

***CEDAR STREET***  
**LAND USE and NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN PLAN**

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INTRODUCTION

There are opportunities and potential to enhance the quality of life within the Cedar Street Area by solving specific problems and reinforcing the assets of this unique residential and commercial

district with its exceptional open spaces. Concerned citizens, business owners, and the Town of Wellesley recognize that solutions are needed to meet the challenges of reconstructing the interchange of Route 9 and Cedar Street, to correct problems associated with regional commuter traffic moving through the area, and to realize the potential of the commercial area as a centerpiece for the area. The Cedar Street area --- in order to begin the process of coordinated and comprehensive improvement --- requires an action plan.

The purpose of *The Cedar Street Project - Phase II* is the development of a coordinated plan -- *Land Use Plan and Neighborhood Design for the Cedar Street Area* that addresses design and character, pedestrian convenience and safety, traffic mitigation, appropriate land use regulation, and open space integrity. It needs to carry out the recommendations of the *1994 Comprehensive Plan* that detailed studies be done of each of the commercial areas of Town. It builds on the direction established in *Phase I - Vision Statement and Area Plan* completed in 1999.

The Plan's purpose also includes building the foundation for cooperative action based on continuing involvement and growing consensus among residents, stakeholders, boards and commissions as projects proceed toward realization.

*Land Use Plan and Neighborhood Design for the Cedar Street Area* includes the plan components listed below, each with a special purpose in addressing neighborhood issues. These components represent an integrated strategy for the Cedar Street area and each contains recommended actions that are coordinated with and reinforce recommended actions in other plan components.

### Description of Plan Components

**The Streetscape and Neighborhood Design** includes specific concepts and recommended actions to enhance the visual quality of the area and mitigate the traffic impact. Aesthetic elements include interchange design, an improved commercial area, tree planting, and enhanced paving and lighting that strengthen the image and memorability of the community.

**The Pedestrian and Bicycle Access and Safety Plan** is based on the goal of safe and pleasant movement around the neighborhood and across Cedar Street and Route 9. Sidewalks and crosswalks are viewed as a connected network and analyzed in the context of interchange redesign. Safe access to residential areas, schools, employers, and services are addressed with infrastructure changes at key intersections and school crossings to provide neighborhood protection.

**The Traffic Mitigation Program** recommends actions that balance traffic movement with local access and pedestrian safety to enhance the quality of life for the neighborhood. Regional through traffic volume is analyzed and traffic calming proposals appropriate to area conditions and local objectives are described to address problem situations.

**The Land Use and Build-out Program** identifies incompatible land uses in the area and new development opportunity areas and redevelopment areas with the goal of future land uses that are an asset to the neighborhood and the Town. Future commercial land use scenarios are analyzed for traffic impacts, compatibility with current land uses, and goals for the area. It examines commercial development potential associated with the various interchange redesign options being studied and recommends actions for zoning incentives and guidelines to direct future growth to ensure compatibility with the neighborhood.

**The Open Space Management Structure** establishes strategies for open space and habitat areas of the Cedar Street area, identifying methods for protection and enhancement. Management issues, including access points, carrying capacity, level of protection, and maintenance are addressed to insure the future of these resources and the environmental quality of the neighborhood. It includes recommended actions for further defining this treasured asset and important character element toward the goals of long term quality of life and neighborhood viability.

**The Implementation Schedule and Maintenance Plan** looks to the next step for each of the recommended actions, establishes priorities and a sequence for implementation and identifies the lead agency in implementation.

**Relationship of Plan to Comprehensive Plan.** The Wellesley Planning Board completed and published their current Comprehensive Plan for the Town in 1994. The plan recommends that detailed studies be done of each of the commercial areas of Town, including the Cedar Street Area. The current planning process for the Cedar street area was initiated by that Planning Board recommendation and is one in a series of specific area plans either completed or underway.

The *1994 Comprehensive Plan* makes the following statement: " Maintaining and enhancing what we are proud of, and strengthening our sense of community -- these are the central themes of the *1994 Wellesley Comprehensive Plan*." The plan addresses Land Use, Housing, Economic Vitality, Natural and Cultural Resources, Services and Facilities, Open Space and Recreation, Circulation and Transportation, and includes an Implementation Program. Each section of the Comprehensive plan contains goals, policies and actions, several of them reinforced with concept designs and recommended actions in this *Land Use Plan and Neighborhood Design for the Cedar Street Area*. Selected goals with a particularly strong relationship to the issues identified in the Cedar Street area are listed below:

- **Land Use Goal II.2:** "Protect and enhance the aspects of Wellesley's existing image and character including the Town's village character that most citizens agree epitomize the positive physical character of the community -- including the town's village character, attractive and vital town centers, attractive neighborhoods and open space".
- **Land Use Goal II.6:** "Preserve and strengthen the appearance of the town's neighborhoods, and protect them from adverse influences".
- **Land Use Goal II.10:** "Pay special attention to the entrances to the town on major roadways (gateways) since they represent a visitor's first impression of the town".
- **Housing Goal III.2:** "Seek methods of providing a wider range of housing opportunities for people of diverse income, age and family size".
- **Economic Vitality Goal IV.1:** "Enhance the unique role and character of commercial areas within the town including retail, service, office, wholesale and industrial uses".
- **Economic Vitality Goal IV.4:** "Increase the diversity and vitality in the town's retail areas".
- **Economic Vitality Goal IV.5:** "Maintain high standards of design and maintenance in existing and new commercial developments".
- **Economic Vitality Goal IV.7:** "Improve the commercial areas at entrances to the Town along major roadways (gateways)".

- **Natural Resources Goal V.1:** "Preserve open space for habitat protection and enhancement of community character".
- **Natural Resources Goal V.2:** "Protect Wellesley's sensitive land, water and wetlands resources, and restore those resources that have been degraded or impaired".
- **Natural Resources Goal V.3:** "Prevent damage to natural resources and human health from hazardous materials and elements".
- **Natural Resources Goal V.9:** "Maintain up-to-date information about Wellesley's natural resources, to assist in resource management".
  
- **Open Space and Recreation Goal VII. 2:** "Maintain and enhance Wellesley's public open space areas and recreation facilities".
- **Open Space and Recreation Goal VII. 4:** "Provide opportunities for safe and enjoyable walking and bicycle access throughout the town".
- **Open Space and Recreation Goal VII. 5:** "Promote the awareness and use of Wellesley's parks, recreation facilities and open spaces".
  
- **Circulation and Transportation Goal VIII.1:** "Encourage the expansion of public transportation to reduce the dependence on the private automobile and the resulting traffic".
- **Circulation and Transportation Goal VII. 4:** "Improve safety for automobiles, pedestrians, and bicycles through roadway and walkway design, signage, speed limits, and other appropriate means".

**Planning Structure and Process.** The *Cedar Street Project - Phase II* involved the development of a Land Use Plan and Neighborhood Design for the Cedar Street Area over a seven-month period, culminating in the Final Plan. The Town of Wellesley commissioned the plan under the auspices of the Planning Board. The Planning Director and Planning Department staff acted as client-side project manager and worked with the consultant team throughout the process. In addition, the consultant team met with other Town officials and staff as needed, including the Town Engineer and the Natural Resources Commission Director. The Cedar Street Project Steering Committee held a series of scheduled meetings throughout the process with the consultant team and provided input and feedback.

Neighborhood residents, business owners and the general public participated in the process through their representation on the Steering Committee, in special Stakeholder meetings and phone calls and in two Public Forums. The meetings and discussions with the residents, stakeholders, the Steering Committee, and the Planning Board were conducted with the goal of generating a consensus that will lead to action. The meetings were used to present ideas, test alternatives, generate feedback, and arrive at agreement about appropriate actions, priorities, responsibilities, and commitment of resources.

Each of the five main topic areas-- Streetscape and Neighborhood Landscape, Pedestrian and Bicycle Access and Safety, Traffic Mitigation, Land Use and Build-Out and Open Space -- were addressed in relationship to the other at each meeting. This simultaneous approach was used to facilitate the creation of a well-integrated Final Plan. There are multiple benefits in a coordinated approach to the planning and implementation of individual projects. In particular, capitalizing on the interchange reconstruction to achieve multiple neighborhood design improvements, traffic mitigation, pedestrian safety, and an improved commercial area.

