

Report of the Wellesley Square Forum

for the Wellesley
Planning Board

Held June 12, 1997
Village Church, Wellesley, MA

Van Orman & Associates
Belmont, MA

in association with
Daylor Consulting Group
McCabe Enterprises

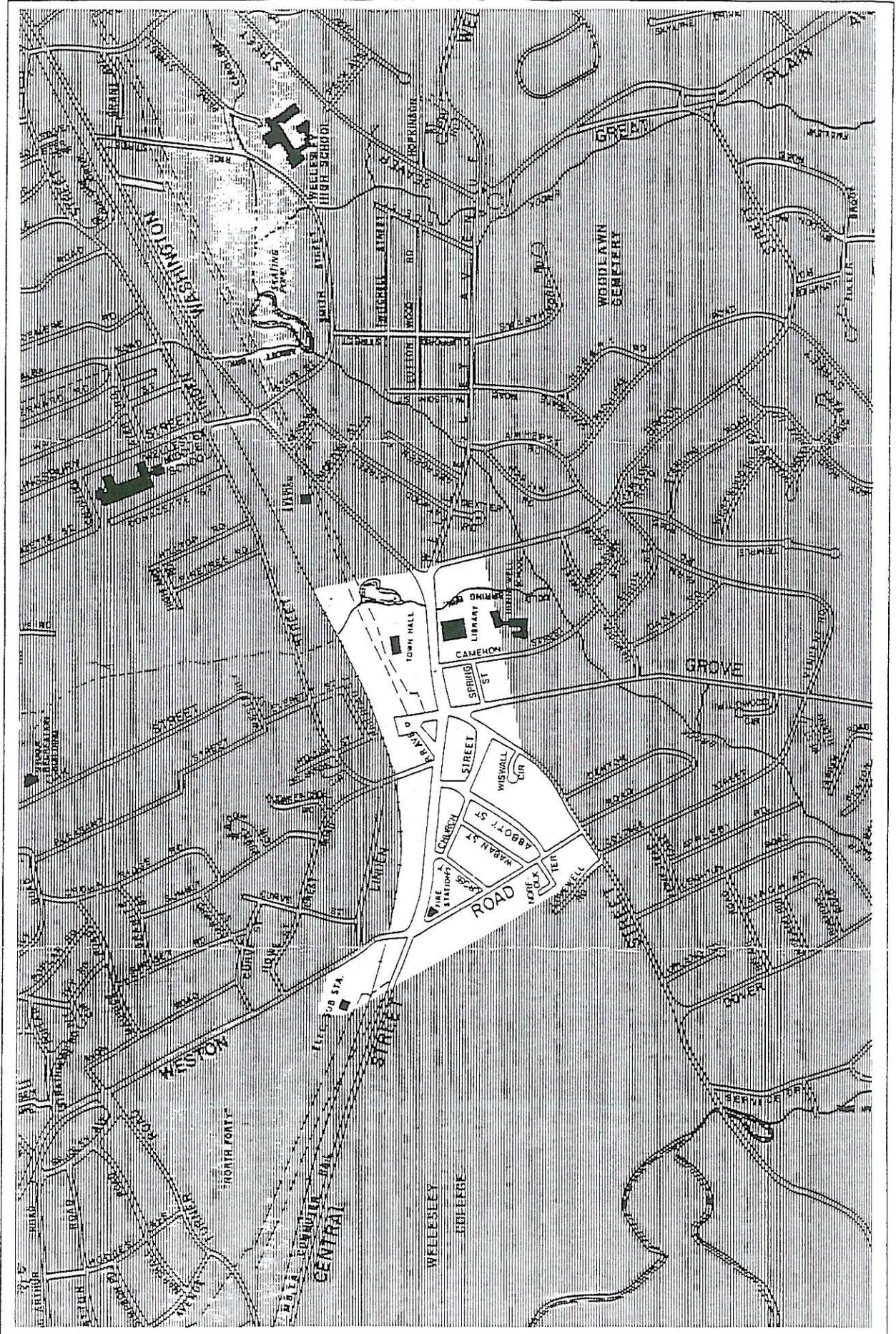
June 20, 1997

Wellesley Square Forum

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BE THERE FOR THE SQUARE!



I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We refer to "Wellesley Square" as the business area that includes the commercially zoned sections of Central Street, Washington Street (from Waterman's to Brook Street), Church Street, Crest Road, Abbott Street, Cross Street, Grove Street, and Spring Street. (See the section in white on the map on the preceding page.)

The Wellesley Square Forum was held on June 12, 1997 with over 100 participants expressing their desires and suggestions for the Square's future. The Forum was sponsored by the Wellesley Planning Board and Board of Selectmen in cooperation with the Wellesley Chamber of Commerce and Wellesley Square Merchants Association.

The Forum was the main event in Phase I of a three part planning process for the Square, initiated by the Planning Board. The purpose of Phase I was to establish a vision for the Square's future with the focus on enhancing its economic vitality.

Immediate results from the Forum include this report, which summarizes the Square's issues and goals and includes recommendations by the consultant Team of Van Orman & Associates, Daylor Consulting Group & McCabe Enterprises. The summary of the issues, goals and recommendations follows.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES, GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL GOALS

1. Establish and develop an organizational structure that will permit centralized management of Square issues that require collective solutions while allowing for broadly inclusive participation.
2. Balance the demands imposed on the Square in its various roles: as Town center, as a business district, and as a neighbor to residential areas and colleges.

PARKING

GOAL

Improve access to the Square by improved management & designation of existing spaces, adding new capacity as needed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Short term: finish implementing 1996 Parking Study management recommendations & Weston Rd. lot; secure employee spaces; improve information through signage/flyers; offer incentives to improve private lot capacity.

Long term: hold longer term actions, until evaluation of above & resolution of spatial configuration of Square (new gathering place, expanded library?)

SUMMARY OF ISSUES, GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

STUDENTS, BUSINESS MIX & EVENING LIFE

GOAL

Develop attractions in the Square that provide more “entertainment”, make students more comfortable, emphasize the unique, and continue after 5:00 P.M.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Include students (college, H.S.) & college administrations on Square Advisory Committee; analyze existing, potential Square markets to identify commercial gaps. Relate market analysis to non-commercial area culture (see Cultural Attractions’ Recommendations below).

Consider forming a recruitment sub-committee to the Square Working Group. Priorities to include: “anchor”, unique businesses, in order to achieve more diversity & goods/services appealing to students. (See Rents below).

Formulate a policy to define “evening” activities & their implications (impacts, permitting) and relate this to cultural attractions (see below).

EXISTING ASSETS

GOAL

Protect & enhance historical structures, improve specific areas with plantings; consider re-use of Grove/Railroad Ave. area.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES, GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

EXISTING ASSETS (continued)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Prioritize a few Square structures (including historic signage) in terms of aesthetic importance, risk, status & with Historic Commission & Design Review Board consider mix of regulations, incentives (permits, easements, grants) for owner to preserve or rehab. Do same for private areas needing landscaping.

CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS

GOAL

Strengthen & emphasize cultural attractions, whether offered commercially in the Square, from the Bandstand in a central gathering place, or on nearby campus.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Clarify "culture": Bandstand & concerts on a new Common? College museum/lectures? Commercial Square galleries & bookstores? Short-term work could include directory sign & flyers identifying Square & abutting resources - including culture? Preliminary urban design can examine Square for gathering places & resulting spatial/use reconfigurations; paths for pedestrian connections between sub-areas.

SUMMARY OF
ISSUES, GOALS &
RECOMMENDATIONS

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

GOAL

Create a focal gathering place for people & pedestrian paths linking different areas of the business district.

RECOMMENDATIONS

See Cultural Attractions above.

BOUNDARIES

GOAL

Maintain the Square's boundaries as currently defined. (See first paragraph of Executive Summary.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Emphasize Wellesley Square boundary as defined for Forum in signage, flyers, literature. Where commercial-residential boundaries are weak, strengthen through plantings, etc.

RENTS

GOAL

See Goal above relating to: Students, Business Mix & Evening life.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES, GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

RENTS (continued)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Potential ways of responding to "rent" issues could be a task for Phase II of Square Planning. Consider using local expertise in real estate and retailing, as rents relate to business mix.

MANAGEMENT

GOAL

Establish & develop an organizational structure that will permit centralized management of those Square issues requiring collective solutions while allowing for broadly inclusive participation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Rename the Forum Working Group to the Square Working Group & consider it the precursor to a private/public organization with joint funding for a Square Coordinator. Make the policy decisions before staffing and implementing.

II. THE FORUM

THE FORUM

The Forum was the main event of Phase I of a three part planning process for Wellesley Square, the largest of Wellesley's commercial areas.

The purpose of Phase I was to establish a vision and goals for the Square's future by involving all those interested in the Square in a public event, the Forum. This was held June 12, 1997 at the Wellesley Village Church. Phases II and III of the Square's planning process will produce a plan and implementation schedule for the vision established in Phase I.

BACKGROUND

The three phase planning process including the Forum evolved from a recommendation of the 1994 Wellesley Comprehensive Plan, which advised an in-depth evaluation of Wellesley's business districts to improve their functioning and economic vitality.

The Wellesley Planning Board invited the Selectmen and representatives from the Wellesley Chamber of Commerce and the Wellesley Square Merchants' Association to join them as part of a Forum Working Group. That Group directed a Consultant Team, which designed and conducted the Forum.

PARTICIPANTS

The Forum was designed to include all people and organizations with an interest in the Square and to elicit from them their ideas and concerns for Wellesley Square's future.

Over 100 people attended the Forum. Approximately 30 of these participants were merchants or landlords, with a good percentage of those also being Wellesley residents.

The Consultant Team created and presented a "Timeline" including key Town and Square events. Participants signed this Timeline, indicating their date of arrival in Town or in the Square. The Timeline was followed by a Consultant Team slide presentation illustrating lessons from analogous downtowns of commuter rail suburbs and academic communities as well as focusing on the Square's character and historical development.

All participants were randomly assigned tables and thus became "Small Groups" who produced statements of their vision of Wellesley Square in the year 2012. Participants were involved both by being in a Small Group and later by voting for the various ideas and themes that each Small Group presented.

Each of the Small Groups' points were written on large pad sheets, which were then hung along the wall following the Groups' presentations. The participants of the Small Groups took orange sticker dots and "voted" by placing their dots next to the idea, suggestion or issue with which they agreed. These dot votes became the prime way of measuring support for ideas or issues relating to the Square.

In the following report, any idea or issue that is cited as having support received at least 1 dot vote. The following Forum topics cited as priorities received 10-15 dot votes. In assessing the level of support for an idea or concern, individual participants' written comments submitted at the end of the Forum were also factored in. For a detailed listing of the Small Group ideas or concerns, see Appendix B.

III. THE SQUARE'S ISSUES

PARKING

The single most important concern for the Square expressed by the Small Groups was, of course, parking! Parking was stressed more than any other single issue, whether measured by the verbal presentations or the subsequent dot votes participants placed next to a particular issue or suggestion on a list produced by a Small Group. (See Section II for Forum process.)

STUDENTS

The second most important issue for the Square was students, both college and high school. There was strong support for creating a "welcoming environment for students." A related and supported idea was the notion of "more planning, communication with the colleges."

BUSINESS MIX

Improving the business mix was a priority theme throughout the Forum as expressed by both Small Groups and individuals. Specifically, various Small Groups urged that Wellesley "seek out unique businesses" and have a variety of retail stores, including a [variety of] price range." Wellesley Square retailers, however, wondered what was meant by "unique business" and cited the recent, rapid turnover of new businesses in the Square.

EVENING DESTINATION

The idea of the Square becoming an evening destination was strongly supported and applauded. Specific elements that would contribute to evening life, such as restaurants,

cafes and a theatre, were supported. Also, a Forum participant emphasized the importance of evening hours as a factor in revitalization. This was confirmed by a Small Group statement that shops should stay open later. Making Wellesley (as distinct from the Square) a destination point was another Small Group statement receiving support.

EXISTING ASSETS

The Square's existing physical assets are important for people. This was variously expressed. Participants believed Wellesley Inn "has untapped potential as an anchor" and the train station should be "more multi-functional and vibrant." Landmark buildings were cited as important for protection or restoration. Various streetscape improvements - particularly plantings - were recommended.

CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS

Cultural attractions came up several times. Receiving very strong support was the Small Group desire to have the Bandstand and other cultural attractions to bring together all age ranges from the community. Others saw the Bandstand as a "center of social activities" and still another group wanted to create "gathering places".

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

Related to the need for gathering places was the often expressed and supported feeling that the Square should have more "pedestrian interaction" and be more oriented to the pedestrian. Also expressed were the notions of having "places to linger" and "better walkways"

connecting one area to another. Related to the pedestrian's welfare was the perceived problem of "heavy vehicles traffic."

BOUNDARIES

BETWEEN COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL

A clear and unequivocal message delivered at the Forum related to the boundary between business and residential areas. Expressed in a variety of ways was the theme of "maintaining residential areas as single family homes." A related idea that received support was to create a "buffer between residents and businesses and parking." Also, a statement receiving support was that there should be no housing demolition.

THE SQUARE'S BOUNDARY

There was no support for extending the geographical limits of the Square as defined during the Forum and in the Wellesley Square Map preceding page 1.

RENTS

Two Small Groups saw rent levels for Square businesses as a problem or expressed the desire for "affordable, reasonable rents for stores." The theme also came up in discussions by individual retailers and residents alike. For example, one neighbor/participant rued the demise of the Wellesley Market and attributed this, in part, to rent levels.

MANAGEMENT

The matter of actively managing the Square arose several times in different contexts. Participants asked about the management functions of the successful downtowns shown in the slide presentation. An illustrated example was the implementation of a Tax Increment Finance District, which provides funding for parking garages in Palo Alto, CA.

The question was raised as to the advisability of hiring someone to coordinate Square-related matters. Individuals' written submissions also emphasized the need for management and coordination. The need was also implied in such statements as "Seek out unique businesses." Parking management was supported as well.

