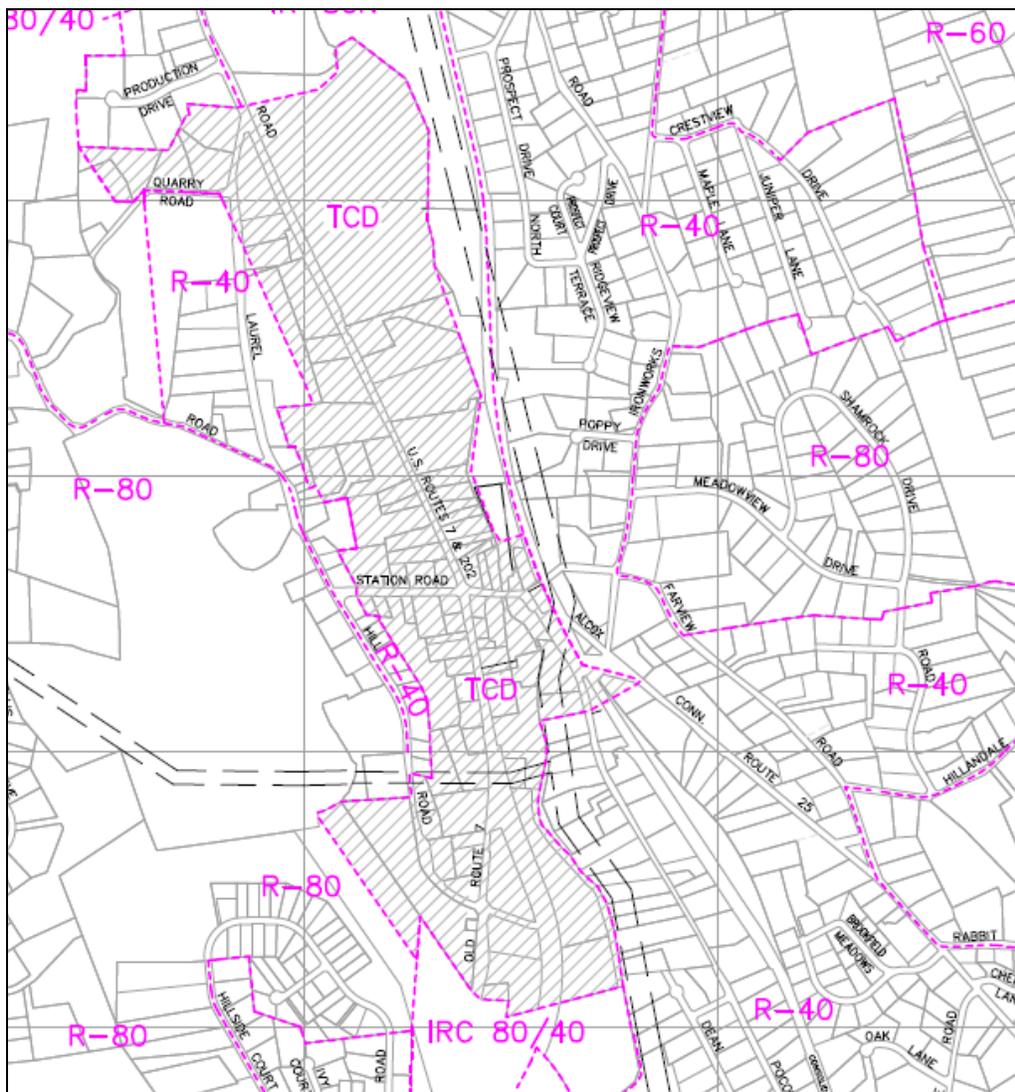




## Four Corners Brookfield Town Center Revitalization Plan

### *Study Context and Purpose:*

The Town of Brookfield wishes to develop a practical, functional revitalization plan that provides a clearly visualized future scenario or concept for the Town Center District at Four Corners with associated documentation. The Four Corners study area is represented by the Town Center District (TCD); a zoning district adopted to manage land use in the area as shown on the following map and including gateways to the district to the south at Exit 12 to the Route 7 expressway and to the north where the Route 7 expressway meets Federal Road.