This planning process has been structured around key points for decision and direction by the Steering Committee to guide the effort as illustrated below.

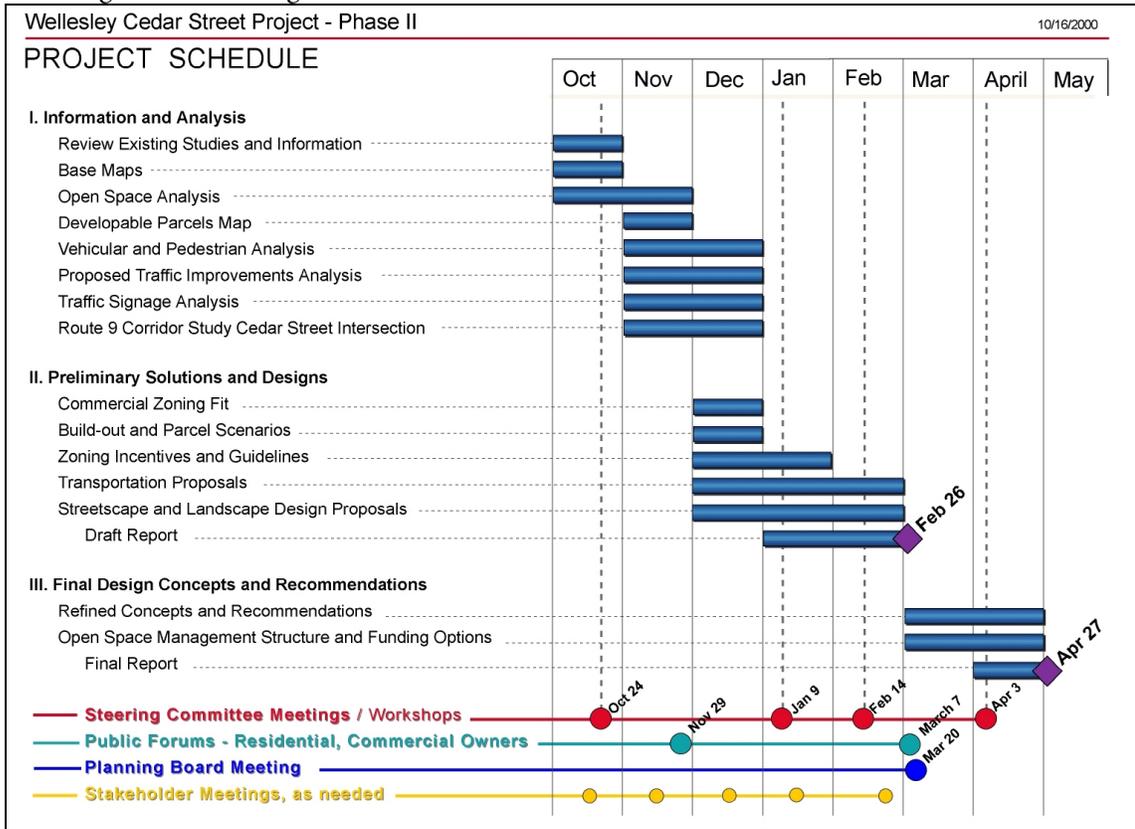


Figure --Planning Structure and Process

## I. OVERALL VISION FOR CEDAR STREET AREA

This following vision statement has been kept in full view throughout this planning process. It represents a community consensus and has served as a guidance document to direct the more focused planning that has occurred in this Phase II work. This vision was established for the Cedar Street Area during *Phase I- Cedar Street Project*, completed in 1999. The potential of the area and the desired character were developed during the Phase I work and have provided a strong basis for the work in this phase -- the work of structuring step-by-step actions that will make the community's vision a reality. This project focuses on its realization with proposed actions to achieve its paramount objective: neighborhood protection and enhancement.

### *A Vision for the Cedar Street Area*

*As one walks, cycles, or drives along Cedar Street, one is aware of the collection of diverse home styles and neighborhoods that traverse the corridor. Neighborhood schools, sidewalks and local streets help connect residents to the larger community and area businesses. As a pedestrian, one is aware of the natural resource areas that border the corridor, and feels safe when crossing the roadway to get to schools and other neighborhood locations. Streetscape and landscape improvements make it clear to motorists that they are in a residential area, one that is punctuated by stately trees, flowering and ornamental shrubs, and clearly defined walkways. These built and natural features reinforce that the corridor is much more than just a regional connector---- it is a high quality residential environment.*

## II. PLANNING CONTEXT

The Town of Wellesley is a residential community of 26,600 people, located 10 miles west of Boston, bordered by the Charles River and Newton on the east, Needham and Dover on the South, Natick on the West and Weston on the north. The predominant land use is single-family residential, much of it among the most expensive in the Boston metropolitan area. The reputation of the school system, the easy access to Boston along the Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90), Route 9 and Highway 128 (I-95), the presence of several educational institutions including Wellesley College, and the New England village character with its large amounts of forested open space create this desirability and market appeal. There is a strong desire among residents to protect this residential character and contain commercial growth. Continued economic vitality will require balancing character preservation goals with any new development initiatives.

The town is 6,336 acres, 69% of it zoned residential and 2.5% zoned for business and industrial use, with 13.2% of the Town's tax base coming from commercial uses. These commercial uses are concentrated along Route 128 in the Wellesley Office Park, in the Wellesley Newton Office Park along Walnut Street and Route 16, immediately west of the interchange between I-95 and Route 9, at the intersection of Cedar Street and Route 9 and in the traditional centers of Wellesley Square, Wellesley Hills, Wellesley Lower Falls, and the Fells. The "villages" are distinct, one from the other, and offer shops and services that are unique and that serve their surrounding neighborhood. There is limited land in these areas that could support new development. If existing service areas were redeveloped, parking requirements in the *Zoning By-Laws* would result in an even lower intensity of development and a very different pattern with larger areas for parking and setbacks and smaller areas for buildings.

Though most of Wellesley's housing is single family, high-end residential, 4.5% of the housing is subsidized by state programs. There is a recognized need for additional housing for senior

citizens, students, and for people with a range of incomes. Though the population is projected to decrease by .5% per year, due primarily to a reduction in household size, it is estimated in the *Wellesley Comprehensive Plan* that new residential growth over the next few decades will produce roughly 400 new units of single family housing. The issue of additional affordable and senior housing as well as apartments, and the challenge of integrating them into the single-family neighborhood character, have caused controversy.

The Cedar Street Area is the easternmost part of Wellesley, bordered by the Charles River and Highway 128 on the east. Its pleasant residential streets and large open spaces, including the Town Forest distinguish it. In addition, it includes several of the major office and commercial areas mentioned above, including the relatively intense but isolated Wellesley Office Park, Harvard Pilgrim and Sun Life Financial, and their office and other commercial enterprises at the Cedar Street and Route 9 Interchange. These areas provide substantial support to the tax base of the Town.

Cedar Street runs north south the entire length of the neighborhood, offering the opportunity to unify and establish an identity. It is divided into distinct segments and its continuity as a neighborhood unifier disrupted by the large cloverleaf intersection with Route 9. The open space along the River and the adjacent residential areas are negatively impacted by Route 128(I-95) and the neighborhood is bisected by Route 9. Route 128(I-95) is classified as a limited access highway and Route 9 is classified as a primary arterial. To the detriment of the neighborhood, Cedar Street currently functions as a regional sub route and a way for commuters to avoid the congestion on Route 128. Because the area is bordered and transected by major regional highways and arterials, the environmental quality and image of the residential neighborhood is overwhelmed with through traffic, while pedestrians and local residents seek a safe and calm environment.

### III. THE PLAN TOPICS

#### A. STREETSCAPE AND NEIGHBORHOOD LANDSCAPE

##### *Background Analysis -- Opportunities and Constraints*

The area's image was identified as one of its major constraints in the early visioning work. Since the Cedar Street area is dominated by the highway infrastructure of the major roadways that bisect it, the speed and volume of the regional through traffic, congestion, and the lack of accommodation for pedestrians; it lacks a distinguishable visual character. Route 9, and to some extent Cedar Street, are entry points into Wellesley and the experience sets the tone for the entire community.

