



An Action Plan for Wellesley Hills Square

August, 2001

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In association with
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1. INTRODUCTION

In 1999 the Town of Wellesley began a planning process for Wellesley Hills Square as a part of ongoing implementation of the 1994 Comprehensive Plan. The 1994 plan recommended that the town prepare detailed master plans for each of the commercial villages focusing on issues such as village identity, business mixes and activities, transportation and parking, and landscape improvements.

The village improvement programs consist of three phases: a visioning process, an action plan, and implementation. Community Design Partnership assisted the town in completing the visioning study (Phase I) for Wellesley Hills Square in June 2000. The “Vision for the Wellesley Hills Square” was developed with input from residents, business and property owners, institutional representatives and town officials. This vision includes the preservation of well-loved elements of the past and improvements in district identity, distinctiveness, cohesiveness, pedestrian environment and management of traffic and parking. The document also includes recommendations for the action plan (Phase II), to include circulation and parking, design, zoning and business mix.

In January 2001, Daylor Consulting Group, Inc. (Daylor) in association with McMahon Associates (McMahon) was selected to develop an action plan to help the town achieve the vision developed during Phase I. This action plan was developed based on significant public input as well as an analysis of existing conditions, options, and preferred solutions for the future of Wellesley Hills Square. The action plan is intended to be a blueprint for town officials, residents and business owners to follow over the next several years in order to maintain and enhance the area’s vitality and village-like character while accommodating appropriate new development.



Elm Park

2. COMMUNITY VISION

2.1 Visioning Process

The 1994 Wellesley Comprehensive Plan recognized Wellesley Hills Square as one of the Town's important commercial villages, and recommended the completion of studies and a master plan for the area. The Plan drew attention to a variety of issues that should be considered in the planning of the villages.

- Establishment of a distinctive identity or design theme for each village;
- Maintenance of a lively mix of businesses, services, and activities;
- Creation of pedestrian links between residential and commercial areas;
- Attention to transitions between residential and commercial areas;
- Transportation and parking management, including easy bicycle access to commuter train stations; and
- Attention to landscape improvements.

In 1999 the town retained Community Design Partnership (CDP) to assist in the visioning phase of the Wellesley Hills Square improvement program. The Phase I process engaged residents, business and property owners, institutional representatives and town officials in the development of a vision to guide subsequent detailed planning for the area. Participants in the visioning process valued the variety of shops and services currently available, the large number of independent businesses, the public landmarks such as Elm Park and Sprague Clock Tower, the compact and human-scaled storefronts, and special features of the area, such as the stonework used in several public and private buildings and sites. The most common concerns were:

- Traffic congestion and its effect on convenient vehicle circulation and on the pedestrian environment and safety;
- Parking difficulties, especially in the eastern part of the commercial district;
- Definition of the identity of the district, which lacks

COMMUNITY VISION

- entryway markers and a cohesive design personality;
- Store signage and building maintenance consistency; and
- Need for more streetscape greenery.

The resulting vision for Wellesley Square is summarized below from CDP's final report.

The Vision for Wellesley Hills Square

In 2015, Wellesley Hills Square is a thriving commercial village serving the surrounding neighborhood, daytime business owners and employees, and members of the wider community.

- Its village character is reflected in the small and medium scale architecture of its 19th and 20th century buildings located at the sidewalk edge, and in the many small independent storefront businesses.

- Its distinctiveness is expressed in the use of stonework throughout the district, attractive entryway signage, and careful maintenance of its landmark, park and clock tower. In good weather, Elm Park attracts users throughout the day, including a lunchtime crowd enjoying the chance to be outside and surrounded by greenery.

- Its cohesiveness can be seen in the variety of thriving businesses, activity throughout the day and evening, seasonal round of plantings and other decorations, effective signage and lighting, well-maintained buildings, and active business association that takes a strong role in promoting and managing the Square.

Although Washington Street remains an important arterial road carrying substantial traffic, Wellesley Hills Square has become more pedestrian friendly through effective management of transportation, circulation, and parking. New public parking, cooperative management of all public and private parking resources, neighborhood shuttles to serve the train, signal timing changes and modifications, more pedestrian and bicycle amenities, are among the improvements that create an optimum balance between pedestrian and vehicle mobility.

2.2 Recommendations for Phase II Study

The Phase I report also recommended that the Phase II action plan study address the following issues:

Transportation, Circulation and Parking

- Working with MassHighway on the Route 9 project to obtain a traffic study to identify local traffic impacts and take these into account in modifying the project design to minimize negative impacts to the district.
- Revisiting the 1997 parking study to implement management recommendations; considering a parking deck span over Route 9; preparing parking management plans for the Bread & Circus lot and Washington Street on-street parking, and for an area-wide parking management plan to coordinate public and private parking resources; designing the Eaton Court parking lot improvements and preparing a feasibility study for creating new spaces at the Eaton Court lot.
- Preparing a feasibility study for new train station parking, drop-off and pick-up options.
- Preparing a plan for intersection control and considering traffic calming elements at key pedestrian points for Washington Street.

Design

- Providing gateway signage to identify the Wellesley Hills commercial village with a Wellesley Hills symbol or logo.
- Providing a program of changing seasonal decorations; organize a moveable planter program; design and construct permanent, on-street planters for perennials on Washington Street.
- Enhancing the appearance and use of Elm Park.
- Providing bicycle amenities, more benches and outdoor café seating.
- Improving the pedestrian experience on the bridge.
- Providing additional directional and interpretive signage for the Brook Path connection with Washington Street.
- Renovating the tot lot in Maugus Park.

COMMUNITY VISION

- Developing guidelines for window display lighting; developing guidelines for store signage improvements.
- Investigating establishing a loan program to provide incentives for storeowners to improve signage, facades and other improvements.

Zoning

- Revision of the zoning regulations is recommended to preserve the attractive, pedestrian-friendly character of Wellesley Hills Square.

Business Mix

- Considering a market study to identify gaps in offerings.
- Planning for a possible move of the Bread & Circus, an important anchor business which attracts shoppers who also patronize smaller merchants.
- Investigating the possible reasons for perceived high turnover of businesses at the Forest Street node of businesses and take any actions that are warranted.

Organization and Programming

- Organizing a business association for joint promotions and special programs; possible support and organization of a planter and seasonal decoration program.
- Organizing a program of seasonal decorations and sale days.
- Programming another active community day like Marathon Day.
- Programming family and senior activities for Elm Park.

3. EXISTING CONDITIONS

The study area for this action plan includes the Wellesley Hills Square commercial area (the section of Washington Street between Forest Street and Route 9) as well as surrounding residential, public and institutional uses. The study area boundary is shown on **Figure 1**. The Wellesley Hills area is an important transportation nexus for the town, with the intersection of Washington Street (Route 16) and Worcester Street (Route 9), as well as an MBTA commuter rail station. However, the area's linear shape and its function as a commercial and transportation center cause parking and circulation problems.

This section analyzes issues related to the current built environment, transportation patterns, and potential future development patterns allowed under the current zoning codes and design guidelines.

3.1 Built Environment & Zoning

Built Environment

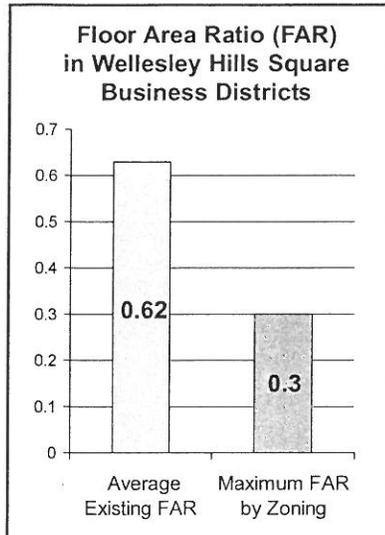
Existing land uses in Wellesley Hills Square include small independent retail and service uses, offices, public facilities, and some single- and multi-family housing. The commercial area along Washington Street contains a mix of 1- to 3- story commercial and mixed-use buildings. Behind Washington Street are primarily single-family houses, with the exception of office and institutional buildings surrounded by large parking lots located near Laurel Avenue. There are two gas stations at the entrance to Route 9. A major part of the business district on



Retail buildings with parking in front.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

*Floor Area Ratio (FAR) =
Building Floor Area/Lot area

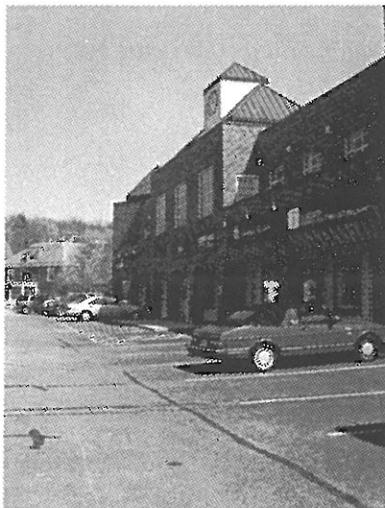


the northwest side of Route 9 is used by the Public Works Department.

The area's architecture is characterized by an eclectic mix of brick and concrete buildings. The facade of the buildings, storefronts and signs are also diverse. Some of the buildings have first story retail stores with offices or residential uses in the upper stories. Many retail storefronts are defined by smaller bays with a door for each store, and large windows with clear glass that create a pedestrian-friendly village-like appearance. Some of the newly developed retail buildings, however, have a strip-mall appearance created by unified and continuous storefront signage, setbacks and parking in front. Several office buildings in the area have blinded or tinted windows on the first floor that create a visually "impermeable" space for pedestrians walking by.

Parking in Wellesley Hills Square is located mostly in back of the buildings with the exception of several buildings that have parking lots in the front or side. In some places, there are large parking lots behind the commercial buildings on Washington Street without proper screening from the residential uses on side streets.

Sidewalks and street furniture have recently been upgraded along Washington Street, and are currently in good condition. There are no gateway signs that indicate entrances to Wellesley Hills Square.