There is an opportunity to recreate a vibrant, walkable, activity center at the Four Corners that serves both the residents of Brookfield and invites travelers to get off the highway before reaching the end of the Route 7 bypass to shop, sightsee, dine, and take advantage of services there. A future development scenario developed through this study will address land use, economic sustainability, mobility and access, parking, visual character, infrastructure, and preservation of sensitive natural, historic, and cultural resources. This future scenario will be accompanied by feasible recommendations for the tools, strategies, and actions to realize it.

Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc. in association with 4ward Planning will undertake this study, completing the following tasks, which include:

- Task 1: Project Collaboration
- Task 2: Project Discovery
- Task 3: Community Engagement
- Task 4: Future Land-use Plan and Transportation System – Scenario Development
- Task 5: Implementation Program Development
- Task 6: Documentation - Four Corners Revitalization Plan

## **Task 1. Project Collaboration**

- 1.1 Communication:** The Town of Brookfield will appoint a point person to serve as the key project facilitator/manager for the Town for this project. FHI will be available to meet with this Project Manager on a monthly basis in person or by phone as needed within reason to monitor project progress and prepare for upcoming tasks. FHI's Project Manager will also be available on a day-to-day basis to discuss project direction via phone or email.

FHI will create and maintain a project communications website hosted by Shutterfly; an online photograph and document sharing website. We will utilize this website to share project documents, maintain the project schedule, and elicit feedback from the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). In addition, FHI will provide electronic files of project products to the Town of Brookfield webmaster for her posting to the Town website on a page developed by the Town for this project. Products may include project documents, the project schedule, and agendas for the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings.

- 1.2 Project Technical Advisory Committee (TAC):** FHI will work with the Town of Brookfield's Project Manager to identify a group of 8 to 12 individuals who will serve as a Technical Advisory Committee for the project duration. The group is expected to include Town Staff, representatives of Town boards and commissions, and key stakeholders from the study area. The TAC role will be to provide review and comment on study products and to help guide the community engagement process. FHI will distribute draft study products to the TAC electronically via the Town's Project Manager, and the Shutterfly website for review and comment and will meet with the TAC during the study as specifically defined as follows:

- **TAC Meeting #1** – Project Kick-off – The purpose is to review the scope and schedule; brainstorm issues and opportunities for the study area; discuss the community outreach steps and plans for the charrette, brainstorm a preliminary list of stakeholders to contact for interviews and focus groups; and discuss and develop a first draft vision for the Four Corners area.
- **TAC meeting #2** – A conference call or Skype meeting (or other online meeting application) will be used to conduct the second TAC meeting. The meeting’s purpose is to review details of the planning charrette and expectations for participation by the TAC members during the charrette.
- **TAC Meeting #3** – Draft vision statement and scenario review – This meeting will occur during the planning charrette to preview early work products and receive confirmation from the TAC on the direction of the plan. Feedback is critical at this meeting.
- **Additional TAC Meeting (#4)** - A conference call or Skype meeting (or other online meeting application) will be used to conduct the fourth TAC meeting. This meeting will take place within one month of the planning charrette. The meeting’s purpose is to receive the TAC’s comments on the draft concept plan developed at the charrette, reach agreement on any additional modifications to the plan, and seek approval to complete the Draft Revitalization Plan and Implementation Plan.
- **TAC Meeting #5** – A final meeting will be held to present the Draft Revitalization Plan with Implementation Program to the TAC. It is expected that additional minor comments on the plan will be collected, and incorporated into the Final Plan documentation.

## **Task 2. Project Discovery – Existing and Future Conditions**

Project Discovery is a process during which FHI will identify existing conditions and trends and assess issues and opportunities in the study area.. The focus of this task is to quickly synthesize available data and supplement the information with targeted field observations. FHI will rely primarily on existing studies, data, reports, and mapping provided by the Town of Brookfield and/or HVCEO. Project Discovery is intended to establish a baseline of understanding and performance in which alternative improvement ideas can be compared. The project discovery process will include:

- 2.1 Study area mapping:** FHI will create two maps for this task. One will be a base map in a format that can easily serve as a foundation for the future development scenario and will depict roads, property boundaries, and significant natural features (such as the Still River). This base map will be developed utilizing existing GIS data layers provided by the Town of Brookfield.

