



**WALTER
ROBBS
CALLAHAN
& PIERCE**
Architects, PA



Acknowledgements

Walter Robbs Callahan and Pierce extends its appreciation to the following people and organizations who have been involved in the planning process for the updated Heart of Fletcher Master Plan. The Master Plan and course of action are collaborations between the Town leaders and Walter Robbs Callahan and Pierce staff. We also wish to thank past Town leaders for their ideas inspired by concern for the future of the Town of Fletcher.

Fletcher Town Council

Mayor William B. "Bill" Moore
Councilman Hugh Clark
Councilman Bob Davy
Councilwoman Sheila Franklin
Councilman Eddie Henderson

Fletcher Planning Board

Chairman George Clayton
John Ciaramella
Pat Clark
Brenda Ford
Duane Gentle
Myra Grant
Carl Heikkinen
Joe Tandy

Fletcher Administration

Mark Biberdorf, Town Manager
Eric Rufa, Planning Director

Walter Robbs Callahan and Pierce

Rence Callahan, Vice President
Joe Bircher, Senior Project Architect
Brian Kubecki, Architect
Shayna Thiel, Senior Planner

Table of Contents

Background / History 3
 2000 Fletcher Town Center Master Plan 3
 2008-2009 Heart of Fletcher Master Plan 4
 2011 Heart of Fletcher Overlay: Development Guidelines 5

Master Plan Update Process..... 7

Development Considerations 9

Final Concept Plan..... 11

Sketch Rendering 13

Initial Action Steps 14

Development Recommendations 15

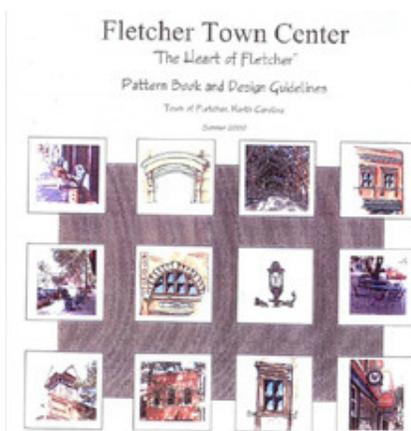
Appendix..... 16
 Heart of Fletcher Master Plan Update: Dream Sheet..... 16
 Technical Input & Fact Collection Meeting Notes..... 17
 Developer Forum Notes 19



2000 Fletcher Town Center Master Plan

Fletcher has been interested in organizing its growth for almost 15 years. On May 3, 2000, Scott R. Melrose & Associates partnered with citizens and town leaders in a design charrette to create the original Fletcher Town Center Master Plan. The master plan set forth the community's vision, but the study area was confined to the 28-acre town-owned site west of the Town Park. The 2000 Master Plan provided excellent guidelines for the physical and experiential nature of

desired future development; however, the development lacked integration with the existing fabric of Fletcher. As part of the 2000 Master Plan, the Pattern Book and Design Guidelines provided photographic and diagrammatic examples of the types of buildings, streets, and neighborhoods that Fletcher residents preferred to see in their town. While suburban in principle, the designs increased density and provided the zoning and organization necessary to facilitate the streetscape attributes that Fletcher residents valued.



The goals of the 2000 Master Plan and associated Pattern Book and Design Guidelines include:

1. "Create an integrated fabric of public, private and semi-public spaces within a vibrant town center that acts as a hub for existing and probably future development in the Town of Fletcher
2. Create a new public green as a focal point for the Town to gather, socialize and hold events
3. Provide a commercial, economic, social and physical focus for the Town of Fletcher
4. Have strong reciprocal relationships between building elements and streetscape elements
5. Provide a pattern for development that reflects the desires of Fletcher townspeople while allowing for individual creativity in the design fields (architecture, landscape architecture)
6. Include inspiring design details within its spaces (light fixtures, benches, site furniture, paving patterns, signs, etc.)
7. Build with a "pedestrian-first; vehicular second" philosophy within the downtown core by providing sidewalks on every street, by delineating crosswalks within the roadway pavements, etc.
8. Relegate parking lots and service-related activities to the rear of buildings thereby dedicating the streetscape corridor to building facades, street trees and the townspeople
9. Share parking requirements among different building uses
10. Create a flexible master plan that can expand with future growth and modify based on determined need
11. Protect the surrounding ecosystem with innovative stormwater and wetlands management
12. Capture mountain views