Promotion requires management. Various kinds of promotional activities were suggested and supported on Small Group lists.

Finally, a concern stated during the Forum was the purportedly high turn over of businesses within the past few years. Clearly, responding to that issue would involve some form of centralized management.

IV. PRIORITIES & GOALS

PRIORITIES

Increasing Vitality The focus of the Forum and Phase I of the Wellesley Square Planning Project has been on increasing the vitality of the Square's business sector. Nevertheless, many other values have arisen in the process. Some of these values are intangible. One such intangible value is the goodwill, which was demonstrated during the Forum and afterwards in written submissions.

The goodwill took tangible expression in the gratitude one participant expressed in her written comment "THANK YOU for having this meeting" or the attitudes of neighbors in wanting better boundaries yet also wanting to see the students welcomed in the Square.

Unique Values A second priority theme that emerged was the Square as the center of the Town of Wellesley. As such, the Square has a unique value among places in the Town. Ed Hand, a former Planning Board member, expressed it well:

The town center/retail area is critical as it effects the community in terms of its unifying aspects, on the education/development of values, and the message/opportunities it gives children, and its impact on home values, etc.

Improved Access & Circulation The dominant, pragmatic concern that emerged from the Forum is to improve the Square's access and circulation - most noticeably for parked vehicles and pedestrians.

Another critical concern is the felt need for more attractions in the Square. As one individual Forum attender wrote:

Transportation and access to Wellesley Square should be combined with providing enough diversity of retail stores to encourage people to even want to come to the Square in the first place.

Greater Diversity

Part of the concern about the Square's attractions focused on introducing greater diversity and more unique retail stores. A shift towards more "entertainment" was supported. This included not only restaurants and movies or theatre but also "cultural attractions" for the entire community with several references to placement of the Bandstand. Thus, there was a desire for more commerce-based entertainment for which one would pay as well as public sector-based entertainment, which might be free.

College Market

The nearby colleges were very important to Forum participants: first, as a market (along with the high school students); and second, as reasons the Square and Wellesley as a whole could draw people. The colleges were seen as sources of customers and of culture - with a museum, exhibits and lectures.

Cultural & Retail Attractions

Obvious cross connections appeared. If the Square were to offer more entertainment, then the students might feel encouraged to visit the Downtown. As a sizeable market, they would have the potential to affect the nature of the entertainment. If cultural attractions (either within the Square or near it), such as a band concert, museum exhibit, college lecture or library event, were emphasized more, that cultural focus could well help market the Square's retail stores that offered antiques, objets d'art, jewelry or books. In other words, a specialty base could be broadened and deepened.

Landmark Buildings

Supporting the theme of uniqueness and the Square's unique historical development is the presence of landmark buildings. Neither of the monumental buildings of Town

Hall or the Village Church, both significant in terms of place-definers, were mentioned by Forum participants. Rather, participants mentioned more modest buildings: E.A. Davis, Stuart Swan's building and the need to restore the facade of the U.S. Trust building at the corner of Washington and Grove Streets.

*Managing
the Square*

Finally, the need to manage the Square recurred throughout the evening of the Forum and afterward. Related to this need, was the question of who should be involved. Individuals' written desires to be involved in working to improve the Square underscored the importance of an inclusionary process.

Organizing to plan or to manage a complex place like the Square could be very labor intensive. While management by definition involves a central authority, management of a place where the public and private sectors join would require broad participation. Thus, the Square's management, particularly during the planning phases, will need to be centralized under one organization while allowing for varying levels of participation by various interested individuals and groups.

GOALS

1. Establish and develop an organizational structure that will permit centralized management of those Square issues requiring collective solutions while allowing for broadly inclusive participation.
2. Balance the demands imposed on the Square in its various roles: as Town center, as a business district, and as a neighbor to residential areas and colleges.
3. Improve access to the Square by more effective management and designation of existing parking spaces, adding new capacity as needed.

4. Create a focal gathering place for people and pedestrian paths linking different areas of the business district.
5. Develop attractions in the Square that provide more "entertainment," make students more comfortable, emphasize the unique, and continue after 5:00 P.M.
6. Strengthen and emphasize cultural attractions, whether offered commercially in the Square, from the Bandstand in a central gathering place, or on a nearby campus.
7. Protect and enhance the historical structures and improve specific areas with plantings; consider re-use of Grove/Railroad Avenue area.
8. Maintain the Square's boundaries as currently defined.

V. SPATIAL & RETAIL OPPORTUNITIES

The preceding statement of priorities and goals provokes two questions. Can the goals be met within the present spatial configuration of the Square? If so, how; and if not, how?

PARKING

As parking was stressed more than any other issue, we begin by asking about the parking. A brief review of the recommendations of the 1996 Mc Donough & Scully Wellesley Square Parking Study should answer this question.

The land use analysis indicated that there is a parking shortfall within the business district. Under current conditions, the western end of the district is estimated to experience a shortfall of approximately 110 spaces. The eastern portion could experience a shortfall of approximately 160 spaces with continued growth in commuter rail demands and expansion of the library.

The study goes on to recommend a series of remedies both in terms of more efficient management of existing areas both on and off-street and in terms of providing additional supply - specifically off Weston Road.

The parking study recommends pursuing the management options before constructing a new supply. A few of the study's recommendations have been implemented. For

others, such as the new Weston Road parking lot, funding is being sought. None of the recommendations would alter the present spatial configuration of the Square.

GATHERING PLACE & PEDESTRIAN PATHS

Goal #4 of creating a focal gathering place and pedestrian paths linking different areas would, however, require some spatial reconfiguration of the Square. One Small Group (which happened to include two architects!) produced a sketch (see sketch on following page) showing this goal - specifically the re-use and re-design of the Grove/Railroad Ave. area in front of the Post Office.

Under this proposal, parking and roadway areas would be open space suitable for gathering and featuring the centrally placed Bandstand (see large asterisk on sketch). Also in this scheme, the newly created space would be defined by both existing (Grove) and new (Crest Road) retail blocks. Thus under this re-design, both public gathering and retail opportunities would be enhanced.

CREST

ROAD

MASS.

