



**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
PLANNING COMMISSION, DEVELOPMENT REVIEW
BOARD & CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA**

Online & 2 Lincoln St.
Essex Junction, VT 05452
Thursday, November 6th, 2025
6:30 PM

E-mail: cyuen@essexjunction.org

www.essexjunction.org

Phone: 802-878-6944, ext. 1607

This meeting will be held in-person at 2 Lincoln St and remotely. To participate remotely:

- **JOIN ONLINE:** [Join Zoom Meeting](#)
- **JOIN CALLING:** (toll free audio only): (888) 788-0099 | Meeting ID: 953 1240 7791; Passcode: 040339

1. **CALL TO ORDER** [6:30 PM]
2. **AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES**
3. **PUBLIC TO BE HEARD**
 - a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda
4. **MINUTES**
 - a. September 4th, 2025
5. **BUSINESS ITEMS**
 - a. Discussion and Consideration of Connect the Junction Transit Oriented Development Master Plan* [6:33 PM]
 - b. Introduction of 802 Homes / Homes for All Phase project* [7:30 PM]
6. **MEMBERS UPDATES** [7:40 PM]
7. **STAFF UPDATES** [7:45 PM]
8. **ADJOURN** [8:06 PM]

*attachments included in the packet

Agenda item timestamps are estimates of the starting time of each topic and are subject to change.

This agenda is available in alternative formats upon request. Meetings of the Planning Commission, like all programs and activities of the City of Essex Junction, are accessible to people with disabilities. For information on accessibility or this agenda, call the City Manager's office at 802-878-6944 TTY: 7-1-1 or (800) 253-0191.

**CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION
PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES OF MEETING
OCTOBER 2, 2025
DRAFT**

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Elijah Massey, Chair; Diane Clemens, Vice-Chair; Elena Juodisius; Finn Hamilton (non-voting); Scott McCormick; Kirstie Paschall
ADMINISTRATION: Chris Yuen, Community Development Director
OTHERS PRESENT: None

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Massey called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

None.

3. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

a. Comments from Public on Items Not on Agenda

None.

4. MINUTES

a. September 4, 2025

DIANE CLEMENS made a motion to approve the minutes of minutes, seconded by **SCOTT MCCORMICK** of September 4, 2025. Motion passed 5-0.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Update on Connect the Junction project public engagement and next steps

Mr. Yuen said that in-person and online participation has been occurring throughout the summer. Last Saturday was the in-person open house. Online participation was not as strong as in-person, which may have been due to the fact that the original version of the online open house was not mobile-friendly. The online open house will be available for an additional two weeks. The Planning Commission (PC) plans to hold an additional in-person opportunity on October 11th at the Meet Me on Main event. Clear direction from the City Council needs to be given regarding building heights to finalize this project. A joint meeting is proposed on November 6th for this purpose. The PC discussed public opinion on the issue and if additional outreach would be required. Building heights would need to be included in updates to the Land Development Code, which would require additional public input prior to final implementation. Essex Junction will be reviewing housing targets and determine when these could be reasonably reached when specific adjustments are made to the LDC. Ms. Clemens said that building heights should be discussed individually as the PC prior to making a recommendation. Mr. Yuen said that a recommendation could be given by the PC at a later date if they are not ready to make a recommendation immediately.

b. Review and Consideration of draft RFP for 2027 Comprehensive Plan Update

Mr. Yuen said that the first draft of the Request for Proposals (RFP) is included in the packet. The plan expires in August of 2027, and a municipal planning grant needs to be spent by April of 2027. Mr. McCormick said that he would send additional comments to Mr. Yuen via e-mail and encouraged this

document to be user-friendly and applicable. He said that it should have action items rather than general goals. Mr. Yuen said that Comprehensive Plans can be very large projects and noted the \$40,000 budget for this project. Mr. McCormick encouraged the plan to be condensed and to only include applicable items.

c. Introduction of Housing Infill project collaboration with Burlington, South Burlington and Winooski and 802 Homes – Phase 3 of Homes for All

Mr. Yuen said that Essex Junction is in talks with South Burlington and Winooski to collaborate on an initiative on infill housing. Workshops will be rotated between the municipalities, as each one has slightly different regulations. This will also allow for additional speakers and other opportunities. This project will require volunteer and other engagement opportunities for the PC. Mr. McCormick discussed the staggering costs of construction in Vermont. Mr. Yuen said that Essex Junction has been shortlisted for a grant through the 802 Homes Initiative.

d. Update on mural grant

Mr. Massey said that the local review committee had their first meeting this afternoon. The committee reviewed the work plan and will move forward on the initial solicitation on thematic input, which will target young people and students. The community will be able to weigh in on artist and design selection prior to the development of the final work plan. The project report is due at the end of September 2026, and it is solely a design grant. Mr. Yuen requested that local match information for the second round of the grant be made available as soon as possible.

6. MEMBERS UPDATES

Ms. Clemens said that Williston's Comprehensive Plan took two years to approve and highlighted recent news articles related to housing. She discussed the work of the Essex Energy Committee in engaging the community.

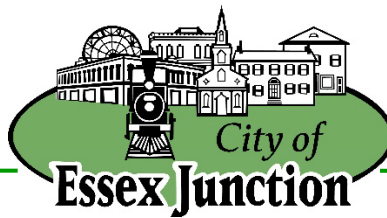
7. STAFF UPDATES

Mr. Yuen said that the consultants are working on a draft report on the Pearl Street multi-modal improvements project and plan on presenting to the City Council on November 12th. Municipal Day will be on October 17th.

8. ADJOURNMENT

SCOTT MCCORMICK made a motion, seconded by DIANE CLEMENS, to adjourn. Meeting adjourned 7:57 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Darby Mayville



MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission, Development Review Board, City Council
From: Christopher Yuen, Community Development Director
Meeting Date: Thursday, November 6th, 2025
Subject: Connect the Junction Transit-Oriented Development Master Plan

Issue: Whether to adopt the *Connect the Junction Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Master Plan*.

Discussion:

On May 1, 2025, the Planning Commission and City Council held a joint meeting to review and discuss the draft *Connect the Junction* TOD Master Plan. At that meeting, the consulting team presented an overview of the draft plan and gathered initial feedback.

Over the summer, the project team conducted an extensive, multi-channel public engagement campaign, both online and at in-person events. The findings from this outreach are summarized in the attached *Summer Engagement Summary Report*.

At the November 6 meeting, the consulting team will present the results of the summer engagement and the final plan recommendations. Key discussion topics will include:

- Regulation of building heights along the Pearl Street corridor; and
- The future configuration of the Five Corners intersection and surrounding area.

While the primary purpose of this meeting is to provide the Planning Commission and City Council with a presentation on the engagement results and subsequent final plan recommendations; ultimately, Staff is asking for the Planning Commission to endorse the plan and recommend adoption of the plan to the City Council for their consideration and adoption. This would provide direction on these and other topics. With this direction, the project team will begin the final phase of *Connect the Junction*: drafting recommended zoning amendments to implement the plan. Because these two plan elements will be implemented in different ways (height will be adjusted in the Land Development Code for regulation outside of the right-of-way; and Five Corners configuration will be implemented via capital planning) there is more of an immediate need for direction on height. These Land Development Code amendments will be presented to the Planning Commission in early 2026 and will undergo additional public engagement and a formal legislative process before adoption by the City Council.

If the Planning Commission is prepared to endorse the plan at this meeting, it may do so. Alternatively, it may continue discussion at its December 6 meeting. If the City Council is prepared to adopt the plan at this meeting, it may do so. Alternatively, it may continue discussion at its December 17 meeting.

The May 2025 draft plan is available at <https://www.connectthejunction.org/documents>.

Cost:
N/A

Recommendation:

If ready, the recommendation is for the Planning Commission to endorse, and the City Council to adopt, the *Connect the Junction* Transit-Oriented Development Master Plan as presented.

Recommended Motion:

Planning Commission:

"I move that the Planning Commission endorse the *Connect the Junction* Transit-Oriented Development Master Plan [as discussed]."

City Council:

"I move that the City Council adopt the *Connect the Junction* Transit-Oriented Development Master Plan [as discussed]."

Attachments:

1. Connect the Junction Summer Engagement Summary
2. November 6 Presentation Slides

SUMMER ENGAGEMENT

Summary Report

CONNECT THE JUNCTION

A Transit-Oriented Development Plan for Essex Junction

CITY OF ESSEX JUNCTION

October 2025





CONTEXT | BACKGROUND

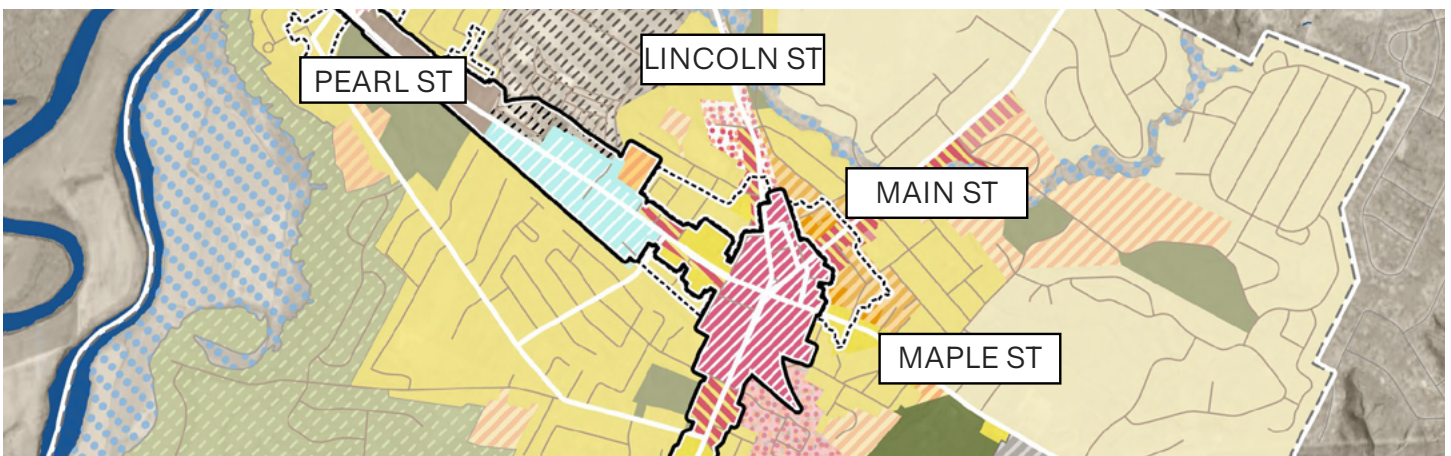
As of writing this report, the City of Essex Junction is in the process of creating a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Master Plan that focuses on the City Center and Route 15 corridor. This project is part of the larger TOD project for the Northwest region of Vermont and is funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant program. This TOD effort plans for the addition of homes and services in convenient, transit-accessible areas to provide a viable alternative to automobile-dependent living, reduce household transportation costs and support walkable town centers while addressing the ongoing housing shortage.

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.

Learn more at connectthejunction.org



Map (below) showing where 5 major roads converge to form Essex Junction's historic and commercial center.





CONTEXT | SUMMARY

Between June and September 2025, the City of Essex Junction and the project team conducted an extensive series of public engagement activities to inform the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Plan. Outreach strategies included: five in-person events, one Online Open House, developer discussions, online surveys, press releases, newsletters, social media campaigns, utility bill mailers, posters, and municipal site updates and announcements.

These efforts reached more than four-hundred community members, generating over 100 written comments and more than 500 sticker responses across all activities. Engagement was intentionally designed to reach a wide array of perspective across a range of community members including renters, families, long-time residents, business owners, land owners, developers, youth and more.

Feedback revealed strong community alignment towards safer and walkable streets as well as small-scale public realm improvements. Opinions differed around building height increases and housing density, most notably between in-person, and online groups.

The rollout of online engagement included a significant hiccup - utility bill mail inserts included a QR code to the online open house which was not mobile or tablet-friendly. This stymied a number of residents interested in leaving comments. To remedy this, a mobile-friendly survey was created to redirect mobile users, and to provide a more accessible forum for providing feedback.

KEY ENGAGEMENT TOOLS



3

Online Tools



4

Newsletter
Mentions



4,000+

Utility Bill
Mail Inserts



3

Stakeholder
Focus Groups



3

Press
Releases



Multiple

Social Media Posts,
Posters/Flyers



6

Organized
Events



1

Walking Tour



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT | OVERVIEW


400+
Participants



Digital and Media Outreach Analytics

To expand outreach beyond in-person events, the City used Facebook to share updates and encourage participation in the Online Open House and survey. These posts helped increase visibility and drove traffic to the project website throughout the summer engagement period.

