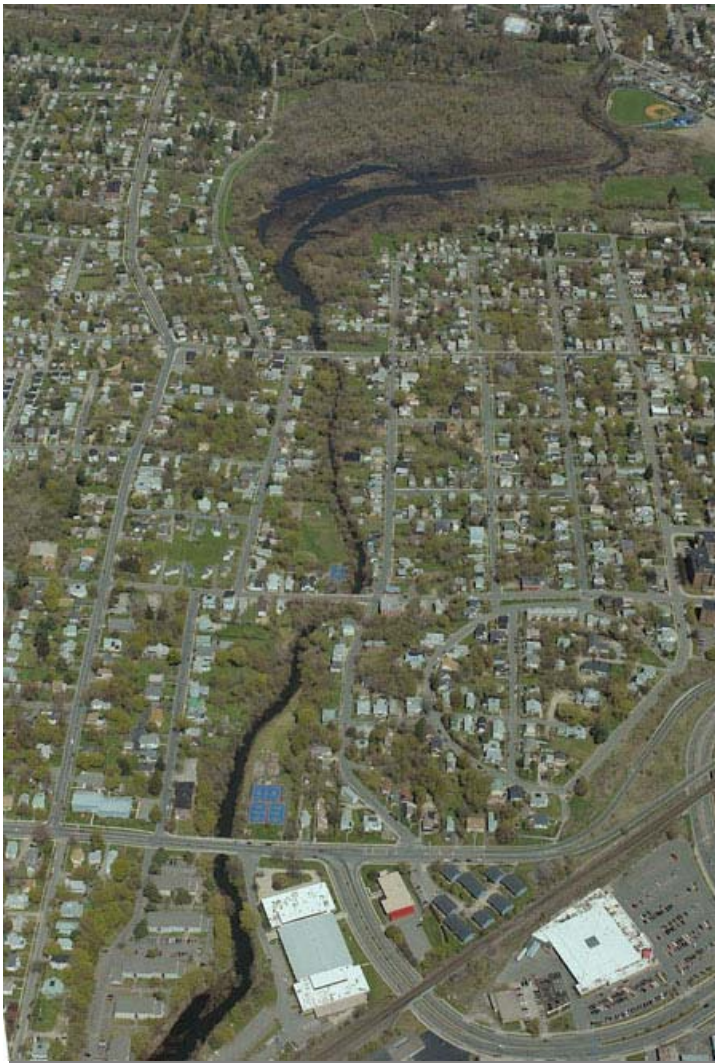




West Branch of the Housatonic Charrette

May 12, 2007

Summary Report & Charrette Record



GOODY
CLANCY

ARCHITECTURE
PLANNING
PRESERVATION

West Branch of the Housatonic Charrette

May 12, 2007
Summary Report & Charrette Record

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West Branch of the Housatonic Charrette

May 12, 2007
Summary Report

UrbanRiver Visions Pittsfield
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Introduction

The West Branch of the Housatonic River and its surrounding neighborhoods were the focus of the UrbanRiver Visions Charrette in Pittsfield. Local events included a reception held at Pitt Park on Friday night, May 11, 2007 and the Charrette at Conte Elementary School on Saturday, May 12, 2007. More than 50 local leaders, activists, and community residents were present over the two days to discuss the future of the river and adjoining areas.

The reception at Pitt Park was designed as an introduction to the project for residents. Maps and aerial photographs were hung up around the band shell, allowing attendees and passersby to point out and address ideas and issues to the UrbanRiver Visions team and each other. Markers, note pads and yellow sticky-notes were available for people to write down their thoughts and post them on the maps.

The next day's Charrette was divided into a morning session and an afternoon session with slightly different discussion formats and goals. During the morning session, the Charrette participants were sorted by expertise and interest into three thematic groups: Connections; Neighborhood Issues; and Water. The principal goal of each group was to discuss the issues involved with each general theme, and to begin forging a vision of short-term and long-term improvements related to that theme. Each group was facilitated by members of the UrbanRiver Visions team with professional experience in the topics discussed. The product of each group's discussion was a set of notes that outlined specific goals and visions. Each group presented these goals to the entire audience at the conclusion of the morning session.

The primary goal of the afternoon session was the creation of graphic plans that embodied the ideas set forth in the morning session and other ideas that arose in the afternoon discussions. The morning groups were reassembled into two mixed groups for the afternoon session, to increase the diversity of thought behind the plans. Charrette participants fashioned the plans with help from the UrbanRiver Visions team members, including specific ideas mapped onto the plans as well as additional notes of a more general nature. Each group listed priority projects and whether they would be short- or long-term. At the end of the afternoon session, each group presented their plans and ideas back to all of the assembled participants.

The purpose of this document is to record the notes, plans, and supporting materials for the above described events; the attendees at Pitt Park, as well as the morning and afternoon sessions of Saturday's Charrette. On the following pages, there are summaries of each group's discussion, including the goals and issues that received the greatest emphasis. Following that are the transcripts of the posted notes taken by the group's facilitators; the notes are transcribed almost verbatim, and anything specifically highlighted by the group is shown in bold letters.