BAY

TRANSPORTATION

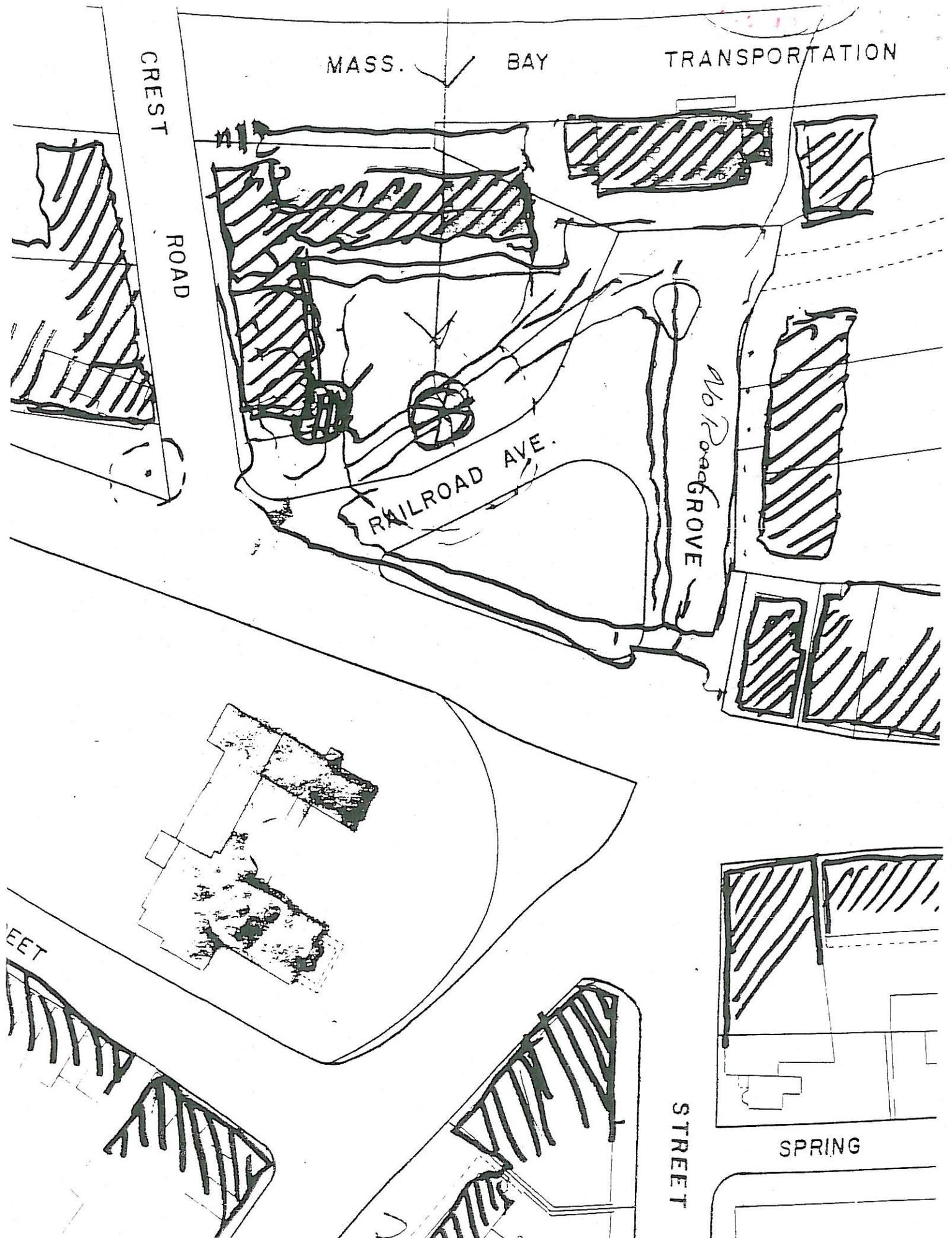
RAILROAD AVE.

160 ROAD GROVE

REET

STREET

SPRING



VI. RECOMMENDATIONS: PHASE II

STRUCTURE

In the course of Phase I of the Square planning, a Forum Working Group was formed and worked together effectively over the course of several weeks. The membership of that group included: the Wellesley Planning Board whose chairman led the Working Group and the Planning Director; the Selectmen and the Executive Director of General Government Services; the Advisory Committee Chair; the Presidents of both the Wellesley Chamber of Commerce and the Wellesley Square Merchants Association; and a representative of the neighborhood.

We recommend that this structure be continued but be limited to one designee for each group represented, with the possible exception of the Planning Board. This is because a small group tends to be more efficient. However, an Advisory Group of broader membership should be formed to be periodically consulted during the Phase II planning.

Membership of the Advisory Group should include members who are representative of merchants; landlords, including at least one non-resident from those groups; the colleges and all those who were at the initial "Steering Committee" meeting held in the Town Hall in early 1997.

Also for consideration is the informal proposal made in a Forum written comment that there be a subcommittee, specifically for merchants & landlords, which would be responsible to the Working Group.

TIMING

Just as goodwill and creditability can be squandered by excluding people from a process, so it can be lost by not moving forward. Going into Phase II quickly, is therefore, important. Likewise, taking action on issues that require only simple measures and that are on already "on the table" is important in order to maintain momentum and creditability. This can occur while engaging in conceptual or long range planning.

SHORT TERM ACTIONS

1. PARKING

The paramount issue confirmed by the Forum's priorities is acting on increasing parking supply both through minor adjustments and creating a new lot.

The 1996 Wellesley Square Parking Study recommendations are in varying stages of implementation by the Selectmen's Office. The study recommended introducing the "management" measures first. The Forum underscored the widely shared concern over specific aspects of the parking supply shortfall - such as parking for employees.

The parking measures already recommended should be at the top of the list of Wellesley Square improvement actions for the next few months. Parking signage and informational handouts are examples of measures easy to implement.

Additionally, there are private lots whose capacity could be enhanced if the site owner would make slight

adjustments such as moving a fence. Is this an issue in which a Merchant/Landlord Subcommittee could play a mediation role?

2. SIGNAGE & DIRECTORIES OF THE SQUARE

Making the Square a destination point, particularly an evening one was a theme expressed during the Forum. There are now, however, no signs telling one where the Square begins, nor directories telling what retailers, services or resources exist in or near the Square. These are actions that require minimal public action. Yet were the Town willingly to support these actions, merchants might feel encouraged to act collectively.

3. OTHER SHORT TERM ACTIONS.

A host of other measures listed in Appendices B and C emerged from the Forum and may lend themselves to short term implementation. In addition, individual Forum participants raised the importance of having a staff person responsible for coordinating a downtown area such as the Square.

Selecting from amongst the short term action possibilities should be the first substantive step (after organization) of Phase II.

LONG TERM ACTIONS

There are several types of decisions which should emerge from Phase II of the Square's planning process. These policy decisions should precede questions of implementation. They should be informed by some surveys and analysis of the existing Square offerings, definition of the Square's markets, and identification of

categories of commercial enterprises suitable for recruitment. After some initial policy decisions are made, there will also be a need for some urban design.

URBAN DESIGN & HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Do you want to create a gathering place - large enough to hold a Band concert audience say - within the Square and if so where?

Do you want to begin to shape the Square around well-defined and well functioning public spaces? As pointed out during the Forum, there are several dead spots in the Square which for varying reasons are not used. One such area is the Central Street side of the Village Church. These dead areas are not only not used but they act as blocks for easy passage from say Central to Church Streets.

Do you want to protect or bring back the various "landmark" buildings cited by Forum participants? If so, which buildings are most important (or at risk) and what incentives might be employed to encourage such action on the part of the building owners?

EVENING

What does "evening" mean? Defining the concept as applied to the Square and then reaching consensus will be critical. Being clear about what evening life in the Square should mean will allow for more effective recruitment of selected businesses. Also any departure from current policy (albeit implicit) may require amendments to land use and permitting regulations. The nature of the Square's future spatial design will hinge on clarification of such policy issues.

