Streetscape Policy and Design Guidelines for Stoughton Town Center

Prepared by the Old Colony Planning Council for the Town of Stoughton, Massachusetts

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Project Overview

"Streets and their sidewalks, the main public places of a city, are its most vital organs…..If a city's streets look interesting, the city looks interesting; if they look dull, the city looks dull." – Jane Jacobs

The Town of Stoughton is conducting a planning initiative to envision significant streetscape improvements in its Town Center area. The current streetscape conditions are designed for efficient vehicular circulation, but do not necessarily support effective pedestrian and bicycle accessibility and safety.

The Old Colony Planning Council has been selected to assist the Town of Stoughton in developing streetscape design concepts for a specific area that includes Route 138 (Washington Street) in Stoughton on portion of Road leading into the Center from the South (Walnut Street to Railroad Avenue) and out of the Center to the North (Monk Street to Lincoln Street).

The recommendations are focused on ways to beautify the Stoughton Town Center, create a greater multi-modal balance with pedestrians, and form a better setting for business growth and development. Between 2006 and 2016, the proportion of people biking to work nationwide increased by approximately 25 percent, and municipalities are increasingly focused on promoting walkability and access to transit as a means to attract talent and investment.

The result of the streetscape design and policy will be a more attractive and functional design that will be more inviting to businesses and residents in close proximity to Stoughton Center; the gateways to the heart of the community. The design will also make the area more inviting for current businesses and their patron as well as current residents. The new design will be ADA compliant and will create a safer pathway for pedestrians and cyclists.

Additional landscaping including shade trees will turn the area from a stretch of asphalt to an attractive and welcoming area that will be admired by the community as well as thousands of commuters that pass through this area every day.

Stoughton Town Center can be an attractive destination for residents and visitors alike. Its historic and traditional New England Village development patterns remain largely intact today. This has resulted in most buildings lining the sidewalk which supports walkability. However, traffic congestion, parking constraints, limited open spaces for gatherings, the blighted condition of several buildings, and competing local and regional commercial interests have resulted in a far more limited mix of commercial, entertainment and civic uses than once drew residents from around the community on a regular basis.

The fabric of the Town Center is woven from its significance as the center of municipal government and the site of important business, cultural, and civic activities. Diverse uses including offices, medical services, education institutions, residences, and retail shops are found in the Town Center. While the historic character of the area as a bustling hub of activity remains, the current urban design vision emphasizes the Town Center area as a livable, walkable, progressive and sustainable community.

Planning Goals

The following planning goals have been identified:

- Create a clear **vision for a streetscape enhancement** of Stoughton Town Center that includes a more holistic design approach.
- Provide an environment that is **friendly to pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists** with a system of connected multi-modal amenities.
- Seek a more effective **traffic calming** solution to the study area.
- **Reinforce the Town Center** as an attractive historic place that includes modern elements such as sustainable green infrastructure.
- **Enhance the economic value** of the area as a place to shop, visit, and work.
- Improve the Town Center with development as a **gateway hub.**

Design Process

As part of the design process, OCPC met with Town officials to review and discuss existing conditions, goals and opportunities to improve streetscape and accessibility within the study area. Additional steps in the design process included the following:

- Site visits and data analysis to **understand the basic conditions** of the streetscape elements.
- Use of **community input** to understand key issues and opportunities.
- Provision of **street design guidelines** that represents a vision of streetscape improvements and conveys the design character of the Town Center area, building upon key intersection and street designs that are underway.
- Provision of **documentation of the vision** to support subsequent grants and funding requests.

Streetscape Policy District

The study area consists of the following rights-of-way:

- Route 138 (Washington Street) in Stoughton on portion of Road leading into the Center from the South (Walnut Street to Railroad Avenue); and
- from the Center to the North (Monk Street to Lincoln Street).

(Insert Map of Streetscape Policy district here)

Complete Streets Policy

Vision and Purpose

Complete Streets principles contribute toward the safety, health, economic viability, and quality of life in a community by providing greater opportunities in multi-modal and non-motorized transportation; therefore, the purpose of the Town of Stoughton Complete Street Policy is to accommodate all road users by creating a road network that meets the needs of individuals utilizing a variety of transportation modes. It is the intent of the Town of Stoughton to formalize the plan, design, operation and maintenance of streets so that they are safe for all users of all ages and abilities. These policies direct decision makers to consistently fund, plan for, design, and construct streets to accommodate all anticipated users including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, transit, freight, and commercial vehicles.

Core Commitment

The Town of Stoughton policies recognize that all users of all transportation modes, including, but not limited to, pedestrians, cyclists, transit and school bus riders, motorists, delivery and service personnel, freight haulers, and emergency responders, are legitimate users of streets and deserve safe streets. "All Users" includes users of all ages and abilities.

The Town of Stoughton recognizes that all projects, new, maintenance, or reconstruction, are included as opportunities to implement Complete Streets principles. The Town will, to the maximum extent possible, design, construct, maintain, and operate all streets to provide for a comprehensive and integrated street network for people of all ages and abilities.

Exceptions to the Complete Streets Policy may be granted by the Town of Stoughton Street Commissioners which include: 1. Transportation networks where specific users are prohibited by law, such as interstate freeways or pedestrian malls. An effort will be made, in these cases for accommodations elsewhere. 2. Where cost or impacts of accommodation is excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use. 3. Documentation of an absence of current and future need.

Best Practices

The Town of Stoughton Complete Streets Policy will focus on developing a connected, integrated network that serves all road users. As feasible, the Complete Streets Policy will be integrated into policies, planning, and design of all types of public and private projects, including new construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, repair, and maintenance of transportation networks. The policies will be consistent with the following bulleted project selection criteria for multi purposed pathway and pedestrian projects utilized by the Town:

- To point of destinations – The project will alleviate the documented transportation problem and will be part of an existing multi or walkway network and link, complete, or extend systems. However, a project that is the first element of a planned multi or walkway system will also be valued. Isolated projects with no clearly defined origin or destination will be avoided.

- Reason to come – The purpose of the project is to provide pedestrian links to destinations including the Stoughton Center, transit stops, shopping centers, and playgrounds and pedestrian oriented destinations.
- Highly populated area – The project will serve highly populated areas.
- Schools – The project(s) will serve streets and the network surrounding schools.
- Athletic complexes – The project(s) will serve streets and the networks surrounding these areas.
- Recreation Centers – The project(s) will serve streets and the networks surrounding these areas.
- Beach – The project(s) will improve streets leading to and from beaches.
- East-West connections – The project will enhance east-west connections.
- North-South connections – The project will enhance north-south connections.

The Town of Stoughton Complete Streets Policy may be achieved through single elements incorporated into a particular project or incrementally through a series of smaller improvements or maintenance activities.

The latest design guidance, standards, and recommendations available will be used in the implementation of Complete Streets including but not limited to the following:

- Massachusetts of Department of Transportation MassHighway Design Guidebook. (latest edition)
- American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) A Policy on Geometric Design of Highway and Streets. (latest edition)
- The United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration's Manual on Uniform Traffic Design Controls. (latest edition)
- Institute of Transportation Engineers, Traffic Engineering Handbook (latest edition)
- The Architectural Access board (AAB) 521 CMR Rules and Regulations.
- Documents, plans and studies created for the Town of Stoughton, such as bicycle and pedestrian network plans, the Town's Master Plan, Town Policies, traffic management plans, urban renewal plans, and all other related documentation.

Complete Streets principles include the development and implementation of projects in a context sensitive manner in which project implementation is sensitive to the community's physical, economic, and social setting. The context sensitive approach to process and design includes a range of goals by considering stakeholder and community values on a level plane with the project need. It includes goals related to livability with greater participation of those affected in order to gain project consensus. The overall goal of this approach is to preserve and enhance scenic, aesthetic, historical, and environmental resources while improving or maintaining safety, mobility, and infrastructure conditions.

Complete Streets implementation and effectiveness should be constantly evaluated for success and opportunities for improvement. The Town will develop performance measures to gauge implementation and effectiveness of the policies.

Implementation

Implementation of the Complete Streets Policy will be carried out cooperatively within all departments in the Town of Stoughton with multi-jurisdictional cooperation, to the greatest extent possible, among private developers, and state, regional, and federal agencies. The Town's Engineering Department will serve as the Town of Stoughton Street Commissioners' technical review agency for all Complete Street projects. The Engineering Department will forward the project documentation and plans to all applicable Town departments for comment during the review process. Ultimately, the project will require a vote by the Town of Stoughton Street Commissioners.

The Town shall make the Complete Streets practices a routine part of everyday operations, shall approach every transportation project and program as an opportunity to improve streets and the transportation network for all users, and shall work in coordination with other departments, agencies, and jurisdictions.

The Town will review and revise or develop proposed revisions to all appropriate planning documents, zoning codes, subdivision regulations, laws, procedures, rules, regulations, guidelines, and programs to integrate the Complete Streets principles in all street projects, as feasible.

The Town will maintain a comprehensive priority list of transportation improvement projects including problem intersections and roadways.

The Town will maintain a comprehensive inventory of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure that will prioritize projects to eliminate gaps in the sidewalk and bikeway network. The Town will coordinate with MassDOT to confirm the accuracy of a baseline pedestrian and bicycle accommodations inventory in order to prioritize projects.

The Town will re-evaluate Capital Improvement Projects prioritization to encourage implementation of Complete Streets principles.

The Town will incorporate Complete Streets principles into the Town of Stoughton's Master Plan as well as other plans including open space, recreation, and comprehensive plans.

The Town will train pertinent town staff on the content of Complete Streets principles and best practices for implementing policy.

The Town will utilize inter-department coordination to promote the most responsible and efficient use of resources for activities within the public way.

The Town will seek out appropriate sources of funding and grants for implementation of Complete Streets policies.

Introduction

The public realm, as it is commonly referred to, is the area contained in the public street right-of-way. This area is under public ownership and includes areas such as streets, sidewalks, open space, landscaping, lighting, and street furniture. Comprehensive planning and design of public and private streetscape elements can help establish a cohesive character and, ultimately, a stronger, more distinct identity for the Town of Stoughton. In the public realm, emphasis is placed on creating a safe and suitable pedestrian environment. Particular attention should be paid to the design of new and replacement sidewalks, crosswalks, use of storefront displays and merchandising to promote pedestrian traffic, and provision of sidewalk dining areas. These guidelines are intended to be used as a planning tool for public projects and to guide conditions of approval for private projects. These guidelines contain concepts, illustrations, images, recommendations, and design guidance that will aid in implementation of public area improvements.

Objectives

The streetscape design guidelines aim to create a unified and visually attractive environment. This effort will ultimately act as an investment catalyst, encouraging private property upgrades and new development. Specifically, the intention of the design guidelines is to:

A. Establish a clear sense of arrival, through a distinct change in landscape, built areas, or special entrance features.
B. Organize signage, lighting, and street furniture to give people a sense of direction and orientation.
C. Create a public realm that is safe, secure and enjoyable.
D. Establish a high quality street furniture palette that creates interest and comfort for the public realm.
E. Establish a landscape palette that sets the proper tone, is easy to maintain, and is appropriate to the locale.
F. Balance the needs of pedestrian with vehicular and bicycle traffic.

The design of the public right-of-way, particularly paving, street furniture, landscaping, and lighting, should contribute to the evolving sense of place and character of the Town of Stoughton.

Streetscape Policy

The placement and arrangement of the various elements that make up the streetscape has a significant impact on the appearance, usability, and function of the street and sidewalk. To be effective, the design of the streetscape must consider all the elements collectively, and place each in relation to the others in a logical fashion. This ensures that the elements function property with respect to each other and that adequate space in the streetscape is preserved for each function.

Purpose

The Town of Stoughton is committed to providing a high quality, safe, pedestrian-friendly environment with multi-modal accommodation and a positive experience of the street. The Town Center district will be developed into a vibrant environment through the consistent use of durable but aesthetically pleasing materials, diligent maintenance, and targeted resources to leverage private development. The Streetscape Policy will achieve a sense of continuity on key linear corridors and provide a rational strategy for transitioning from one neighborhood to another.

Approach

Overall, it is the Town's intent to use the Town Center as a pilot for larger town-wide streetscape initiative. The Streetscape Policy addresses fundamental quality of life issues such as safety on the street, connectivity to work and activity districts, access to transportation options, and the creation of a clean and comfortable public environment. The Streetscape Policy regulates the type and use of materials as well as the dimensions and the construction of the public ways within the Streetscape Policy District.

This Policy applies to any construction in the public right-of-way, whether done by a private entity, the Town, or as appropriate, the Commonwealth's Department of Transportation. The Streetscape Policy is administered by the ***Town of Stoughton's Department of Public Works (or engineering dept.?),*** which is responsible for implementing improvements within the Town's rights-of-way. Specifically, DPW and any design consultants under contract with the Town will use this Policy to design specific projects. In some cases, the private sector may be involved with the implementation of streetscape improvements in front of a building, in which case the Policy will be applied to ensure continuity and quality.

Limitations

This document has its limitations. While the Streetscape Policy brings a sense of coherence and aesthetic standards to the District, it does not represent a full "Complete Streets" policy. A Complete Streets Policy adopts an approach where road networks are safer, more livable, and welcoming to all. It is designed for all modes of transportation and provides safe access for all users – pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation.

The Town acknowledges this is a living document and is therefore meant to evolve over time. Additionally, dimensional criteria are descriptive in nature rather than prescriptive. Lastly, while unique categories are used rather than industry classifications, all streetscape improvements within the Streetscape Policy District shall be consistent with American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) specification and guidance, as applicable.

The following section presents each of the primary components of the Streetscape Policy, and defines the primary criteria for locating each component in the public realm. The criteria indicate where flexibility is available in placement of elements to maintain the overall design goals.

Previous Studies

Route 138 Corridor Planning Study – July 2001

In July 2001, the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) completed the Route 138 Corridor Planning Study, which included Route 138 in the communities of Milton, Canton, and Stoughton. The study recommended 25 corridor improvements including a number of improvements in Stoughton.

These Stoughton improvements included:

- Installing traffic Signals to the York Street/Washington Street (Route 138) intersection, including widening the intersection approaches to include an exclusive left turn lane and a through lane southbound, a combination through right turn lane and through lane northbound, and a separate left turn lane and right turn lane westbound.
- Widening the southbound lane at the Lincoln Street/Washington Street (Route 138) intersection to include an exclusive left turn lane and a through lane, and widening the eastbound lane to include a separate left turn lane and right turn lane.
- Installing traffic signals at the School Street/Washington Street (Route 138) intersection and including two southbound approach lanes.

This study included signal warrant analyses for the York Street/Washington Street (Route 138) intersection and the School Street/Washington Street (Route 138) intersection that showed both of these intersections satisfied the Four Hour Volume Warrant and the Peak Hour Volume Warrant of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

Town of Stoughton Community Development Plan – MAPC 2004

The recommendations from the Town of Stoughton Community Development Plan, which was completed in 2004, focused on improving Stoughton Downtown and highway commercial strips in order to improve economic vitality in the town. It included recommendations to revise zoning for the purpose of increasing mixed development, improve streets and sidewalks to help businesses improve appearance, develop strategies for downtown parking, and to increase the mix of cultural and co mmercial activities to attract shoppers.
The recommendations pertinent to the Bottleneck Study area included:

- Revise downtown zoning to include a Mixed Use Overlay District (A draft Mixed-Use Overlay District Bylaw and Design Guideline Document was prepared in February 2007 and implemented shortly thereafter).
- Study Downtown Parking
- Increase Downtown activities
- Tie the Mixed Use Overlay District in the Downtown to the Washington Street commercial area
- Improve and streamline permitting process for businesses

Stoughton Station Concept Plans- 2010

As part of ongoing local technical assistance planning for the extension of the South Coast Rail to Fall River and New Bedford, conceptual plans were developed by a consultant for relocating the Stoughton commuter rail station platform and for constructing a new parking facility between Brock Street and Morton Street west of the railroad tracks. These concepts provide new opportunities for creating public parking, creating new streets for circulation, and redeveloping vacant lots in Stoughton Center. This project also presents an opportunity for the rehabilitation and reuse of the historic train station in Stoughton Center. The consultant developed two alternative concepts. These include constructing the Old Colony Major Bottleneck In-Depth Analysis and Action Plan new station platform south of Wyman Street, between Wyman Street and Brock Street, and an alternative concept with the platform constructed south of Brock Street. Both concepts shown an extension of Rose Street south through existing parking lots to Wyman Street.

In addition, both station concepts rely on the same parking lot concept, which calls for constructing a 500 space lot between Brock Street and Morton Street. This new parking lot will significantly alter the patterns of circulation in the downtown, placing a larger significance on the Washington Street (Route 138)/Brock Street intersection, as vehicles will use Brock Street for access to the new parking lot, and also on Kinsley Street and Walnut Street as cut through routes between Park Street (Route 27) and Washington Street (Route 138). The commuter rail parking facility will likely impact the Morton Street/ Brock Street intersection significantly.

Stoughton Square Origins and Destination Study OCPC 2011

The Stoughton Origin and Destination Study was completed by OCPC in 2011 and was initiated by a request from the Town of Stoughton to determine which roadways drivers were using to arrive at the Square (origins) and depart from the Square (destinations). Understanding the traffic pattern by determining which roadways drivers arrive from and which roadways they departed is an important factor in determining effectiveness of any future potential projects to improve traffic flow and relieve co ngestion. Furthermore, it was requested that the data by analyzed to determine the effectiveness of extending Rose Street on the northwest side of the Square southward to Railroad Avenue and Was hington Street (Route 138), creating a bypass paralleling the square to the west. Data collection involved manually collecting license plate numbers of vehicles entering and exiting on each of the nine roadways that lead into and away from Stoughton Square.

These roadways include (in clockwise order around the Square):

- Washington Street (Route 138), Northern Leg
- Freeman Street
- Pleasant Street (Route 139)
- Park Street (Route 27)
- Washington Street (Route 138), Southern Leg
- Wyman Street
- Porter Street/Canton Street (Route 27)
- Pearl Street

The study concluded that there is a high degree of lane changing and weaving within the Center with Route 27 and Route 138 crossing each other. Traffic entering Stoughton Center from Route 139 and the local roadways (Porter Street, Freeman Street, and Wyman Street) further complicate the traffic flow.

One of the objectives of the study was to determine the potential effectiveness of diverting traffic by extending Rose Street from its current intersection with Porter Street (Route 27), southward to Railroad Avenue and Washington Street (Route 138), bypassing the Square.

Traffic flow between the southern leg of Washington Street (Route 138), Wyman Street, and Porter Street (Route 27) was examined to determine the potential effectiveness of this conceptual bypass roadway. The following are the existing traffic volumes traveling between these roadways:

- 260 Vehicles (7:00 – 9:00 AM) = 5.8% of Overall Volume
- 306 Vehicles (4:00 – 6:00 PM) = 6.5% of Overall Volume

Extending Rose Street to bypass Stoughton Square could remove up to 5.8 percent of volume for the Square during the morning and up to 6.5 percent during the afternoon. Such a decrease in volume would likely have minimal effects on level of service and delays experienced in the Square. Additionally, an extension of Rose Street to Railroad Avenue and Washington Street (Route 138) would require substantial property taking and redesign of surrounding land use. This would also exacerbate traffic problems south of Stoughton Square, with vehicles from Porter Street Route 27 and Pearl Street vying to cross over Route 138 Washington Street south of square to access Route 27 Park Street from the outlet of the Rose Street extension.

Existing Conditions

A number of challenges were identified. These included:

- Incomplete sidewalks and wide crosswalks.
- Inconsistent pedestrian paths.
- Lack of universal access at some locations.
- Limited landscaping and poor edge conditions in some areas.
- Poor maintenance of street trees and sidewalks in some locations.
- Visual impact of overhead wires.
- Large areas of paved parking surfaces.
- Several auto-centric plaza's in need of façade improvement.


2D
Google

The Study Area has several different building setback patterns. There are buildings that front directly on the sidewalk, buildings with modest setbacks defined by small front yard areas, and buildings with large setbacks and paved parking areas in front. Some buildings are set back away from the sidewalk but the street edge is clearly defined by either fencing or landscaping. However, in several locations this strong pattern is broken, particularly where parking is located between the sidewalk and adjacent buildings. In some areas, the lack of a strong street edge and numerous curb cuts makes for an uncomfortable pedestrian space.

- Uneven, poorly maintained sidewalks
- Sidewalk paving varies in material
- Difficult to see the crosswalk
- Crosswalk not ADA compliant
- Driveway aprons need maintenance
- Lack of bike/sharrow lanes
- Visual impact of overhead wires

• Distracting signage, not standard or uniform, difficult to identify businesses. There are a variety of signage types, styles, and colors used in the area. Directional signage for pedestrian and bicyclists is limited and inconsistent.

• Lack of safe, clear pedestrian pathways to residential neighborhoods.

• Parking areas and asphalt are uninterrupted. Curb cuts should be installed along the edges to direct vehicle access and sidewalks installed to separate pedestrians from vehicles.

Street Design Guidelines

The Design Guidelines will promote high quality urban design by reinforcing basic principles that make a Town Center desirable and attractive for residents, employees, and visitors. The Guidelines are not intended to limit the development program, but rather to ensure that the program responds to its site context and minimizes adverse impacts to the pedestrian environment.

The intent is to ensure that each building acknowledges surrounding buildings and site characteristics, enhances the pedestrian environment, and contributes to the civic pride of the Town over the long term. In some cases, new civic buildings may be designed as an exception to the Guidelines, allowing these unique buildings to stand out within the urban fabric due to their public function and their role as landmarks for the community.

Investments in streets in the Streetscape district should prioritize walking with improvements that strengthen a pleasant and safe pedestrian experience, enhance a welcoming and attractive streetscape and encourage safe driving.

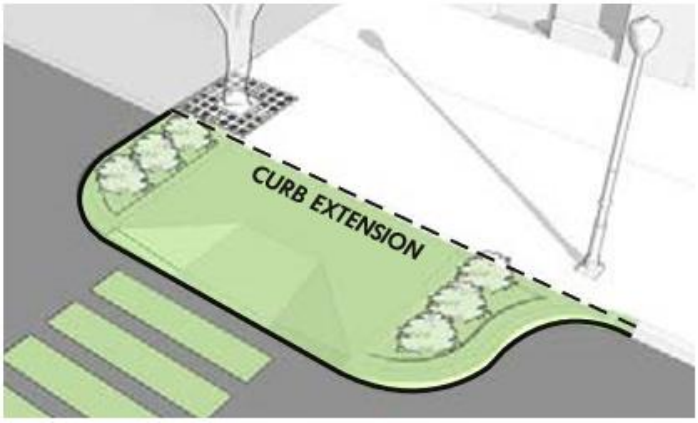
Sidewalks are the key pedestrian circulation component. They provide pedestrian access to virtually every activity and connect walking with other modes of travel, including automobiles and public transit. The pedestrian experience will play an important part in the functionality and the economic health of the Town of Stoughton. The following are design guidelines for sidewalks and pedestrian treatments.

Multi-functional Sidewalks **-** Provide generous and multi-functional sidewalks that are safe, accessible, and visually engaging. Three distinct zones should provide adequate space for circulation with a minimum clear width of 5 feet, adequate space for utilities, streetscape, and amenities and adequate space for activity in front of the building. These three distinct zones should be accounted for in the overall width of the sidewalk.

1. Sidewalks should have a "***circulation zone***" that is kept clear of street furniture, landscape features, and other fixtures/obstructions. A minimum of five feet – preferably eight feet – should be reserved to allow for two people to walk comfortably side by side in compliance with the American Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

2. Sidewalk surfaces should be stable, firm, smooth, cleanable and slip-resistant.
3. Sidewalk paving pattern, color, and material should continue when driveways/curb cuts intersect. Where pedestrian circulation paths come in contact with vehicular circulation paths, crossing should clearly delineate a continuous pedestrian path (material change, contrasting color, or slightly raised surface).
4. Design features such as enhanced paving on walkways, landscaping, and lighting should be used to distinguish the pedestrian route from the vehicular route.
5. Sidewalks shall be well maintained, kept free of litter and cleaned regularly.
6. On-street parallel parking, or diagonal parking, raised planters, and landscaping planting strips should be used to define the sidewalk edge and provide a buffer between pedestrians and moving vehicles.
7. Planting areas, bike racks, street lighting, transit furnishings, newspaper racks, and other street furniture should be contained in the "***amenity/utility zone***" located between the sidewalk and curb to keep the "***circulation zone***" free for walking.
8. Raised planters adjacent to hard surfaces should be fitted with skateboard deterrent devices that are tamper-proof, safe, attractive, designed to minimize liability and blend in with the character of the site.
9. Where appropriate, seating and outdoor dining opportunities can be accommodated in the area between the "***circulation zone***" and the building frontage, depicted as the "***building activity zone***."

Crosswalks – Pedestrian crossings are critical components of pedestrian mobility. On high volume streets, pedestrian crossings should be located at signalized intersections. Valuable improvements may include accent paving, additional landscaping, directional signs where appropriate, sidewalk extensions, and selected street furnishings consistent with the guidelines.



The following are design guidelines for crosswalk treatments:

1. *Crossing distances should be minimized to the greatest extent possible*. Uninterrupted pedestrian crossings without a central refuge island should be limited to a maximum of fifty feet.

2. Extensions of the sidewalk into the roadway at crosswalks are called "***bulb-outs***" or "***curb extensions***" and are designed to give pedestrians greater visibility as they approach the crossing. Bulb-outs decrease the distance users must cross as well as slow traffic. Sidewalk bulb-outs should be used where feasible given the requirements of traffic volumes and specific storm drainage conditions. Landscaping in bulb-outs should be kept under 18 inches for driver and pedestrian visibility.

3. Pedestrian crosswalks should be adequately lit, have clear sight distances, and be free of obstructions.
4. Countdown pedestrian walk-signals should be employed at intersections with high vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

Special paving treatments communicate to individual users that the crosswalk is part of pedestrian space, not an encroachment by pedestrians into the roadway. Paving, texture, and color treatments are especially important in places where it is important to make pedestrian more comfortable crossing.

Crosswalk Banding – Crosswalks shall be 10 feet minimum width on all Town Center streets. High visibility crosswalks have white longitudinal stripes with 2 feet wide white stripes with 2 feet spacing. Make stripes parallel to the curb line of the street. The longitudinal lines shall be contained within two 12 inch edge lines. High-visibility ladder, zebra, and continental crosswalk markings are preferable to standard parallel or dashed pavement markings. These are more visible to approaching vehicles and have been shown to improve yielding behavior. An advanced stop bar should be located at least 8 feet in advance of the crosswalk to reinforce yielding to pedestrians.

Stripe the crosswalk wider than the walkway it connects to. This will ensure that when two groups of people meet in the crosswalk, they can comfortably pass one another. Crosswalks should be aligned as closely as possible with the pedestrian through zone. Inconvenient deviations create an unfriendly pedestrian environment.

Sidewalk Seating Areas – Strengthen a sense of community and sense of place through the integration of modest plazas and seating areas throughout the district that are part of the design of the frontage of a private property and combined with the multi-functional sidewalks.

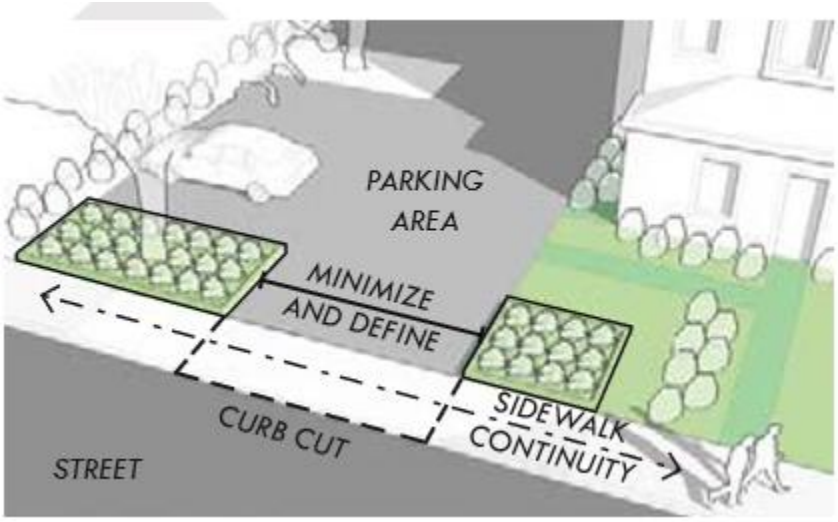
Pedestrian Landscape Buffers – Strengthen the walkability of the district by buffering pedestrians from vehicular traffic with landscaping buffers either at the curb or between sidewalks and parking areas, or both, where applicable. Interrupt large areas of paving where the street, sidewalk and parking are adjacent.

Visible and Well-marked Crosswalks – Enhance the pedestrian safety of the district with visible and well-marked street crossings and driveway crossings. The change in materials should be easily maintained and used to indicate pedestrian right-of-way through painted crossings or a change in paving materials.

Safe and Short Crossings - Add curb extensions to enhance the pedestrian safety of the district. The curb extensions reduce the street crossing distance for pedestrians, reduce the speed of turning vehicles and add sidewalk space for additional amenities and landscape. Curb extensions should be used at intersections, mid-block crossings, or in locations where added sidewalk width would benefit the site frontage, sidewalk activities or provision of landscape. Also, reduce vehicular travel lane widths, center medians, turn lanes, or other components that contribute to wide street crossings.

Welcoming Streetscape – Strengthen a district-wide approach to thoughtfully designed landscape that is appropriate to the context of the building and surrounding streetscape. Public and private investments should be coordinated and integrated to provide consistent street trees at a spacing of no more

than 35 feet per tree. Other planting beds, potted plants, or streetscape features should reinforce a consistent district feel through uniform placement to define sidewalk activity areas and buffer pedestrians from vehicles and harmonious species of streetscape plantings. Private investments in bike rack, trash receptacles, benches, lights, or other amenities should also be coordinated and integrated with public investments in the district.



Reduce Curb Cuts – Strengthen the walkability of the district by placing priority on the continuity of sidewalks and crosswalks and clearly defining the places in which pedestrian and vehicular circulation overlaps. Reduce the frequency and width of curb cuts that interrupt the sidewalk for vehicular circulation.

Durable Materials – Select materials for quality, durability, and climate. Match or complement adjacent materials and coordinate between public and private investments to reinforce continuity of the community character.

Stoughton will have many choices among materials and elements that will compose the improved streetscape. As it continues with the process of designing the streetscape improvements, the participants will need to determine the approach that best matches the community character that they wish to reinforce. ***The following observations and relevant images underline key considerations and possibilities.***

> ***Paving*** – The streets and connections within the Town Center have substantially variability in width, relationship to the adjacent uses, landscapes, and site improvements. The sense of

connection and identity will be enhanced if there is a clear and visually prominent pattern in the paving. By creating a consistent band along the curb edge with unit pavers, the Town can establish this pattern.

There are bands of brick paving along portions of Washington Street today. This pattern can be extended with either brick or another material, such as concrete pavers that have an integral color. The design should anticipate the need to have even surfaces and be resistant to settlement by providing a consistent underlayment of asphalt or concrete. This approach will also eliminate the problem of plants colonizing the joints between the bricks. The paving band can vary in width to reflect the conditions of various segments, and can be interspersed with planting beds or street tree grates if appropriate.

Street Furniture Palette – Street furnishings not only serve a utilitarian function but also improve the aesthetic quality of the public realm. Street furnishings include all items placed within the public right-of-way, such as street lights, benches, bus shelters, bollards, trash receptacles, planters, tree grates/guards, bicycle racks, kiosks, and newspaper racks. Proper design and placement of street furnishings is extremely critical, and when properly executed, has the power to unify and bring new life to the Town of Stoughton.

Because the intention of this streetscape initiative is to strengthen the identity of the area and its connectivity, it will be most appropriate to create a consistent set of streetscape furnishings, with limited variability.

The following design guidelines should be considered when selecting and locating street furniture amenities.

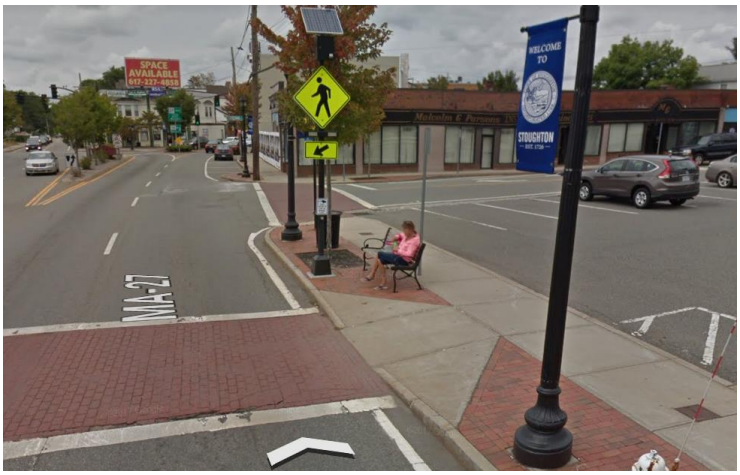
1. High-quality street furniture conveys a sense of permanence and shows the community that the public realm is important and well protected.
2. Materials and colors should be carefully selected to create the desired aesthetic and vision for the public realm. Metal components are preferred and shall be powder-coated the same color to create a sense of continuity. Poured concrete may be used where appropriate.
3. The design and selection of street furniture should consider the safety, security, comfort, and convenience of the user. Prior to final selection, the Public Works Department should review choices for durability of materials and ease of maintenance after installation.
4. Street furniture should be securely anchored to the sidewalk and a graffiti-resistant coating should be applied to ensure a good appearance over the long term.
5. Street furniture should be located along the street edge of sidewalks. A clear and sufficient width should be maintained to accommodate pedestrian traffic.
6. Furnishings should be grouped together to create a more organized and efficient use of sidewalk space. Trash and recycling cans should be located near benches with a variety of furnishings in higher pedestrian traffic areas.
7. Waste receptacles should have liners to prevent litter from leaking or falling out of the container. Plastic liners with a disposable heavy-duty inner plastic bag are preferred. Avoid expensive metal liners that are not secured and subject to theft.
8. Provisions to accommodate persons with disabilities should be incorporated into the design and location of furnishings. This includes a provision for space adjacent to walkways for wheelchair and/or stroller parking. A 48-inch clear zone should be maintained.
9. A six-foot bench, as well as trash and recycling receptacles, should be placed approximately every 100-feet in the high traffic areas, and should be clustered at transit stops and intersections.
10. Exterior electrical outlets or connection availability shall be provided where accent lights may be used. Additional outlets should be provided to accommodate tree lighting.
11. The use of ADA compliant tree grates is required where proposed street trees would be located in the sidewalk area. Tree grates should be a minimum width of four feet and have progressive knockouts to allow for growth. Tree grates provide more clear pedestrian area while reinforcing the desired urban character.
12. Bicycle racks should be located near transit stops, civic uses, commercial areas, parking lots, and within parks and open spaces. Well places and secure bicycle racks will encourage bicycle

ridership and provide an attractive alternative to locking bicycles to trees and light poles. Along major streets, bicycle racks are required at key locations. The U-shape style rack is recommended due to its functionality and ease of use. The rack design permits bicycles to be parked parallel to the sidewalk, which keeps bicycles out of pedestrian traffic.

13. Bollards, kiosks, and other street furnishings should also be carefully located throughout the Town. Raised landscape planters or walls should be used to define selected sidewalk extensions. When properly placed, bollards help to delineate between vehicle and pedestrian zones and create a safe walking environment.

Islands and Medians – The traffic islands and medians can be designed to provide visual relief and differentiation from the surrounding asphalt. Island and medians can be designed with unit pavers or patterned colored asphalt. If adequately wide, the islands and medians can contain plantings, including street trees. As defined islands beside crosswalks, pedestrians are provided with a refuge if they do not proceed all the way across the street. Many of the planters can be sponsored by area businesses or organizations. Portions of Route 138 and 27 have these improvements (see above).

Street lighting – Street lighting technology today provides opportunities to tailor the lighting levels in different locations, even though the same light posts and fixtures are employed. In general, the areas along shops and at intersections should have high lighting levels, while the areas in between can be stepped down to lower levels. Fixtures can be used to highlight architectural features, or significantly limit the spillover onto surrounding buildings and structures. New LED technologies result in low operating and maintenance costs, but remain relatively expensive to purchase and install compared to other sources.



Accessibility and handicapped ramping – The design must comply with contemporary standards for accessibility and should incorporate best practices. This now includes provision of textured materials at crosswalk ramps, and care in the placement to avoid potential problems at the top or bottom of the ramps.

Street trees and plantings – The streetscape should be augmented with strategically located street trees and plantings. The design process should consider where new trees and plantings can best occur.

Curb cuts – There are a number of curb cuts that are needed to provide access to drives, parking areas, and service entrances. Rather than continuing asphalt paving through the curb cut, the paving should have a continuous concrete paving, set at the same level as the driving surface. This treatment provides a visual signal that pedestrians are present and expected to have safe passage across the curb cut areas. The width of the curb cuts should be minimized wherever possible to constrain the circulation of vehicles in deference to the pedestrian environment.

Green Building – The Town encourages all builders and developers to consider environmental impact with every new development and renovation project. As part of the planning process, the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification guidelines should be consulted to determine the practicality of green construction. Whenever possible, LEED guidelines

should be incorporated into design plans to reduce environmental impact and promote energy efficiency and cost savings.

Green Infrastructure – Green Infrastructure is a system where stormwater runoff is slowed, infiltrated, used, and/or treated using vegetation, soils, and natural processes to manage water runoff and create healthier environments. Green Infrastructure is a cost-effective, resilient approach to managing wet weather impacts that provides many community benefits. Green Infrastructure reduces and treats stormwater at its source while delivering environmental, social and economic benefits.

Permeable pavement, soil amendments, enhanced infiltration, and underground stormwater storage systems can be used to mitigate drainage problems or nuisance flooding in parking areas and walkways. Addressing issues of standing water on pavement or in low-lying areas improves public safety and helps to eliminate mosquito breeding habitat. Stormwater planters better enable stormwater to slowly drain into the ground, reducing stormwater runoff, flow rate, volume and pollutants, and recharging groundwater supplies.

Green Streets – Green Streets refer to streets designed with green infrastructure features to allow rainwater flowing over buildings, streets, and parking lots to soak into the ground and be filtered by soil. This reduces the quantity of water and pollutants flowing into storm drains and local rivers. Green streets are created by integrating green infrastructure elements into their design to store, infiltrate, and evapotranspire stormwater. Permeable pavement, Bioswales, planter boxes and trees are among the elements that can be woven into street design. Green streets combine more than one feature to capture and treat stormwater.

Utilities

New development must place utilities underground and/or screen them from view in an aesthetically pleasing fashion.

A. Utilities shall be placed underground for improved service reliability and greater public safety. Underground utilities eliminate visual blight and enhance the quality of the public realm.
B. Overhead utilities must be placed underground wherever major streets' streetscape improvements are made.
C. Structures, fences, and landscaping should be used to screen above ground utility transformers, pull-boxes, and termination cabinets where allowed by utility providers.
D. Transformers should be placed underground to minimize visual impacts. If this is not possible, the transformers should be well screened and placed in the rear or side setback area to minimize visibility from the public right-of-way.
E. On-site connections and utilities should be installed underground where feasible. If utilities and connections cannot be located below ground, these elements should not interfere with, or adversely affect the access, visibility, appearance, or character of the structures in the vicinity.

Site Design Guidelines

Site investments in "Stoughton Town Center" should prominently position positive features, conceal negative aspects of a property, and reinforce a sense of community through thoughtful response to the patterns of neighboring properties.

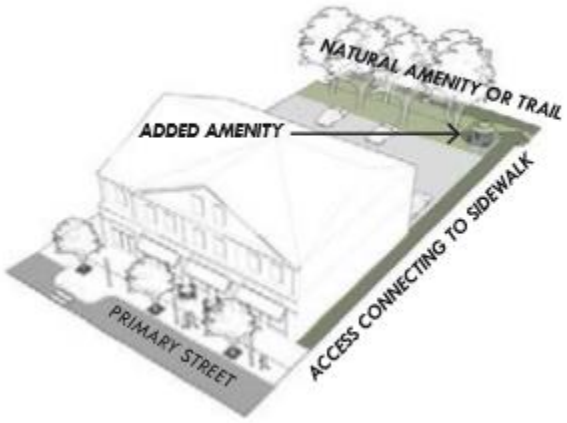
Strengthen the Street Frontage - Design the primary orientation of the site and building to define the street frontage of the property. This definition is created through the placement of the building on the site, building entries, storefront windows, and signage. Parking should not be a part of the street frontage with a location in the rear of the building or setback behind a generous landscape buffer.

Define Site Entry and Exit – Reinforce the site patterns of circulation for the site through clearly defined sidewalks, paving patterns, curbed driveways, landscaped beds and features, signs, or other means to guide pedestrian and vehicular access to the site and building entries and exits.

Minimize Parking Visibility – Design the site to place all parking areas to the rear of buildings. Minimize the visual impact of parking on the district and position buildings to more directly contribute to the character and pedestrian orientation of the district.

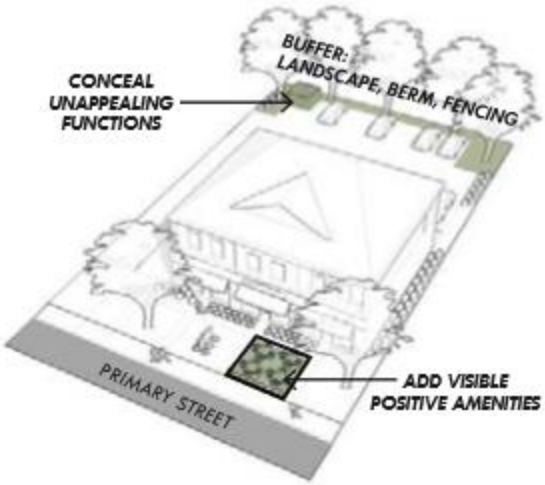
Respect the Neighboring Context – Relate the pattern of building and site layout to abutting properties to create similar building setbacks and street frontage conditions. Do not emulate existing patterns that are discouraged by these guidelines, for example, by relating to a property that places all of its parking in front of the existing building.

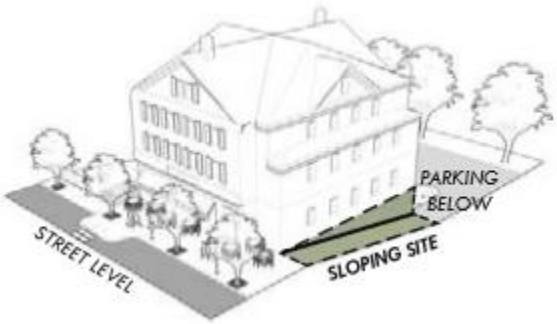
Strengthen Recreational Connections – Design site circulation to strengthen connections to parks, riverfront trails, rail trails or other community amenities that connect to or that are nearby the property.



Expand Positive Amenities – Use unused corners or edges of the property to expand positive amenities with new small plazas, sitting areas, landscape areas, or locations for public art. Redeveloped properties should be designed to use the site as efficiently as possible to strengthen the district vibrancy and amenity.

Conceal Unappealing Functions – Design site layout to minimize impact, visibility, and public view of parking areas, service areas, loading docks, dumpsters, utilities, or other utilitarian functions of the property. The site layout should place these components to the rear of the building and buffered with site landscaping and fences.





Optimize Sloping Sites – Design site layouts to take advantage of topography that may naturally slope. The lower portion of slopes should be used to the advantage of the property by concealing parking, services or loading areas below street level.

Building Design Guidelines

Building investments in "Stoughton Town Center" should strengthen the district as a neighborhood center, reinforce the intimate and historic scale of the district, and contribute to the vitality, activity, and continuity of a walkable place.

Sensitive Building Size and Shape – Respect the historic context of Stoughton Town Center that includes modestly sized stores and houses. The building size and building form of future development should be sensitive to this context. Typically, the width of historic buildings was no more than 40 feet. This should be reflected in new building massing to reinforce the modest scale of the district. While a building may be larger, the plan and shape of the building should reduce larger lengths into bays of no more than 40 feet.

Sensitive Building Height – Respect the historic context of Stoughton Town Center that includes a context of primarily one and two story houses, and stores. The building height of future development should be sensitive to this context, while creating opportunities for buildings taller than one and two stories. New buildings which are taller than surrounding buildings should respect neighboring properties by stepping down a portion of the building near property lines or providing a step back at the upper levels to reduce the visual impact.

Interesting Rooflines - Reinforce the village aesthetic of Stoughton Town Center with interesting and sloped rooflines. Most of the historic buildings and historic photographs of the district reflect a relatively consistent application of sloped roofs that should be a part of the character of future buildings. Flat roofs or parapet roofs are not consistent with the village character and are discouraged. Sloped roofs should be used to reduce the overall perceived height of taller buildings by integrating the upper most floor within the slope of the roof.

Building Orientation – Strengthen district continuity with the orientation of buildings. All aspects of the building should reinforce an orientation to the primary street or streets on which it is located. The primary façade, building entries, placement of the building on the property, location of signage, and location of storefront windows should all reinforce an orientation toward the street and a framing of the street frontage to create a sense of enclosure and continuity of the street wall.

Leverage Historic Structures – Respect and reinvent original structures, if redevelopment involves a property with historic structures. The preservation or restoration of an existing or historic structure or adjacency to a historic structures should result in redevelopment that is respectful and deferent to the original building or portion of the building retained. The past legacy of Stoughton Town Center should be elevated through thoughtful reuse of structures.

Strategic Modifications – Respect and reinvent original structures through strategic additions that will enhance the visual interest and reinforce the modest scale of the district. Minor modifications to existing structures should be used to better align them with the quality and character of the future district with new roof features, dormers, window bays, cupolas, storefronts, awnings, porches, or other strategic modifications and additions.

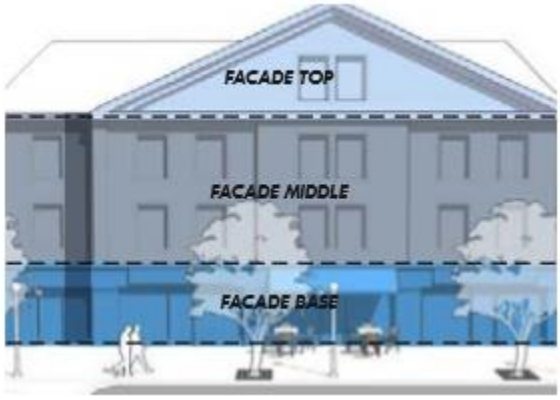
Preserve Variety of Uses – Reinforce Stoughton Town Center as a neighborhood center. At minimum, space should be provided on the ground floor for a mix of uses that would complement the neighborhood center. Additional residential uses may be part of future redevelopment, but residential uses should not completely eliminate all other uses in the center.

Façade Design Guidelines

Investments in building facades in Stoughton Town Center should improve character and quality of the district by elevating design, enhancing materials, and increasing the visibility of vibrant activity.

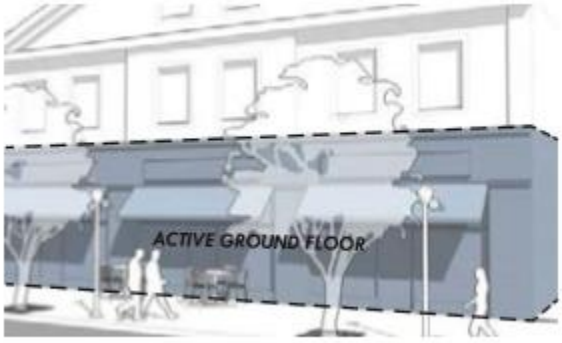
Define Façade with Detail – Reinforce district architectural patterns characterized by understated and simple façade details that are constructed of high quality materials and finishes that are durable. The focus of façade details were typically designed to draw attention to doors, windows, ground floor levels, cornices, and eaves. Façade details and materials should also be used to break down large scale facades by dividing them into a pattern of smaller bays.

High Quality Materials – Employ authentic natural materials such as brick and stone for the exterior of structures and landscape features. Construct windows, storefronts, and public doorways of wood where possible. Any synthetic materials should be as close in appearance and detail to the natural material it simulates.



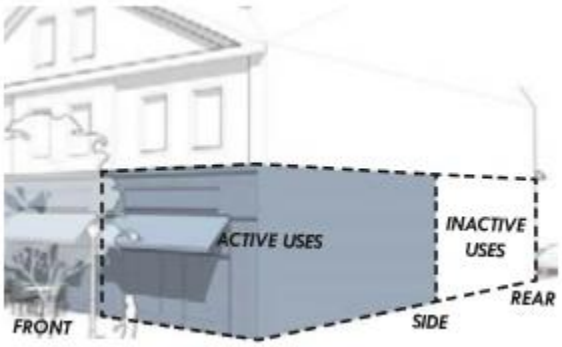
Façade Organization – Divide the façade vertically into a base, middle, and top to emulate historic façade patterns. The base of the building providing a visual anchor for the structures while displaying ground floor activity. The middle portion reflecting the different use of upper floors, often with smaller, regularly spaced windows and different façade materials. The top of the building typically designed as a transition to the roof or integrated with the roof.

Local Character – Emphasize the local character of the district with façade design, details, and colors, including prioritizing local character over national franchise colors or other standardized design features.



Active Ground Floor Uses – Strengthen the vibrancy of the district with activity and visibility of that activity at the ground level facing primary streets. This activity traditionally includes shops, businesses and restaurants, but may also include residential lobbies, community rooms, exercise rooms, cafes, or art gallery spaces, among others. Transparency should be provided through storefront widow systems.

Ground Floor Storefront Windows – Increase the visibility of active ground floor uses to contribute to district vibrancy. The ground floor of buildings should include a higher percentage of transparent windows, typically at least 60%. These ground floor storefront windows are typically more frequent, if not continuous and taller, matching a ground floor which is typically taller than other levels. Glass in the storefront should be clear, as opposed to reflective, tinted, or mirrored.

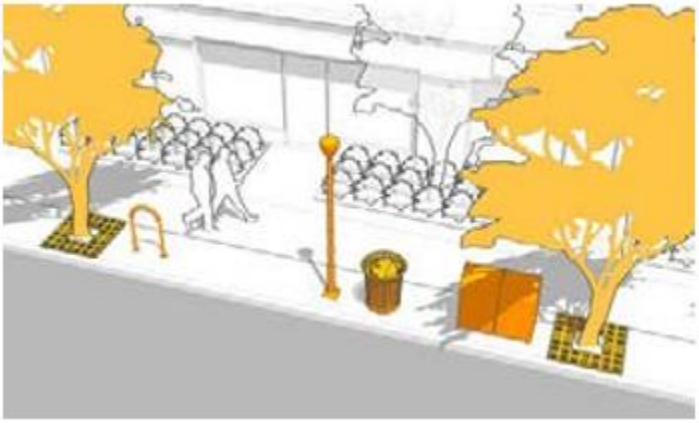


Future Active Interior Activities – Arrange the building program and interior activities to display the most active portions of the program at the ground floor street level. The most active uses should be oriented to the primary street on the ground floor with a storefront window. The least active uses should be oriented to the rear or side of the building. No blanks, walls greater than 20 feet, devoid of windows, doors, or other features should be visible from the street.

Landscape Design Guidelines

Landscaping in the public right-of-way, including street trees, medians, parkways (landscaped strips between the street and sidewalk), and accent plantings, improves the appearance of roadways, complements private properties, and unifies the area. Plant materials and hardscaping should be easy to maintain, set the proper tone, be appropriate to the locale, and blend with other uses in the area. Landscaping can be used to frame, soften, and define important structures. Safety and environmental impacts should be considered when selecting and locating trees and other landscaping elements.

Urban "***greening***" is a key feature of redevelopment activities and, while this effort is not always "green" in the traditional sense, the focus of landscaping should be to create comfortable and attractive pedestrian spaces. The addition of appropriate street trees alone can be the single biggest improvement to a revitalized community.

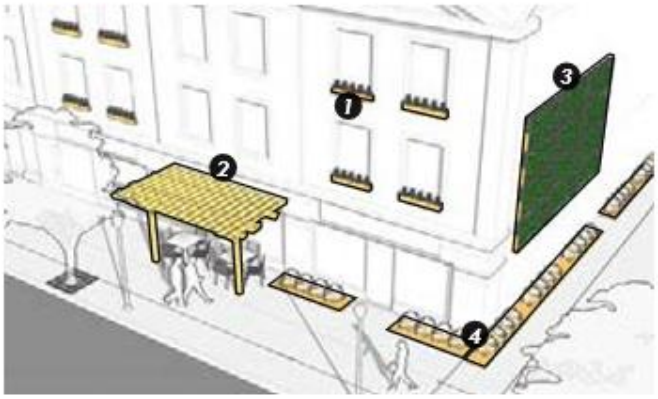


Landscape Details – Integrate landscape components thoughtfully into the site with focus on the location of plantings, selection of plantings, integration with hardscape features, and integration with other amenities such as outdoor seating, benches, bicycle racks, fences, lighting, and trash receptacles.

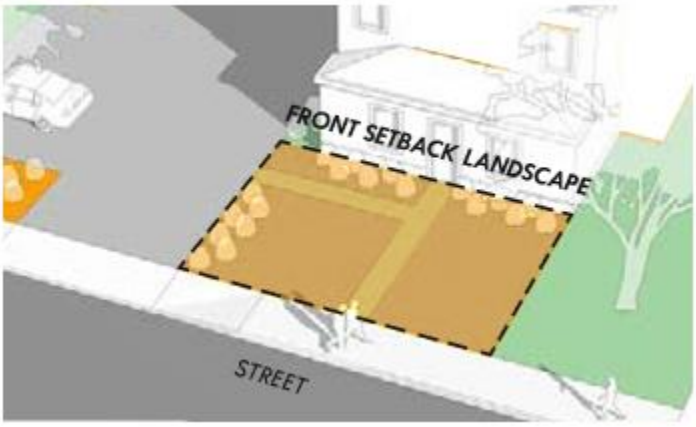
Site Lighting – Use simple lighting of landscape and site features to enhance the overall evening and night appearance of the district and to highlight district features. Lighting should be energy efficient, pedestrian-scaled, and dark-sky compliant (full cut-off lighting) that focuses illumination downward or directly onto the highlighted feature. Ornamental street light fixtures should be selected to match light fixtures used in Stoughton Square.

Landscape Integration – Coordinate private landscape investments at the property frontage with public and abutting investments. This approach should link seamlessly to adjacent properties and provide an opportunity for enhanced landscaped features. Additional landscape should be provided to supplement public investments to define areas for sidewalk seating or frame building entries.

Street Trees – Street trees play a key role in establishing a unified street scene, reducing perceived street widths, and softening otherwise discordant arterials. When properly scaled, trees often make a street memorable through rich and vibrant foliage, colors, and textures. Accent trees should be used to call attention to important intersections, gateways, and other key locations. Species should be chosen for their cleanliness, ability to survive in an urban environment, and appropriate scale in relation to the built environment. Street edge trees should provide shade and cool during the warm summer months. Trees that provide attractive fall colors, seasonal flowers, or shade are preferred. Species native or naturalized to the region are encouraged.



Building Landscape – Introduce planting features as part of the building design on building facades through the use of (1) widow boxes, (20 entry or seating area trellises, (3) vertical gardens and green walls on blank facades, and (4) foundation plantings to anchor buildings to the site.



Front Setback Landscape – Integrate landscape into front setbacks with a simple approach integrating signs with a planting bed, focal tree in the yard, and side edges that may also include denser planting or additional trees.

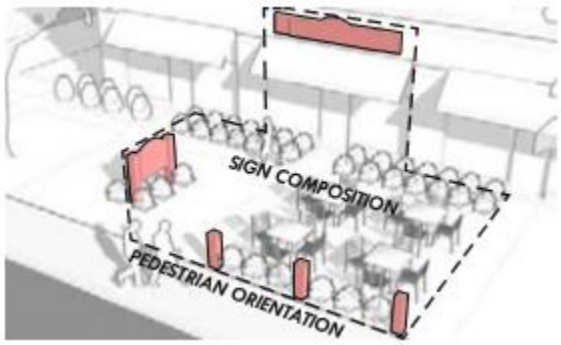
Landscape Site Features – Anchor site features or site plans with plantings that will integrate the features or signs with the overall site and landscape design. Landscape should be designed and selected as to support but not obscure the sign or site feature.

Parking Landscape – Integrate landscape into larger parking lots of more than 10 cars to reduce the visual impact of large areas of paving. Integrated landscape should replace 1 out of every 10 parking spaces with a landscape bed the size of a parking space. Landscape beds may be curbed or uncurbed and should include shrubs and trees.

Consistent Plant Species – Select plant materials to reflect the character of the district and species native to Eastern Massachusetts and appropriate to the climate conditions. Plantings selected should be low-maintenance, long-lived, hardy, and sturdy with salt tolerance when adjacent to roadways or parking lots. Landscape selections should also include native perennial pollinator friendly plants. Landscape maintenance plans should be included with landscape proposals and improvements.

Sign Design Guidelines

The establishment of a clear and attractive navigational (also known as wayfinding) system allows visitors to find important services and attractions. A sign program should include directional signs with arrows and labeling to denote the location of key destinations. Directional signs should reflect design materials and components of the gateway and street signs to provide consistency and unity. Signs in Stoughton Town Center should contribute to the vibrancy and attractiveness of the district reflecting the close-knit community, sense of pride, and historic narrative that is at the center of the neighborhood. In the long-term, consideration should be given to developing a unique street sign program for the Town of Stoughton.



Signs to Reinforce Walkability – Select and design signs to reinforce a pedestrian scale and walkability in the district. Free-standing and auto-oriented signs should be minimized in size. Signs should be scaled to pedestrians in the district.

Integrate Signs with Design – Coordinate and integrate signs as part of the site and building design to reinforce the overall character and quality of the property. All sign elements and sign details, such as address numbers and awnings, should be consistent and integrated with the overall approach to the overall design and other signs on the property.

ALL SIGN TYPES AND COMPONENTS INTEGRATED WITH A COMMON DESIGN THEME AND MATERIALS

Sign Types – Restrict sign types to include address numbers, freestanding signs, wall signs, projecting signs, shop front window, awnings, and temporary signs.

Sign Placement – Integrate sign placement with the building design, façade design, and site design to be an integral part of the composition. All combinations of signs should be coordinated and integrated to support a single design theme and approach. Signs and awnings should coordinate with other façade features.

Public Art

Public artworks are an important element in the marketing, promotion, and economic development of the Town. Public art creates a sense of place by bringing out the community's unique character. Art can be integrated into public improvements such as benches, trash containers, street lights, signs, paving patterns, fountains, and gateways. Locations for public art pieces are suggested at most public spaces such as streets, or along pedestrian passageways.

The Town of Stoughton is committed to expanding its public art. Whether publicly or privately constructed and maintained, art in the public realm enriches the lives of residents and visitors, strengthens the sense of place, and enhances the civic spirit. Public art identifies Stoughton as a town that values its streetscape and cultural assets as enhancements to economic development initiatives. Public art indicates a town of vision and pride.

- The Town will work with both public and private entities to ensure that public art is a key component of Stoughton's Town Center design. Whether integrated into development projects, incorporated into public spaces, or supported by financial contributions, public art will increasingly become a part of the Town's planning. Public art reflects and respects its surroundings and also generates interest and excitement.
- Residents, particularly school children, can create decorative tiles that can be integrated into paving, benches, seating areas, walls, stairs, entries, and fountains.
- Public art should incorporate lighting to provide visibility and enjoyment during evening hours.

Public Art for Blank Facades **-** Integrate public art (murals, sculptures, lighting, etc.) with building facades that are blank (absent of walls, doors, or other architectural treatments). For example, shown to the left, the exterior wall of a store façade integrates a mural that features community assets.

Public Art for Utilities – Contribute and integrate public art (murals, sculptures, lighting, etc.) with utility structures or components that are part of the nearby public realm or private frontages, utilitarian in nature, and absent of decorative features. For example, utility and traffic boxes are shown with decorative finishes.

Public Art for Streetscape and Plazas – Contribute and integrate public art (banners, sculptures, lighting, etc.) with streetscape (street lights or utilities) or components that are part of the nearby public or private plazas. For example, shown to the left, banners on light posts and a metal sculpture that highlights the industrial past of a district.

Interpret History – Research and interpret the significance of buildings, sites, past events, and historic contributions of individuals or organizations through interpretive signage, commemorative plaques, or public art.

Local Character – Emphasize the local character of the district with sign design and colors, including prioritizing local character over national franchise colors, logos, or other standardized design features.

Materials and Durability – Select and design sign details and materials for durability, ease of maintenance, and consistency with the character of the building on which it is placed and the character of the district overall.

Sustainability

Sustainable development, defined most popularly as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Bruntland, 1987) has become an important planning focus as new development places greater pressure on our region's fragile resources.

In this plan, sustainability is addressed in the typical triple-bottom-line approach promoted by LEED. From an environmental standpoint, the plan promotes pedestrian and bicycle travel and accommodates alternative transportation to decrease automobile trips. That means fewer short distance car trips, promoting less carbon emissions, as well as decreased traffic. In all proposed landscaping, native and drought-tolerant species are recommended for their limited water needs and carbon-mitigating abilities. Increased tree canopy through replanting of street trees will also support clean air and microclimate cooling. Where stormwater is collected, the plan proposes Low Impact Design (LID) landscape solutions in the place of storm drains to improve stormwater quality.

Dark sky principles were heavily considered in the planning for streetlights, as well as energy efficiency through solar and LED light sources. Proposed street lights in the study area would replace existing street lighting with more energy efficient and dark sky-compliant models.

The proposed plan promotes connectivity to and increased awareness of local businesses through better wayfinding, stimulating local retail sales. It promotes economic sustainability through public-private partnership opportunities and increases public investment in the Town Center. The proposed streetscape plan encourages improvements to multi-modal connectivity which gives those without a car more access to the Town Center. Additional, pathway upgrades have been made with ADA accessibility in mind.

- Reduced vehicle trips by promoting pedestrian travel and alternative transportation.
- Low Impact Design (LID) plantings and pervious paving limits disruption of natural hydrology by capturing and treating stormwater at its source.
- Landscape plantings emphasize native and adaptive vegetation to reduce maintenance and need for water, pesticides, and fertilizers.
- Solar lighting/LED options for street lighting and bollards reduces energy consumption.
- Street furniture includes potential use of recycled materials.
- Focus on efficient use of existing parking areas reduces the need for pavement and reduces heat islands.
- Increase accessibility through ADA compliant pathways, accessibility to bus stops and updateable technology to convey information.

Low Impact Design Guidelines

Infiltration practices are engineered structures or landscape features designed to capture and infiltrate runoff. They can be used to reduce both the volume of runoff discharged from the site and the infrastructure to convey, treat, or control runoff. Infiltration practices can also be used to recharge ground water. They can be integrated into landscape features in a site-dispersed manner. This feature can result in aesthetic benefits.

Downspout Disconnection – This simple practice reroutes rooftop drainage pipes from draining rainwater into storm sewer to draining it into rain barrels, cisterns, or permeable areas. Stormwater can be stored for use later or allowed to infiltrate into the soil. Water from the roof flows from this disconnected downspout into the ground through a filter of pebbles.

Planter Boxes – Planter boxes are urban rain gardens with vertical walls and either open or closed bottoms. They collect and absorb runoff from sidewalks, parking lots, and streets and are ideal for space-limited sites in dense urban areas and as a streetscaping element.

Bioswales – Bioswales are vegetated, mulched, or xeriscape channels that provide treatment and retention as they move stormwater from one place to another. Vegetated swales slow, infiltrate, and filter stormwater flows. As linear features, they are particularly well suited to being placed along streets and parking lots.

Consistent edge banding in brick or other materials may be preferable along curb edges where there is parallel parking and where the landscape is subject to winter time damage associated with salting and plowing.

The overhead utilities reduce the attractiveness and inhibit the view of historic buildings and spaces. This illustration indicates the change that would occur if the utilities were removed.

In many locations, the parking areas and asphalt are uninterrupted. Along edges like this, curb cuts should direct vehicle access and sidewalks installed to separate pedestrians from vehicles.

Observations on Public Placemaking

The streetscape design process should provide and inspire special public places that will make the pedestrian and bicycle experience pleasant. There are many opportunities to create unique, interesting spaces that engage the community and provide amenity. This small pocket park is a special feature and exemplifies the type of idiosyncratic, spirited contributions that simple gestures can make.

This informal corner and free "give and take" library is a distinctive feature that exemplifies the possibilities associated with improving the public realm of streets, sidewalks and open spaces.

Wayfinding and Signage

A key community goal to provide better links between the commuter rail station and for pedestrians moving to and from Stoughton Town Center. A well-designed signage and wayfinding program can strengthen these links. The Town can commission the design of a coordinated graphic approach that will identify the center and its landmarks, and provide directions for bicyclists, pedestrians, and vehicles.

The wayfinding should employ a visually interesting graphic theme that can be used throughout the districts. The sign size and shape should be clearly distinct from typical directional signage and should be mounted on separate posts or standards, if possible. Competing or confusing signage should be removed and the associated messaging incorporated into the wayfinding system wherever possible. The number of destinations should be limited to a few key places or directions, such as the Town Center, the train station, Town Hall, parking and the like.

Kiosk Signage: Select roof, trellis or other signature decorative feature on top of kiosk frame. Include map of the Town Center highlighting schedule of community events, area business directory, or other information.

Pole Signs: Pole with finger signs pointing to key amenities and/or destinations are recommended. Finger signs are lettered with name of destination, distance to destination, and in some cases the universal symbol for that destination. Parking directional signage is proposed to be wider than the finger signs and placed lower on the pole to improve visibility for motorists.

Post Signs: Post has natural finish to resemble old hitching posts. Inset tiles are printed with directional arrows, distance to destination, and words or universal symbols for nearby amenities and/or destinations as recommended in narrative section of plan.

Recommendations

1. Provide a continuous pedestrian network of improved sidewalks along all of the streets and across the intersections in the study area to complete a safe pedestrian network, while also ensuring that all paths are universally accessible.
2. Employ sharrow lane markings, wayfinding signage and bicycle racks to identify bicycle routes and stopping points.
3. Create a wayfinding and signage program to connect the rail to the Town Center business district.
4. Use seasonal planters in highly visible locations along Washington Street to enhance the corridor.
5. Provide a consistent edge banding in brick or other materials to identify the Town Center and rail links.
6. Provide simple, painted treatments of all of the crosswalks and maintain them over time.
7. Provide planters, bump-outs or other enhancements where they can be added without interfering with circulation needs.
8. Provide street trees and enhanced plantings where they will complement the existing streetscape, choosing species and placements that will complement business signage and entrances.
9. Undertake the coordinated redesign of the Town Center area and environs of the MBTA station with park-like landscaping, civic features, resting and seating areas, and integrated bikeway and walkway networks.
10. Provide new pedestrian-oriented street lighting throughout the area.
11. When appropriate, replace overhead utilities with below-grade solutions, beginning along Washington Street.
12. Work in collaboration with business property owners to improve the edge of parking lots along the sidewalk. Consideration should be given to the possibility of adding green edges and a few shade trees in collaboration with strategically located on private land but along the pedestrian path.
13. Several locations throughout the study area have the potential for Low Impact Development (LID) landscaping techniques. This would replace simple storm drains with vegetated swales that naturally filter and treat stormwater before it flows downstream. LID has been known to improve the aesthetics of a street, air quality, and downstream water quality. The large, paved parking areas should be encouraged to incorporate green infrastructure technologies when designing future improvements in order to reduce the amount of impervious surfaces, reduce energy use and better manage stormwater.

Implementation

The implementation strategy prescribes a program for creating positive change and stimulating development momentum in Stoughton. The following section outlines a proposed improvement plan that can be followed by the Town to realize the vision for the study area. Coordination with other parties and funding availability will be major factors in determining the timing and sequence of improvements and therefore the priorities identified below should be considered flexible and subject to change as opportunities arise. This implementation strategy is founded on the principle that public dollars must be spent on projects that stimulate significant private investment in the Town Center area.

Implementation of this plan will require focused, aggressive efforts by the public and private sectors over the coming years. For this plan to be successful, a comprehensive, consistent and coordinated effort will be necessary.

Public investment in infrastructure and open space will be necessary to improvement the private investment environment within the Stoughton Town Center study area. With limited public funds available, it will take time to build out all of the public actions identified in the plan. To limit public costs, catalyst and key projects can be phased to limit public financial exposure in the early stages of implementation.

Action 1: Determine the location and relationship of catalyst and key public infrastructure projects. A catalyst project can be essential to creating a positive town center atmosphere and triggering significant private development. The project will serve as an amenity and focus for town center development by creating an identity that will add value to the surrounding parcels. Key infrastructure projects must be implemented to support retail revitalization.

Action 2: Identify Potential Funding Sources.

The Town and its partners should identify grants and other possible sources of funding for the streetscape improvements. Grants may be available to support certain recommendations, such as bicycle racks. Local contractors may also be willing to donate some materials and labor to support the plan.

It is important to keep in mind what Stoughton "wants to be when it grows up" and to devise an implementation strategy around that notion rather than simply crafting a strategy based upon limited available funds. For the Stoughton Town Center to be revitalized and the community's vision to be realized, a concerted and disciplined adherence to the strategies and elements of the plan will be required.

Funding of Town Center public projects will likely come from various sources. Some of these sources, such as Tax increment Financing (TIF) or the Town's Capital Improvements Program (CIP), are options for consideration. Nationwide, tax increment financing of public projects has proven the most effective tool for funding downtown infrastructure. Additional funding from local, state and federal sources should be explored.

Action 3: Adopt streetscape plan

Implementation: Planning Board adopts the streetscape plan and uses it as a guidance document in the town's permit granting review processes, including special permit and other projects under consideration. Formally adopting the plan will facilitate coordination with other agencies, non-profit entities, and business partners.

Plan adoption is the first step in providing a clear commitment to Stoughton's future and a tool for decision makers to use to prioritize public investment that will generate significant and sustained private investment. The Plan should be reviewed by the Planning Board and presented to the Board of Selectmen. The plan should be approved and adopted by the Selectmen.

Action 4: Transfer streetscape policy plans to engineering department for review and survey, coordinate with MassDOT.

Implementation: All improvements in the right-of-way will have to be designed and transferred to a plan/engineering survey of the area that can be used for construction. All elements of the streetscape plan need to be included in the construction plan, including signs, bike racks, landscaping, street trees, new curb lines, etc. The survey is necessary to confirm there is adequate room for street trees and furniture recommended in the plan. Specifications for specific elements of the plan need to be included in this phase, along with costs for specific street furniture, plant and tree species and materials selected under the guidance of the Planning Department/Planning Board.

Where the streetscape plan includes changes in areas under MassDOT control, the Town should consult with MassDOT early in their design process to ensure that local preferences are considered and addressed.

Several parts of the streetscape plan include significant public areas that will need further refinement before being included in engineering plans. The town may wish to take a separate action to refine designs and/or initiate discussions with adjacent property owners to explore alternatives, constraints and opportunities. Final design of some signage elements is also needed, and could be accomplished with assistance from supporting organizations or local artists, with approval by the Town.

Action 5: Policy and Regulatory Updates. Plan recommendations generally comply with existing and updated plans, policies and regulations. Where recommendations do not comply or additional regulations are needed, updates to the existing policies and regulations should be made to ensure that the intent of the Streetscape Design Plan is realized.

Implementation: Initiate update to zoning bylaws, design guidelines and street standards where needed.

Action 6: Establish a Phasing Plan for public improvements.

Implementation: Given the breadth of improvement articulated in the streetscape plan, it is unlikely that the Town will be in a position to implement all of them at the same time. More importantly, it is

essential that streetscape improvements are coordinated with other construction efforts (i.e. sewer, traffic or private construction projects) in the vicinity. Therefore, it is recommended that the town develop a phasing plan that considers other public improvements on the planning horizon and coordinates them with the streetscape plan. Many of the recommendations in the plan (upgrading sidewalks, installing bicycle racks) can be implemented in the short term with adequate funding, but larger projects such as intersection improvements or re-alignment will need greater coordination and longer lead times. The town should prioritize those improvements that will not conflict with other construction plans and that have a large impact for a small investment, such as pedestrian pathways, street furniture and bicycle amenities.

Action 7: Issue Requests for Proposals for labor and materials (as needed).

Implementation: This action should be implemented in accordance with the desired phasing plan. Each element of the streetscape plan will need to be sourced, priced and budgeted prior to installation. RFPs may be issued for groups of elements (i.e. all furniture, all landscaping) or for specific locations as phasing dictates.

Action 8: Engage individual property owners to further the plan.

Implementation: Many of the proposed changes shown in the streetscape plan will involve coordination with individual property owners. In some cases, changes may be shown on private property and these improvements can only occur with the involvement and endorsement of the affected individuals. The Town should continue its outreach efforts to stakeholders in the district and pursue private/public cooperation to further the plan. Improving the streetscape by installing landscaping and shielding parking at key locations will be essential to the success of the overall plan.

- Establish an inter-departmental implementation team to coordinate public and private sector efforts. Administer loan and grant programs contributing to Town Center revitalization efforts. Encourage the creation of a Town Center business association.
- Coordinate a public process for amending zoning code and development standards and Town Center design guidelines consistent with the recommendations identified in this Streetscape Policy and Design Guidelines Plan.
- Develop and implement redevelopment activities, such as attracting developers and assisting in site assembly.
- Provide updates to constituent groups for downtown revitalization and implementation progress.
- Identify planning strategies for attracting visitors, meetings and events.
- Participate in retail and office recruitment outreach and marketing programs.
- Provide the information required to create an effective leasing strategy and marketing materials for the Town Center.