



Town of Auburn, Massachusetts

Planning Vision and Design Guidelines for Drury Square

February 7, 2017



Massachusetts Downtown Initiative



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This project and report were prepared through a grant provided by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development and its Downtown Initiative.

1. PROJECT OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY

The Town of Auburn has been conducting a planning initiative to create a stronger design identity and a sense of place in Drury Square, a commercial district located at the intersection of Auburn and Southbridge Streets and surrounded by residential neighborhoods.

Drury Square is characterized today by low-rise buildings, generally setback from the street and surrounded by parking. Vehicular access to the area and to individual businesses is excellent, but pedestrian facilities are limited. Thus, the image of the district is car-oriented and undefined in terms of its architectural character.

Running parallel to this commercial area is a center of educational and recreational activities, anchored by the Auburn High School and its recreation complex of football, baseball and soccer fields, tennis courts, and an outdoor basketball court. Additional public facilities and amenities are Goddard Park, the Public Library and the Fire Rescue Department Headquarters.

Project Overview

A desire has emerged within the community to transform Drury Square into a walkable district, building upon its commercial, institutional and recreational character to become a civic center within the town. Both the Town government and the community have expressed their desire to see Drury Square become a mixed use village center and see current uses and activities as opportunities to create a walkable district. This work will require coordinated planning and improvements by both the public and private sector.

Harriman has been selected as a planning and design consultant to assist the Town through the planning and design process required to define and express this vision. This project is being funded through a grant from the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative, a program of the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

Purpose and Aim of the Study

In addition to the goal of developing a vision for a walkable district and a sense of place, this study is aimed at developing a strategy to enhance the economic value of the area as a place to shop and visit. It also explores opportunities to add mixed use development that would attract a different type of residents to Auburn (e.g. young professionals, young families, empty nesters, etc.). These types of projects would bring new vitality to the area, through increased visits and travel during weekends and evenings.

The outcome of the study is a design concept plan and a set of recommendations for implementing this vision, including recommendations for design guidelines that will steer new projects to contribute to an identifiable and coherent design image for the study area.

Summary

Existing Conditions

An assessment of existing conditions was compiled using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data and other information provided by the Town's Planning Division. A description of land use, ownership patterns and zoning within the study area is provided in *Section 2* of this report (page 6). This map-based data was complemented with site observations and input from a Community Charrette held on June 30, 2016. The results of the charrette are summarized in the *Appendix* (page 25).

Findings from the analysis are summarized below:

- The overall image and perception of the study area is a car-oriented district, where it is difficult and impractical to walk due to long distances between venues, narrow sidewalks, and limited crosswalks.
- Some of the Town's most significant institutions and public amenities are in the study area – Auburn High School and its recreational sports facilities, Auburn Free Public Library, Auburn Fire Rescue Department Headquarters, and Goddard Park.
- At present, recreational fields are used by high school students and some residents; they represent civic assets that could become available to larger segments of the Town's population.
- Some of the buildings are old and could be made more attractive through façade renovations and site landscaping; more trees are needed throughout the study area.
- Parking is perceived as a problem. There seems to be space for enough parking to support current commercial activities, but narrow sidewalks and long distances between crosswalks make it difficult to walk between stores and entices shoppers to drive from one parking lot to another while shopping.
- Streetscape improvements are being planned along Brotherton Way and Auburn Streets; this will represent a significant benefit to the district, but may need to be complemented further to promote walking and connectivity within the district and to surrounding areas (e.g. the Auburn Mall).

Photographs illustrating existing conditions are shown below.



Views of traffic at main intersections



Shaw's, Bed Bad and Beyond, and Auburn High School as seen from Southbridge St.



Commercial buildings along Southbridge St.



Views of Auburn Pond as seen from Goddard Park



Auburn Free Public Library and monument to Goddard's rockets



Commercial buildings and high school recreational areas along Auburn St.

Recommendations

This analysis of existing conditions and the input received at the Community Charrette resulted in a series of recommendations.

The proposed recommendations can be condensed into three main ideas:

1. Leverage infrastructure and streetscape investments to create a sense of place and enhance the walking experience.
2. Promote mixed use redevelopment that consolidates parking at strategic locations and promotes walking, to increase neighborhood retail and attract new residents to the area.
3. Adopt design guidelines that promote the development of new buildings and the creation of publicly accessible spaces with a vibrant and distinctive design quality.

A detailed list of recommendations is included in *Section 3* of this report (page 10).

Vision and Design Concept Plan

Two site plan options, both showing potential mixed use redevelopment opportunities for commercial sites to the north and east of Auburn Street, have been explored. Both plans are illustrated in *Section 4* (page 12). The first option shows a small retail building added to the Shaw's/Bed Bath and Beyond site. This would increase opportunities for neighborhood retail and promote pedestrian traffic along the street. The second option illustrates the possibility of the Shaw's/Bed Bath and Beyond site's possible transformation into a mixed use commercial and residential development.

Implementation

Implementation of the proposed recommendations will require a targeted and coordinated effort on the part of Town officials, local institutions and businesses, and members of the community. The ambitious goal of creating a walkable mixed use district can only be achieved through public/private partnerships and collaboration between the Town and local businesses.

