



Town of Montville – Route 32 Investment Plan Steering Committee #3: Agenda (Draft)

Thursday, February 12th

5:00 pm

Meeting Minutes

Attendees

Dennis Goderre

Meredith Badalucca, Asst. Planner

Stacy Radford, ZEO

Meracus Hernandez

Mario Infante

Bill Pieniadz

Jim Butler

Laura Pirie (Piri Associates, via Zoom)

Matt Spears (Piri Associates, via Zoom)

Steve Jacobs (BJH Advisors, via Zoom)

Arthur Samuel (BJH Advisors, via Zoom)

Asher Hoyt (BJH Advisors, via Zoom)

Discussion Items

Survey takeaways:

- In-person:
 - Steve Jacobs shared that the Fair Oaks in-person session had about 35–40 attendees.
 - The attendees emphasized preferences for programmed, year-round active public spaces, a town green as a social hub, and village-scale mixed-use development while rejecting high-density apartments.
 - Participants favored traditional New England and naturalistic streetscape aesthetics.
- Online:
 - Asher Hoyt described the online survey methodology, response rate (155 total), common non-response issues, and demographic skew toward residents who work elsewhere and are predominantly age 55+.

- The survey is treated as guiding input rather than scientific.
- The Town Center (1A) scored strongly for an active main-street program with restaurants, retail, grocery, offices, missing-middle housing, and a library anchored by a Town Green.
- The Cove (1B) favored trails, passive recreation, and water activities.
- Palmetown Village (2) leaned toward small-scale townhouses and neighborhood mixed-use.

Town Center vision and connectivity:

- Laura Pirie presented a long-term (~15-year) vision for the Town Center.
 - The proposed vision will include a central Town Green, a branch library, and a performance amphitheater
 - The proposed area will also include multimodal paths and new roadway reconfigurations, which will help to reduce truck traffic and to improve pedestrian safety and trail connections to the Oxoboxo and Thames Rivers.
 - The plan includes townhouses and village-scale mixed-use buildings reflecting survey preferences.

Cove District vision and connectivity

- Laura Pirie described the Cove District as an underutilized asset that could be connected by multimodal trails to the public safety complex and the Town Center.
 - This would enable medium-density mixed-use development near Horton Cove.
- Pirie Associates proposed a new roadway alignment behind the plaza with a multimodal path terminus, trailhead parking, and bike-share facilities.

Outdoor recreation and pedestrian priority

- The consultant team emphasized the importance of linking the new outdoor recreation and green space areas to commercial centers to boost vitality.
 - Laura Pirie framed the Oxoboxo connection and a potential new trail as critical links between the Town Center and waterfront amenities.
- Designs will also reprioritize intersections away from automobile dominance toward pedestrian safety.

Streetscape and trail design

- Pirie Associates recommended treed sidewalks, shaded parking, and a pedestrian-oriented street edge to set the public-realm conditions that attract developers.
 - Residents had reacted strongly to the absence of trees.
- The consultant team suggested a cohesive placemaking palette: New England-style sidewalks and wrought-iron elements transitioning to natural wood elements at trailheads. Nature trail areas would have wayfinding and branding to help with navigation and placemaking.
 - These interventions aim to maintain visual familiarity while differentiating trail and urban segments.

Density, phasing, and market support

- Housing counts are based on the market assessment and linked to public-realm improvements.

- Development will be phased to match market demand and preserve Montville character.
- Public investments in trails and placemaking will make Montville competitive with neighboring towns for development.
- Pirie Associates estimated up to about 300 residential units could be accommodated in the proposed village-style development, phased over time.

Palmertown Village Character and River Restoration

- Palmertown Village was identified as a place to retain village character while adding modest residential density, mixed-use storefronts, and pedestrian improvements, including a proposed pedestrian bridge.
 - The plan includes converting an existing mill building into loft apartments to preserve industrial heritage while adding housing.
 - The plan also includes the potential removal of the dam to restore the river.
 - Committee members questioned how restoring the dammed river edge would affect upstream hydrology and local water uses, prompting clarification that the proposed scheme can function with or without the dam and that hydrologic study is required.
 - Removal would likely introduce ecological and resiliency benefits associated with restoring a river's repairing edge, fish passage, and access to potential federal cleanup funds for contaminants associated with historic manufacturing sites.

Parcel Status

- Dennis Goderre shared details from meetings with the church, who is open to redevelopment discussions.
 - The convent is vacant.
- Dot's Cafe building owner may be open to a transaction for public benefit via tax code.
- Dennis reported difficulty contacting the Moultrie family.
- The consultant team discussed potential near-term facilitation of property acquisitions.
 - Pirie Associates reviewed parcels that had been for sale (Dunkin', McDonald's and adjacent lots) and noted market listings fluctuated on LoopNet, affecting near-term redevelopment potential.

Truck routing and road realignment proposals

- Pirie Associates discussed a truck bypass concept to reduce heavy truck traffic on Bridge Street by routing trucks via Maple Avenue toward 163 and 395.
 - Pirie noted current truck volumes and maneuverability constraints and suggested corner realignment to improve safety and operations.
 - Committee members raised concerns about topography, property impacts, and preserving pedestrian village character while improving truck access.
- Pirie Associates emphasized balancing industrial truck needs with village-scale walkability and safety, and requested specific feedback from operators to refine diagrams and sweeps for truck maneuvers.
 - Local operators described tight corners, existing driver workarounds, and suggested potential realignment or removal of a corner building to widen buffers for truck traffic.

Historic Building Sensitivities and Zoning Constraints

- Committee members flagged several historic structures as character anchors to be preserved or adaptively reused, and requested map/coding clarifications to reflect existing residential buildings.
 - Steve Jacobs noted that underlying zoning (R40, R120 and non-overlay) will restrict higher-density perimeter development and requires sensitivity to existing industrial uses.

Brownfield candidate identification

- The consultant team reviewed brownfield scope options and noted Bridge Street site #3 is under contract and should be avoided for this study.
 - The committee discussed Palmer School's deed restrictions and potential adaptive reuses including housing or an innovation/education hub, while acknowledging negotiations with the trust and Board of Education would be required.
 - The building nearest the dam (Building #7) was identified as likely contaminated and possibly dependent on dam removal for redevelopment.
 - The Wisniewski property near the water tower was proposed for outreach to COG/state brownfield programs.
- Steve Jacobs and Laura Pirie clarified the brownfield task is a use-and-massing assessment (test-fit for program and funding justification), not an environmental remediation study, and explained that building-level measurements and records would be needed to support test fits.
 - Committee members agreed to gather building footprints, tax records, and permits to inform test-fit analyses
- The consultant team also discussed whether brownfield findings should be presented at the March town meeting or as a standalone deliverable.
 - The committee agreed to hold internal follow-up conversations and to refine deliverables and outreach plans to public works and potential parcel-control nodes.

Next Steps

- Steve Jacobs shared a project timeline, highlighting upcoming deadlines and engagement sessions.
- Committee help will be beneficial to promote community engagement events.
- Steve Jacobs shared an overview of the implementation strategy.
- BJH Advisors will begin to look at the financial feasibility of priority sites.