Mall-like looking retail building

Zoning

Wellesley Hills Square includes single residence, general residence, transportation and business zoning districts. (See **Figure 1**.) The maximum allowed Floor Area Ratio (FAR)* for non-residential uses in Wellesley is set at 0.3. However, the FAR of many existing buildings in the area exceeds 0.3 because these buildings pre-date the current zoning regulations. In fact, the average FAR in the Wellesley Hills Square business districts is currently 0.62, more than double what is allowed under the current zoning. Many of the older buildings along Washington Street that exceed 0.3 FAR are located on relatively small lots. By contrast, newer developments have had to assemble larger parcels of land to comply with the

EXISTING CONDITIONS

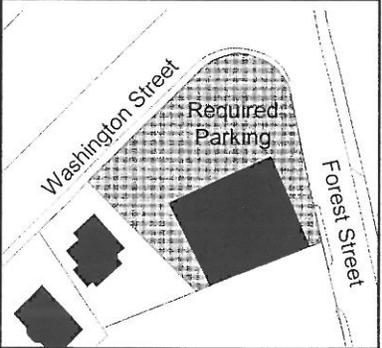
A Simulation of Potential Future Development by Current Zoning :
At the corner of Washington Street and Forest Street



Existing Condition



An Example of Maximum Build-Out Allowed by Zoning



EXISTING CONDITIONS

maximum allowed FAR of 0.3.

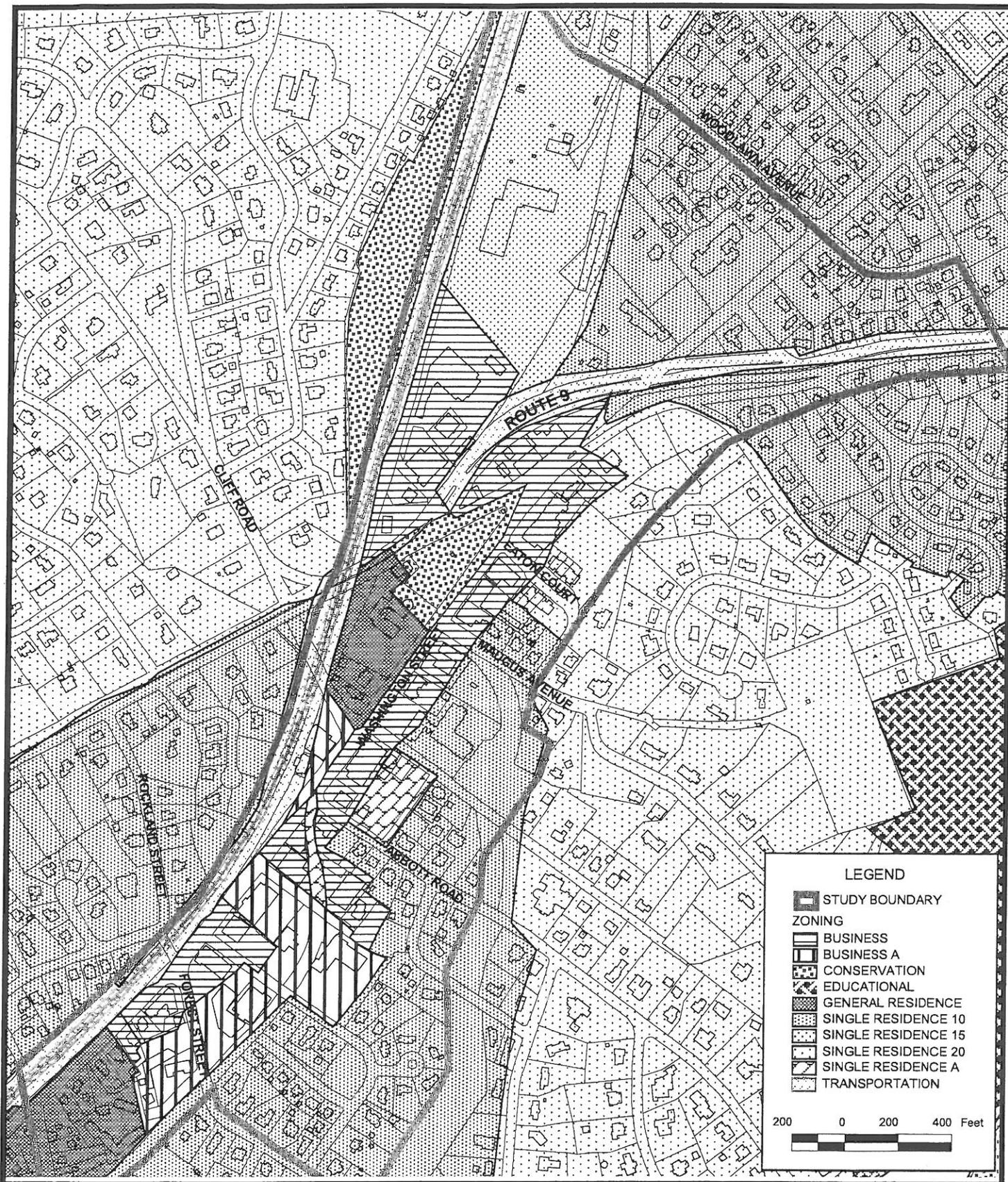
Off-street parking requirements for the commercial buildings are 1 space per 150 s.f. of building footprint or no less than 3.2 spaces per 1000 s.f. of building floor area. Most of the buildings in the area do not meet this requirement.

The off-street parking requirement in combination with the maximum FAR discourages small property owners from redeveloping their properties because it is generally not feasible to build a low-FAR building *and* on-site parking on a small lot. Instead, these requirements encourage developers to buy several adjacent small parcels and consolidate them into one big parcel to develop larger buildings, which will then require a larger parking lot. In addition, because there are no regulations for maximum or minimum front yard setbacks in a business district, the current zoning allows and even encourages the development of a large retail store with a large parking lot on the street frontage.

Over time, this process of consolidating smaller developments into larger ones and providing large amounts of off-street parking in visually prominent locations will erode the area's pedestrian-friendly village character.

A vast parking lot behind the commercial row of Washington Street.





LEGEND

- STUDY BOUNDARY
- ZONING**
- BUSINESS
- BUSINESS A
- CONSERVATION
- EDUCATIONAL
- GENERAL RESIDENCE
- SINGLE RESIDENCE 10
- SINGLE RESIDENCE 15
- SINGLE RESIDENCE 20
- SINGLE RESIDENCE A
- TRANSPORTATION

200 0 200 400 Feet

Daylor
Consulting
Group
Inc.

Wellesley Hills Sq. Existing Zoning (2001)
Wellesley, Massachusetts

07/13/01



Figure
1

Ten Forbes Road Braintree, MA 02184 781-849-7070

Sources: MassGIS, USGS

3.2 Elm Park

The most distinctive and frequently used open space in the area is Elm Park. Sprague Clock Tower is the park's centerpiece and the most notable landmark in Wellesley Hills Square.

Based on public input, residents view the park as an ideal destination for lunch hour picnics as well as a facility that might support larger crowds for community events, such as sidewalk sales, old home days and Boston Marathon activities. However, the park is currently underutilized due to a lack of programming.

Most of the park is covered by a grass lawn with the exception of a small brick paved plaza in the middle, some pathways, benches and picnic tables. Significant vegetation includes mature trees, which are in good condition, and flower beds, which are well maintained by the local garden club. One significant issue for park users is the noise and visual pollution emanating from Route 9 and, to a lesser extent, Washington Street.

Residents view the old bus shelter at the intersection of Worcester and Washington Streets as an inappropriate park gateway at a highly visible location along the park perimeter. However, many within the town are interested in having that location available for use as a bus stop in the future, should there be a return of bus service.



Elm park is an ideal destination for a lunch hour picnic.

EXISTING CONDITIONS



Parking Restriction Sign

Residents and other stakeholders emphasized their desire to maintain Elm Park as a predominately natural centerpiece for Wellesley Hills Square. At the same time, they recognized that the clock tower serves as an important anchor and “keystone” for the park and community, and is deserving of a supportive setting with better opportunities for access. In addition, some residents identified the need to retain an appropriate relationship between the park and the building to the southwest.

3.3 Circulation and Parking

The most heavily congested area within the study area is the intersection of Old Worcester Street and Washington Street (in front of Eaton Court/Bread & Circus). Traffic queues at this location sometimes extend east across the Route 9 overpass and west approaching Cliff Road. In addition, significant congestion was also observed in the area around Cliff Road and the commuter rail station during the afternoon peak hour.

Washington Street provides two travel lanes eastbound and one travel lane westbound during the morning peak, and two travel lanes westbound and one travel lane eastbound during the afternoon peak. The additional travel lane is gained by prohibiting on-street parking on the south side of Washington Street during the morning peak hour and on the north side of Washington Street during the afternoon peak hour. All other times of the day, parking is permitted on both sides of Washington Street along most of the roadway and one travel lane is maintained in each direction. During the

Parking at Eaton Court



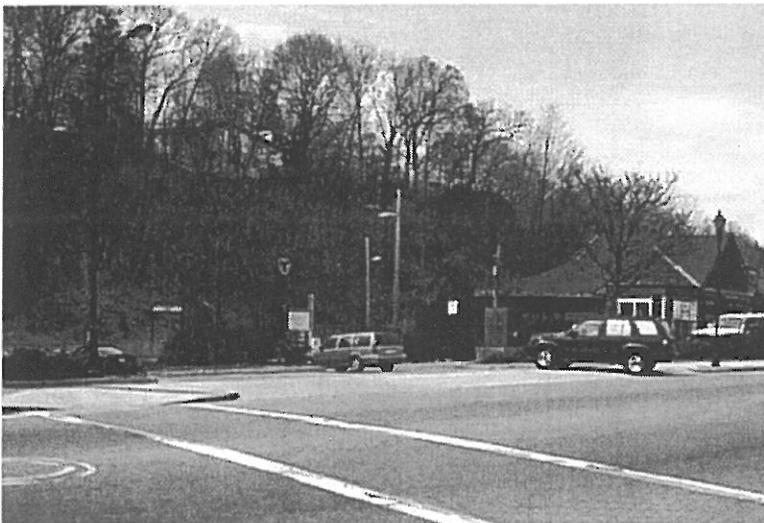
EXISTING CONDITIONS

peak commuter periods, the second lane minimizes traffic delays in the peak direction, but traffic is frequently congested in the non-peak direction single lane (especially eastbound during the PM).