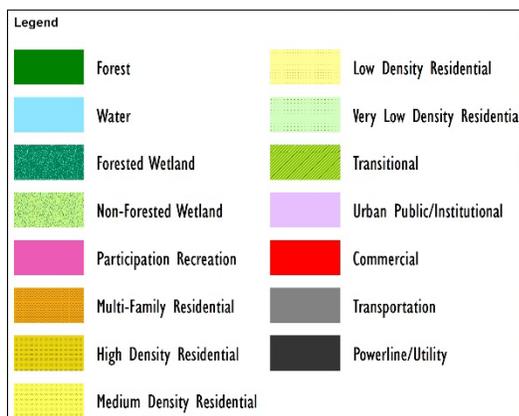
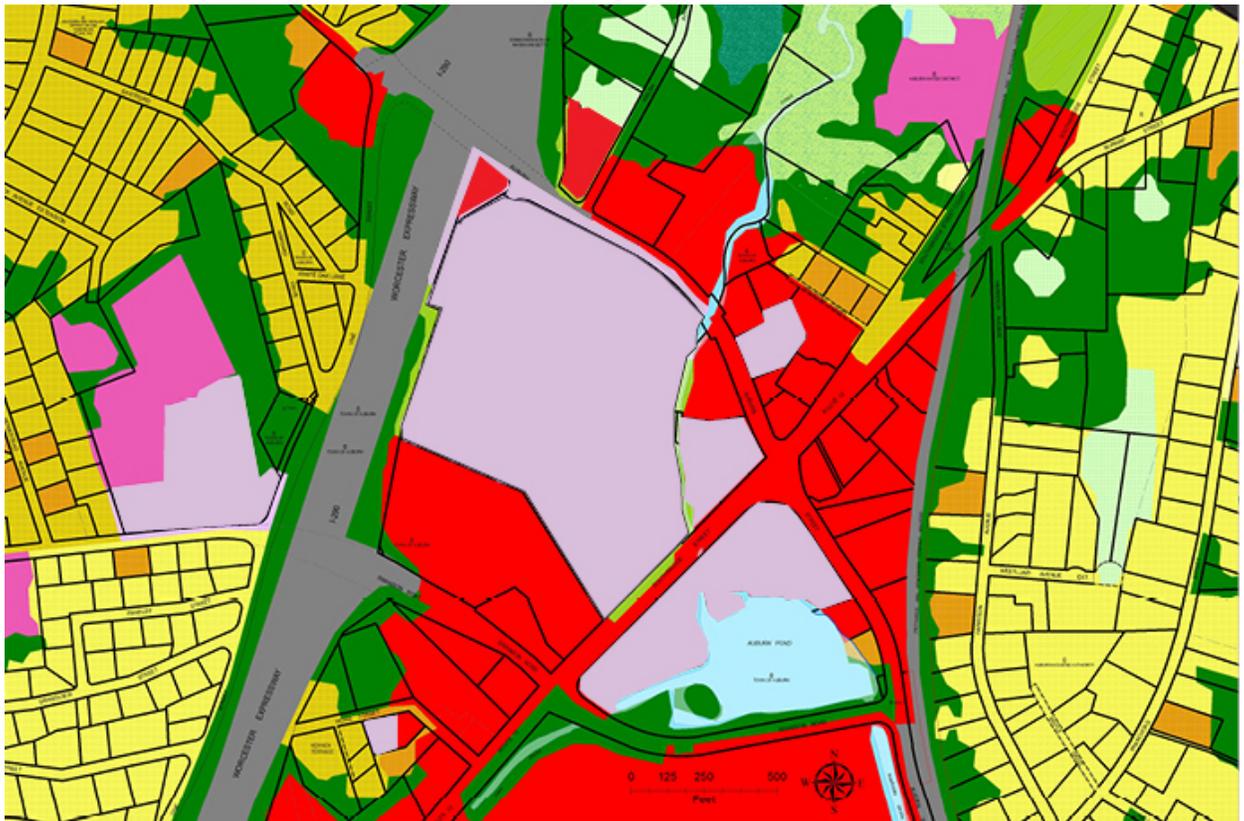
Important steps and tools in the implementation of this vision and concept plan are described in *Section 5* (page 14). They include the review and update of zoning to allow for mixed use development, the creation of public/private partnerships to improve walkways and streetscape, and marketing strategies to promote Drury Square as a place to shop, visit and recreate.

Section 6 includes draft design guidelines and recommendations to enhance the design character of the area (page 18).

3. EXISTING CONDITIONS

Land Use

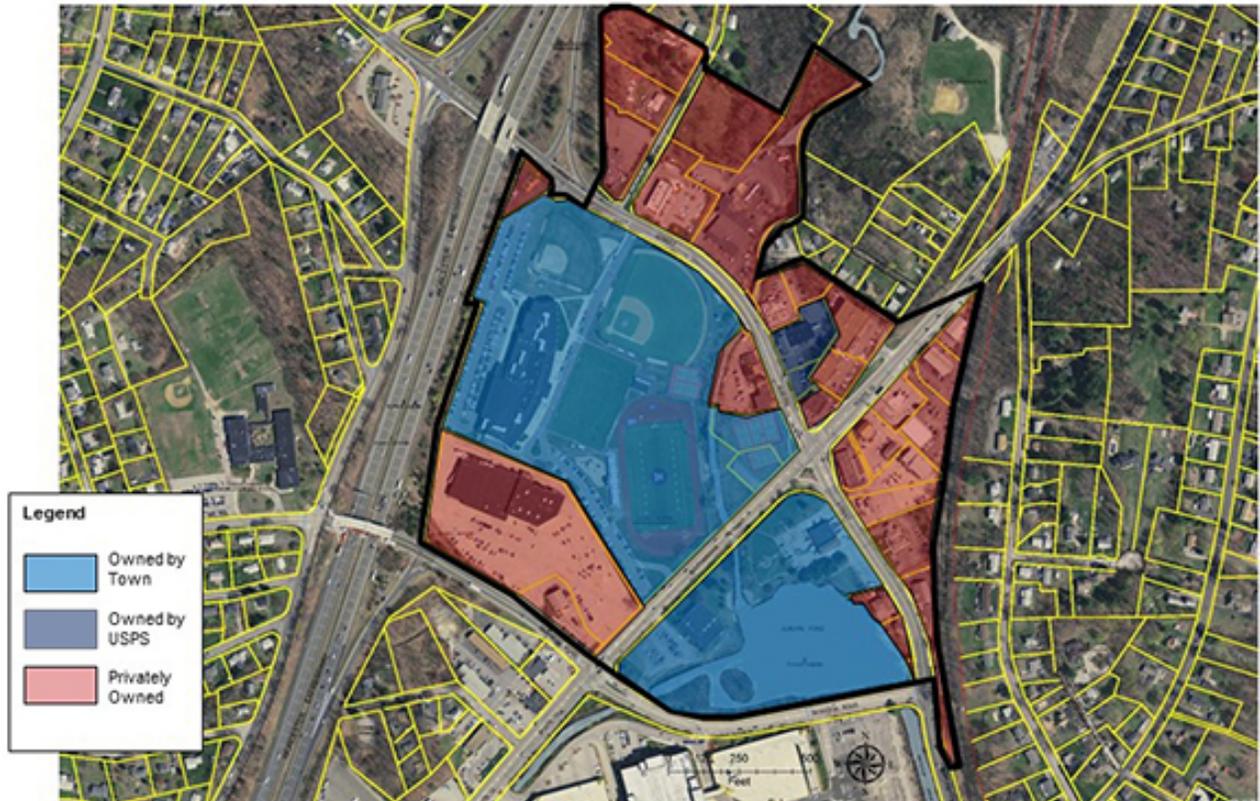
Massachusetts Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data shows Drury Square as predominantly used for commercial activities, including retail, offices, restaurants and automotive services. A sample of the type of businesses located in the area include Shaw’s supermarket, Bed Bath and Beyond, Bank of America, Savers Bank, Verizon, Town Fair Tire, Drury’s Barber Shop, McDonald’s restaurant, and Yong Shing restaurant.



