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REPORT

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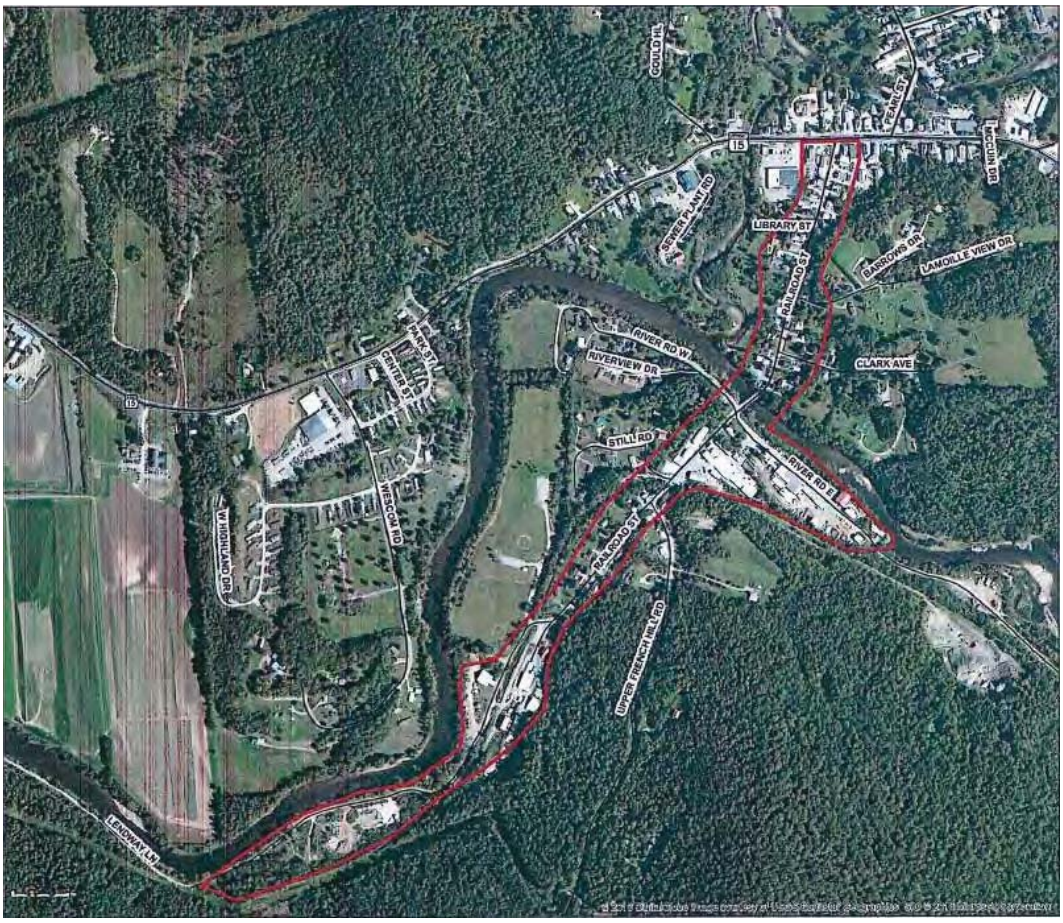
TOWN OF
Johnson
VERMONT

Targeted Area-Wide Plan & Implementation Report



3.1 Former Manchester Mill

Currently this property is unutilized. It was formerly a lumber milling operation that operated for decades at this site. Within the last year the facility was shuttered, and the equipment sold. The portion of the property within the AOI (approximately 5 acres) is on both the North and South sides of River Road East. This portion of the property has several buildings including a residence turned into an office, the former manufacturing building, a rented building used as an auto repair shop, a cold storage building and several pole sheds. The portion of the property on the North of River Road is dominated by undeveloped river bank and gravel parking. The bulk of the land surrounding the former manufacturing building, parking area and former log storage is paved. The entire northern section of the property is within the mapped floodplain and river corridor. Portions of the southern section of the property are also in the mapped flood plain and river corridor. A basic description of current site conditions is included in the following table:

Address	66 River Road East
Lot Number	10-02-04
Owner	Manchester Investments, Inc.
Acreage	14.19 Total In AOI = 2.15 Village, 3.0 Town
Office Building	2 story, wood frame, 1,400 sq. ft
Manufacturing Building	1 story, wood frame, 15,000 sq. ft
Rental - Garage	1.5 story, metal sided, 4,700 sq. ft
Storage	1 story, wood frame, 2,000 sq. ft
Assessed Building Value	$1,049,700 (prior to equipment removal)
Assessed Land Value	$163,500
Total Assessed Value	$1,213,500
Current Use	Former Lumber Mill
Use District(s)	Village Industrial
Water	Municipal (limited size)
Wastewater	Private, Unknown
Topography	Flat on north side of road sloping to north on south side of road
Floodplain	South side = partial, does not include building North side = Yes
River Corridor	South side partial (most of building in RC) North side = Yes
Wetlands	No
Contaminant Presence	Unknown. A 10,000 gallon diesel fuel UST is present and hydraulics were utilized. Auto repair in rental building.
Comments	Building is sprinkled. Water service is currently limited by small potable water service to Mill and other buildings south. Rail trail abuts west property line. Also own 17 acres to the west adjoining AOI lot.