Facebook Post	Date	Views	Reach	Impressions	Link Clicks	Interactions
Junction City News	July 8	483	294	23	8	-
Open House	Sept 23	808	534	593	11	4
Survey End Dates	Sept 30	1268	843	882	38	4 (2 comments)
Survey End	Oct 8	757	495	542	6	2
Total	July-Oct	3,316	2,166	2,040	63	10

Definitions

- **Views:** The number of times your post was displayed.
- **Interactions:** The number of reactions, comments, shares and saves on your post.
- **Link clicks:** The number of clicks, taps or swipes on links within your content, including ads. Content may include formats such as posts, stories, and reels that led to destinations or experiences, on or off Facebook.
- **Impressions:** The number of times your content was on screen.
- **Reach:** The number of people who saw your content at least once. Reach is different from impressions, which may include multiple views of your content by the same people. This metric is estimated.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT | OVERVIEW

Event	Date	Attendees	Key Takeaways
4th of July Fireworks Tabling	July 4	Mixture of residents; casual attendees	Mainly conversational awareness-building for those who do not normally attend planning meetings.
National Night Out	Aug 5	Mostly families, majority homeowners	Parents expressed concerns around Main St. closures and traffic, one bike commuter supported latest safety improvements.
Maple Street Park Pop-Up	Aug 13	Local youth, plus parents, mixture	Strong youth engagement with kids supporting taller housing and walkable pathways; mixed-responses from parents
Pearl Ice Cream Social	Aug 20	Majority renters and nearby residents	Deep conversations around housing affordability, safety, and transit; mostly supportive of increasing height and density if well-designed.
Pearl Ice Cream Social	Aug 26	Majority renters	Positive feedback on transit access; sharing of daily experience of bus users and people walking/biking with children.
Rotary Club Presentation	Sept 3	Business owners, civic leaders, and long-term residents from Essex Junction and Westford	Comments centered around balancing growth and community identity; pragmatic and future-thinking conversations
Meet Me on Main Open House	Sept 27	Mixture of families, renters, business owners and visitors	Strong interest in walkability, safety, and economic revitalization.
Meet Me on Main Open House	Oct 11	Mixture of families, renters, business owners and visitors	Strong interest in walkability, safety, and economic revitalization.
Online Open House and Open House Survey	July - Oct	Primarily homeowners and long-term residents, as well as some younger renters.	Various comments on building height, parking, and traffic, with homeowners more cautious and renters generally supportive of density and transit improvements.

Media: Junction City News

- **June 23** — featured the Connect the Junction Draft Plan Overview segment; generated 107 views
- **August 25 (Pearl St West Segment)** — featured the Pearl Street West Segment Update; generated 43 views, helped maintain visibility of project milestones.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT | IN-PERSON RESPONDENTS

In-person outreach centered on meeting residents where they already spend time. Staff joined existing community events and hosted a few of their own to connect with people who might not otherwise engage in city planning and reach a broader mix of voices.

Casual Conversations + Insights

Taking an in-person approach towards engagement helps capture a broader cross-section of Essex Junction residents, including families, youth, renters, and long-term homeowners. These candid interactions offered valuable context that online data alone cannot provide, revealing how people experience their neighborhoods day-to-day and what matters most in their regular routines.

Photos from the Maple Street Park event (bottom) and the Meet Me on Main Event (middle) illustrate the variety of participants and the energy of in-person engagement. These moments capture how public dialogue becomes most meaningful when it's visible, approachable, and rooted in community life.

Findings and Learnings

Our team found that in-person engagement provided opportunities to explain ideas directly and give participants more context about each concept. This helped clarify misunderstandings, build trust, and ensure that feedback reflected a clearer understanding of the proposals.





PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT | ONLINE RESPONDENTS

The online open house and survey provided a platform for residents to freely review materials and share feedback at their own pace and schedule. This format expanded participation beyond in-person events and allowed those with limited time or mobility to engage directly in the planning process.

Reach and Participation

The City mailed every homeowner in Essex Junction a utility bill insert with a QR code linking to the open house, prompting a strong initial surge of responses—approximately 80 submissions within the first few weeks. However, participation tapered over time, reflecting the challenges of sustaining online engagement across multiple months.

Online Engagement Challenges

While the online open house helped reach a wide audience, it experienced several technical and timing challenges. Some challenges include the following:

- **Utility Bill Mailer** — A QR code linking to the open house was mailed to every homeowner in Essex Junction, resulting in a surge of initial participation and web traffic within the first two weeks.
- **Early Engagement** — The online open house saw strong early interest, with approximately 80 total responses, but participation slowed after the initial campaign period.
- **Accessibility Issues** — The first version of the open house platform was not mobile-friendly, leading to several resident complaints. To remedy, the City released a mobile-optimized SurveyMonkey version to improve accessibility.
- **Limited Follow-Up Participation** — Despite improvements, engagement through the SurveyMonkey format remained limited, suggesting that most online participants had already engaged through the initial version.
- **Competing Campaigns** — The online open house coincided with several other City initiatives and surveys throughout the summer, likely contributing to reduced participation due to engagement fatigue.

Insights and Learnings

Despite its challenges, the online open house generated the most comments and provided valuable input from residents who might not have attended in person. Many respondents used the open format to share detailed written comments, offering a range of feedback on housing, building height, design, and community character. Lessons from this effort will inform future outreach strategies to ensure smoother accessibility in digital participation tools.

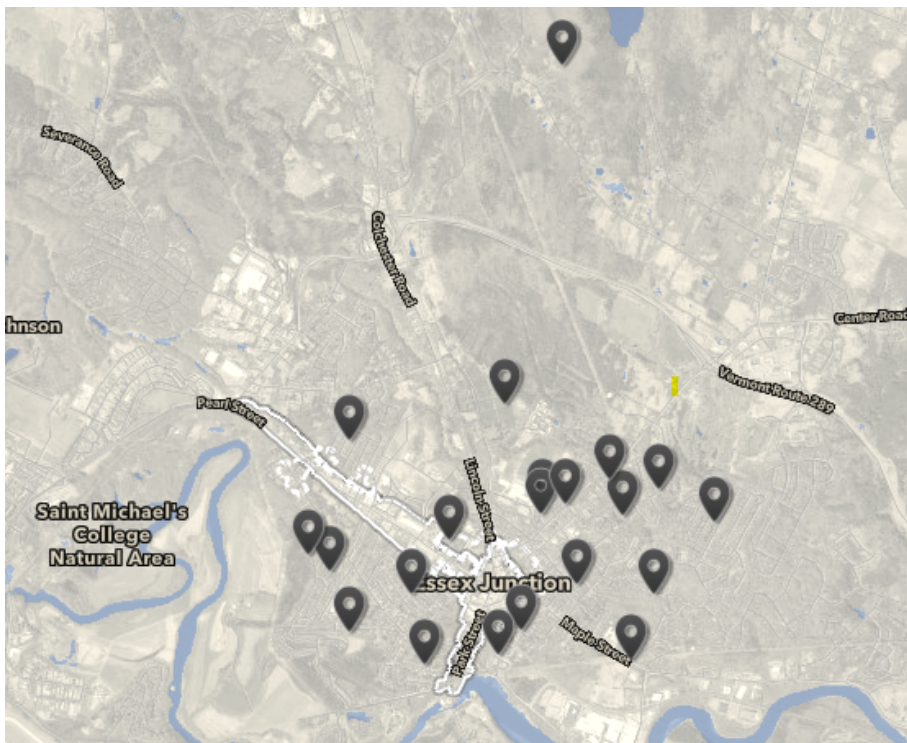


PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT | ONLINE RESPONDENTS

The table below reflects the demographics data of only online respondents. To minimize engagement fatigue, demographics boards were not consistently used at in-person events. As a result, this data reflects the groups most likely to engage through online outreach tools.

Tenure and Age of Participants

Age	< 1 y	1-5 yrs	6-15 yrs	15+ yrs	Not A Resident	Total
< 18 y.o.	0	2	1	3	0	6
18-24 y.o.	0	2	0	2	1	5
25-35 y.o.	4	12	5	4	5	30
35-49 y.o.	1	19	17	27	3	67
50-64 y.o.	1	0	7	46	6	60
65+ y.o.	0	3	4	31	1	39
Total	6	38	34	113	16	207



Resident Distribution

Respondents who engaged in the online open house were asked to map their homes. The resulting map to the left shows a relatively even distribution across the city, but no respondents living within the study boundary. In-person events captured more of this population.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT | DEVELOPMENT

Building Height & Housing Density

The plan proposes increased height limits within the study area; feedback included a variety of perspectives that were markedly different between in-person and online events, making it important to distinguish which groups we were hearing more from in each setting.

Q1. In general, do you support increased height along the Pearl St. Corridor as a way to address the housing shortage?



yes (94%) - 61 votes

no (6%) - 4 votes



In-Person



yes (47%) - 24 votes

neutral (14%) - 7 votes

no (14%) - 20 votes



Online

In-Person vs. Online Feedback Comparison

Feedback gathered through in-person events reflected a generally supportive attitude towards increasing heights and housing density. The participants in this group - comprised of a greater proportion of renters, younger families, and downtown residents - saw value in encouraging taller mixed-use buildings as a way to provide more housing and support businesses. Comments emphasized a need towards balancing density with good design and walkable streetscapes and accessible modes of transit for future development.

In contrast, feedback from the Online Open House and survey reflected a more preservation-oriented perspective. This group, comprised more heavily of long-term residents and single-family home owners, favored retaining or even reducing story height limits, from the existing 5-story maximum to a 4-story maximum, citing a desire to maintain views and retain the city's existing look and feel. Cautionary feedback reflected concern around human scale as well as compatibility with the City's existing charm and character.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT | DEVELOPMENT

Q2/Q3. What is the maximum height you think should be allowed in the Village Center District? The TOD District*?

What Height... Is Right?

- 10
- 9
- 8
- 7
- 6
- 5
- 4
- 3
- 2 (Residential)
- 1 (Retail/Commercial)

Village Center

42% - 30 votes

13% - 9 votes

32% - 23 votes

7% - 5 votes

4% - 3 votes

2% - 2 votes

TOD District*

37% - 21 votes

11% - 6 votes

39% - 22 votes

4% - 2 votes

7% - 4 votes

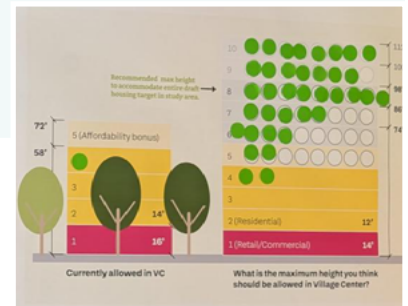
2% - 2 votes



In-Person

87% of in-person respondents favored **8-10 story height increases**

The image to the right shows the dot-voting board from the “Meet Me on Main” event showing community preferences on building height.



What Height... Is Right?

- 10
- 9
- 8
- 7
- 6
- 5
- 4
- 3
- 2 (Residential)
- 1 (Retail/Commercial)

Village Center

5% - 3 votes

2% - 1 votes

19% - 11 votes

3% - 2 votes

12% - 7 votes

20% - 12 votes

31% - 18 votes

No Preference

9% - 5 votes

TOD District*

2% - 1 votes

0% - 0 votes

20% - 13 votes

12% - 8 votes

9% - 6 votes

24% - 16 votes

26% - 17 votes

No Preference

8% - 5 votes



Online

8-stories was the **most favored height** among supporters of increasing height limits

over **50%** of online group favored **keeping** existing height limits.

**Note: In most survey materials, “TOD” covered the Pearl Street corridor outside of the Village Center and nearby low-density area.*



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT | TRANSPORTATION

[In-Person Responses] - Accessibility & Road Improvements

Participant across all in-person events overwhelmingly supported safer crossing, sidewalks, and improved biking and transit access, and responded positively to “Meet me on Main” car-free events.

Q2. Would you support further **vehicle turn movement reduction** if it reduced wait times and enhanced pedestrian and bike safety? *

yes (98%) - 42 votes

no (2%) - 1 votes



Strongly Supportive

Renters
Younger Families
Local Youth



More Cautious

Homeowners
Long-Term Residents

Pedestrian Safety Measures

Pearl St Median west of West Street Extension
“makes things safer and reduces conflict”

Transit Enhancements

“I wouldn’t mind waiting behind a bus if it meant people could get home safely.”

Pearl Street Road Diets

“One lane westbound would be okay; this area is not the real bottleneck for westbound traffic.”

Main Street Activation

Praise towards Meet Me on Main car-free event, describing it as “fun, safe, and lively”

Vehicle Circulation

Frustration with proposed Pearl Street design changes citing “annoying — having to go around.”

Road Impacts

A few residents emphasized “the need for more studies before full implementation”

18
supportive
in-person
comments

6
cautious in-person
comments

**Note: For in-person events, staff provided additional context explaining how the concept would function, which may have influenced participant responses compared to online engagement.*

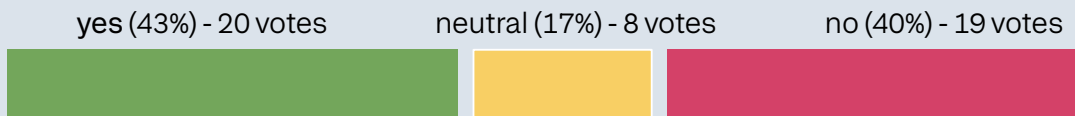


PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT | RESPONSES

[Online Survey Responses] - Accessibility & Road Improvements

The Online Open House survey through online tools drew nearly 80 total responses. Similar to the in-person events, participants emphasized the need for safer more accessible streets, particularly to sidewalks, crosswalks and other traffic calming measures.

Q2. Would you support further vehicle turn movement reduction if it reduced wait times and enhanced pedestrian and bike safety? *



Some participants may have been uncertain about whether Main Street would remain open to vehicles, as the proposal's intent was clarified in person by staff during discussions.

Pedestrian Safety Measures

"Support for intersection redesign to reduce mobility conflicts."

Traffic Flow & Congestion

"Traffic changes are okay if they don't make Five Corners even slower."

Pearl Street Road Diets

"Pearl St improvements are crucial for public safety."