By land area, the largest property use is urban public/ institutional (Auburn High School) and the public land associated with the high school’s recreational sports facilities, both located on the northwest side of Southbridge Street. On the southeast side, the Auburn Free Public Library, Goddard Park and the Auburn Fire Rescue Department Headquarters occupy a significant amount of public land.

Ownership Patterns

Land ownership patterns are useful in clarifying the type of uses and activities that take place within the study area. In this case, over 50% of the area is owned by the Town, including the high school, fire headquarters, public library and Goddard Park. This pattern represents a potential opportunity to enhance the existing public facilities and improve the streetscape through public investment.

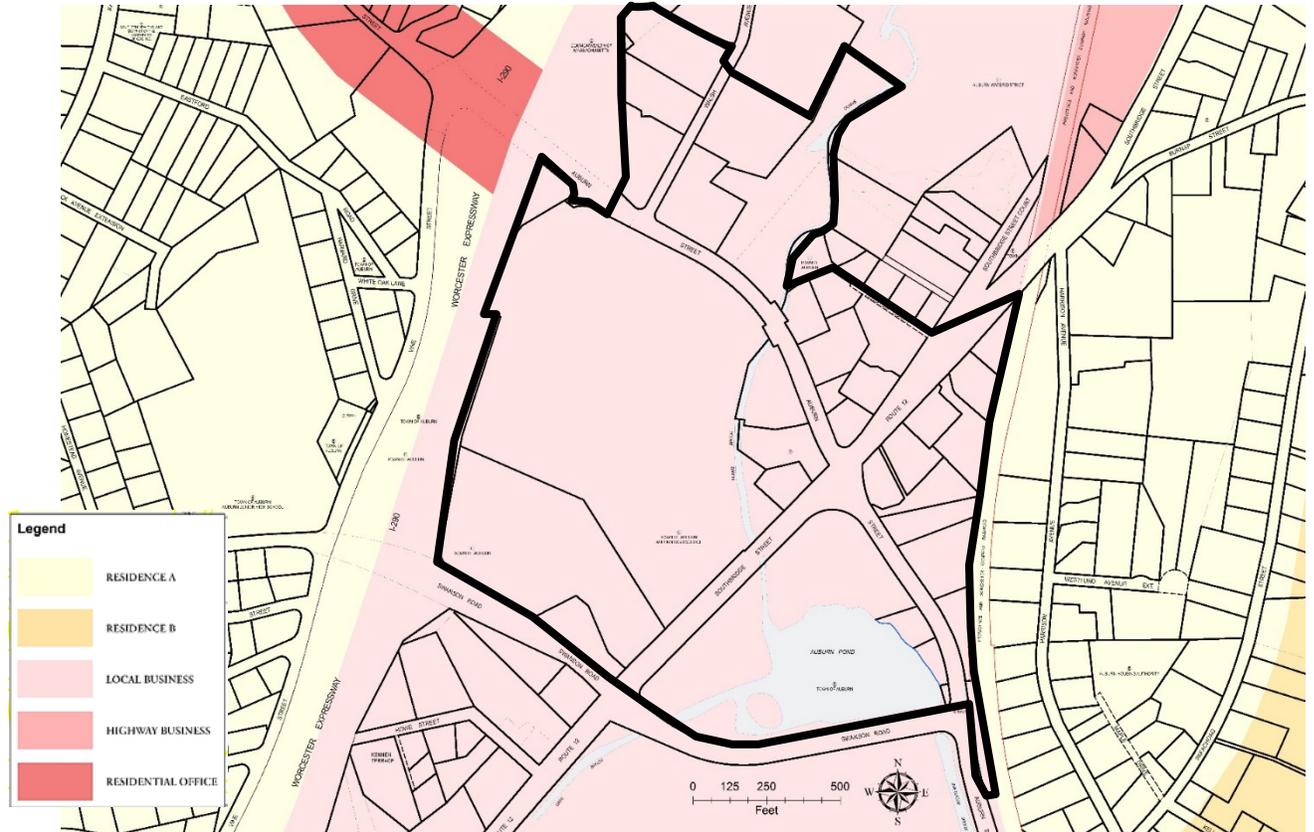


Zoning

The area is located within the **Local Business (LB) District**, which is intended to promote commercial activities. Mixed use (commercial/residential) is prohibited and multifamily residential uses are allowed by special permit, and only as described below:

- Uses Allowed: Gardens, greenhouses, neighborhood retail, professional and medical services, shops.
- Uses Allowed by Special Permit: Apartments, converted dwellings, lodging, institutional uses, governmental and public services, restaurants, automotive services.

