, civil and traffic engineering, and economics.

Building on VSC accomplishments of the previous three years, TDRC generated a series of alternatives to those originally imagined by the VSC. These alternatives were vetted in a series of design workshop events. Event #1 was held on October 4th to bring the public into the work of imagining a revitalized York village. This event attracted about 60 people. Event #2, held on November 22nd, attracted about 80 attendees. This workshop focused on a narrower range of alternatives for the major intersection in the village. Event #3 took place on February 7th, and saw more than 100 people in attendance. This time the focus was on street segments as well as on issues of public/private cooperation.

In addition, other outreach efforts were made. TDRC's Economist met one-on-one with dozens of business leaders and Village merchants. Other TDRC staff also met with various constituent groups from the Village and Beach Fire Departments to the American Legion. The Board of Selectmen were addressed either by the VSC or TDRC at various points along the way as well. To support these presentations written reports were provided. All documents from the past year (including minutes of all meetings) can be found at the VSC website: www.yorkvillage.org.

TDRC has worked hand-in-glove with the VSC for the last nine months. Most recently, an editing sub-committee has been at work to hone the Village Master Plan final report. This Master Plan will be available for distribution to the Board of Selectmen during the week of April 20th, and it is expected that a formal presentation will be made to the BOS on May 11th.

At that time, the VSC anticipates further encouragement from the BOS in the form of a request to forward the Village Master Plan to the Planning Board (PB), with an understanding that the PB will review the Plan, hold a public hearing, and recommend it for adoption within the Town's Comprehensive Plan. This recommendation is expected to be on the Town Meeting referendum in November, 2015. In advance of that formal recommendation to the voters, the Planning Board will be considering a number of changes to village Zoning and Design Standards which are recommended to support and be consistent with the Master Plan.

The VSC will be making a second request after the BOS has had a chance to digest the complete Master Plan documentation. This will be to request that the BOS approve release of additional funds to allow the TDRC contract to be amended. The current

contract ends with delivery of the Master Plan, but it has always been understood that two additional phases of the design work remain. These are the Schematic Design phase and the Construction Documents phase. Funds for this work would come from reserves already available to the Town, but no further work can be done without explicit consent from the BOS.

Stuart Dawson, Antonia DeSoto, Gloria Gustafson, Chris Hartwell, Joel Lefever, Dean Lessard, Jody Merrill, Robert Palmer, Dylan Smith, Peter Smith, Scott Stevens, Lew Stowe and Ron McAllister, Chair