Access & Connectivity

"Support closing Memorial Way, but not Main Street between Five Corners and Railroad."

Parking & Vehicle Priority

"Parking is limited. Don't sacrifice vehicle movement for expensive pedestrian spaces."

No Additional Restrictions

"Crescent Connector already slows traffic... adding more restrictions will make it worse."

18

supportive online comments

15

cautious online comments

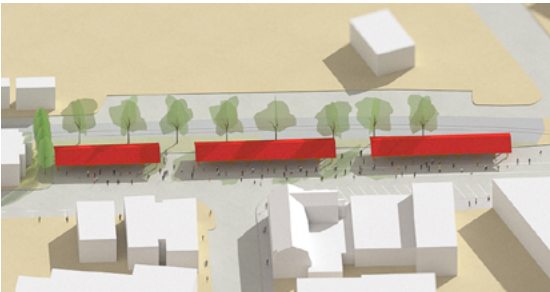
**Note: For in-person events, staff provided additional context explaining how the concept would function, which may have influenced participant responses compared to online engagement.*



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT | PUBLIC SPACE

[In-Person Responses] - “Big Four” Improvement Projects

This topic drew the most conversation and hands-on engagement during the summer outreach. Across all engagement events, participants added nearly 70 sticker votes and over 20 written comments on the boards. This reflects a strong community interest in human-scale projects that contribute to Essex Junction’s identity and activate the public realm.



Railroad Ave. Market Structures

(100% supportive) - 17 votes

- “The most exciting idea — something the city really needs.”
- “Great for year-round markets, events, and local vendors.”
- “Would make this area a destination, not just a passthrough.”



Pocket Park

(100% supportive) - 12 votes

- “We need small green spaces with shade and seating.”
- “Perfect for families and lunch breaks downtown.”



Veterans Memorial / Food Truck Space

(80% supportive / 20% cautious) - 16 votes

- “Good spot for social gatherings and weekend activity.”
- “Noise and circulation near the memorial could be an issue.”
- “Rotating food trucks would keep it interesting.”



Murals

(100% supportive) - 19 votes

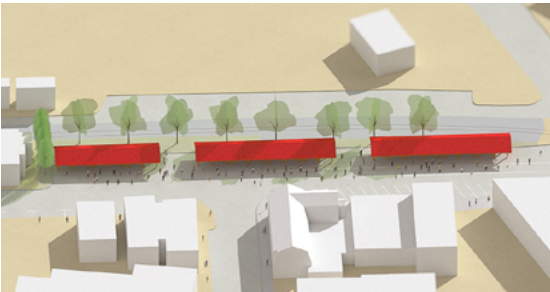
- “fun, colorful, easy to implement.”
- “A way to bring energy and identity to downtown.”
- “Would love to see local artists involved”



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT | PUBLIC SPACE

[Online Survey Responses] - “Big Four” Improvement Projects

Online participants provided more mixed feedback on the four improvement projects; while many appreciated the beautification and the support for activity in the downtown area, there were also concerns around cost, practicality, and fit within Essex Junction.



Railroad Ave. Market Structures

(34% supportive / 28% neutral / 38% cautious) - 47 votes

- “I would love to have an open air farmers market in Essex Jct”



Pocket Park

(29% - support / 31% neutral / 40% cautious) - 48 votes

- “5 corners is not a place for a park—too loud, poor air quality, inadequate parking, completely unattractive area.”
- “Stop wasting money on stupid pocket parks”



Veterans Memorial / Food Truck Space

(36% supportive / 26% neutral / 38% cautious) - 50 votes

- “We are a small city with a small budget. There really is no need now to build limited use enclosures.”
- “Don’t try to cram more stuff in this dysfunctional crossroads”



Murals

(19% support / 17% neutral / 48% cautious) - 50 votes

- “...its very important to make sure we are supporting local, female, lgbtqia+, and bipoc artists”
- “Anytime something nice goes up, it get ruined by people who never see the repercussions and could care less.”



SUMMER ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY | APPENDIX

Online Events

Online Open House

- Launched in early July. After the initial marketing campaign, the City received feedback about technical glitches and the tool not being mobile-friendly.
- A mobile-friendly SurveyMonkey version was added in July.
- The Online Open House was advertised in:
 - June, July, August, and September newsletters, available online and in print editions of the Essex Reporter newspaper.
 - July 8 and September 23 News Releases, with a link pinned to the front page of essexjunction.org for much of the summer.
 - Utility bill insert mailed June 2025.
 - Posters in prominent locations.
 - Social media posts.
- The Essex Reporter ran a story on July 15, 2025.
- “Connect the Junction” had to compete with several other City initiatives for attention, which may have contributed to online engagement fatigue. Other initiatives occurring throughout the summer included:
 - Essex Junction Amtrak Station Open House and Survey
 - League of American Bicyclists online survey
 - Essex Police Community Advisory Board Survey
 - Pearl Street Multimodal Improvements Scoping Study Update Open House
 - Meet Me On Main event series
 - City Rebranding Survey

Focus Groups

Consultants met with some previous focus group participants individually to get their input on the draft plan including four property owners owning large lots within the study area with interest in developing.

Junction City News

Chris Yuen and Ashley Snellenberger hosted a “Junction City News” introducing the Draft Plan on 6/23/2025. Junction City News is a live show on CCTV, every fourth Monday of each month at 5:25 PM. It features important information residents should know, initiatives, and upcoming events and activities in the City.



SUMMER ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY | APPENDIX

In-Person Events

July 4 Fireworks Event

On July 4, 2025, the City held an in-person public engagement event from 6:00 to about 8:00pm at the Champlain Valley Exposition grounds. This event coincided with the July 4 fireworks event, held by Essex Junction Recreation and Parks. Open-house summary boards were displayed on easels, with a print-copy of the draft plan available for review. Postcards with a link to the online open house were handed out to those who were interested in the project but did wish to stay discuss with the City representatives.

Few people participated in the sticker voting exercise but those who stopped at the booth learned about the project and shared their thoughts verbally.

Population Reached:

- The project team spoke with approximately 40 people- a mixture of City and Town residents.

City representatives in attendance:

- Scott McCormick, Planning Commission
- Elaine Haney, City Council
- Brian Sheldon, City Council

National Night Out- August 5, 2025

On August 5, 2025, the City held an in-person public engagement from 5:00–7:00 PM to promote the Connect the Junction project at the annual National Night Out event. This event was located outside of Essex High School. The event was hosted by Essex Police Department, with a goal of enhancing the relationship between the community, support services, and emergency services. Various city departments attended the event, where kids activities and free food were offered. The Connect the Junction team set up a booth at this event, as it similarly did during the early phases of this project in 2024

City representatives in attendance:

- Michael Giguere, City Planner
- Diane Clemens, Planning Commission
- Estimated participation: ~50 conversations with staff. The National Night Out event attracted families with kids, but the project team mostly spoke with the parents and caretakers.

Comments

- One resident was strongly in support of maximizing building height and density around the project area. He believed this will help foster a more cohesive community and develop more interesting street-level uses that are easy to interact with on a whim while walking around.
- Two residents were strongly opposed to building height increases and even expressed a desire to see building heights decrease in the Village Center district, citing blocking the view as their reasoning. After discussing housing needs further, they agreed that 6 stories seemed



SUMMER ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY | APPENDIX

reasonable.

- One resident was strongly opposed to closing Main Street, citing impacts to local businesses on Main Street as his main reason. Michael discussed some of the proposed alternatives, such as reducing one lane for expanded bicycle and pedestrian space. The resident strongly supported these ideas and even supported removing the diagonal striped parking to accommodate this space. He also expressed a desire to see the Railroad Avenue marketplace structures, stating that this would be a great way to encourage people to visit the City rather than just pass through and could be flexible for all types of events. He discussed his support for other plan concepts, such as a mural program and removing the Memorial Way slip lane for food truck space.
- One resident was opposed to most of the plan in general, stating that he would have preferred to see Essex Junction remain “historic”. After further discussion, he explained that to him, historic meant preserving more trees and greenspace in the community. Michael showed some of the plan concepts that propose to add greenspace and landscaping, which did not seem to convince the resident fully, but they agreed it’s important to the community. This resident also expressed a strong dislike for the triplex at 162 West Street, stating that it’s out of place for the area and wondered if neighboring residents were upset by its construction.
- One resident, a bike commuter, expressed excitement over many of the rechannelization concepts, as he often bikes with his two young kids and was hopeful for more safe routes around the city.
- One resident was in favor of increased building heights to help solve the housing shortage, and asked why people would be opposed to supplying more housing

Maple Street Park – August 13, 2025

On August 13, 2025, the City held an in-person public engagement event at Maple Street Park, during the last week of summer day camps between 4pm and 6pm. The team set up display boards and solicited feedback from those using the park and swimming pool. The weather was warm and sunny, and the team offered “Pop ice” frozen deserts to draw the attention of families and kids.

City representatives in attendance:

- Christohper Yuen, Community Development Director
- Michael Giguere, City Planner
- Diane Clemens, Planning Commission
- Elijah Massey, Planning Commission
- Finn Hamilton, Planning Commission



SUMMER ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY | APPENDIX

Estimated participation: 60 people, including approximately 25 children and teenagers

Comment Summary

- One resident asked for a “giant traffic circle” that could help vehicle traffic circumvent Five Corners
- One child asked “why don’t they build houses taller so we can have more homes for people?”
- One resident expressed the feeling that Five Corners is “built out” and does not have room for larger projects
- One resident expressed interest in seeing a “tiered system” of building heights on Pearl Street to help accommodate a variety of commercial/residential goals
- Notably, regarding opinions on building height, children and teenagers consistently indicated a preference for higher maximum heights, including many “sticker votes” for ten stories. Even within the same families, children and teenagers consistently selected higher preferred height limits than their parents.

197 Pearl Ice Cream Social - August 20, 2025

On August 20, 2025, City staff hosted an “ice cream social” style public engagement event in front of 197 Pearl Street from 4:30–6:30 PM. Attendees were invited to enjoy scoops of Ben & Jerry’s ice cream while reviewing display boards for both the Connect the Junction project and the Pearl Street Road Diet Scoping Study update. Event outreach included email invitations distributed to residents through the property management company, as well as posters placed at 197 and 203 Pearl Street, as well as the nearby bus stop. The weather was sunny and warm, which was conducive to high participation. Approximately 30 members of the public participated in the event, many of whom engaged deeply, asked many questions and provided comments for both projects.

- City representatives in attendance:
 - Michael Giguere, City Planner
 - Chris Yuen, Community Development Director
 - Finn Hamilton, Planning Commission
 - Elaine Haney, City Council

Participant comments:

[Resident 1]

- I like the median – it makes things safer and reduces conflict
- When I lived here in 2018, not so bad, but now I have to take whatever I can find [in relation to housing costs / Connect the Junction project]
- More housing is great [in relation to housing costs / Connect the Junction project]



SUMMER ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY | APPENDIX

[Resident 2]

- Median is annoying – having to go around
- I wouldn't mind waiting behind a bus for a bit if it meant people could get home safely

[Resident 3]

- I don't like on-street bike facilities. It's dangerous for bikers and drivers
- I would like to see the median removed eventually, but not a huge deal if it has to stay as I've gotten used to it

[Resident 4]

- I don't mind the median that much. The turnaround at West Street Ext is quite reasonable
- I understand the need for the eastbound bus stop but I'm concerned about the bus completely blocking the eastbound cars while serving the stop

[Resident 5]

- I would like to see one of two futures for this section of Pearl Street:
 - + Remove the median, making car access easier, OR
 - + Make this section of Pearl Street fully walkable/bikeable. No half measures

[Resident 6]

- Median is okay, I like it for safety
- GPS sometimes doesn't know how to navigate this area

[Resident 7]

- The median is annoying and requires driving past the apartment complex and turning around- having it removed would be nice
- If it's not possible to remove the entire median, perhaps it could be removed at strategic locations
- One lane westbound would be okay, this area is not the real bottleneck for westbound traffic
- Concerns about drivers hitting bikes/peds at driveway

235/241 Pearl Ice Cream Social - August 25, 2025

On August 26, 2025, City staff hosted an “ice cream social” style public engagement event in front of 235 Pearl Street from 4:30–6:30 PM. Attendees were invited to enjoy scoops of Ben & Jerry's ice cream while reviewing display boards for both the Connect the Junction project and the Pearl



SUMMER ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY | APPENDIX

Street Road Diet Scoping Study update.

Event outreach included email invitations distributed to residents through the property management company, as well as posters placed at 235, 241, and 243 Pearl Street as well as the nearby bus stop. The weather was cool with intermittent drizzle, which may have reduced attendance. Approximately 10 members of the public participated in the event. Staff also observed about 15 cyclists using the Pearl Street sidewalk during the event, a relevant data point for the Road Diet project.

- **City representatives in attendance:**
 - Michael Giguere, City Planner
 - Chris Yuen, Community Development Director
 - Finn Hamilton, Planning Commission
 - Elena Juodisius, Planning Commission
 - Diane Clemens, Planning Commission

Participant comments:

- Resident 1 – The median is a little inconvenient but not a major issue.
- Resident 2 – Supports the 2025 Alternative because they frequently walk and take the bus; emphasized the importance of the proposed eastbound bus stop.
- Resident 3 – Finds the eastbound bus stop proposal very useful.
- Resident 4 – Uses transit with children and currently walks 9 minutes each way; strongly supports the proposed bus stop.
- Resident 5 – Reported that Uber drivers often have difficulty navigating the jughandle turn.