- Uses Not Allowed: Townhouses, commercial recreation, large scale retail or industrial uses.



The Town also has an **Aquifer Protection Overlay District** that applies to the entire study area.

Design Character

The design character of an area is the product of its architecture, parks and public spaces. In Drury Square, buildings generally exhibit a modern architectural character with some elements of New England traditional design expression. Building height typically ranges from one to three stories.

Commercial buildings vary in design, age and condition, but tend to be typical of suburban commercial strip construction with no significant features that would differentiate them from commercial buildings in other districts.

The Auburn High School stands out as the most distinctive building in the study area due to its size, location, visibility, and its good quality of design and construction.

The High School recreation and sports complex also commands views from vehicles and passersby traveling through the district. Together with Goddard Park, they represent a significant landscape asset and civic amenity that straddles both sides of Southbridge Street. Sidewalks, however, lack trees and streetscape that could provide shade and visual interest along the road. Sidewalks are narrow and utility poles often take over what could have otherwise been walking space. The streets are wide and generous in travel lane width. While this allows traffic to move quickly, it generates a perception of a car-oriented district and encourages high speed driving, both conditions that detract from pedestrian activity.

Opportunities

Auburn residents have expressed, through opinions and past planning processes, their desire to see a walkable district and village center emerge at Drury Square. This desire was confirmed by the Community Charrette held in June.

Many of the participants in the Charrette mentioned that they visit or drive through the area almost daily, but shopping is made difficult by the limited parking and the need to move from parking lot to parking lot for different stores, since the area is not equipped for pedestrian comfort or safety. The relatively low density of commercial buildings and the presence of valuable public institutions suggest that it might be possible to create a walkable district by consolidating parking at strategic locations. This would support pedestrian traffic and free land for new development, which could increase neighborhood business.

Streetscape improvements aimed at enhancing the quality and safety of the pedestrian experience could further bolster the image and perception of a walkable district. Mixed use development could also help by providing opportunities for village center-scale residential uses. These would complement pedestrian-oriented businesses by increasing the number of patrons and people on the sidewalks beyond regular business hours.

3. DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

This section contains a set of recommendations intended to enhance the urban design character of Drury Square. These recommendations are informed by a review and analysis of existing conditions in the study area, and the comments, ideas and suggestions received at the Community Charrette held at Auburn High School on June 30. Recommended strategies have been grouped into midterm and long term priorities.

Midterm (2 to 5 years)

- **Design and build streetscape improvements to enhance the quality of the pedestrian environment**, and support the creation of a walkable district by improving and widening sidewalks where feasible, providing clearly defined crosswalks and pedestrian activated crosswalk signals, and adding pedestrian lighting, street trees and vegetation (currently being planned at some locations).
- **Consider adding traffic calming measures**, if not contemplated under the current plans for streetscape improvements. In particular,
 - **Add a new crosswalk and a rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) connecting Goddard Park to the High School recreational area** where the existing pedestrian trail along Dunn’s Brook meets Southbridge Street.
- **Add wayfinding elements, crosswalks, banners/flags, and distinctive landscaping to key roadway intersections**, which can be perceived as gateways into the district:
 - Southbridge St./Brotherton Way
 - Southbridge St./Auburn St.
 - Brotherton Way/Auburn St.
 - Auburn St./Walsh Ave.
 - Southbridge St./Southbridge Ct.
 - Auburn Pond/Dunn’s Brook/Ramshorn Brook
- **Work with property owners to improve building façades and site landscaping** (e.g. owners of the Shaw’s/Bed Bath and Beyond site and the Auburn Mall).
- **Work with the owners of the Shaw’s/Bed Bath and Beyond site to explore adding a small retail building with frontage on Southbridge St.** to promote neighborhood retail and encourage pedestrian activity (e.g. coffee shop, newsstand, gift shop, etc.)
- **Investigate the potential for mixed use redevelopment of strategically located properties**, aiming at creating village-scale residential opportunities:
 - **Sites located directly east of the Auburn/Southbridge St. intersection**, which could possibly be assembled to create larger parcels appropriate for mixed use.

- **Sites near the Post Office, north of Auburn St and west of Dunn's Brook.**
- **Consider extending the Mixed Use Development Overlay District (MD) to the study area or creating a new overlay zoning district** to promote a mixed use village character.
- **Complement zoning provisions with design guidelines** aimed at defining the design character of new architecture and landscaping visible from public ways.
- **Gather funding and resources to establish a Façade Improvement Program.**
- **Initiate marketing campaigns and set incentives** to attract entrepreneurs and investors looking for opportunities to create restaurants, cafes, and entertainment businesses.
- **Partner with area businesses, including the Auburn Mall, to promote sponsorship of public space** and organize events with private business support/promotions that would attract residents and visitors to the area.
- **Improve Goddard Park to incorporate more public amenities**, such as a canoe launch, kayaks, a walking trail around the pond, a new pedestrian bridge connecting to the library site (a covered bridge has been suggested), more benches, a covered seating area, or a gazebo for local concerts. These additions would strengthen its character as a community destination.

Long Term (5 years and beyond)

- **Add more trails and crosswalks to create a walking trail system** and connect Goddard Park to the High School recreational facilities, Auburn Mall, and shopping areas along Auburn St. (subject to availability of alternate funding sources other than the Town). In particular,
 - **Add a new crosswalk and landscaped pedestrian pathways connecting the Auburn Mall to Goddard Park and the Auburn Free Public Library.**
 - **Consider adding a half-block crosswalk connecting Goddard Park to businesses across Auburn St.** (like the one in front of the Post Office).
- **Improve the site plan and building façade of the Fire Rescue Headquarters**, and investigate the potential to expand Goddard Park and its recreational uses if at some point the Town would consider relocating the existing facilities (this was an idea suggested at the Community Charrette).
- **Investigate the potential for mixed use redevelopment of large sites**, such as the Shaw's/Bed Bath and Beyond site.
- **Seek state, federal, and private funding to relocate overhead utilities underground.**

4. VISION AND DESIGN CONCEPT PLAN

The illustrative planning vision and design concept plan presented here visualizes the outcome of the proposed design recommendations and the potential redevelopment of commercial properties.