UNIQUE STORES AND STUDENT MARKETS

One Forum participant defined "unique" stores as ones which neither exist in the Mall nor are there "10 of them in the region". Others cited the need for more diverse and affordable retail offerings. And of course, all these definitions need to be tied to an examination of the student markets which amongst themselves encompass a range.

MANAGEMENT

The timing and sequencing of policy decisions with management decisions is critical. If a Downtown/Square Coordinator were to be hired, the initial directions and policy decisions should be made before hand.

VII. CREDITS

The inspiration for the Forum came many months ago from the Wellesley Planning Board who understood the value of beginning the planning process for Wellesley Square by establishing a shared vision for it. Bob Di Schino supplied a large part of the determination to get the project off the ground. Board Chair Stanley Brooks formed a Forum Working Group to cooperatively plan for the Forum. Included were: the Selectmen, Advisory Committee Chair, and representatives from the residential neighborhood and key local business groups.

Jean Lukas and Frank Shea, Presidents of the Wellesley Chamber of Commerce and Wellesley Co-operative Bank respectively, contributed creative suggestions and food respectively.

Planning Board Member Barbara Gard was particularly insightful about where and how people shop outside of Wellesley. These observations will be especially useful during Phase II of the project as will the urban design suggestions of Board Member Marjorie Marks. During the Forum itself, Robert Murphy provided invaluable background on the influences that shaped the Square's development. Associate Member of the Planning Board, Robert Sechrest, was also helpful during the Forum.

Throughout the planning for the Forum, Wellesley's Planning Director Rick Brown was supportive and inventive. Noah Luskin, Planner, and Linda Schelling, Secretary/Technical Assistant, both spent long hours before, during, and after the Forum with ideas and logistical support.

Selectman Barbara Shanahan took an initial and leadership interest in the Forum process from its inception. Selectmen Vincent Juliani, Peter Gubellini, Maura O'Brien, Royal Switzler all attended along with Arnold Wakelin, who provided insight into how the Square is perceived as well as information on a variety of Square-related projects. Doug Weil, Chair of the Advisory Committee, took a special interest in the collaboration of the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen throughout the process. An invaluable member of the Forum

Working Group was Ellen Watts, who combined the understandings of an architect, neighbor and historic house owner.

Tory DeFazio, Past President of the Wellesley Historical Society, created a verbal and illustrated sketch of the Square's historical development while the Society's Executive Director Laurel Nilsen fleshed this out with archival material.

Out of town, downtown business people and civic leaders from Lexington, MA to Palo Alto, CA provided the ideas and specifics for the slide presentation background material. Their names and affiliations are listed in Appendix D of this report.

The members of the consultant Team included the Project Manager, Jeanne Van Orman, AICP, of Van Orman & Associates; Mitchell Fischman, of the Daylor Consulting Group, who made invaluable suggestions throughout the project; and Kathy McCabe, AICP, of McCabe Enterprises who created the Square's "Timeline" and brilliantly summarized the Forum participants' ideas for Wellesley Square. Also, Larry Bluestone of Bluestone Planning Group assisted the Team by contributing design ideas specific to the Square.

Finally, the Wellesley Congregational Church, also known as the Village Church, contributed its basement for the Forum event. The evening's coffee was donated by W. Marie Gaither from the Belgian Cafe.

VIII. APPENDICES

WELLESLEY SQUARE DOWNTOWN FORUM
 THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 1997, 6:00 P.M.
 VILLAGE CHURCH
 ATTENDEES

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Sheila Clafin | 36. Arnold Wakelin -Selectmen | 70. John G. Schuler |
| 2. Harold Sheldrick-Cent.St.Tr. | 37. Janie Batista | 71. S. Douglas Weil |
| 3. Lynn Surum - Strata | 38. Eric Cohen | 72. William D. Mone |
| 4. Juliette Fager | 39. Anne Cohen | 73. Heather Madigan -
Placewares |
| 5. David Honen | 40. Sandy Carter - resident | 74. Ira Foss - Pilibosian |
| 6. Judy Jones | 41. Ellen Watts - resident | 75. Maura O'Brien - Selectman |
| 7. Linda Sanderson - resident | 42. Kit Bowry | 76. Pat Phylis-Sanger |
| 8. Marc Stanton | 43. Daniel Bernstein | 77. Barbara Gard - Planning Bd. |
| 9. Jane Kettendorf | 44. Annette Luchere | 78. Peg Condon |
| 10. Peter Gubellini - Selectmen | 45. Larry Luchere | 79. Fran O'Leary |
| 11. Glen Ramos | 46. Bob Fuller | 80. Jean Childs - WLWV |
| 12. Rob Skolnick- E. A. Davis | 47. Roy Switzler - Selectmen | 81. J. Holtay |
| 13. Susan Stevens | 48. Eleanor Ottobrini | 82. C. Braun - Editor Townsman |
| 14. Faith Mori | 49. Bonnie Bleichman | 83. Ed Hand - DRB & res |
| 15. Inge vande Heyde | 50. Norm Bleichman | 84. Vin Juliani - Selectmen |
| 16. Steve Verriale - O'Neil
Jewelers | 51. Cindy Mathews | 85. Ellen Cunnif |
| 17. Sarmuta Brown | 52. Sandy Sloothen | 86. Ellen DeMambro |
| 18. Lewis Rice - Townsman | 52. Evelyn Andrews | 87. Ted Chryssicas |
| 19. Mona Maya | 53. Murray Mathews | 88. Robert Sechrest-Planning Bd. |
| 20. George Maya | 54. Sissy Sullivan | 89. Jeanne Lukas - Chamber |
| 20. Lorelei King | 55. Terry Catchpole | 90. Peggy Dean |
| 21. Frank Romeo - BETA | 56. Catherine Catchpole | 91. Walter Henderson
BancBoston |
| 22. Bonnie Cuane | 57. Kent Stasiowski - MAPC | 92. Jon Temin |
| 23. Linda Lutfy Clayton - res. | 58. Pat Herlinger | 93. Jonathan Haynes |
| 24. Richard W. Clayton - res. | 59. Stephen Nelson Wellesley Inn | 94. Carol Gleason - Library |
| 25. Mary E. Rich | 60. Shirley Cooney Wellesley Inn | 95. Stanley Brooks-Planning Bd. |
| 26. Phyllis Totaro - Todd Gallery | 61. Wayne Cunningham Police
Department | 96. Robert Murphy-Planning Bd. |
| 27. Robert Totaro- Todd Gallery | 62. Linda McCabe | 97. Robert Di Schino-
Planning Board |
| 28. Barbara Fuller | 63. Bill McCabe | 98. Jeanne Van Orman-Consultant |
| 29. Vickie Mancini -
Anderson Jewelers | 62. Janice G. Bures - Library | 99. Kathleen McCabe- Consultant |
| 30. Ed Donlon | 63. Dennis Di Schino - Equity
Partners | 100. Mitch Fischman - Consultant |
| 31. W. Marie Gaither -
Belgian Cafe | 64. Dorothy Di Schino | 101. Larry Bluestone- Consultant - |
| 32. Herb Gliick | 65. Jack Lovewell Village Church | 102. Lynda Schelling-Plng. Dept. |
| 33. Mike McCabe - Thunder | 66. Frank Shea - W.Sq. Merchants | 103. Noah Luskin - Plng. Dept. |
| 34. Linn Mix | 67. Susan Wasilauskas - NRC | 104. Rick Brown - Plng. Dept. |
| 35. Marjorie Marks - Planning Bd. | 68. Tory DeFazio | |
| | 69. Stephen Velky - resident | |

wsqflist.doc

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF SMALL GROUP PREFERENCES ORGANIZED BY SUBJECT

NOTE: G# = Small Group Number. The number following is the number of votes the suggestion received.