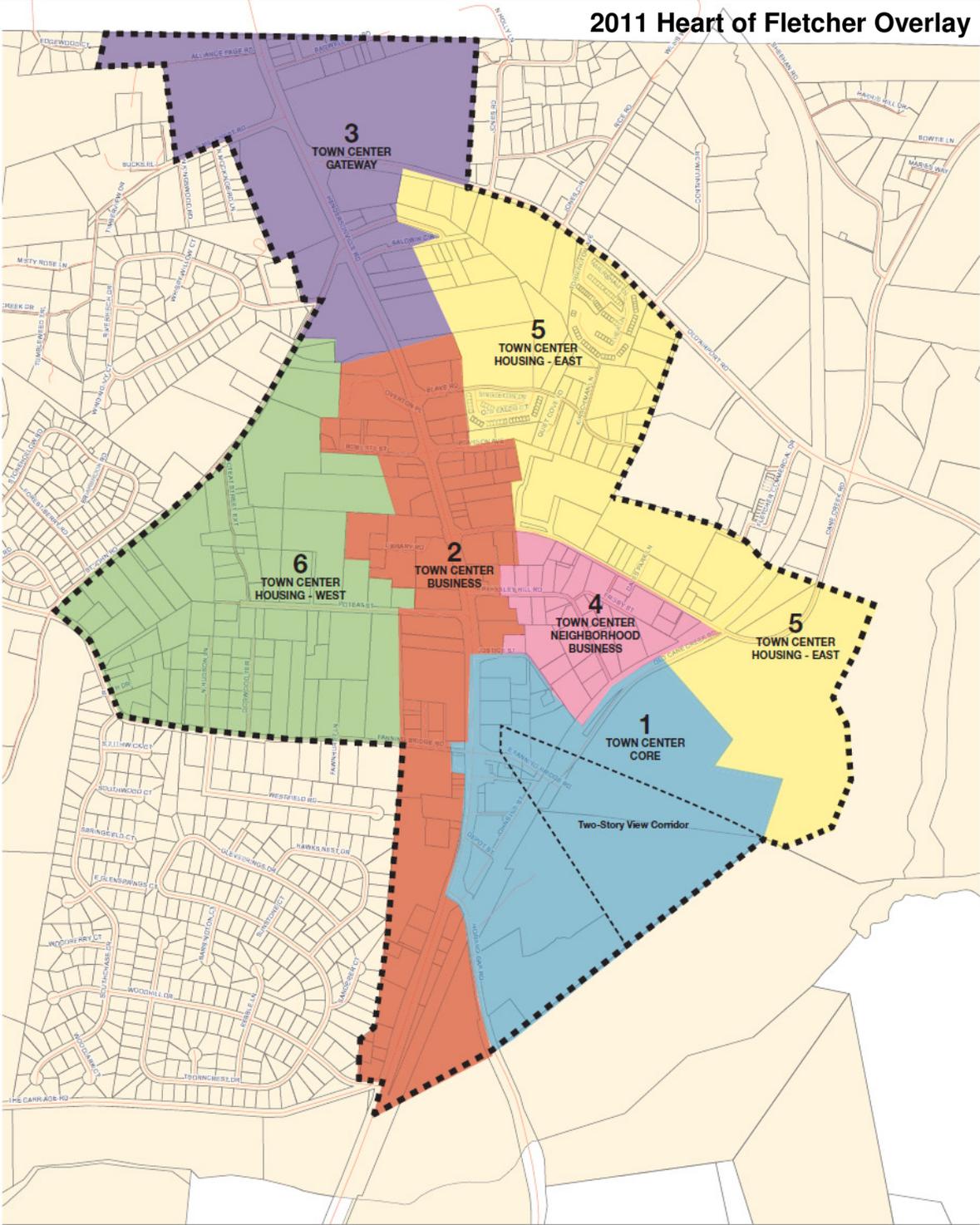
Because of the railroad, the historic Heart of Fletcher concept presented a potential disconnect between commercial development areas and visibility. However, the strongest feature was the link back to the historical crossroads of the town, where Fanning Bridge Road crosses US 25. The new “Heart of Fletcher” encouraged higher-density commercial and residential infill development close to the historic center of Fletcher to promote walkability and provided for north-south connectivity east of the railroad. It set the new Town Hall and other future municipal buildings on a grand vista axis view to the mountains. The concept also allowed for expansion of the existing town park, one of Fletcher’s popular amenities. The Town Planning Board approved the “Heart of Fletcher” concept, and Walter Robbs continued its efforts to create a town center for Fletcher.

2011 Heart of Fletcher Overlay: Development Guidelines

Walter Robbs collaborated with elected and appointed officials, town staff and residents of the Town of Fletcher for over four years to produce the Heart of Fletcher Overlay: Development Guidelines. Throughout the process, our research and communication efforts were extensive and inclusive. We met with town staff numerous times, held a variety of workshops and public meetings with the Town Planning Board and Town Council, and notified affected property owners.