Two site plan options follow, which could either represent independent alternatives or successive phases of development. Each plan illustrates possible layouts for the potential redevelopment of commercial parcels located to the north and east of Auburn St. Both include streetscape improvements and new crosswalks to increase connectivity and promote pedestrian safety. A walking path is shown connecting Goddard Park to the Auburn Free Public Library, the High School recreational area and Dunn’s Brook.



Concept Plan Option 1

In this option, a small retail building has been added to the Shaw’s/Bed Bath and Beyond site to create opportunities for more neighborhood stores and to activate sidewalk traffic. An improved intersection at Southbridge St. and Swanson Rd. contributes to pedestrian activity and walking connections to the Auburn Mall.



Concept Plan Option 2

This plan builds upon the same ideas as Option 1, but further explores the redevelopment potential of the Shaw's/Bed Bath and Beyond site and the possibility of its transformation into a mixed use retail and residential development in the long term. The rest of the plan elements remain like the previous option.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing the proposed recommendations will require a targeted and coordinated effort on the part of Town officials, local institutions and community members. Most importantly, the ambitious goal of creating a walkable mixed use district can only be achieved through public/private partnerships and collaboration between the Town and local businesses. Some important steps in the implementation of this vision and concept plan include the following:

Zoning Review and Update

The current Local Business (LB) zone does not support mixed use development of the kind that would increase pedestrian activity and the number of residents in the area (e.g. neighborhood retail uses on the ground floor and apartments or residential condominiums above).

The Auburn Zoning By-Laws include a Mixed Use Overlay District (MD) created “... to permit a mixture of residential, open space and commercial uses, and a variety of building types...” under Special Permit granted by the Planning Board (page 31 of the Zoning Bylaws). A Zoning Overlay Map provided in the Auburn Master Plan shows the MD overlay zone located southwest of the I395/Rte. 20 intersection, approximately two miles away from our study area. A detailed review of current MD provisions and their compatibility with the planning goals and vision expressed by the community for Drury Square would help determine whether the MD zone should be applied to our study area or if a new Mixed Use Overlay District with different provisions should be prepared.

Special consideration should be given to whether the current zoning’s standard parking requirements are appropriate for mixed use development. Current parking requirements for residential use (2 spaces per dwelling) and retail/business use (one space per 180-200 square feet of net floor area) are consistent with customary practices in suburban areas, but result in a high number of required spaces and extensive paved areas that may not be fully used most of the time. Parking synergies between residential and commercial uses need to be studied and then incorporated into new standards that would include shared parking among uses with complementary demands (e.g. shoppers park during the day while residents tend to park at night). Shared parking reductions from the single use parking ratios are often calculated on a project-by-project basis and subject to Special Permit. Also, the inclusion of relatively small residential units in mixed use buildings (often including one- and two-bedroom units) may not necessarily require two parking spaces per dwelling; parking requirements for mixed use buildings could be adjusted to address these conditions.

The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) publishes a guide to parking standards. However, the actual needs may vary significantly for different locations, depending on the availability of public transportation, density of interdependent uses within walking distance, and availability of public parking.

Design Guidelines

Design guidelines specifically written to promote an urban design and landscape image consistent with the vision of a mixed use village center will be an important tool to support the transformation of Drury Square into a walkable district with a distinctive design identity. Examples of design guidelines that may be used as a reference may include Marblehead Uptown Business District Design Guidelines Manual, Hopkinton Neighborhood Mixed Use District Design Guidelines, and Great Barrington Design Guidelines Workbook.

Guidelines can be written to complement zoning in those design elements that require a certain degree of choice, such as materials, colors, façade composition, or articulation. In the case of mixed use districts, design guidelines can be extremely useful as design tools to define the relationship between commercial and residential areas, clarify distinctions between public and private realms, promote the design compatibility of new and existing buildings, and enhance the design quality of walking and bicycling pathways.

Public/Private Partnerships

Town officials, local businesses and residents need to work closely with another to create the mechanisms that will make the community vision for Drury Square possible. Active community participation will be required during planning, the discussion of potential zoning changes, the preparation of design guidelines, the construction and operation of desired public amenities, the promotion of the study area to attract new businesses and redevelopment opportunities, and other possible actions.

One working partnership that could be established is with the Auburn Mall, which is adjacent to the block occupied by Goddard Park and the Free Public Library. The Mall could be an effective business partner in helping improve the park grounds and creating attractive pedestrian connections between the Mall and the Library. Access to an improved park with canoe/kayak amenities could be an opportunity to link shopping to recreational activities for mall customers. Similarly, in the case of special events, the Mall could help supply the parking needs of recreational users of the park and sports facilities, if it is well connected by trails and pedestrian walkways to the rest of Drury Square.

An important partnership that could be continued is the one that currently exists with the Auburn Chamber of Commerce or the other local business associations. Another alternative to consider would be to establish a new Drury Square Business Association.

These groups could organize promotional activities and events, helping to maintain public spaces and keep areas of public gathering in optimal shape and conditions.

Streetscape and Park Improvements

Streetscape improvements and landscaping represent the ‘soft’ side of public space. They are not always considered a budget priority, because of the need to carefully plan and manage budgets or find funding through external sources among other reasons. Landscaping, however, can make an enormous difference in the quality of the pedestrian experience. Streetscape improvements, focused on sidewalks and crosswalks, are currently being planned along Southbridge and Auburn Streets. Additional investment could possibly be approved in stages as funding is identified. The Town should work to identify public and private grant opportunities to facilitate streetscape and park improvements. Restoration of the fountain in Goddard Park and the construction of a pedestrian bridge over the water connecting the Library to Goddard Park would be improvements that would enhance pedestrian connectivity and increase the attractiveness of the park. This would allow wayfinding and gateway design improvements to be introduced gradually, which would contribute to pedestrian comfort and a sense of identity in the district.