Rotary Presentation – Sept 3, 2025

On July 4, 2025, Community Development Director Christopher Yuen made a presentation to the Rotary Club of Essex and Westford on Connect the Junction. The presentation began with a high-level discussion of the concept of Access to Opportunity, the power of frequent, all-day transit, and why the Pearl St corridor is particularly well-suited to transit oriented development. The presentation then provided a summary of the plan's Big Ideas, with an emphasis on building height, as well as proposed changes to the five corners intersection.

Several participants stayed after to provide for a one-on-one discussion.

Population Reached:

Approximately 40 people attended the Rotary luncheon. This included residents and business owners and community leaders in Essex Junction, the Town of Essex, and the Town of Westford.



SUMMER ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY | APPENDIX

Comments and key themes:

- Comment 1: This all seems like a good idea that's worth trying. I remember when the McGillicuddy's building went up and there was a huge outcry about the it changing the character of the Five Corners, but now, it seems to blend in as a part of what people expect as an image of Essex Junction.

Meet Me on Main / In-Person Open House – September 27 th , 2025

On September 27, 2025, a project team associated with Connect the Junction participated in an in-person public engagement event from 4:00–7:00 PM. The event coincided with the second installment of “Meet Me on Main”, a car-free celebration on a temporarily pedestrianized Main Street with multiple vendors, food trucks, and other activities. Attendees were invited to enjoy cookies, candy, and lemonade while reviewing display boards for both the Connect the Junction project, the Pearl Street Road Diet Scoping Study update, and the Amtrak Multimodal Station Improvement project. Team members were divided into two groups; one group tabled directly on Main Street, and the second group tabled inside Lincoln Hall as a part of public tours of the newly renovated office building.

Estimated participation:

~100 conversations with staff, ~150-200 people that at least briefly looked at the project boards. Many participants arrived as couples, as a family, or with friends. Most participants were city residents. Participants seemed to represent a broad cross section of age and demographics.

City representatives in attendance:

- Michael Giguere, City Planner
- Chris Yuen, Community Development Director
- Finn Hamilton, Planning Commission
- Elena Juodisius, Planning Commission
- Diane Clemens, Planning Commission
- Jeff Arrango, Framework
- Sarah Lukins, Framework
- Marshall Distel, CCRPC

Connect the Junction comments (inside Lincoln Hall):

- Comment 1 – At first I didn't like the McGillicuddys building but I got used to it. It's nice for people to live there and be such a walkable area.
- Comment 2 – (on Five Corners turn movement changes) I would be interested in seeing more studies about this to see traffic impacts.
- Comment 3 – (on building height) It's better to have 8 stories than a giant parking lot
- Comment 4 – Terracing or step backs might help mitigate the feel of additional building height



SUMMER ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY | APPENDIX

- Comment 5 – My biggest concern is run-down old buildings like Road Res-Q and Rocky’s

Connect the Junction comments (on Main Street):

- Comment 1 – I’m concerned about emergency vehicle access on Main Street. I’d be interested in reducing traffic on Maple Street instead due to lower impact. Traffic laws need to be enforced.
- Comment 2 – Essex Junction’s access to public transit makes it perfectly suited for additional housing. I live in the Town of Essex but hope that the Town can follow the City’s example when it comes to housing!
- Comment 3 – We need more goods and services in downtown to allow people to access these without a car.
- Comment 4 – I’m concerned about increased crime with new development like Burlington. Public safety needs to be a priority.
- Comment 5 – We need a diversity of stores around Five Corners in order to make these concepts possible. Placerville, CA is a good example of a similar-sized community that has done this well.
- Comment 6 – Larger retail spaces might be helpful.
- Comment 7 – Is this growth for the sake of growth or will this benefit locals?
- Comment 8 – Low-income/social status/high buildings vs. higher income residential houses. Better life?

Pearl Street West comments:

- Comment 1 – Visibility at driveways will be important.
- Comment 2 – Could there be targeted gaps in the median?
- Comment 3 – (on the proposed bus stop) I’m concerned about slowing down and inconveniencing drivers during peak commute hours.
- Comment 4 – (on the on-street bike lane) Will bus drivers have to pull into this bike lane to pick up/drop off passengers? This seems dangerous.
- Comment 5 – (on the eastbound lanes) There is only one eastbound lane at the Susie Wilson intersection. Why is this proposed to “fan out” to two lanes before immediately merging into one lane? Wouldn’t it make more sense to keep it as a single lane the entire time?
- Comment 6 – I love the 2025 proposal. I would love to see anything done to make this area more accessible.

Meet Me on Main – Finale – October 11, 2025

On October 11, 2025, a project team associated with Connect the Junction participated in an in-person public engagement event from 4:00–7:00 PM. The event coincided with the fourth installment of “Meet Me on Main”, a car-free celebration on a temporarily pedestrianized Main Street with multiple vendors, food trucks, and other activities. Attendees were invited to enjoy candy while reviewing display boards for both the Connect the Junction project and the Pearl Street Road Diet Scoping Study update.



SUMMER ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY | APPENDIX

Attendees represented a range of life stages including kids with their parents, teenagers, young adults, all the way up through older members of the community. There were approximately as many participants at this event as the September 27 th iteration of Meet Me on Main.

Planning Commission representatives in attendance:

- Elijah Massey
- Scott McCormick
- Finn Hamilton

Connect the Junction comments:

- Most attendees expressed more opinions on the transit-oriented development draft plan rather than the Pearl Street West plan due to the event being held close to Five Corners.
- Folks were generally supportive of more public gathering spaces and supported increased access and safety for non-motorized transportation.
- Feedback varied on the housing shortage and the City's efforts to increase density in the project area.
- Most folks acknowledged the issue, but their preferences on how it should be addressed varied.
- On average, most people acknowledged that increased building height is an effective way to address the housing crisis.
- Some folks emphasized maintaining the current feel of the City's past development patterns and expressed concern over larger development.
- Others were in favor of supporting more units by any means necessary.
- A range of housing unit sizes (larger than just studio and one-bedroom apartments) was repeatedly cited as an important piece to adding additional housing.

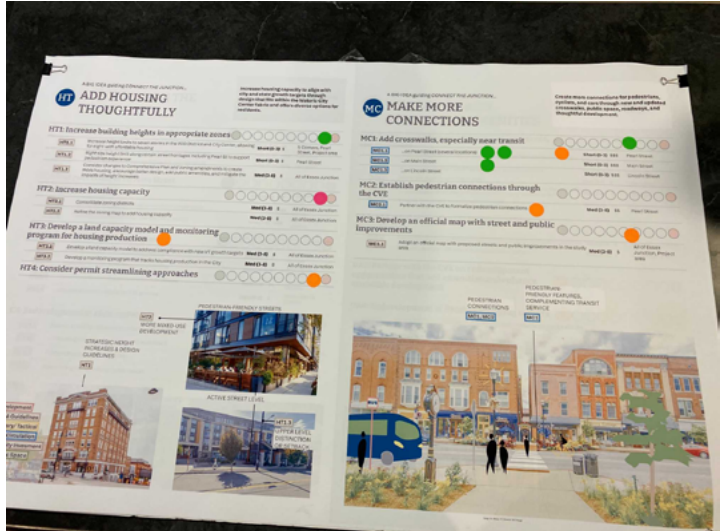
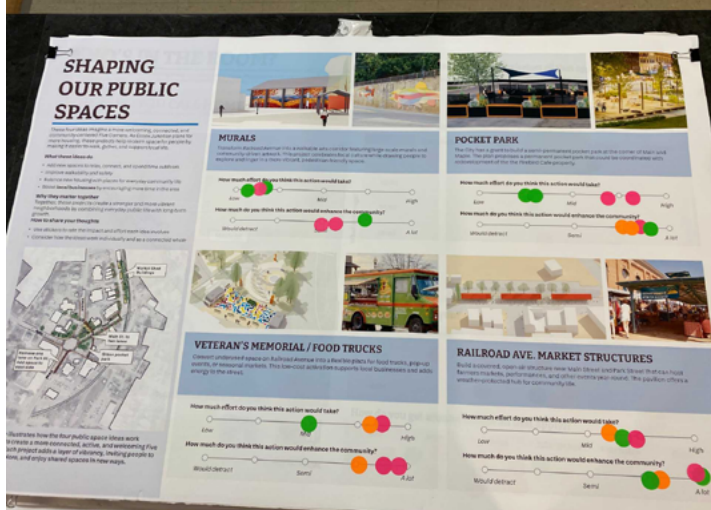
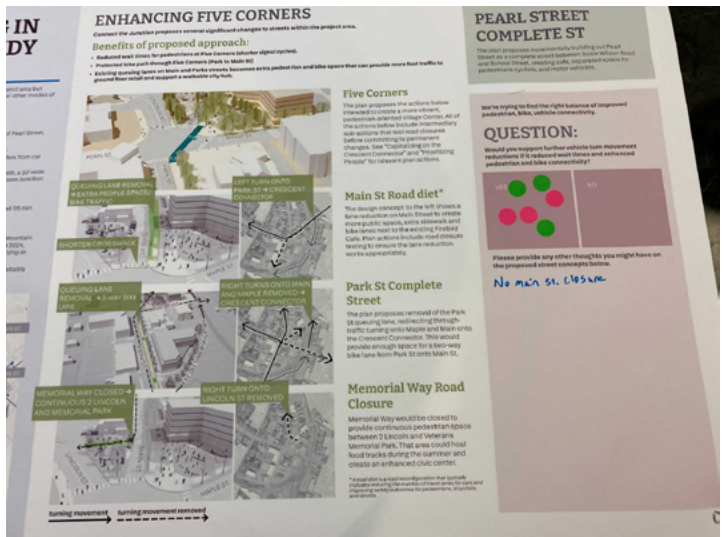
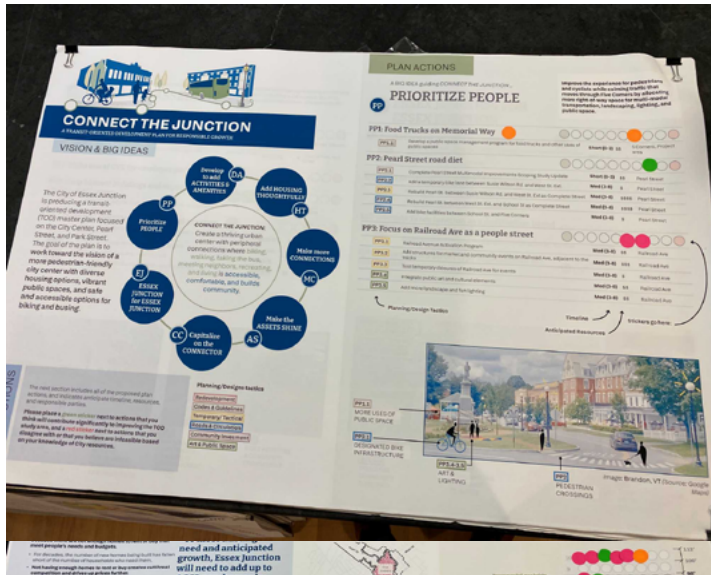


SUMMER ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY | APPENDIX

Photos from Events

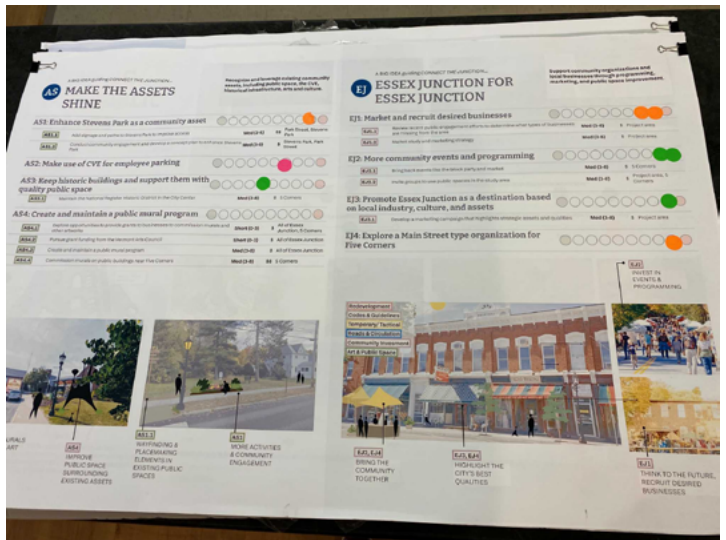
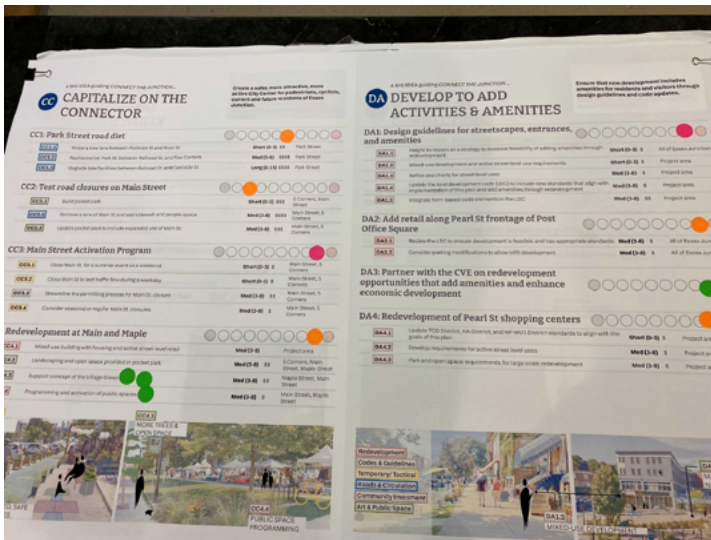
Images of the engagement boards were collected to document community responses and maintain a visual record of the feedback gathered during each outreach event.