Walter Robbs expanded the boundaries of the “Heart of Fletcher” to include more than just the centrally-located property owned by the Town. Rather than suggesting a major rezoning effort or overhaul of the Land Development Code, we recommended that the Town utilize an overlay district, which would supersede the existing Land Development Code and Zoning Map. We designated six precincts, each having its own development guidelines related to design such as: building location and height, transparency, density and parking. The overlay also included real-world examples and streetscape renderings. In December 2011, the Fletcher Town Council adopted the attached Heart of Fletcher Overlay: Development Guidelines. These guidelines

were intended to prevent suburban-style development while still allowing for creativity and flexibility in creating urban, pedestrian-oriented design opportunities in and around the town's center. Because of the national recession, new development opportunities in the critical core area (Precincts 1, 2 and 4) were constrained, thereby hindering the capacity for those new regulations to significantly reposition the town's historic central area into becoming the desired more urban, walkable destination.



After adopting the Heart of Fletcher Overlay: Development Guidelines, Walter Robbs continued its relationship with the Town of Fletcher to update the 2008-2009 Heart of Fletcher Master Plan. Since the overlay's approval, the town proceeded with the design and construction of a new Town Hall. In addition, minimal residential and commercial activity took place in the town's core.

Nonetheless, the Fletcher Town Council was eager to move forward with development in the Town Center core. Walter Robbs was enlisted to help devise ways to best leverage the new Town Hall and town-controlled property to spur private investment. The Town Council asked us to re-examine the 2008 Heart of Fletcher Master Plan and identify tweaks that could make the area more appealing to developers. Walter Robbs proposed to reaffirm the town's vision, incorporating the precise location of the new Town Hall and optioned property, and consider different planning scenarios to attract future development. We recommended that the town be proactive in its efforts to encourage interested developers to embrace the Heart of Fletcher concept.

Walter Robbs outlined a recommended process to prepare the update to the Heart of Fletcher Master Plan. The steps included: (1) a brainstorming/idea exchange during a Town Council public meeting; (2) a technical input/fact collection meeting with Town staff and experts in the fields of transportation, engineering and stormwater management; (3) a developer forum with interested commercial and residential developers and real estate professionals; and (4) conceptual layout options review meetings with Walter Robbs and Town staff.

The Town Council held the brainstorming/ idea exchange on October 1, 2012 at Fletcher Town Hall. Walter Robbs summarized the history and work done on the Heart of Fletcher project planning. Town staff discussed the recent progress and development activities occurring with the Heart of Fletcher and solicited comments from the public. During the exchange, Walter Robbs, with input from the Town Council, staff and public, was able to revise the Town's "Dream Sheet," which highlighted development preferences for the Heart of Fletcher, such as public sector investment, desired uses/services, pedestrian-friendly and bicycle-friendly amenities, and landscaping/street designs. The "Dream Sheet" can be found in the Appendix at the end of this document.

On October 31, 2012, Walter Robbs facilitated a Technical Input/Fact Collection Meeting with Town staff and area transportation, engineering and stormwater management experts at Fletcher Town Hall. To identify potential opportunities and barriers to development, the group started to think about the Heart of Fletcher as potential developers and investors might. They considered electric/gas line capabilities, floodplain regulations, regional stormwater facility feasibility, water/sewer capacities, water reuse policies, pedestrian-friendliness, and traffic-calming strategies. The group also discussed many of the infrastructure improvements underway and/or planned for the "Heart of Fletcher" and associated environmental constraints and permitting requirements. Walter Robbs used the information gathered during this meeting as the planning foundation in preparing the Master Plan update. Notes from the Technical Input/Fact Collection Meeting can be found in the Appendix at the end of this document.

Walter Robbs held a Developer Forum on February 25, 2013 at Fletcher Town Hall. Developers and real estate professionals from Charlotte, Greensboro and Winston-Salem met with Town staff to share their experiences and ideas about the development potential of the town-owned property. Because of its remote location between Hendersonville and Asheville, the group agreed that the Heart of Fletcher must distinguish itself, creating a "sense of place," and provide visibility from US 25. They encouraged the town to focus on improving the area around the US

25/Fanning Bridge Road intersection, which could become a viable retail gateway to the Town Hall. Since it's an area asset, the group also recommended expanding the Town's Community Park toward the Town Center and into the existing floodplain space. The developers and real estate professionals stressed that only limited commercial and higher residential development would occur without visibility to/from US 25. This forum allowed Town staff to gauge market interest from area developers and revise/prioritize ideas based on current economic conditions. Walter Robbs incorporated the comments received during the forum into the sketch plans and conceptual renderings of the Master Plan update. Notes from the Developer Forum can be found in the Appendix at the end of this document.

