

IX. Recommendations

The Wellesley West Gateway is an ideal location to utilize many of the new and emerging zoning tools that can assist the community in preservation of open space, protection and enhancement of key natural resources, the addition of cultural and recreational opportunities, and a mixture of housing choices in addition to shops and offices that provide goods and services in close proximity to existing and new housing.

Tools for Consideration

1. Create a Wellesley West Gateway Overlay District

Because of the variety of land uses within the study area, and the importance of creating regulatory measures that do not affect the entire town, creation of an overlay district is worthy of serious consideration. An overlay district is an additional zoning requirement that is placed on a geographic area but does not change the underlying zoning. Overlay districts contain specific land use and development characteristics which warrant the need to encourage a creative and innovative approach to land use and design. Overlay districts are used to establish guidelines to permit creative

Overlay Districts

- **Adopt a transect-based overlay district with building form, streetscape, and architectural design standards.**
- **Examples:**
 - Amesbury's Smart Growth District
 - Lowell's Hamilton Canal District



Source: Amesbury, MA
Smart Growth / Smart Energy Toolkit

Source: Lowell, MA
Form Based Codes

mixtures of uses, flexibility in design standards and often aim at mixing residential and business activities in hopes of creating pedestrian oriented developments. Overlay districts have been used to impose development restrictions in specific locations in addition to standard zoning requirements.

The overlay district recommendation can work on its own, but can be strengthened when used in combination with recommendation #2, Form-Based Codes.

2. Form Based Zoning Codes (FBCs)

The first zoning tool that is recommended is development of Form Based Zoning Codes (FBCs). FBCs are

- One of the most effective land use tools for shaping pedestrian-scaled, mixed-use and active urban environments.
- Often used with “New Urbanism”, village-style development, or neo-traditional planning.
- More concerned with the arrangement and form of buildings than the use that goes on inside them.
- Represent an innovative response to undesirable urban sprawl.

FBC's are becoming increasingly popular in communities seeking practical ways to grow smarter, and provide certainty in a complex permitting process. FBCs are used to control physical form primarily through local land use regulations including zoning, subdivision and other regulations such as wetlands, drainage and shade trees, and historic preservation. The work well because:

- FBCs are prescriptive
 - ➔ Describe what you want rather than don't want.
- FBCs encourage public participation
 - ➔ Leads to better understanding of density.
- FBCs enable incremental growth
 - ➔ Less reliance on a developer.
- FBCs work well in established communities.
 - ➔ Codify the community's existing "DNA".

FBCs address the relationship between building facades and the public arena, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets. The public arena includes streets, alleyways, sidewalks, lighting, landscaping and street furniture such as benches, bike racks, news racks and fountains, as well as squares, plazas, parks, public art, open space areas and pedestrian corridors.

The regulations in FBCs are usually presented in both diagrams and text. They are usually keyed to a specific area plan, a transect plan, that designates the appropriate form, scale and character of development rather than only distinctions in land-use types.

This approach is in direct contrast to conventional zoning's focus on the separation of land use types, allowed property uses, and the control of development intensity through setbacks, floor area ratios, height limits, and parking ratios. FBCs specify what type of development a community desires versus conventional zoning which has often resulted in the exact kind of development a community does not want.

Limitations of Conventional Zoning

- Separation of land uses.
- Focus on lot size & setbacks.
- Function over form.
- Promotes low density, auto-dependant suburban sprawl.



Smart Growth / Smart Energy Toolkit



Form Based Codes



FBCs should not be confused with design guidelines or general statements of policy. FBC's, are regulatory, not advisory, and they are not limited to the appearance of buildings. FBC's include building form standards to control the configuration, features and functions (such as height, massing, setback, parking and use) of buildings that define and shape an area. They depart from the conventional zoning "one-size-fits-all" approach. Each building type is principally defined by performance measures relating to pedestrian access and open space arrangement. Some FBCs also include frontage type performance measures which combine with the building type measures to establish a building's relationship to the street. This blends building scale and façade treatment to best accommodate the pedestrian.

FBC's can also include public space standards to set specifications for sidewalks, travel lanes, street trees, street furniture, bike lanes and utilities. They can be adopted in the form of performance standards under the Zoning Bylaw or as design standards under the Subdivision Rules and Regulations. These standards often include innovative techniques for mandating environmentally sensitive low impact development techniques for stormwater management on individual lots or for the roadway design. Provisions can also be added to promote energy efficient building designs such as Energy Star programs or LEED certification.

Municipalities have three main options to incorporate FBCs into their regulatory framework: Quick Fixes; Overlay Districts, and a Comprehensive Code (Zoning Bylaw/Ordinance) Update. For the Wellesley West Gateway Study Area, the town may want to use a blend of the "Quick Fix" option and the Overlay District. It would involve:

- Targeted districts/ zones.
- Revision of land use, building and parking regulations within the targeted district/s to effectively shape the public realm of the street.
- Inclusion of a transect-based zoning map, building form standards and some form of streetscape design standards.
- Examples:
 - ➔ Historic District regulations, which often regulate the form of new buildings in historic districts.
 - ➔ Building Design Standards, for instance regulating proposed "Main Street" buildings, or taming big boxes.
 - ➔ New generation of dimensional standards, replacing setback lines with "Build-to" lines.