National Night Out- August 5, 2025

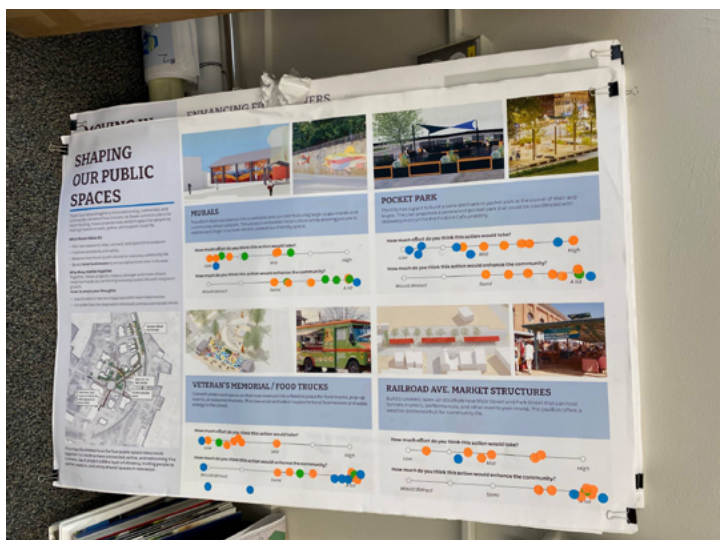
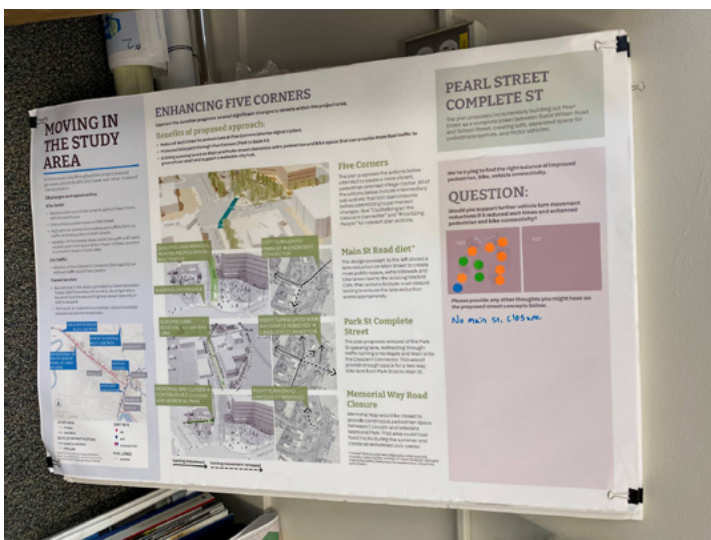
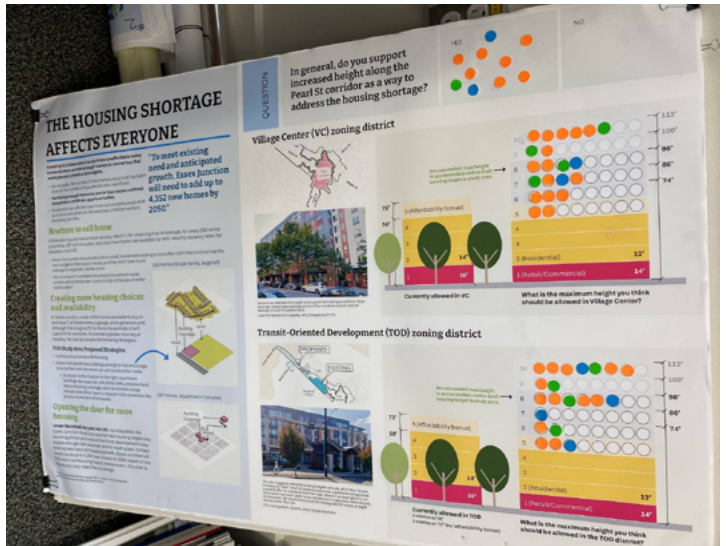




SUMMER ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY | APPENDIX



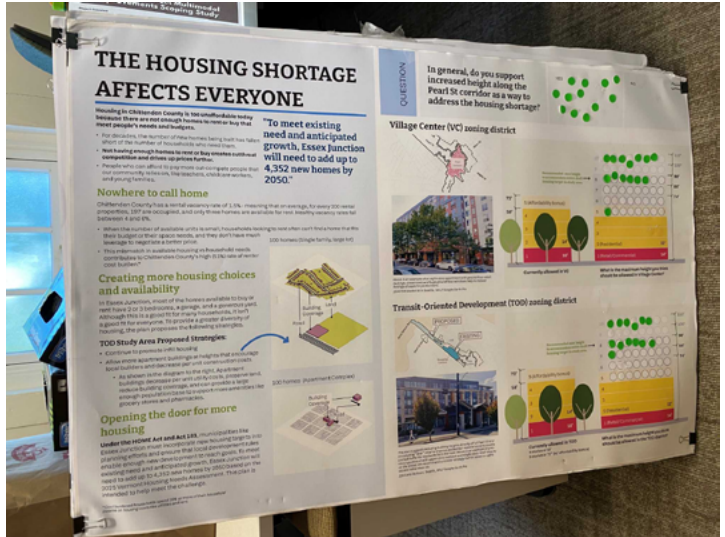
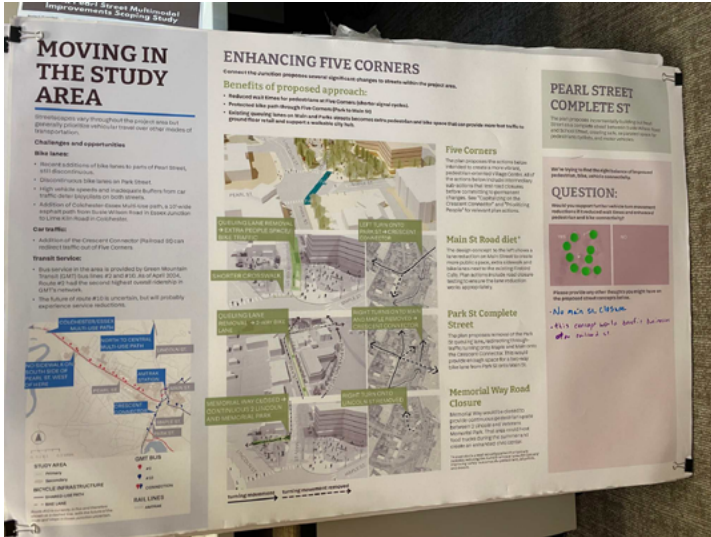
National Night Out- August 5, 2025





SUMMER ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY | APPENDIX

235/241 Pearl Ice Cream Social - August 26, 2025



Ice Cream Social

Tuesday August 26, 2025
4:30 to 6:30pm



Join the City of Essex Junction near the front entrance of **235 Pearl St** for a **FREE** ice cream and to share your thoughts on the City's transportation and growth plans for the future of the Pearl Street corridor!



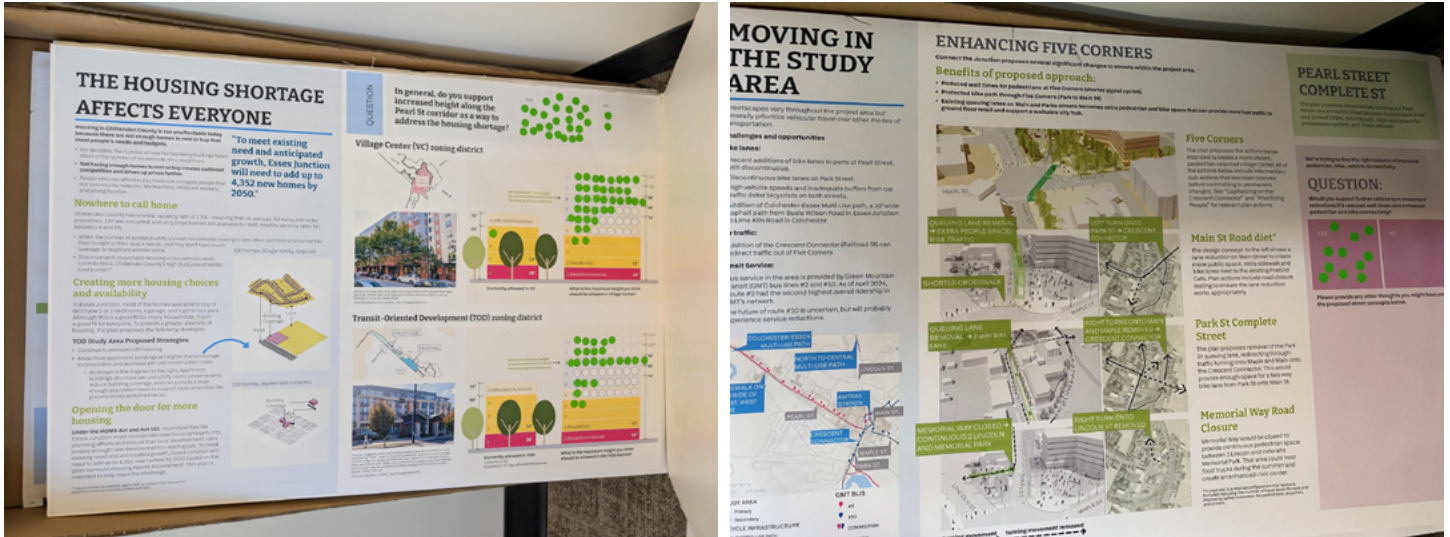
Junction City News: Draft Plan Overview - June 23





SUMMER ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY | APPENDIX

Meet Me on Main (Outdoor) - October 11, 2025





CONNECT THE **JUNCTION**

Transit Oriented Development Master Plan

Joint PC and CC Meeting
November 6th, 2025



Agenda

1. Project overview
2. Draft Plan: public engagement overview
3. Key proposals
 - a. Project area height increases
 - b. Five Corner right of way restructuring
 - c. Public space activation
4. Next Steps



Overview:

PROJECT BACKGROUND



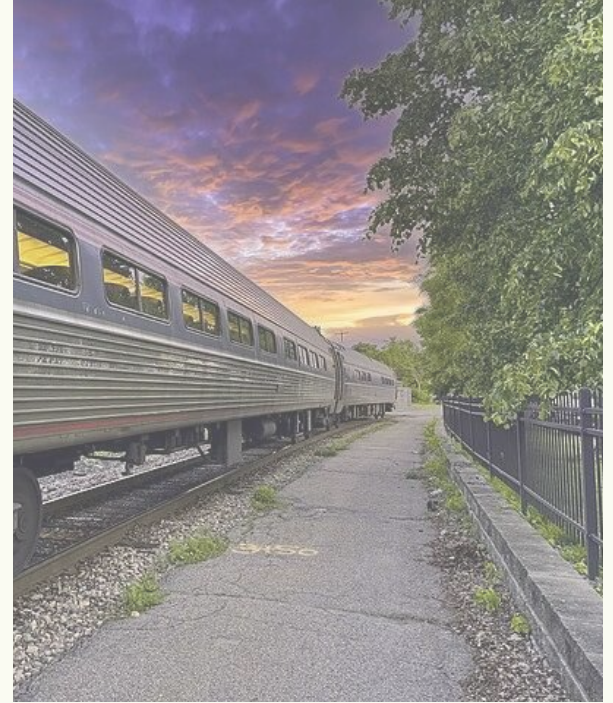
framework

Project Background

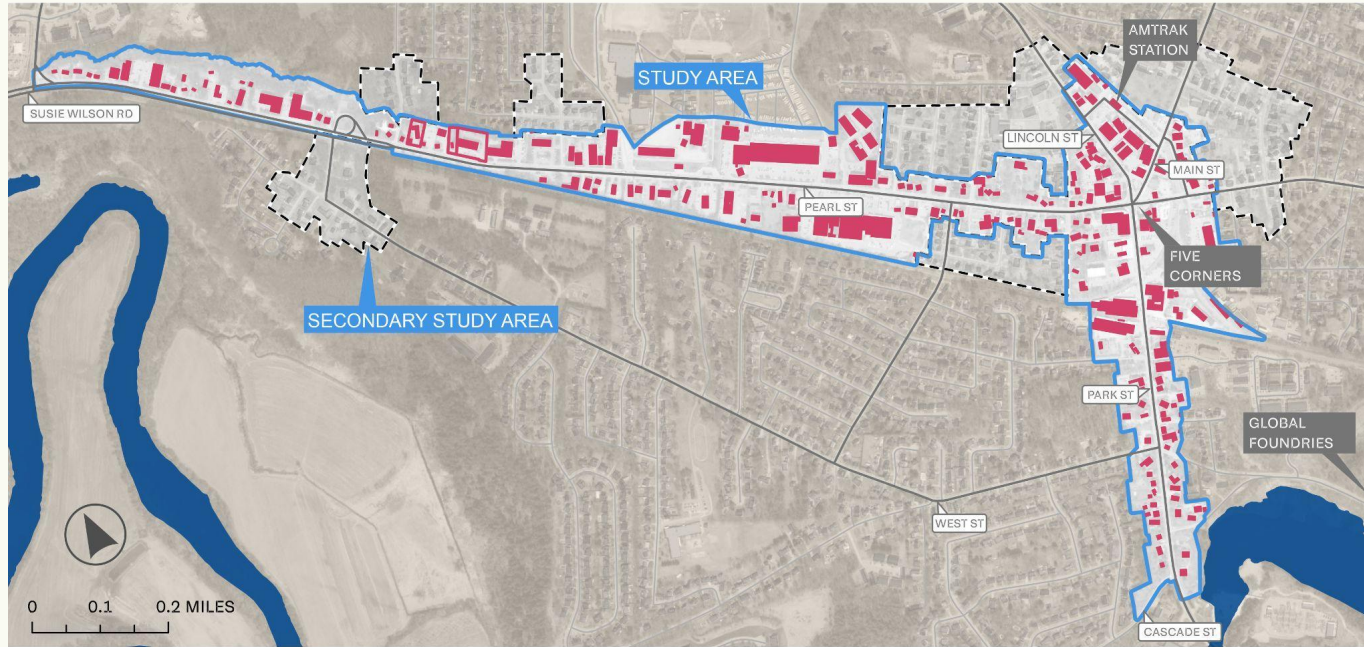
- Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Master Plan
- Federally funded: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program
 - 10 communities throughout Northwest Vermont to develop TOD Plans

What is transit-oriented development (TOD)?