Parking at the commuter rail station and around Eaton Court (in front of Bread & Circus) were generally at capacity throughout the day, and vehicles accessing the parking lot in front of the Bread & Circus shopping center queue out onto Washington Street and create delays for Washington Street traffic. However, parking is generally available in the public lot behind the Bread & Circus and on-street along the north side (westbound direction) of Washington Street. Parking on the south side of Washington Street was generally full throughout the day, probably due to the fact that a majority of the businesses in this area are located on the south side of Washington Street.

Parking at the Commuter Rail station spills over onto Cliff Road and perhaps other parking lots behind businesses and along side streets. However, public comment suggests that much of the parking on Cliff Road may be utilized by U.S. Postal Service employees rather than commuter rail passengers.

Pedestrian access to businesses, residences and park areas along Washington Street is excellent. Sidewalks are provided along both the north and south sides of Washington Street



*Crosswalk at Abbott Road and
Commuter Rail Station.*

EXISTING CONDITIONS

and crosswalks are provided at all signalized intersections, as are pedestrian-only crossing phases. Crosswalks are also provided across unsignalized side streets along Washington Street. In addition, two crosswalks are provided across Washington Street at unsignalized locations: Abbott Road across from the commuter rail station and Maugus Avenue. The safety of unsignalized crosswalks can be improved through the use of signing and traffic calming tools such as pedestrian barrels, cones and/or flashing inset crosswalk lights warning motorists of the potential for pedestrians in the crosswalk.

MassHighway has completed the design for its proposed reconstruction of parts of the Route 9/Route 16 interchange. The project includes rebuilding the Washington Street bridge over Route 9 to increase vertical clearance, repairing the Route 9 retaining walls, and modifying the Route 9/Old Worcester

Route 9 Overpass



Street signalized intersection.

In order to investigate the feasibility of creating additional parking in Wellesley Hills Square, McMahon spoke to MassHighway about the possibility of constructing a parking deck over Route 9, west of the Washington Street overpass. Although MassHighway is not generally opposed to providing parking structures over its roadways, they considered the idea of a parking structure over this portion of Route 9 to be

impractical due to the vertical and horizontal alignment of Route 9 as it passes through Wellesley Hills Square.

At the request of the Planning Board and town staff, McMahon has prepared conceptual sketches illustrating parking deck alternatives over Route 9 (see **Figures 2 & 3**). Using the alternatives developed for this study, a maximum of approximately 65 spaces could be provided on a deck over Route 9. In order to construct this deck, support columns would be required in the median of Route 9 and the deck would need to slope upwards, parallel to the Route 9 roadway (see **Figure 4**). As illustrated in **Figure 4**, the location of the required columns for the parking deck would result in horizontal sight distance of only 240 feet. This sight distance would only meet the minimum for a 35 m.p.h. design speed. In addition, the required upward sloping of the parking deck would result in the parking deck being approximately 3.75 feet above the existing grade at its westerly edge. Although this elevation is not a significant problem, it may result in aesthetic concerns.

The cost associated with constructing a deck over a major arterial roadway is another significant issue. For example, the deck constructed over the Southeast Expressway at East Milton Square cost approximately \$12 million. Although this project is not to the scale of the East Milton Square project, construction costs have increased in the four or so years since the East Milton Square project, and a deck over Route 9 could be expected to cost approximately \$4 million. Even with the full 65 spaces, the cost per space would be over \$60,000 per space. When compared to typical surface parking costs of \$2,500 per space and structured parking costs of \$10,000 per space, the financial viability of a deck at this location would be difficult to justify.

As an interim solution, it was requested through public comment that additional discussions be held with MassHighway regarding the feasibility of providing the necessary substructure for a future parking deck while the retaining walls are being rebuilt. Discussion with Mass Highway revealed that the abutment substructure of the retaining walls is not being rebuilt as part of this project. Rather, only the façade of the

EXISTING CONDITIONS

walls are being restored with a stone facing. According to MassHighway, adding the reconstruction of the substructure to accommodate a possible future deck would not be practical. As a result, although it appears that constructing a parking deck over Route 9 may be possible, it would create sight distance problems along Route 9 and with the limited amount of parking spaces that would be added, it is not economically viable.

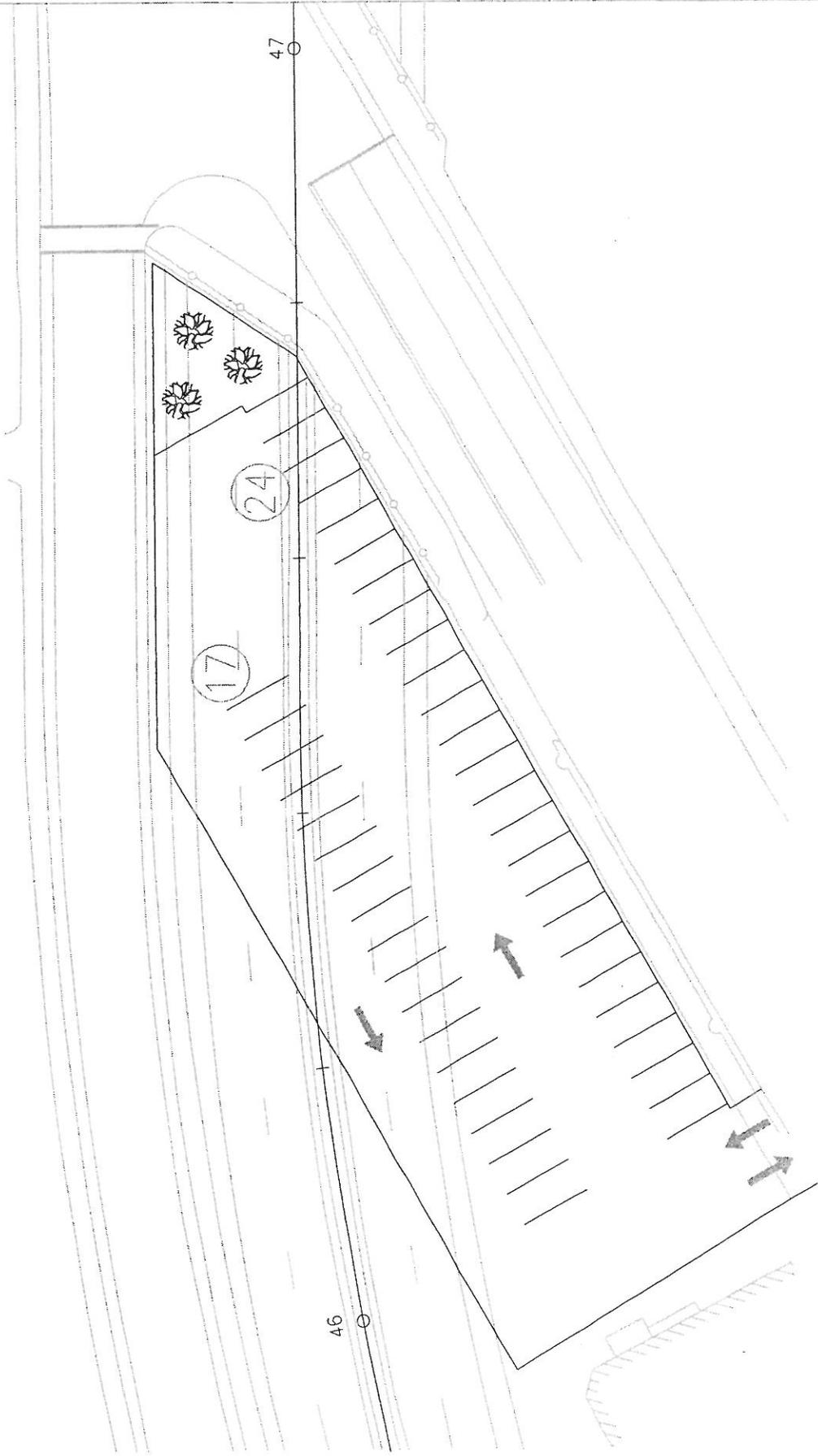
The intersection improvements at Old Worcester Street/Route 9 include prohibiting crossing of Route 9 to/from Old Worcester Street with the exception of emergency vehicles, which will override the traffic signal as they exit the fire station. Traffic exiting Old Worcester Street will be allowed to turn right only onto Route 9 eastbound. Westbound traffic on Route 9 will have a continuous green signal, except when preempted by the fire station. Westbound left-turns from Old Worcester Street will be prohibited and will be accommodated on the access ramp located east of the Washington Street overpass. The left-turn from Washington Street onto the westbound on-ramp, which is currently prohibited, will be permitted as part of MassHighway's improvements.

Eastbound queues that currently form on Washington Street at the Old Worcester Street intersection will now form east of the intersection over the Washington Street overpass. The relocation of the left turns should help alleviate some of the traffic congestion in this area.