Kurt Gaertner introduces the West Branch event at Pitt Park and UrbanRiver Visions project team



Senator Ben Downing welcomes the charrette participants and emphasizes the importance of their participation



Charrette facilitator Peter Flinker presents background information for the charrette focus area

Friday Evening: Pitt Park Reception

Maps and aerial photos were posted up at Pitt Park on the evening before the charrette and many residents from the neighborhood were able to learn about the UrbanRiver Visions 2 project and provide the consultant team with information, concerns and suggestions for the West Side and the Housatonic River.



Above Reception attendees discuss aerial photographs and the future of the West Branch of the Housatonic River

Left: Children from the neighborhood enjoying Pitt Park

List of notes from reception:

- Stop invasive species in natural areas
- Open space south of Clapp Park could be used as a dog park or Industrial Drive parking
- Keep King Street Dump area green
- Create walkway along river
- There is a roadway behind Wahconah Park, could be used as walking/riding path, create bridge over river to Pittsfield Cemetery
- Clean up trash
- Need to inform residents about importance of river
- Wonderful walking trails exist at south end of Clapp Park
- Can vacant industrial areas along river be reclaimed? (East Mill Street, Holly Street)
- Want to kayak, but too many downed trees
- What should homeowners do to take care of the river?
- Boylston Street pedestrian bridge over river is excellent community asset – provides foot access to parkland for kids, joggers, walkers, bikes. Needs to be physically strengthened, currently closed due to repair need.
- Turn the ‘bridge’ via concrete pipe (south of Clapp Park) into a real, safe walking bridge
- Is there a way to create walking trails along the river in neighborhoods? (private property easements)
- Art trails, story trails along river
- Create walking/bike path from Wahconah to Rt 20
- Expand env. studios at Wahconah Park or one of the other parks.
- Flooding noted between Dewey Ave and King Street
- Need more affordable housing
- Need after school recreation for kids close to home
- Need access to paths you don’t have to drive to
- Last chance to preserve the river. Watch encroachments of property owners



Above: Residents discuss what they'd like to see happen with the West Branch of the Housatonic River

Below: Maps were set up in the band shell to record ideas and concerns from the Pittsfield residents



- Make walkway natural – not large wide paved
- Bike and/or walking trails
- Open air concert hall
- Where is river safe to canoe? Where get on? Where get off? Mark stones to indicate depth or safety
- King Street resident noted heavy flooding twice a year – used to be smaller, only a stream
- Clean up the water & banks, have a walk trail (not paved)
- Lived here 35 years, never go near the river – always thought river too dirty
- Keep the fence in Pitt Park – I'm here every day – I feel safe for my kids with the fence
- Clean up the water & banks of trash. I will help, Mr. Johnston
- Can have gates on the fences so can get to river at safe spots
- Have organized canoe trip on the river
- Reduce shopping carts in the river. Store should charge or stop it or clean them out
- I'd like a walking path along the river
- If river were cleaner, I would walk along with my kids
- Everybody's back yard – kids enjoy bikes & snowmobiles there
- Use community art to celebrate river and community heritage along greenway
- River trails used rights – patrolling – fences. How to do it with art? Big safety issues
- Start area trail where largest abutter – need a big rush or education about the river
- Doing anything on or along the river has a social/educational component
- Remove Mill Street Dam. Attractive nuisance. Not have a purpose anymore today except for kids to hang out.
- Big green stormwater in front of clock tower buildings and parking area
- Dam limits canoe or kayak through
- Could take out a beam at a time to release
- City owns some land along Mill Street, could be an interesting area for a walkway.
- Abandoned bridge above Mill Street Dam, could be made into a pedestrian bridge, part of trail system.



Samples of notes made at the Pitt Park reception

Charrette Morning Session: Group 1 – Connections

Peter Flinker & Sarah la Cour, UrbanRiver Visions Facilitators

The focus of the “Connections” group was how and where to bring people to the Housatonic River. Walkways, bikeways, waterways, viewing areas, along with places to gather and celebrate the river, were all components the group felt were integral to engage Pittsfield residents in the future of the West Branch.