TOD focuses on creating dense, walkable, mixed-use development near transit, creating vibrant, connected communities that enjoy easy access to jobs and services.



Project Area



- **Primary Focus Area: Village Center, Park Street, Pearl Street Corridor**
- **Secondary Focus Areas: *Potential transition zones***



Planning Objective:

SUPPORT SMART GROWTH



The housing shortage is local

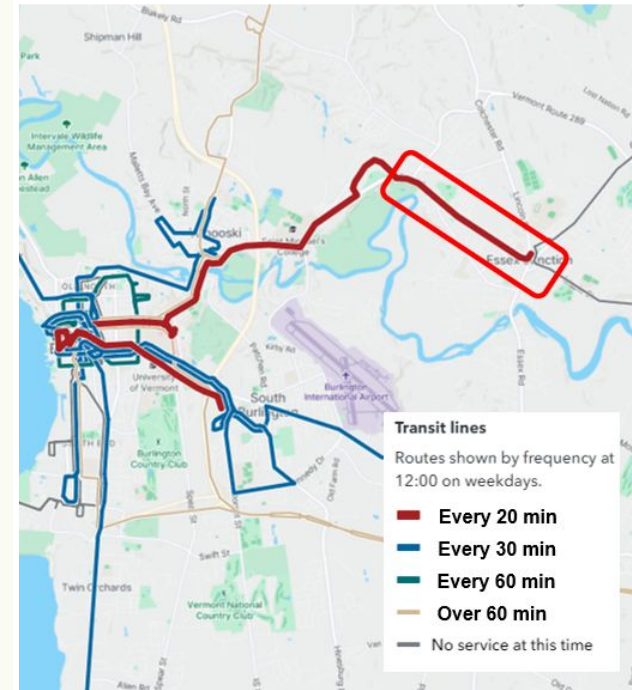
- Housing costs are too high
 - 51% of renters are cost burdened
 - 2% vacancy rate in Chittenden County
- Lack of housing choice and availability
- Adding homes of all sizes in connected, convenient neighborhoods can help address the shortage, shorten commutes, and help local businesses hire.
- Year 2050 housing targets

	Low	Mid	High
Essex Junction	1,529	3,062	4,594
Chittenden County Total	15,783	31,595	47,407



Why TOD (Transit oriented development)?

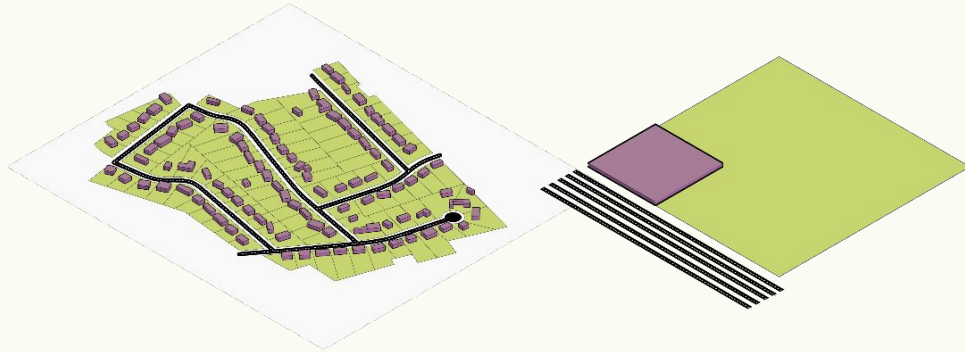
- Pearl Street has existing water, sewer and transit
- Pearl Street has frequent service
- Building around transit can mitigate the need for additional car trips



Efficiently accommodating growth

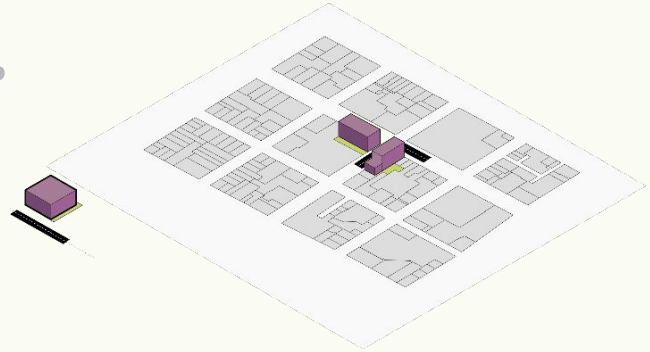
- Proposed changes to municipal code could accommodate around half of Essex Junction's mid range growth target by 2050 within the TOD project area.

100 units @ R2 density



VS.

100 units @ proposed VC density



Big Ideas - structure the Plan

- PP Prioritize PEOPLE**
Improve the experience for pedestrians and cyclists while calming traffic that moves through Five Corners by allocating more right-of-way space for multi-modal transportation, landscaping, lighting, and public space.
- CC Capitalize on the CRESCENT CONNECTOR**
Leverage the City's investment in the Crescent Connector with complimentary development of open space, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and supportive retail and housing.
- AA Develop to add ACTIVITIES & AMENITIES**
Ensure that new development includes amenities for residents and visitors through design guidelines and code updates.
- HT Add HOUSING THOUGHTFULLY**
Increase housing capacity to align with ambitious city and state growth targets through design that fits within the historic City Center fabric and offers diverse options for residents.

- MC Make more CONNECTIONS**
Create more connections for pedestrians, cyclists, and cars through new and updated crosswalks, public space, roadways, and thoughtful development.
- AS Make the ASSETS SHINE**
Recognize and leverage existing community assets, including public space, the Champlain Valley Exposition Centre, historical infrastructure, arts and culture.
- EJ ESSEX JUNCTION for ESSEX JUNCTION**
Support active community organizations and local businesses through programming, marketing, and public space improvements.



Plan Actions - key themes

Transportation

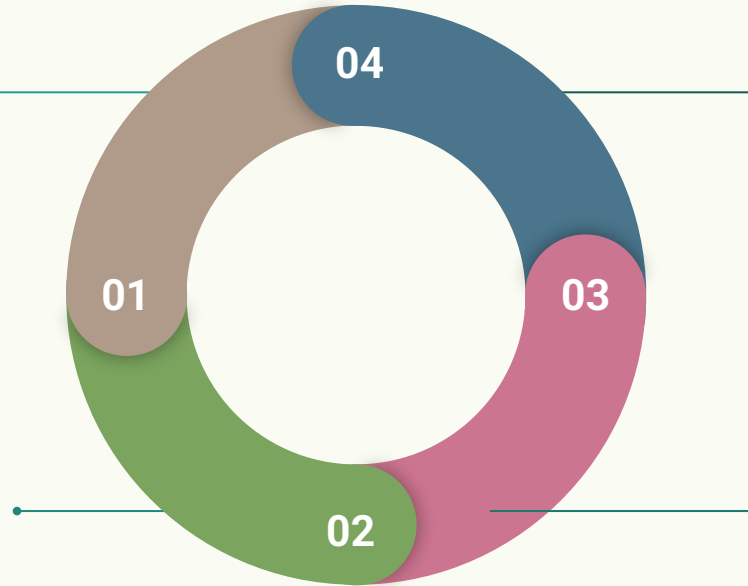
Updating the road network to provide greater safety and comfort for pedestrians, bikers, and residential uses in the study area.

Keywords: contiguity, landscaping, public space, walkability, bikeability

Housing

Allowing more homes in the TOD area to support housing affordability and provide more types of homes to fit different needs and budgets

Keywords: housing diversity, affordability, walkability, height increases, transit access



Services and amenities

Capitalizing on having lots of people in one place to support needed amenities like groceries and pharmacies within walking distance of housing

Keywords: economic development, complete community

Public life & Community Vibrancy

Investing in more community art, public space, and supporting community building and association.

Keywords: murals, food trucks, market structures, pocket parks, landscaping, Main St org., events



framework

What we heard:
Draft plan
**COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**



Community engagement overview



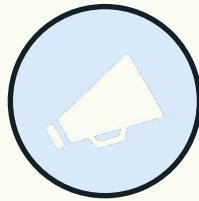
Multiple
Social Media
Posts,
Posters/
Flyers



4
Newsletter
mentions



4,000+
Utility bill
mail inserts



3
Press
releases



3
Online
engagement
tools



6
Conversations
with property
owners



6
Organized
Events



1
Walking Tour



57
Online
survey
responses



146
Engaged
with online
open house



67
online open
house
comments



569
Sticker votes



42
Sticky note
comments

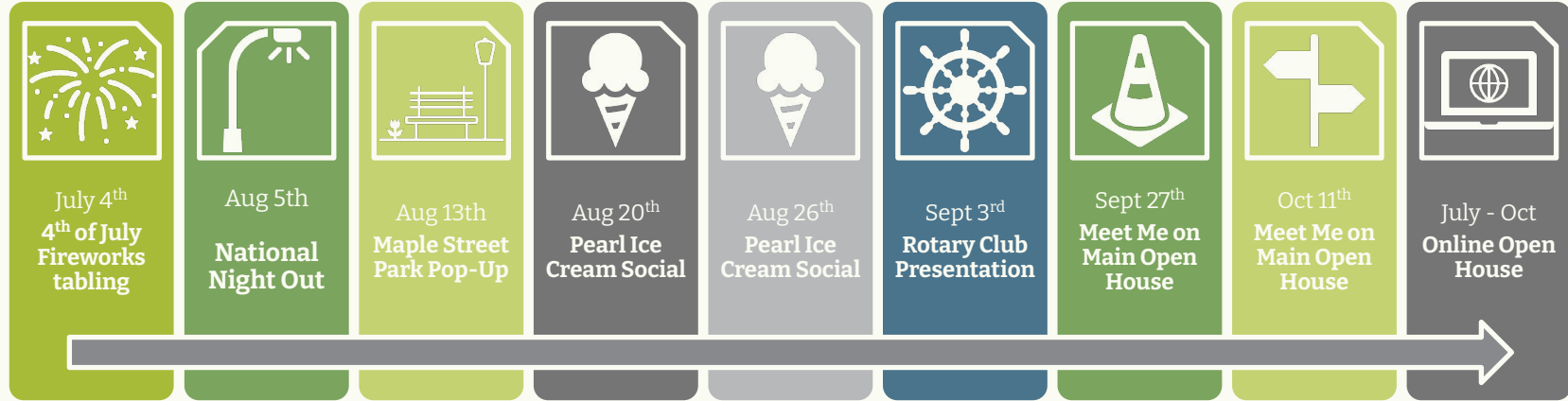


25
Conversations
with youth



framework

Engagement Timeline



Takeaways:

KEY PROPOSALS



HEIGHT INCREASES

Framing questions

- Should we allow increased heights within the study area?
 - If we allow increased heights, how much additional housing can we expect to encourage?
 - If we allow increased heights, how many additional floors should we allow to maximize benefit?