The site is located approximately 0.33 miles from the junction of Main and Railroad Streets in the heart of Johnson. The property is accessed from several locations on River Road East. The main manufacturing building and large log yard are located outside of mapped flood plain and river corridor areas. The manufacturing building has had nearly all of the former milling equipment removed. Electrical service includes 230 volt 3 phase power sufficient to operate large processing equipment.

The proposed conceptual redevelopment for this parcel is ambitious. The conceptual redevelopment is presented on Figure 5. This very ambitious redevelopment concept should be viewed as an "ultimate" goal for the property. The concept creates a "campus" feel with moderate density housing blocks, (apartments/townhouses) with ample green space and a comprehensive waterfront park. The proposed build out of the redevelopment is flexible and encourages reuse and repurposing of several existing buildings.

Site visioning depicts how the Manchester Mill might become a flourishing new center for commercial enterprise and social gathering, and the advantages of connecting to the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT) and extending site improvements to Railroad Street. The conceptual redevelopment depicts future uses in forms that are flexible and could serve multiple objectives. The proposal for the Manchester Mill also recognizes those areas of the site where redevelopment is incompatible with flooding hazard. These areas have been programmed as new areas for public gathering.

Enhancing walking and biking in the Study Area would improve quality of life in the surrounding Railroad Street neighborhoods and in doing so, bring benefits to the Village as-a-whole. The vision for the site depicts a new connection between the Village Main Street and the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT). A kiosk at the LVRT is located at a new pedestrian/bicycle "spur" that connects cyclists and pedestrians to the rail trail and to the existing sidewalk near the truss bridge. In addition to this public thoroughfare, two new gathering places are proposed. The first is a tree-lined common area framed by redeveloped and new buildings that provide a flexible mix of commercial space and housing. The common area serves as a "front lawn" for housing (live/work units, apartments, townhouses) shown on the east side. Across River Road is a riverfront park featuring steps to a small "beach", a floodable open-air pavilion space for community events, venues that rent seasonal recreation gear (kayaks, tubes, bikes, etc.), and space for food trucks.

Potential tenants of the commercial/light industrial spaces meeting the identified highest best use analysis include "maker spaces", food/beverage manufacture, food storage, hospitality and culinary arts training and education. Care must be taken to assure that any proposed "industry" will be compatible with residential use so close by.

Proposed Redevelopment:

- Up to 28,000 square feet of light industrial/commercial space including 2 new buildings attached to the existing manufacturing building (or new facility on the same footprint).
- 2, 3 unit over 3 unit apartment buildings, or 6 townhouses,
- 1, 2 unit over 2 unit apartment building, or 2 townhouse,
- 1, 4 unit over 4 unit apartments, or 4 townhouses,
- Renovation of the existing auto repair building into a "pole barn" style pavilion,
- Renovation of the cold storage building into a boat rental and snack bar facility,
- Construction of a non-motorized boat launch,
- Installation of a connecting path from the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail to River Road, including an information kiosk
- Creation of a walkable riverfront park with additional access to the Lamoille River.

Redevelopment Benefits:

The benefits of the proposed redevelopment for Johnson include:

- Provides for flexible use and redevelopment of the property based upon developer interest and economic feasibility. The existing manufacturing building could be immediately utilized by an established small or even startup company looking for industrial space.
- Provides much requested quality residential units near the downtown core.
- Enhances public use of Lamoille River while reducing the buildings and use at risk in the flood plain.
- Creates an extension of the Railroad Street neighborhood and enhances connectivity of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail to Johnson.

Redevelopment Challenges:

The primary challenges for redevelopment of this site are:

- Water supply is limited by a small water line in River Road. A larger supply line will be necessary to serve the proposed development. The water main in Railroad Street is sufficiently sized to be extended to the project area.
- Municipal wastewater disposal is not present at the site. However, the sanitary sewer main is located several hundred feet away in Railroad Street.

- Much property is located within the mapped floodplain and river corridor. This imposes specific limits on the locations of buildings and elevations of infrastructure (park, boat launch, new buildings). Careful programing of the development will be necessary to account for the flood plain implications. Repurposing of the buildings currently in the floodplain into the proposed flood resistant pavilion and seasonally used snack bar should actually reduce flood risk.