The second map will summarize existing physical features of the study area and be a composite depicting land use by type, existing building uses, vacant and potential infill and redevelopment parcels, historic structures and community resources, parking, transportation system/roadway features, preserved open space, and areas

constrained for future development (i.e. steep slopes, water bodies, floodplains, and wetlands). Supporting documentation will analyze the amount of developable space for parcels and existing structures.

## **2.2 Field Inventory**

*Questions this effort will answer:*

- What are typical weekday travel conditions in the study area?
- Where are the opportunity sites for development, redevelopment and infill?
- What issues has Town staff observed in the study area over time?
- What are the physical constraints to change in land use and the transportation system?

The FHI team will spend one day (with support from the Town's Project Manager) dedicated to an inventory and photography of the study area. We will:

- Document land/building uses, locations of vacant and underutilized parcels and buildings, and community institutions and resources.
- Observe traffic operations and roadway conditions.
- Document locations and qualitative condition of infrastructure such as sidewalks and parking, public utilities, drainage, and facilities supporting public transit
- Meet with key Town staff to discuss current study area conditions and plans for future improvements.
- Meet with the Town Planner, Building Official and Zoning Enforcement Officer to discuss and reach consensus on space (square footage or acreage) available for development, redevelopment, and infill for parcels in the study area

## **2.3 Build-out analysis**

*Questions this effort will answer:*

- What is the current mix of land uses, by percentage, by type today?
- Based on current zoning, what is the maximum potential for future development in the study area? Practically speaking how many acres and how much square footage of building space by type could be developed?
- How many parking spaces are in the area today and how much more parking might be needed to serve a scenario where maximum future development occurs?

Based on the information from the field day, data collected, and discussion with the Town staff, FHI will develop a tabular listing of developable land by acreage, type of use, and potential parking demand. We will include underutilized parcels/buildings with infill potential in this analysis (based on information provided by the Town of Brookfield). This information will help inform the market study and be used later in the study process to help set the context for discussion of the options for a future development scenario and concept for the Town Center District. This

information will also inform the land use recommendations for implementation of the study area vision developed in Task 4.

## 2.4 Market analysis

*Questions this effort will answer:*

- Knowing that there is an abundance of concentrated retail within a short drive of the 4 corners (both in Brookfield south down Route 7 and in New Milford to the north), is there any unmet demand for retail in the future that would be successful in the 4 corners? If so – what type?
- Besides retail, are there other appropriate uses that have unmet demand in the future that would fit in the 4 corners? Medical office, small professional office, rental or other housing?
- Who might want to stop in the area in the future if there was the right mix of businesses to attract them? What is their economic and demographic profile and what goods and services would meet their needs and desires?
- What sets, or could set, 4-corners apart from the other areas of Brookfield and New Milford?
- What are the long-term economic trends in the region that influence the success of business in the study area?
- What economic conditions are inviting or discouraging developers from investing in the area today?

The FHI team will undertake a market analysis such that each successive task builds upon the findings in prior tasks, developing a strong foundation upon which to make recommendations. The Market Analysis will be critical part of the overall process.

Tasks will include the following:

- Demographic and labor trend analysis utilizing available U.S. Census data and other proprietary sources.
- Regional real estate trends analysis
- Interviews with a sampling of active regional developers and real estate brokers
- Interviews with a sampling of current property and business owners. (FHI will seek input from the Town on what property/business owners should be interviewed)
- Real estate supply/demand analysis
- Assessment of market support for retail, office, restaurant, entertainment, and residential uses. The report will define trade areas for each of these uses, demographic supporting factors, describe supply and demand, current and planned development, general vacancy rates, land prices, rents and price points within the defined trade area.
- The market analysis will identify a mix of uses, of a scale appropriate for development as envisioned, which could take advantage of estimated market support. The analysis will also incorporate reasonable absorption rates and pricing for expansion of existing uses and for new development, given market

trends, vacancy rates, competition, and existing land value and rents to determine what the most viable uses would be for the study area.