Public/private partnerships among the different parties that use and occupy the district could also play a role in securing funds and collaboration. Business Improvement Districts (BID) are associations of local businesses that gather together and contribute funds to embellish and maintain the quality of public spaces in a designated area. While Drury Square may be far from becoming a BID, other experiences about the ways in which other places collaborate to achieve common goals can be informative. Experiences that may be referenced as examples are the successful Main Streets programs that have been created to revitalize business districts nationwide (www.mainstreet.org).

Façade Improvement Program

There are not too many buildings in the study area that could be considered to have historic character or contribute to a historic district. However, some of the existing buildings show signs of aging and would benefit from the opportunity to renovate and improve their façades.

An important element of a façade renovation that doesn’t necessarily require a large capital investment is signage; however, sign updates or new signs may be postponed for a long time due to budget priorities.

Most façade renovation programs are designed as revolving loan funds, which issue relatively small loans, between \$5,000 and \$10,000, to small businesses and property owners that help to cover some of the planning, design and construction costs of fixing or replacing exterior building components.

Marketing and Promotion

Successful downtowns and village centers often exhibit a diversity of stores, businesses, and services that satisfy the needs and desires of residents and visitors due to their unique character. Sometimes this is not purely coincidental, but rather the result of business planning and marketing. Business associations have learned to seek out and attract the types of businesses that would be complementary to the existing venues in term of their capacity to satisfy the needs of their customer profile.

Most shopping malls and commercial centers study and seek out the type of business that would best complement the profile of the existing stores. There is a lot that could be learned from business marketing practices by mall operators with regards to promoting Drury Square to new businesses. Future work should involve collaboration with local businesses aimed at identifying and attracting the type of retail, restaurant or entertainment that would increase the public appeal of the district. Collaborative marketing and promotions by the businesses in Drury Square could draw visitors to the area to participate in promotional events, such as holiday celebrations, dine-around activities or retail-food festivals.

7. DESIGN GUIDELINES

Design guidelines are a powerful urban design tool to create a distinctive and identifiable image for a district. As the name indicates, guidelines are intended to guide the design of buildings, sites and public spaces towards the achievement of a preferred design image, based on the harmonious relationship among the design of its physical components.

The following guidelines are not intended to be a finished product, but rather a starting point for the development of more detailed guidelines that take the results of a potential zoning review and other recommendations into consideration. There are many models and approaches to develop design guidelines for an emerging village center, and the preparation of detailed design guidelines is beyond the scope of this study. However, some of the specific elements that could be addressed in the case of Drury Square include the following:

Site Design and Landscaping

Building Orientation and Entrances

- Buildings shall be oriented with the primary façade(s) facing the primary street frontage(s) of the site.
- Building massing and façades shall be designed to frame streets and public spaces, to provide a sense of spatial enclosure and to define street edges.
- A building's main entrance shall be clearly visible and easily accessible from the primary street(s).
- Entrances shall provide a distinctive and welcoming composition that is integrated into the overall massing and design of the building.



- Storefronts in commercial and mixed use buildings shall be oriented to the primary street(s) with access, visibility and transparency from streets and public spaces.
- Residential and mixed use buildings shall provide adequate privacy for onsite residential units and units on adjacent properties by orienting buildings toward open space or pedestrian ways, placing public rooms closer to pedestrian ways than private rooms, and using streetscape and plantings to screen the windows of private rooms.

Curb Cuts

- Curb cuts shall be minimized and combined whenever possible into one main access point per property, depending on needs for truck and emergency access.
- Curb cuts and driveways of adjacent properties may be combined into one shared access point, subject to Plan Review.
- In general, curb cuts shall not exceed twenty-four feet (24') in width measured at the point of tangency with the driveway curb radius.
- Sidewalks shall be continuous and uninterrupted at driveways and curb cuts to allow priority for pedestrians.

Off-Street Parking

- Parking areas shall be located on the interior of blocks, behind buildings, or at the rear of sites, away from prominent site edges, public spaces, and streets.
- Parking areas shall be separated from adjacent residential and mixed use properties by landscaped buffers ranging from five (5) feet to ten (10) feet in width.
- Parking areas visible from the street shall be screened from street view by fences, gates, walls, landscaping, permanent planters, hedges or combinations of these elements.
- Large parking lots shall incorporate landscaping in the form of trees, vegetated aisles or bioswales, and comfortable destination-oriented passage across and along the side of parking areas.



- A minimum of one (1) large tree per twelve (12) parking spaces (minimum 3" caliper with adequate root protection and rain absorption area), and one (1) vegetated aisle or swale per sixty (60) parking spaces shall be provided.
- The combined minimum size for vegetated aisles shall be no less than 5% of the entire parking lot area.

- Bicycle racks shall be provided onsite at locations that may attract customers and visitors, such as the sidewalks in front of mixed use buildings. Bicycle storage facilities for residents shall be incorporated into the design of new residential and mixed use buildings.

Loading Areas

- Loading areas and service entrances should be located to the rear or side of the building, and adequate space and clearances shall be provided for the maneuvering of trucks and delivery vehicles.
- Loading and dumpster areas should be screened from public view by landscape buffers, fences, walls, or a combination of them.

Landscaping

- Landscape features shall frame streets and public spaces, and define edges, while shielding negative views such as dumpsters or loading areas.
- Plantings shall not conflict with the visibility of site entrances and exit drives, access ways, or road intersections.
- New trees and shrubs shall be selected from species native to the region and noninvasive species adapted to the area.
- Tree species shall be selected to maintain adequate height clearances for sidewalk circulation and good visibility of commercial storefronts.



- Site and landscape features shall be integrated with architectural design, to reflect a coordinated site and building design concept.