- The use of the property as a manufacturing facility and the presence of the vehicle repair facility in the rental garage may have resulted in environmental contamination beneath the site requiring assessment and potentially remediation.

- The existing layout of the former mill building may not be suitable for some tenants' processes.

3.2 Former Cyprus Talc Mill

This property, is currently jointly owned by the Town of Johnson and the Village of Johnson. The property is being partially utilized by the Town as their highway garage. The Village houses its Water and Light Department garage on the property. Additional uses include food shelf, municipal storage and fire training facility. Only a portion of this large tract is included in the AOI. The unique location of this property and extensive infrastructure provide a unique opportunity for redevelopment which could enhance recreational activities, increase visitation to Johnson and provide an economic boost to the area. Being in Town ownership allows the Johnson community to control and direct the redevelopment of this area in their best interests.

This complex was a portion of the Former Cyprus Minerals Talc mine and mill. It was first developed as a talc mine and processing facility as early as 1907 by the American Mineral Company. The site is actively managed as a hazardous waste site by the VTDEC. At the time of the first environmental investigation at the Site in 1989, the facility was operating as Cyprus Industrial Minerals. In 1996, one 15 acre parcel was sold to the Town and Village of Johnson, which contained the "old talc mill site" and associated structures. In 2003, the remaining 180.5 acres were sold to the Town and Village.

Generally, raw material was mined from just south of the mill area and in East Johnson, delivered to the mill and processed into various industrial products. Water necessary for the processing was pumped from the Lamoille River. Wastewater from the processing was pumped into settling ponds to the northeast of the

mill (now the recreation fields). The sludge settled from the process water and tailings are known to contain high levels of arsenic (As) and nickel (Ni). Evidence of process water/sludge/tailings overflow into the adjacent Lamoille River and evidence of buried tailings adjacent to the River have been noted. These heavy metals also leach from the sludge/tailings into infiltrating storm water and are transported to and with groundwater ultimately discharging into the River. The settling pond area (Old Mill Park) is considered remediated and is in active use.

Additional contamination at the Site exists adjoining and downgradient of the DPW facilities including petroleum from several underground storage tanks. It appears that this contamination may have penetrated into the bedrock beneath the property. The extent and degree of metals and petroleum contamination at the facility is unknown. There is also the potential for railroad related contaminants and PCBs to be present. Currently, additional subsurface investigation required by the VTDEC is underway.

The portion of the property within the AOI (approx. 27 acres) is bisected with Railroad Street and by the LVRT. This portion of the property has several buildings, in various states of use, including:

- Former Residence being used by the local Boy Scout Troop, as a food shelf and as an office for the Village foreman is located at the "entrance" to the property.
- A small parking lot specifically serving the LVRT is also located at the "entrance" to the facility.
- 2 open span steel buildings currently utilized as the Town Highway Garage and Village Water and Light headquarters and equipment storage/repair facilities to the south to the LVRT and Lendway Lane.
- Several "pole barn" style storage sheds also exist on the south side of the LVRT.
- A large storage building is located between Railroad Street and the Lamoille River.
- The "smoke house" training area for the Fire Department is also located between Railroad Street and the Lamoille River.
- Storage of bulk materials (sand, gravel, fill) occurs on both sides of Railroad Street to the southwest of the building complex. This entire area is located in the floodplain and designated River Corridor.

The entire facility is served by municipal water and sewer lines capable of receiving significantly increase flows. Electric service is also robust with 3 phase, 230 volt power available. Overall the functional use of the southern portion of the property is robust. The Town/Village DPW has made the space work for their needs, despite some inefficiencies in design and flow. Any redevelopment of the DPW and Electric facilities would require consolidation or relocation of entities. This presents a long range planning and funding challenge for this portion of the property. However, numerous incremental projects can be performed prior to DPW relocation. A basic description of current site conditions is included in the following table:

Address	661, 663, 665 Railroad Street
Lot Number	10-01-90
Owner	Town and Village of Johnson
Acreage	188 Total (3 lots) In AOI = 2.4 Village, 24 Town
Former Residence/Food Shelf	2 story, wood frame, 2,500 sq. ft.
Department of Public Works	1 story, steel open span, 7,500 sq. ft.
Electric Department	1 story, steel open span, 5,200 sq. ft.
Storage Building	1.5 story, 6,400 sq. ft.

