

Staff Report

To: Development Review Board
From: Michael Giguere, City Planner
Date: April 17th, 2025
Subject: Site plan review for a pocket park at 1 Main Street by the City of Essex Junction, owner.
File: SP# 4.2025

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The City is proposing the construction of a public pocket park named “Gabriel G. Handy and Diane L. Handy Park” at 1 Main Street. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2025 and be completed by 2026, funded using a State of Vermont Downtown Transportation Fund grant. The project aims to provide shade using shade sails during summer months and add delineation from surrounding areas using upgraded planter boxes, paint, and signage. The project also aims to maintain flexibility for integration into potential expanded pedestrianized space on Main Street in the future, as envisioned in the Design Five Corners plan and the Connect the Junction Transit Oriented Development master plan.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND GENERAL INFORMATION

Project Location: 1 Main Street, Essex Junction, VT 05452

Project Area Size: 3,050 square feet

Lot Frontage: 171 feet

Existing Land Use: Vacant lot

Surrounding Land Use: Mixed-Use (residential and commercial)

Zoning District: Village Center

Minimum Lot Size: 5000 square feet

Existing Lot Coverage: 100%

Proposed Lot Coverage: 100%

Lot Coverage Maximum: *“The maximum total lot coverage shall be determined by the Development Review Board as a part of Site Plan Review”*

SECTION 604: VILLAGE CENTER (VC)

A. Purpose

“To provide a compact commercial center having a mix of commercial, governmental, cultural and mixed use buildings that are consistent with the purpose of a designated Village Center District, and a neighborhood development area as both are defined by the State of Vermont. The Village Center shall be the core for an ongoing revitalization that will improve the community’s vitality and livability and the goal of having a Center that accommodates growth. Due to the historic nature of the residential

neighborhoods surrounding the Five Corners area, the design and layout of any new developments or infill projects shall acknowledge the importance of the existing streetscape and enhance the area through an architectural design and site layout that enhances pedestrian connectivity to adjacent properties.”

B. Lot Size/Lot Coverage

The existing lot size of square feet of 3,050 square feet is an existing non-conformity below the minimum district lot size requirement of 5,000 square feet. This was approved as a part of the property transfer and boundary line adjustment completed in 2020.

Lot coverage maximums in the Village Center district are determined by the DRB. No lot coverage change is proposed by the applicant from the current coverage of 100%.

Staff recommend that the DRB approve the proposed lot coverage of 100%.

C. Setback Requirements

The LDC provides guidance on setbacks for commercial and residential buildings in the VC district but does not provide specific guidance on setback requirements for parks.

The DRB should confirm the applicability of evaluating this site plan application as a commercial or mixed-use building with no setback requirement.

D. Permitted and Conditional Uses

“Recreation Use, Low-Intensity” is a permitted use in the VC district.

E. Design Review and Historic Preservation

The DRB is authorized to undertake a special design review of proposed developments in the Village Center that propose exterior alterations as a part of their site plan review. The DRB may require additional information and documentation as it deems necessary to assist in this process.

The applicant is offering direct pedestrian access to the sidewalk and a pocket park, fulfilling the two site feature requirements of Section 604.E.4.a.v.

The DRB should evaluate the proposed development using the Design Review Standards outlined in Section 604.E.4.a of the LDC.

F. Parking

There is no minimum parking requirement established for the Village Center. No parking is proposed as a part of this development.

Ten (10) short-term bicycle parking spaces are proposed for this application, which meets the minimum requirement of four (4).

H. Building Height

“...building heights shall not exceed four (4) stories or fifty-eight (58) feet, whichever is less.”

The light poles are the tallest proposed structures in the park at thirteen (13) feet tall, which meets district height requirements.

SECTION 704: LIGHTING

A. Purpose

“To provide appropriate outdoor lighting adjacent to buildings, streets, sidewalks, and within parking areas for public safety and to minimize glare on streets and adjoining properties while minimizing energy use through the use of efficient fixtures and minimizing the use of lighting during non-business hours or when activity is not occurring on-site.”