*Route 9/Old Worcester St.
Intersection.*



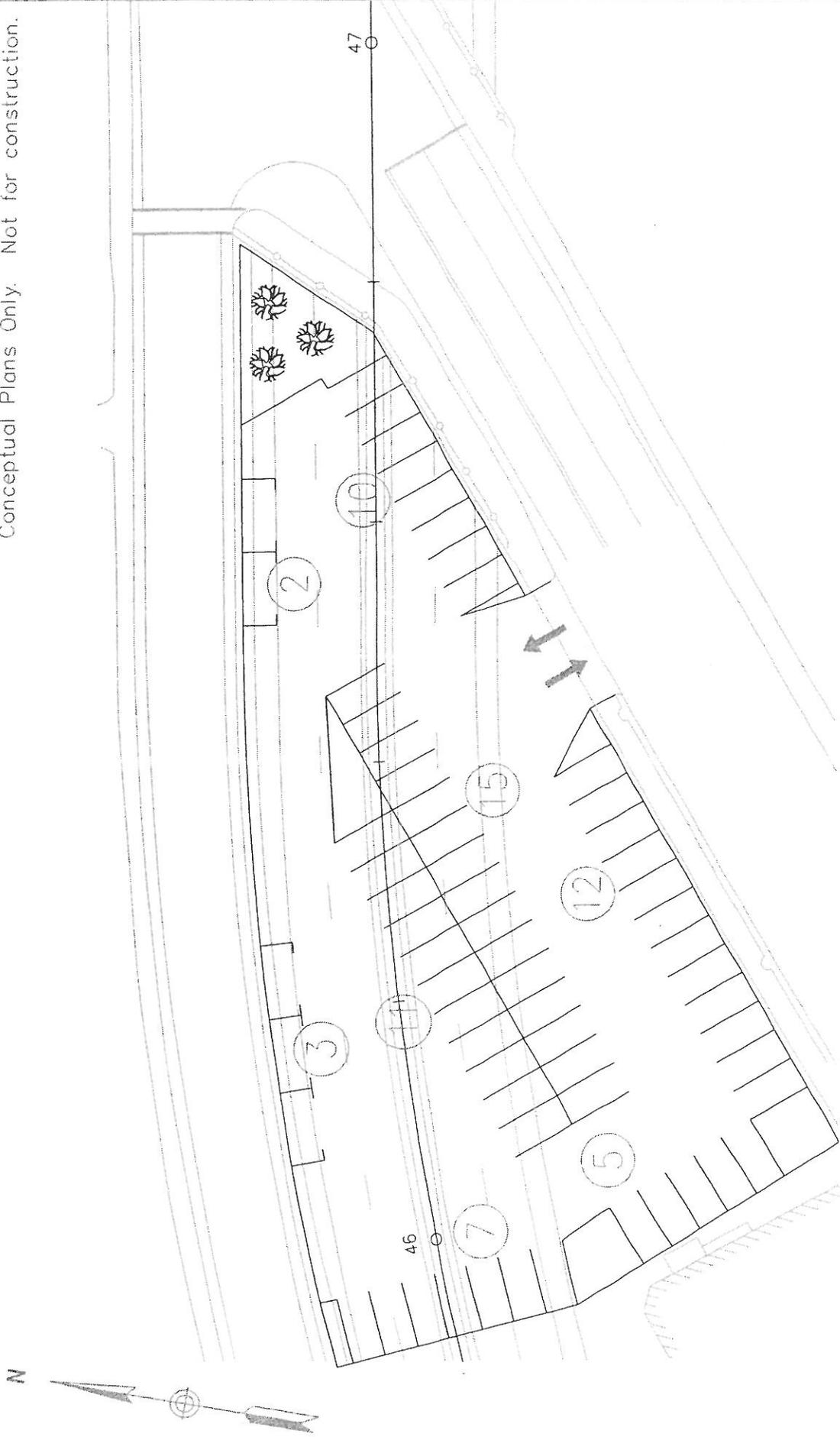
Conceptual plans only. Not for construction.



Total Spaces = 41

Figure 2: Route 9 Parking Deck - Option 1
Wellesley Hills Square

Conceptual Plans Only. Not for construction.



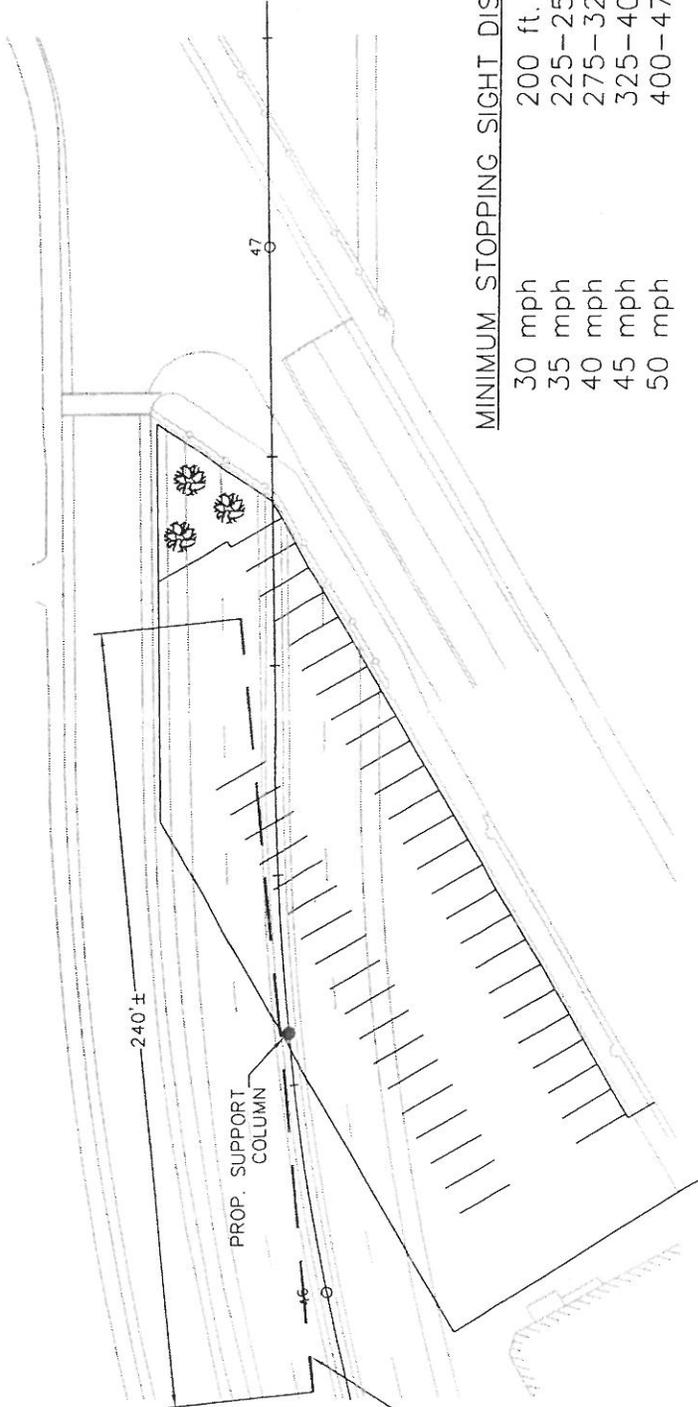
Total Spaces = 65



Figure 3: Route 9 Parking Deck - Option 1
Wellesley Hills Square

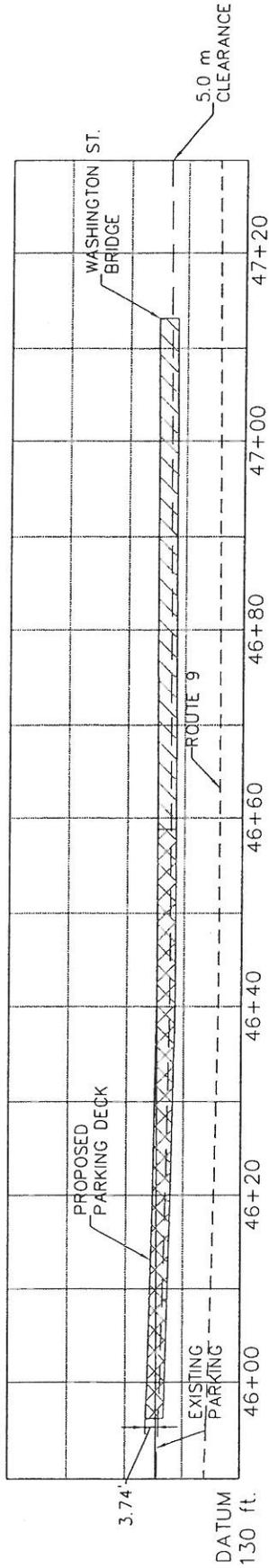


N



MINIMUM STOPPING SIGHT DISTANCE:

30 mph	200 ft.
35 mph	225-250 ft.
40 mph	275-325 ft.
45 mph	325-400 ft.
50 mph	400-475 ft.



Note: All elevations are approximate.

Figure 4: Route 9 Parking Deck - Profile
Wellesley Hills Square

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

This action plan for Wellesley Hills Square is a result of the collective effort of town officials, residents, property owners and business owners. The planning process was guided by the Wellesley Hills Square Steering Committee, a group of local stakeholders and town officials that worked with the consulting team through the project. The process began with two Steering Committee meetings to review the outcome of the Phase I visioning and discuss existing conditions and possible courses of action.

Based the Committee's guidance as well as the consultants' observation of existing conditions, the consultant team prepared several alternatives for improving Wellesley Hills Square in the areas of land use, zoning, transportation, streetscape, and Elm Park. The consultants presented these alternatives at a Public Forum held in the Wellesley Community Center on May 2, 2001. Approximately 30 residents, property owners, and business owners in the area participated in the Forum.

The consultant's presentation identified current conditions and trends as well as possible future alternatives related to four specific topic areas: land use and zoning; village character and streetscape, transportation and parking, and Elm Park. A copy of the presentation slides is included as **Attachment A**. Following the presentation, Forum participants were divided into four topic-specific breakout groups with one focused on each of the four topics. To help the breakout groups in their discussions, the consultant team provided a zoning map of the study area, road maps, panoramic photographs of a portion of Washington Street, and drawings of two Elm Park alternatives. At the end of the breakout group discussion, representatives from each group presented their findings to the entire audience. A summary of the breakout group comments is included in **Table 1**.

5. ACTION PLAN FOR WELLESLEY HILLS SQUARE

This section summarizes recommendations and action items for Wellesley Hills Square. These recommendations are based on:

1. The consensus vision for Wellesley Hills Square developed during Phase I of this project.
2. Input received at the public meeting held in the Wellesley Community Center on May 2, 2001.
3. Input from the Wellesley Hills Steering Committee.
4. The professional expertise of the consultant team which includes Daylor Consulting Group (planners and landscape architects) and McMahon Associates (transportation planners).

The following sections 5.1 through 5.4 discuss specific action plan steps for land use and zoning; village and streetscape improvements, transportation and parking, and Elm Park. Section 5.5 summarizes all of the action plan items in a single table and identifies the responsible group and approximate timeframe for each item.