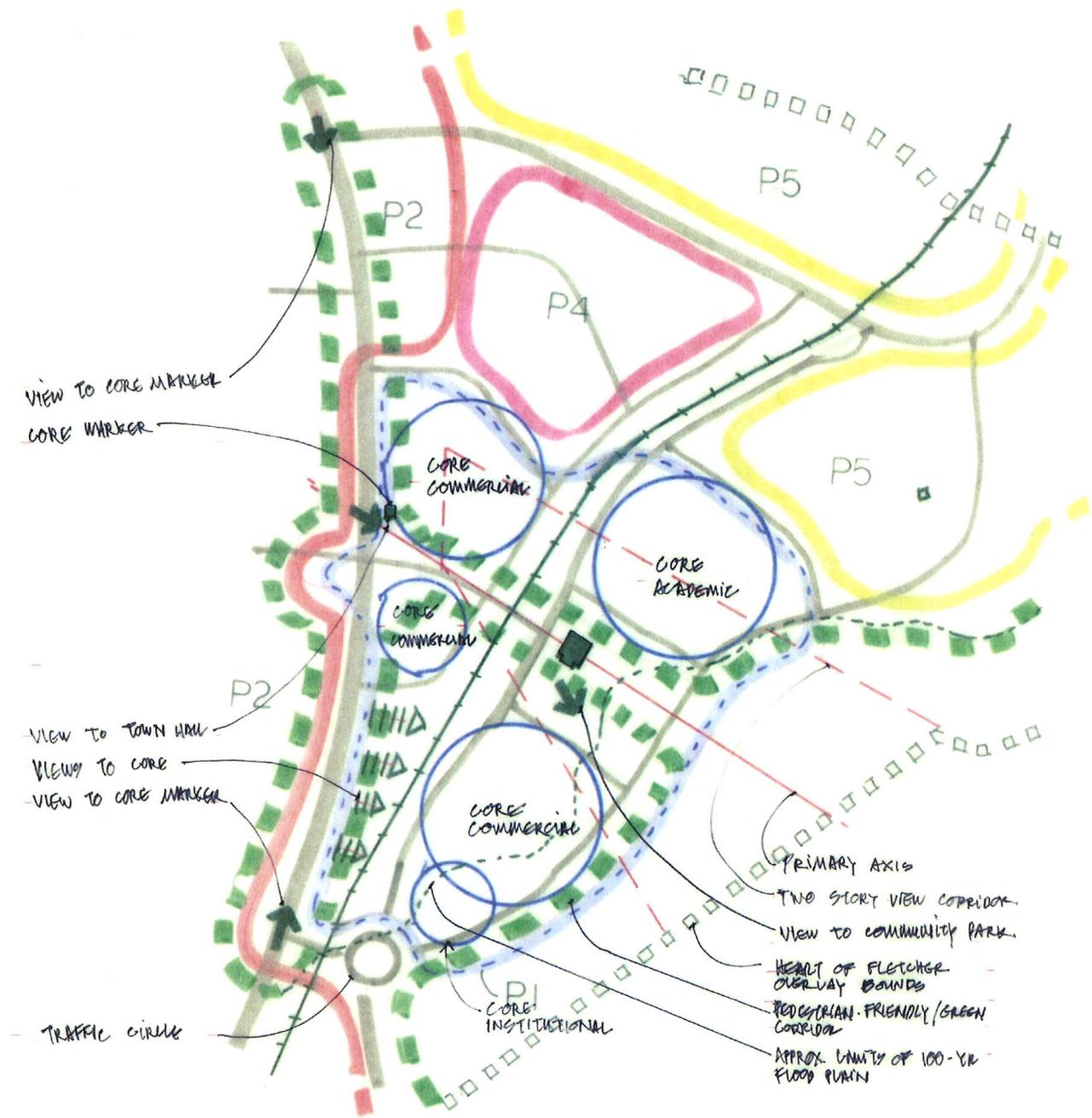
After gathering input from the various meetings and forums, Walter Robbs prepared general redevelopment scenarios and reviewed them with Town staff. From those discussions a final recommended deliverable was prepared.

In the end product, this 2012-2013 Heart of Fletcher Master Plan Update, Walter Robbs synthesized public, Town Council and staff comments into a final concept, created a rendered site plan and conceptual sketch that reflect the final concept recommendations, and included specific development action steps for the town-controlled parcels. The following **Development Considerations** diagram proposes development concepts for the Town to consider. The **Final Concept Plan** shows future improvements that the Town should explore to attract mixed-use, commercial, institutional and recreational development within the Heart of Fletcher. The **Sketch Rendering** illustrates hypothetical mixed-use development consistent with the Heart of Fletcher Overlay guidelines. And the **Initial Action Steps** drawing highlights the minimum initial actions that will further the vision of the Heart of Fletcher. Finally, the **Development Recommendations** table discusses different planning efforts, with three levels implementation: what is currently done, how the Town can plan better, and how the Town can be more proactive to achieve its development goals.

