

Downtown Winsted

Alan Platts, associate dean of the Yale school, said the group's final report should be finished in about a month when the team returns to Winsted. But he stressed the report is just a beginning, not an end.

"These (ideas) are meant to get you going, to get you excited," he said. "The future of the town is in your hands."

Among the team's ideas:

- Reconnecting Main Street with the Mad River and the old mill buildings on the north side of the river. They strongly advocate a continuous sidewalk along Main Street's river side. They also envision pedestrian bridges where residents can access the north side for parking, shopping, recreation, and other uses.
- Narrowing the width of Main Street to accommodate additional parking, to slow down the traffic, and allow pedestrians safe and easy access across the road.
- Developing a Laurel City Heritage Trail that ties existing historical landmarks together, including Soldiers' Monument.
- Changing existing zoning laws

to curtail suburban strip development. They advocate a "mixed-use" downtown for residential, commercial and industrial purposes, allowing the town to maintain and enhance its traditional character.

The team's report also encourages the local parking authority to use its funding to improve signage, access to parking, lighting and layout for parking lots. The Winsted Retail Association should also mediate problems over parking space among local businesses, the report said, and encourage employees to use lots off Main Street to allow customers to use those spots.

The Winsted Design Coalition plans to continue to oversee the committee's ideas, said coalition member Deirdre McGara.

Claire Nader, director of the trust, encouraged citizens to call the coalition at 738-3133 or write to P.O. Box 1044, Winsted 06098, with further ideas for redesigning the downtown. A copy of the preliminary report is available through the coalition.