The character of the smaller residential streets in this area of Wellesley are typical to New England, with curving roadways, mature trees, and fairly extensive plantings, fences, walls and other landscape elements. There are intermittent mature trees within the public right-of-way and on private property along the Cedar street right-of-way.

A less positive image exists along sections of Route 9 and Cedar Street and particularly at the interchange of Route 9 and I-95 and at the interchange between Route 9 and Cedar Street. Route 9, Cedar Street and these two important interchanges are part of the arrival sequence for each person living or operating a business in this area of Wellesley, and for those visiting, working or passing through to go to other parts of Wellesley. The length of

Route 9 right after the interchange is identified as an 'Urban Gateway' in the *Wellesley Open Space and Recreation Plan 1995-1999*. Improving the character of these two major streets and their intersection can transform the way the neighborhood is experienced.

Cedar Street was rebuilt in 1994 from the intersection with Walnut Street on the north to the intersection with Hunnewell on the south. This involved reconstruction of the right-of-way, rebuilding the curb and in some places the sidewalk. The sidewalks along Cedar Street as well as along other smaller neighborhood streets are comprised of mixed stretches of asphalt and concrete, with deteriorating patches. They are of varying widths, uneven condition and inconsistent curb conditions. Any existing defined crosswalks are painted. In addition, the edges of commercial areas and their parking lots are undefined and lack landscape treatments along streets and in parking areas, also negatively affecting the character of the area.

There is the opportunity to change Cedar Street toward a residential street and away from a vehicular throughway. The addition of improved sidewalks, new paving materials, and other streetscape enhancements aimed at the pedestrian scale offer the opportunity to improve the image of the area. This can reinforce the residential character and when combined with traffic mitigation measures and pedestrian enhancements will set a different tone for the entire Cedar Street neighborhood area.

These roadways and street furniture such as lights are designed at the scale of the automobile. Adding elements that can be appreciated at the level of the pedestrian, bicyclists and local traffic can contribute to the establishment of a distinctive character. The quality and types of materials used must establish a "fit" between the character of the street and the existing residences.

Additional desirable aspects of the area that can strengthen its image and identity include the major open space elements that one passes when moving along Cedar Street or Route 9. Framed views and clear access points to these resources that are visible from the through streets will also contribute to a distinguishable neighborhood character.

### *Issues Summary*

- Neighborhood identity as shaped by the character and function of Cedar Street
- Image of residential areas
- Image of commercial areas
- Definition of residential areas by border design along commercial and landscape buffers along highways
- Visual dissonance caused by traffic infrastructure
- Visual integration of large commercial developments

### *Recommended Actions*

**1. Interchange Design as Neighborhood Centerpiece called 'Cedar Center' or 'Cedar Crossing'.** Capitalize on the redesign of the Cedar Street interchange with Route 9 to create a neighborhood focal point and to shape an identity for the Cedar Street area. Use street and sidewalk

configuration, lighting, planting and landscape elements, and new buildings and commercial redevelopment to accomplish this.

**2. Urban Design Benchmarks.** Locally endorse specific design expectations for the new interchange to: 1) avoid a detrimental impact on the livability and cohesiveness of the neighborhood, 2) preserve and improve access to commercial and residential properties, 3) enhance the commercial viability of adjacent properties; and 4) establish safer and more “friendly” pedestrian and bicycle crossings of Route 9. Present these benchmarks to the Massachusetts Highway Department and work proactively with them on the design of bridge, roadway, intersection crosswalks, lighting, paving, street furniture and landscape elements.

**3. Cedar Street Design.** Invest public funds in streetscape amenities for Cedar Street to strengthen the residential character and enhance the beauty of the street. Accomplish this with a combination of infrastructure improvements, including signage, paving and planting. Increase the impact of this investment by pairing it with the Town of Wellesley's *Public Shade Tree Program* and a voluntary program of residential plantings. Base plant selection on a proposed palette of plant types that includes trees and ornamental shrubs.

The Town typically maintains improvements in the public right of way as with other Town infrastructure. Private property owners typically maintain trees and other improvements on private property.

Accentuate views of Town Forest and Conservation Areas from Cedar Street with vista pruning, view-framing plantings, and appropriate fence design.

**4. New Cedar Street Bridge.** Recognize the design of the new Cedar Street Bridge as a major opportunity to create a landmark, to visually connect the north and south sides of the neighborhood, and to unify the commercial area around the interchange. Place an emphasis on pedestrian movement and the creation of a special place.

**5. The 128/Route 9 Interchange.** This vehicular cloverleaf is a 'gateway' to Wellesley, and to a lesser degree, the neighborhood. Work with the Massachusetts Highway Department to make a statement with signage and landscape design and to increase the amount of planting on State-controlled lands in accordance with species identified by the Town horticulturist.

**6. Corporate Gateway Landscape.** Use landscape treatment at Sun Life Financial and at Harvard Pilgrim to better integrate these large commercial developments into the neighborhood, harmonizing with the residential and forest landscape.

**7. Route 9 Character and View of Open Space Resources.** Work with the Massachusetts Highway Department to standardize driveway access along Route 9. Accentuate views of Town Forest and Town Conservation Area from Route 9 with vista pruning, view-framing plantings, and appropriate fence design.

**9. Design of New Commercial Buildings.** Develop design guidelines for new redevelopment parcels. Use the siting and design of new commercial buildings in the area around the new interchange to enhance the marketability of the area and to better define Cedar Street.

## B. PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLIST ACCESS AND SAFETY

### *Background Analysis -- Opportunities and Constraints*

The most critical feature of any planning effort is safety, particularly of pedestrians. Urban and rural areas pose very different concerns that have distinct solutions that are designed to be compatible with each type of pedestrian and vehicular travel pattern. For example, in an urban or village environment there is typically a grid of streets each with sidewalks and curbing along both sides of all streets and signals at many intersections that are all provided with crosswalks and pedestrian signal phases. In rural areas there is less volume, lower speeds and less direct control with lights and other devices. The number of pedestrians and crossing points are much less dense, and pedestrians and motorists must judge safety. Conflict points are designed with this behavior in mind. However in a suburban setting like Cedar Street, and on a street that has a variety of characteristics along its length, the solutions are not always clear.

Measures recommended to enhance pedestrian safety at an intersection may be considered “too urban”, such as signals designed specifically for pedestrian crossings and others “too rural”, such as the use of raised crosswalks or crosswalks with contrasting pavers. In designing for pedestrian and bicyclist safety it is necessary to select the elements that fit the setting and the demand level in a particular location. Cedar Street has various situations within a short distance – suburban residential, schools, business village, and highway interchange. Pedestrian safety, in addition to being dependent on various types of specific controls, the management of traffic, is also influenced by the overall 'sense of place' of the street. A street that feels like a neighborhood road will have drivers traveling slower and watching out for neighborhood activities like children walking to school and children walking between neighborhoods.

Recommended actions for Cedar Street must address the corridor as a whole as well as the specific pedestrian and bicycle circulation elements as parts of that whole. It may be necessary to alter general circulation plans to account for needs at individual locations. Cedar Street was recently reconstructed to a minimum width of 24', expanding to 26' and 28' width in some places. Improvements included new granite curbing, reconstruction of at least 50% of the sidewalks and a new roadway surface. The street does not have an identified bicycle lane.

The *Bike Trails and Walkways Committee* performs planning for trails networks for Wellesley. While their focus has been on the recreational dimension of trails networks, of particular concern in this study is the safety and access to schools for children and others throughout the Cedar Street area. Cedar Street functions for experienced bicyclists, however it is dangerous for less experienced bicyclists and needs improvements to accommodate bicycles in the safest way possible. This study addresses what needs to occur on Cedar Street to enhance this role and to make it safer for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Cedar Street is an important north south link between the Sudbury River Aquifer (Sudbury Path) and the Cochituate Aquifer (Cochituate Path), both major east-west regional structures. Realistically bicyclists and pedestrians will increasingly use Cedar Street as a connection between the Sudbury Trail and the Cochituate Trails as part of major regional networks that are gradually being implemented by neighboring communities and metropolitan planning agencies. Cedar Street is identified as a recommended bike route on several maps and guides including: *Metrowest Bicycle Map* produced by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, *Boston Bike Map*, and on *Eastern Massachusetts Bike Map*.