Development Considerations

In the development considerations diagram, Walter Robbs proposed development concepts for the Town of Fletcher to consider. The different district boundaries of the Heart of Fletcher Overlay act as the underlying base of the diagram, and concentric circles, or “bubbles,” identify general areas for preferred development, such as core commercial, core academic and core academic. At the intersection of US 25 and Fanning Bridge Road, the historical crossroads of the town, we suggested a distinguishable marker to designate the Heart of Fletcher Town Center Core. To create a sense of place, the marker should be visible along US 25 from the north and south. The diagram also shows an unobstructed view from the new Town Hall to the Community Park and a pedestrian-friendly green corridor linking the two.

Development Considerations



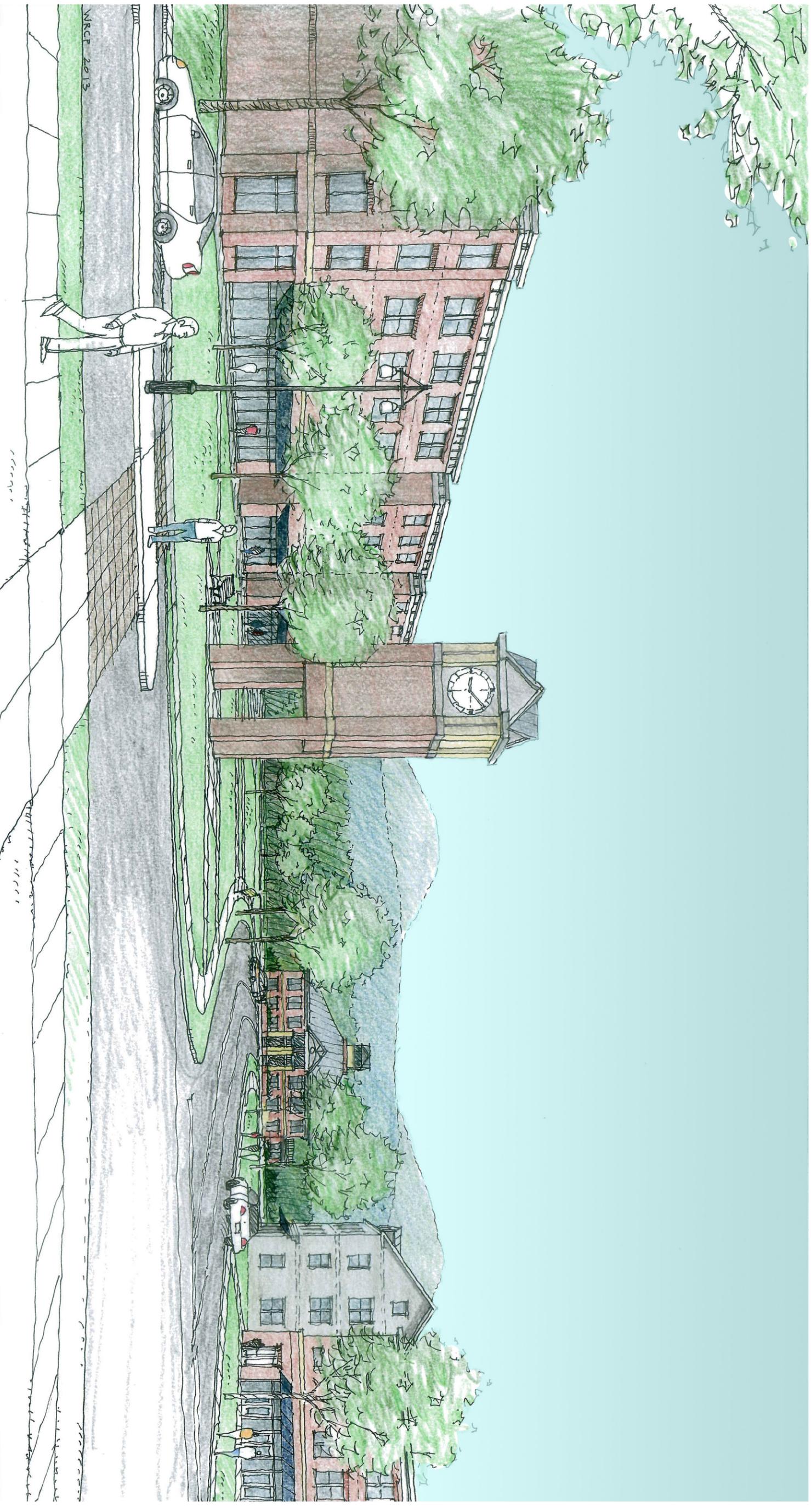
Taking into account all the information gathered during the update process, Walter Robbs prepared a final concept plan that focused on the property owned by the Town of Fletcher. While the Town does not have control over property located at the intersection of US 25 and Fanning Bridge Road, Walter Robbs urges the Town to consider improvements to the area, such as marked crosswalks, landscaped medians and recognizable markers, as they are imperative to the success of the Heart of Fletcher. These improvements would help to highlight the Heart of Fletcher as a special place to residents, visitors and passers-by. Expanding green space from the US 25/Fanning Bridge Road intersection would create a visual connection to the new Town Hall, Community Park and mountain range in the background.