The applicant’s submitted lighting plan proposes two new light fixtures mounted at the top of two of the thirteen (13) foot sun shade poles, above the sun shade sails. At night, this will illuminate and filter through the sails, and the light fixtures are proposed to be put on an automatic on/off timer. Due to the orientation of the sails, the number of tall poles and light fixtures may increase to three (3) total.

The DRB should discuss the proposed lighting plan to confirm the design intention and impact on the surrounding area.

SECTION 718: PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

G. Visual Impact

“The Development Review Board may review visual impact of any proposed development located in any Commercial or Industrial District. The Development Review Board may place conditions on any approval or may require the alteration or relocation of any proposed structure which in its opinion would significantly alter the existing character of the area.”

Like the Design Review Standards of Section 604.E, Section 718.G provides additional context and criteria to ensure that development proposals are well-integrated into the surrounding community.

The DRB should discuss whether the proposed application meets the standards of visual impact listed in Section 718.G.

SECTION 719: LANDSCAPE AND TREE PLANTING REQUIREMENTS

This project proposes the future addition of a street tree supported by underground silva cell infrastructure if additional funding becomes available. This tree will not be included in the initial phase of the project.

Conceptual Site Plan Recommendations:

Staff recommend the Development Review Board approve the proposed site plan application pending a determination of the following items:

- The Development Review Board should confirm the proposed 100% lot coverage limit for this application.
- The DRB should determine the applicability of evaluating this site plan application as a commercial or mixed-use building with no setback requirement.
- The Development Review Board should evaluate the proposed development using the Design Review Standards outlined in Section 604.E.4.a.
- The Development Review Board should determine if the proposed lighting plan meets the requirements of Section 704.
- The Development Review Board should determine whether the proposed application meets the standards of visual impact in Section 718.G.

Recommended Motion:

I move that the DRB approve the site plan application for a pocket park at 1 Main Street by the City of Essex Junction, owner.

City of Essex Junction, VT
Development Application

For Office Use:

Permit # 4-2025

Planned Unit Development: Scale: ☐ Minor ☐ Major Stage: ☐ Conceptual ☐ Preliminary (optional) ☐ Final

Site Plan: Scale: ☒ Minor ☐ Major Stage: ☐ Conceptual ☐ Preliminary (optional) ☐ Final

Subdivision: Type: ☐ Sketch ☐ Preliminary Other: ☐ Variance ☐ Conditional Use

Property description (address) for application
1 Main Street Park

General Information

Applicant City of Essex Junction Day Phone# 802-878-6944
Address 2 Lincoln St, Essex Junction 05452
Email Address cyuen@essexjunction.org

Owner of Record (attach affidavit if not applicant)

Name _____ Day Phone# _____
Address _____

Applicant's agents

Name David Burton, Ginkgo Design Day Phone# 802-338-8604
Address P.O. Box 358 Underhill, VT 05489

Property information

Zoning District VC Current Use Empty Lot Tax Map # 29
Lot # 47-99 Lot size sf 3,050

Other Information

Street frontage (public or private) 171 ft. Proposed height 13' highest pole
Proposed number of stories 0 Estimated completion date 1-Nov-2026
Proposed Parking Spaces 0 Required spaces 0
Landscape cost \$160,200

Lot coverage (include all structures and impervious surface)

Existing (sq ft.) 3,050 plus proposed (sq .ft.) 0 equals 3,050 total sq .ft.
Divided by 3,050 lot sq.ft. equals 100 percent of lot coverage.

Submit one (1) full size copies, a PDF copy, GIS and supporting documentation required by the Code and the appropriate completed checklist for initial review by Staff. After Staff determines the application is complete, attach one (1) full size copies and six (6) 18" x 24" copies of your proposal, forty-five (45) days prior to a scheduled meeting. Applications that are not complete cannot be accepted for review.