Housing capacity based on height: TOD + VC Zones

Growth target:

High: 4,594

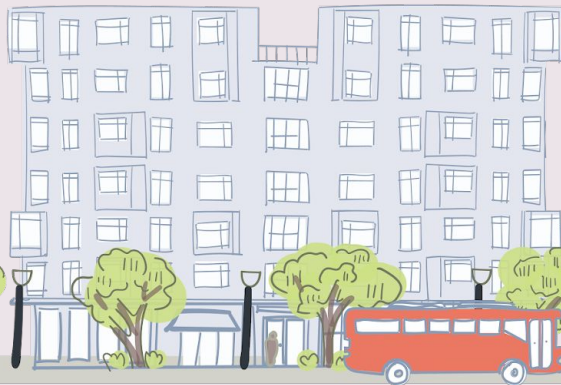
Mid: 3,062

Low: 1,529

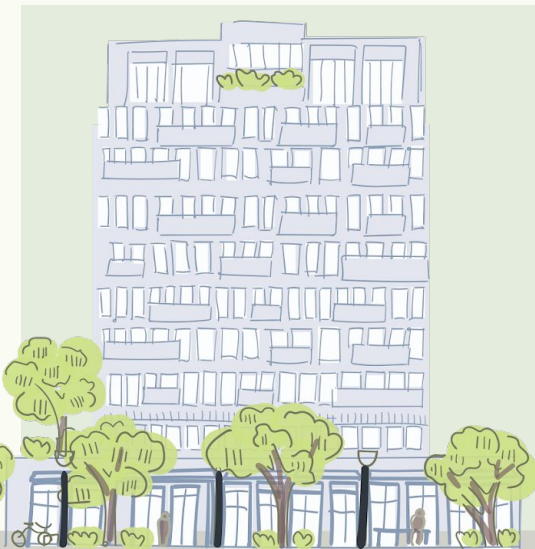


Alternative 0: 4 stories, 1 story bonus
Estimated capacity: 1144 New homes
TOD Zone: 467
Village Center Zone: 677
Total annualized: 46 units

Recommended



Alternative 1: 7 stories, 1 story bonus
Estimated capacity: 1662 New homes
TOD Zone: 689
Village Center Zone: 973
Total annualized: 66 units



Alternative 2: 9 stories, 1 story bonus
Estimated capacity: 2008 New homes
TOD Zone: 836
Village Center Zone: 1172
Total annualized: 80 units

How we came up with those numbers



Height Increases: Community engagement takeaways

Q1. In general, do you support increased height along the Pearl St. Corridor as a way to address the housing shortage?



In-Person

yes (94%) - 61 votes

no (6%) - 4 votes



Online

yes (47%) - 24 votes

neutral (14%) - 7 votes

no (14%) - 20 votes



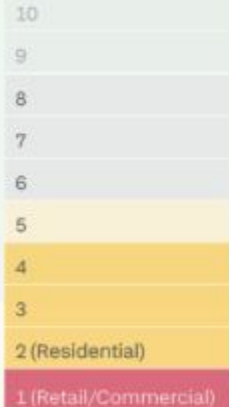
Height increase



In-Person

87% of in-person respondents favored **8-10 story height increases**

What Height... Is Right?



Village Center

TOD District*

42% - 30 votes	37% - 21 votes
13% - 9 votes	11% - 6 votes
32% - 23 votes	39% - 22 votes
7% - 5 votes	4% - 2 votes
4% - 3 votes	7% - 4 votes
2% - 2 votes	2% - 2 votes

Village Center

TOD District*

5% - 3 votes	2% - 1 votes
2% - 1 votes	0% - 0 votes
19% - 11 votes	20% - 13 votes
3% - 2 votes	12% - 8 votes
12% - 7 votes	9% - 6 votes
20% - 12 votes	24% - 16 votes
31% - 18 votes	26% - 17 votes
No Preference 9% - 5 votes	No Preference 8% - 5 votes



Online

8-stories was the **most favored height** among supporters of increasing height limits

over **50%** of online group favored **keeping** existing height limits.



framework

Balancing public feedback: height increase

Feedback

Pros

- More affordable and diverse housing options to meet demonstrated need
- Concentrated population to support local businesses
- Increased development viability and flexibility by maximizing construction type
- Increased likelihood of achieving growth targets
- Generally more fiscally and environmentally sustainable alternative to greenfield development

Concerns/Challenges

- Conflicts with historic architecture and suburban/rural character
- More housing = more cars, more congestion, and a need for more parking
- Disrupted views
- Decline in public safety
- Poor build quality on some recent development could be exacerbated by height increase

Recommendation

Height recommendation

- Allow 7 stories outright and an additional floor as an affordability bonus



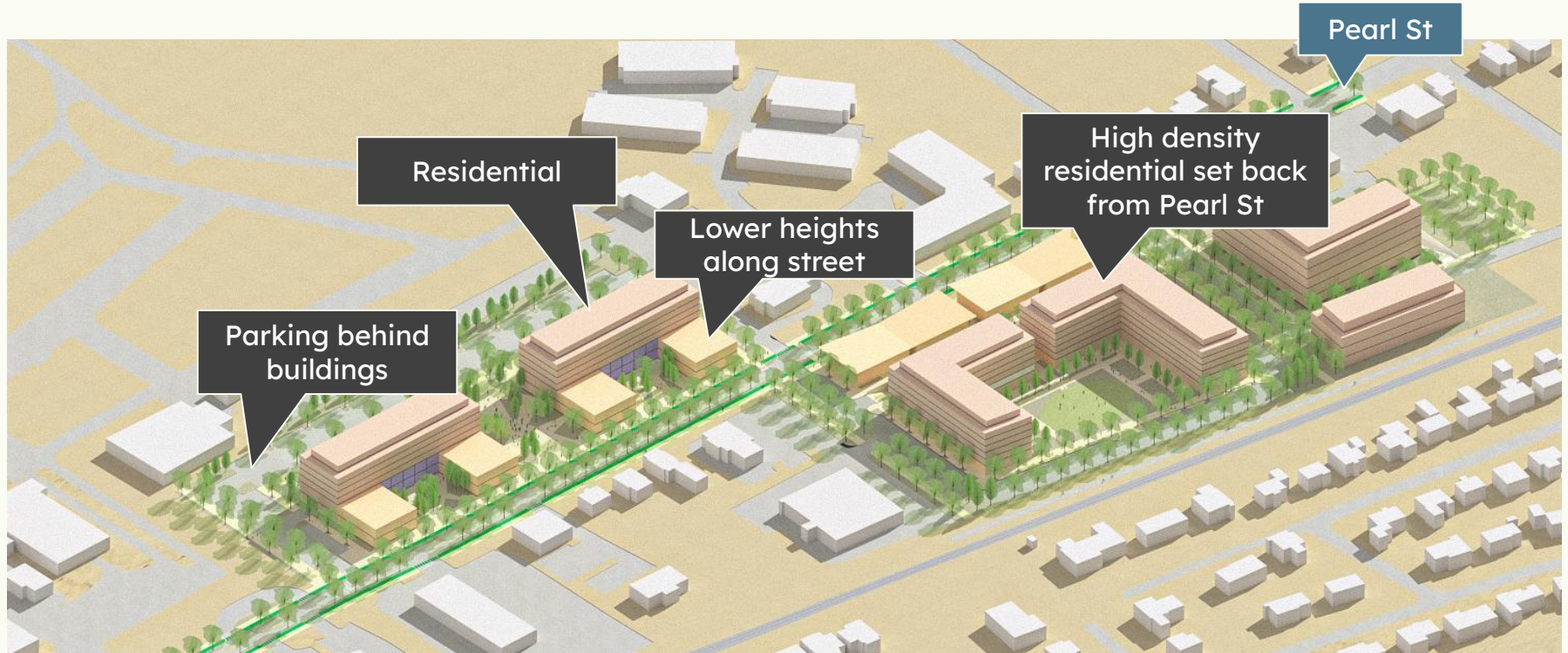
Mitigation strategies

- Calibrate heights along frontages to reduce feeling of scale
- Require transparency, active street uses to increase public safety
- Improve frontage standards to enhance design outcomes

CC4 | Redevelopment at Main and Maple



HT1.2 | Consider a lower height limit along certain street frontages including Pearl St.



Discussion

- Should we allow increased heights within the study area?
 - If we allow increased heights, how many additional floors should we allow to maximize benefit?
 - Can mitigation strategies sufficiently address concerns, or are concerns so great that they can only be addressed by keeping the existing height limit?
 - Is there further information that you would need to make a decision?

Five Corners Right of way reconfiguration



Framing questions

- Should we modify right of ways in Five Corners as recommended?
 - Do the recommendations provide the right balance of improved pedestrian and bike experience while sufficiently addressing the concerns of vehicular through-traffic?

Overview of proposed traffic revisions

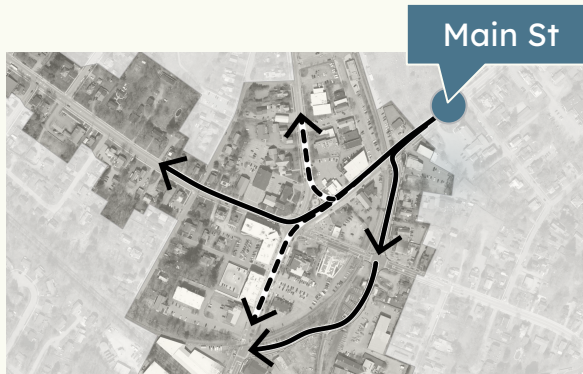
Turning movement removed



Lincoln St



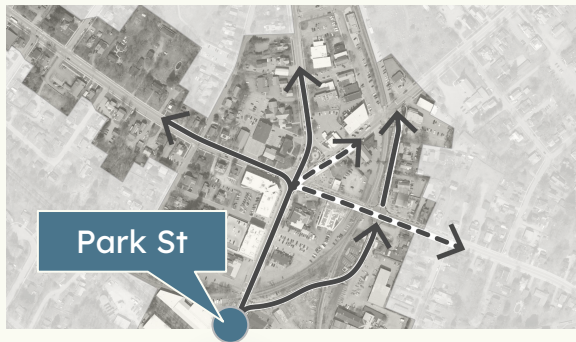
Main St



Maple St



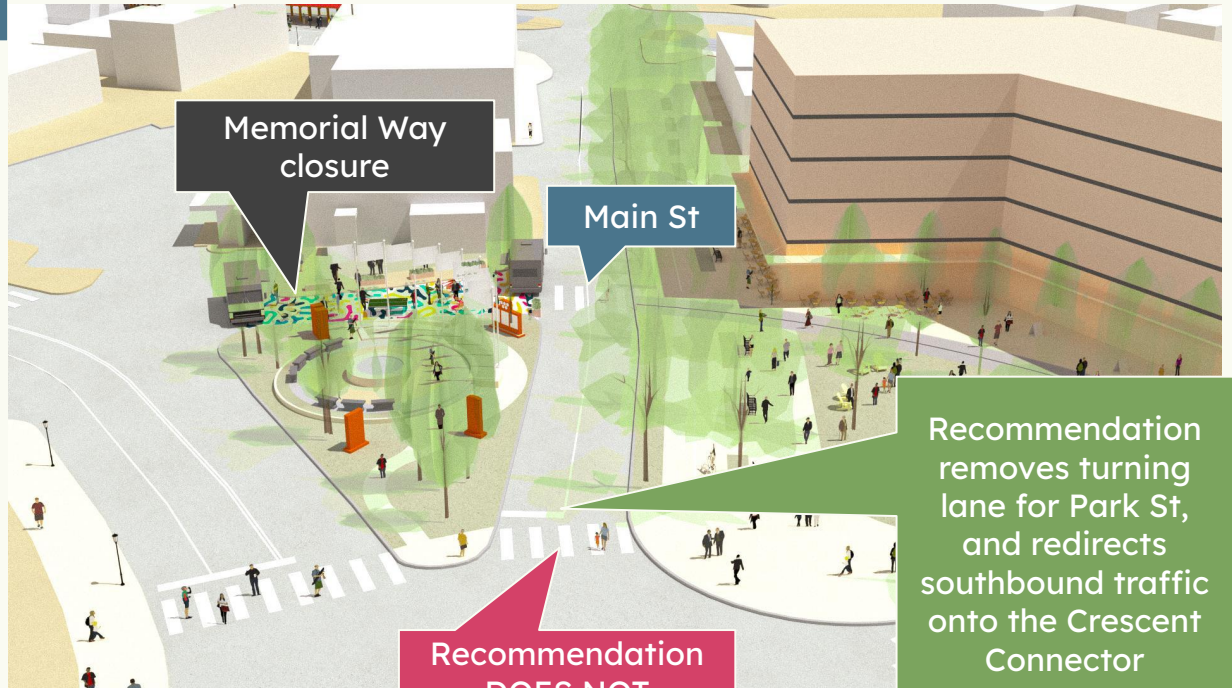
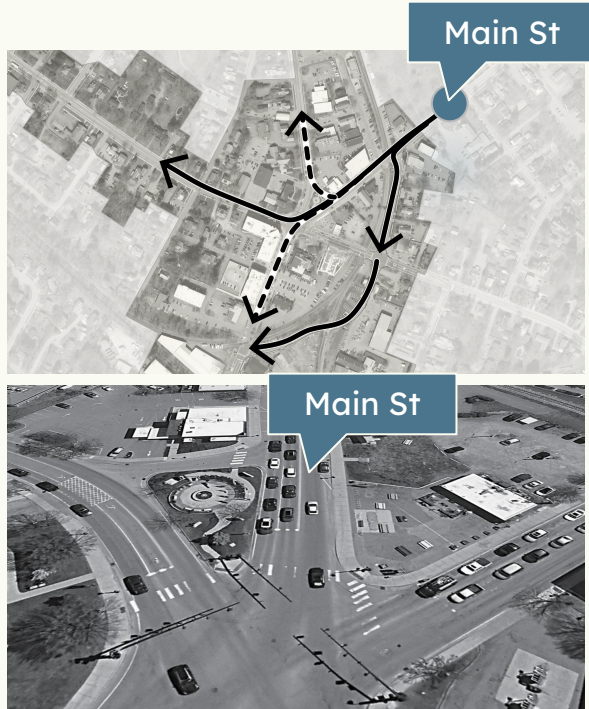
Park St



