



**WORKFORCE
HOUSING COALITION**
— OF THE GREATER SEACOAST —
Opening Doors to Vibrant Communities

The Kennebunk Savings Bank
Workforce Housing Design Charrette in Stratham, New Hampshire
Hosted by the Workforce Housing Coalition of the Greater Seacoast
and the Town of Stratham, New Hampshire

October 22 & 24, 2014

Introduction

The Workforce Housing Coalition of the Greater Seacoast and the Town of Stratham hosted a workforce housing design charrette in the community of Stratham New Hampshire. Held over a two-day period, October 22 & 24, 2014, the process included a site walk, community dialogue, and design workshop, and culminated in a design reveal on October 24, 2014. This, the Coalition's fifth annual design charrette, produced conceptual designs for the development of two sites in Stratham that included workforce housing opportunities.

What is a charrette?

A Workforce Housing Coalition design charrette is an intensive planning session where property owners, community residents, designers, and other professionals collaborate to create a vision for development. Charrettes often take place in multiple sessions in which the group divides into sub-groups. Each sub-group then presents its work as material for further dialogue. Such charrettes serve as a way of quickly generating multiple design concepts while integrating the aptitudes and interests of a diverse collection of people.

A charrette is a unique opportunity to...

- Envision workforce housing developments possible under current land-use regulations.
- Suggest modifications to current land-use regulations to better suit workforce housing development.
- Test the financial feasibility of design concepts.
- Provide proposals to decision-makers for potential development of the subject sites.

The charrette process can be summarized in nine steps:

1. Identify the study area.
2. Reach out to property owners and stakeholders.
3. Research the study area.
4. Recruit volunteer design teams.
5. Walk the site with owners and stakeholders.
6. Listen to the needs and concerns of all stakeholders.
7. Create design options by volunteer team members.
8. Present designs and recommendations to all stakeholders.
9. Prepare a Summary Publication with recommendations.

Typical charrette teams include:

- Designers and planners - architects, landscape architects, engineers, environmental consultants, municipal and consulting planners.
- Financing and development professionals - developers, construction estimators, bankers, and real estate agents.

Charrette team members are unpaid volunteers, who contributed an average of 14 hours, plus travel time, to the Stratham charrette process. This amounted to over 335 volunteer hours of professional talent and time put into the Stratham project.

Charrette Partners & Sponsors

Platinum Level:



Gold Level:

Town of **Stratham, New Hampshire** Incorporated 1716



Property Owners

Fred Emanuel

Kevin King

Special Recognition

Thank you to Lincoln Daley, Stratham Town Planner, Paul R. Deschaine, Town Administrator, the Stratham Planning Board and Board of Selectmen for their helpfulness and partnership.

Additionally, we also appreciate the generosity of the many local businesses that provided in-kind gifts of refreshments, meeting space, technological resources and materials : Café at Stratham Village Market, Dunkin Donuts, Formichelli's Pizzeria e Ristorante, Hannaford Supermarket, Kittery Community Center, Lindt & Sprungli, Maine Sea Grant/University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Shaw's Supermarket, Sweet Dreams Bakery, and T.H.A. Architects L.L.C.

Charrette Design Team

Design Team Lead

Thomas House, THA Architects L.L.C.,
Vice President -WHC Board of Directors

Design Team Members

Paul Bergeron, Federal Savings Bank
Mike Castagna, Castagna Consulting Group
John Chagnon, Ambit Engineering, Inc.
Marty Chapman, The Housing Partnership
Scott Collard, Scott N. Collard Landscape
Architecture L.L.C.

Lincoln Daley, Town of Stratham

Carrie DiGeorge, Kennebunk Savings Bank

Dave Emmanuel, Emmanuel Engineering

Tony Fallon, Tony Fallon Architecture

Leo Gagnon, Keller Williams Coastal Realty,
Gove Group Real Estate, L.L.C.

David Groen, Groen Builders

Fenton Groen, Groen Builders

Rob Harbeson, DeStefano Architects

Keely Maguire, Federal Savings Bank

Rip Patten, Credere Associates

Ralph Pope, Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage,
WHC Board of Directors

Gayle Sanders, Gayle Sanders Home Design L.L.C.,
WHC Board of Directors

Deb Scott, Federal Savings Bank

Cliff Sinnott, Rockingham Planning Commission,
WHC Board of Directors

Eric Weinrieb, Altus Engineering

Roberta Woodburn, Woodburn & Company
Landscape Architecture, L.L.C.