Briefly describe your proposal (attach separate sheet if necessary)

The City proposes to install a pocket park at the corner of Main and Maple Street, facing the Five Corners intersection and in front of the Firebird Cafe using a State of Vermont Downtown Transportation Fund grant. The proposed park includes prominent features such as seasonally installed shade sails, new planter boxes, signage, lighting, bike racks, seating and tables.

Describe all waiver requests (if applicable)

I certify that the information on this application is true and correct. I agree to abide by all the rules and regulations as specified in the land development code and any conditions placed upon approval of this application. In accordance with the *Essex Junction City Council Policy for Funding Engineer Plan Review and Inspections*, the applicant, by signing this form agrees to pay for the actual cost of engineering plan review and construction inspections by the City Engineer.

Kegina Mahony
Applicant

4/10/25
Date

Land Owner (if different)

Date

RECEIVED

Staff Action

MAR 26 2025

Date received: City of Essex Junction

Meeting date: 4/17/25

Board Action Approved _____ Denied _____

Date: _____

Other approvals/conditions: _____

****Fee based on sq.ft. of improved area per current Fee Schedule**

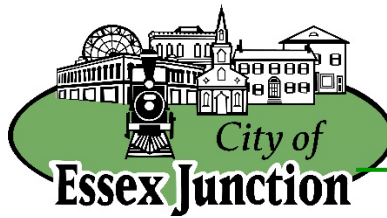
Staff Signature

Date

Fee Amount: **
Fee Waived
Kegina Mahony

Fee Verified:





March 26, 2025

Dear Michael Giguere,

The City of Essex Junction proposes constructing a pocket park at 1 Main Street Park using a State of Vermont Downtown Transportation Fund grant. The park will include prominent features such as seasonally installed shade sails, new planter boxes, signage, lighting, bike racks, seating, and tables. The project also proposes the future addition of a street tree supported by underground silva cell infrastructure, if additional funding becomes available. This tree will not be included in the initial phase of the project.

The project aims to:

- Provide shade using shade sails during summer months,
- Add some delineation from the surrounding areas with features such as upgraded planter boxes, paint and signage,
- Maintain flexibility for integrating the park into an expanded pedestrianized space on Main Street in the future, as envisioned in the Design Five Corners plan and the Connect the Junction Transit Oriented Development master plan.