In evaluating Cedar Street for vehicular and pedestrian safety, the corridor was broken into three segments. The highway interchange and its adjacent development can have a certain circulation pattern and the neighborhoods north and south of this can have an alternative pattern that feeds

into the interchange area. The interchange area can be developed as recognizing the suburban nature of 'Cedar Center' commercial area while the residential segments of the street can be more domestic with narrower sidewalks and increased tree planting. This approach would be consistent with the expected traffic control measures in each of these areas.

There are several aspects of this corridor that need to be included in planning the circulation network. There is the need to provide access to the two schools at either end of the corridor; a strong connection over Route 9, the only grade-separated crossing within a mile; safe access into and out of the neighborhoods along Cedar Street and a strong network of sidewalks connecting existing and potential new businesses near the interchange. This will encourage pedestrian traffic and minimize vehicular traffic between uses. Overall pedestrian and bicycle accommodations strengthen the residential character of the area, and when combined with traffic mitigation constitute 'traffic-calming' measures.

#### *Issues Summary*

- Pedestrian and bicycle protection and crosswalks, especially at problem intersections
- Pedestrian and bicycle safety and access at Route 9/Cedar Street interchange
- Safe school access for pedestrians and bicyclists

#### *Recommended Actions*

**1. Walnut/River/Cedar Street Intersection Improvements.** This intersection was upgraded recently to enhance traffic safety and at that time the Town engineer and the Town's traffic consultant recommended signalization. It was not implemented. The current design favors traffic flows and, to some extent, encourages the use of Cedar Street as a short cut, further reducing pedestrian safety. It is recommended that the intersection design be revisited to incorporate safer pedestrian crossings, possibly including signalization.

**2. Cedar/Hunnewell/Hastings/McLean Intersection Improvements.** The Town's traffic consultant studied this intersection and it was recommended that signalization and a redesign be considered to ensure safe pedestrian crossings and to provide safe side street access, especially at peak hours and in relation to the Fiske School. Signalization will increase travel times along the main street, a traffic calming measure that may discourage some through traffic in the long run. The initial step is the Preparation of a *Functional Design Report* for this intersection. While a new entrance to the Fiske School directly off Cedar Street may reduce the importance of this as an egress from the school, it will not eliminate the need for this improvement.

**3. New Entrance to Fiske School Directly Off Cedar Street.** Though still in the planning stages, improvements to the Fiske School include a driveway access directly to and from Cedar Street. This access could improve pedestrian safety at the school crossing by accentuating the school activity occurring there. Other access points to the school will not change; therefore it is expected that a new driveway here will not affect the overall traffic flows. The introduction of a new driveway might complicate the improvement potential at the Cedar/Hunnewell/Hastings/McLean intersection. The school access design process should consider these ramifications.

**4. Mid-block Crosswalks Along Cedar Street.** Crosswalks should be relocated to maximize sight lines or relocated to nearby intersections where signalization is being considered. Pedestrian links and routes will be an essential part of the planning and redesign of the Cedar Street/Route 9 interchange.

5. **School Access.** With Fiske School and Schofield School along the Cedar Street corridor, safe access for children, parents and buses is very important. Flashing school zone signage and new high-visibility fluorescent pedestrian signs on Cedar Street at school crossings will alert drivers and cause them to drive more slowly. Crossing guards are also appropriate given the high percentage of non-local traffic using Cedar Street. Pedestrian-related improvements at Walnut/River/Cedar Street intersection, at Hunnewell/McLean/Hastings intersection, and at the Cedar/Route 9 Interchange will also provide clearer and safer access to the schools.

6. **Bicycle Safety.** Enhance bicycle safety by creating wider shoulder lanes (where possible) that perform like bicycle lanes. Repainting shoulder lines (either farther from the edge of the street or perhaps wider lines) to encourage drivers to travel closer to the middle of the street will result in more space for cyclists and might act as a traffic calming measure by reducing travel speeds.

7. **Route 9 Interchange.** Work with Massachusetts Highway Department to ensure safer and more “friendly” pedestrian and bicyclist crossings of Route 9 as part of the interchange redesign. The state should consider these issues to be consistent with their recently completed master plans.

## C. TRAFFIC MITIGATION and TRANSIT SERVICE

### *Background Analysis -- Opportunities and Constraints*

Recommendations for traffic improvements as part of the *Vision Statement* prepared for Cedar Street in 1999 specifically focused on enhancing safety and pedestrian access but at the same time not increasing the capacity of the area to carry more traffic. The vision also emphasized visual identity and the use of design elements to provide the street with the sense of a residential community.

The *1994 Comprehensive Plan* recommended a dual approach: make improvements to the transportation system to resolve specific issues and develop alternative ways for townspeople to travel. This assessment focuses on resolving specific issues along the Cedar Street corridor and how to enhance travel by alternative, non-automobile modes. It outlined a series of goals that are relevant to Cedar Street. Enhancements to pedestrian and bicycle routes, encouragement of pedestrian travel through zoning and land use decisions, design of streets and intersections with transit, pedestrians and bicyclists in mind, and improvement in the consistency of traffic and parking controls have been incorporated into this plan, both specifically and generally.

Route 9 dominates the Cedar Street area neighborhood by transecting it, yet it is isolated from it. The fate of the Cedar Street area was greatly impacted when the decision was made to provide this grade-separated crossing rather than a signalized, at-grade crossing. Traffic has grown and the travel speeds have increased since this crossing was built, and the bridge and interchange have proven inadequate in terms of capacity and safety features. The existing layout of the interchange falls below current standards and the bridge needs to be replaced. As a result Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) is currently evaluating design options for this work. MHD must meet current standards in redesigning and “fixing” the current interchange and simply rebuilding the existing interchange as-is is not an option. Rebuilding the Cedar Street bridge over Route 9 along with the interchange presents the potential to identify the Cedar Street area neighborhood and make it more unique. There will be a major impact on the neighborhood and local businesses

and an important opportunity for Wellesley to work with them to develop the design that has the greatest benefit for the Cedar street area as a whole.

The area traffic patterns that have developed over the years have been based on the capacity this crossing provides. The alignment and connections of that create the Walnut/Cedar/Hunnewell corridor have made it a convenient for regional traffic to by-pass Route 128 and take Cedar Street instead. Previous traffic improvements have focused on addressing specific issues but have not focused on the corridor as a whole in an effort to address the overall issues, such as its role as a regional commuter route. As an example, geometric improvements at the Walnut/Cedar intersection enhanced traffic safety of the route for through traffic flows but reduced pedestrian accommodations.

In addition, the corridor also has become fragmented. The three basic segments are easily recognizable as one drives along Cedar Street north to south. They include, 1) the neighborhood residential street from Walnut Street to the Rosemary Brook crossing, characterized by single family homes, residential side streets and the Schofield School, 2) the north half of the interchange characterized by its lack of traffic controls and the wide pavement areas of the ramp system and lacking organized land uses, and 3) the segment from the Route 9 bridge to the frontage of the Fiske School characterized by the neighborhood residential that was evident south of Walnut Street but with a business presence along the ramps to/from Route 9 eastbound. This area is tight and constrained with many safety hazards and in sharp contrast to the wide open excessive pavement areas north of Route 9.

The theory of 'traffic calming' indicates that drivers will drive slower and be more alert where they feel constrained or where they are confronting potential hazards. This approach is recommended to protect the neighborhood environment from through traffic and the visual impacts of traffic infrastructure. Traffic calming improvements establish strategies to reduce speeds, improve sight lines, and change the pace and character of traffic movements. While some 'traffic calming' measures are designed for roadways with lower volume than Cedar Street, there are measures appropriate for Cedar Street and those measures, implemented along with the expected Route 128 widening project south of Route 9 are likely to relieve Cedar Street of some regional commuter traffic.

Measures such as neck-downs and contrasting crosswalks – either colored pavements or alternative materials – might be appropriate for intersection locations. Repainting roadway edge lines is an option along roadway segments. Increasing travel times (i.e., slower speeds) and making the corridor more difficult to traverse can have a secondary benefit of reducing the advantages that make this route a short cut for commuters. Signage recommendations will be an integral part of this strategy, directing traffic to appropriate destinations.