5.1 Land Use & Zoning

Land use and zoning policies for Wellesley Hills Square should ensure that any future development or redevelopment will adhere to the pedestrian-friendly village character valued by the community while maintaining a diverse mix of uses and structures. To this end, the Town should designate the area shown in **Figure 5** as the Wellesley Hills Square Commercial Village District. Within this District, the following changes to dimensional and use regulations should be made:

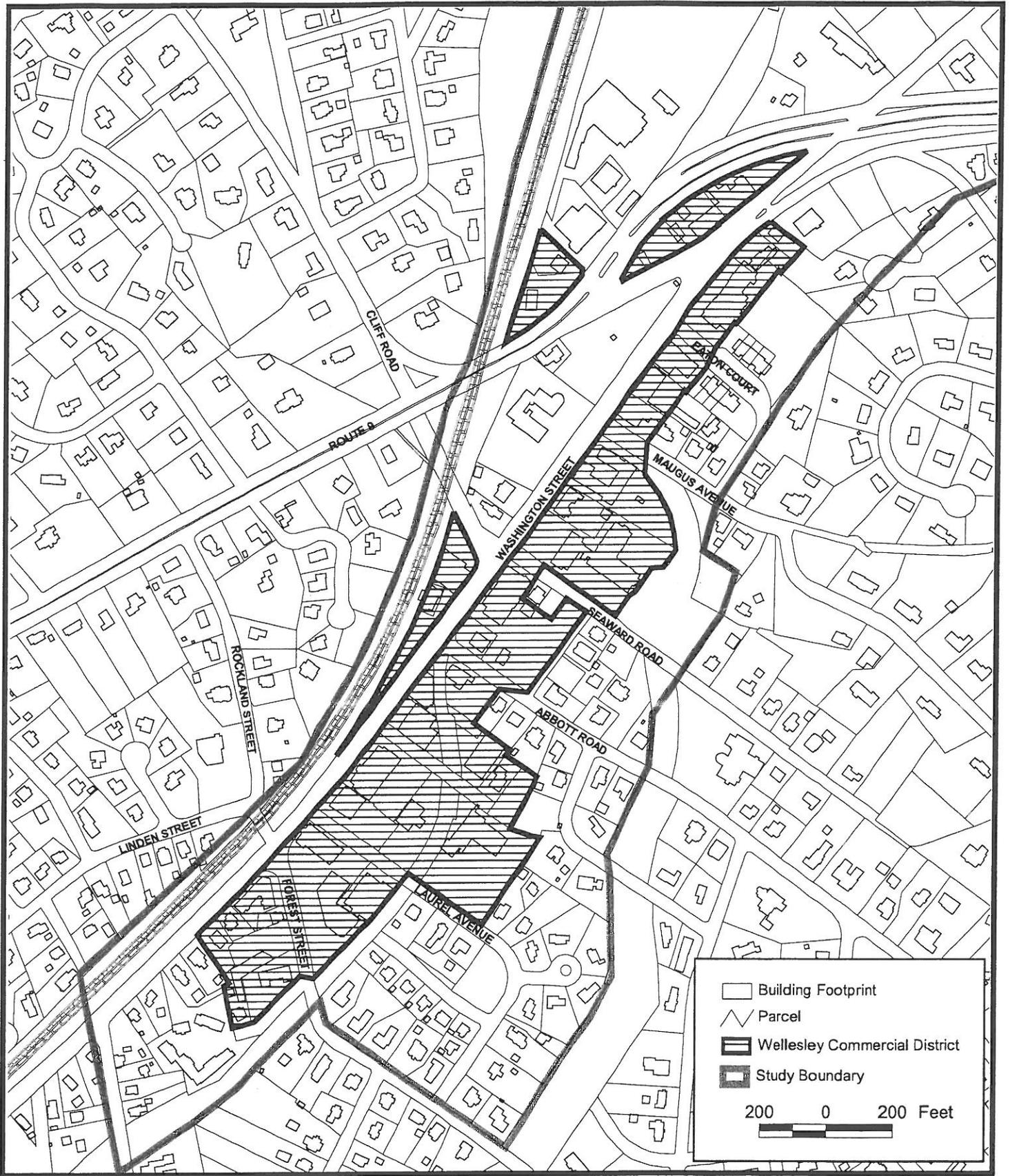
- Increase the maximum floor-area ratio (FAR) allowed by right to 0.6 to allow the current densities to be retained (the current aggregate FAR for the area is 0.6) and to encourage development on small parcels as opposed to the consolidation of small parcels into large ones.
- Allow developers to build at an FAR of 1.0 by special permit. As a condition of receiving the special permit, the project should be required to provide certain public amenities such as ground-floor retail space and enhanced design.



A gas station near Elm Park. Under the recommended zoning for Wellesley Hills Square, new gas stations will not be allowed in the future (although existing uses will be allowed to remain).

ACTION PLAN FOR WELLESLEY HILLS SQUARE

- Encourage mixed-use development (e.g., retail on the first floor and residential or office on the upper floors) by providing density incentives (see above), parking incentives (see below), and flexibility for locating more than one primary use in a single building or lot.
- Make the list of allowed uses more restrictive to prevent the development of incompatible uses. The use regulations for the Lower Falls Commercial District are generally appropriate for Wellesley Hills Square, based on public input. Allowed uses would include residences for 3+ families, lodging, restaurants, retail stores less than 10,000 square feet in size, theaters, offices, banks, and public and semi-public buildings. Special permit uses could include veterinary hospitals, dry cleaners, and retail stores over 10,000 square feet. Drive-through facilities, light manufacturing, and automotive uses should not be allowed, although pre-existing uses should be allowed to remain in business with limited upgrades or expansions.
- Require a minimum 5-foot and maximum 10-foot front yard setback to maintain the current street wall definition while providing wide sidewalks as a pedestrian amenity. (Exceptions could be made to allow a larger setback to accommodate outdoor café seating). Prohibit parking streetward of the building façade.
- Allow 0-foot side yards if the property abuts a commercial use or mixed use and require a 20-foot side yards if it abuts a residential use.
- Eliminate the parking requirement of 1 space per 150 s.f. of building foot print for commercial uses. While maintaining the parking requirement of 3.2 spaces per 1,000 s.f., allow a reduced parking ratio for multi-story mixed-use buildings as is done in Lower Falls.



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Wellesley Hills Square
Commercial Village District
Wellesley, Massachusetts



Figure
5

Sources: MassGIS, Town of Wellesley

ACTION PLAN FOR WELLESLEY HILLS SQUARE

5.2 Village and Streetscape Improvements

Village and streetscape design improvement involves efforts from both public agencies and private business and property owners.

Public Improvements

a. Identity

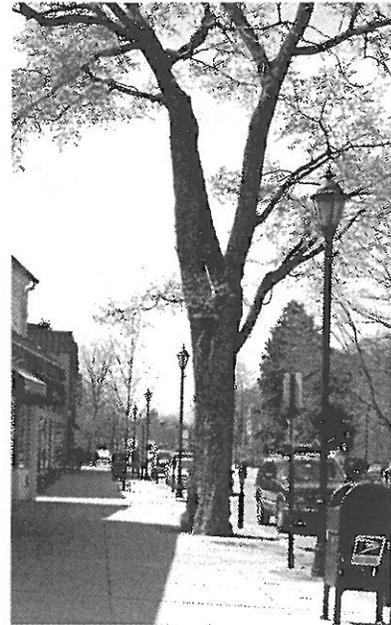
- Hold conversations with Wellesley Hills business owners and merchants to determine whether a logo and signage unique to Wellesley Hills Square would be beneficial.
- Work with the garden club to develop standard styles for window boxes and planters for the area to assist business owners in placing and maintaining seasonal flower boxes on or in front of their property.

b. Sidewalks and Public Realm

- As parcels are redeveloped, enforce the minimum 5-foot and maximum 10-foot setbacks to provide wide (but not excessively wide) sidewalks while keeping pedestrian friendly storefronts close to the sidewalks.
- Encourage building owners to provide public amenities such as benches, street cafés, and bike racks through the project review process. (For example, allow flexibility in dimensional requirements for outdoor seating and require bike racks for new projects over a certain size as a traffic mitigation measure.)
- Maintain recently upgraded lighting and street furniture.
- Replace the grey cobra head street lights between Forest Street and the Mobil station on Washington Street with black overhead street lights.
- Provide public bicycle racks at Elm Park, Maugus Park, playgrounds, the train station and other focal points.

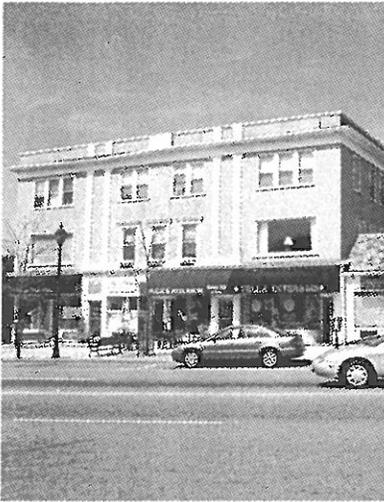
c. Landscaping

- Screen public parking areas from streets by means of planting and fencing (e.g. train station parking lot and Eaton Court lot).



Recently upgraded lightings and sidewalks should be well maintained.

ACTION PLAN FOR WELLESLEY HILLS SQUARE



Two or three story mixed-use buildings with retail on the first floor are desirable.

Private Improvements

Prepare illustrated design guidelines for the Wellesley Hills Square Commercial Village District that will be enforced as part of the Town's existing Site Plan Review and Design Review processes. The design guidelines should include mandatory guidelines that must be followed for any project as well as recommended guidelines that must be followed if the developer seeks a special permit and are strongly suggested for as-of-right projects.

The mandatory design guidelines should include the following:

- Parking should be located behind buildings and in no case shall parking be allowed streetward of the building facade.
- Parking areas shall be screened from public ways and abutting residential lots by means of landscaping and/or fencing.
- The site plan must minimize both the number and the width of curb cuts by designing entrances and exits of parking areas to reduce curb cuts and by cooperating with adjoining property owners to share private driveways.
- At least 70% of the first-floor façade at the pedestrian eye level shall be windows and doors with clear glasses.

