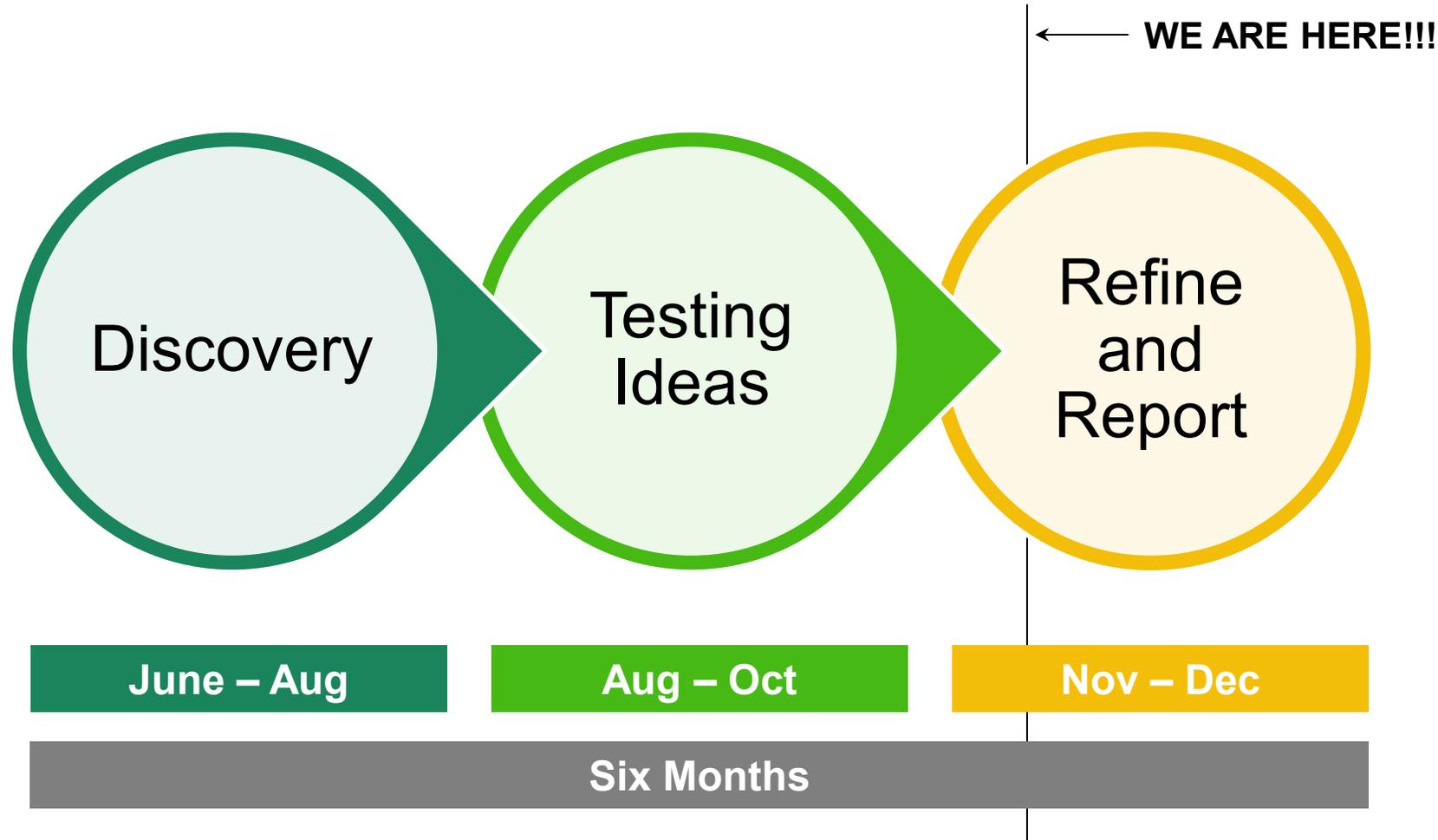


# Upper Main Street Planning Project: Update #2





# Planning Process





# Master Plan Workshop

## WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS

01

### PLANNING SESSIONS

5 Stakeholders Groups

Oct 01/02



02

### PUBLIC WORKSHOP

32-40 Participants

Oct 03

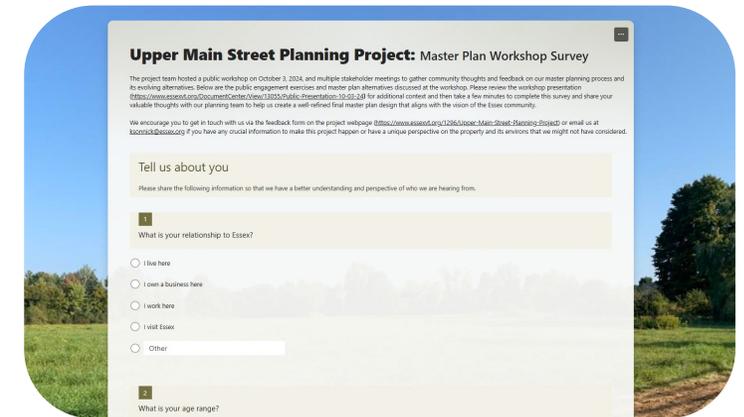


03

### ONLINE SURVEY

62 Respondents

Oct/Nov



Insightful conversation and engagement with the community

# Master Plan Workshop | What we heard?

## 01 PLANNING SESSION | 5 Stakeholders Groups

- Concerns about trails/hunting in (and around) wetlands
- Challenges for fire station placement/ requirements and traffic issue (roundabout to solve traffic congestion?)
- Possibility to merge fire department and rescue
- Greater visibility for library and town center from the Vt-15
- Need space for future expansion
- Prefer authentic detailing and caution against “fake” traditionalism
- Preferred precedents: Williston fire station, Charlotte library



# Master Plan Workshop | What we heard?

## 02 PUBLIC WORKSHOP | 32-40 Participants

- Conserve and protect old (big) growth trees and open space
- Leverage sunset view from nature park
- Better linkage to wetlands with ADA accessible boardwalk
- Additional programs like multipurpose room, indoor recreation center, flexible theatre, incubation hub, nature center and auditorium