ACCESS

- G7 - 10 Deck the Tailby lot/better promotion of parking areas (flyers)
- G1 - 10 Parking (especially for employees)
- G12 - 6 More parking: *outside the Square directly for retail employees/commuters; *angled parking
- G1 - 5 Parking (yes, again)
- G7 - 1 Parking - Tailby lot - multi-story?
- G5 - 1 Better identification for parking

BOUNDARIES

- G12 - 2 Maintain residential area as single family homes
- G14 - 1 Buffer between residents & businesses & parking

DESIGN

- G15 - 7 Trees, there are none; they are needed in municipal lot back of GAP & planting strip at edge of lot on Cross St.
- G13 - 3 Small town/village feel; trees, garden feel - (window boxes)
- G7 - 2 Change F.A.R. (floor area ratio)
- G15 - 1 Move trainstop to Wellesley College land

ENHANCE EXISTING ASSETS

- G9 - 5 New/Old Wellesley Inn with an English Pub
- G1 - 4 Wellesley Inn has untapped potential as an anchor
- G2 - 2 Make Train Stations more multi-functional, more vibrant
- G12 - 2 Landmark buildings: Stuart Swan, E.A. Davis
- G15 - 1 Restore U.S. Trust building facade - uncover its 1950's modernization (at NE corner of Washington & Grove)

MANAGEMENT (See also MIX OF BUSINESSES & ACTIVITIES category.)

- G3 - 2 Manage existing parking
- G1 - 1 Seek out unique businesses
- G6 - 1 Shops stay open later

MIX OF BUSINESSES & ACTIVITIES (see also category of SPECIAL POPULATIONS)

- G3 - 8 Evening destination: * restaurant, * cafe, * theater
- G4 - 3 Variety of retail, including price range
- G1 - 3 Seek out unique businesses (also noted under MANAGEMENT)
- G1 - 1 Bars in restaurants
- G4 - 1 Good anchor - department store
- G1 - 1 Maybe a theatre/playhouse
- G1 - 1 More & varied restaurants
- G14 - 1 Movie theatre
- G5 - 1 One of a kind stores
- G7 - 1 Residents must patronize small shops
- G13 - 1 Theatre?

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

- G6 - 2 Better walkways- connections between back streets/parking and front of buildings
- G2 - 2 Pedestrian interaction/oriented
- G5 - 1 Gathering places to sit/a center
- G15 - 1 Move train stop to Wellesley College land to free up more downtown
- G2 - 1 Places to linger
- G12 - 1 Wider sidewalks and streets

PROBLEMS, DESIRES & NO-NO'S

Problems:

- G8 - 1 Heavy vehicles traffic
- G8 - 1 Rent

Desires:

- G4 - 1 Affordable, reasonable rents for stores

No-No's:

- G4 - 1 Discount, basement stores
- G8 - 1 No: housing demolition

PROCESS

- G14 - 3 Need for more planning, communication with colleges
- G12 - 1 Strong citizen action

PROMOTION (see also ACCESS category)

- G1 - 2 Chamber of Commerce on Central St - visitor info., etc.
- G4 - 2 More special events in Square (like J. Jubilation)
- G1 - 2 Promote Wellesley as a destination.
- G5 - 1 Better identification of parking: signs/maps

SITES

- G2 - 13 Bandstand - cultural attractions - attracts all ages of community members
- G9 - 3 Bandstand - center of social activities - Post Office Square
- G13 - 3 Gazebo, bandstand
- G6 - 1 Eliminate gas station, make eating/play area
- G5 - 1 Gathering places
- G6 - 1 Need better connection Church St./ Washington St. commercial areas - unpleasant walk, boring

SPECIAL POPULATIONS

- G5 - 14 Places for students (high school as well as college - safety; coffee houses; place for music - students feel uncomfortable)
- G8 - 3 Solution: high school kids as a market
- G8 - 2 Shuttle bus to the colleges
- G8 - 2 Solution: college population as a market
- G2 - 1 Welcoming environment for students

APPENDIX C: SUMMARY OF INDIVIDUALS' STATEMENTS (FROM FORUM COMMENTS & SUBSEQUENT WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS)

As of this writing, 19 individuals submitted written comments in the form of 16 index cards handed in at the conclusion of the Forum and three detailed discussions of the Square from Ed Hand (former Planning Board member), a Forum participant, and Ellen Watts (Forum Working Group member), who cited ideas of her neighbors.

MORE INVOLVEMENT

Four individuals volunteered for further involvement and made suggestions ranging from greater involvement of the merchants to the formation of a Forum Sub-Committee of Merchants on how they could collectively improve or make suggestions on:

- * employee parking
- * promoting Wellesley as a destination
- * Evening and Sunday hours
- * Other cooperative events to promote business here.

One of the retailers who wanted more involvement identified herself as a non-resident.

Another complained that the Board of Selectmen in 1996 "changed the rules on the approval process for restaurants without consulting the above parties (landlords and retailers) and for the wrong reasons".

LIBRARY & COLLEGE ATTRACTIONS

Three individuals expressed the desire for expansion of the Wellesley Library and greater utilization of its facility and land. The library is seen as having potential for more

programs, possibly a theatre, but also as a distribution point for information about Downtown parking lots and stores.

In terms of cultural offerings, one individual advised: "utilize what the colleges offer to attract people to town - link to town services and publicize museums, concerts, etc."

OTHER THEMES

Other submissions emphasized or provided greater specificity to themes emphasized by the small groups.

Ed Hand's long and thoughtful submission (letter follows this summary) raised issues others had not addressed so directly, including:

- * changing "demographic trends including dual income families with complex schedules which result in limited or shifted shopping hours and a change in the type of shopping (i.e. food and service/entertainment)."
- * the manner in which "the town center/retail area is critical as it effects the community in terms of its unifying aspects, on the education/development of values, and the message/opportunities it gives children, and its impact on home values, etc."
- * the Town in a "leadership/facilitator role" to provide "conceptual planning"; "leadership in bringing diverse ... parties to the table..." and "financial, management and operations capabilities."

NEIGHBORS

Ellen Watts reported (letter follows this summary) that neighbors "made these comments to me: they were glad about the many suggestions that Wellesley Square be designed to better address the needs of the student population; they hoped successful Wellesley Square retailers who were not in attendance would also be contacted; they hope more cooperation among retailers might result in more efficient use of existing parking."