The market study methodologies, data and information sources will be documented. Issues and opportunities that come out of this process will be summarized.

## **2.5 Transportation system analysis**

*Questions this effort will answer:*

- What are the issues with the geometry, design, and traffic control features in the study area?
- What contribution does the physical design of the roadway system make to the character of the area today?
- What are the travel patterns – origins, destinations, and daily volumes of traffic traveling through the study area today?
- How did the recently opened Route 7 By-pass road affect traffic volumes and patterns in the area?
- How well does the intersection of Route 7 and 25 function today?
- Where are the opportunities and barriers to travel by transit, bicycle, and on-foot?

Based on the information from the field day, data provided by the Town of Brookfield, and discussions with Town staff, we will evaluate the existing multimodal transportation network, and identify system gaps that are impeding mobility, access, or safety for its users. The analysis will be performed according to the principles of Complete Streets, which aim to balance the use of streets for people of all ages and abilities. Sidewalk quality and connectivity, bicycle accommodation, truck/emergency vehicle accessibility, as well as convenience and efficiency for car travel will be evaluated. Roadway geometry will be evaluated to aid in understanding locations of congestion, accessibility constraints, or conflicts. Issues and opportunities that come out of this process will be summarized.

## **2.6 Infrastructure review**

*Questions this effort will answer:*

- What public infrastructure is available today and under consideration or programmed for the future to support future development?
- What limits on infrastructure system capacity exist?

Based on the information from the field day, data provided by the Town of Brookfield, and discussion with Town staff and/or local utility providers, public utility infrastructure will be identified in the context of its ability to support future development in the area. Issues and opportunities that come out of this process will be summarized.

## 2.7 Parking analysis

*Questions this effort will answer:*

- What are the existing parking conditions today with respect to supply, demand, and location?
- How many more parking spaces could be needed in the future?
- Is the demand of any particular user (patron, commuter, etc.) not met and why?
- How are the zoning regulations facilitating or impeding management of the parking supply and character?
- What are the traffic issues related to the distribution and configuration of the current parking supply?
- What are the pedestrian issues related to the distribution and configuration of the current parking supply?

The parking analysis task will include:

- During the field day inventory we will map and assess the location, supply, observed usage patterns, access to, and general qualitative conditions of available parking in the study area. Walking distance to major destinations and pedestrian network conditions relative to parking will be noted.
- Zoning regulations for parking applicable to the study area will be reviewed and analyzed.
- During the interviews with local business owners conducted during the charrette (Task 3 below) we will discuss their parking concerns and experiences.
- Based on the build-out analysis, we will estimate the potential demand for additional parking supply in the study area.

This information will provide a basis for recommendations for the strategic location of parking supply as part of the future revitalization concept for the Town Center District. Issues and opportunities that come out of this process will be summarized.

***Deliverable:*** Study area mapping along with a compendium of tabular information from the above analyses will be provided to the Town for review as the deliverable from this Task. This will be accompanied by a tabular summary of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to future sustainability of the area.

### **Task 3           Community Engagement**

Community engagement will form the foundation for crafting a vision statement for the Four Corners Town Center District. It will also inform the planning process at every stage, in particular the iterative evaluation of the future concept plan for the district. This task includes:

### **3.1 Visual Preference Survey**

*Questions this effort will answer include:*

- What role does the community at-large envision for the Four Corners area in Brookfield's future?
- What should the area look like in terms of building size, density, and character?
- What amenities would the community like to see in the area; sidewalks, bicycle lanes, landscaping, street trees, outdoor art, etcetera?
- What mix of land uses would the community prefer to see in the area; homes, manufacturing, warehousing/storage, Town government, retail, service businesses, parks, and open space?
- What would the community not like to see in the area in the future?