Successful transit services are dependent on several factors, most importantly the routing and connections of the system. In evaluating one neighborhood at a time it is not possible to develop such a system. Nonetheless, the designs incorporated into the neighborhood plans can enhance the implementation of a transit network and, in this case, develop a sense of place that can act as a focal point for transit operations in the immediate area.

### *Issues Summary*

- Balance between local and regional circulation goals along Cedar Street
- Redesign of intersections, particularly Hunnewell/Cedar/McLean intersection, the potential Fiske School driveway, and Cedar/Barton Road

- Traffic impacts at Route 9/Cedar Street interchange
- Separation of commercial and residential traffic
- Incorporate Traffic Calming Measures
- Connecting the residential and commercial neighborhood to regional transit services

### *Recommended Actions*

**1. Cedar Street Traffic Control.** Implement traffic control changes along the Cedar Street corridor, including striping and signage to enhance side street access, pedestrian movements, speed zones, etc. Establish a vocabulary of traffic control elements along Cedar Street that advises through traffic of local traffic safety concerns using standardized elements (such as speed limit signs at short intervals and possibly textured pavement at crosswalks).

A signage plan should be developed for the area within a town-wide signage master plan. This will ensure standardization and consistent treatment for different neighborhood areas.

**2. Route 9 Interchange.** Establish a Town-preferred concept for structural design of the interchange and take an active role working with the State Highway Department to shape interchange planning and redesign before a less desirable design has gained momentum.

**3. Transit Service.** Cedar Street is not fully connected to public transit. Existing bus routes travel along Route 9 but do not currently stop at Cedar Street and bus stop structures at Cedar Street need upgrading in the context of intersection redesign. It should include bus stops on both the eastbound and the westbound sides of the interchange to allow easy incorporation into Route 9 bus routes.

Redevelopment plans should include strengthening these locations as part of a pedestrian network. Redevelopment may provide an opportunity to establish this interchange area as a “destination,” giving it enough of a profile to become a focal point in the local transit system. Service by local private shuttles should be explored as a means to enhance services and provide greater transit access for neighborhood residents particularly residents of the Barton Road neighborhood (some who do not own cars) and senior citizens throughout the neighborhood.

**4. Traffic Calming.** “Traffic Calming” measures should be developed along the corridor to enhance safety and side street access. The goal is to design such constraints and hazards (in a controlled way) that least expose pedestrians, bicyclists, and side street traffic but enough to encourage safer and slower driver behavior.

**6. Traffic Enforcement.** Police presence has a strong impact on traffic safety. Many of the streetscape upgrades discussed above will eliminate many locations where a police vehicle might stop to monitor local traffic conditions. Therefore, it is recommended that such stopping places be incorporated into the roadway plans. These spaces can also be used for the unmanned speed monitoring units that are becoming popular in many local communities.

## **D. LAND USE and BUILD-OUT**

### *Background Analysis -- Opportunities and Constraints*

One of Wellesley's many attractions are its wooded setting and the quiet areas of residential with minimal commercial infringement. One of the concerns of the property owners in the Cedar Street

area is protection of the integrity of existing residential areas and the containment commercial development in order to accomplish this. Clearly defined lines between residential areas and commercial areas with adequate buffering between different uses were identified as important to the residents of the area in the 1999 Vision planning.

There is very little land available for development in the area and that land is zoned for residential use, however some opportunity exists for commercial development and commercial redevelopment associated with the interchange reconstruction.

Commercial Land Uses at the Interchange of Cedar Street and Route 9. The commercially zoned properties and the existing commercial uses in the area around the interchange of Cedar Street and Route 9 is zoned *Business and Business A*. The commercial area has approximately 20 parcels. The assessed valuation of commercially zoned property ranges from \$161,000 to \$5 million. The area zoned commercial is bordered by Barton Road residential on the north the Air National Guard, zoned residential on the east and single family residential on the south. This zoning allows an F.A.R. of .3 and no higher than 3 stories.

Commercial Development at the Interchange of Route 9 and I-95. Commercial Development at the Interchange of Route 9 and I-95 is comprised of two major campuses, Harvard Pilgrim and Sun Life Financial. These large developments are zoned *Administration and Professional*, allows an F.A.R. of 0.4 with conditions. Each campus incorporates multi-level structures for employee parking. This development flanks the gateway into Wellesley and the Cedar Street area and acts as a transition between I-95 and the major cloverleaf interchange and the residential areas along Route 9.

The Barton Road Neighborhood. The Public Housing Authority operates this neighborhood within the Cedar Street area. It is entirely rented with no home ownership provisions. Approximately 75 families, including Haitian, Latino, Caucasian, and African American ethnic backgrounds make up the community. The Public Housing Authority is planning extensive remodeling of these units and the entire site. The structures will have pitched roofs added, sheds and fences removed and parking and site completely reconfigured.

The Health Department is currently working with residents on a needs assessment and the results will be available within the next year. In meeting and talking with neighborhood residents of Barton Road, the following problems were identified.

- Isolation from public transportation
- Isolation from services, including a convenience store, drug store or grocery
- Business district at Route 9 intersection with Cedar is difficult to get to and lacks uses that serve the neighborhood
- Barton Road housing structures are isolated by landscape and located against the highway
- Not all tenants own cars and they have problems getting rides to grocery store, drug store, clothing stores, MBTA commuter rail, school etc. This places a burden on the other tenants who give rides to services and public transportation

The goals expressed by residents of the public housing include better social integration with the community, a sustainable and beautiful neighborhood and housing type that blends into the surrounding neighborhood, access to public transportation, and see a drug store, grocery store, or other services close by.

The Massachusetts Army National Guard Site. This 7-acre site is zoned *Single Family Residential* with a 15,000 square foot minimum lot size. This is the headquarters for the Massachusetts Army National Guard, and they have occupied the site for five years following the relocation of the Air National Guard. The statewide office administration functions are located here and include 15-20 full time employees in offices. Weekend training functions occur once a month, year around, including some classroom training for about 40 -50 people at a time. There are occasional weeklong training sessions also.

At this time the Army National Guard has no plans to relocate, however a more intense use of the site is planned with the addition of a new federal program, The Distant Learning Center, for continuing education and computer training. It is expected to begin in the next few months. It will offer computer training to the public at large through night classes etc. Mass Bay Community College has used part of the building for vocational training but they will be moving out in June.

There is 111,000 square feet of paved parking area on the site and a gas tank for vehicle fueling. This significant amount of on-site parking ensures that Army National Guard activities do not interfere with the use of the street by the residents. Chain link fencing surrounds the entire site.

The current operation at this State-owned building does not appear to conflict with the single-family residential uses on the street. The Cedar Street area residents living east of the Army National Guard site may value its presence as a buffer between their single-family residential properties and the commercial development and multifamily residential to the west. It may also be viewed as protection against pressure to expand commercial office development in the vicinity of Route 9 or the pressure to expand Public Housing Authority multi-family housing.

None the less, this can be considered an incompatible use with the surrounding single family residential uses based on the State ownership of this site and the lack of local control, its current institutional use, and the suitability of the building and its potential for other higher intensity institutional uses. In addition, it detracts visually from the appearance and environmental quality of the residential street it is located on.

Development Opportunity. **'Cedar Center' Area - Excess land in the vicinity of the Route 9/Cedar Street interchange, currently captured by the configuration of the interchange.** The current configuration of the interchange consumes a lot of land and creates islands of inaccessible and useless open space surrounded by freeway style circular ramps. With the redesign of the interchange and the changed alignment of roadways, there is an opportunity to reclaim land for development that will support the land use and urban design goals for '*Cedar Center*'. There is little land available for development in '*Cedar Center*' with the exception of land that might be left over from the interchange redesign.

Redevelopment Opportunity. **Land in the 'Cedar Center' Area may transition to a higher and better use after interchange reconstruction.** The reconstructed and redesigned interchange will improve access, image and visibility and therefore marketability of some key parcels of land that are currently underutilized in and around the interchange.

The types of uses permitted and the amount of floor area permitted (FAR) will influence the kind of new development that occurs. Whether the interchange redesign supports easy access for regional users and a mix of uses or is more conducive to back office uses that do not need a street presence or to rely on drop-in traffic. A zoning overlay district called *Cedar Center Commercial District* that has the basic purpose of -- "allows for commercial reinvestment and improvements, while protecting the

quality of the immediately surrounding residential neighborhoods", as is the purpose statement for the Lower Falls Village Commercial zone but customized for the Cedar Street Area.

Development Opportunity. Public Housing Authority land connected to the Barton Road neighborhood adjacent to the Army National Guard. New residential development might occur on the Public Housing Authority land between Barton Road Neighborhood and the National Guard Armory, particularly the area with frontage on Route 9 with access directly off Route 9. This might include a combination of market rate homes and affordable home ownership opportunities with design guidelines to ensure harmony with adjacent residential.

Development Opportunity. The Hastings Village site. This acre site along Hastings Road is comprised of five privately owned parcels. A residential development is currently proposed for multifamily housing with a total of 52 units and 25% of the units affordable. 80% of the units proposed are two bedroom, two bath. This land use would define the edge of commercial development area and provide a transition to residential.

Development Opportunity. Army National Guard Site. Viable alternatives to this institutional use include residential development, single family or semi-detached homes of a slightly greater density but with a level of design quality that contributes to the character and value of the area. That might meet some of the housing needs of families and seniors in Wellesley. The replacement of the Army National Guard with new single family houses could result in approximately 12 homes continuing the surrounding pattern of 10,000 square foot lot sizes.

This reuse will involve demolition of the existing building complex and evaluation of the wooded and wetland areas to determine feasibility for development. Any significant stands of trees and other habitat preservation concerns should be identified and the new development shaped accordingly. In general, the woodland character present on areas of the site should be preserved and extended to the level feasible as an element of the new residential or a natural buffer.

Uses other than residential will be a failed opportunity to improve the character of Minuteman Lane and to extend the neighborhood area east of Minuteman Lane. New homes on this site will allow a satisfactory transition to the proposed '*Cedar Center*'-- a revitalized commercial area and to the remodeled Barton Road neighborhood.

#### **Land Use Scenarios Considered for '*Cedar Center*'**

Scenario 1. Rezone the '*Cedar Center*' to *Administrative and Professional District*, allowing a higher Floor Area Ratio would encourage office uses and corporate complexes similar to Harvard Vanguard or commercial offices in Wellesley Office Park. This would result in a 9-5 daytime use pattern with morning and afternoon traffic peaks as employees arrive and leave work. Those uses would have little relationship to the neighborhood, with the exception of those residents working there, and without services for those working there it would generate traffic in and out of the area for all support services.

Scenario 2. Retain the *Business* zoning that currently exists for the area. As the interchange redevelops improvements to access and image have the potential to increase the value of the property and a combination of uses may result. There will be no assurance that the uses will relate to the neighborhood or that the combination will avoid traffic peaks and distribute vehicle trips throughout the day.

Scenario 3. Retain the *Business* Zoning that currently exists for the area and place an overlay zone on this use that accomplishes specific land use goals, including the reduction of traffic volume peaks. This could be achieved by combining neighborhood services with small-scale office employers and multi-family residential. If the FAR were to increase to 0.4 it might result in the construction of parking structures to serve developments.

Scenario 4. Rezone the area to allow multi-family residential and mixed-use developments to address some of the housing needs in Wellesley. This use would provide a buffer between highway activities, commercial and single-family residential areas and transform the identity and nature of the area. Some structured parking might be encouraged. This use would not cause traffic peaks at the interchange and would be compatible with the office uses existing in the 'Cedar Center' area.

The most compatible scenario for the area is a well-designed mixed-service commercial district with retail, professional office and service uses. Specific uses would include a branch bank, a small hotel, a convenience store, a mid-size grocery, dry cleaners, drug store, video store, copy center, child care, health clinic, small restaurants, 1st and 2nd class office space. Since the goal is to avoid traffic peaks, relate to the neighborhood and provide services within the area for concentrations of employees and residents, homogenous developments should be avoided. This land use concept for 'Cedar Center' would still have an auto orientation but it would balance it with pedestrian character, convenience and access from the surrounding area.

### *Issues Summary*

- Definition of commercial redevelopment parcels
- Appropriate land uses for key development and redevelopment sites in 'Cedar Center'
- Zoning and redevelopment regulation
- Barton Road neighborhood identity, image and priorities
- Barton Road neighborhood integration into Wellesley community
- Fit between National Guard Armory and surrounding residential areas
- Lack of a neighborhood center, attraction or businesses where people can frequent and socialize i.e. coffee shop, café, convenience store

### *Recommended Actions*

**1. Overlay District with Incentive-based Zoning.** Create a zoning overlay district in the *Cedar Center* commercial area that promotes a mix of uses, and establishes parking lot landscape and site design standards for all developments. Based on the increased value and potential of the commercial property in the context of the restructured interchange, consider increases in the allowable F.A.R. to .4 as an incentive for meeting qualitative performance standards.

**2. Land Use Mix.** Enable a land use mix that complements existing traffic peaks, and is comprised of retail, service, and commercial office. This should include some new establishments that provide services for the surrounding neighborhoods and the people working in the area and that can benefit from existing through traffic without undermining neighborhood goals for controlling traffic.

**3. Parking Requirements.** Pursue the establishment of various parking solutions, including separate 'shared parking regimes' for the north and the south side commercial areas to improve the marketability of the land, support the incorporation of a new mix of uses, ensure the long-term viability of the area, and possibly make a neighborhood shuttle service feasible.

**4. Incompatible Land Uses in the 'Cedar Center' Area.** Support compatible land uses on sites currently occupied by incompatible land uses, specifically the auto dealerships and the Army National Guard. The auto dealerships have certain non-conforming rights but are prohibited uses since this is a *Water Protection District*. The Army National Guard is in an area zoned residential. The State-owned building is suited to a variety of uses, including education and health care that may be incompatible with the surrounding residences and bring larger amounts of traffic onto the dead-end street.

**5. Impacted 'Cedar Center' Sites in Conjunction with Route 9/Cedar Street Interchange.** Use the interchange redesign project to enhance the viability of adjacent commercial properties. The design of the interchange can be coordinated with reparcelization of impacted properties for redevelopment. Take an active role in working with the Massachusetts Highway Department on the interchange redesign to ensure the optimum potential for these parcels.

**6. Aggressive Redevelopment of New Sites.** During the new interchange design process, define sites on State-owned lands for new commercial/retail and open space development on the east and perhaps the west sides of Cedar Street. In working with the Massachusetts Highway Department identify a redevelopment strategy and prepare a *Redevelopment Action Plan* for in the context of interchange design. Get the sites rezoned, establish specific design guidelines for each parcel and solicit redevelopment proposals.

**7. New Residential and Open Space - Public Housing Authority Land.** Evaluate the feasibility of new residential development on the Public Housing Authority land between Barton Road Neighborhood and the National Guard Armory, particularly the area with frontage on Route 9 with access directly off Route 9. Consider this in conjunction with renovations and site plan changes planned for existing Public Housing along Barton Road.

Consider the feasibility of coordinating development of this site with the redevelopment of the Army National Guard site.

**8. New Residential and Open Space - Massachusetts Army National Guard.** When the opportunity to redevelop this site occurs at some point in the future, redevelop it as an extension of the residential pattern along Minuteman Lane to the east. The design should address issues of transition to the Public Housing Authority land directly to the west and the Barton Road neighborhood. Access off Route 9 should be studied in conjunction with Housing Authority plans for their vacant land.

**9. Zoning Enforcement.** Enforce existing zoning bylaws effecting area businesses such as the auto dealership's infringement on the Route 9 right of way. Such zoning infractions detract from the character of the area and also compromise public safety. Enforce the requirement for a landscape buffer along reconstructed Route 9.

## E. OPEN SPACE

### *Background Analysis -- Opportunities and Constraints*

The Cedar Street area has an extensive network of open space that extends from the Charles River to include the Rosemary Brook corridor and the Town Forest. Large parts of the surface area of the Cedar Street neighborhood are in the Rosemary Brook Basin, a major watershed. This is the recharge area for the Rosemary Brook Aquifer, and as such must be protected from pollution. This area is classified in the Wellesley Zoning By-Laws as a *Water Supply Protection District*. Specific concerns

include salt use along Route 9 and I-95 and enforcement of zoning by-laws limiting pesticide and fertilizer use for the protection of Wellesley's groundwater resources. Most of Wellesley's water supply comes from local groundwater. There are 2 water supply wells within the Cedar Street area, the Rosemary Well and the Longfellow Well.

Other open space resources include the Cochituate Aqueduct, built in 1848 to transport drinking water from Lake Cochituate to Boston. Today it is owned by the Town and used for drainage. The Sudbury Aqueduct was built in the 1890's. Both aqueducts are designated historic structures used for open space and recreational activities. There is local concern that existing levels of protection may not be adequate to insure their preservation as integrated and continuous historic structures and recreational resources.

It is important to put this Cedar Street area planning work into context of *The Wellesley Open Space and Recreation Plan 1995-1999*, which was completed in 1994 by the Natural Resources Commission. It addresses trends and priorities for the community and summarizes its focus in the following excerpt from that plan.

"As it faces the future, Wellesley needs to focus on three aspects of open space and recreation planning: *preservation* of those open space parcels that are significant because of their size or location; expansion and enhancement of the trail and path system that provides *linkages* among open space and recreation facilities throughout the Town; and a continued provision of the types and amounts of recreational *facilities* that will meet the needs of the Town's residents."

The Bike Trails and Walkways Study Committee prepared a plan to expand the linear open space links with walking trails and bicycle routes which is incorporated into the *Open Space Action Plan*. They are in the process of creating a network of bicycle paths and walking trails that connect to bike routes throughout town. Major trends in lifestyle show increases in walking, running and bicycling for health and as an environmentally sound alternative to driving. In addition, Wellesley has a Play Fields Task Force that has been looking for sites for soccer and other recreational needs. Sites in the Cedar Street area were considered but none have been identified at this point as suitable for that use.

Due to the Town Forest along Route 9 and the Town owned land on the south side of Route 9 west of Sun Life, portions of Route 9 offer the experience of driving a parkway. Cedar Street is also flanked by open space systems leading to the Town Forest along Rosemary Brook and traversed by the Cochituate Aqueduct close to the intersection of Cedar Street with Walnut Street.

Other issues to surface in discussions about open space in the Cedar Street area include the appropriate level of resource use, parking and access to serve visitors, and informative signage. Of particular concern are the Town Forest, the Town-owned land south of Route 9 and west of Sun Life (at this time the area is surrounded by residences and has no designated public access point), and the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) open space land along the Charles River Corridor.

### *Issues Summary*

- Open space character and function
- Optimization of open space for neighborhood benefit
- View protection and enhancement/views from Route 9
- Protection of water supply and aquifer
- Access to the Charles River corridor

### *Recommended Actions*

1. **Reclaimed Open Space.** When the interchange is redesigned, rezone and convert State-owned land (currently occupied by the existing interchange) to a buffer of open space along Rosemary Brook at Cedar Street. Explore the creation of a pedestrian path under Cedar Street along the brook and the adjacent development of complimentary new uses that take advantage of the view to the Town Forest.
2. **Ouellet Park.** Keep Ouellet Park as a high priority for implementation of proposed improvements and strengthen its role as a neighborhood recreation amenity. Keep views from Cedar Street to the Little League Field open and concentrate tree and shrub plantings to provide shade for parking and spectators and buffers with the adjacent residences.
3. **Access to Local Open Space Resources.** Expand access to the open space, particularly the Town Forest and the MDC land by designating, signing and maintaining a recreational trail system with supporting parking areas. Construct an expanded parking area along Charles Street in conjunction with the redesign of Ouellet Park to serve the trail access point at that location. Other trailhead parking is located at River Street and *Long Fellow Pond*.
4. **Trails Networks.** Support the ongoing development of the planned trail networks by the Trails Committee to ensure that trails networks are created, signage is installed, and that they are well maintained.
5. **Access to the Riverfront.** The Cochituate Aqueduct corridor, east of Cedar Street leads directly to the Charles River. A landscaped park could be developed here including public parking accessed off the commercial office park to the north and signage that would provide direct access to the river. This public frontage offers an opportunity to give the Cedar Street neighborhood and Wellesley a "doorway" to the river that leads to a connection across the river (see 6 below).
6. **Linking Both Sides of the River.** Explore the development of a link under Route 128 and over the Charles River adjacent at the Cochituate Aqueduct to link open space systems on both sides of the river.
7. **Hunnewell Fyffe Footbridge.** Modify Hunnewell Fyffe Footbridge to create a direct access from the bridge between Washington Street and the Metropolitan District Commission's waterfront walkway at Cordingly Dam, thereby avoiding the disconnected route through private property.
8. **Town Forest.** Protect the Town Forest by: 1) halting the degradation of water quality and vegetation diversity, 2) protecting the wetlands from runoffs and encroachments, 3) restoring a diversified native plant and animal community, implementing forest management practices that ensure the long-term protection of the eco-system. Work with the Massachusetts Highway Department to substitute less environmentally damaging alternatives to salt spreading on Route 9.
9. **Regional Open Space Links.** Initiate planning with the adjacent communities of Newton and Needham to link open space networks and trails systems and to create safe and inviting access between them. This includes working with Newton to get safe bicycle and pedestrian connections between Quinobequin Road and Washington Street in Wellesley and across the river on the old Railroad Bridge to *Riverside MBTA Station*. In addition, work with adjacent communities to realize a completed *Sea to Sea* Trail and the full realization of trails on the Cochituate and Sudbury Aqueducts.

**10. Increase Protection of Town-owned Land and the Cochituate and Sudbury Aqueducts.** This may involve zoning this municipal land to a Conservation Zone or formally designating it a conservation use.

**11. Resource Management Plans.** Continue the preparation of action plans for the Town Conservation Areas, the Town Forest and the Rosemary Brook corridor. In addition to being important natural areas, these areas are also Waterworks lands. They protect the aquifer below and the Town's water supply and are subject to special regulations. Plans should 1) establish detailed information on the resources within the property, 2) establish goals for the use of the property, 3) create a specific management plan necessary to carry out the established goals addressing the following issues:

- Future maintenance
- Access Points
- Level of usage and carrying capacity
- Funding

**12. A Resource Management Model.** The management mechanisms established by the Natural Resources Commission should be designed to provide support and advocacy in realizing projects and carrying out the initiatives of the various committees. The NRC should continue system-wide planning, project implementation, funding support, grant writing and facilitate coordination with parallel agencies and other Town Departments.

#### IV. URBAN DESIGN BENCHMARKS FOR INTERCHANGE RECONSTRUCTION

This plan recommends developing a design for the interchange that impacts the area around it in ways that serve the neighborhood as well as regional users. The reconstructed interchange has the potential to contribute to the area's sense of place and to work in conjunction with new development to become a neighborhood centerpiece with an identity as *Cedar Center*.

The design and reconstruction of the Route 9/Cedar Street interchange is necessary for both traffic safety reasons and because the Cedar Street Bridge is in deteriorated condition and in danger of eroding to a point that requires that it be closed to vehicular traffic. The existing interchange is hazardous and confusing for both motorists and pedestrians. It fails to accommodate critical pedestrian desire lines between the two sides of the street and between neighborhood residential areas and the Fiske School.

The existing interchange is designed to serve automobiles moving between a primary arterial (Route 9) and a residential collector (Cedar Street) and it carries a large amount of regional traffic. In addition, Cedar Street, though technically classified as a residential collector, is functioning as a secondary arterial. Commuters use it as an alternative to 128/I-95. Because Cedar Street and Route 9 play a role in these regional traffic patterns, the area around this interchange will continue as a highway-oriented environment. Nonetheless, its redesign must also serve motorists and pedestrians accessing the residences and commercial businesses in the area.

The new interchange design will impact development and redevelopment opportunities. It has the potential to enhance the value of the surrounding land and set the stage for an appropriate land use mix with additional new businesses that serve surrounding neighborhoods. Realization of this goal

will require combining vehicular and pedestrian safety improvements with a comprehensive redevelopment strategy for the area, with improved access to businesses, residences, open space, and parking and with landscape enhancements to create a memorable place.