The recommended design guidelines should include the following:

- Develop 2 or 3-story mixed-use buildings or add an upper story to one-story buildings to provide more consistency within the area.
- Utilize native building elements and designs currently found in Wellesley Hills Square including building style and composition, roof, window, material and color while allowing for a more modern interpretation of these elements. The design guidelines may benefit from the inclusion of examples of existing facades or building elements in the area that exemplify the desired qualities.
- Provide rear entrances so that buildings can be easily accessed from parking lots, and design the backside of buildings as a secondary façade.

ACTION PLAN FOR WELLESLEY HILLS SQUARE

- First floor storefronts should be carefully designed (including fenestration, window displays, and signs) to enhance the pedestrian experience at sidewalk level.
- Appropriate awnings are recommended.

The points identified above will need to be expanded upon in more detail to create the design guidelines for the Wellesley Hills Square Commercial Village District. This may be done by the Wellesley Design Review Board or by a separate ad-hoc committee appointed by the Planning Board. In any case, representatives from the business community should be involved. In order to enforce the design guidelines, the building inspector may need to verify periodically that buildings, awnings, signs, and parking lot screens approved by the Design Review Board are maintained in good condition.

5.3 Elm Park

The action plan for Elm Park is presented here as a park design plan that accommodates community needs and improves the park's aesthetic appearance. The objectives of this park design are to accommodate pedestrian activity, buffer the impact of traffic particularly along Route 9, and improve the park's aesthetics while retaining its natural character.

Initially, two schematic alternatives were devised to promote the objectives for Elm Park. (See slide 18 and 19 of **Attachment A**.) The first design alternative presented was more "informal" in concept, and included curving pathways, large areas of lawn, and a water feature where the bus shelter is now located. The second alternative emphasized the clock tower by including a linear promenade and view corridor from Washington Street to the tower. Both design alternatives included additional plantings and seating areas.

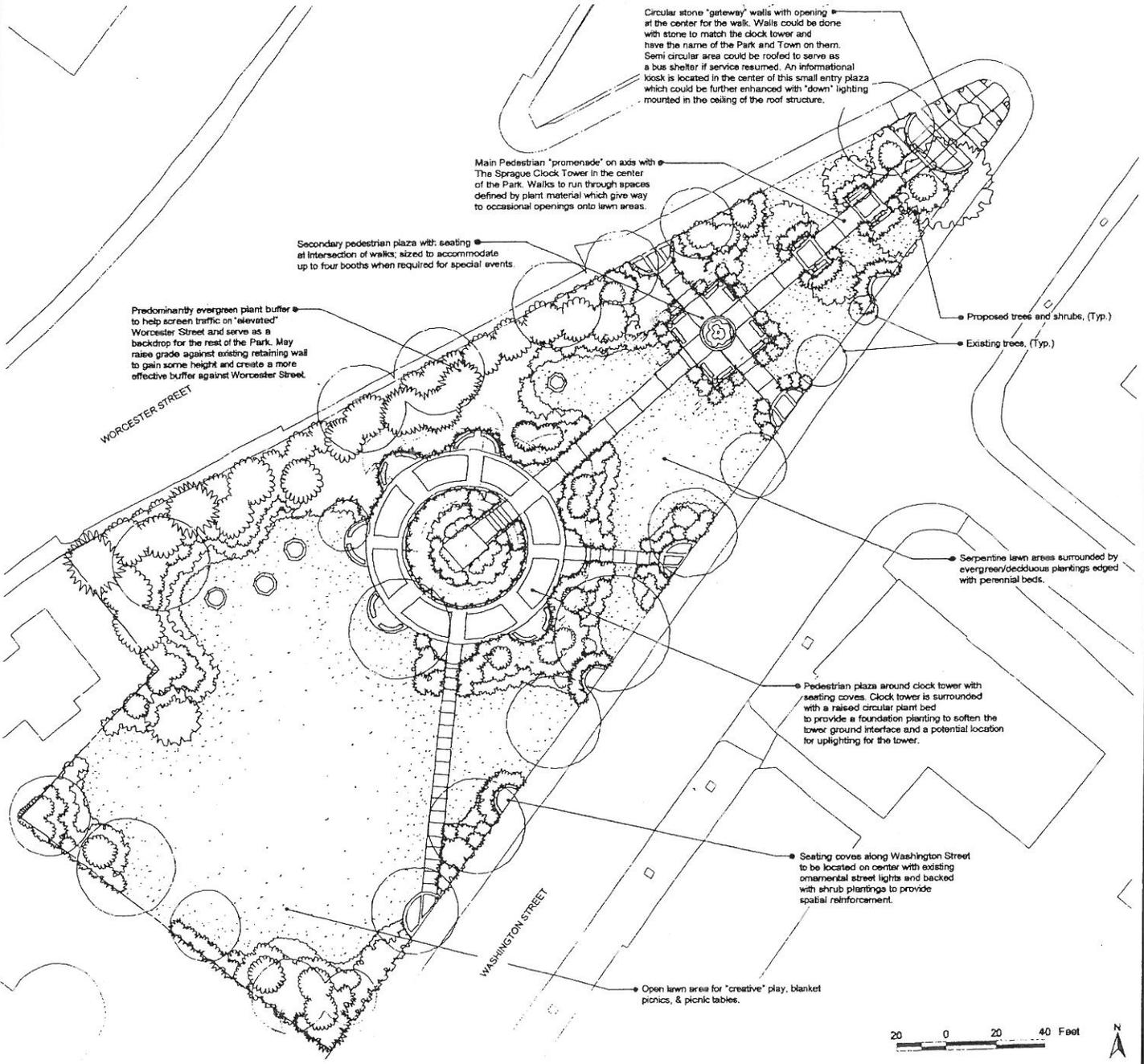
The final Elm Park design concept is based on feedback from the public and town officials on the two alternative designs. (See **Figure 6**.) This design incorporates more elements of the second alternative than the first. Implementation of this design would require the following steps:



More programming in Elm Park will attract more people and better accommodate community activities.

ACTION PLAN FOR WELLESLEY HILLS SQUARE

- Create a pedestrian plaza around the clock tower with seating coves.
- Install lighting for the clock tower.
- Plant evergreen plants along the Route 9 retaining wall to buffer the impact of Route 9 traffic.
- Create a bigger raised plant bed around the clock tower to soften the tower ground surface and provide a potential location for uplighting for the tower.
- Create a main pedestrian path on the axis with the Sprague Clock Tower and the gateway plaza.
- Remove the existing bus shelter, and create a gateway plaza at the intersection of Worcester and Washington streets. An informational kiosk, stone seating walls, lighting and bollards may be incorporated in the gateway plaza. Also, it can be a location for a roofed bus shelter, should the need arise.
- Create a secondary plaza with a small water feature at the intersection of the main park path and the path connecting two crosswalks on Worcester Street and Washington Street.
- Maintain open lawn area for creative play and picnic.
- Consider placing plaques addressing local history in the park.
- Install pedestrian scale lighting along the paths.
- Place seating areas along the main path as well as two main plaza areas.
- Place picnic tables in the spatial coves formed by the proposed plant material.
- Place plant beds to provide gateway entrance spaces flanking all the entry points into the park.
- All the major plant beds have foreground perennial and annual beds associated with them to provide seasonal color and interest.
- The local garden club should continue their involvement with the park and contribute to the design and maintenance of the plant beds in the park. Existing perennial material in the park should be reused in these plant beds and enhanced as necessary.



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Ten Forbes Road, Braintree, MA 02184 781-849-7070

Elm Park Design Recommendation

Wellesley, MA

Figure

6

ACTION PLAN FOR WELLESLEY HILLS SQUARE

5.4 Parking and Circulation

Based on the findings mentioned in Section 3 as well as feedback provided throughout the planning process, the following parking and circulation action steps are suggested. See **Figure 7** for the location of specific projects.

- a. Provide improved signage for parking areas.
 - Install directional signs to the Eaton Court public parking lot on Washington Street for westbound traffic to notify motorists of the availability of parking in this lot (see example below).
 - Install "ADDITIONAL CUSTOMER PARKING IN REAR" signs in the Bread & Circus lot to notify customers of the parking area behind the shopping center (see example below).
 - Improve the parking restriction signing so that it can be read more easily by motorists traveling along Washington Street rather than by pedestrians at the meters.



Examples of Directional Signs for Public Parking

- b. Maximize the availability of short-term parking for Wellesley Hills Square shoppers by encouraging employees to park elsewhere.
 - Meet with the owners of area businesses to identify locations where their employees can park other than short-term parking on the street and in front of the Bread & Circus shopping center (if this is not already occurring).
 - Provide a limited number of free all-day parking spaces in the Eaton Court lot for area employees. Institute a sticker system for area employees to use this free parking.
- c. Consider changes to Eaton Court traffic circulation pattern.