Event Planning Team

Kristen Grant, Maine Sea Grant/University of Maine
Cooperative Extension

Ashlee Iber Amenti, WHC Executive Director

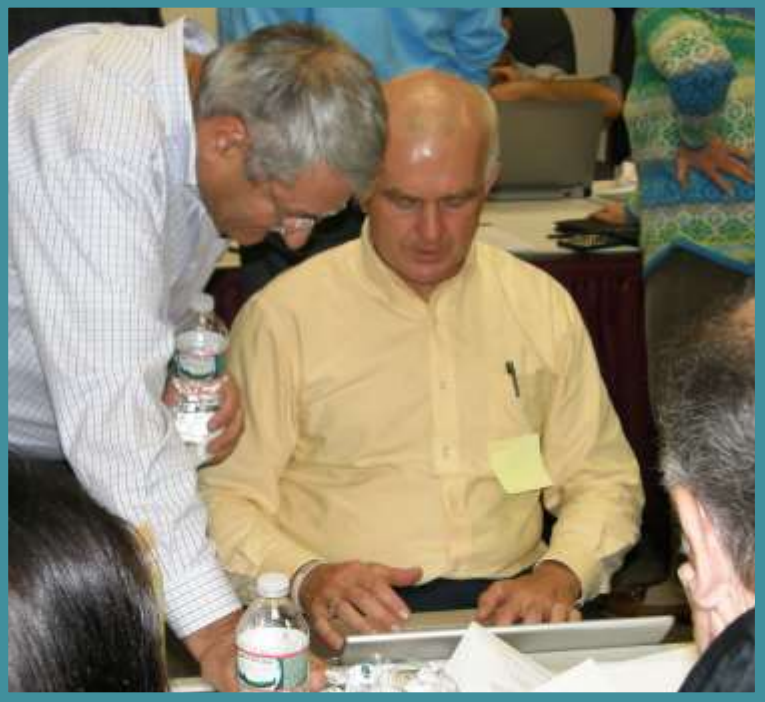
Paula Perkins, Stratham resident

Stephanye Schulyer, Unitil

Leakana Sok, WHC Intern

Summary Publication Design

Patricia Prescott, Consultant



**WORKFORCE
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The Workforce Housing Coalition of the Greater Seacoast is a 501c3 nonprofit organization. Our mission is to be a catalyst for the development of a range of housing options affordable for the diverse workforce in the Greater Seacoast region. Visit us online at www.seacoastwhc.org.



Professional offices at Portsmouth Avenue



View south on Portsmouth Avenue



View north on Portsmouth Avenue



View east from Portsmouth Avenue



West abutter



South abutter



From access road



Corn fields at mid-property



Forest at rear of property



Trisha's Way



Forest near Trisha's Way



Trisha's Way to Bunker Hill Avenue

Site Walk Observations

The charrette focus area is a group of properties located in the center of Stratham, off Route 108/Portsmouth Avenue. The sites are located on the easterly side of Portsmouth Avenue, which serves as the major artery through the Town's business and commercial districts.

The subject sites are situated in the Town's Professional/Residential District (PRE) and Residential/Agricultural District (R/A).

Professional/Residential District (PRE) - The "front" portions of the two properties (areas closest to Portsmouth Avenue) are located in the PRE District.

The intent of the PRE district is to maintain the existing and surrounding neighborhood's residential appearance while allowing professional office development and limited retail uses through creative planning, oversight, and performance standards. The district offers a unique opportunity to promote mixed-use development while maintaining buffering for residential neighborhoods from disturbance and disruption on streets with high traffic volumes.

Residential/Agricultural District (R/A) - The "back" portions of the two properties (areas furthest from Portsmouth Avenue) are located in the R/A District.

The intent of the R/A district is to provide for open space conservation, agricultural use, and predominantly low density residential development on individual lots or in cluster developments, which can be accommodated on the land without major disruptions of the natural terrain, vegetation, watercourses or surface drainage and which would not customarily have Town water and sewer.

Parcel #1: 118 Portsmouth Avenue

Owner: Fred Emanuel

The parcel is located on the easterly side of Route 108/Portsmouth Avenue. It has approximately 1000' of main artery frontage and 97.13 acres of total land area. The parcel is bisected by Millbrook Drive. Millbrook Drive is a partially paved road.

Two office buildings and a large parking lot occupy the north side of Millbrook Drive nearest Portsmouth Avenue. There exist plans for 4 additional buildings next

to the 2 office buildings, creating an oval of 6 office buildings.

The central area of the parcel is subdivided into 11 smaller parcels (1-1.5 acres each) for potential future construction of single family homes. Corn fields are at the front of the property. Forested and wetlands areas are at the rear of the property.

There are no public water or sewer utilities on the property.

The charrette focused on the entire parcel - including the subdivided lots totaling approximately 55 - 60 acres.

Parcel #2: 144 Portsmouth Avenue

Owner: Kevin King

The property is located adjacent (directly north) to the Emmanuel property. It has nearly 1500' frontage on Portsmouth Avenue and nearly 148 acres of land. The charrette focused on approximately 30 acres of land at the rear of the property.

Current uses include the property owner's residence and office nearest Portsmouth Avenue and undeveloped wetlands including Mill Brook. The owner wishes to keep his residence and would not provide access from his driveway.

Developments would have to create their own access possibly via Trisha's Way or through Fred Emanuel's Property. A recent Town charrette identified an access road from Winnicutt Road to the Stratham Circle roundabout. This option is challenged by several wet land crossings.

There are no public water or sewer utilities on the property.





Community Dialogue Session

Input from stakeholders is a key component of the charrette process. Charrette site property owners, abutters, neighborhood residents, business owners and community members were invited to a Community Dialogue Session on Wednesday, October 22 from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm at Stratham's Town Hall on Bunker Hill Avenue.

The purpose of a public session is to give charrette team members and property owners an opportunity to hear community members' hopes and concerns about potential future development of the focus sites.

Ashlee Iber Amenti, WHC Executive Director, started the session with a welcome to the attendees, and a presentation on workforce housing, which included what is meant by workforce housing, who needs workforce housing and an overview of the housing challenges residents face in the Town of Stratham.

Volunteer facilitator, Michael Castagna, Castagna Consulting, began a brainstorming session, where attendees were asked to consider: What don't we know that we should? What would you like to see? What wouldn't you like to see? What are the opportunities? What are the challenges associated with the site? Attendees wrote ideas on notes that were then read aloud and posted together by theme. These ideas were then recorded and reviewed with the charrette team members prior to beginning the designing, in order to guide their process.

What don't we know that we should?

- How other communities do this differently.

What would you LIKE to see?