The final concept plan proposes that another municipal or public-use building be constructed in close proximity to the new Town Hall. The plan also shows additional open, undeveloped space that forms a “Town Green” and connection to the Community Park. Limited commercial and mixed-use development is also encouraged along Fanning Bridge Road and on the Town-controlled property.



Sketch Rendering

The following sketch rendering depicts the potential view looking east from the intersection of US 25 and Fanning Bridge Road. Town Hall is in the foreground and framed by the mountains in the distance. The sketch rendering shows hypothetical mixed-use development consistent with the Heart of Fletcher Overlay guidelines.





Walter Robbs recommends that the Town take the following minimum initial actions to advance the vision for the Heart of Fletcher.

1. Clear cut view corridor to Community Park
2. Cut and fill areas to adjust floodplain and developable land
3. Divert water to storm pond
4. Install traffic-calming street enhancements along US 25
5. Realign Howard Gap Road and US 25 intersection
6. Encourage commercial/mixed-use development at Fanning Bridge Road and US 25 intersection and on town-owned property south of Town Hall
7. Construct County Library and Town Lawn/Green
8. Pursue interest in Academic/Institutional Buildings

Development Recommendations

Planning Topic	Current	Plan	Proactive
Initial Development Area	No specific actions	Work with existing property owners to negotiate development agreements	Gain control of property within initial development area
Visual Connection between Town Park & new Town Hall	No connection exists	Clear vegetation on town-owned property to create open space connection	Clear vegetation & add trail connection
Rutledge Property Use	Allow Rutledge property to be sold without consideration of Heart of Fletcher plans	Seek rezoning(s) on Rutledge property to guide future development	Purchase critical sections of Rutledge property to preserve desired development potential
US-25 Traffic Calming	Traffic moves quickly; Fletcher is not noticed	Create "wish-list" of projects that soften US-25 experience & create sense of place	Apply for funding & lobby NCDOT to include US-25 traffic calming in Throughway Improvement Plan
Town Park Expansion	Utilize existing amenities of park	Prepare master plan to expand park into town-owned property & to Town Hall	Apply for funding to expand park as recommended in master plan
Stormwater Management	Individual projects have their own stormwater ponds	Prepare comprehensive stormwater master plan; consider regional facility for Heart of Fletcher	Enact moratorium on new stormwater facility construction until study completed
Stormwater Rerouting	No improvements	Build ditch to manage stormwater runoff	Acquire permit for pipe installation to reroute stormwater runoff
Floodplain Development	Abide by existing federal permit requirements	Determine feasibility of filling/moving floodplain to allow for more developable town-owned property	Hire engineers to gain necessary approvals to fill areas & change floodplain determinations
Outdoor Recreation Uses	Outdoor recreation uses not considered	Determine feasibility of having outdoor recreation uses on town-owned property	Inquire with outdoor recreation companies about willingness to develop facilities on town-owned property
Not-for-Profit Partnerships	Town providing all funding	Solicit joint partnerships groups such as colleges, county library to develop facilities on town-owned property	Create a Heart of Fletcher Authority, a Not-for-Profit to coordinate redevelopment efforts
Planning Relationships	Plan only for Fletcher	Cultivate cooperative relations with neighboring communities	Establish comprehensive planning agreements with adjacent municipalities
Market Forces & Economic Drivers	Allow market & economic forces to dictate future development	Commission retail market study by consultant	Recruit targeted economic businesses, ie. destination retail, to Heart of Fletcher
Fanning Bridge Road Multimodal Improvements	No improvements planned	Prepare plan that proposes to add bicycle lanes & sidewalks to Fanning Bridge Road	Fund Fanning Bridge Road multimodal improvements
Howard Gap Road Realignment	Continue with existing intersection improvement plans	Lobby NCDOT to include plans to realign Howard Gap Road creating new intersection with US-25	Acquire land for ROW
Tax Credit Assistance	Tax credits not researched	Determine if census tracts make Town eligible for New Market and/or any other tax credit programs	Apply for tax credit assistance, as appropriate
Developer Incentives	Developer incentives not available	Offer developer infrastructure planning assistance on town-owned property	Gift portion of Town-owned property as incentive for private investment; Reduce development cost by providing infrastructure
Financial Planning	Continue to be reactive; Rely on existing town policies	Enact incentive policies for redevelopment area	Develop TIF or BID District to assist with tax rebates & public improvements