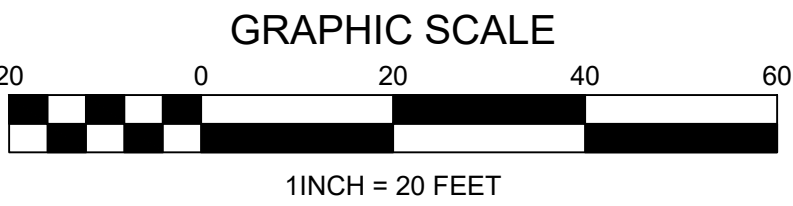
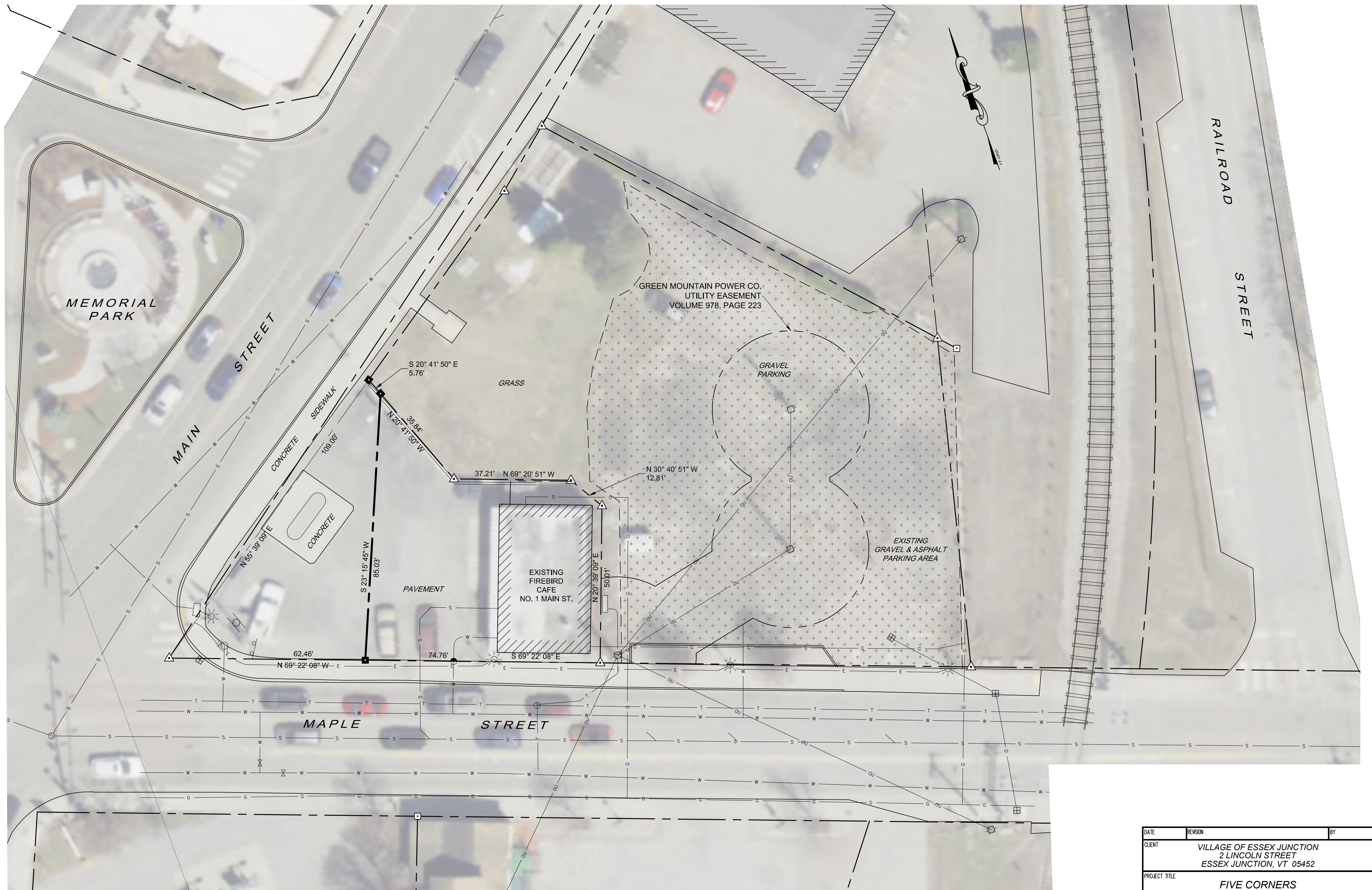
The project is located over a portion of a former automotive service station where soil sampling has revealed the presence of contaminants at several locations. To minimize the need for soil remediation while meeting the the Department of Environmental Conservation's requirements for inclusion in the Brownfields Reuse and Environmental Liability Limitation Program (BRELLA), the project proposes to maintain the existing paved surface and to resurface only the top layer of asphalt as needed. Excavation will be limited to the location of the shade sail mounting poles, which will also serve as the mounting points for new light fixtures. If additional funding for the proposed shade tree becomes available, some additional excavation for the installation of underground silva cell infrastructure may be required.