Specific tasks will include:

- FHI will develop an online survey with a brief list of written questions and some visual preference questions with associated graphics about the role and character of the Town Center District.
- FHI will design a visual preference survey utilizing the Key Point polling system to be administered two times:
  - At the first TAC meeting or at a subsequent zoning meeting, and
  - During the first day of the planning charrette.
- FHI will prepare advertisements for the surveys including a flyer, Town website notice, and an article/notice in local newspapers (Brookfield Patch). It is assumed that the Town of Brookfield will handle distribution of the flyer and post the website notice. The Town of Brookfield will reach out to local media to request and encourage coverage of the study. All costs for newspaper publicity will be incurred by the Town of Brookfield.

The visual preference survey tool will focus on visual character with both photos and graphics for future opportunities for the area. The survey will be developed in collaboration with the Town, with all questions and visual preference aids to be reviewed in advance of survey administration.

We will tabulate the survey results, prioritize individual items, options, and alternatives proposed and create a hierarchy of priority based on the overall vision, goals, and objectives of the project.

### **3.2 Multi-Day Planning Charrette**

Building upon the existing conditions and future build-out analyses, the FHI Team will conduct a multi-day workshop in a "studio" location in Brookfield (local community center or meeting space in the study area). The outcomes/products of this event will include:

- A list of ideas and issues from the community
  - A draft vision statement

- Final round and preliminary findings of the visual preference survey
- Two public presentations
  - Day One - An introduction to “complete streets”, village design, multi-modal transportation, economic sustainability, and an overview of study area data collection and existing conditions analysis findings.
  - Day Two – no public presentations; workshop format
  - Day Three – evening TAC meeting; workshop format
  - Day Four – presentation of first draft concept plan for the study area
- Draft concept plan for the study area; land uses, transportation network and facilities, spatial arrangement of buildings and parking

This charrette sequence will include:

- Day 1 – Set up – evening community workshop - brainstorming
- Day 2 - Open House - Team design work – draft vision statement - interviews with key stakeholders (Open house – open to 8 PM)
- Day 3 - Open house - Team design work - evening TAC review (meeting #3) for discussion of work in progress (meeting open to the public)
- Day 4 - Team refine drawings and products – prepare presentation - present draft vision statement and future concept plan at an evening open house with presentation

The FHI Team will work over the four (4) days, between other activities and meetings, to assimilate the data collection and analysis along with community input into a set of reasonable redevelopment concepts. This work will include “open house” opportunities to allow interested stakeholders the ability to informally meet with the Project Team to discuss ideas and share information. The open house design workshop day (Day Two) will remain open until 8 PM in order to ensure full opportunity for citizens who are not able to participate during the work day. Analyses will be performed at a level sufficient to document the relative performance differences between improvement options and their ability to meet project goals and objectives.

***Deliverable:*** Vision/Concept Development Charrette Summary: This document will capture the graphic and analytic products of the discovery phase, charrette process, and visual preference survey and summarize them. This will be mainly a graphic-orientated document with limited text and tables used to annotate and describe the key design concepts that result from the workshop.

### **3.3 Publicity and Communications**

Supporting outreach efforts will be essential to the success of the visual preference survey and conduct of the planning charrette. We will utilize the following tools to publicize the study progress. For this purpose, FHI will:

- Develop and maintain a project communications website via Shutterfly for use principally by the TAC, town staff and FHI
- Provide electronic files with study information and products to the Town for its posting on the Town website.

- Develop a distribution list composed of targeted stakeholders and community groups. This list will be developed during the first TAC meeting. These contacts will be utilized, in part, for e-mail distribution of study activities and notices.
- Develop a flyer to notify the community about the visual preference survey and available time period and venues to participate.
- The Town staff will establish an office/workshop location in the TCD where inventory data and visual preference survey results can be available for public viewing. Staffing this office will be the responsibility of the Town of Brookfield. FHI will leave materials developed at the workshop for the Town to use.
- Use a variety of social media to publicize the survey, communicate study progress, and share the draft concept plan; including materials provided to the town for its posting to the project website, and email blasts.
- The Town of Brookfield will contact local press, including “News Times”, “Housatonic Times”, and “Brookfield Patch”, as well as with local radio stations to create a working relationship with them for tracking study progress and encourage them to cover the survey and charrette events.
- Create a flyer promoting the four-day charrette (as described above) and concluding public meeting. These would be distributed in a similar manner to the on-line survey outreach described above.
- Make one presentation of the final plan at a Board of Selectmen or Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.
- The charrette and following public presentation at the conclusion of the project will be supported with a variety of materials which FHI will develop including agendas, informational brochures/handouts for participants, and presentation graphics. Handouts will be provided as a pdf file to the Town for inclusion on the Town website and may be distributed to the stakeholder/interested community group list.