Heart of Fletcher Master Plan Update: Dream Sheet

Public Sector Investment

- New municipal complex
- Town green & public art
- Park & greenway trails
- Veteran’s Memorial
- Community Center/Youth Center/Senior Center
- Theater/Fine Arts Center
- Satellite University campus
- Post Office
- Bus stops
- Library

Uses/Services

- Sidewalk cafes/restaurants
- Mix of residential types
- Bars w/ live music
- Fitness center
- Small grocery store
- Retail boutiques
- Dry cleaners, salons & similar services
- Professional offices (lawyer, architect, accountant, insurance)
- Physician/Dentist offices
- Child Daycare

Pedestrian-friendly & Bicycle-friendly

- Wide sidewalks
- Connectivity to park & greenway trails
- Parking behind buildings
- Clearly-marked bicycle lanes

Landscaping/Amenities

- Decorative lighting
- Attractive street furniture (bike racks, trash cans, benches)
- Native vegetation
- Alternative energy sources

Technical Input & Fact Collection Meeting

Heart of Fletcher Master Plan Update

Fletcher Town Hall

October 31, 2012

10:00 am

Meeting Attendees:

Natalie Berry, Henderson County; Harry Buckner & Forrest Westall, McGill Engineers; Steve Cannon, NCDOT; Mark Biberdorf & Eric Rufa, Town of Fletcher; Rence Callahan, Brian Kubecki & Shayna Thiel, Walter Robbs Callahan & Pierce

Rence welcomed the participants and provided a summary of the “Heart of Fletcher” history and the proposed Master Plan update process.

- “Heart of Fletcher” History
 - Heart of Master Plan, 2008-2009
 - New Town Hall Construction – estimated completion in January 2014
 - Heart of Fletcher Overlay: Development Guidelines, 2011
 - Heart of Fletcher Master Plan Update, 2012-2013
- “Heart of Fletcher” Master Plan Update Process
 1. Public Meeting: Brainstorming/Idea Exchange
 2. **Technical Input & Fact Collection Meeting**
 3. Developer Forum & Interaction
 4. Conceptual Layout Options Review
 5. Master Plan Update

Rence encouraged the group to start looking at the “Heart of Fletcher” as potential developers and investors might to identify the opportunities and barriers to development. Some items to consider include: electric/gas line capabilities, floodplain regulations, regional stormwater facility feasibility, water/sewer capacities, water reuse policies, pedestrian-friendliness, and traffic-calming strategies. The group discussed many of the infrastructure improvements underway and/or planned for the “Heart of Fletcher” and associated environmental constraints and permitting requirements.

Instead of requiring each development within the “Heart of Fletcher” to provide its own stormwater pond, it might be better to plan ahead for a more regional facility able to accommodate multiple developments. Federal funds and/or experimental/innovative grants might be available for this type of project. The updated Master Plan might recommend that the Town conduct a comprehensive stormwater study to determine the feasibility of such a project. Another idea discussed was whether the Town could place a moratorium on the construction of individual storm ponds in the Heart of Fletcher. Nancy suggested that the Town consider trying one on the property it controls, and then offer incentives for others to design similar projects.

Steve talked about the NCDOT's Complete Streets Policy and how the multi-modal bicycle lane and sidewalk improvements underway along Howard Gap Road comply with the new policy. The group suggested that a similar project be considered along Fanning Bridge Road. Another possibility discussed by the group was the realignment of the Howard Gap Road intersection with US 25N. If a north-south connector around the Town Hall is developed as hoped, Steve thought it might be eligible to become a NCDOT roadway. Mark identified the need and desire of the Town to slow traffic on US 25N through the "Heart of Fletcher" and beautify the area. The Town also wants to maintain/improve the connection between the Town Park and Town Hall. Steve recommended that the Town obtain buy-in with the TAC (Transportation Advisory Committee) to increase support in the SPOT (Strategic Planning Office of Transportation) prioritization process for roadway improvement projects along Fanning Bridge Road, traffic calming on US 25N, and the intersection realignment of Howard Gap Road and US 25N.

Rence outlined the expected population growth over the next 20-30 years along with the increased residential densities and commercial capacities encouraged by the "Heart of Fletcher" Overlay. The Town's infrastructure systems, including water and sewer lines, must be able to accommodate the future growth. Harry indicated that a substantial water/sewer network already exists in the area that could possibly even serve Buncombe County, with 16" potable water mains and 24" sewer mains. The Town should consider the costs and logistics associated with tie-in connections. The group also talked about floodplain regulations and ways that the Town could build in the floodplain.