- Combined heating and cooling system (Geothermal)
- Prefer separate cycle track from the walking trails
- Green Infrastructure and storm water retention
- Need space for future expansion





# Master Plan Workshop | What we heard?

## 02 PUBLIC WORKSHOP | 32-40 Participants

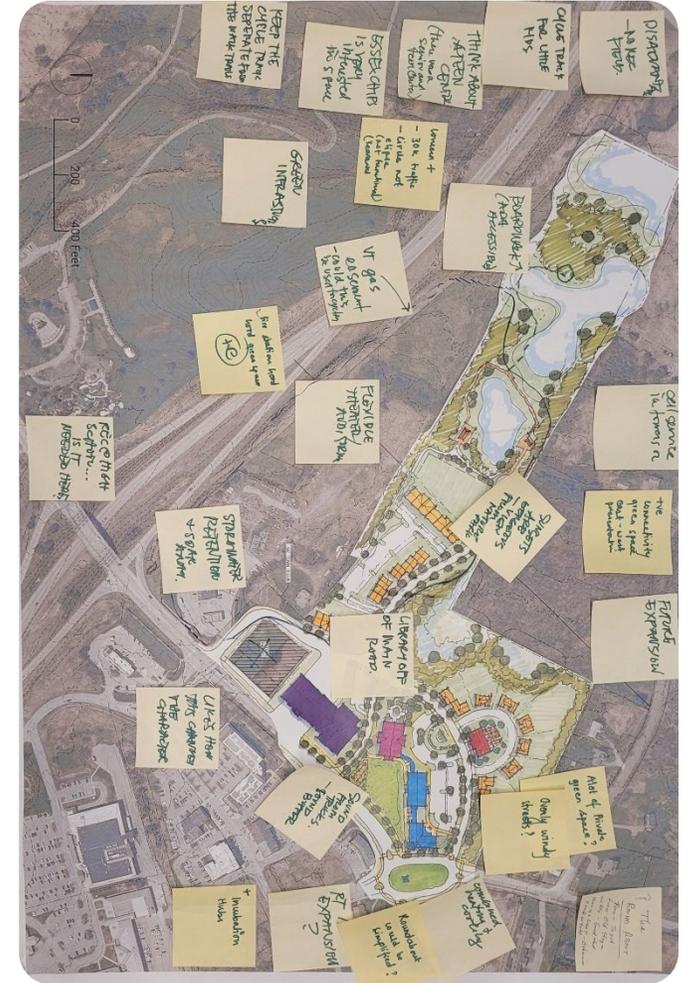
UPPER MAIN STREET PLANNING PROJECT | SELECT BOARD PRESENTATION



OPTION 01  
"A Classic Town Center"



OPTION 02  
"A Green Spine"



OPTION 03  
"Town Commons"



# Master Plan Workshop | What we heard?

## 02 PUBLIC WORKSHOP | 32-40 Participants

**+Pros:**

- Good fire station circulation, town green and building organization
- Town buildings well interconnected

**-Cons:**

- Prefer set back for library away from VT-15 for nicer, quieter experience
- Prefer less housing

OPTION 01  
"A Classic Town Center"

**+Pros:**

- Boulevard
- Clear hierarchy of street network
- Clear segregation between town and housing area
- Enclosed green space in housing

**-Cons:**

- Inadequate outdoor space adjacent to library for programming
- More housing took away future expansion space
- More buildings separated are costing more to heat
- The fire station is partially located on adjacent property not owned by the town, and its feasibility would require an agreement with the property owner.