#### **Task 4            Future Land -use Plan and Transportation System – Scenario Development**

For this task, FHI will take the draft concept that emerged from the charrette process and add detail to it. In addition, we will prepare up to three supporting renderings to illustrate the plan and draft a set of recommendations for economic development, transportation system improvements, and land use management to complement the concept plan.

FHI will prepare a draft concept plan for the TAC and Town’s Project Manager for review and comment. An additional TAC meeting (#4) will be held as described above to guide the final concept plan development toward consensus. The final draft will be placed on the Town website and the study website along with a contact email to where comments can be sent. FHI will prepare the final concept plan in response to comments received.

## **Task 5            Implementation Program Development**

Based on the study area concept plan, FHI will develop a program of recommended strategies and actions to implement the plan and its complementary objectives. From this, we will identify priorities, initiatives, and potential phasing of plan elements. We will review the implementation program proposal with the TAC and finalize it based on their input (TAC Meeting #5).

FHI will prepare “order-of-magnitude” cost estimates for Plan’s transportation system recommendations utilizing CTDOT’s Preliminary Cost Estimating Guidelines and other appropriate resources. We will also identify potential funding resources for the implementation of the concept plan elements. The final piece of the Market Analysis, the Fiscal Impact Analysis, will be prepared at this time. It will evaluate the preferred development scenario(s) in terms of potential municipal expenditures and tax revenue. This will include an illustrative “Project Proforma Statement” for a single site with a “typical” development project (e.g., mixed-use site, inclusive of residential, retail and office).

## **Task 6            Assemble Four Corners Revitalization Plan**

This is the stage of the planning process through which the revitalization plan is composed and finalized. The end product will be a visually rich document with limited and targeted text and a clear and straight-forward implementation program. It will focus on communicating all of the elements of the concept plan and how those elements can be achieved. The plan will include the following components:

- Final concept master plan
- Streetscape, public space, and amenities plan
- Complete Streets plan: modifications to roadways, circulation patterns, network and accommodations for transit, bicyclists and pedestrians, and design guidelines
- Economic development/market sustainability recommendations; what ways can the Town influence development patterns and market attraction to help with the Four Corners plan?
- Regulatory framework recommendations; how should the zoning regulations be modified to facilitate realization of the Four Corners Plan
- Up to three renderings of the concept plan in part or whole
- Preliminary ‘order-of-magnitude ‘cost estimates for infrastructure improvements
- Transportation infrastructure design guidelines for the Town Center District addressing pertinent elements of the revitalization plan

FHI will prepare a Draft Four Corners Revitalization Plan which will include an Executive Summary summarizing the study process and findings, graphics developed through the course of the study, the final concept plan and related renderings, recommendations, and implementation program.

A total of 15 paper copies of the draft plan will be provided to the Town of Brookfield and distributed to the TAC. We will provide an electronic copy the Draft Plan suitable for posting by

the Town on its website. FHI will make one round of edits to the plan based on comments received.

***Deliverables:*** Fifteen (15) copies of the draft plan and fifteen (15) copies of the final plan will be provided to the Town of Brookfield for its use, internal review, and distribution to the TAC. The reports will also be provided in Adobe Portable Document File (pdf) format for the Town's use.

In addition to the deliverables included above, all digital material developed by the FHI Team as part of the study will be made available to the Town of Brookfield in its native format (whether it be a Word document, GIS, or Excel document or graphic file for example). The FHI Team will provide CD's/DVD's containing all of the project documents including presentations in Adobe pdf format.