The following are the notes recorded for the “Connections” group during their discussion:

- Key Questions
 - What kind of connections are most important?
 - Where and how should those connections be made?
 - What would help to make a trail or trail network a local and regional draw?
- Kinds of connections and where/how
 - Canoe from Wahconah Park to Clapp Park
 - Removal of Mill St. dam; City is working on it with MA Riverways
 - Opportunity for portage if dam isn't removed
- Recognize as an asset – (rivers) not shown on local mapping
- Need more visual connections so people can see it better
 - Will help with remembering it's there
- Security issues for children but other than chain link fence
- Riverfront areas that can be accessible and safe!
- Wahconah Park – (HVB, there is a current order of conditions for wetland replication, etc.)
 - Former land fill re-use
 - Improvements in river access
 - Parking area
 - Beautify
 - Severe flooding problem
 - Build boat launch
 - Obstruction of Columbus Ave
 - Dam
- Clapp Park (HVB)
 - Parking
- Overcome floodplain issues all along river
- Connection to downtown
- Connect parks to each other
- Connection along Bradford Street – residential streets, as well as commercial streets
- Neighborhood business districts
- Snowmobiles through neighborhood from Conte school to River
- Sidewalks
 - Kids to school
 - Through neighborhood
 - Need priorities for wider sidewalks



Presentation of the Connections Group's ideas and concerns for the West Branch

- Bike lanes
 - Some restricted parking
- Parking lots – connect to river
- Walking paths
 - Along river
 - To downtown – trail from Wahconah Park
- Columbus Ave Bridge
 - Town owned land on ether side
 - Good access point
- Dorothy Amos Park
 - Could be a take-out for canoeing from Wahconah
- Viewpoint off of Dewey Ave
- Dam removal will create a new river configuration- trail possibilities
- Abandoned railroad bridge above dam that could be a pedestrian connection
- Guard rail systems that allow views of river
- Surfacing of track @ Clapp Park
- Bike path & lanes
 - Important to have continuous loop connection – combination of road/off road
 - Route would need to be on roads but include access points to river
 - Connection to North Street
- Convert or modify streets to bike paths
- Build paths in riverbank exposed after dam removal
- Campbell Street – old road that could be pedestrian link to Wahconah Park –from Onota Street
- Handicapped accessibility
- Less impervious surfaces – more permeable pavement
- Former landfill
 - 88 acres owned by the city
 - Currently working on assessment and monitoring of what to do
- North/south
- Connect every neighborhood to the river – maps with access points
- Boylston Street connection – local
- Pedestrian bridge that could connect the Bradford Street neighborhood to the school, etc.

The Connections Group continued their discussion using a base map of the area and hit upon the following points (see next page for marked up base map):

- Attractive; off road
- History (SRHP – Berkshire Eagle area), cultural heritage – industrial past
- Safe; parking
- Attractions; things to do
 - Museums, retail, etc...
 - Seasonal Stands
- “Wild River in the City”
 - Utilize wild/scenic/natural quality of the river – very unique
 - Wildlife corridor

Connections Group Discussion Map

Key: Red dots - city owned land
 Orange dots - tax title land
 Green dots - town owned housing
 Yellow dots - Parking areas



Yellow notes read:

- Wahconah Street – potential site for Housatonic River Museum, a bookend for greenway
- Use old Campbell Street for pedestrian loop
- Bradford Street connection to downtown
- If dam removed trail may be available here
- “View area” by dam
- Boylston foot bridge needs to be maintained

Charrette Morning Session: Group 2 – Neighborhoods

David Spillane & Hillary Blanchette, UrbanRiver Visions Facilitators

The focus of the Neighborhoods group was looking at the concerns and needs of the residents along the West Branch. Major concerns include garbage and homeowner practices along the river. The group felt strongly that educating the area's residents about the importance of the river is crucial for a successful cleanup. There are some great river and neighborhood initiatives already in place; but the group sensed that further outreach within the neighborhoods would increase their success.

The following are the notes recorded for the Riverfront Development group during their discussion:

- Key Questions
 - What are the areas of concern along the river?
 - What is needed in terms of housing, parking and economic activity?
 - What properties offer opportunities for reuse?
 - What uses or events will draw people to the West Branch?
- Current Initiatives/Assets
 - Private beautification projects
 - "Garden Awards", encouraging program
 - "Pittsfield Beautiful" organization sends notes/postcards thanking citizens for gardening, taking pride, putting energy into their yard
 - West Side Initiative
 - Columbus Ave Wildlife
 - River Clean-Ups
 - Wildlife all along the river
 - Trees are a vital part of water life, willows are wonderful
 - State Champion cottonwood tree on Columbus, by the river
 - Large amount of parkland owned by City along the river – Dorothy Amos and Pitt Park neighborhood's "Front Yard", highly used parks.
- Issues
 - People use backyards to dump garbage
 - People don't respect/value the river
 - Pontoosuc Ave heavily dumped area
 - River at Columbus Ave heavily trashed
 - Fallen trees prevent access to/along river
 - Need policing system in place
 - People cutting down trees in their yards: raises temps of water, affects life further down stream
 - Fences along river –is there a way to allow access to some areas of river but still keep children safe?