At the end of the meeting, Rence thanked the group for participating and encouraged them to contact Shayna if they had more comments to share as part of our fact-collection efforts. Walter Robbs will compile the information and use it as the planning foundation in moving forward with the Master Plan update. Walter Robbs hopes to contact the group again further along in the update process to obtain additional feedback.

Possible Master Plan Recommendations to Explore:

- Preparation of a comprehensive stormwater study
- Moratorium on incremental stormwater pond construction
- Multi-modal improvements, such as bicycle lanes and sidewalks, to Fanning Bridge Road
- Traffic calming measures along US 25N through the "Heart of Fletcher"
- Realignment of the Howard Gap Road intersection with US 25N

Developer Forum

Heart of Fletcher Master Plan Update

Fletcher Town Hall

February 25, 2013

2:00 pm

Meeting Attendees:

Arthur Samet & Jarrod Dunlap, Samet Corporation; Paul Harnett, Madison Marquette; Steve Lineberger, FMK Architects; Jack Steelman, Miller Hatcher; Mark Biberdorf & Eric Rufa, Town of Fletcher; Rence Callahan & Shayna Thiel, Walter Robbs Callahan & Pierce

Rence welcomed the participants and provided a summary of the “Heart of Fletcher” history and the proposed Master Plan update process. The participants introduced themselves and highlighted their background and experience.

Overview/History of Heart of Fletcher Master Plan

- “Heart of Fletcher” History
 - Heart of Master Plan, 2008-2009
 - New Town Hall Construction – estimated completion in January 2014
 - Heart of Fletcher Overlay: Development Guidelines, 2011
 - Heart of Fletcher Master Plan Update, 2012-2013

- “Heart of Fletcher” Master Plan Update Process
 6. Public Meeting: Brainstorming/Idea Exchange
 7. Technical Input & Fact Collection Meeting
 - 8. Developer Forum & Interaction**
 9. Conceptual Layout Options Review
 10. Master Plan Update

Open Conversation on Development Potential of Town-Owned Property

- The Community Park is an important asset; it could be Fletcher’s identity.
- Making a connection between the Town Hall and Community Park could force traffic to pass through town-owned property.
- Elected officials want to see development spurred by the new Town Hall, not necessarily contributing to tax base, but creating a sense of place/identity and providing small services to Fletcher residents.
- Because of its remote location between Hendersonville and Asheville, the Heart of Fletcher must distinguish itself and provide visibility from US25.
- The new Town Hall isn’t enough of an economic engine to drive people off US25.
- The town needs a unique “hook,” to draw traffic, such as food truck court, amphitheater, farm-to-table gardening.

- Retail won't be successful off of US25; institutional and housing might be easier to accomplish.
- The town should reach out to community colleges and hospitals about locating satellite campuses in the Heart of Fletcher.
- Locating a new library near the Town Hall would be a good fit.
- Entering into a joint venture with the YMCA, where the town would donate land and share park amenities with a new YMCA branch, would be a great idea.
- Retail follows rooftops; need residential supply before commercial comes, etc.
- The "front door" to the town-owned property is not attractive, and the town should focus on improving the US25/Fanning Bridge Road intersection. While it's not controlled by the town, it could become viable retail gateway to the Town Hall.
- More market analysis is needed. The town should consider hiring a consultant to conduct a retail study to gauge market conditions and better understand Fletcher's purchasing power/potential. A few consultant names were recommended.
- Fletcher lacks a substantial building stock able to be redeveloped.
- Similar successful NC communities include Apex, Burkdale & Locust.
- The town should look into the possibility and requirements of moving floodplain to be able to more fully develop the 49 acres it controls.
- The town is working on plans to possibly add landscaping & medians, reduce speed limits and generally soften the experience along US25 through the Heart of Fletcher.
- The current Town Hall, when vacated, should be used as a catalyst for desired development.
- With it's proximity to rail and highway, the town-owned property would be a great advanced manufacturing site.
- The town-owned property might not be the right place for development now; maybe wait as long as town can afford.
- Depending on census tracts, the town-owned property might qualify for new market tax credits, which could drive non-residential development.
- To stimulate private investment, the town should consider TIF District (or similar) leveraging and/or allowing town-owned property to be gifted as incentive.

Suggested Strategies for Consideration

- Continue with Master Plan update, identifying opportunities and challenges.
- Grow the Community Park toward the Town Center and into the floodplain space.
- Clear trees in farm land to create open space connection from new Town Hall to Community Park.
- Commission market study analysis.
- Talk with Library, Colleges, Hospitals and YMCA about partnership to develop facilities on the town-owned property.
- Determine feasibility of moving floodplain line to allow for more developable land on the town-owned property.