

# DRAFT – 12/29/21

## Priority Projects\*

\*Projects were identified by the Select Board Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee, Town staff, BBC staff, and BCRC staff. Most projects were placed in two broad categories – Economic Development Projects and Infrastructure and Town Operation Projects. Projects that did not clearly fit within Economic Development Projects, and Infrastructure and Town Operation Projects were identified as Other Projects. Although not identified as separate categories, the importance of projects that addressed public health and/or housing were acknowledged as high need and are included in the projects listed below. The Economic Development projects were preliminarily prioritized based on a report from White & Burke and Dominic Cloud in consultation with the Select Board Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee. The Infrastructure and Town Operation projects were preliminarily prioritized by Town Staff in consultation with the Select Board Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee. The projects identified as Other Projects were not prioritized as they all are very speculative at this time and/or there was not a clear role for the Town at this time.

Public input and discussion with the entire Select Board will need to occur to identify possible additional priority projects and before a more definitive ordering of projects can be completed.

### Economic Development Projects

Economic Development projects were prioritized based on a three-tier system. Projects within each tier are listed in no particular order. **Tier 1** includes projects with a near-term opportunity (within 1-2 years), stakeholders at the table, and a clear role for the Town. **Tier 2** projects were deemed critical economic development projects but lacking a clear role for the Town at this time. **Tier 3** Projects were deemed speculative and/or not to have a role for the Town at this time.

**TIER 1 (Projects with a near-term opportunity (within 1-2 years), stakeholders at the table, and a clear role for the Town.)**

**Project Name (Nickname): Benn High (former Middle School)**

**Location:** 650 Main Street

**Project Description:** Facilitate redevelopment of the vacant 90,000 sq. ft. historic Bennington High School (most recently the former Middle School). Opportunities include the creation of a community center (possibly including the Senior Center) and gymnasium with programming for

all ages, and multiple housing units, including senior housing, and market rate housing. Potential partners include Shires Housing (senior housing), the Town's Senior Center, Meals on Wheels, Council on Aging, YMCA (to manage recreation programs), Berkshire Dance Theatre, Bennington Farmers Market, and Vermont Arts Exchange.

**Project Status:** The Benn High building was purchased by a developer in 2020. Roof leaks were repaired, many old windows were repaired, and new utility services to the building were constructed. More recently, the building owner applied for and was granted local permits for a mixed-use renovation/redevelopment of a large portion of the property. The plans included several new market-rate apartments, maker's spaces, offices, and a recreation use in the old gymnasium space and the old cafeteria space. Initial renovation of the cafeteria space and three nearby former classrooms has been completed. Renovation of the balance of the space has not begun.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$500,000 to \$2 million.

**Funds Secured/Possibly Available:** To date, the building owner has self-financed initial improvements. Possible sources of additional funding include: Town Revolving Loan Program, TIF Funds, Vermont Community Development Program, Historic Tax Credits, ARPA.

**Timing:** Ideally, completion of renovations in 18 to 24 months with an opportunity to begin use of the community center spaces earlier.

### **Project Name (Nickname): Downtown Food Market**

**Location:** 239 Main Street (Salerno building - former LaFlamme's building) – Letter of Intent signed.

**Project Description:** Establishment of a downtown food store in the downtown. There is now a dedicated group of people working to establish a high-quality not-for-profit food store in downtown Bennington and the Town may be able to further those efforts significantly. Financial support for a planned downtown food market to help ensure its financial viability and development of affiliated programs designed to enhance food access and security would be a tremendous benefit to the community.

**Project Status:** The Four Corners Market Board (non-profit) has been formed and is meeting regularly. A Market Manager, Kitchen Manager, and Bakery Manager have already been identified and are actively working with the board. A loan from the Town's Revolving Loan Fund has been secured. A fund-raising effort will begin soon.

**Estimated Project Cost:** Start-up costs, including tenant fit-up and equipment purchases, are estimated at between \$400,000 and \$600,000.

**Funds Secured/Possibly Available:** Possible sources of funding for the downtown food market include private donations, the Town's Revolving Loan Program (secured), USDA Rural Development grants and loans, Vermont Community Foundation, Preservation Trust of Vermont, ARPA.

**Timing:** The goal is to enter in to a lease for 239 Main Street within the next 30 days and begin fundraising thereafter. A Summer 2022 opening would be ideal.

**Project Name (Nickname): Putnam Block Phase 2**

**Location:** East of intersection of Washington Avenue and Main Street (adjacent to Putnam Phase 1) – western portion of Putnam Block.

**Project Description:** Mixed use redevelopment (new multi-story building and site improvements) anchored by Southwestern Vermont Health Care (SVHC). The project would include clinical office space, small liner retail spaces and thirty+ units of housing. Possible municipal involvement may include a low-interest loan, state and federal grants, TIF funding, and/or upgrades to Washington Avenue and/or West Main Street, and on-site parking improvements and assumption of the entire lot as a municipal asset.

**Project Status:** The project is in the pre-development phase – planning and feasibility assessment is ongoing. Identification of funding sources, including New Market Tax credits, will follow.

**Estimated Project Cost:** Unknown but will be a multi-million-dollar project.

**Funds Secured/Possibly Available:** Some funding for brownfields remediation work has been secured. BRG has funded, to date, the pre-development costs. Possible additional funding sources include: private funding sources (including opportunity zone investment), traditional bank financing, New Market tax credits, Town Revolving Loan Program, etc. for parking lot and or streetscape improvements – TIF funds, Downtown Transportation Fund, municipal funds (primarily in-kind work for parking lot improvements if lot is given to Town) may be sought.

**Timing:** The goal is to have the feasibility and preliminary planning work completed by mid-2022 with the identification of funding elements to follow soon thereafter.

**Project Name (Nickname): Capitalization of Revolving Loan Program**

**Location:** N/A.

**Project Description:** Use portion of ARPA funds that may be identified as reimbursement for lost revenue to increase capitalization of Town Revolving Loan Program. Funds could be used to fund economic development priorities.

**Project Status:** In process of determining amount of ARPA funds that may be deemed reimbursement of lost revenue.

**Estimated Project Cost:** To be determined.

**TIER 2 (Projects deemed critical economic development projects but lacking a clear role for the Town at this time.)**

**Project Name (Nickname): Catamount School (Bennington Sports Center)**

**Location:** 230 School Street (also has frontage on North Street)

**Project Description:** Facilitate re-development of former Catamount School. The property consists of the historic four-story 19th century former St. Francis Academy (facing North Street), and a three-story structure constructed in the 1950's (facing School Street). The buildings previously served as the Catamount Elementary School. The St. Francis Academy building is largely vacant but has been well maintained and has a new roof among other improvements. The three-story School Street property has been recently converted to a recreational space known as the Bennington Sports Center. The space has been used to host indoor soccer leagues, clinics, and camps. Those uses will, likely continue, but only occupy the space for a very limited time. In partnership with the Town, the YMCA recently signed short-term lease for the Bennington Sports Center. The YMCA plans to expand its youth afterschool and summer programs at the property. Over the next few months, the YMCA will determine if a long-term lease makes sense based on revenue the Y generates with expanded programs. The building owner is interested in developing extended stay suites in the St. Francis Academy building. There may be opportunities for the Town to facilitate the re-development of the St. Francis Academy Building and the robust use of the Bennington Sports Center for community benefit.

**Project Status:** See above.

**Estimated Project Cost:** Unknown at this time.

**Funds Secured/Possibly Available:** Possible funding sources: owner funds, traditional bank financing, Town Revolving Loan Program.

**Project Name (Nickname): Downtown Hardware Store**

**Location:** Multiple locations have been considered, including the Tuttle's Lot, Putnam Block, 239 Main Street (Alcaro/LaFlamme's building), Inkspot Press on East Main Street, and the former Jeep/Dodge Dealership on North Street, etc.

**Project Description:** A downtown hardware store has long been identified as a critical need. Over the past several years, Town and BBC officials have contacted multiple hardware store operators and met with several property owners to facilitate establishment of a hardware store in downtown. Although most hardware store operators express interest, the per sq. ft. rent the operators believe is affordable is insufficient to pay for renovations or new construction of a hardware store space. Municipal financial support for a hardware store in the form of loans, grants, or direct investment appears necessary.

**Project Status:** Town efforts continue but the numbers have not changed.

**Estimated Project Cost:** Unknown, but substantial – perhaps \$500,000 to \$1 million in loans, grants, direct investment.

**Funds Secured/Possibly Available:** Possible sources of funding for a downtown hardware store include CDBG and the Town’s Revolving Loan Fund.

**Project Name (Nickname): Energizer**

**Location:** 401 Gage Street (frontage on Gage, Division, Pratt, and Scott Streets)

**Project Description:** Facilitate re-development of multi-building Energizer manufacturing complex. An Energizer Re-use Plan funded by grants secured by the Town provides detailed information regarding the property and redevelopment possibilities for the site. Opportunities for public investment to help spur redevelopment of this critical site adjacent to the urban core might include public parks or other recreational assets along the Walloomsac River on the southern edge of the property, support for public programming space or any other number of possibilities. Pursuit of community development block grants or other available funding to assist with redevelopment that may include a mix of housing types would be a valuable role for the Town to play.

**Project Status:** Energizer will vacate the site soon. The property has been listed for sale.

**Estimated Project Cost:** Unknown at this time.

**Project Name (Nickname): Everett Estate (former SVC Campus)**

**Location:** Mansion Drive – West of Southwestern Vermont Medical Center (SVMC)

**Project Description:** Facilitate redevelopment of Everett Estate in partnership with Southwestern Vermont Health Care (SVHC).

**Project Status:** SVHC is actively marketing the Everett Mansion for hospitality use. The gymnasium is currently being used for COVID testing and vaccinations. SVHC is evaluating how best to re-develop the dormitory buildings, cafeteria buildings and balance of the site. The Town is operating and maintaining the athletic fields. SVHC has continued to encourage and allow public access to the numerous trails on the property.

**Estimated Project Cost:** Unknown at this time.

**TIER 3 (Projects deemed speculative and/or not to have a role for the Town at this time.)**

**Project Name (Nickname): Youth Housing**

**Project Description:** Housing and wrap around services for unaccompanied youth ages 15-18 and transitional youth 19-24. Predominant causes of youth homelessness are physical, sexual

and/or emotional abuse by parents/guardians. Youth ages 19-24 are also at risk for homelessness due to aging out of the foster system, limited economic opportunities or are pregnant/parenting. Youth and young adults who leave home, voluntarily or forced, resort to staying with friends, couch surfing or may engage in risky behaviors/relationships to have a roof over their heads. Identified as a priority by local housing agencies, supervisory union and parenting resource center, more research to determine the extent of youth homelessness in Bennington is needed. Opportunity with Bennington Regional Planning Commission and Homeless Health Equity Grant for assessment/planning to inform need, spending priorities and local operational capacity. ARPA funding could potentially be used to support research.

**Estimated Project Cost: \$???**

**Project Name (Nickname): Affordable Housing Options for Homeless**

**Project Description:** Short- term plans to house General Assistance Motel population when state program ends/increases restrictions. This requires more research and could be paired with other initiatives such as the Housing First model used by Pathways Vermont.

**Estimated Project Cost: \$???**

**Project Name (Nickname): Purchase by Municipality of Blighted Properties**

**Project Description:** Purchase of blighted/vacant properties (other than those identified above), cleaning up the properties (demolition of structures/brownfields remediation, etc.), and re-sale or redevelopment of the properties.

**Infrastructure and Town Operations Projects**

Infrastructure and Town Operations Projects were prioritized based on a two-tier system. Projects within each tier are listed in no particular order. **Tier 1** includes high priority projects that appear to be ARPA eligible and that may be constructed/implemented within 2 to four years, and the estimated cost of the projects do not exceed available municipal ARPA funds. **Tier 2** projects were not included in Tier one for one or more of the following reasons: the project is not ARPA eligible; the project may be funded from other sources; the project is not shovel ready enough to be constructed within 4 years; and/or the project's estimated cost exceeds the available municipal ARPA funds. It is important to note that the recently passed approximately \$1 Trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act may provide significant additional funding for infrastructure projects, but few specifics are known yet.

**TIER 1 (Projects that appear to be ARPA eligible and that may be constructed/implemented within 2 to four years, and the estimated cost of the projects do not exceed available municipal ARPA funds.)**

**Project Name (Nickname): Willow Park Playground Replacement**

**Location:** Willow Park, East Road/Performance Drive

**Project Description:** Willow Park is a large and extremely popular town park. The main playground at the park must be replaced due to the deteriorating condition of the playground equipment. A new play structure must meet or exceed all current Federal, CPSC, ASTM, IPEMA standards as well as be fully ADA Accessibility compliant. Additional enhancements to Willow Park should also be considered.

**Project Status:** The project is currently in the planning phase. Ballpark estimates and conceptual designs have been developed, but a final design will be determined after gathering public input. A Design/Build request for proposal is in development. Community Engagement will be incorporated into the design selection process.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$600,000 - \$800,000

**Funds Secured/Possibly Available:** ARPA eligible – located within approved census tract.

**Timing (if relevant):** Given current condition of the playground, construction should begin in the Spring of 2022.

**Project Name (Nickname): County Street/Benmont Avenue Sewer Line Upgrades**

**Project Description:** Replacement of 1600' of 15" clay sewer line to a larger size adequate to handle the sewer flows. The current sewer line is undersized and surcharges during high flows.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$800,000

**Timing (if relevant):** Could be completed within two years.

**Project Name (Nickname): South St./Union St. Stormwater Management Improvements**

**Project Description:** Study and address frequent flooding of South Street/Union Street intersection caused by inadequate stormwater system in the area.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$25,000 for review of current stormwater system conditions and design alternatives – Unknown for construction of chosen alternative.

**Timing (if relevant):** Study could commence almost immediately. Construction could occur within 2 – 3 years.

**Project Name (Nickname): Premium Pay/Benefits to Eligible Workers**

**Project Description:** Compensation to Town employees who worked throughout the COVID-19 pandemic - \$99,000 for hazard pay and \$88,000 for benefits

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$187,000

**Project Name (Nickname):** Construction of Skate Park and/or Outdoor Skating Rink (synthetic ice)

**Project Description:** Construct additional recreational amenities in town such as a skate park or outdoor ice-skating facility (synthetic ice). A possible partner and location for an indoor/outdoor skate park have been identified.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$???

**Timing (if relevant):** Construction within 2 – 3 years.

**Project Name (Nickname):** Digitization of Land Records

**Project Description:** Retain digitization company to scan, index, and make available online Town of Bennington land records dating back 40 years (State requirement for title searches). The project will increase efficiency and reduce costs over time.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$160,000 initial fee – \$225 monthly maintenance fee.

**Timing (if relevant):** Can be implemented as soon as funding is available.

**TIER 2 (Projects that were not included in Tier one for one or more of the following reasons: the project is not ARPA eligible; the project may be funded from other sources; the project is not shovel ready enough to be constructed within 4 years; and/or the project's estimated cost exceeds the available municipal ARPA funds.)**

## **Wastewater Department Infrastructure Projects**

**Project Name (Nickname):** Wastewater Treatment Facility (WTF) Sand Filter Replacement

**Project Description:** The WTF sand filter was built in 1985 and has begun to fail in the past few years. The under-drain system needs to be replaced. Since 1985 there have been other filter designs that don't use the sand. With new and more restrictive wastewater limits the old sand filter will soon lead to compliance issues.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$1.5 million to \$2 million.

**Project Name (Nickname):** Relining of Sewer Interceptor

**Project Description:** The 36" sewer interceptor was installed in 1959 and made of reinforced concrete. This is the one line that collects almost all the flow for the treatment plant. There are sections of this line that have some visible cracks and or infiltration of ground water. The

interceptor line will continue to deteriorate at an accelerated pace. The length of the interceptor is approximately 3.5 miles long. There is a substantial cost savings if the interceptor is relined while it is still intact.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$3 million to \$3.5 million

## Water Department Infrastructure Projects

### **Project Name (Nickname): Settlers Road/Springhill Road Water Line Extension**

**Project Description:** Extension of municipal water line to serve 17 single family residences on Settlers Road and Springhill Road that were impacted by PFOA contamination. It is expected that this project will be funded by State ARPA or Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funds.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$1.6 Million

### **Project Name (Nickname): South end Water Main Improvements**

**Project Description:** Some higher elevation properties on the south end of town experience low or no pressure during fire flows. In addition to being a nuisance for the impacted property owners, these conditions may cause drinking water to be contaminated. The Town's permit to operate a water supply system from the State of Vermont requires the Town to address the low-pressure issues. Since 2015 the Town has constructed a pump station and a 750,000-gallon storage tank and has begun extending larger water mains to serve the south end, but substantial work remains to extend expanded water mains to the impacted areas.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$4 Million

### **Project Name (Nickname): Raw Water Tank Replacement**

**Project Description:** The raw water tank is a 500,000-gallon concrete tank constructed in the late 1960's. The concrete interior of the tank is spalling and the tank is undersized. During heavy rains when the river is dirty, the water treatment plant must be shut down so that extremely dirty water does not have to be treated. Because the current raw water tank is undersized, the plant can only be shut down for a short time before the tank is depleted. A larger tank for the raw water would allow for the plant to continue operating during heavy rains for a day or two until the river clears up. The upgrades to the tank would also allow the Town to pretreat the water for PH.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$4 million to \$4.5 million.

**Project Name (Nickname): Filter Upgrades at Water Filtration Plant**

**Project Description:** Filters at the water filtration plant have not been replaced since 1978. These filters are very large and inefficient and have reached the end of their useful life. Replacing the original filters with new filters that utilize modern technology will substantially increase efficiency, improve water quality, and reduce disinfection by-products.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$5 million to \$8 million

**Project Name (Nickname): Chapel Road Tank Replacement**

**Project Description:** The Chapel Rd tank is a poured in place three-million-gallon tank constructed in 1978 and is nearing the end of its useful life. The tank has become expensive to maintain as it continues to deteriorate. It will eventually fail. Replacing the tank with a new and smaller one and a half or two-million-gallon tank would reduce maintenance costs and improve water quality.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$3 Million

**Project Name (Nickname): Burgess Rd Pressure Reducing Valve**

**Project Description:** The current Burgess Road pressure reducing valve, located in a manhole at the bottom of Burgess Rd, must be replaced. This valve is one of two valves that control the pressure in the entire water system. Without this valve the pressure in the water system would be too high. A design for a replacement pressure reducing valve in an above ground structure is being developed.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$250,000

**Project Name (Nickname): Gage Street Water Main Replacement**

**Project Description:** The 1700' water main in the 900 block of Gage Street is undersized and must be replaced.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$600,000

**Highway Department Infrastructure Projects**

**Project Name (Nickname): Depot Street Bridge**

**Project Description:** Renovation of Depot Street Bridge – structural repairs to abutments and replacement of concrete/steel beam superstructure and bridge deck. Recent State bridge inspections have identified structural issues with the bridge.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$650,000

**Project Name (Nickname): Mount Anthony Road Bridge**

**Project Description:** Removal of existing undersized culvert on Mt. Anthony Road and construction of new bridge.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$400,000

**Police Department Projects**

**Project Name (Nickname): 4-run Dog Kennel and Vehicle Impound Yard**

**Project Description:** Build and maintain a 4-run kennel/small office on Town of Bennington property located off of Burgess Road. The kennel will provide the Bennington Animal Control Officer with a safe place to lodge/quarantine dogs. Estimated cost - \$35,000.00. Construct vehicle impound yard in same location. Estimated cost - \$10,000.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$45,000

**Project Name (Nickname): Firefighter Certification of Police Officers**

**Project Description:** Cross train selected members of the Bennington Police Department as firefighters. The members will obtain Firefighter 1 certification and will be able to assist volunteer members of the Bennington Fire Department. Cost of training will be minimal. The purchase of turnout gear and necessary equipment is estimated at \$50,000.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$50,000

**Project Name (Nickname): PD Equipment Purchases and Upgrades**

**Project Description:** The purchase of the following equipment:

Mobile radios - upgrade radios P-25 digital operation - 10 radios \$40,000 installed in police vehicles.

Portable Radios - upgrade radios P-25 Apex 4500 - 30 radios \$69,900 programmed and ready to use.

Body cameras and in car cameras. (Current cameras are five years old). Estimated cost to replace body cameras and in car cameras is \$150,000.

Radio console (replace/upgrade current console). Estimated cost is \$200,000.

**Estimated Project Cost:** See above.

## Recreation, Parks, and Pathway Projects

### **Project Name (Nickname): Town Gymnasium**

**Project Description:** There has long been a need for more gymnasium space in the community. Although the local school system has gymnasiums, their availability to the public is very limited for obvious reasons. The Town, perhaps in partnership with the Y, would like to provide at least one additional traditional gymnasium space. As noted above, the BennHi gymnasium could fill this need.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$???

### **Project Name (Nickname): Ninja Trail**

**Project Description:** The proposed path is 2.12 miles. It provides a safe bike/ped corridor between Downtown Bennington, the Northside Drive Commercial corridor, and the Village of North Bennington. The pathway begins on Hicks Avenue at the existing pedestrian bridge and ends at the intersection of VT Route 67A/College Drive/Silk Road/Matteson Road. From there, pedestrians and cyclists can reach the Village of North Bennington via Bennington College's paths and low-speed roads.

**Status:** \$1 Million in State/Federal Grants have been secured. An update of the cost estimate using current pricing indicates that additional funding in the amount of \$1,300,000 will need to be secured. A bridge over the Walloomsac is estimated at \$1 Million dollars and is the most urgent need as it is essential to the project. Additional grant opportunities are being explored. Segments of paved path between Hicks Avenue and Harmon Road (behind Walmart) and between Bennington College entrance and the Hampton Inn have been constructed. Interim path (dirt and gravel) between the two completed segments is open for use. Preliminary plans for the construction of the remainder of the paved path have been approved by the State. The Town has now obtained all of the easements required for the project.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$2.3 Million total - \$1.3 Million in additional funding needed.

### **Project Name (Nickname): Benmont Avenue Bike/Ped Improvements**

**Project Description:** Improvements to make Benmont Avenue safer and more attractive for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers, including significant changes to the Hunt Street intersection. The improvements will act as an extension of the Ninja Trail into Downtown Bennington.

**Status:** A total of \$559,000 in State/Federal Grants have been awarded. An update of the cost estimate using current pricing indicates that additional funding in the amount of \$525,000 will need to be secured. Additional grant opportunities are being explored. All easements have been obtained. Construction is scheduled for 2023 subject to the receipt of additional funding.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$\$1.1 million total - \$540,000 in additional funding needed.

**Project Name (Nickname): Sidewalk Repairs and Improvements**

**Project Description:** Particularly downtown, repair/replace sidewalk sections to reduce trip hazards, buckled areas. Repair/replace downtown sidewalk brickwork.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$???

**Project Name (Nickname): Expansion/Interconnection of Local Pathway/Trail Network**

**Project Description:** Multiple sections of pathways and trails to create connections between and extensions of Bennington's main existing and proposed Bike/Ped pathways and trails (Ninja, Rail/Trail, Benmont, East Road, BATS trails, etc.) to provide a comprehensive interconnected Bike/Ped pathway and trail network in Bennington.

Possible pathway/trail connections and extensions include the following:

- **Ninja Path Walloomsac short-cut**
  - Scenic short-cut from Hicks Ave. ped bridge to the existing path behind Walmart. For permitting reasons would likely be a simple gravel path. Low cost, high value project.
- **Ninja Path extension to Paper Mill Bridge or to Henry Bridge**
- **Orchard Rd. Connector Path**
  - Shared-use path on the east side of Orchard Rd. between the Molly Stark Elementary School and Northside Dr.
- **Benmont Ave./Rail Trail/North St. Connector Path**
  - Provides East-West connection (approximately from Leonard St. to Tasty Freeze/Beverage Den). Town has easement for a Benmont/Rail Trail connection, but not all the way across to North St. High priority project.
- **Kocher Dr. pedestrian crossing to (former) Kmart Plaza**
- **North St. Sidewalk Extension** (on west side near the Blue Benn)
- **Rail Trail Connector to Northside Dr.**
  - Could be on Waite Dr. or Emma St. or both
  - Connects Rail Trail to Northside Dr. and Ninja Path via Waite Dr. (One easement required).

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$???

**Project Name (Nickname): Mount Anthony Summit Trail and Lookout**

**Project Description:** Construction of summit trail and lookout (including parking facility, wayfinding signs and marketing) on Mount Anthony in conjunction with Southwestern Vermont Healthcare and the Bennington Area Trail System. Possible funding sources include VOREC.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$200,000

**Project Name (Nickname): Public Arts Projects**

**Project Description:** Installation throughout Town, especially in Town parks, of public art – sculptures, murals, etc.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$???

## **Town Facilities Department Projects**

**Project Name (Nickname): Armory Building**

**Location:** Franklin Lane (behind Town Office)

**Project Description:** Redevelopment of the Armory Building by the Town. The historic Armory Building located on Franklin Lane (behind the Town Office) adjacent to the Putnam Block will be conveyed to the Town after a new National Guard Readiness Center is constructed. The transfer is expected to occur within the next four years. The Town is beginning to consider municipal uses for the building including a State-of-the-Art meeting facility for public meetings and various municipal office and recreation and performance uses.

**Estimated Project Cost:** Unknown at this time.

**Project Name: Renovations & Upgrades to the Recreation Center Facility**

**Description/Narrative:** The Recreation Center Building is over 50 years old and is need of renovations and upgrades of the Administrative Areas, Weight Room, Locker Rooms, and Basement Community Rooms. Scope of work would include meeting full ADA Accessibility Compliance; installing upgraded HVAC systems that includes Air Conditioning, De-humidification, and fresh air/air purification systems; and plumbing, electric, and lighting upgrades. The project would address current limitations and issues to include access limitations in the locker rooms; current humidity issues in the basement community rooms; and improve

energy efficiency throughout the building; improve the overall operations and functions of the facility.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$400K to \$600K

**Project Name: Air Quality Improvement & HVAC Upgrades - Town Office**

**Description/Narrative:** The Town Office building is a historic home. The incorporation of a fresh air/air purification system as well as completing the installation of split unit HVAC heat pumps throughout the building will significantly improve air quality, health, and energy efficiency of HVAC systems in the Town Office.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$150K - \$200K

**Project Name: Air Quality Improvement & HVAC Upgrades Firehouse Company Rooms & Community Room**

**Description/Narrative:** A multi-phase project to install mini-split unit HVAC heat pumps throughout the firehouse has started. Areas remaining to be completed are the Company Rooms (three total) and common third floor area. A fresh air/air purification system is not in place in the building. The third floor Community Room is the primary space for Town of Bennington public meetings. This project will significantly improve air quality, health, and energy efficiency of HVAC systems.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$150K to \$200K

**Project Name: Blacksmith Shop Building Exterior Historical Renovation**

**Description/Narrative:** This project is to restore and preserve the historic structure. Once completed this would restore the full historical nature of the building and compliment the historic downtown structures.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$250K

**Project Name: Town Office Roof Replacement**

**Description/Narrative:** The Town Office slate roof is approaching end of life within the next 10 years. Due to the Historic Nature of the Building a replacement slate roof and/or equivalent slate replica material roof should be installed.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$200K - \$225K

**Project Name (Nickname): Support for Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, and other “Green” Infrastructure Projects**

**Project Description:** Possible projects include the installation of vehicle charging stations, energy efficiency upgrades of Town buildings, adding electric/hybrid vehicles to Town fleet, Supporting renewable energy production on town lands and approved sites, etc.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$???

**Improvement of Downtown Streetscape, Infrastructure, Facades**

**Project Name (Nickname): Improvements to Downtown Streetscape, Infrastructure, and Facades**

**Project Description:** The Better Bennington Corporation has identified the following improvements, programs, initiatives:

**Putnam Square**

Traffic Signals

- Paint signal poles black
- Replace/modernize signal system with rigid suspension
- Replace system with ground-mounted installation

Curbing and sidewalks

- Power wash, reset and replace granite curb as needed
- Reset and level all brick paved areas with improved sub-base
- Improve corner drainage, especially SE
- Straighten or replace damaged planting bed curbs
- Refurbish kiosk, installed original-design signage, install video information system
- Repair/replace clock base
- Install permanent granite crosswalks
- Enhance and define Square with granite surface

Facades

- Install appropriate architectural façade lighting historic buildings
- Renovate first floor bank façade – windows, flashing and entry

**Streetscape, General**

Tree Program

- Develop comprehensive tree plan, study locations
- Consider linden replacement
- Redefine tree beds
- Consider tree grates and/or tree guards

Curbing and Sidewalks

- Reset granite curbs as needed, replace broken
- Substantial repaving as needed
- Reset and level all brick paved areas with improved sub-base

- Install permanent granite crosswalks
- Install new bollards at all crosswalks and bulb outs, consider permanent installation of new lamppost bollards

#### Alleyways and Access Points

- Treat downtown accessways on a level equaling streetscape quality
- Create “portals” to identify access points
- Insure accessibility and safety

#### Bennington in Bloom

- Develop comprehensive plan for expansion and enhancement, In particular town entrance ways
- Develop and implement plans for bridge installations
- Obtain additional hardware (pole brackets, etc.)
- Replenish/replace concrete planters

#### Street Furnishings

- Assess need for additional trash receptacles and coverage area
- Repair damaged existing metal benches
- Develop bench placement policy
- Purchase additional benches, receptacles as required

#### Street Art/Sculpture Installations

- Develop Street Art program in conjunction with the Bennington Area Arts Council and the Better Bennington Corporation
- Seek artist proposals for established juried selection process
- Fund selected installations including sculpture and murals at selected sites

### **Façades**

#### Façade Standards

- Develop façade improvement standards in conjunction with the Historic Preservation Commission and the Better Bennington Corporation

#### Façade Improvement Program

- Develop Community Development Program in conjunction with the Better Bennington Corporation
- Provide free design consultation
- Fund approved projects through grant and loan programs

### **Public Parking Lots**

#### Function and Capacity

- Improve identity and traffic flow patterns
- Analyze capacity needs, particularly in regard to future development
- Incorporate private lots into unified public system

#### Ped Access and Enhancement

- Provide pedestrian amenities providing safe and welcoming environments including accessibility and bollard protection
- Develop and execute plans for street furniture and landscaping
- Provide information and wayfinding at access points

### **Walloomsac Riverwalk**

#### Assessment and Planning

- Develop short- and long-range plan for enhanced use and improvements (analysis in progress)
- Widen/pave original section, repave other sections as needed
- Resolve drainage and erosion issues

- Thin bank vegetation in selected areas, address/replant cherry trees
- Install new lighting systems in the three easterly sections
- Replace existing benches with new, extend along the walkway
- Improve and enhance street crossings, improving safety
- Repurpose westerly section, develop seamless link to rail-trail
- Extend easterly through Energizer, connect to East Main

**Depot Street/Washington Avenue**

Enhance to Downtown Core Esthetic

- Develop master plan for comprehensive improvements anticipating development opportunities
- Expand downtown tree program to both streets
- Extend downtown street furnishings, lighting, bollards as referenced under streetscape
- Explore options for overhead utility services
- Reduce existing and potential concrete environment
- Enhance Putnam Phase II environment and access
- Reduce negative impacts, enhance downtown entry

**Wayfinding/Street Signs**

Execute Comprehensive Signage Program

- Refurbish Town entry signs, consider alternate sites
- Fabricate and install downtown signs to reflect expansion concept and enhance approach and identity
- Install downtown wayfinding to advertise attractions and enhance streetscape
- Explore and utilize on-line access to information on the street
- Utilize “mini” kiosks to invite pedestrians into downtown from parking and peripheral areas
- End the practice of using the period lampposts as signposts
- Eliminate conflicts between regulatory signs and amenities
- Utilize grant opportunities and municipal funding

**Estimated Project Cost: \$???**

**Town Administration Projects**

**Project Name (Nickname): Computer Hardware Upgrade**

**Project Description:** New computers to include desktops, laptops, iPads, and Wi-Fi printers Town wide w/built in video and microphone capabilities that not only allow us to work remotely and safely but can utilize the benefits/speed of FIBER network.

**Estimated Project Cost: \$???**

**Project Name (Nickname): Main Server Upgrade**

**Project Description:** Replace computer server. One of our two main servers is un-supported.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$15,000

**Project Name (Nickname): Software Upgrades**

**Project Description:**

Time and Attendance System

Status: Currently determining if feasible.

Timeline: Possibly in place by FY23

Cost Estimate: \$5,000-7,000 per year ongoing

General Notes: streamline time-keeping process, cloud-based/able to be used remotely, timekeeping rules will be standard for employee groups which can reduce union issues, more visibility to both employees and managers, able to schedule and have visibility of time off for all employees, reduce manual paper tracking, reduce delays due to manual approval process, reduction of phone calls/in person discussion between payroll clerk and managers, project tracking of labor and equipment used for billable work, grant or other projects, etc.

Payroll System (linked to Time & Attendance)

Status: Not yet researched, but discussed often as very related to Time & Attendance

Timeline: As soon as possible after implementing a time & attendance system

Cost Estimate: \$3,000-4,000 (estimate) per year ongoing

General Notes: streamline payroll process, cloud-based/able to be used remotely, further reduction to manual paper tracking, no manual data entry by payroll clerk, much better reporting capabilities, instant access to employees to update optional deductions, banking, w-4 information, etc.

Human Resource System (linked to Payroll and Time & Attendance)

Status: Not yet researched, but discussed often as very related to Time & Attendance

Timeline: ???

Cost Estimate: \$6,000-\$8,000 per year ongoing

General Notes: Cloud-based/able to be used remotely. This would be the next logical step to complete the payroll and time and attendance project. Our system for hiring, employee benefits, annual reviews, is completely paper-based and takes an extremely long time.

Automating these processes would free up the Human Resource Manager to deal with actual HR issues instead of paperwork.

Budgeting, Financial Reporting and Transparency Software

Status: Researching and speaking with sale people

Timeline: ???

Cost Estimate: \$20,000-\$25,000 per year ongoing

General Notes: Cloud-based/able to be used remotely. Modernize our budgeting process, reduce time needed and human error, increase communication/visibility between managers, budget change tracking and required approval process, instant what-if scenarios, enhanced reporting, and ability to make data available to the public.

**Estimated Project Cost:** See above

## **Other Projects**

### **Project Name (Nickname): Public Sanitation Facility**

**Project Description:** Public restrooms and shower facility accessible 24/7 for public use. Sanitation facilities can also serve as a hub for information, wi-fi access, recharging and waste disposal. Opportunity with Bennington Regional Planning Commission and Homeless Health Equity Grant for assessment/planning to inform need, spending priorities and local operational capacity.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$???

### **Project Name (Nickname): Expanding Services at Bennington Free Clinic and/or Schools**

**Project Description:** Supporting dental, medical, mental health and substance use services available to uninsured/under insured individuals in Bennington.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$???

### **Project Name (Nickname): Bus and Car Share Expansion**

**Project Description:** Support more frequent bus service and the creation of a car share service (Zip car, etc.) in Town.

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$???