The Neighborhood Issues Group presents the results of their discussion

- Ideas for the future
 - West Side Initiative needs more outreach
 - Network neighborhoods for information/action (email list?)
 - Investigate best tree species for urban waterways
 - Involve kids/neighborhoods, get them interested and caring about the river
 - Better access, connections from neighborhoods to park (i.e. Boylston Street footbridge)
 - Art installations, places identified for creating art
 - Community gardens
 - River Celebration – at Pitt Park, annual party to involve/engage residents in caring for the river/neighborhood. Include groups like Habitat for Humanity
 - Everyone needs to have a voice & be able to contribute to changing/creating the neighborhoods (not just the river) to be a place they can be proud of
 - Address river abutters, let them know they have a responsibility for their piece of the river
 - Have them identify issues (garbage, trees down)
 - Educate about what can & cannot be done on their property
 - Best way to gather information is to get out on the street – locals will come out and share their experiences
 - Short term, high profile improvements will catch people's attention & get people invested in helping to create more change.
 - Create canoe launch site(s)
 - Develop a fence policy and involve residents in this.
 - CONTINUE TO GET PEOPLE INVOLVED
 - CREATE A BUZZ AROUND SPECIFIC THINGS

Charrette Morning Session: Group 3 – Water

Maria Van Dusen & Brock Cutting, UrbanRiver Visions Facilitators

The focus of the Water group was identifying important environmental concerns for the river. The group discussed activities and uses they would like to see along the river and how to address stormwater and garbage issues. Participants expressed interest in making the West Branch canoeable, increasing its potential as a cold water fishery, and figuring out ways to create walking and/or biking trails all along the river. They brainstormed ideas to deal with runoff from the Hurlbut/ West Street commercial area and how to educate residents about becoming better stewards of the river and investing in its future.

The following are the notes recorded for Water group during their discussion:

- Key Questions
 - What activities and uses should happen in the West Branch?
 - How can we protect the health of the river and surrounding land?
 - How can we celebrate the river as an environmental asset?



The Water Group discusses uses for and clean-up of the river

- King Street landfill & Wahconah Park
 - What is status of remediation options?
 - Report due out
 - Mostly ash fill
 - Need for DEP to come out and do neighborhood presentation on status
 - Could future allow limited access on boardwalk for viewing wildlife?
- How to get into area to walk now?
 - Now go thru cemetery at end of King Street
- Need for pretreatment area for stormwater runoff in Hurlbut St/Clock Tower area
- Potential for W. Branch to function as cold-water fishery (could support trout)
- Capping option necessary for ash landfill @ King Street
 - Add shade trees along river edge
 - Grass surface over capped area
- Outflow for Churchill & West Sts = channel under road
 - Water underground from Onota Lake – geological → cool?
- Outflow for St. Mark's school/Columbus Ave – broken pipe w. runoff-running 2+ hours.
- Produce pool cooler before Columbus Ave in river; take temp there at pipe
- Increase infiltration to cool water before entering West Branch
 - Option: City bylaw encouraging this
- Huge stormwater runoff from center of town down through West Street area
- Trout pools just below dam , also on Onota Brook
- Fisheries – cold water designation
- Temperature now = _____?
- Impacted for macro – bigger issue may be lot of siltation

- DEP found - slightly to moderately impaired habitat 2005 work done; the report not out yet; draft is available
- If improve water quality cleanup trash – June 9th/10th – river will be more appreciated in neighborhood
- Gates thru fences at safe spots ideal – green fingers
- Linden & John – potential corner park parcel
- Is King Street acting as dyke & thus flooding to east at Wahconah Park – restore make true floodplain
- At Wahconah Park better water if:
 - Pipes small – sand filled
 - Figure out what edge should be
 - Make detention area
 - Parking lot surface
 - Under lot infiltration
 - Maybe bedrock?
- Sacco land = dump? Was used for parking while BMC built
 - Want to give to city but whose liability for possible/likely contamination?
 - Need to do phase one evaluation
 - Redevelopment options?
- Tires down in river below Clapp Park
- Canoeable?
 - Spot for put in at City sewer easement just upstream from Wahconah ball fields
 - also footbridges there
 - get people involved
 - rocks in river at Linden – shallow summer
 - branches trees down between Linden & Columbus
 - trash collects from flooding x wall/bank
 - at West St. portage easier over bridge
 - take out spot above dam near RR
 - nice slower areas
 - one W. Park
 - small one near West Street DA park
 - below Clapp Park
- value of buffers – live trees provide shade
 - education for neighbors = important
- habitat value of decaying wood of dead trees in the river
 - education for neighbors
 - but you cut water trails through
- what effect dam removal at Mill Street will have on water flow below?
 - Sediment study at Mill Street dam before removal – status?
- Pedestrian access
 - All along the river wherever can – note: several tax parcels in City in mid-Dewey Ave, multi-use area
 - Can paint path of hidden stream along street (stenciling)
 - St. Marks woods to Columbus Ave
 - Conte
 - To pool in City tax title land below bridge on Columbus Street
- Could build canoe/boat trail if constituency
 - Could you get landowners to allow backyard for West Side river walkway or bike path for neighborhood kids
 - From Linden to Columbus? - bridge to East Side to City land
 - And continue down below Columbus Ave to sewer easement
- Bridge from Dorothy Amos park to City owned land (36 South, Abram James)
- Ask ConCom for permit & DPW to remove tree?
 - Summer best time for removal – ask Caleb Mitchell (East Branch O of C)