"Smoke House"	2 story, wood framed, 1,400 sq. ft.
Pole Barn	1.5 story, 2,500 sq. ft.
Assessed Building Value	$561,800
Assessed Land Value	$202,600
Total Assessed Value	$764,400
Current Use	Town Highway Garage/Village Water and Light Garage
Use District(s)	Village Lower Village Town Agricultural Town Village
Water	Municipal
Wastewater	Municipal
Topography	Terraced, sloping to river to North
Floodplain	Yes, North of Rail Trail Only
River Corridor	Yes, North of Rail Trail Only
Wetlands	Yes, North of Rail Trail Only
Contaminant Presence	Yes. Petroleum, Metals and potentially PCBs
Comments	Additional investigation of contamination is required. Much of the upland portion of the property outside the AOI is part of Johnson Town Forest.

The proposed long term redevelopment concept for this property is extremely ambitious. The "ultimate" goal of the redevelopment in this area is to make it a destination for recreation enthusiasts of all types and to encourage visitation to Downtown. The proximity to the LVRT, Lamoille River, Town Forest trails and recreation fields make this area a natural "hub" for many recreational activities. The conceptual "ultimate" redevelopment is presented on Figure 6. It has been crafted to ultimately allow for commercial and recreational uses, along with creating an enhanced public access and use areas adjoining the Lamoille River. Commercial uses such as a brewery or distillery would bring in visitors to Johnson and enhance LVRT connectivity. This very ambitious redevelopment concept should be viewed as an "ultimate" goal for the property. The concept creates a "welcome center" feel with amenities for recreation, arts space, and an enhanced waterfront. The proposed build out of the redevelopment is flexible and encourages reuse and repurposing of several existing buildings.

Potential tenants of the commercial/light industrial spaces meeting the identified highest best use analysis include "maker spaces", food/beverage manufacture, food storage, and potentially building manufacture. Care must be taken to assure that any proposed "industry" will be compatible with recreational uses.

Proposed "Ultimate" Redevelopment:

- Renovate the residential building into a Welcome Center with restrooms,
- Expand parking and signage for the LVRT accenting the proximity of Downtown Johnson,
- Redevelop existing Town Highway and Village Water and Light buildings into a brewery/distillery/food processing facility with tasting/restaurant/events spaces,
  - Utilize the storage building as a water sports rental facility (tubes, paddle boards, kayaks),
  - Create a non-motorized boat access,
  - Create a sculpture garden along the LVRT,

- Install amphitheater seating and "frame" for community movies/outdoor theater.

We recognize that the “ultimate” redevelopment is a long range and expensive plan that will require significant commitment from the Town/Village to relocate the Town Highway and Village Water and Light Garages and attract at least one large scale tenant to renovate the existing buildings for their specific use.

Therefore, we propose the following “initial” redevelopment plan which will catalyze establishing the area as a “hub” and provide the backbone needed to attract the larger scale redevelopment above. This initial redevelopment plan is shown on Figure 7. Johnson could encourage significantly more visitation of Main Street businesses by creating a more welcoming arrival experience to the Village at the publicly owned Talc Mill. At a minimum, Johnson should provide an information kiosk and basic wayfinding signage in key locations. Signage should orient visitors to the area, and make it clear to all that Main Street shops and venues are only a short ride away.

Proposed “Initial” Redevelopment:

- Renovate the residential building into a Welcome Center with restrooms,
- Expand parking and signage for the LVRT accenting the proximity of Downtown Johnson,
- Create a non-motorized boat access,

- Create a sculpture garden along the LVRT,
- Install lighting at the adjoining Old Mill Park

Redevelopment Benefits:

The benefits of the proposed redevelopment for Johnson include:

- Enhances the Old Mill Park and LVRT area by creating a meeting hub for local users.
- Provides a "catchment"/"destination" for visitors who can then be guided to the downtown core. The welcome center will provide a reason for LVRT users (pedestrians, bikers, snowmobilers) to stop in Johnson.
- Enhances public use of Lamoille River, Old Mill park and the LVRT.
- Provides for flexible use and redevelopment of the property based upon future developer interest and economic feasibility.
- Creates the inertia necessary to progress to the "ultimate" redevelopment goal.

Redevelopment Challenges:

The primary challenges for redevelopment of this site are:

- Combined use as recreation and municipal facilities. The design, flow and "feel" of the trail hub area will be impacted by the municipal traffic and activities passing through the pedestrian access area.
- The unknown extent of contamination and potential remedial efforts create uncertainty regarding the impact on redevelopment schemes around and downgradient of the DPW buildings.
- Much property north on Railroad Street is located within the mapped floodplain and river corridor. This imposes specific limits on the locations of buildings and elevations of infrastructure (park, boat launch, new buildings). Careful programing of the development will be necessary to account for the flood plain implications. Repurposing of the buildings currently in the floodplain will require additional permitting costs.