OPTION 02  
"A Green Spline"

**+Pros:**

- Preferable location of fire station
- Preferred green connectivity throughout the site

**-Cons:**

- No recreation field
- Roundabout needs to be redesigned (circular vs ellipse shape)
- Need sound buffer (sound from trucks)
- Overly winding streets with lots of private green space

**Preferred Workshop Option**

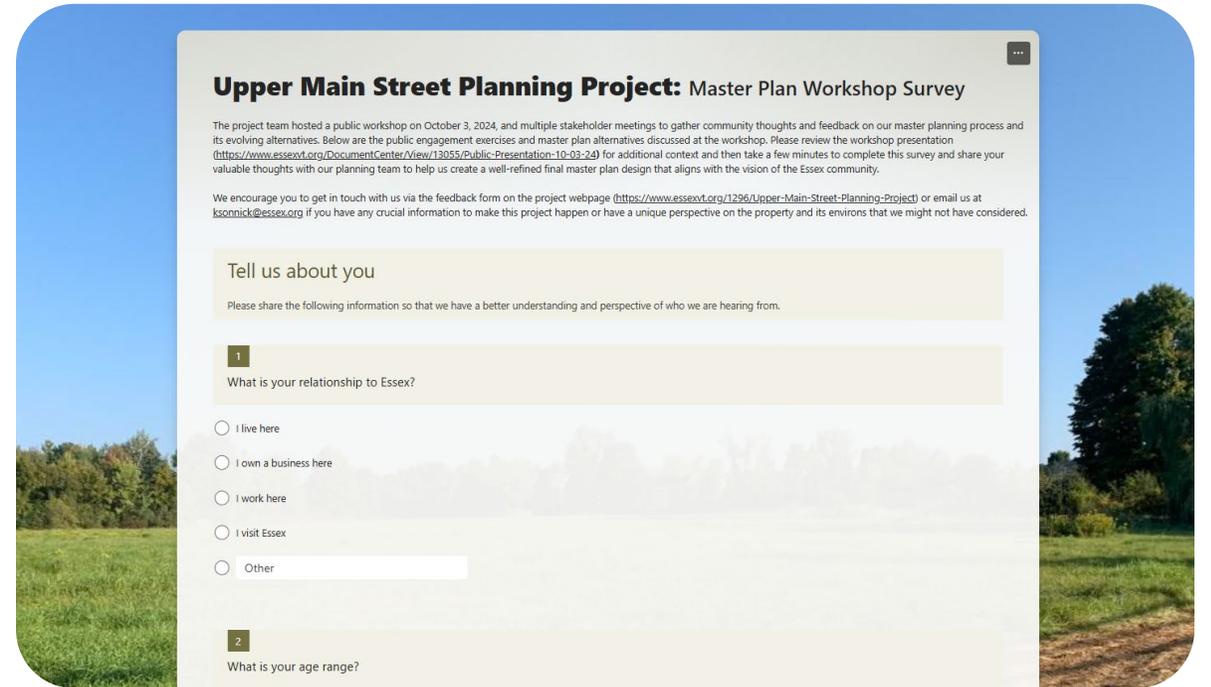
OPTION 03  
"Town Commons"



# Master Plan Workshop | What we heard?

## 03 ONLINE SURVEY | 62 Respondents

- Majority (84%) of respondents are living in Essex
- More than half (69%) of respondents fall within the age group of 31 to 60 years while nearly one-quarter (21%) are between 61 to 80 years



# Master Plan Workshop | What we heard?

## 03 ONLINE SURVEY | 62 Respondents

Option 01: "A Classic Town Center" received positive feedback for its central green space, recreational areas, parking, and community-oriented design.