- Sand/silt from streets ends up in river
 - Clean storm drains
- Ask Trout Unlimited about habitat enhancement
 - Clear water areas and murky areas near landfill
 - Life cycle education
 - Work with HVA/MAS
- Education about no trash & stewardship – regular walks
- East Mill St – old mills
 - Brownfield site – clean up directed by City
 - City should keep river buffer easements when sell property
- Neighborhood area along Mill Street
 - Get picnic tables
 - Stewardship
 - land behind houses joining 2 City parcels
 - lot X from Riches
- RR Art park near falls (Mill Street)
- How should I as homeowner take care of my property?
- Landing kayak – does it harm bank? → stabilize landing areas
- At King Street
 - Pull back land/ash contaminated areas back
 - Build upland higher – partial cap
 - Water runs off to flood plain
 - Allows more floodplain/wetland near the river (with boardwalk)
- Dam
 - Sediment management
 - Final engineering to remove dam
 - Permitting
 - Implementation & removal
 - Without dam river will be slow gradient change from West Street up to Columbus
 - Steep banks will remain → erosion and access will need addressing
 - White ripples high water & low water – rocky water
 - Along edge – walkway, historic

Charrette Afternoon Session: Group One

Peter Flinker, UrbanRiver Visions Facilitator

Following are the key themes addressed by Group One along with the graphic plan completed by the group.

Short Term Priorities

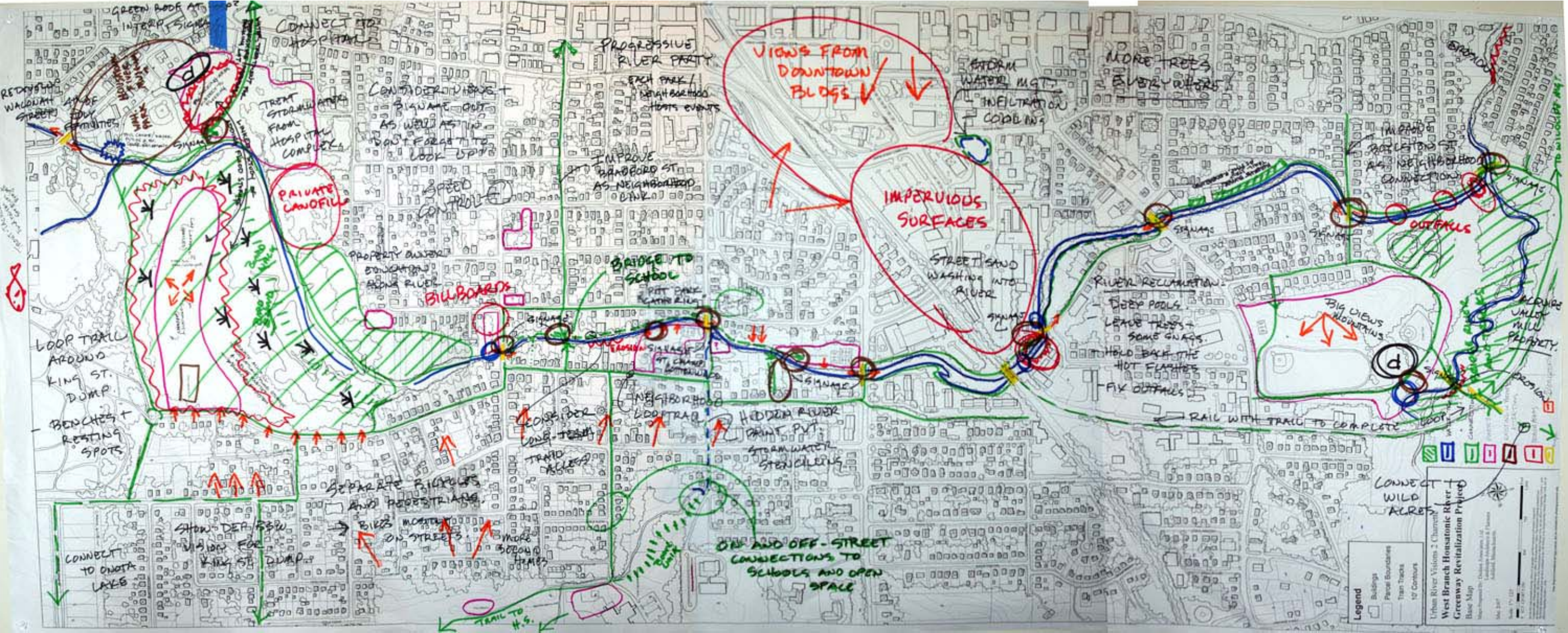
- Progressive river festival
- Open Housatonic River Museum
- Maps/Signage
- Homeowner Education
- Locate on-street bikeways
- Tree cutting/pruning
- Temperature of hidden river
- Repair Boylston Street footbridge

