



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

CONNECT THE JUNCTION

TOD PLAN FOR RESPONSIBLE GROWTH
CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION





OVERVIEW

The City of Essex Junction is beginning the process of creating a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) master plan that focuses on the City Center and Route 15 corridor. This project is part of the larger TOD project for the Northwest region of Vermont and is funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant program. This TOD effort plans for accessible and convenient public transportation services that will provide a viable alternative to automobile-dependent living for Vermonters, reduce household transportation costs, provide rural residents with job opportunities, support walkable town centers, and improve transit connections across the state.

Called "**Connect the Junction**," the TOD Master Plan for Essex Junction will look at land use and transportation strategies to improve walking, biking, and transit access in the Five Corners and Route 15 corridor, and to strengthen the community's access to diverse housing options, local businesses, and public space. With the goal of creating space for community members to engage in the planning process and provide input, this Community Engagement Plan outlines Framework's plan and timeline for outreach strategies.

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PROJECT SCHEDULE



FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups will be guided sessions that inform participants about the TOD Master Plan Project, review the Current Conditions Report, and invite feedback about opportunities and challenges in the project area. Framework will provide a slide deck to be used for in-person and remote meetings, and printable materials for in-person meetings. After these groups meet, they will be invited to continue to weigh in on the concepts put forth during the Community Design Charrette and on the draft master plan.

Developers Focus Group

Developers are an important stakeholder for this project, as they own buildings and properties and will likely implement future projects within the project area. Further, they may be able to provide contact information/connect the project team to owners of businesses within the project area for the Business Owners Focus Group.

Developers and Rental Management:

- Milot Real Estate
- Gabe Handy Rental Properties
- McEwing Properties LLC
- BlackRock Construction
- Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity
- 161 Cheeseman LLC
- Riverside by the Village
- Sisters and Brothers Investment Group
- Cathedral Square

Meetings:

- City and consultant staff will meet with each of the above developers individually.
- Focus groups will review map of redevelopable parcels, talk through projects, and discuss potential projects and impacts.
- These meetings will likely happen remotely via Teams or Zoom.

Business Owners Focus Group

Business owners will be impacted by this plan. Initially, project construction will put a strain on businesses in the area, while improvements to streetscape and resulting walkability have the potential to increase local customer bases and commerce in the area in the long term. Having business owners involved in this process can help to garner their support for these improvements, and their feedback will inform choices made about land use designations and the design of streetscape and public spaces.

Contacting business owners will happen in the following ways:

- Consultant team will create a sheet of existing businesses in project area.
- Project team will send a letter to businesses, inviting them to participate in a focus group and follow up via phone or email.
- Developers may provide contact information for some businesses/individuals, whom the project team can reach out to for further recruitment for this focus group.

Meetings:

- This focus group will meet together for one to two meetings, depending on the availability of participants.
- These meetings will likely happen in person.

Community Organizations Focus Group

This project will impact housing, transportation, and public space in the City of Essex Junction and neighboring communities. Housing organizations, cyclists, urbanists, and sustainability leaders are thus important voices to include in this discussion. There are several active groups that may be interested in providing initial input.

Potential Representatives:

- **Chittenden County Homeless Alliance**
- **Champlain Housing Trust**
- **VPOP:** Grassroots organization advocating for more livable, lively, and resilient cities in Vermont.
- Essex Junction's **Tree Advisory Committee**
- **Local Motion:** Vermont's statewide advocate for active transportation, vibrant communities, and safe streets
- Essex Junction's **Bike/Walk Advisory Committee**
- **Aunt Dot's Place**

Meetings:

- This focus group can meet as one contingent, or divided in two groups by interest, for a total of 1-2 meeting(s) either in person or remotely.

Student Focus Group

It's important to include the voices of young people in discussions about how housing, transportation, and public space will evolve in their cities. There are several student groups who may be interested in participating in a focus group.

Potential Student Groups:

- Essex High School **Social Justice Union**
- Essex High School **Environmental Club**
- Essex High School **One Heart Club**
- **Center for Technology, Essex** (CTE) housing in the City class
- Essex Teen Center (CHIPS)

Meetings:

- This focus group can meet as one contingent, for a total of 1 meeting either in person or remotely. Group will meet once school is back in session.