- Street furniture, such as benches, bike racks, trash and recycling receptacles, shall be clustered at convenient locations that are plainly visible and accessible.

- Onsite open spaces may include pocket parks or playgrounds, outdoor sitting areas, benches and community gardens, which could also be accessible to the public if adjacent to a public space.

- Fences may only be used to help differentiate private space from public space, provide privacy for residents and their guests from passersby, and to provide continuity to a streetscape.

Lighting

- Outdoor lighting shall be designed to ensure proper illumination of the pedestrian network, and it shall not cast glare onto streets, public ways, the sky, or onto adjacent properties.
- Outdoor illuminating devices, lighting practices, and systems which will minimize light pollution and conserve energy while maintaining reasonable nighttime safety and security shall be employed.
- Site lighting shall be set at a low luminaire height (bottom of fixture not higher than 12-14 feet for pedestrian areas, and 18-20 feet for parking lots).
- Light fixtures shall be the "cut-off" variety, projecting all light down towards the pavement (less than 90 degrees from the vertical line).
- Decorative fixtures do not need to be the cut-off variety, but shall be equipped with interior reflectors or shields to direct light at the desired target.
- The use of LED fixtures and solar-powered lights is encouraged.

Building Design

Building Form, Scale and Proportion

- Building massing, form, and scale shall be complementary to and respectful of the patterns of existing buildings in the immediate vicinity.



- Elements that may help to relate building massing proportionally shall include: articulated building bases through a change in material or treatment; placement of windows in a regular pattern; articulation of building entries with porches or awnings, and façade and roof projections such as gabled roofs.

- Building mechanical equipment located on building roofs, sites, or other locations shall not be visible from the street.

Building Façades

- Primary building façades with frontage along the street shall be sensitive to the existing context of building façades along that street.
- At least two of the following design elements shall be repeated in adjacent buildings: design treatment at the ground level, relative location and size of doors and windows, window style and proportions, location of signs, dominant façade material, dominant color, and dominant roof form.
- New construction and substantial rehabilitation of commercial and mixed-use buildings shall be oriented to define the edges of the street and provide visibility to and from the ground floor to activate the public space.



- There shall be a direct vertical correspondence between the design of the façade of the upper floors and the ground level retail façades in mixed-use buildings.

Façade and Roof Materials

- Building façade exterior materials, including architectural trim and cladding, shall be high quality and durable, including but not limited to: stone, brick, wood shingles or clapboard, wood trim, metal, glass, sustainable cement masonry board products and integrated or textured masonry.
- Materials on the façade that are subject to deterioration (plywood or plastic) shall be avoided or removed and replaced with more durable materials (wood shingles, clapboard, brick or metal).
- Exterior material may not include vinyl or aluminum siding.

- Uninterrupted, multi-level glazing may not be used as a primary façade design treatment.
- Roofing materials visible from public sidewalks or streets shall be high quality and durable, including, but not limited to metal, ceramic slate tile or architectural asphalt shingle.
- Roofing materials shall not call undue attention to the roof itself with bright or contrasting colors, unless historically documented.

Doors and Windows

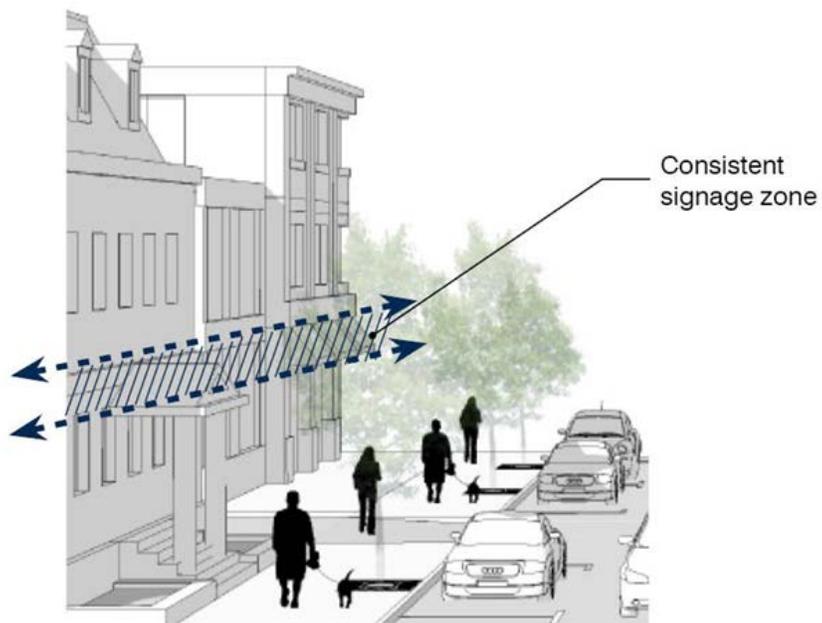
- Entrances shall be oriented to the primary street frontage and address the street with an active and welcoming entry composition that is integrated into the overall massing and configuration of the building.
- Building entries may add components to the building façade such as porches, canopies, glazed areas and stoops.
- New construction shall acknowledge and respond to existing window patterns of adjacent buildings in proportion, scale, rhythm and number of openings.
- Commercial and mixed-use buildings shall provide a high level of visibility and transparency into storefronts and ground floor uses.
- Buildings with commercial use at the ground level shall have at least 40% of the ground floor façade in transparent windows and storefronts.



- Along the secondary façades that face pedestrian alleys or connections, façades must achieve at least 15% transparency.
- Windows on the ground floor of the primary façade of commercial buildings shall not be mirrored or use tinted glass or be obstructed by curtains, shades, or blinds.

Awnings and Signage

- Awnings and signs may not obscure important architectural details by crossing over pilasters or covering windows.
- Multiple awnings or signs on a single building shall be consistent in size, profile, location, material, color and design.
- On multi-tenant buildings, the awnings and signs shall be allowed to vary in color and details, but shall be located at the same height on the building façade.