- A Town committee to explore what's required and what options exist, besides building.
- A mix of market and workforce housing.
- More young people in the community.
- Different styles of housing units.
- Mixed-use buildings (homes, retail, condos, apartments, etc.) to expand the tax base.
- Quality design and materials.
- Multiple points of access to the property.
- Pub or restaurant as a public gathering place.

- A community center/park/green space.
- Lots of green/open/conservation space
- A portion of property to remain in agricultural use.

What would you NOT LIKE to see?

- Large buildings/multi-level apartment complexes.
- A developer using the neighborhood as solely rental income.
- Building at low cost – lower long term quality is out of character.
- Increased stress on schools and public services.

What are the OPPORTUNITIES?

- A welcoming gateway to the town.
- New development that fosters vibrancy and diversity.
- Welcoming young families to Stratham.
- Ensure vitality of new residents to town.
- New zoning district that defines workforce housing.
- Increase density to increase tax base.
- Creative financing of existing units to workforce applicants.
- Live/work opportunities.
- Reduction in traffic congestion.
- Boost to the economy, workers live/spend here.
- Increase commercial mixed-uses.
- Senior housing opportunities - 55 plus.
- 55-plus better trade-off to workforce housing.
- Increase focus of one district
- Maintain rural character up to 3-4 stories (e.g. The Elms).
- Create smaller footprint with sustainable housing.

What CHALLENGES are associated with this site?

- Additional traffic - increased congestion.
- Misunderstanding of the differences between workforce housing and Section 8 housing.
- Small number of residents resistant to change.
- No guarantee of the type of households that will move in – potential for "non-preferred".
- Increase in transient population lacking connection to the local community.
- Lacking municipal utilities - water and sewer.
- Bending zoning (density) potential slippery slope.
- Costs to purchase land for development - 2 acre minimum with cost of house.

- Access to new development thru Trisha's Way would greatly alter the existing neighborhood. Potential danger to the children residing there.
- Cost of the increased number of school-age children without compensating property tax increase.
- Adding "family" housing at a net loss (schools).
- Tax burden on residents for public services.
- Who pays property taxes in new development?

Design Considerations

- Any development should be in phases. The large size of the parcel and citizen concern about a large development warrant any development be completed in stages.
- Include a pub/restaurant for community gathering.
- Consider the implications of the lack of municipal water and sewer services to any development.
- Include market rate housing, in addition to workforce housing, make the project more affordable.
- Explore what is "rural character" and incorporate it into the final design.



Design Concept #1

Phase 1 – Millbrook Commons:

- Portsmouth Avenue frontage.
- 1st floor offices - 32 units plus a pub.
- 38 workforce housing rental units on upper floors.
- Maintain existing open space agriculture.

Phase 2 – Farm House Condos:

- 84 affordable and market rate condos.
- 2-story colonial style house with barn quadruplex.
- Shared corridors and stairways.
- Garages for the units.
- First and second floor porches.
- Courtyard with open space.

Phase 3 – Single family Homes:

- 20 market rate single family homes (20-30 acres).
- Access from the circle. Trisha's Way as secondary access.
- Walking paths to town center.

Financial Model Assumptions

- Cost to build: Market rate - \$150/sq. foot; Affordable - \$120/sq. foot.
- What can sell in today's marketplace.

Is the end result feasible?

The design could be financially feasible with:

- 38 affordable rental units -
 - * 25 two-bedroom units at \$1000/month;
 - * 9 one-bedroom units at \$780/month;
 - * 4 three bedroom units at \$1140/month.
- 28 affordable farm house condos with a selling price of \$284,000 (1500 square feet of living space each).
- 56 market rate farm house condos selling for \$377,000 each (2200 square feet of living space each).
- 20 building pads (single family homes at a \$170,000 selling price).
- 136 total units on ~ 90 usable acres.

Neighborhood and community context: Relationship to other buildings and uses, etc.