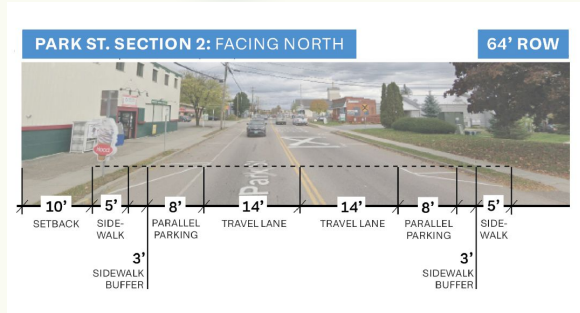
Pearl St



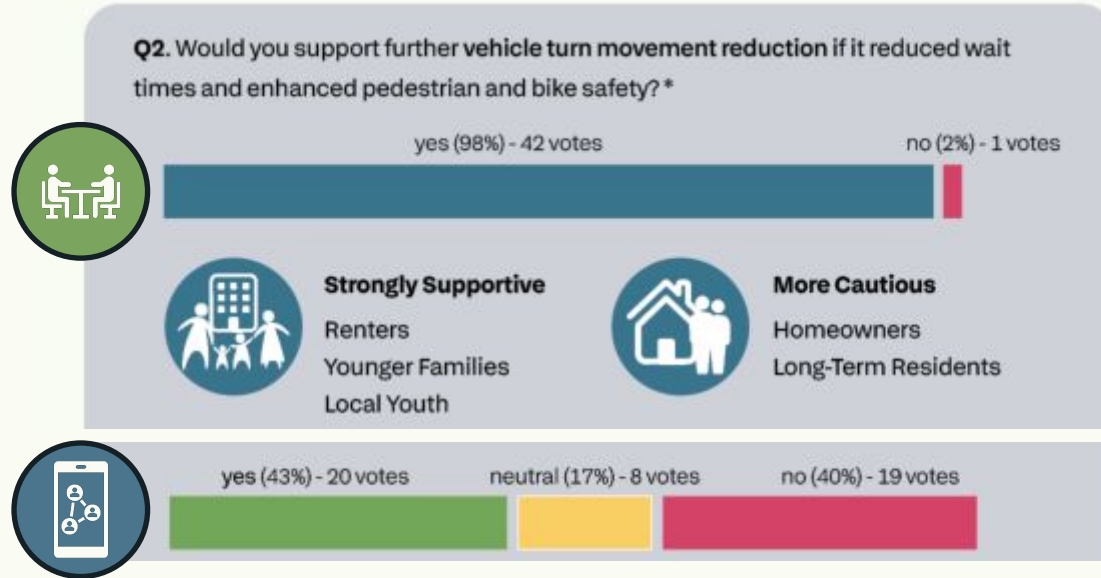
Main St proposed lane reduction



Park St proposed lane reduction



ROW reconfiguration: Community engagement takeaways



Meet Me on Main events

- The Meet Me on Main events were a proof of concept for temporary closure of Main Street.
- Events were well attended, and participants overwhelmingly positive.



Balancing public feedback: ROW reconfiguration

Feedback

Pros

- Dedicates more space to pedestrians and bikers in support of housing and economic development goals
- Reduces impacts on through-traffic compared to full street closures
- Creates more pedestrian and bike connectivity

Concerns/Challenges

- Unclear if the Crescent Connector can handle through-traffic volume bound to and from Global Foundries without “unacceptable” slow-downs
- Concern that there isn’t a sufficient biking community to justify reducing vehicular traffic and making serious ped/bike infrastructure investments

Recommendation

Recommendation

- Move towards Main and Park St Lane closures (no permanent full street closures are recommended)



Mitigation strategies

- Complete a traffic study of lane closures to measure implications for through traffic
- Use temporary lane closures to test road diet
- Calibrate light timing and turn movements on the Crescent Connector to better serve through-traffic
- Test pedestrian and bike infrastructure before making permanent investments

Discussion

- Should we modify right of ways in Five Corners as recommended?
 - Does the recommendation provide the right balance of improved pedestrian and bike experience while sufficiently addressing the concerns of vehicular through-traffic?
 - Do mitigation efforts and phasing sufficiently minimize risk?
 - Is there further information that you would need before making a decision?



Public Space investments



Framing questions

- Which public space improvements and programs should move forward?
 - Are there additional public space improvements that should be prioritized?

AS 4.4 | Commission murals on public buildings near Five Corners

2 Lincoln

Essex Junction Fire
Department



Activate Railroad Avenue



ROW reconfiguration: Community engagement takeaways



Railroad Ave. Market Structures

(100% supportive) - 17 votes

- "The most exciting idea — something the city really needs."
- "Great for year-round markets, events, and local vendors."
- "Would make this area a destination, not just a passthrough."

Pocket Park

(100% supportive) - 12 votes

- "We need small green spaces with shade and seating."
- "Perfect for families and lunch breaks downtown."

Veterans Memorial / Food Truck Space

(80% supportive / 20% cautious) - 16 votes

- "Good spot for social gatherings and weekend activity."
- "Noise and circulation near the memorial could be an issue."
- "Rotating food trucks would keep it interesting."

Murals

(100% supportive) - 19 votes

- "fun, colorful, easy to implement."
- "A way to bring energy and identity to downtown."
- Would love to see local artists involved"



Railroad Ave. Market Structures

(34% supportive / 28% neutral / 38% cautious) - 47 votes

- "I would love to have an open air farmers market in Essex Jct"

Pocket Park

(29% - support / 31% neutral / 40% cautious) - 48 votes

- "5 corners is not a place for a park—too loud, poor air quality, inadequate parking, completely unattractive area."
- "Stop wasting money on stupid pocket parks"

Veterans Memorial / Food Truck Space

(36% supportive / 26% neutral / 38% cautious) - 50 votes

- "We are a small city with a small budget. There really is no need now to build limited use enclosures."
- "Don't try to cram more stuff in this dysfunctional crossroads"

Murals

(19% support / 17% neutral / 48% cautious) - 50 votes

- "...its very important to make sure we are supporting local, female, lgbtqia+, and bipoc artists"
- "Anytime something nice goes up, it get ruined by people who never see the repercussions and could care less."



framework

Discussion

- Which public space improvements and programs should move forward?
 - Are there additional public space improvements that should be prioritized?



NEXT STEPS



framework

What comes next?

1. Connect the Junction Plan

- a. Make any necessary revisions

2. Code Updates

- a. Update the land development code to reflect code-related plan actions





CONNECT THE **JUNCTION**

a transit-oriented development plan for responsible growth

THANK YOU!



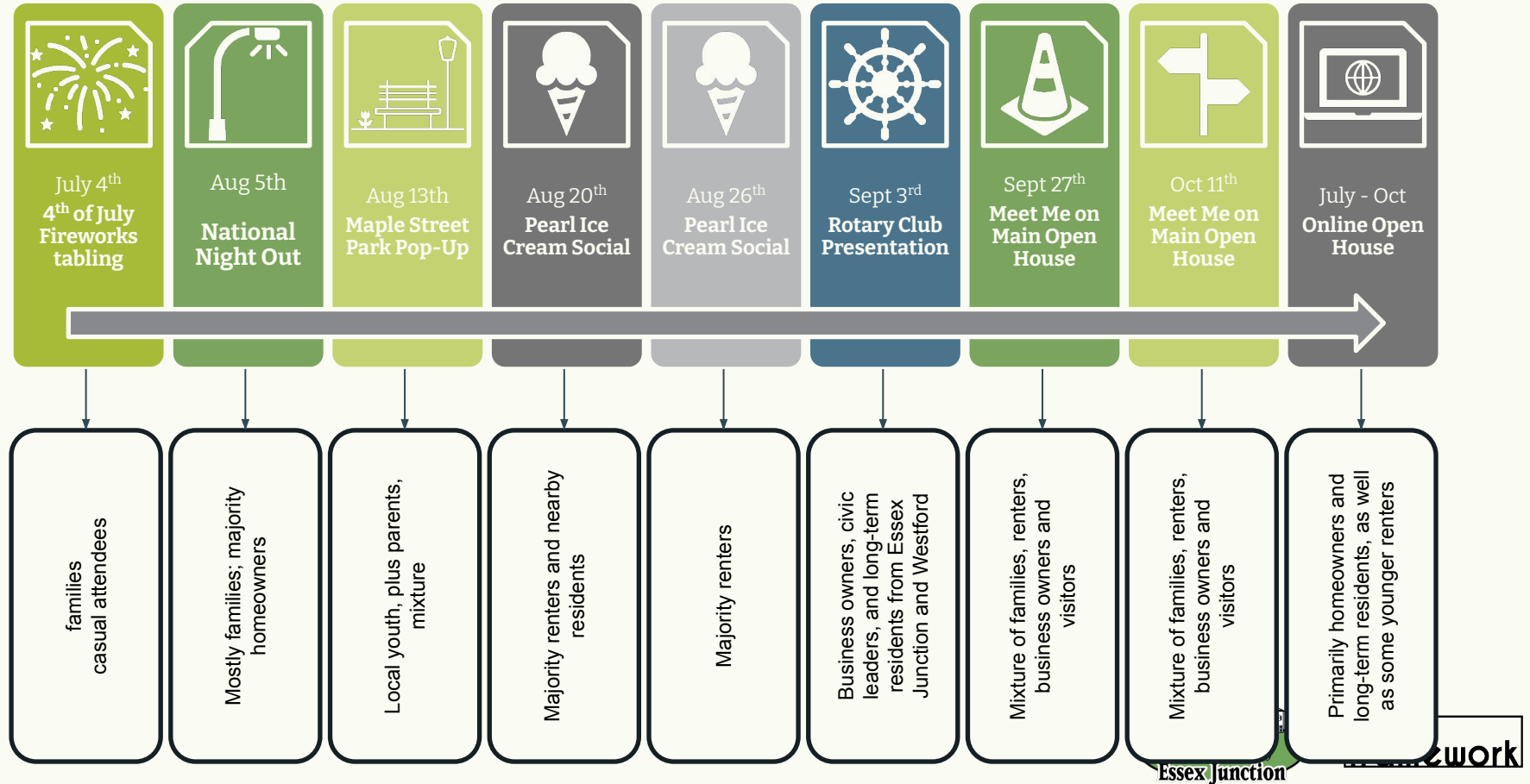
framework

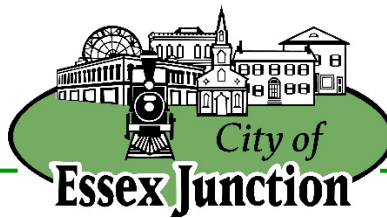
Plan development: discussion

- Do the plan actions support community liveability?
- Do the plan actions successfully plan for city growth? If not, what additional actions should be considered?
- Do the proposed heights within the study area feel appropriate especially when paired with actions intended to reduce feeling of scale?
- Do the suggestions for changes to traffic flows in Five Corners appropriately balance community needs for walkability with the needs of through-traffic?



Engagement Timeline





MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission; Development Review Board; City Council

From: Christopher Yuen, Community Development Director

Meeting Date: Thursday, November 6, 2025

Subject: 802 Homes / Homes for All Phase 3

Issue: The City has been selected by the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development to serve as a “Development-Ready” community partner for their “802 Homes” initiative.

Discussion:

Note that a similar version of this memo was previously included in the October 22 City Council packet

As mentioned in my October 8 memo to the City Council, the Community Development Department applied for the City to be one of three “Development-Ready” Community Partners as part of Vermont’s award-winning Homes for All initiative. Essex Junction has since been selected to participate in this program, alongside the Towns of Hartford and Manchester.

By participating as a “Development-Ready” community partner, the City will:

- Tailor plans for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) through four-unit homes—adaptable for stick-built or off-site construction—to meet the community’s needs.
- Be the first to gain access to a catalog of 10 ready-to-build, code-compliant home designs (Note: Once the 802 Homes catalog goes “live”, other communities will have a pathway to utilize the home designs).
- Learn how to systematically identify opportunity sites for infill housing in the community.
- Help shape a statewide model that empowers small-scale builders to deliver infill housing that fits into existing neighborhoods.
- Explore streamlined permitting approaches while reinforcing the community’s identity and values.

Across the country, communities embracing ready-to-build home designs are unlocking new housing potential. The Community Development Department is excited to be part of this initiative, which may play a major role in helping the City address the housing shortage and achieve its housing targets.

The first event of this initiative, a Missing Middle Homes & Infill Site Inventory Virtual Tour, is anticipated to take place on November 18, 2025. During this session:

- Typical infill sites and existing housing typologies will be selected to showcase a representative variety of typical infill opportunities within the selected “development-ready” communities that are applicable to similar communities across Vermont. They will be used as a source of inspiration for the 802 Homes catalog and the 10 home designs. The tour or virtual event will be planned and run by the DHCD’s consulting team.
- Communities will help identify compelling existing missing middle homes (MMHs) that could serve as precedents for the 10 home designs, as well as typical infill opportunities suitable for MMH development (e.g., large or double lots, deep lots that could accommodate an ADU or second principal structure, underutilized parcels adjacent to the village, etc.).

Technical staff, as well as interested members of the Planning Commission and City Council are invited to attend this event.

In the coming months, a broader group of stakeholders—including housing advocates, interested homeowners, and community members—will have the opportunity to participate in an in-person design charrette to help shape these ready-made home designs.

More information on Homes for All Phase 3 - 802 Homes is here:

<https://acd.vermont.gov/current-initiatives/homesforall/802homes>

Cost:

Aside from staff time dedicated to this project, there is no cost to the City.

Recommendation:

This memo is for information only.