RETAIL DIVERSITY

One respondent wrote, "Transportation and access to Wellesley Square should be combined with providing enough diversity of retail stores to encourage people to even want to come to the Square in the first place."

SPECIAL SQUARE EVENTS

A Forum participant suggested more events such as a "Holiday Festival with house tours; a garden tour in the spring," which "bring people to town". Another participant desired "nicer Christmas decorations," which she appropriately expressed in large red letters!

DESIGN CHANGES

Bob Sechrest (Planning Board member) asked about the possibility of adding another floor to Filene's to make it more attractive as an "anchor" store; and also the consideration of eliminating Central Street parking to widen the sidewalks.

The Tailby lot's improvement (multi-level, over RR tracks, and better access) was mentioned again, as it was by Small Group participants.

RECREATIONAL NEEDS

One participant cited the need for “a place for kids to go skateboarding. This is so important!”

MARKET LEAKAGE

A Forum participant observed (letter follows this summary) that many Wellesley shoppers go to downtown Natick for a variety of purchases and services. She speculated that the high rent structure in Wellesley was a factor contributing to Wellesley citizens shopping in Natick and certain shops locating in Natick, which offers lower rent.

INHIBITING FACTORS

A whole set of small scale factors that may contribute to less pedestrian utilization of different sectors of Central Street was cited. This included items such as roadway connections to the Wellesley College campus and the afternoon traffic generated by the Hunnewell School.

BETTER UTILIZATION OF EXISTING ASSETS

Many Forum participants mentioned some existing sites and structures that may be more fully utilized (specifically the Post Office Building and the private parking lot behind the GAP).

CONTRIBUTORS TO STREET LIFE

Some of the day time activity level of Central Street is lent by the two pre-schools.

EDWARD S. HAND JR.
26 WESTON ROAD
WELLESLEY, MA 02181
(617) 237-4348

June 11, 1997

Wellesley Square Study Committee
Wellesley Town Hall
Wellesley, MA 02181

The enclosed document Wellesley Square Improvement Options is a compilation and expansion of ideas for Wellesley Square, developed over the years, which may prove useful to the committee. I would be happy to provide further elaboration and/or explanation as required.

Sincerely,



Edward S. Hand, Jr.

Wellesley Square has an immediate problem with the traffic/bridge/road construction; and along with other town centers has a longer term problem in terms of changing demographics/life styles, and retail and shopping trends.

Demographic trends include dual income families with complex schedules, which result in limited or shifted shopping hours and a change in the type of shopping (i.e. food and service/entertainment). Retail trends that are impacting retail include megastores, mail order catalog sales, and the development of on-line shopping/home delivery.

The town center/retail area is critical as it effects the community in terms of its unifying aspects, on the education /development of values, and the message/opportunities it gives children, and its impact on home values, etc.

Wellesley Square is not a mall/shopping center, however it shares many of the characteristics, and many of the property management techniques and considerations that govern the management of a shopping center could be applied to Wellesley Square. The coordination of parking, common areas, amenities, marketing and promotion, and hours of operation are applicable to the Square.

Business Vitality:

The Town should initially take a leadership/facilitator role in making the shopping areas more attractive, functional, and vital. In cooperation with the business community and Town residents the Town should provide conceptual planning of aesthetic and infrastructure improvements; leadership in bringing diverse and perhaps reluctant parties to the negotiating table, and financial, management and operations capabilities as required. Expenditure of Public funds, if required, should be self amortizing. The following are examples of opportunities for improvement. Many deal with parking, pedestrian access, circulation, and design, elements which would enhance the Wellesley Square shopping experience .

Parking

Parking Lot Behind 61-71 Central Street, Wellesley Square

Some 70+ parking spaces are located behind the stores on the north side of Central Street. These spaces are inaccessible from most of the stores because of a spite fence, and underutilized. Removal of this fence, the installation of a few parking/directional signs and perhaps a mirror at the corner where the access takes a right angle turn, to facilitate entrance and exit, would make this part of the square much more accessible and convenient to shoppers. A more elegant solution might include the re-configuration of the arcade where Simmon's Flowers is located, to provide a pedestrian passage from the east end of the this lot to Central Street.

Cross Street Parking Lot

The parking lot at the corner of Weston Road and Cross Street is a private parking lot which is utilized by many shoppers as a "Public lot" in the sense that shoppers tend to park in a central location and do as many errands as possible in one stop, whether or not all of the stores patronized are tenants of the owner of the parking lot. Furthermore this lot is laid out so as to maximize the number of spaces, but there is no internal circulation within the lot. Cars have to exit the lot and travel along Cross Street, a public way, to move from aisle to aisle in search of a space; further blurring the line between public and private space.

In addition this lot, and the stores on Central Street which back onto the lot, are directly across from a residential area. There is no screening between the lot and the residential neighborhood, nor is there any interior landscaping to make the lot a pleasant environment for shoppers, or more aesthetically pleasing to the adjoining residential neighborhood.

There may be an opportunity to both improve this parking area and develop additional spaces by re-configuring the lot, and combining it with some of Cross Street, (the sidewalk and existing on-street parking spaces, etc.) Whether additional spaces can be developed or not, this lot represents an excellent opportunity for the Town to work with a private landowner to improve the quality of a highly visible area in Wellesley Square, so as to make for a better shopping experience, and to better integrate the shopping area into the neighborhood.

Tailby Lot

Decking the Tailby lot would provide a large infusion of spaces but at a high cost/space. Eventually it may be required, and is a logical development. Somewhat centrally located with respect to the present station, Town Hall and the shops, the Tailby lot could be decked with minimum visual impact, being essentially below grade. However it is a considerable distance from all but the station. Linking the lot to the stores will require some innovative thinking and public/private collaboration, perhaps involving existing properties on Crest Road, or air rights over the railroad. As has been previously suggested, the Tailby lot could serve as part of a link between the Linden Street shopping area and Wellesley Square, however the question remains are the distances too great for shoppers? It appears to make more sense for all day parking, employees and commuters. If the Town were to undertake construction of decked parking at this site then consideration should be given to a parking structure with office or residences above.

Employee Parking

Has a study been made of employee parking? How many spaces are currently being used, and where are they? The argument is made that customers want easy access to shopping destinations. One of the quickest ways to free up spaces is to have the business community strictly restrict local on and off-street parking to customers. Parking meters don't accomplish this. The enforcement of such a policy requires that alternative employee parking exist. A number of sites have been suggested by various parking needs study committees. For example, the existing lot at the intersection of Weston Rd. and Washington St.;

the Tailby lot; and the substation property at the intersection of Linden St. and Weston Rd. In addition the Town might lease space in various church lots to be re-leased for employee parking.

Key Properties -

Crest Road Mall The Crest Road Mall building, at the corner of Crest Road and Central Street, is a pivotal property in that it provides a potential enclosed link between the Tailby lot and Central St., as well as an alternate link to the parking behind the stores to the north of Central St. Furthermore it is the possible site of a "railroad station" located in the lower floor of this building. With access from both Central St. and the station platform, retail/services could be provided to commuters.

50 Central Street This large multi-level property, previously the location of Filenes and Filenes Basement is a key presence in the Square, and has also served as a link between the Waban St. parking lot and Central St.