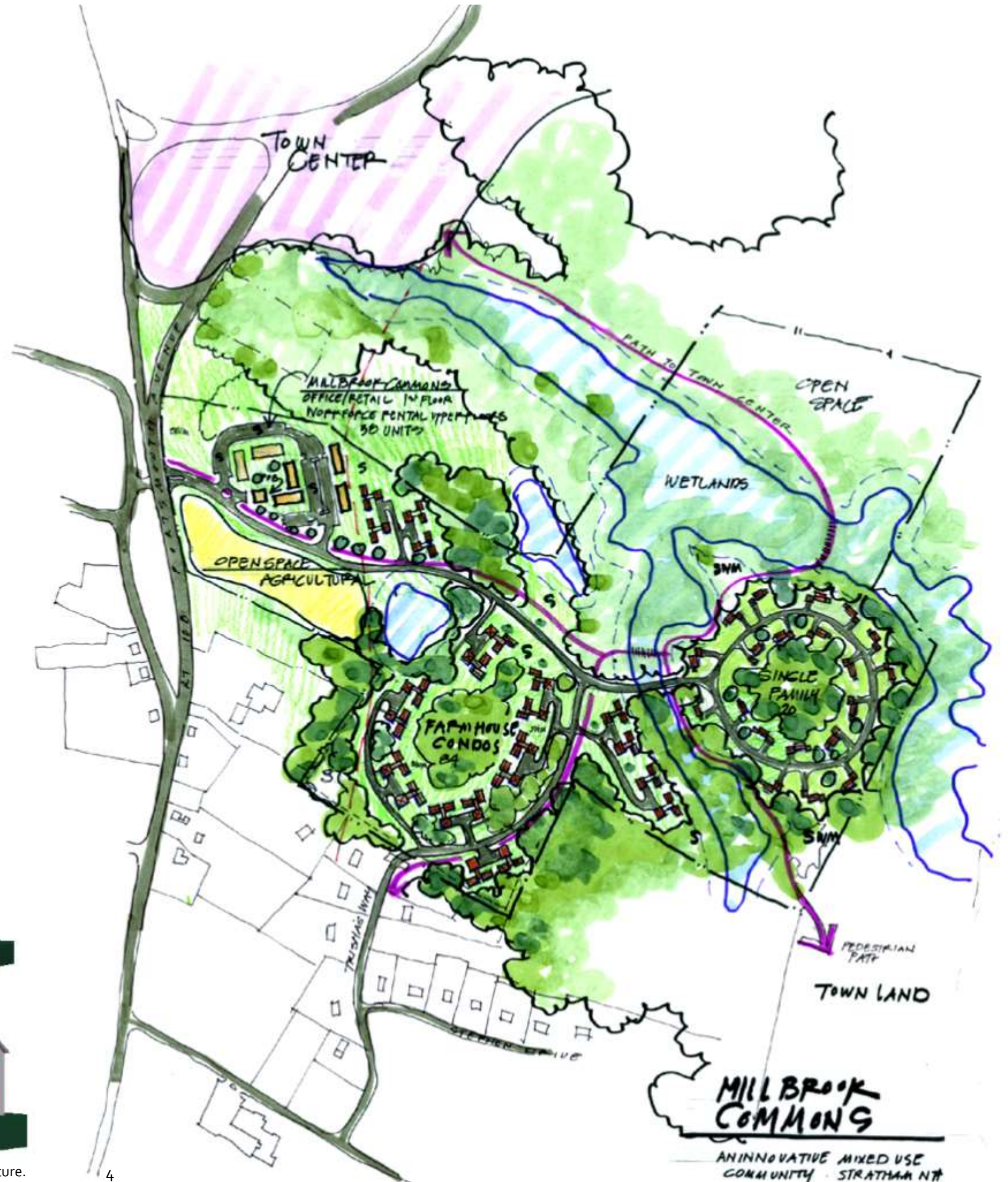
- Maintains rural character and act as a bridge between the Gateway District and Town Center. The cornfield that you see from the street will remain, as well as, the office space.
- Tucked in the back of the office buildings would be 2 more office buildings with courtyard and parking and 2 buildings tucked in the back. The pub/restaurant would be part of this development. This is designed to minimize an overly dense visual impact.
- The residential area would be behind this development, with farm house design for multi-family housing.
- Additional housing would be past the front cornfield so as to minimize the visual impact from Portsmouth Avenue.

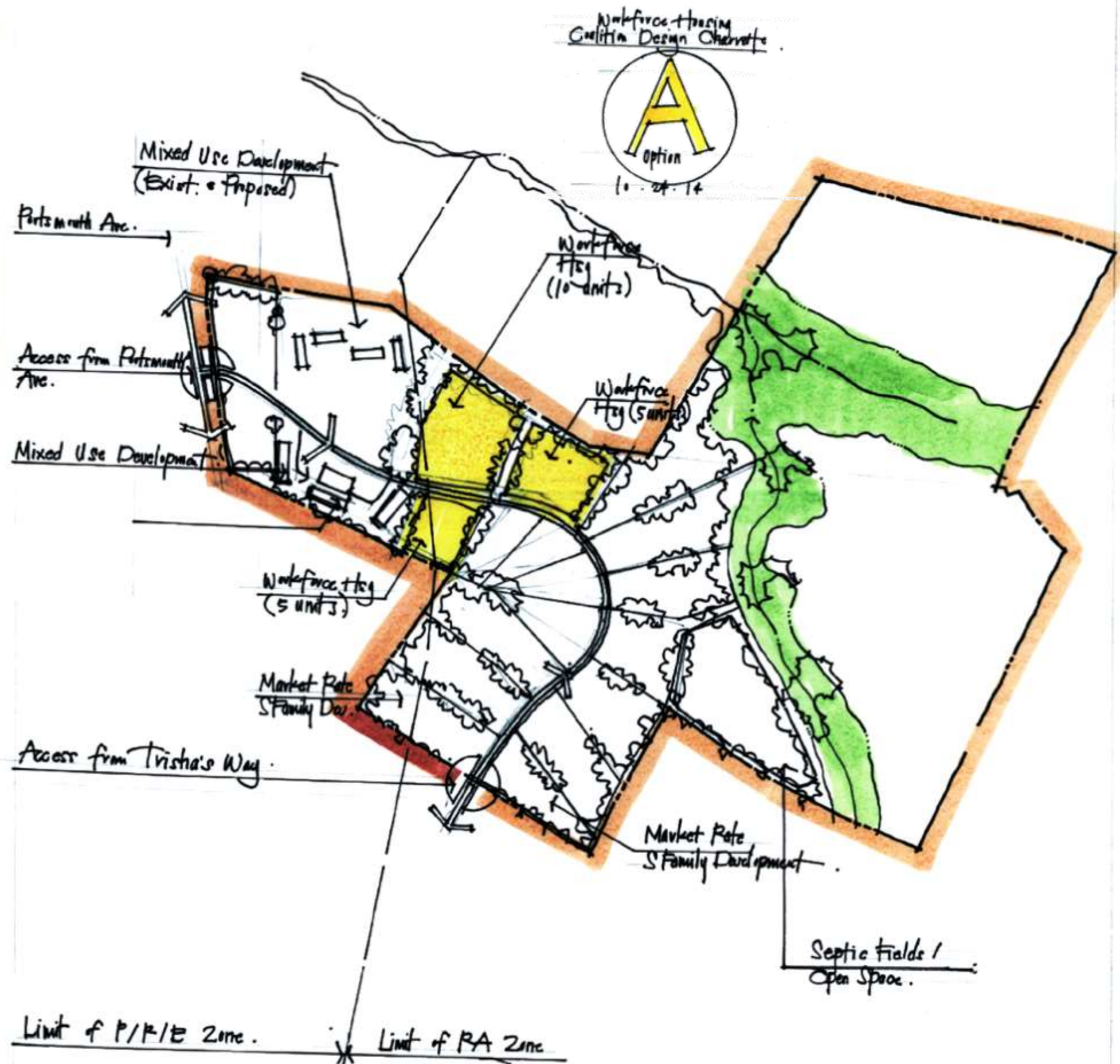
This concept resonates with the community dialogue comments:

- * Concern for rural character;
- * Maintains residential character, scale and quality;
- * Tax implications;
- * Mixed-use;
- * Green space;
- * Connection to the Town Center.



Computer generated images provided by Tony Fallon Architecture.





Design Concept #2 : Plan A

Determine development rights and transfer rights from Town Center zoning to King and Emanuel parcels.

King Parcel:

- To remain open space.

Emanuel Parcel:

- Primary access from Portsmouth Avenue to the Professional/Residential Zone (PRE) and Residential/Agriculture Zone (R/A) to the rear. There would be a buffer along Portsmouth Avenue of open space, providing consistency in visual character.
- Office building area: Mixed-use with commercial uses on the first floor, residential rental apartments above.
- Green boulevard space with pods of workforce housing (Open space will accommodate septic and shared wells).
- Behind is lots for sale for development of market rate or single family homes.
- Development ends at the edge of the land defined by wetlands.
- Town to create road access to housing.

Is the end result feasible?

The design could be financially feasible with:

- The Town granting a transfer of Town Center development rights to the King and Emmanuel parcels. Allowing for mixed-use rental (30,000 square feet).
- 30 residential rental units:
 - * 20 two-bedroom (1200 square feet each);
 - * 10 one-bedroom (1000 square feet each).
- 12 market rate building lots.
- Pads for 30 workforce housing units for sale at \$250,00 per unit.

Neighborhood and community context: Relationship to other buildings and uses, etc.

- The 3 zones: Gateway, PRE (which includes the charrette properties) and Town Center. Each is set up with purposes - i.e. Town Center context is people arriving and a great place to go to.
- Farmhouse architecture.

This concept resonates with the community dialogue session comments:

- * Concern for rural character;
- * In keeping with residential character, scale and quality;
- * Tax implications;
- * Mixed-use;
- * Green space;
- * Connection to the Town Center.

Design Concept #2: Plan B

- This option also calls for a transfer of development rights so that the back portion of the King property would have Town Center zoning.
- Access would be from Portsmouth Avenue with green space frontage. This green space would accommodate shared wells and septic systems.
- The existing office building area would expand to a mixed-use development area.
- Cluster development area of workforce housing and 2 areas of market rate single family detached homes.
- Additional access would be through land that is owned by the Town through Stevens Road and access to Trisha's Way.

Is the end result feasible?

This concept would be financially feasible with:

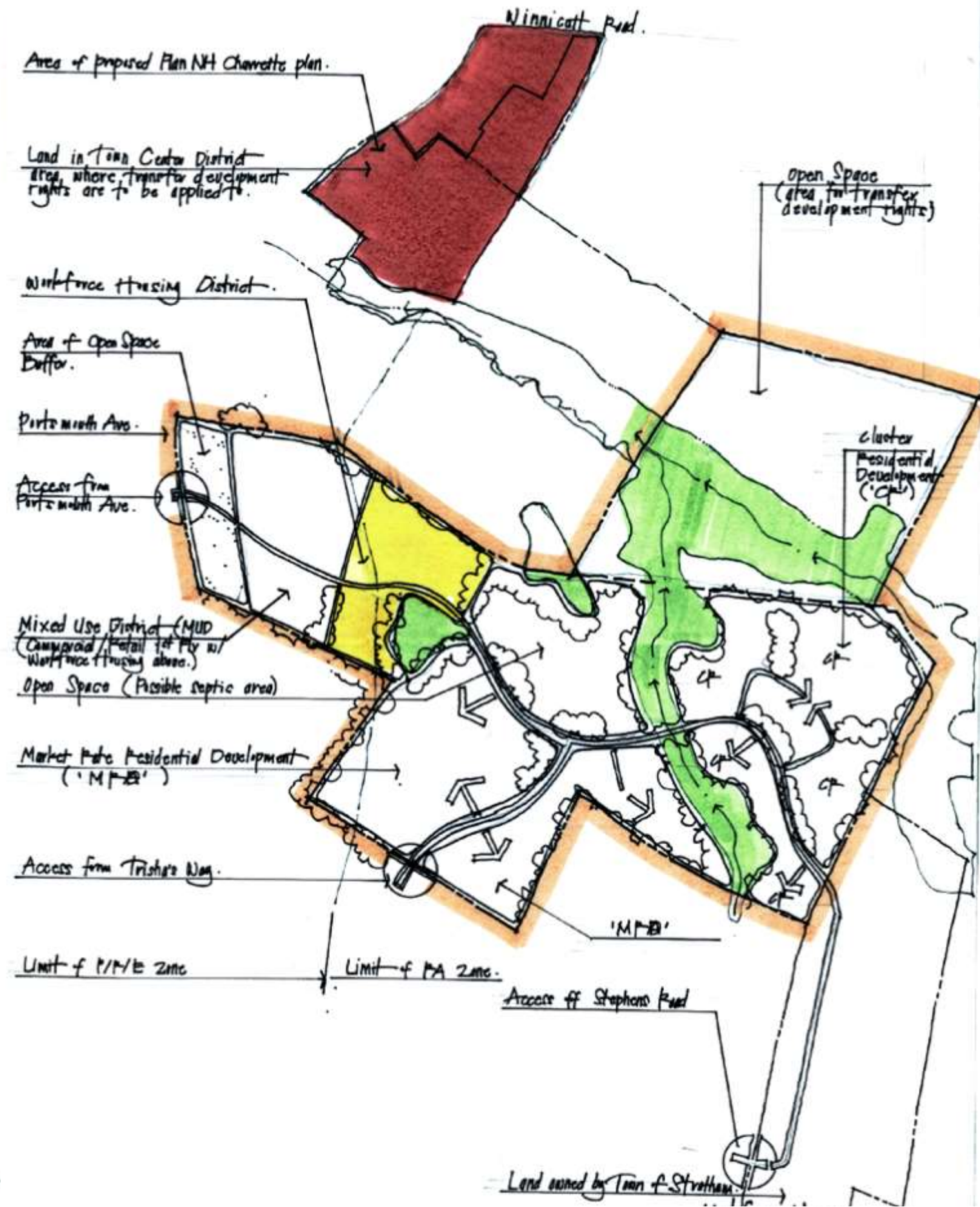
- The Town granting transfer of development rights allowing Town Center zoning to the back portion of the King property.
- The Town granting access through Town owned land through Stevens Road and access to Trisha's Way. It would allow for:
- Mixed-use rental - (30,000 square foot flex space):
- 30 residential rental units:
 - * 20 two-bedroom (1200 square feet);
 - * 10 one-bedroom (1000 square feet).
- 11 market rate lots.
- 30 workforce housing units for sale at \$250,000 per unit.
- 49 cluster housing units for sale at \$250,000 per unit. Mix of market rate and workforce housing.