We anticipate that this project will begin construction in 2025 and be completed in 2026. Please find attached the project's site plan and lighting plan and please let me or the City's consultant, David Burton know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

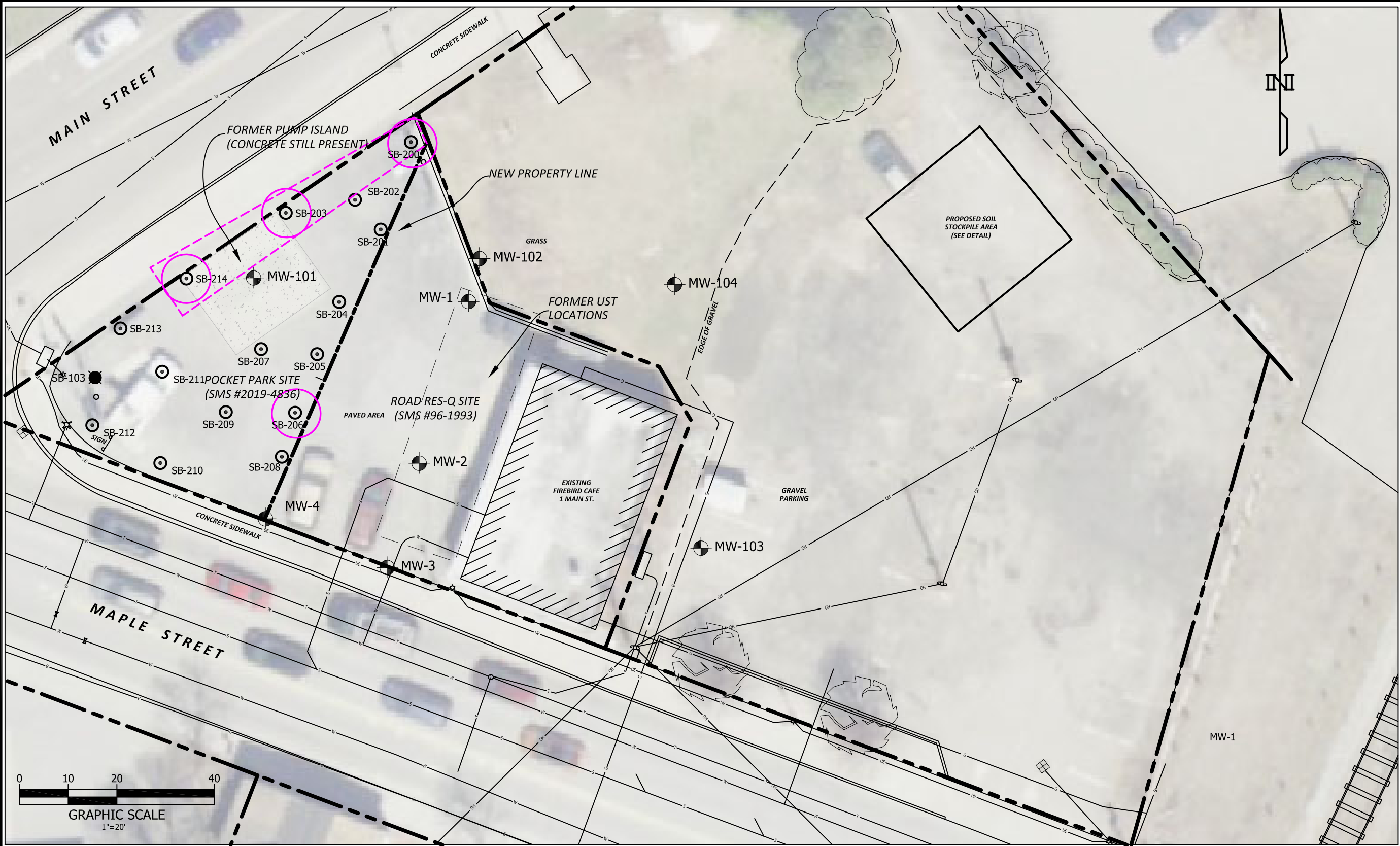
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Yuen".