Long Term Priorities

- Wahconah Park
 - Natural and redevelopment as an initial hub
- “West Branch Riverway”
 - Walking, bike trails
 - Universal access
 - Signage; mapping
- Clapp Park improvements
 - Boylston Bridge
 - Connection to Wild Acres
 - Boat access
 - Parking, trails
 - Acquire Valley Mill land
- Remove Mill Street Dam
 - Drainage basin improvements
- King Street Dump
 - Remediation
 - Flood storage issues
 - Wildlife habitat
 - Natural area
- Stormwater Management
 - Impervious surfaces
 - Improved stream habitat
 - Reduce heat island
 - Treat runoff
 - Trees



Group One Vision Plan



Other important points drawn on the Group One vision plan:

- Redevelop Wahconah Street
- Green roof at hospital?
- Wahconah Park
 - Possible canoe/kayak put in at existing sewer easement
 - Housatonic River Museum nearby
 - West end of parking lot subject to flooding, link to landfill & study adding flood storage, signage
 - Town land from parking lot down to Park Street to treat stormwater from hospital complex
- King Street Dump
 - Cap landfill? (grassed)
 - Kiddie park, shade/stroller path; community gardens; wildlife overlook
 - Loop trail with benches/resting spots
 - Connect to Onota Lake
 - Excavate ash fill to add wetland flood storage and wildlife habitat; boardwalk system
 - Show DEP/BSW vision for King St. Dump
- Create parks
 - At end of Danforth/Dewey Aves
 - NW & SE corners of Dewey Ave/Linden St
 - South side of Columbus Ave, across from Pitt Park
 - Preserve buffer/trail strip as proposed redevelopment of East Mill Street brownfield site
- Separate bicycles and pedestrians; bikes mostly on streets
- Hidden river paint – put stormwater stenciling
- On and off-street connections to schools and open space
- Connections/Trails
 - Loop around King St. Dump property
 - From landfill out Campbell and Warriner Streets; connect the two with Onota then out Lakeway Drive and Vin Hebert Boulevard
 - All along King St to Linden, south down Dewey Ave and John St
 - Improve Bradford Street as link to neighborhood; City owned parcels at end of street, link through to river, build pedestrian bridge
 - West Union Street to Conte School & out trail in Coolidge Park to High School
 - Boardwalk through City land adjacent to West Side Schools
 - From Columbus Ave south, down South John Street with additional link to river through City right of way; create link along east side of river to Dorothy Amos Park
 - From West Street south, create link along either side of river, over railroad tracks& along Mill Street
 - Create link along river at back of Mill Street parcels
 - Cross West Housatonic to east side of river, along banks of East Mill Street brownfield site, to Boylston Street and trail system around Clapp Park
 - Improve Boylston Street as neighborhood connection
 - Rail trail to complete loop
- Property owner education along river
- Billboard removal?
- Consider long term trail access
- Speed control along Linden Street?
- Consider views and signage out as well as in – “don’t forget to look up”
- Improve Bradford Street as neighborhood link
- Views from downtown buildings
- Views of downtown from Circular Ave
- Stormwater management, infiltration, cooling at Northwest corner of Center & Church Streets
- More trees everywhere!
- Signage at bridges

- River reclamation
 - Deep pools
 - Leave trees & some snags
 - Hold back the hot flashes
 - Fix outfalls
- Acquire Valley Mill Property
- Pitt Park
 - Open up views to river, river as potential attraction
 - Signage at State Champ. Cottonwood
 - Erosion issues just north of park
 - Create restaurant with 'river deck' at corner of Dewey and Columbus Aves
- Mill Street Dam
 - Erosion issues
 - Potential attraction
 - Water trail put in/take out
- Clapp Park
 - Big mountain views from hill
 - Water trail take out
 - Reduce erosion at south end of site, create signage
 - Wildlife area along river, south of ball field
 - Connections from Taylor/Fairfield/Harding Street neighborhoods, signage
 - Outfalls at end of Bay State Road/Taylor Street addressed as problem areas
 - Bridge the river and railroad tracks, connections south