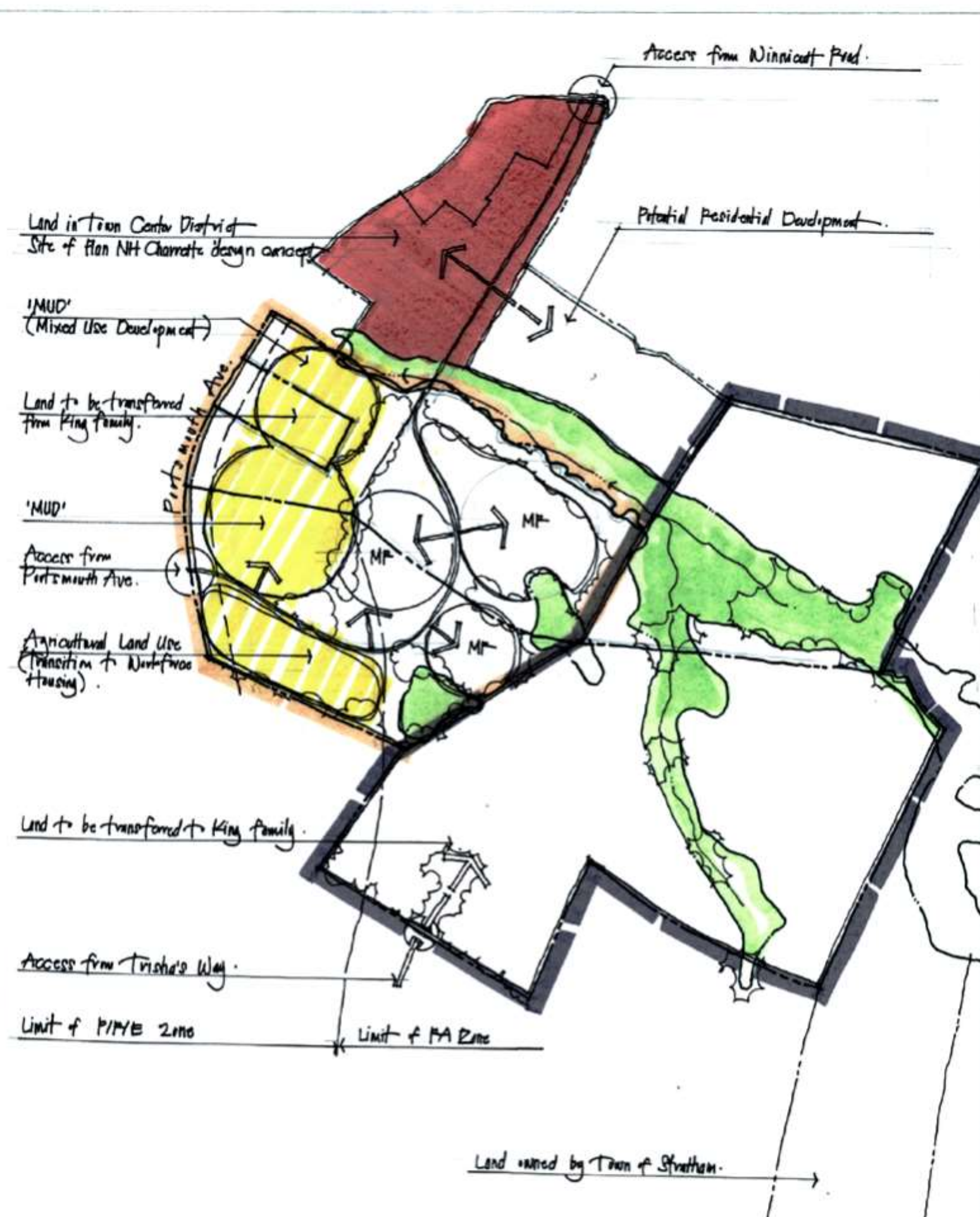
Neighborhood and community context: Relationship to other buildings and uses, etc.