During this study the Town of Wellesley has considered its options from the perspective of their overall impact and potential for the Cedar Street area and is prepared to work with the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) in developing a final interchange design. The following *Benchmarks* are recommended for use in working with MHD and in evaluating interchange options.

***Benchmark 1. Traffic design elements that address the needs of multiple transportation modes and user groups.*** A design is needed that serves the variety of travel methods and users that are expected, including:

- Through traffic along Route 9, along Cedar Street, and the traffic moving from one to the other
- Neighborhood residents both along Cedar Street and on adjacent neighborhood streets
- Local business owners and customers
- Pedestrians and bicyclists
- School children and town residents using these community facilities
- Public and quasi public transit services, either existing or potential new ones

***Benchmark 2. Traffic design elements that create a sense of place for 'Cedar Center'.*** The selected interchange design should ensure that the safety and convenience of the local users is not subjugated by the needs of regional traffic. This is an interchange located in a neighborhood, not a neighborhood located at an interchange. At the same time there are certain standards that must be met for safety:

- The design must, to the extent possible, maintain or enhance access to adjacent businesses and to potential new development parcels
- The design must provide safe and efficient access to the residential neighborhoods north and south of Route 9.
- The design must ensure smooth flows along Route 9 and smooth flows between Route 9 and Cedar Street

***Benchmark 3. Traffic design elements that are at a neighborhood scale with infrastructure that is not intrusive to the neighborhood.*** The interchange design should be based on lower design speeds with the goal of reducing travel speeds on ramps and on Cedar Street to the extent possible without compromising safety at ramp junctions with Route 9. Lower speeds allow the construction of less intrusive infrastructure. The following should be evaluated:

- street and ramp widths
- turning radii
- continuity of pedestrian flows across the bridge over Route 9, along Cedar Street and into and out of adjacent residential and business areas
- the accessibility (vehicular and pedestrian) and visibility of open spaces
- The location of transit stopping points and routes
- Overall paved surface areas

***Benchmark 4. Pedestrian and bicycle safety and access.*** The interchange design options must be evaluated to ensure that the plans specifically include elements that enhance pedestrian and bicyclist

safety. This is particularly important since Cedar Street serves as an important link between neighborhoods north and south of Route 9 including school children moving to and from the nearby schools. As the only non-at-grade crossing of Route 9 available for pedestrians and bicyclists the design of the interchange must specifically include features that address this need. In addition access to the commercial properties in the area by both pedestrians and bicyclists needs to be convenient. People who work on the north or south sides of Route 9 in the Cedar Center area should be able to easily access businesses and services on either side of Route 9 without using their cars.

- Safety and clarity of pedestrian sequence across Route 9 for school children and others
- Safety and clarity of pedestrian sequence across Route 9 for employees and customers in the commercial establishments around the interchange
- Bicycle accommodation and safety at the new interchange

**Benchmark 5. Optimized redevelopment opportunity sites.** The existing interchange occupies a significant amount of land on the north side of Route 9 due to its exaggerated cloverleaf design. Each of the design options for the reconstructed interchange will have different areas left over for redevelopment or open space. These 'left-overs' may offer important opportunities for a minimal amount of appropriate new development in the interchange commercial area. To the extent possible the town should have a plan in place for a variety of possible parcel shapes and sizes that are benefits of the reconstruction.

- Open space buffer provided along Rosemary Brook on reclaimed land resulting from more efficient interchange design
- Redevelopment sites along Cedar Street resulting from more efficient interchange design
- Mutually agreeable arrangements between the Town and the State to facilitate the use and/or redevelopment of excess state-owned land

**Benchmark 6. Benefits existing landowners and businesses.** Evaluate the marketability and potential of the business-zoned land parcels based on the interchange design, including the degree to which the interchange design supports desired land use goals. The function and appeal of the interchange from a market perspective will determine the level and type of investment that is made here. Easy access, convenient parking and good visibility favor businesses that require quick in and out such as retail and service businesses. Such businesses will have a two-tiered market that includes neighborhood residents and employees who approach by multiple modes of transportation including on foot, by bicycle and by car; and regional traffic.

**Benchmark 7. Realizes urban design opportunities.** Overall the image of Cedar Street should be substantially improved by the design of the interchange. This reconstruction should be seen as an opportunity to upgrade the area and make it a cohesive commercial area. Evaluate interchange design options based on urban design goals that include:

- New development sites frame Cedar Street,
- Encourages pedestrian activity
- Accommodates access to commercial and retail parking
- Addresses open space views and open space access
- Incorporates landscape design features

**Benchmark 8. Bridge Design has landmark qualities.** There is an opportunity here to tie the north and south segments of Cedar Street together with a bridge acts like a 'belt buckle' visually, connecting rather than dividing.

**Benchmark 9. Good value in return for project costs.** The cost of constructing each of the interchange design options will vary based on roadway configuration, length of new roadway constructed, changes to alignment of Route 9 and Cedar Street, bridge design and location of ramps and business access. Related to these costs is the construction staging plans under each option which will effect how long the existing crossing might be closed for construction. The costs have to be evaluated related to total costs and the costs that might have to be borne by the town.

**Benchmark 10. Property acquisition cost.** Each interchange redesign option requires some property acquisition. The cost of these acquisitions and the associated demolition and the loss to tax base will help determine which interchange concepts are feasible and which are not. An associated consideration is the usability of any of the parcels after there reconfiguration for the interchange. If they can be redeveloped or combined and redeveloped for new uses, that is a value that offsets part of the cost.

## VI. IMPLEMENTATION

CEDAR STREET LAND USE and NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN PLAN

**IMPLEMENTATION TABLE**

Infrastructure Projects	Local Lead Agency	Time Frame Years				Cost			Notes
		1 - 2	2 - 5	5 - 10	10+	L	M	H	
1. Cedar/Walnut/River Street Intersection	Engineering	X				\$			
2. Cedar/Hunnewell Street Intersection	Engineering	X				\$			
3. Cedar Streetscape Design + Construction	Planning/Engineering	X	X	X				\$	
4. Cedar/Route 9 Interchange Design + Construction	Planning/Engineering	X	X	X				\$	Local share only
5. Route 9 Intersections/Crosswalks	Engineering			X				\$	
6. School Crosswalks	Engineering	X				\$			
7. Cedar Street Restriping	Engineering	X				\$			
8. Cedar Street Signage/Traffic Control Elements	Engineering	X				\$			
9. Open Space Restoration at Rosemary Brook/Cedar	Natural Resources C.			X				\$	
10. Trails Signage, Maintenance, Clean-up	Trails Committee/NRC	X				\$			Human resources
11. Ouellet Park Reconstruction and Parking	Natural Resources C.	X				\$			Budgeted
12. Hunnewell Fyffe Footbridge Modification	Trails Committee/NRC/MDC		X			\$			MDC grant/local match
13. River Crossing Under 128	Trails Committee/NRC/MDC			X				\$	
14. River Connection at Cochituate Aqueduct	Planning/Trails Com/NRC/MDC		X					\$	
15. Redevelopment and Property Acquisition	Planning/New Redevelopment Entity		X	X				\$	
<b>Study/Plans</b>									
1. Commercial Design Guidelines Draft	Planning	X				\$			
2. Zoning Overlay District Draft	Planning	X				\$			
3. Parcelization/Property Acquisition Plan	Planning	X	X			\$			
4. Cedar/Route 9 Interchange Plan	Planning/Engineering	X	X			\$			
5. Residential Development Feasibility Study	Public Housing Authority	X				\$			
6. Resource Mgmt. Plan - Town Forest	Natural Resources C.	X				\$			Budgeted, Ongoing ?
7. Resource Mgmt. Plan - Conservation Area	Natural Resources C.			X		\$			
8. Resource Mgmt. Plan - MDC Riverfront Land	Natural Resources C./MDC		X			\$			
<b>Organizational Tasks</b>									
1. Form Redevelopment Entity for Cedar Center Area	Town Board		X					\$	
2. Auto Dealership Enforcement	Engineering/Town Board	X				\$			
3. Structure to Implement Regional Trail Connections	Trails Committee/NRC		X			\$			
4. Resident's Organization, Voluntary Buffer Planting	Local Garden Clubs/Org.		X			\$			
5. Transit Planning, Agency + Private Sector Coord.	Planning		X			\$			