Christopher Yuen
Community Development Director
City of Essex Junction



DATE	REVISION	BY
CLIENT	VILLAGE OF ESSEX JUNCTION 2 LINCOLN STREET ESSEX JUNCTION, VT 05452	
PROJECT TITLE	FIVE CORNERS BOUNDARY LINE ADJUSTMENT	
DRAWING TITLE	EXISTING CONDITIONS BASE PLAN	
Survey	DLHCE	Scale 1" = 20'
Design	---	Job 19-801
Drawn	BFD/MLD/JPK	File
Checked		Drawing
Date	05/22/2020	1

Donald L. Hamlin
Consulting
Engineers, Inc.
136 Pearl Street
Essex Junction, Vermont



NOTES: BASEMAP IS PLAN BY DONALD L. HAMLIN CONSULTING ENGINEERS ENTITLED "EXISTING CONDITIONS BASE PLAN, FIVE CORNERS BOUNDARY LINE ADJUSTMENT, MAY 2020. ADDITIONAL FEATURES HAVE BEEN ADDED BASED ON FIELD INSPECTION AND RESEARCH BY WHM.

- EXISTING PROPERTY LINE
- WATER LINE
- SEWER LINE
- GAS LINE
- UNDERGROUND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

- UNDERGROUND ELECTRIC
- OVERHEAD ELECTRIC
- SEWER MANHOLE
- TELECOMMUNICATIONS MANHOLE
- LIGHT POLE

LEGEND

- UTILITY POLE
- CATCH BASIN
- HYDRANT

- MW-1 ROAD RES-Q MONITORING WELL
- SB-103 ROAD RES-Q SOIL BORING
- SB-213 1 MAIN ST PARK SOIL BORING
- PAHs IN SHALLOW SOIL - CONCENTRATION EXCEEDS URBAN BACKGROUND

Waite - Heindel
Environmental Management

• Hydrogeology • Water & Wastewater Design •
• Environmental Services •

Burlington, Vermont • (802) 860-9400
www.waiteenv.com

DATE: 9/09/2022

PROJECT NO. 2019-9

DRAWN BY: S.S./M.W.

PROJ. MGR: S.C.

APPROVED: M.W.