- The 3 zones: Gateway, PRE (which includes the charrette properties) and Town Center. Each is set up with purposes; for example, town center context is people arriving and a great place to go to.
- Farmhouse and New England style architecture.
- This development would provide connectivity to the Town Center to encourage a more vibrant Town center via walking and bicycle paths.

This concept resonates with the community dialogue comments:

- * Concern for rural character;
- * In keeping with residential character, scale and quality;
- * Tax implications;
- * Mixed-use;
- * Green space;
- * Connection to Town Center.





Design Concept #2 : Plan C

THE BIG WHAT IF...

(This Plan is not as fully formed as the others, and is purposefully out-of-the-box thinking.)

- Ask the King property owner to trade road frontage and move the compound to an area at the rear of the Emmanuel property, with access from Trisha's Way. This would create a parcel contiguous with the Town Center that, if the Town granted a transfer of rights, would allow for Town Center zoning. This would allow for mixed-use development with commercial and retail on the 1st floor and workforce housing rental units on the upper levels.
- Access would be provided to Portsmouth Avenue and eventually Winnicutt Road.
- This development would strengthen rural character, provide open space, and transportation opportunities supporting a more vibrant Town Center district.

Is the end result feasible?

Financial feasibility was not evaluated for this design concept.

Neighborhood and community context: Relationship to other buildings and uses, etc.

- The 3 zones: Gateway, PRE (which includes the charrette properties) and Town Center. Each is set up with purposes; i.e. Town Center context is people arriving and a great place to go to.
- Farmhouse architecture.

This concept resonates with the community dialogue session comments:

- * Concern for rural character;
- * Maintains residential character, scale and quality;
- * Tax implications;
- * Mixed-use;
- * Green space;
- * Connection to Town Center.



Survey Results

At the end of each part of the charrette process, we surveyed attendees and participants in an effort to gauge the overall effectiveness of our charrette program as a tool to educate the community on the importance of a balanced supply of housing for area workers.

We surveyed property owners, community dialogue participants, design reveal presentation attendees and our volunteer design team members. The survey questions asked all participants if the charrette:

- Improved their general understanding of workforce housing,
- Increased their understanding of the need for workforce housing,
- Impacted their level of support for workforce housing development.

Overall, the survey responses show that the charrette process is an effective method of increasing awareness of workforce housing, the need for workforce housing in the community, its benefits and for generating support of workforce housing development. Challenges remain in clarifying the demographic market for workforce housing and how the availability of workforce housing connects to the quality of life for all who live in the community.

We also asked our volunteers, participants and attendees open-ended questions regarding what they liked or disliked and ways to improve the charrette process. Here is how they responded.

"I am willing to participate in a committee to explore non-building options."
...Dialogue Participant

Disagree

Better understand the connection between the availability of workforce housing and quality of life in the community.

100%
Property owners & Reveal attendees
Strongly agree/agree

40%
Forum participants
Strongly disagree/disagree

40%
Dialogue participants
Strongly agree/agree

20%
Dialogue participants
Don't know

Strongly Agree

Increased awareness and understanding of what workforce housing is.
100%
All responses
Strongly Agree/Agree

Agree

"More emphasis is needed on educating residents on the target market."
...Volunteer

Have a better understanding of why workforce housing is needed.

12%
Volunteers
Don't know

88%
Volunteers
Strongly agree/agree

100%
Property owners & Reveal attendees
Strongly agree/agree

40%
Dialogue participants
Strongly disagree/disagree

60%
Dialogue participants
Strongly agree/agree

Don't know

"Nice balance of time for the feedback and design"... Volunteer Team Member

Would participate in future charrettes and recommend participation to a colleague.
100%
Volunteers
Strongly agree/agree

Strongly Disagree

What do you mean by workforce housing?

Workforce housing includes single family homes, townhouses, condominiums and apartments that are affordable to low- and moderate-income households. To be affordable, monthly housing costs shouldn't demand more than 30% of gross household income. To close the widening gap between incomes and housing costs, some developers/owners utilize subsidy programs. However, subsidies are not synonymous with workforce housing.

New Hampshire Workforce Housing Law

NH RSA 674:58 defines workforce housing as for-sale housing which is affordable to a 4-person household earning no more than 100% of median area income or rental housing which is affordable to a 3-person household earning no more than 60% of median area income.

In 2014, the limit for workforce housing rentals in the Portsmouth-Rochester, NH HUD Metropolitan Fair Market Rent Area (HMFA) (of which Stratham is a part of) is \$1140/month, which would be affordable to an income of \$45,520. In 2014, the limit for workforce housing for purchase in the Portsmouth-Rochester HMFA is \$284,000, which would be affordable to an income of \$84,300/year.

Who needs workforce housing?

The Greater Seacoast of New Hampshire and Southern Maine is one of the least affordable regions in the country. Many people cannot afford to live in the communities in which they work, so they endure long commutes: which is harmful to the environment and limits time with family and at community and volunteer activities. Some people move away, leaving employers who are unable to hire and retain the workers they need to sustain and grow their businesses.

What does workforce housing look like?

Contemporary workforce housing is based on good design and minimal impact - small, mixed-income developments that are distributed throughout a town. Developments in suburban settings are clustered to leave areas of open space. Compared to unplanned sprawl, such land use is much more efficient and attractive.