Charrette Afternoon Session: Group Two

David Spillane, UrbanRiver Visions Facilitator

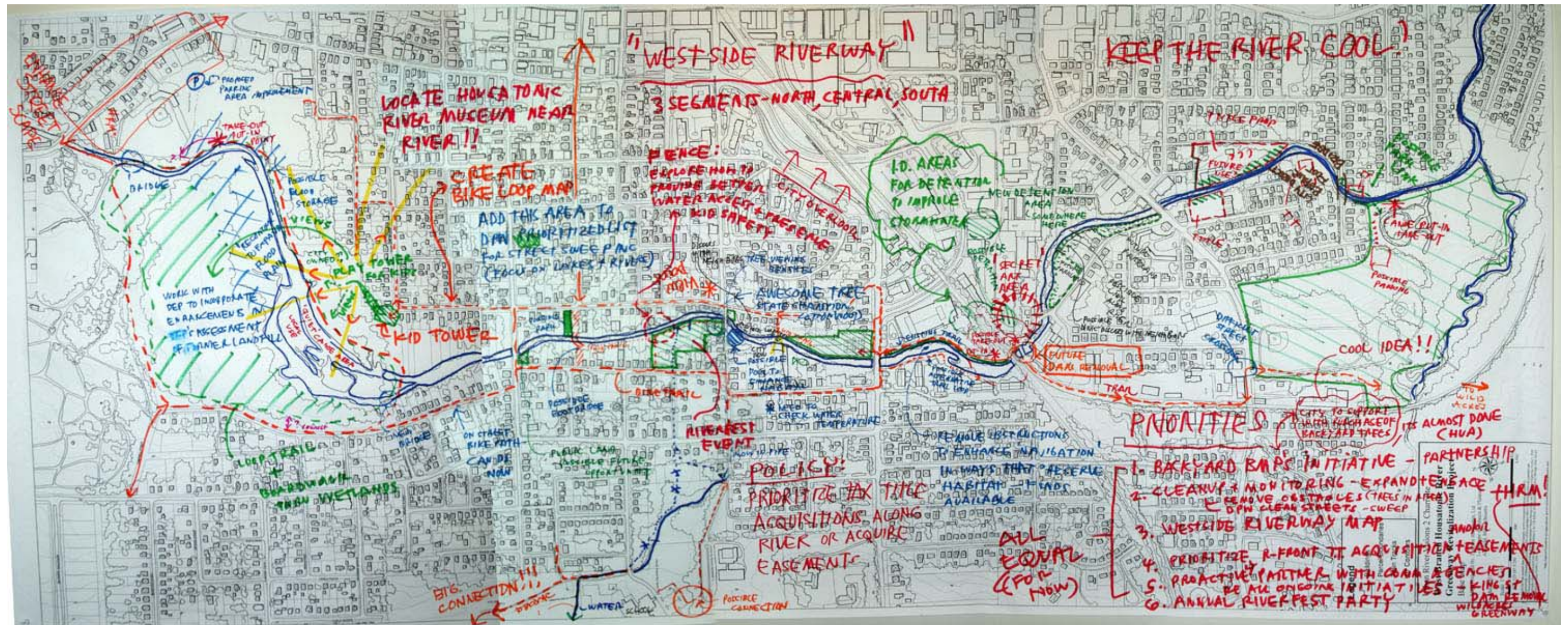
Following are the key themes addressed by Group Two along with the graphic plan completed by the group.

Priorities


- Backyard best management practices (BMP's) initiative
 - HVA is working on this
 - Partnership with City to support w/ purchase of backyard trees
- Clean up & monitoring of river
 - Expand & engage
 - Remove obstacles (trees in area)
 - DPW to clean streets (sweep)
- Create "Westside Riverway" Map
- Prioritize riverfront Tax Title acquisition and/or easements
- Proactively partner with community agencies regarding all ongoing initiatives
 - eg. King St. Dump, Mill Street Dam removal, Wild Acres Greenway
- Annual Riverfest Party



Group Two Vision Plan



Other important points drawn on the Group Two vision plan:

- Enhance Wahconah streetscape
 - Wahconah Park
 - Proposed parking area improvements
 - Bridge crossing West Branch behind park to King Street Landfill/Pittsfield Cemetery
 - Canoe/kayak take out/put in point behind (west of) park
 - King Street Landfill
 - Bike loop around, boardwalk through wetlands
 - Work with Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP) to incorporate enhancements in DEP's assessment of former landfill
 - 'quiet' canoe area promoted for local use through river
 - Possible flood storage along river
 - Town owned land at end of Turner Ave? → create play tower for kids with views into landfill parcel wetlands
 - New pedestrian bridge to link King Street neighborhood to play tower
 - On-street bike path, something can do now
 - Create bike loop map
 - Linden St to Columbus Ave section of river → numerous Tax Title/City-owned parcels; potential for new parks and linkages
 - Add this area to Dept. of Public Works(DPW) prioritized list for street sweeping (focus on lakes & rivers)
 - Bradford Street bike link from downtown to river, possible footbridge through parcels at the end of Bradford St.
 - Pitt Park
 - Riverfest Event location
 - FENCE: Explore how to provide better water access and preserve kid safety
 - Recognize State Champ cottonwood on Columbus Ave
 - Tree viewing bench at southwest corner of Dewey/Columbus
 - Connect schools, trail opportunity along stream on City-owned land east of Conte Elementary
 - Big connection from Conte out through Coolidge Park and beyond
 - Possible pool to enhance habitat below Columbus Ave; need to check water temps
 - Utilize City right of way, South John Street
 - ID areas along West Street for detention to improve stormwater
 - Canoe put in/take out on either side of railroad at Mill Street Dam
 - Existing trail east of river, south side of West Street to railroad tracks
 - Remove obstructions to enhance 'navigation' in ways that preserve habitat – funds available
 - "Secret Art" area at Mill Street Dam
 - Remove Mill Street Dam
 - Two City-owned parcels along Mill Street – future parkland
 - Discuss with 3 parcel owners between about possibly linking the two City-owned parcels along the river
 - East Mill Street/Harris Street Tax Title properties → City to gain riverway easement, if sell parcels for other future uses
 - City direct repair Boylston Street footbridge
 - Possible parking in Clapp Park land at the end of Hollister Street
 - Walking path, canoe put in/take out
 - KEEP THE RIVER COOL!
- 
- A woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a pink t-shirt, is pointing her right index finger towards a large map. The map is a detailed sketch of a river system, likely the Wahconah River, with various handwritten notes in red, blue, and black ink. The notes include phrases like "LOCATE HUNGER TRAIL", "WESTSIDE RIVERWAY", "SECRET ART", "KEEP THE RIVER COOL", and "PARKING". The map also shows a network of streets and a river flowing through them. The woman is standing in front of the map, which appears to be a large sheet of paper or a wall display.