### Likes:

- Many respondents appreciate the ample green space, recreation areas, and open spaces in this design option. The central town green and community gathering space is seen as a positive feature
- The inclusion of recreational facilities like sports fields and courts is viewed favorably
- Some like the layout with the library and municipal buildings centralized and easily accessible
- The lack of dense residential housing is favored by several respondents

### Dislikes/Concerns:

- Concerns over lack of sufficient parking for the library, green spaces, and other buildings
- Dislike for the inclusion of residential housing, especially multi-unit apartments/condos. Preference for townhomes
- Potential noise issues from the fire station disrupting events on the green or library
- Doubts about the need for a soccer field when the Tree Farm fields are nearby
- Worries about increased traffic congestion and the need for additional traffic lights on Route 15
- Criticism of the small size of the town common/green area and desire for larger green spaces and community gardens
- Cost concerns and potential tax increases for the proposed development

**VOTE: 46%**

\*14% People voted for none of the options

## MASTER PLAN ALTERNATIVES | Option 01: "A Classic Town Center"



# Master Plan Workshop | What we heard?

## 03 ONLINE SURVEY | 62 Respondents

Option 02: "A Green Spine" was praised for its greenery and residential options but criticized for excessive housing and lack of public spaces.

### Likes:

- Some appreciated the green spine and natural areas, as well as the layout with residential streets along the back
- The close proximity of town offices, library, and fire station was seen as a positive aspect
- There were mixed opinions on the residential options, with some liking the mix of housing types and others finding it too dense
- The access and visibility of buildings along the main road was appreciated by some

### Dislikes/Concerns:

- Too much residential housing takes up space that could be used for public/municipal purposes
- Lack of sufficient green space and recreational areas for the community
- Concerns about increased traffic congestion and lack of parking
- Smaller town office and library buildings than desired
- Uncertainty about acquiring additional land for the fire station
- Residential areas too close to municipal buildings like the fire station, causing potential disruptions
- Lack of a cohesive town center feel, appearing more like a housing development
- Doubts about the affordability of the residential units for the general public

**VOTE: 10%**

\*14% People voted for none of the options

## MASTER PLAN ALTERNATIVES | Option 02: "A Green Spine"





# Master Plan Workshop | What we heard?

## 03 ONLINE SURVEY | 62 Respondents

Option 03: "Town Commons" was favored for its dual entrances, roundabout, and balanced mix of green spaces and residential areas.

### Likes:

- Many respondents appreciate the green space and town commons area in this design
- The roundabout is seen as a positive for improving traffic flow
- The layout and arrangement of buildings around the central green space is praised for its cohesive, campus-like feel and sense of community
- The direct access for the fire station and separation of the library from main roads are viewed favorably
- Mixed opinions on the amount of residential housing included, with some wanting more and others preferring less

### Dislikes/Concerns:

- Concerns about too much residential housing and not enough public green space or parking
- Doubts about the feasibility and necessity of certain design elements like the roundabout and wetland areas. Some express concerns about implementation and potential costs of roundabouts
- Dislike for the proposed roundabout, which may cause confusion and traffic issues.
- Desire for better traffic flow and accessibility, especially for emergency vehicles
- Worries about increased traffic congestion and impact on existing roads.
- Preference for more recreational areas, community gardens, and amenities for public use
- Criticism of using taxpayer funds for private housing development
- Concerns about potential flooding in certain areas near the sewer limit

## VOTE: 31%

\*14% People voted for none of the options

### MASTER PLAN ALTERNATIVES | Option 03: "Town Commons"

#### Concept:

"The Town Commons reimagines the site by capturing two points of access, from the southeast and southwest, into two prominent vistas with a skewed central town green and a roundabout to streamline traffic flow on VT-15."

\*The design of the site beside the town office, library, fire station and multipurpose building is could be flexible and used for potential future expansion of town campus, recreation or housing depending on future needs.

\*\*The town has an agreement with the adjacent property owner to give 0.5 acres of the town-owned property in exchange for ownership of the proposed right-of-way across from Billie Butler Drive.

- LEGEND
- Waterbodies
  - Wetland / Greenery
  - Residential
  - Town Office
  - Library
  - Fire Station
  - Other (Services/ Mixed Use)
  - New Parcel\*\*