Workforce Housing Coalition of the Greater Seacoast

With the support of our members, the Workforce Housing Coalition tackles complex issues that contribute to the region's limited housing options. We offer planners and developers advice and resources on how to meet the housing need. Through our annual design charrettes, we inspire dialogue and generate concept designs that include innovative ways to increase the local supply of workforce housing.

We envision an adequate supply of affordable, desirable housing throughout the Greater Seacoast region that provides opportunities for area workers to put down roots, creating a more diverse community that benefits us all.

Since the Coalition's inception in 2001, we have helped nearly two dozen communities in the Greater Seacoast region of New Hampshire and Southern Maine to improve their housing regulations. In turn, local developers have created over 350 new units of workforce housing.

The lack of an adequate and balanced supply of housing poses a significant threat to the region's economic health and future. Addressing this issue requires that a broad range of individuals, organizations and public officials become engaged in efforts to change attitudes towards workforce housing development.

What can YOU do?

Learn the facts about the area's housing situation and recognize the link between an adequate and balanced housing supply and the area's economic and social stability.

Participate in local planning processes and monitor local regulatory practices to ensure that they provide reasonable opportunities for appropriate housing development.

Tell your local officials that you expect them to support actions, which lead to a balanced housing supply, and be prepared to support specific housing initiatives that make sense for your community.

Participate in the work of local non-profit housing development organizations or other housing providers.

Communicate your concern about the lack of adequate housing to state policymakers and advocate for policies and programs that support housing development.

Make a membership gift or sponsorship to the Workforce Housing Coalition in your region to support their work to stimulate the development of a range of housing options for the diverse workforce. For information visit, www.workforcehousingnh.com.

Support the Workforce Housing Coalition and help to promote a friendlier climate for workforce housing development in your community, visit www.seacoastwhc.org.

Workforce Housing Coalition of the Greater Seacoast

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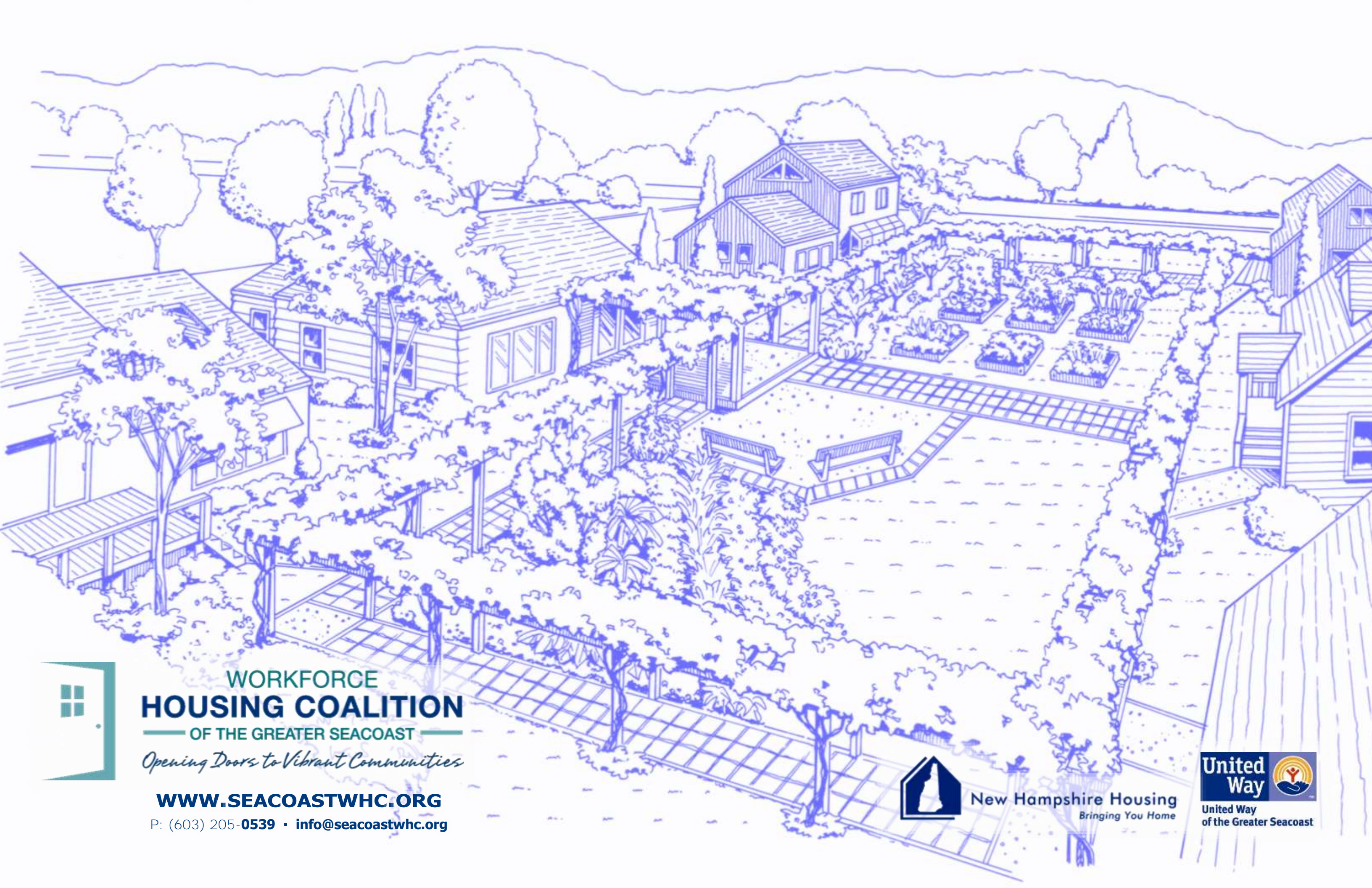
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