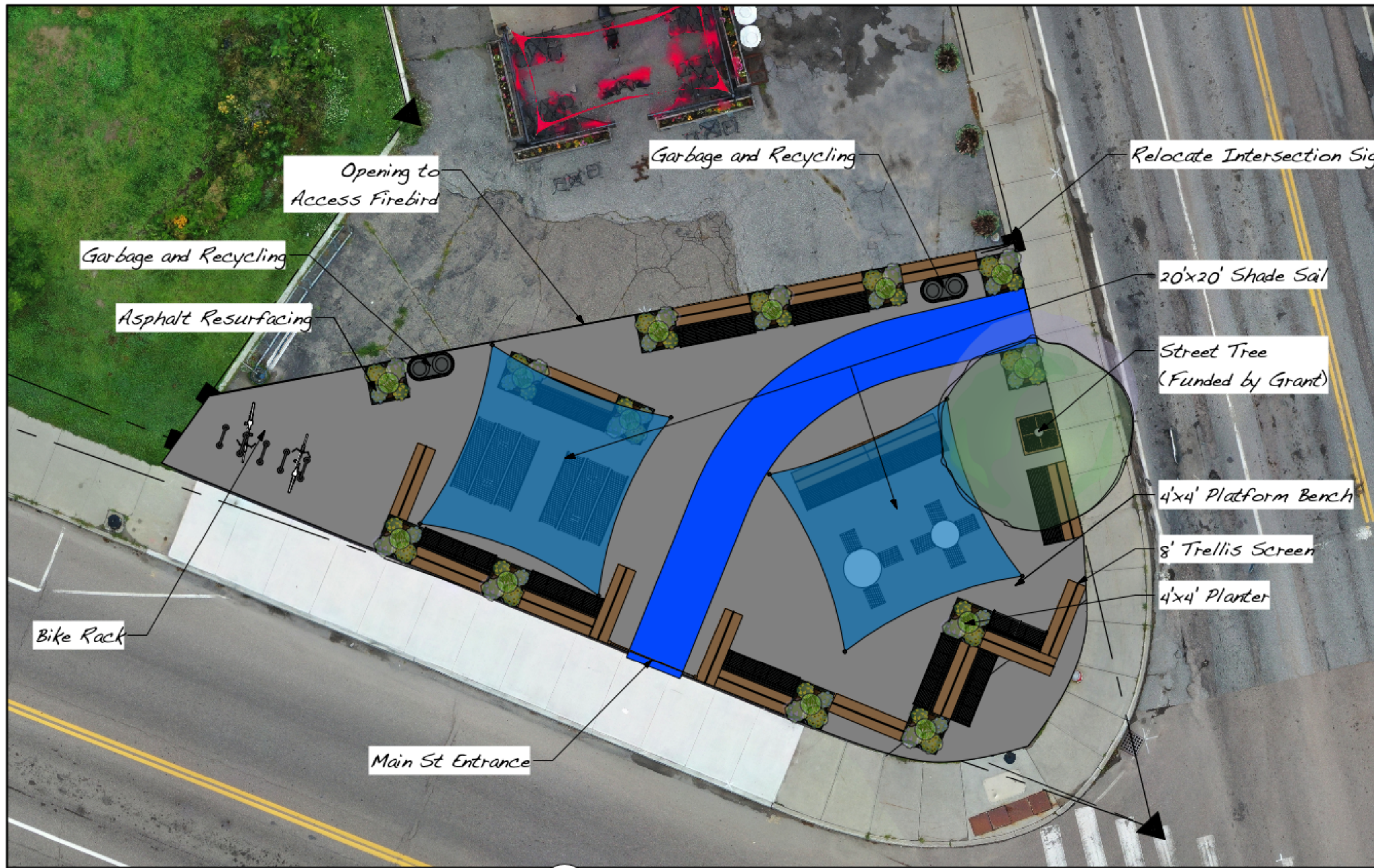
☒ DRAFT ☐ FINAL

1 MAIN STREET PARK / ROAD RES-Q
MAIN & MAPLE STREETS, ESSEX JCT. VT

SITE PLAN

FILE: POCKET PARK.DWG

SCALE: 1" = 20'



1 Pocket Park Plan View
Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"



2 Five Corners Perspective
Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"



4 Maple St. Perspective
Scale: 1" = 10'-0"



3 Main St. Perspective
Scale: 1" = 10'-0"



5 Firebird Perspective
Scale: 1" = 10'-0"

Designed By	David Burton
Drawn By	David
Checked By	David
Date	10/11/24
Revision	

GINKGO DESIGN, LLC
PO BOX 358
UNDERHILL, VT 05489

GINKGO DESIGN
Smart Landscape Solutions

Project Title	One Main - City Park
Location	1 Main St. Essex Jct, VT 05452
Sheet Title	Conceptual Design
Scale	Sheet Scale
Sheet No.	L-01 of 1

Shade Sail Post Height



Main Street Park Budget 10.11.24

Qty	Description	Price	Extension
1	Soil Remediation	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
1	Paving sqft	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00
1	Lighting	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
2	Shade Sail	\$12,600.00	\$25,200.00
10	Footings	\$1,000.00	\$10,000.00
5	Bike Rack	\$300.00	\$1,500.00
10	48"x48" Planters	\$3,000.00	\$30,000.00
15	Screens	\$3,500.00	\$52,500.00
12	Benches	\$1,500.00	\$18,000.00
2	Picnic Tables	\$3,000.00	\$6,000.00
2	Carousel Tables	\$2,000.00	\$4,000.00
1	Entry Sign	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
		Sub Total	\$195,200.00
	General Conditions 10%		\$19,520.00
	Project Management 10%		\$19,520.00
1	Design Fee	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
		Estimated Budget	\$239,240.00
		Budget	\$240,000.00
		Remaining	\$760.00

Notes:

This budget was drafted by David Burton, Ginkgo Design, and is associated with amended park plans submitted to the City on October 11, 2024. The tree near Maple Street is not included in the budget as it is contingent on the results of a Vermont Urban and & Community Forestry Program Community Tree Planting Grant (CTPG) application, to be submitted in January 2025. Highlighted elements have been considered as a part of the Landscaping Budget.