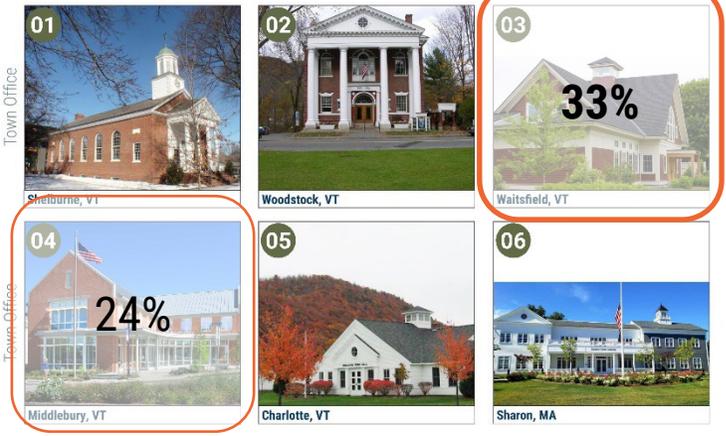


# Master Plan Workshop | What we heard?

## 03 ONLINE SURVEY | 62 Respondents

Visual Preferences | Preferred Municipal Votes

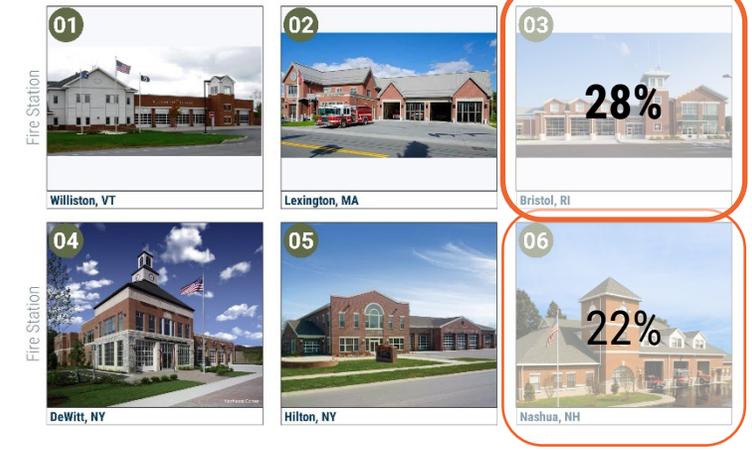
VISUAL PREFERENCE | Municipal: Town Office



VISUAL PREFERENCE | Municipal: Library



VISUAL PREFERENCE | Municipal: Fire Station / Rescue





# Master Plan Workshop | What we heard?

## 03 ONLINE SURVEY | 62 Respondents

### Visual Preferences | Preferred Residential and Open Space Votes

#### VISUAL PREFERENCE | Residential: Townhomes



#### VISUAL PREFERENCE | Residential: Multifamily



#### VISUAL PREFERENCE | Residential: Mixed



#### VISUAL PREFERENCE | Open Space : Public Realm



#### VISUAL PREFERENCE | Open Space : Wetlands



#### VISUAL PREFERENCE | Open Space : Sustainability





# Master Plan Workshop | What we heard?

## 03 ONLINE SURVEY | 62 Respondents

### Additional Programs Suggestions

- Open Space and Recreation:
  - Walking trails
  - Gardens and gazebos
  - Community gardens
  - Dog park
  - Accessible playground
  - Outdoor ice skating rink
  - Senior center combined with daycare
  - Indoor swimming pool
  - Volleyball/tennis/pickleball courts
  - Recreation center
  - Outdoor theater space
- Social
  - Green space for community events
  - Large community pavilion for rental/events
  - Teen center
  - Community building for classes/meetings
  - Cultural programs (auditorium, music, theater)
  - Community solar
  - Childcare center
  - Artist studio/maker space
- Others
  - Recreation department offices
  - Police station annex
  - Electric vehicle charging stations
  - Commuter parking lot

Some comments express concerns about costs and limiting development to essentials. There are differing opinions on the extent of development, with some favoring more open green space and others supporting additional recreational and community facilities.



# Architectural Programming | What are we up too?

## 04 Programming meetings | 3 Stakeholder Groups

Fire Department



Town Hall



Library





# Architectural Programming | What are we up too?

## 04 Programming meetings | 3 Stakeholder Groups

### Fire Department

- Sharing Space with Essex Rescue
- Planning space for the future
- Considerations for full-time staff
- Space for future apparatus
- Considering phases full-time staff beds

### Town Hall

- More conference rooms
- Larger meeting space within town hall buildings
- Consideration for separate community hall and/or gymnasium
- Preference for 3-story building
- Provide space for future growth
- Considering sharing with Civic organizations (IE Community Justice)
- Security
- Welcome Area
- Shared space in community or gymnasium space

### Library

- Need for community activity space
- Can share larger rooms in community or gymnasium space
- Need more space for inventory
- Connections to shared spaces



# Next Steps!!

1. Develop final master plan based on input from stakeholders, public meeting and survey
2. Architectural Programming: Programming refinement, stakeholder input, floor plans, perspective drawings and cost estimating
3. Next in-Person Engagement Opportunity:  
Wednesday, December 11<sup>th</sup> at Essex Town Hall (81 Main Street)