Public Space and Facilities Stakeholders Focus Group

This project study area contains several Capital Facilities buildings, public and recreation spacers, and may affect how these sites are accessed. Further, the addition of new public spaces within the area could necessitate additional management responsibilities for the Parks Department. Understanding the needs of these entities and others can help guide how this Master Plan envisions new public spaces, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and amenities.

Potential Representatives:

- **Essex Junction Recreation and Parks department** (EJRP)
- **Brownell Library**
- **Green Mountain Transit** (GMT)
- **Champlain Valley Exposition**

Meetings:

- This group can meet as one contingent, for a total of 1 meeting either in person or remotely.

COMMUNITY DESIGN CHARRETTE

The community design charrette will be a dynamic, four-day workshop held in Essex Junction in collaboration with the City and community. Community members will have opportunities across four days to actively engage with the project and collaborate with the project team, on-site and in-person. The purpose of the charrette is to share the results of the current conditions analysis and report, provide additional information and background on the project, and generate initial input from the community about challenges and opportunities in the study area. There will also be a working session for the planning and design team to develop concepts and report back to the community for input. The program for the charrette will likely including the following, subject to input from the City.

Location:

The Robert E. Miller Expo Centre - Conference Rooms A & B
and other centrally-located outdoor locations

Schedule:

Day 1 (Friday 10/04):

Evening: Kick-off presentation and open time to look at boards and provide feedback.

Day 2 (Saturday 10/05):

Early afternoon: Design activity/workshop

Afternoon: Site walk

Day 3 (Sunday 10/06):

Afternoon: Open studio hours - people are encouraged to come by at any time to look at project boards, chat with project team, and provide feedback on boards.

Day 4 (Monday 10/07):

Early afternoon: Open studio hours

Day 5 (Tuesday 10/08):

Morning: Charrette debrief with City staff

Late Morning/Early afternoon: Potential focus groups and meetings with key stakeholders.



What is a Design Charrette?

A design charrette is a collaborative meeting that often includes people from different disciplines, entities, or stakeholder groups. The goal is to bring people together to work towards a design solution. Design charrettes can entail a variety of exercises aimed at generating ideas and working together to create design solutions that achieve project goals.

Recruitment:

The Community Design Charrette will be posted to the project website, where participants can register for the event. This link will be distributed widely, including in the following ways:

- **Send to Focus Group participants** as well as organizations who were invited but unable to participate.
- Announce on **Junction City News**.
- Post on Front Porch, City's Facebook page, and the unofficial city Facebook page.
- **Post fliers** at locations such as Brownell Library, Maple Street Recreation Center, the Senior Center, schools, and churches in the area.

- **Send out with August tax mailer.**
- **Bar coasters** directing people to the website
- **Banner** at 2 Lincoln

Deliverables:

- Charrette program
- Charrette boards, design exercise, and engagement materials
- Charrette summary presentation
- Draft project vision and goals
- Charrette summary including community input and feedback
- Focus group discussion guides and summaries

PROJECT WEBSITE

Framework will design a website using Wix, which will be used as a tool for keeping the public informed about the project goals and timeline, events, and opportunities to weigh in on the design.

Website Name: ConnecttheJunction.org

Website Content:

- Project goals + timeline
- Project map
- Current conditions
- Project contact information (email address)
- Community Design Charrette information and registration
- Link to Konveio, a user-friendly online engagement tool for collecting public comment

JUNCTION CITY NEWS

The City will devote the August 26th episode of Junction City News to this project. Chris Yuen (City of Essex Junction) will present the project scope and goals, and advertise the upcoming Community Design Charrette. Jeff Arango (Framework) will join remotely and demonstrate the project website, showing the audience how they can register for the upcoming charrette.



Example of project website created by Framework

A Comprehensive Plan is an official city document that highlights the goals of a city based on its current and projected community identity.

The City of Airway Heights is updating its Comprehensive Plan and extending the planning horizon by another five years, to 2042. As part of the periodic update required by 2026, the City will include updated growth allocations for population and employment from Spokane County. This 2023 update include land use alternatives and zoning changes, and also prepare the City to participate in the County planning process for allocating growth to Airway Heights in the next periodic update.

Plan Vision & 10 Big Ideas

The Plan Vision serves as a guiding statement that reflects the aspirations of the community and directs updates to the Comprehensive Plan. The updated vision statement is informed by community input, the "10 big ideas," and best practices. The vision statement is connected to the plan's priorities, specific goals, policies, strategies, and actions within the plan elements.

[Read More >](#)



Example of project website created by Framework

APPENDIX: FOCUS GROUPS

FOCUS GROUP		MEETING PLAN	# OF MEETINGS
1	Developers and Rental Management	individual meetings	TBD (remote)
2	Business Owners	full or partial groups	1-2 (in person)
3	Community Organizations	one full group, or partial divided by group interests	1-2 (in person or remote)
4	Students	one full group	1 (in person or remote)
5	Public Space and Facilities Stakeholders	one full group	1-2 (in person or remote)

APPENDIX: DETAILED SCHEDULE

DATE	STRATEGY/EVENT	SUMMARY
Aug 1	Planning Commission Meeting	Framework to provide slide deck and conduct presentation focused on Public Engagement Plan and Current Conditions Report.
Aug 6	Website launch	Framework to design website and update as needed.
Aug 6	National Night out	Framework to provide design for informative board, post cards advertising the Community Design Charrette
Aug 11	Begin focus group outreach	Framework to reach out to potential participants, create slide deck, and schedule meetings.
Aug 26	Bar coasters	Framework to provide design for coasters, order product, and reach out to businesses. City to distribute coasters.
Aug 26	Segment on Junction City News	Framework will prepare a script and slide deck for this segment. Regina, Chris, Ashley, and Jeff will present.
Sep 15 -19	Banner posted at 2 Licoln	Framework to provide banner design. City to coordinate printing and displaying the banner.
Oct 4-8	Community Design Charrette	Framework to provide slide deck and board layouts. City to print boards for display.
Nov 7	Planning Commission Meeting	Framework to provide slide deck and conduct presentation focused on reporting back from focus groups and design charrette.
January	Master plan concepts posted on Konveio for public feedback	Framework to prepare master plan concepts, post on Konveio, and direct people to provide feedback through ConnecttheJunction.org.
Feb 12	Planning Commission Meeting	Framework to provide slide deck and conduct presentation for final adoption of plan.

APPENDIX: STYLE GUIDE

COLORS

Primary



R: 35 G: 74 B: 89
C: 61 M: 17 Y: 0 K: 65



R: 115 G: 166 B: 91
C: 31 M: 0 Y: 45 K: 35



R: 248 G: 237 B: 117
C: 5 M: 1 Y: 67 K: 0



R: 204 G: 246 B: 243
C: 17 M: 0 Y: 1 K: 4



R: 212 G: 65 B: 104
C: 13 M: 89 Y: 43 K: 1

Secondary



R: 115 G: 72 B: 112
C: 0 M: 37 Y: 3 K: 55



R: 55 G: 116 B: 140
C: 61 M: 17 Y: 0 K: 45



R: 248 G: 249 B: 239
C: 2 M: 0 Y: 6 K: 0



R: 175 G: 154 B: 137
C: 33 M: 37 Y: 45 K: 1



R: 198 G: 213 B: 111
C: 7 M: 0 Y: 48 K: 16



R: 156 G: 98 B: 147
C: 0 M: 37 Y: 6 K: 39



R: 184 G: 185 B: 187
C: 28 M: 22 Y: 21 K: 0



R: 117 G: 117 B: 117
C: 55 M: 47 Y: 46 K: 12

FONTS

**H1: BITTER BOLD 28 PT;
BLACK TINT 95%**

H2: Bitter Bold; 17pt, Tracking 10

H3: Early Sans Variable Regular; 15 pt, Tracking 10;
Black Tint 95%

H4: Early Sans Variable Medium; 12 pt, Tracking 10; Black Tint 95%

Body Text: Early Sans Variable Light; 12 pt; Black Tint 95%

APPENDIX: LOGO