North Forty This property, owned by Wellesley College, is located on the north side of the railroad tracks/Rt. 135, and bounded by Weston Rd. and Turner Rd. If it were available for development, it would make an ideal location for a mixed use development possibly including an assisted living facility; office, along the railroad tracks; parking serving the western end of Wellesley Square; and open space abutting Moses Pond, the Aqueduct trail and the residences on Weston and Turner Roads. An entrance from Rt. 135 at the college light via a bridge over the tracks would lessen congestion at the Weston Rd./Linden St. intesection.

Design

Preliminary Design Review/Planning - It has occurred to me as a member of the Design Review Board that the aesthetic and design talents of this group, experienced in working with developers, landlords and shop owners in Wellesley, could be utilized in a proactive way by working with the business community and individual building owners to conceptualize facade, signage, streetscape, and landscape treatments to integrate and improve the commercial areas.

Individual tenant signage etc., in accord with these pre-approved concepts for overall facade/signage for multi-tenant buildings, could be readily granted.

The building at 66 Central St. is an example of a building which had a hodgepodge of signs and facades, and was considerably improved by the owner in close cooperation with the Design Review Board.

Housing

Wellesley housing is out of reach for many because of both the underlying cost of land, in Wellesley, the escalation in the size of housing that is being constructed, and the inexorable escalation in size and amenities as once

"affordable" housing is renovated, remodeled and expanded; for example, Cottage Street. What was once housing for shoe factory workers is now, despite small lots for Wellesley, attractive and desirable housing in Wellesley's Historic District.

It is difficult to imagine how new affordable housing units can be created and maintained as affordable unless it is in the form of townhouses or some other housing type with reduced land cost per unit and limited expansion potential.

Accessory apartment and two family use, with strict controls, renewable permits, and owner occupancy requirements are another viable way to increase the availability of affordable housing.

Wellesley Square currently has a mix of traditional single-family, townhouse, garden apartments, apartments for the elderly, two-family and multi-family dwelling units, including a mix of owner occupied units and rental units, including market rate and subsidized units, which makes for a diverse and interesting neighborhood. The recent 6th Annual Block Party for the area bounded roughly by the College campus, Washington St., Cross St., and Church St. attests to this. The success of this current mix of housing types has been the result of strong neighborhood monitoring, input and activism.

Proposed Actions

A Wellesley Square Master Plan - goals and objectives of the Town, residents, property owners, and merchants.

Implementation Plan - laying out critical actions and responsibilities to implement the plan.

A Wellesley Square Marketing Plan? A Wellesley Square Manager?

The challenge will be to get a consensus among the various private interests, and action. The Town has a legitimate role in conceptualizing a solution, lobbying the property owners to negotiate satisfactory access arrangements, making necessary public improvements, and if necessary acquiring the properties or rights, and funding the acquisition costs, over time. In the case of parking, from parking meter fees derived from Town installed meters. Precedent was set by Al Frasier who initiated such an arrangement to create the Waban Street lot behind Filene's

I have cited the above as examples of opportunities for the Town to work with the business community to increase business-vitality and make Wellesley a better place to live work and shop. In each case a fair degree of public/private cooperation is required, but then again that is the essence of community

With respect to parking, before the Town commits to spending money to develop additional public parking facilities an overall plan needs to be

developed which maximizes the utilization of existing public/private resources by restructuring and better managing these resources; makes a clear statement as to the advantages to the business community of cooperating in the implementation of the plan, and failing to obtain this cooperation in any particular situation, sets in motion the process for the Town to acquire the rights to develop and manage the lots. Such a plan should include the physical layout of the affected lots, required improvements, property rights involved, access rights, intended financing and recovery of costs through user fees, and a management plan.

Subj: Wellesley Square Forum & WSJ Article
Date: 97-06-16 22:57:27 EDT
From: EllenWatts
To: VanOrman

Hi Jeanne.

I thought the Wellesley Square forum last week was both very informative and constructive, largely due to the excellent presentation you gave at the outset. Daniel and I agreed that you were superlative!

Over the weekend, various neighbors made these comments to me: they were glad about the many suggestions that Wellesley Square be designed to better address the needs of the student population; they hoped successful Wellesley Square retailers who were not in attendance would also be contacted to contribute their ideas; they hoped more cooperation among retailers might result in the more efficient use of existing parking.

Also, one neighbor had heard about a pending restaurant tenant for a space opposite the Wellesley Inn, formerly occupied by the Wellesley Market. I hope it's as good as Fig's, which I love!

—
Ellen

Subj: Wellesley Square Forum: timeline, etc.
Date: 97-05-29 17:23:46 EDT
From: Forum Participant
To: vanorman@aol.com (Jeanne Van Orman)

Dear Jeanne,

A few thoughts re: Wellesley Square (set down in haste):

Heresy, perhaps, but when speaking of "competition" (for timeline or other analytic purposes) one ought to keep an eye out also for what is happening (or may be happening) in Natick, where commercial rents are certainly considerably lower. To do otherwise may be to buy too completely into Wellesley Square's self image (striving to re-invent the "carriage trade" for the late 90's?). Some economic kind of development arm in place, New Morse Institute building, demolition of the police station for new handsomely designed one, see article on arts center advocacy and parking discussion sent by fax. I have often heard it said by Wellesley Square business people that there is nothing in Natick, but many Natick businesses see it in their interest to list Wellesley phone numbers, the liquors stores do a good Wellesley trade, EduMart (formerly in Wellesley) does well on the Natick line, when Wellesley College needs a tradesman like a locksmith for its many locks or when I need my vacuum repaired for a reasonable price we go to Pond Street in Natick, when my husband and kids need blue jeans, sneakers, sports gear (and wouldn't dream of going to the mall), there is the Natick Outdoor Store, etc., etc. A long standing phenomenon, but probably as much or more a part of the picture now. [Incidentally, the Natick schools are considered a good value for tax money spent.]

West end of Central Street commercial district has always been lent some animation in the pedestrian sense by the College, but what exactly is well patronized in the Square by these pedestrians? Maybe too fine grained for your time line, but several events perhaps stand out as further attenuating the town-gown business relationship: closing of the motor entrance to the College at the intersection of Weston Road and Central Street (60's?); closing of the Hathaway Bookstore which

APPENDIX C: PARTIAL LIST OF
NON-WELLESLEY PERSONS
INTERVIEWED FOR SLIDE
PRESENTATION
(Listed by Municipality)

BEDFORD (Katonah), NY

Jeffrey Osterman
Director of Planning, Building & Related Services
Town of Bedford

GREENWICH, CONN

E. S. Willis, Chairman
Board of Directors
Greenwich Chamber of Commerce

LEXINGTON, MA

Paul Hamburger, Chairman
Eric Michelson, Member
Selectmen's Long Range Planning Committee
Town of Lexington

NEW CANAAN, CONN

Jon McEwan
Assistant Town Planner
Town of New Canaan

Jack Trifero
Downtown Property and Business Owner
Town of New Canaan

PALO ALTO, CA

Susan Frank
Executive Director
Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce