



05 DEVELOPMENT VISION & URBAN DESIGN

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DEVELOPMENT VISION & URBAN DESIGN

INTRODUCTION

The Vision for The Triangle is that of a vibrant mixed-use district that attracts residents, shoppers, employees and employers to live, work, shop, and play in a well-connected environment that encourages walking and bicycling between destinations and minimizes the need for auto usage (Figs. 5.1 and 5.2). This chapter sets out a series of design principles for future development, a connections and open space framework, and a series of hypothetical development concepts for parcels representing different development opportunities. The principles, connections framework and development concepts represent a long-term view of the future of The Triangle, and are intended to provide a structure for working with property owners on development opportunities as they emerge over time. The recommendations in this chapter were developed to accommodate phased implementation, with the idea that, in many cases, public realm improvements would be implemented with adjacent development projects. The phasing sequence could play out in a variety of ways over the long-term as development opportunities respond to changes in the market and lifestyle choices.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

There are a number of Design Principles that have guided the development of an Open Space and Connections Framework for The Triangle, as well as providing the basis for how alternative futures might play out over the next 10 to 20+ years. These principles, incorporated into plans and recommendations throughout this chapter, include:

- Ensure that new development is sensitive to adjacent neighborhoods in Natick and Framingham and improves the quality of life for residents of both municipalities.
- Expand mixed-use development, including retail, office, residential, entertainment, and open space.
- Create an attractive, safe/convenient pedestrian and bicycle environment with good pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular and transit connections between destinations.



Figure 5.1: Assembly Row in Somerville, MA: a recent example of a vibrant, mixed-use district with retail, office, residential, and entertainment uses; and an attractive, walkable pedestrian environment.



Figure 5.2: Recent example of a vibrant, mixed-use district with retail, office, residential, entertainment uses; an attractive, walkable pedestrian environment and a central open space in Storrs, CT.

- Create new amenities (e.g., open space, Cochituate Rail Trail and other greenways, entertainment, transit) and take advantage of those amenities when planning and marketing new development. Introduce new placemaking elements - including plazas, sculptures and other art installations - to attract both children and adults.
- Site buildings to define the street edges.
- Create development sites that are flexible to accommodate multiple uses as the market changes over time and to accommodate a variety of phasing sequences.
- Site lower scale buildings at neighborhood edges to provide a buffer.
- Site retail in locations with good visibility (e.g., Routes 9 & 30 and Speen Street).
- Site corporate office parks along MassPike.
- Expand and clarify a transit shuttle route.

CONNECTIONS AND OPEN SPACE FRAMEWORK

The Aspirational Connections and Open Space Framework Plan (the Framework Plan) shown in Figure 5.3 provides the framework for mobility (vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle and transit) and a development parcelization grid sized and configured to accommodate multiple forms of mixed-use development. The roadway network and parcelization grid are designed to be flexible enough to be built out in different sequencing scenarios.

This Framework Plan represents the aspirational vision for the future of The Triangle and should be used to guide development and the creation of improved connections throughout The Triangle. Individual development proposals, while not necessarily exactly replicating the Framework Plan, should allow for, and contribute to, the realization of a similar open space and connections network. Development proposals should be required to clearly detail how they accommodate and/or provide new, pedestrian-friendly streets and site buildings to reinforce the street edges.

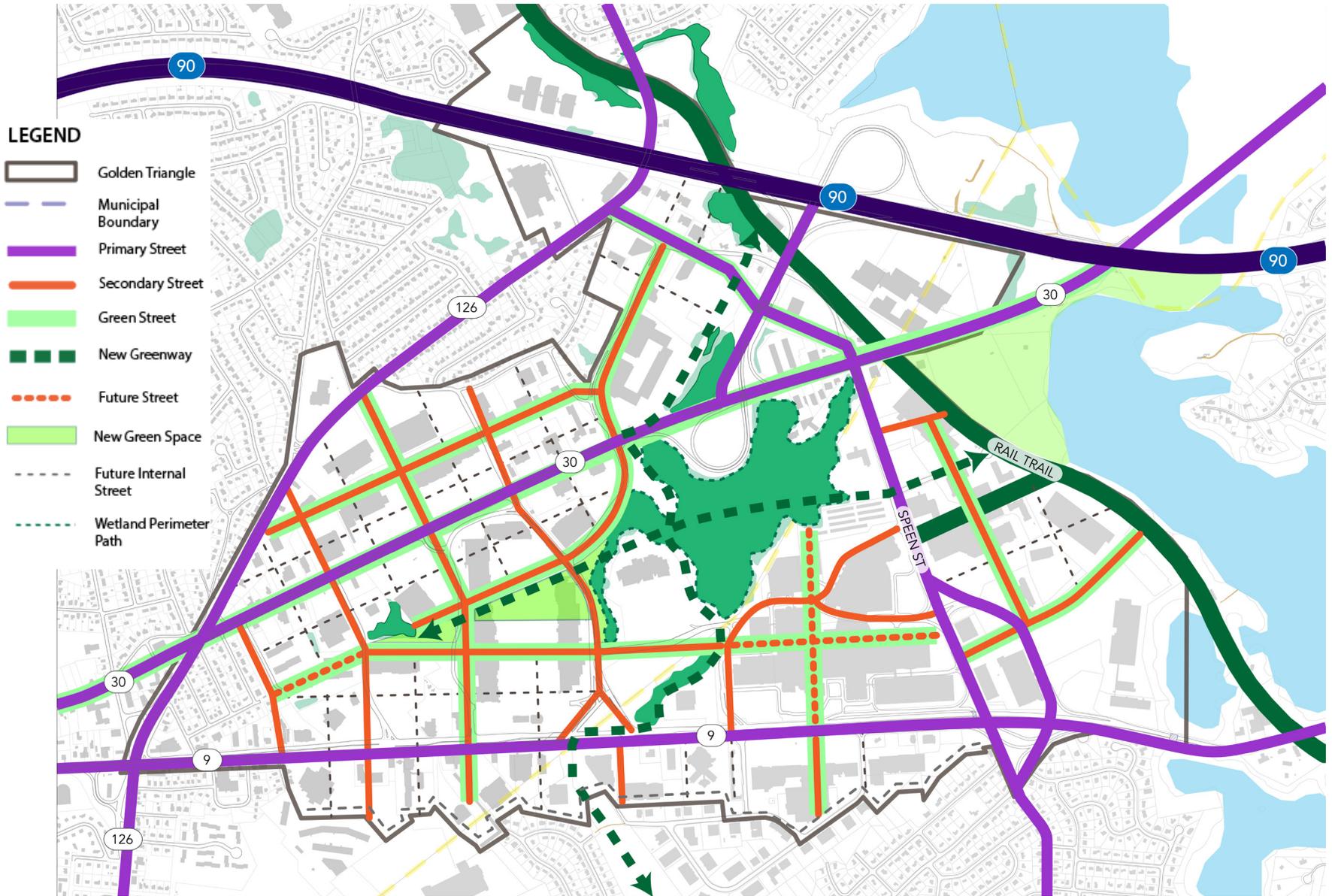


Figure 5.3: Aspirational Connections and Open Space Framework Plan.



Figure 5.4: Boardwalk greenway through a wetland.



Figure 5.5: Pedestrian and bicycle greenway adjacent to new residential development.



Figure 5.6: Active, pedestrian-friendly street with wide sidewalks and cafe seating.

The components of The Framework Plan are:

- A continuous north-south and east-west greenway system utilizing existing open space (i.e., the central wetlands – Bannister’s Meadows, the Cochituate Rail Trail and Wonderbread Spur, the pathway around the Natick Mall and other identified wetlands) in combination with the patchwork of wooded areas bordering and linking the wetlands. These two major greenway corridors will include a wide multi-use path and pedestrian boardwalks through Bannister’s Meadows (Figs. 5.4 and 5.5). The community also expressed an interest in a pathway around Bannister’s Meadows. Much of this land is privately owned. A more detailed study to determine the feasibility of a perimeter pathway, including the availability of relatively flat land for constructing the path, permitting issues, and future ownership and maintenance responsibility is recommended. The municipalities should consider opening discussions with Eversource regarding building trails under Eversource power lines, both north and south of Route 9.
- New continuous east-west pedestrian-friendly “complete streets” (shown as green streets on The Framework Plan) between Route 9 and Route 30 and north of Route 30. Streets that are likely to happen in the longer-term are labeled “future street.” These new streets would function as active front door streets for new mixed-use development – walkable streets that link housing to jobs, retail, and entertainment and that have nodes of gathering spaces (Fig. 5.6).
- Redefined parcels lining the new streets of a size and geometry that can accommodate various building typologies – in other words, conventional city blocks (Fig. 5.3).

The existing roadway system is shown on Figure 5.8.

As discussed in Chapter 2: Existing Conditions, the introduction of a comprehensive wayfinding and signage system (for vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles) throughout The Triangle will be important to improving mobility and creating a more comprehensible and attractive district.

MASSPIKE EXIT 13 INTERCHANGE

The potential reconfiguration of the MassPike Exit 13 interchange would create benefits for both the potential north-south greenway and for development opportunities in the Route 30/Speen Street Exit



Figure 5.7: Diagram of proposed changes to MassPike Exit 13. Letters refer to the text at right.

13 area (Fig. 5.7). This long-term reconfiguration, described in detail in Chapter 6, is recommended to accommodate the long-term 20 percent growth scenario. While the reconfiguration is included in The Framework Plan, it is just one element of that Plan. The full implementation of the remaining elements of The Framework Plan are not dependent on that reconfiguration. The existing Exit 13 configuration is shown in Fig. 5.8.

Location letters in the following description refer to Figure 5.7. Currently, there are two problematic locations on the proposed greenway (A & B) where the pedestrian/bicycle path crosses Speen Street and Route 30. Reconstruction of the interchange would facilitate these two crossings, create new



Figure 5.8: Existing roadways within The Triangle greatly limit opportunities for east-west connections and discourage pedestrian and bicycle activity.

potential development parcels (E), and improve access to adjacent parcels. Some existing parcels on Route 30 (D) would have new frontage on Speen Street as well, which could improve their redevelopment potential, and subsequently the redevelopment potential of nearby parcels (C).

Several access modifications will be required as a result of this reconfiguration. Access to the G parcels from Speen Street will need to be maintained, and a new access road from Speen Street to the TJX campus (F) will need to be created. This will require a land swap with a portion of the abandoned former Speen Street right-of-way and a reconfiguration of the Ameresco parking lot (G).

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Redevelopment opportunities in The Triangle can be roughly categorized into five typologies:

- Large transformative parcels such as shoppers World and Natick Mall
- Large single-ownership parcels with multiple buildings, such as the office park on Old Connecticut Path north of the MassPike, MathWorks Lakeside Campus and the TJX Headquarters
- Big box parcels such as Walmart, Home Depot, Target and Lowes
- Small to medium size strip commercial parcels such as the Cloverleaf Mall and Sherwood Plaza
- Small Parcels, such as the parcels on the southeast quadrant of the Route 30/Speen Street intersection, which could be consolidated to create a more attractive development opportunity.

In addition, there is the redevelopment opportunity opened up by the potential long-term MassPike Exit 13 interchange reconfiguration. Each of these six typologies represents different opportunities for the creation of active, pedestrian friendly, mixed-use development and for the creation of pedestrian/bicycle greenways, a series of internal east-west and north-south streets, and a grid of blocks and parcels sized to accommodate multiple development scenarios in varying sequences.



Figure 5.9: A pedestrian-friendly, two-sided street lined with mixed-use..

Potential redevelopment of properties representing three of these typologies is illustrated on the following pages. The conceptual redevelopment plans were prepared to illustrate how the design principles and Connections and Open Space Framework could be accommodated on a variety of parcel types. The selection of individual parcels does not imply the imminent redevelopment of any of these parcels. Conceptual plans were developed by the Consultant Team in discussion with the Client, but did not involve the individual property owners.

BIG BOX PARCELS: CONNECTIVITY AND POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT SEQUENCE

Figures 5.10 through 5.12 provide a hypothetical example of how a new mobility and parcelization system, consistent with the design principles, could be developed incrementally as individual property owners make redevelopment plans.

In this example, one of the big box parcels (Target - outlined in red on Fig. 5.10) is positioned for redevelopment. These single-owner big box parcels tend to have one or only a limited number of tenants. They are therefore less complex and more likely to change in the short-term than either the larger multi-use parcels or the small parcels that would require consolidation for an efficient redevelopment.

A new east-west street (shown in yellow on Fig. 5.11) links and creates new pedestrian-friendly street frontage. The parcel can be developed incrementally and internal streets or alleys (shown as dotted lines) can provide additional access. The new east-west street could be created with an easement along the rear of the parcel. An incentive or density bonus zoning provision could be used to encourage developers to build the road, to grant easements for the construction of connecting internal streets, and/or to pay into a fund that could be used by the municipalities to build connecting streets.

LEGEND	
	COMMERCIAL (Retail, Restaurant, Entertainment)
	OFFICE
	RESIDENTIAL
	EXISTING BUILDINGS
	OPEN SPACE
	NEW ROAD
	FUTURE INTERNAL STREET
	EXISTING ROAD
	GOLDEN TRIANGLE BOUNDARY

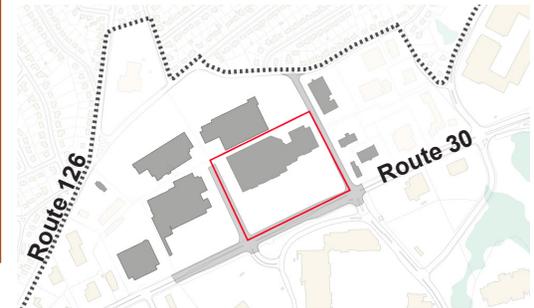


Figure 5.10: Existing conditions with the Target parcel outlined in red.

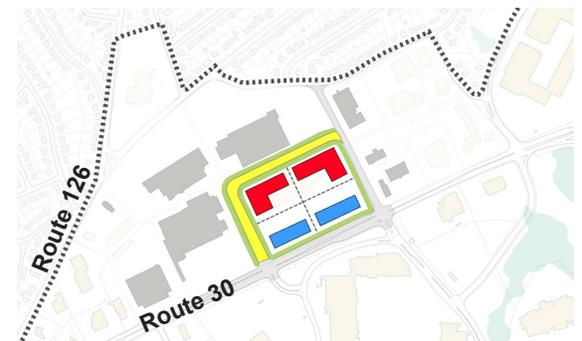


Figure 5.11: Potential redevelopment of parcel with new east-west street connecting to north-south street.



Figure 5.12: Potential redevelopment of four big box parcels with a continuous new east-west street.

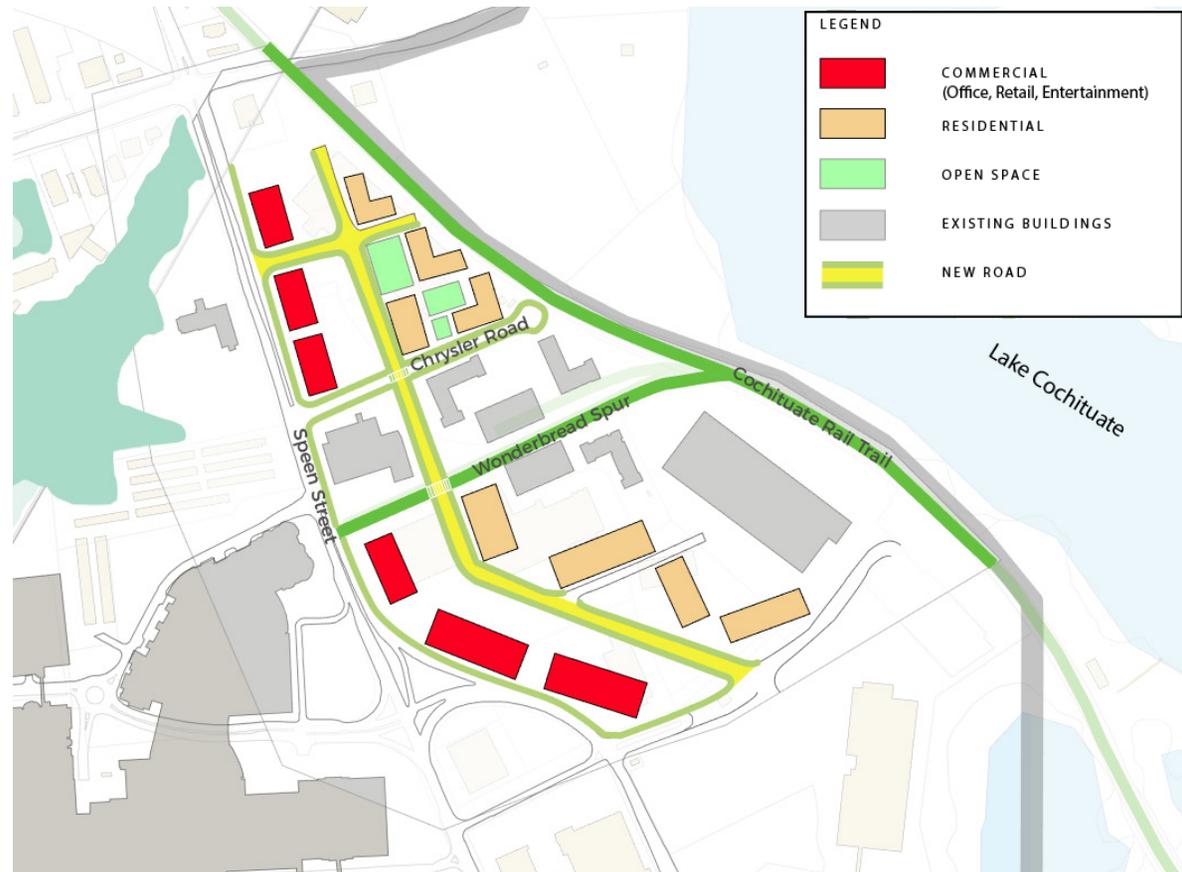


Figure 5.13: A hypothetical redevelopment of the Cloverleaf Mall and Home Depot includes a new pedestrian-friendly north-south street, from TJX to MathWorks, lined with mixed-use development.

New development along Route 30 is sized for commercial/retail use with office above. Buildings along the new east-west internal street are sized for either office or housing over retail.

Over time, this roadway and parcelization system could be extended to create a new district with a continuous pedestrian friendly internal east-west street (Fig. 5.9 and 5.12). Two to three story town-house buildings are shown along the east side of Route 126 to provide a sensitive transition to the adjacent residential neighborhood.

MEDIUM SIZE STRIP COMMERCIAL CENTER POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT

The Cloverleaf Mall is a good example of a medium size strip commercial center. If, over time, the Speen Street sites of Home Depot and the Cloverleaf Mall are redeveloped, a street and parcelization plan could be developed incrementally to reflect the basic design principles described previously and create a new “urban village.” The centerpiece would be a new north-south “complete street” (a pedestrian-friendly two-lane street with parking, in-street bike lanes and wide sidewalks) linking the MathWorks and TJX campuses. The new north-south street is shown lined with buildings sized for commercial uses (office, retail and entertainment) on the west, with housing facing the lake and the Cochituate Rail Trail on the east (Fig. 5.13).

LARGE TRANSFORMATIVE PARCEL POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT

A conceptual redevelopment plan was prepared for the Shoppers World site to illustrate the potential for redeveloping an existing single-use superblock site with minimal pedestrian amenities into a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly development consistent with the design principles outlined earlier in this chapter. While redevelopment of a large transformative parcel would have the greatest impact on The Triangle, the scale of the parcel and number of tenants makes the redevelopment complex, and less likely to redevelop in the near-term.

Therefore, the conceptual redevelopment plan was designed to be easily phased to provide the owner with greater flexibility. For the sake of illustration, a three-phase development sequence is shown on Figures 5.14 through 5.17. Redevelopment of Blocks A, B, and C could happen in any order, and redevelopment of each one could happen in one or two phases.

The key elements of the plan include:

- Two new east-west pedestrian-friendly streets lined with active mixed-use development (housing over retail) and connecting the far western section of The Triangle with Flutie Pass and Burr Street and the eastern side of The Triangle, and a new north-south internal street (Fig. 5.24). The new

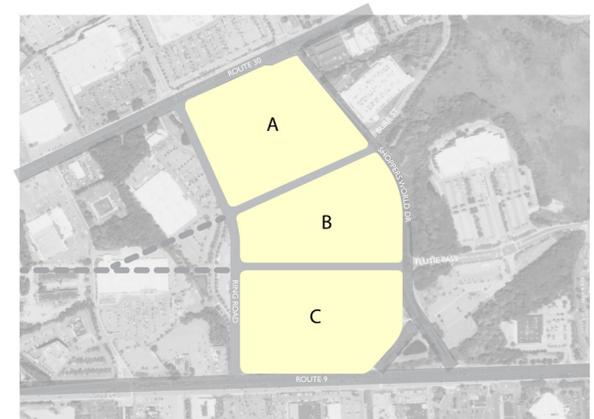


Figure 5.14: Potential redevelopment blocks within the Shoppers World site.

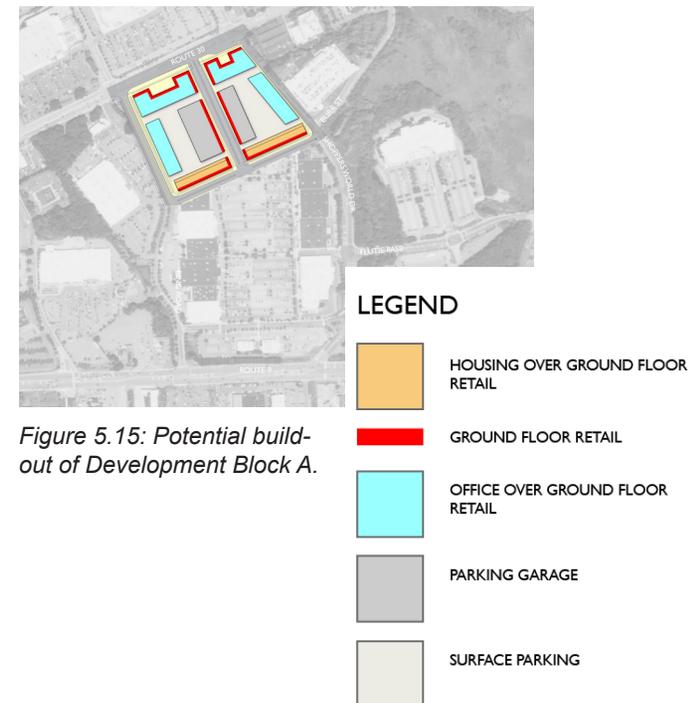


Figure 5.15: Potential build-out of Development Block A.



Figure 5.16: Potential build-out of Development Block C.

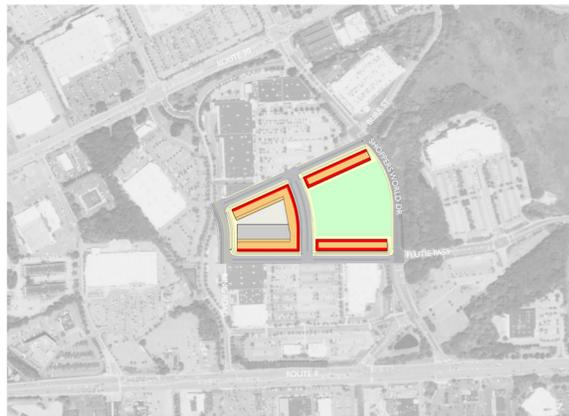


Figure 5.17: Potential build-out of Development Block B.



Figure 5.18: Central green surrounded by housing.

north-south street provides a pedestrian connection from Routes 9 and 30 to the new open space, as well as space for pedestrian amenities such as seating and tables for outdoor cafes (Fig. 5.15). **The two new east-west roads and the new north-south road divide the Shoppers World property into six large blocks which can be developed independently in multiple sequences.**

- Commercial and office uses fronting on Route 9 and Route 30.
- Surface and structured parking in the interior of the parcels.

Development Block A extends Burr Street to the west through the Shoppers World site and establishes the northernmost segment of a new north-south street. Both the new east-west and north-south streets establish a connection with the remaining Shoppers World complex. The buildings are scaled for office over ground floor retail on Route 30, housing over retail facing the new Burr Street extension, and surface parking with two parking garages over retail in the center of the block. Buildings along Route 30 are sited to face a frontage road parallel to Route 30 that creates a more attractive pedestrian environment and improves vehicular circulation. The frontage road concept is described in more detail on page 173.

At the opposite end of Shoppers World facing Route 9 (Block C), a similar land use scenario could be developed with a new east-west road extending Flutie Pass to the west. A new frontage road is shown parallel to Route 9 (Fig. 5.16).



Figure 5.19: Outdoor performance venue.



Fig5.20: Outdoor entertainment venue.



Figure 5.21: Walkways between buildings provide seating and tables.



Figure 5.22: Central green surrounded by mixed-use.



Figure 5.23: Central green surrounded by mixed-use.

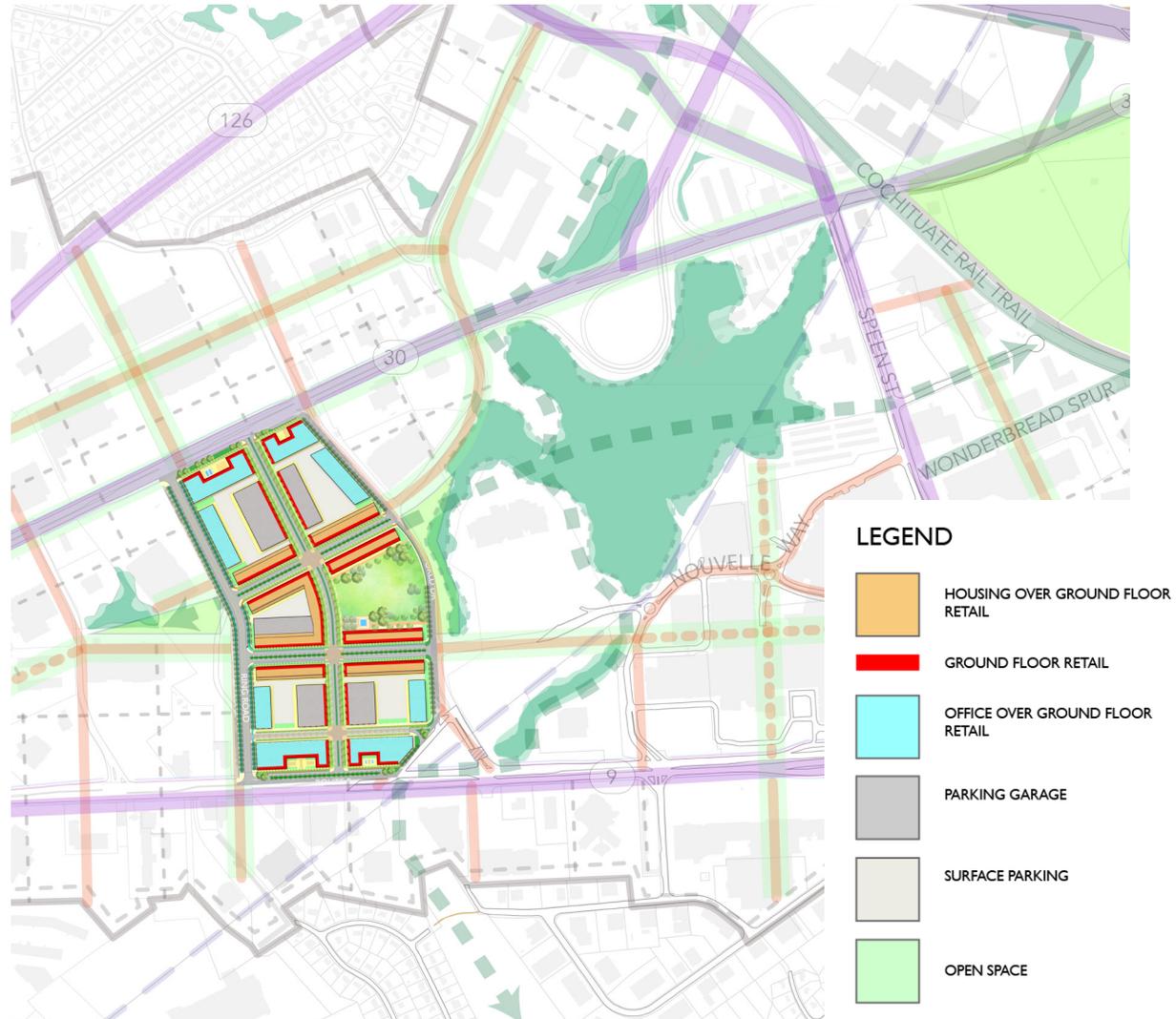


Figure 5.24: Shoppers World hypothetical mixed-use redevelopment plan with a large central green and new east-west streets contributing to the Framework Plan.



Figure 5.25: Street level view of potential new mixed-use development on Route 9 at existing Shoppers World site. The rendering illustrates a one-way frontage road separated from Route 9 by a tree row. The frontage road, parallel parking, bike lane, and tree row buffer pedestrians from Route 9 traffic. Active store fronts and a small plaza with cafe tables and trees enhance the pedestrian environment.

Block B unites the central portion of the new north-south road with both of the new east-west roads. This land use scenario is scaled for housing over retail, with much of it facing into a new village square or common (Fig. 5.18). The major new open space terminates the east-west greenway connections to the Cochituate Rail Trail (Fig. 5.24). Outdoor entertainment uses could complement the AMC Theatre to the east (Figs. 5.19 and 5.20).

The overall plan includes approximately the same amount of retail space as the existing Shoppers World, in addition to new office and residential uses. Figures 5.21 through 5.23 and 5.27 through 5.29 provide images of similar development in other locations.

The sum could be a lively mixed-use district with three new pedestrian and bicycle friendly streets, and a major new open space framed by housing with ground floor retail, opening out toward Bannister’s Meadows and its series of paths and boardwalks.

POTENTIAL FRONTAGE ROAD ON ROUTE 9 AND/OR ROUTE 30

As discussed in the previous pages, a redevelopment option for parcels facing Route 9 and/or Route 30 involves creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment by siting new commercial buildings further from these busy roads with a separation zone that includes a landscaped setback, a narrow frontage road with on-street parallel parking, and a wide sidewalk with a curbside tree lawn (Figs. 5.25, 5.26 and 5.30). Plazas and landscaped setback zones could be interspersed with the new buildings (Figs. 5.27 through 5.29). This design has the advantage of creating a greater buffer between pedestrians and traffic on busy streets, providing additional space for plazas and pedestrian amenities, and

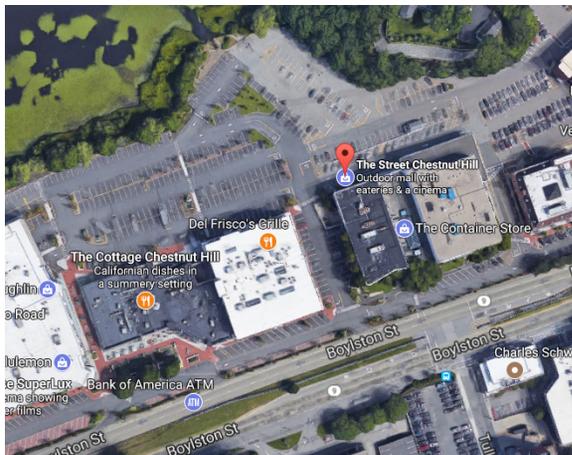


Figure 5.26: Aerial view of similar frontage road at The Street in Chestnut Hill, MA.



Figure 5.27: Occasional larger setbacks provide opportunities for open space and recreational amenities, gathering spaces, seating and cafe tables.



Figure 5.28: Larger setbacks allow for gathering spaces and amenities consistent with restaurant and entertainment uses.



Figure 5.29: attractive walkways between buildings draw people through the development and provide seating areas.



Figure 5:30: Cross sections illustrate (from the top) typical existing building placement on Route 9 with narrow sidewalks and large parking lots; placement of the buildings closer to the street with wide sidewalks and landscaping in front of the buildings and parking behind; suggested frontage road, landscaping and wide sidewalks in front of the buildings, and parking behind.

reducing the need for drivers to exit onto Routes 9 and 30 to reach other nearby destinations. This configuration was mentioned favorably on the coUrbanize website as a way to improve the pedestrian environment, as well as pedestrian and vehicular connections and circulation. The exact design of the frontage road will need to be developed in greater detail and will need to be flexible to accommodate different site conditions and redevelopment plans.

Alternatively, new buildings could be sited at the back of a wide sidewalk, separated from the road by a four or eight foot tree lawn. This layout would provide less of a buffer for pedestrians, but would create a more attractive pedestrian environment than exists today, with a consistent building wall and parking in the rear of the buildings (Fig. 5.30).

POTENTIAL SERVICE ROAD AND PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION SOUTH OF ROUTE 9

The commercial parcels located on the south side of Route 9 share a number of characteristics (Fig. 5.31):

- Every parcel has its own curb cut on Route 9, a number of which can accommodate only right-in/right-out vehicular access.
- In general, buildings are set back from the street to accommodate surface parking in the front, although several buildings are located very close to the front property line.
- There is very little vehicular connectivity between the individual parcels; and, many of the parcels are not connected to one of the north-south streets crossing Route 9. As a consequence, many drivers wishing to move from



Figure 5.31: Aerial view of multiple curb cuts and typical building siting south of Route 9 showing the difficulty of providing a continuous internal connection at the rear of the parcels.



Figure 5.32: Aerial view of connecting path from Hardwick and Essex Roads to Mercer Road.



Figure 5.33: Pedestrian bridge connecting Mercer Road to path on Eversource utility corridor.

one commercial site to another, or who wish to turn left (west) on Route 9, must take indirect routes that add to the congestion on Route 9.

Future redevelopment on the south side of Route 9, where possible, should include the frontage road configuration described on the previous pages. However, because redevelopment on a number of parcels may not happen for many years, the potential for an east-west access road connecting all or most of these parcels at the rear of properties was examined (Fig. 5.3). Three factors complicate the introduction of such an access road:

- There are changes in elevation between some of the parcels, making connections more difficult.
- Some buildings are positioned very close to the rear lot line; and, some of these buildings have service/loading facilities in the rear.
- The rear lot lines are irregular and jagged in some instances, complicating the geometry of an east-west road.

There are, however, opportunities for a series of short east-west streets connecting some of the parcels to one another and to one of the north-south streets that have a signalized intersection at Route 9. A more detailed study of the property boundaries, topography and delivery/access requirements of individual businesses is necessary in order to develop a specific plan for these connecting roads. At a minimum, as parcels redevelop, property owners should be encouraged to create these connections, as well as to consolidate curb cuts. In addition, the issues involved in extending public ownership of Mercer Road to its intersection with Route 9 should be assessed.

There is also a desire for a pedestrian connection to The Triangle from the Natick neighborhood to the south. This connection was mentioned a number of times at the Natick Community Meeting on December 21, 2017 and on coUrbanize. Today, an unofficial path has been created from the end of Essex Road, a short street that extends east from Hardwick Road (Fig. 5.32). Essex Road ends at the Eversource utility corridor, just to the west of Mercer Road. A pedestrian bridge was constructed (by the Natick Trails Committee) over a small watercourse to connect a path across the utility corridor to Mercer Road. Options for defining the legal status of the path should be explored with the intention of creating a more definitive connection.

In summary, recommendations for connections on the south side of Route 9 include:

- Longer-term: Encourage the introduction of a frontage road as properties are redeveloped.
- Shorter-term: Work with property owners to study the feasibility of, and implement, segments of a connecting road at the rear of parcels.
- Shorter-term: Explore options for defining the legal status of the pedestrian path from Essex Street with the intention of creating a more definitive connection.

CYCLE TRACK ANALYSIS FOR ROUTES 9 & 30

In order to facilitate easy bicycle access throughout The Triangle, the potential for a cycle track on Routes 9 and 30 was examined to keep cyclists well protected from nearby vehicular traffic. A cycle track is an exclusive bike facility that combines the user experience of a separated path with the on-street infrastructure of a conventional bike lane. A cycle track is physically separated from motor traffic and distinct from the sidewalk (Fig. 5.34). Figure 5.35 illustrates major and minor physical constraints to the incorporation of a cycle track along Routes 9 and 30. Two potential widths for the cycle track were examined:

- One with a minimum buffer along the street edge (full width: 2' buffer + 6.5' cycle track + 1.5' separation + 6 sidewalk = 16' width)
- One with a tree-lined street buffer (full width: 6' tree lawn + 6.5' cycle track + 1.5' separation + 6' sidewalk = 20' width)

The constraints for both widths are essentially the same along the corridors, although a survey scale analysis would be necessary to confirm this. Based on the physical width constraints, the corridor was divided into three categories (Fig. 5.35):

- Yellow: Few to no physical width constraints to the incorporation of a cycle track along the corridor



Figure 5.34: Example of a cycle track.

- Orange: Minor physical width constraints that can be negotiated through minor regrading/wall installation or adjustment of parking/drive aisle widths
- Red: Major physical width constraints that would need parcel redevelopment or major site level building/parking reconfigurations to accommodate full cycle track width.

This GIS level analysis reviewed available horizontal width along Routes 9 and 30 based on curb lines, sidewalks, building footprints and parking data layers from GIS. It did not take into account other physically constraining elements such as guardrails, street trees, utility poles, or other elements typically reviewed at a survey scale level of detail.

Based on the review, the majority of Route 30 could feasibly accommodate a one-way cycle track on both the east and westbound sides of the road. The primary conflicts are at the on and off-ramps for the MassPike Exit 13 and a few physical constraints at the western end of The Triangle near Route 126. The potential long-term reconfiguration of the MassPike Exit 13 Interchange illustrated in Chapter 6 would remove the primary physical constraint for successful connection of the cycle track to the Cochituate Rail Trail (Fig. 6.5).

Both the north and south sides of Route 9 would be more challenging based on current development. It appears possible to connect from Speen Street to the west side of Shoppers World through some regrading of existing slopes or installation of retaining walls along the route. However, the abutment and overpass constraints at the intersection with Speen Street (“the beetleback”) make direct connection to the Cochituate Rail Trail extremely difficult via Route 9. An alternative connection could be made via the Wonder Bread Spur and along the existing bike route that directs cyclists south along Speen Street at the Nouvelle Way intersection.

West of Shoppers World there are a number of physical constraints, including existing buildings, that create obstacles to installation of a cycle track on either side of Route 9.

In summary, in the long-term, as more of The Triangle is redeveloped, and the Exit 13 Interchange is realigned, many of the more difficult physical constraints to developing the cycle track could be resolved, making it more possible to develop continuous cycle tracks on both Routes 9 and 30 that

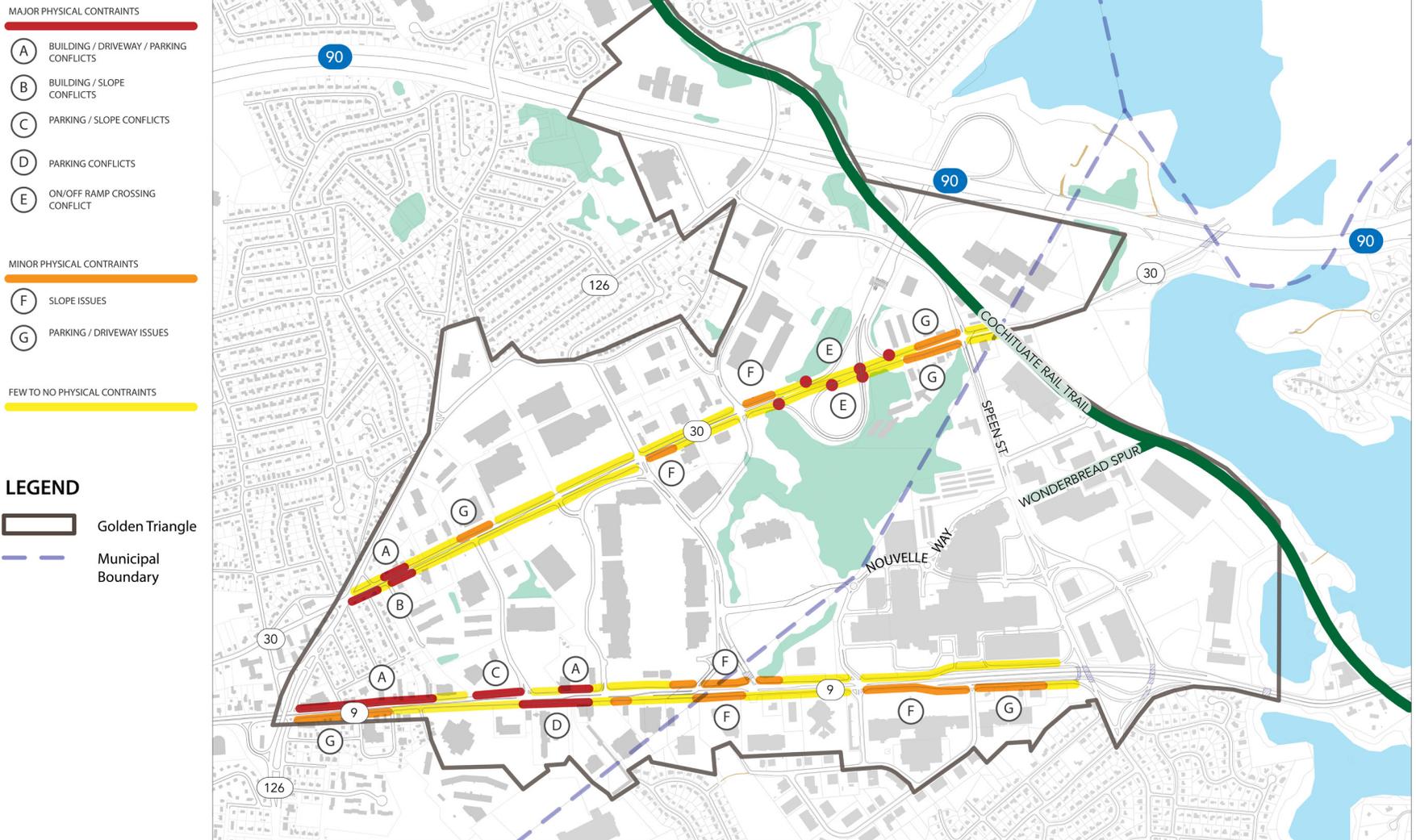


Figure 5.35: Diagram illustrating physical constraints to the development of a cycle track on Routes 9 and 30.

connect to other bicycle facilities on the east and west. In the short-term, consideration should be given to developing a short cycle track on Route 9 that connects via the Natick Mall path on the west side of Speen Street to the Wonderbread Spur and Cochituate Rail Trail on the east and to Ring Road or Shoppers World Drive on the west. This short cycle track would provide a connection to much of The Triangle for cyclists on the Cochituate Rail Trail and for Triangle residents living on the east side of Speen Street.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure that new development is consistent with and helps to implement the Framework Plan. Development proposals should be required to clearly detail how they accommodate and/or provide new, pedestrian-friendly streets that create new connections through The Triangle with buildings sited to reinforce the street edges.
- Review new development proposals for consistency with this Report, including inclusion of mixed-use, connections, open space, driveway consolidation, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, placemaking elements, zoning and design principles.
- Encourage mixed-use development including retail, office, entertainment and residential uses.
- Work with property owners and developers to facilitate desired development.
- Finalize and adopt the zoning recommendations in Chapter 6.
- Pursue funding for the design and construction of the greenways through the wetlands.
- Design and implement a wayfinding and signage program throughout The Triangle.
- Work with property owners and developers to develop a continuous north-south and east-west greenway system utilizing existing open space (i.e., the central wetlands – Bannister’s Meadows, the Cochituate Rail Trail and Wonderbread Spur, the pathway around the Natick Mall and other identified wetlands) in combination with the patchwork of wooded areas bordering and linking the wetlands, including a wide multi-use path and pedestrian boardwalks through Bannister’s Meadows.

- Consider opening discussions with Eversource regarding building trails under Eversource power lines, both north and south of Route 9.
- Conduct a more detailed study to determine the feasibility of a perimeter pathway around Bannister’s Meadows, including the availability of relatively flat land for constructing the path, permitting issues, and future ownership and maintenance responsibility.
- Consider providing an incentive or density bonus zoning provision to encourage developers to build connecting roads, to grant easements for the construction of connecting internal streets, and/or to pay into a fund that could be used by the municipalities to build connecting streets.
- Encourage developers to incorporate the frontage road concept for new development on parcels facing Route 9 and/or Route 30. This involves creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment by siting new commercial buildings further from these busy roads with a separation zone that includes a landscaped setback, a narrow frontage road with on-street parallel parking, and a wide sidewalk with a curbside tree lawn.
- On the south side of Route 9:
 - Work with property owners to study the feasibility of, and implement, segments of a connecting road at the rear of parcels, as well to consolidate driveways.
 - Explore options for defining the legal status of the pedestrian path from Essex Street to Mercer Road with the intention of creating a more definitive connection.
 - Encourage the introduction of a frontage road as properties are redeveloped.
- In the short-term, consider developing a short cycle track on Route 9 that connects via the Natick Mall path on the west side of Speen Street to the Wonderbread Spur and Cochituate Rail Trail on the east and to Ring Road or Shoppers World Drive on the west. In the long-term, as obstacles are removed by future redevelopment the potential redesign of MassPike Exit 13, consider developing a continuous cycle track on both Routes 9 and Route 30.