7. APPENDIX

Community Charrette Summary

A visioning Charrette to review existing conditions and opportunities for future development at Drury Square took place at Auburn High School on June 30, 2016. Approximately 25-30 residents, business owners, and Town officials attended the meeting.

After an introductory presentation by the planning and design consultants working on the project, the audience was broken into three groups for roundtable discussions. The entire audience reconvened at the end of the meeting to share comments and feedback. An edited summary of overall findings, comments and conclusions of the charrette is provided below.

Edited Summary of Questions and Comments

Existing Conditions and Opportunities

Questions:

1. How often do you visit Drury Square?
Almost daily; up to once a week; pass through it every day [drive, not walk]
2. Where do you go when you visit?
The library, Post Office, eye doctors, tennis courts, Shaw's [services rather than shopping]. Also shop at Price Shopper, Park and Shop (outside of the area), Market Basket in Oxford, Stop & Shop in Worcester (Peapod)
3. What places should remain as they are today?
Library, High School
4. What places should change?
Pond feels underutilized (someone had an idea of bringing Swan Boats); it is called Mirror Lake; high school kids canoe there. Shaw's is another area that could change [especially the parking lot]

Existing Conditions / Issues:

- Heavy [traffic] volume
- High speeds
- Not walkable
- No crosswalks
- No handicapped access

- Lots of asphalt
- Pedestrian safety [is a problem]
- [The area] is a ‘Hodge Podge’; it’s more services [than] retail
- Lack of maintenance of some properties
- Small parcels
- Small separated lots for parking
- Parking determines a lot, parking has always been tough
- No on-street parking
- Parking “sea” at Shaw’s
- Shaw’s and Bed Bath and Beyond need renovation and landscaping
- Few people have lunch at Goddard, [although] dam has been repaired recently
- There is no crossing between the High School and Goddard Park
- There is a goose [waste] problem in the park
- Poor maintenance along the edges of pond
- Aging Fire Rescue Headquarters
- No sidewalks near Fire Rescue Headquarters
- Street is being redesigned at the Fire Rescue Headquarters to include two lanes in the North direction and one [heading] South
- Baseball field north of Southbridge Court cannot be used or improved because of its proximity to Town well (aquifer protection area)
- Howe Street: Different places, planning needed; [area] was weak during recession, still some vacancies
- At the Mall, if you want to shop, some signs of weakness [are apparent]
- Concerts and fireworks currently happen at Pappas Recreational Complex
- Thru-traffic [mainly trucks] on Auburn St. going to I290 or heading towards the Pike; FedEx going to the airport
- There are no bike lanes in the town, except a one-mile bike lane at the Middle School [far from the study area]

Opportunities:

- Create amenities, destination, recreation
- It's possible to see activity at the High School [from Auburn St]
- It would be neat to connect park to the library with a covered wooden bridge
- Grass field next to Fire Rescue Headquarters could become part of the pond park [canoe/boat launch?]
- It might be possible to restore and move Goddard's rocket display closer to the corner
- Rotary Club is working with NASA to bring more rocket displays to the park
- [Create a] centralized parking lot, so that people can walk [to and from] parking
- [Need] places to eat, more restaurant options
- Would like to see movie theaters, restaurants in the future
- Renew or update offices [at Southbridge Court]
- Could the six parcels to the east of Auburn/Southbridge St. intersection change?
- What should the [study area be?] retail uses or service[?]
- Streetscape [improvements] would be a great idea
- Shared parking would be good idea
- Green this place up

Lines were drawn on the maps to extend the study area boundary to include the Auburn Mall and the properties on both sides of Howe Street, and Southbridge Court.

Planning Goals

- District promotional events
- Decorative streetlamps and landscaping, banners
- Bike lanes and pedestrian travel
- Improve, clean Auburn Pond
- A destination place
- Encourage outdoor dining
- More of a walking place
- Pedestrian safe area

- Walkways
- Crosswalks (raised?)
- Traffic calming
- Start small, expand later
- Business variety that people would like and would come to
- Make things closer together
- Make it more green
- [Make it] more intentional and organized
- [Auburn is] rocket town, it's flagtown
- Façade and building improvement programs
- Design Guidelines, could be advisory to the Planning Board [check Signage bylaw]
- Benefits for the business community

Vision Elements

1. Include Mall in District
2. Connect pedestrians up to Mall, Southbridge St.
3. Bike lanes / trails
4. Raised pedestrian walkway(s)
5. Sidewalks and paths and crosswalks
6. A generous, nice streetscape
7. Put a median element in?
8. Streetscape planters and banners
9. Use Town ownership along Southbridge Court for landscape
10. Trails along the edges of Turnpike, highway?
11. Lighting for crossings / businesses
12. Decorative lighting / historic lamp posts
13. Frontage / landscaping + lighting plans
14. Consistent signage, "gateway" signage
15. Façade Improvement Program
16. Social uses / outdoor seating

17. Encourage outdoor dining
18. Enhance existing parking
19. Consolidate the shared parking with Town help?
20. Do something with parking lot corners at Southbridge Street
21. Parking resource [arrow pointing at mall]
22. Blackstone Heritage Corridor opportunities
23. District Promo event
24. Better access to water
25. “Adopt a Stream”! (perhaps the Mall? we want to do this!)
26. Do something great around the pond
27. Canoes, Swan Boats, paddle boats, fountain in Auburn Pond
28. Goddard monument functionality (best monument location?)
29. Gazebo? [sitting area at the corner of Goddard park?]
30. Ice skating (the pond freezes and it is not deep)
31. Redevelop a few key properties
32. New destination uses / activities
33. Uniform architecture needed
34. Auburn Fire Rescue Headquarters location?
35. Redo / improve fire headquarters
36. Replace Verizon building with [more vernacular?] architecture
37. [Study area] could have more housing
38. Community lot redevelopment
39. How to use Shaw’s lot?
40. Shaw’s and its future: mixed use zoning, maybe housing
41. Westborough, good example [of mixed use downtown] (architecture like Panera’s building)