Summary: Important Charrette Themes

The following is a list of the important themes discussed in nearly all of the groups during the Pitt Park Reception and both the morning and afternoon sessions at the West Branch charrette. Although this is not an exhaustive list, it covers the topics that received the greatest attention and the most discussion during the course of the day.

- Connect Residents to the River – “CREATE A BUZZ”
 - Backyard BMP’s initiative (HVA is working on this)
 - Fun events (Annual Pitt Park “Riverfest Party”) to draw residents and encourage them to become better stewards of the land
 - Other outreach – from existing initiative groups, create mailing/email list for interested neighbors
- Restore the River
 - More trash pick-up
 - Make the West Branch navigable for canoes/kayaks - remove some debris but keep enough for successful wildlife habitat
 - Monitor temperatures and address stormwater management (especially from large parking areas around West Street businesses) and tree planting to keep the water cool
 - Work with Dept. of Public Works to sweep streets, reduce sediment in river
 - Involve residents in planning for Mill Street Dam and King Street Dump
- Create a Greenway Trail from Wahconah Park to Clapp Park with a walking/bike path - some off-road, some on neighborhood streets (create a map of on street bike trails, parks and attractions)
 - Repair the Boylston Street pedestrian bridge
 - Create a real, safe bridge south of Clapp Park where people already use the concrete pipe to cross the river
 - Keep in mind larger connections: Onota Lake, Wild Acres Greenway
- Share the Vision for a “Westside Riverway”
 - Work with Westside to continue planning and outreach
 - Partner with other neighborhoods to connect with Wild Acres Greenway
 - Work with local and regional partners to integrate potential Mill Street Dam removal and King Street Dump remediation into the riverway

West Branch of the Housatonic Charrette Credits

Facilities

Pitt Park – Friday Night Reception
Conte Elementary School – Saturday Charrette

Welcome

Kurt Gaertner
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Benjamin B. Downing
State Senator

Attendees

Craig Allshouse

Daniel Bianchi

Ray Boudreau

Henry Bush

Matt Bush

Gene Chague
Trout Unlimited

Jan Chague

Marge Cohan

Robert Cornwell
City of Pittsfield

Churchill Cotton
Master Plan Advisory
Committee, Mayor's Ad Hoc
Advisory Committee
Chairperson

Patricia Cotton

Ken Duncan
West Side Steering
Committee, Youth Chair

Tricia Farley Bouvier

Merle Ferber

John Galt
Berkshire Bike Path Council,
Mayor's Ad Hoc Advisory
Committee

Judy Geitleson

Lisa Haynes
City Planner

Jenny Hersch
Housatonic River Museum

Martha LaValle

Jonathan Lothrop

Michale Makes

Jim McGrath
Department of Community
Services, Director

Caleb Mitchell
Conservation Commission

Bob Presutti

Bob Race
LOPA

Deanna Ruffer
Department of Community
Development, Director

Carolyn Sibner
Housatonic Valley
Association

Manfred Slaughter

Bonnie Smith

Charles Smith

Caroline Stone

Megan Whilden
Office of Cultural
Development, Director

Jane Winn
Berkshire Environmental
Action Team, Executive
Director

John Yuill
Berkshire Bike Path Council

Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs/Consultant Team

Hillary Blanchette

Associate

Dodson Associates

Brock Cutting

Principal

Dodson Associates

Cindy Delpapa

Massachusetts Department of Fish and
Game, Riverways Program

Kurt Gaertner

Director of Sustainable Development

Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Eric Hove

Assistant Director of Sustainable Development

Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Peter Flinker

Principal

Dodson Associates

Sarah la Cour

Senior Associate

Dodson Associates

Tim Purinton

Massachusetts Department of Fish and
Game, Riverways Program

David Spillane

*Principal, Director of Planning and Urban
Design*

Goody Clancy

Maria Van Dusen

Public Outreach

Community Connections