ACTION PLAN FOR WELLESLEY HILLS SQUARE

- Consider relocating the Washington Street entrance to the Bread & Circus shopping center to Eaton Court to remove queues from Washington Street due to the shopping center.
 - Install a “DO NOT BLOCK INTERSECTION” sign (R10-7) on Washington Street eastbound at Eaton Court or consider painting out a block of the intersection notifying motorists of the area in which they should not stop.
 - Hold further discussions with the Wellesley police department regarding enforcement of double-parking and standing/idling in the Bread & Circus shopping center lot, which blocks the circulation and sometimes backs traffic out onto Washington Street.
- d. Increase long-term parking near the commuter rail station.
- Provide long-term metered parking along Cliff Road, Prescott Street, and Seaward Road.
 - Sign the additional long term parking as "resident only" and provide Wellesley residents with windshield stickers for their vehicles.
 - Further study the volume of Wellesley residents versus non-residents using the commuter rail station.
- e. Provide a traffic calming measure such as a pedestrian barrel with flashing light(s) or improved signage to alert motorists to the presence of pedestrians in the unsignalized crosswalks crossing Washington Street near Abbott Road and Maugus Avenue.
- f. Consider providing a pedestrian crosswalk across Washington Street at the Eaton Court intersection, allowing more convenient access to businesses along the south side of Washington Street and encouraging patrons to park on the opposite side of the roadway.
- g. In the long term, further investigate the feasibility of building a parking structure in Wellesley Hills Square to assist in meeting future parking demands.
- If warranted in the future, investigate building a parking structure in the public parking lot behind the Bread &

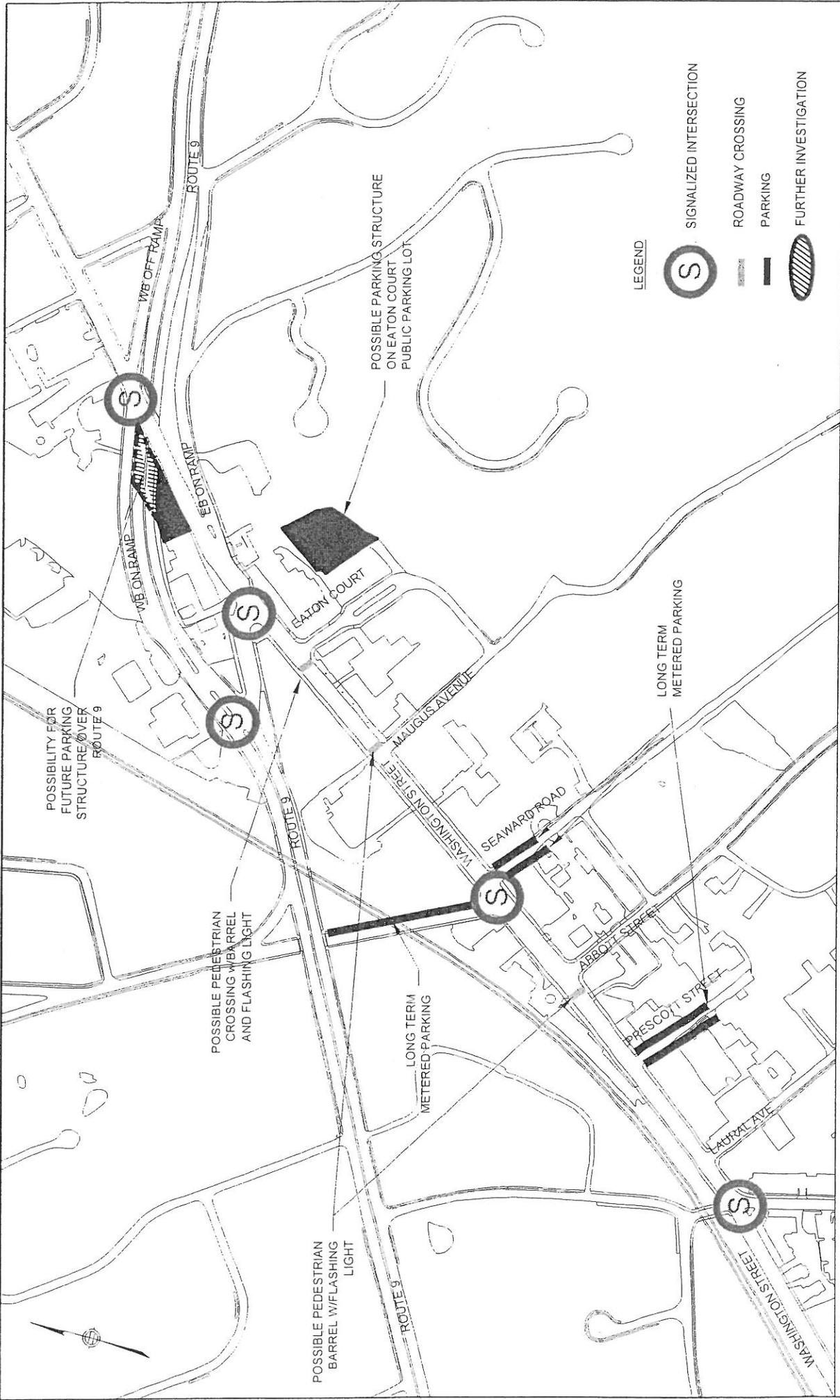
ACTION PLAN FOR WELLESLEY HILLS SQUARE

Circus shopping center.

- A parking deck over Route 9 does not appear to be economically viable and would create serious sight distance problems along Route 9. As a result, the parking deck over Route 9 is not recommended. See section 3.3 for further discussion.

h. Further investigate the feasibility of bus, transit, or shuttle services as means of reducing the number of vehicles on Washington Street through Wellesley Hills Square.

- Further investigate the demand, costs, and revenues associated with returning viable transit service to Wellesley Hills Square.
- Further investigate a pilot program for local shuttle service between businesses, residential areas and nearby transit centers.
- Further investigate rerouting college shuttle buses currently using Forest Street to access Route 9.



LEGEND

	SIGNALIZED INTERSECTION
	ROADWAY CROSSING
	PARKING
	FURTHER INVESTIGATION

**Figure 7: Recommendations
Wellesley Hills Square**

ACTION PLAN FOR WELLESLEY HILLS SQUARE

5.5 An Action Plan for Wellesley Hills Square

Time Frame:

Short-Term = Immediate actions to be accomplished in the next 6-18 months (by December 2002)

Medium Term = Lower Priority or more time-consuming actions to be accomplished in the next 18-30 months (By December 2003)

Long-Term = Actions requiring more significant funding, planning or study to be accomplished in phases over the next 5 years (by July 2006)

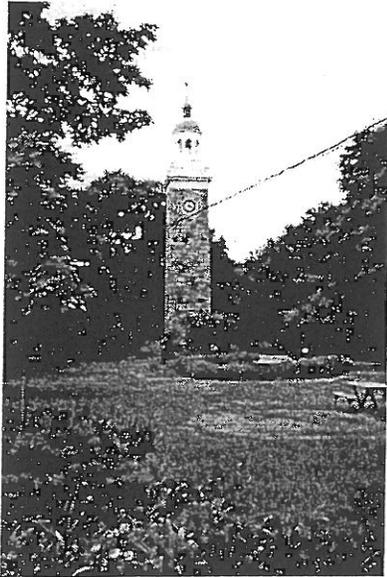
Topic	Action Item	Responsible Group(s)	Time Frame	Notes
Land Use & Zoning	Designate Wellesley Hills Sq. area as the Wellesley Hills Sq. Commercial Village District.	Planning Board, Town Meeting	Short-Term	With input from Wellesley Hills Steering Committee
	Revise zoning regulations for Wellesley Hills Sq. Commercial Village District (See Section 5.1).	Planning Board, Town Meeting	Short-Term	With input from Wellesley Hills Steering Committee
	Further study possible zoning incentives to encourage mixed-use development.	Planning Board	Short-Term	With input from Wellesley Hills Steering Committee
Village and Streetscape Design	Replace the street lights between Forest Street and the Mobil station on Washington Street.	DPW	Short-Term	
	Provide bicycle racks at Elm Park, Maugus Park, playgrounds, the train station and other focal points.	DPW	Short-Term	
	Prepare illustrated design guidelines for the Wellesley Hills Square Commercial Village Districts (See Section 5.2 for detail).	Design Review Board or Committee appointed by Planning Board	Short-Term	Further study is needed for mandatory and recommended design guidelines.
	Enforce minimum and maximum setbacks for new developments.	Planning Board, Building Inspector	Ongoing, After Zoning Change	
	Enforce the new design guidelines through Site Plan Review and Design Review processes.	Design Review Board, Building Inspector	Ongoing, After Zoning Change	
	Maintain recently upgraded lighting and street furniture.	DPW	Ongoing	
	Further investigate whether a logo and signage for the area would be beneficial.	Planning Dept., Business Community	Medium-Term	
	Develop standard styles for window boxes and planters for the area.	Garden Club, Planning Dept.	Medium-Term	
Screen public parking areas from the streets (train station lot, Eaton Court lot).	DPW	Long-Term		

ACTION PLAN FOR WELLESLEY HILLS SQUARE

Topic	Action Item	Responsible Group(s)	Time Frame	Notes
Elm Park	Maintain flower beds in the park	Garden Club	Ongoing	
	Install lighting for the clock tower.	DPW	Medium-Term	
	Remove the existing bus shelter.	DPW	Medium-Term	
	Implement the park improvements in phases, or commission a more detailed park design.	Planning Dept., Garden Club	Long-Term	
Circulation and Parking	Install directional signs to the Eaton Court parking lot on Washington Street for westbound traffic.	DPW	Short-Term	
	Install "ADDITIONAL CUSTOMER PARKING IN REAR" signs in the Bread & Circus lot.	DPW & Business Community	Short-Term	
	Meet with business owners to identify the most suitable locations for their employees to park	Planning Dept., Business Community	Short-Term	
	Provide free all-day parking spaces in the Eaton Court lot for employees, based on a sticker system.	DPW, Business Community	Short-Term	
	Provide pedestrian barrels or other traffic calming measures at the unsignalized crosswalks near Abbott Road and Maugus Avenue.	DPW	Short-Term	
	Further investigate rerouting college shuttle buses currently using Forest Street to across Route 9.	Planning Dept.	Short-Term	
	Install a "DO NOT BLOCK INTERSECTION" sign on Washington St. eastbound at Eaton Court or consider painting out a block of the intersection.	DPW	Short-Term	
	Hold further discussions with the Wellesley Police Department regarding enforcement of double-parking and standing/idling.	Police Department, Planning Dept.	Short-Term	
	Improve the parking restriction signing.	DPW	Medium-Term	
	Provide long-term metered parking along Cliff Road, Prescott Street and Seaward Road, sign it as "resident only," and institute sticker system	DPW	Medium-Term	
	Consider providing a pedestrian crosswalk across Washington Street at Eaton Court.	DPW	Medium-Term	
	Further study the volume of Wellesley residents vs. non-residents using the commuter rail station.	Planning Dept., MBTA	Long-Term	
	Consider relocating the Washington St. entrance to the Bread & Circus parking lot to Eaton Court side.	DPW, Town Engineer	Long-Term	
	If needed, investigate a parking structure for the Eaton Court lot.	DPW, Planning Dept.	Long-Term	
Further investigate the feasibility of returning viable transit service to Wellesley Hills Square, or a local shuttle service.	Selectmen or Planning Dept.	Long-Term		

APPENDIX A

Public Forum (5/2/2001)
Slide Presentation



PUBLIC FORUM

WELLESLEY HILLS PLANNING STUDY, PHASE II

Wednesday, May 2, 2001 at 7 p.m.
Wellesley Community Center
219 Washington Street

Wellesley Hills Square is a thriving commercial village. This workshop will focus on land use, traffic, pedestrian safety and access, parking, streetscape design and open space. The Town of Wellesley wants to know what *YOU* think Wellesley Hills Square should be like in the next five to fifteen years. Come share your ideas with other residents, business people, and property owners!

This program will be conducted by our consultants,
the Daylor Consulting Group, with McMahon Associates.

For further information, please contact Amy Goodwin, Wellesley Planning Department,
781-431-1019 x 238 or e-mail agoodwin@ci.wellesley.ma.us.

An Action Plan for Wellesley Hills Square

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Project Overview

- Purpose
 - Develop an action plan to achieve the Vision for Wellesley Hills Square

- Process
 - 2 initial Steering Committee meetings
 - Public Forum on May 2, 2001
 - Steering Committee meeting to discuss final recommendations
 - Final report will be completed in June

The Vision for Wellesley Hills Square Excerpts from the Phase I Report

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"In 2015, Wellesley Hills Square is a **thriving commercial village** serving the surrounding neighborhood, daytime business owners and employees, and members of the wider community."

- "Its **village character** is reflected in the small and medium scale architecture of its 19th and 20th century buildings located at the sidewalk edge, and in the many small independent storefront businesses."
- "Its **distinctiveness** is expressed in the use of stonework throughout the district, attractive entryway signage, and careful maintenance of its landmark park and clock tower. In good weather, Elm Park attracts users throughout the day, including a lunchtime crowd enjoying the chance to be outside and surrounded by greenery."

The Vision for Wellesley Hills Square Excerpts from the Phase I Report

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- "Its **cohesiveness** can be seen in the variety of thriving businesses, activity throughout the day and evening, seasonal round of plantings and other decorations, effective signage and lighting, well-maintained buildings and an active business association that takes a strong role in promoting and managing the Square."

"Although Washington Street remains an important arterial road carrying substantial traffic, Wellesley Hills Square has become more **pedestrian friendly** through effective management of transportation, circulation, and parking."

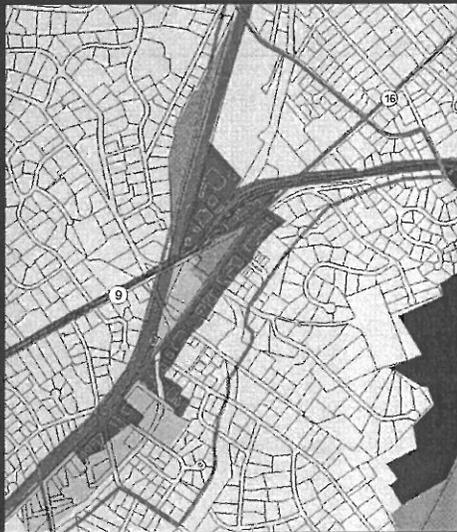
How Can We Achieve the Vision?

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- Land Use and Zoning
- Village Design & Building Design
- Elm Park Improvements
- Transportation & Parking Improvements

What's Allowed Now? Land Use and Zoning

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The study area contains following zoning districts:

- Single Residence
- General Residence
- Business
- Business A
- Transportation
- Conservation



What's Allowed Now? Business District Zoning

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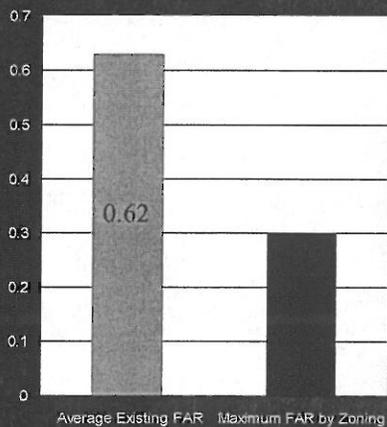
Allowed Uses

- Retail stores up to 50,000 s.f.
- Theaters, hotels, restaurants
- Office buildings, medical facilities, storage, parking
- Light manufacturing
- Residences, institutions
- Additional uses by special permit

What Could Happen in the Future? Business District "Buildout"

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Floor Area Ratio Comparison



FAR (Floor-Area Ratio) =
Building Size ÷ Lot Size

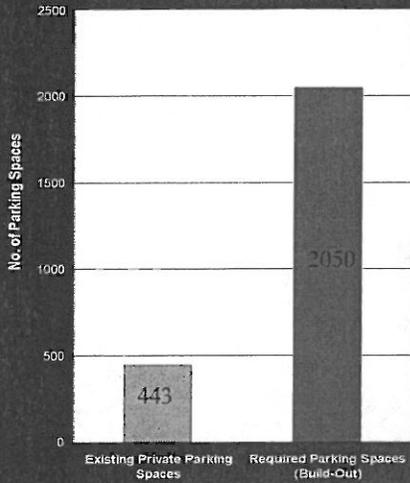
Current FAR = 0.62

Allowed FAR = 0.3

What Could Happen in the Future? Parking in the Business District

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Parking Space Comparison



Off-Street Parking Requirement for Commercial Buildings:

- 1 space/150 sf. of building footprint or
- 3.2 space/1000 sf. of building floor area

What the Zoning Means: An Example Existing Conditions

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At the corner of Forest Street and Washington Street



What the Zoning Means: An Example Maximum Buildout Allowed by Zoning

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At the corner of Forest Street and Washington Street



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Some Alternatives Land Use and Zoning

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Designate the area as the Wellesley Hills Square Commercial Village District:

- Increase the allowed FAR
- Encourage mixed use development
- Reduce maximum allowed retail store space
- Specify maximum and minimum setbacks from the sidewalk. Continue to allow zero setback at the side of commercial development
- Reduce the parking requirement for commercial developments, and allow flexibility

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Village & Streetscape Design

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Existing Streetscape

- New sidewalks and street furniture
- Parking at the back side of developments is visible
- Storefronts and signs are eclectic
- No "gateway" identity

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Building Design

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What's There Now, and What's Allowed?

- 1 to 3 story small and medium scale buildings with brick façades
- Long blank walls and blinded windows in some buildings
- Design Review Guidelines are too generic for this area
- Current zoning allows large retail stores in the area

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Some Alternatives Village Design

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- Wellesley Hills Square identity and "gateway" signs
- Incentives and flexibility for developments that provide public amenities
- Strictly enforce screening requirements for parking areas

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Some Alternatives Building Design

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- Prepare illustrated design guidelines for the area
 - Require awnings on the first floors of buildings
 - More consistency of signage
 - Designate buildings or facades worth preserving or replicating
 - Restrict the length of blank walls or blinded windows
 - Preferred building elements (roof, window, material, color)

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Elm Park

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Existing Conditions:

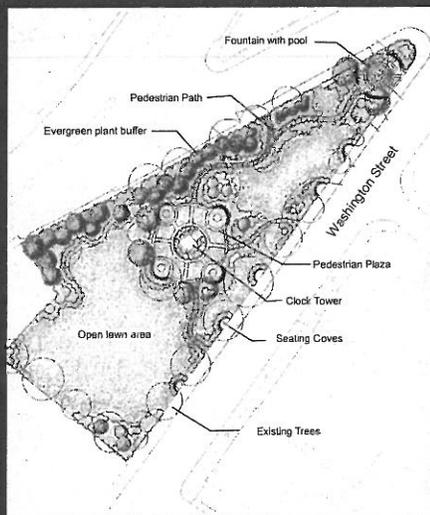
- Clock tower functions as a landmark for the area
- Underutilized; little programming
- Bus shelter no longer used
- Affected by Rt. 9 & 16 traffic

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Alternatives for Elm Park

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Alternative I:

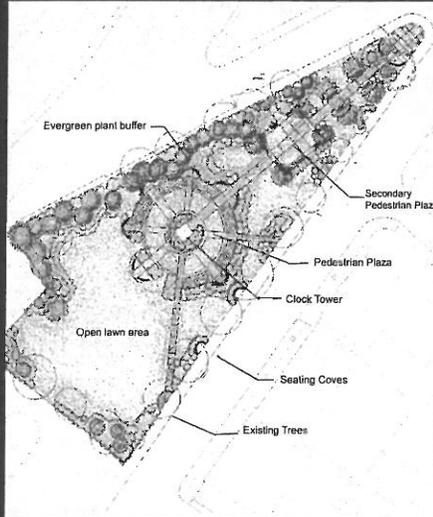
- Remove the bus shelter
- Add fountain & pool at the gateway
- Buffer Rt. 9 with evergreen plants
- Open lawn area for creative play and picnics
- Pedestrian plaza with seating covers
- Light the clock tower

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Alternatives for Elm Park

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Alternative II:

- Pedestrian plaza with fountains to mitigate traffic noise
- More paved area to accommodate community events
- Pedestrian promenade

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Transportation Issues

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- Congestion near the Bread & Circus plaza
- Generally enough parking, but not always in the right places
- Pedestrian friendly, but could be even more so

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Transportation Alternatives

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- Provide additional long-term, on-street parking



- Cliff Road overpass

Transportation Alternatives

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- Prescott Street



- Seward Road

Transportation Alternatives

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- Consider one-way circulation & new curb cut to ease congestion near B&C



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- Replace parallel parking with angled parking on Eaton St.

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Transportation Alternatives

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- Improve directional signing for parking areas



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- Eaton Court Parking Lot

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Transportation Alternatives

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- Provide additional mid-block crosswalk near Eaton Court



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Your Ideas

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Please select a break-out group:

- Land Use and Zoning
- Village Design & Building Design
- Elm Park
- Transportation & Parking

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