First, they can modify existing regulations to include criteria for building forms. This approach can be time consuming because most regulations provide for the segregating of use, limited densities, and the accommodation of traffic and parking. Next, a community can opt to replace existing zoning regulations with FBCs. This solution is best for communities with a strong history of adherence to "smart growth" initiatives. However, eliminating the entire existing regulatory framework can be very controversial and difficult to pass at Town Meeting. Finally, a community can adopt new FBCs expressly for special districts or "overlays" planned for revitalization. With this approach the existing framework remains and FBCs simply augment the underlying zoning.

Useful link:

http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit/bylaws/FBC-Bylaw.pdf

3. Low Impact Development

To reduce the amount of stormwater runoff from developed areas, the town should require implementation of **Low Impact Development** measures in the design of all development proposals within the West Gateway Study Area, and it would be beneficial to implement LID regulations town-wide. The LID approach provides opportunities to build the homes and businesses that are needed, while conserving natural areas and drainage patterns.

LID is accomplished as a two-step process; **FIRST**--thoughtful site planning and, **SECOND**--incorporation of "natural" stormwater best management practices (BMPs).¹

From the local authority's perspective, the better site design in Low Impact Development helps:

- to identify and preserve natural features;
- to maintain natural hydrology;
- to help respect abutter's properties;
- to retain property values;
- to augment groundwater supplies, and
- to maintain high water quality.

Low Impact Development (LID) uses a holistic approach to mimic the natural hydrological characteristics of undeveloped land. LID recognizes that uncontrolled storm water discharges will damage the water quality and biological resources.

LID STRATEGIES: Low Impact Site Design

Stormwater Management

- Minimize directly connected impervious area
- Create multiple sub-watersheds
- Increase time of concentration
- Use a "treatment train" of LID techniques to deal with frequent, low-intensity storms.



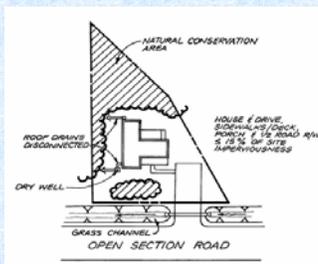
1. Use existing natural systems as the integrating framework for site planning



- Land use planning and watershed planning
- Identify environmentally sensitive areas: wetlands, mature trees, slopes, drainageways, permeable soils.
- Minimize alteration (clearing and grading)

2. Focus on prevention

- Minimize grading and clearing
- Delineate development envelope and work area
- Cluster buildings and reduce building footprints
- Reduce road widths, use shared driveways, reduce parking area
- Use green rooftops
- Use permeable paving



¹ Smart Growth / Smart Energy Toolkit - Low Impact Development, 2008

Low Impact Development measures will reduce runoff and increase recharge of the aquifers, and benefits both water quantity & water quality in the watershed. The goal of LID design is to maintain the integrity of each watershed by maintaining the natural, pre-developed hydrology on each development site. (Site hydrology is the relationship between rainfall, runoff, plant uptake, evaporation and infiltration.)

A LID design creates a functional hydrologic landscape by maintaining natural drainages, like streams, and by using small-scale stormwater controls distributed evenly throughout the site. By doing this on individual sites, the overall watershed can be better protected.

3. Treat stormwater close to the source

- Maintain natural flow paths
- Create subwatersheds and “micromanage” runoff in a treatment train of small structures
- Use open drainage
- Flatten slopes
- Lengthen flow paths
- Maximize sheet flow



4. Emphasize simple, nonstructural, low-tech, low-cost, methods

- Open drainage systems and filter strips
- Disconnection of roof runoff
- Rain barrels
- Street sweeping
- Public Education



Adoption of a **Low Impact Development Bylaw** applicable town-wide would encourage better site design and more efficient form of development that consumes less open land and protects existing topography, wildlife habitats, and natural features. Better site design is a land planning process that follows a logical resource protection approach and employs site design strategies to minimize impervious cover and create opportunities

for micro-scale stormwater management.

Low Impact Site Design provides for:

- Conservation of natural hydrology, trees, vegetation;
- Minimized impervious surfaces;
- Dispersal of stormwater runoff;
- Conservation of stream & wetland buffers; and
- Ecological landscaping.

5. Create a multifunctional landscape

- Use stormwater management components that provide filtration, treatment, and infiltration.
- Provide open space and wildlife habitat.
- Store water for landscape use
- Reduce heat island effect
- Enhance site aesthetics



MetroWest Growth Management Committee developed a Lower Impact Development Bylaw and implementing regulations for the Town of Southborough, which are available on our website: www.metrowestgrowth.org. The Massachusetts Low Impact Development Toolkit (see links below) is a set of materials designed to help citizens, public officials and developers implement LID.

Links:

<http://www.mapc.org/LID.html>

<http://www.epa.gov/hiri/strategies/vegetation.html>

http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit

http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit/bylaws/LID-Bylaw-reg.pdf

<http://www.sierraclub.org/healthycommunities/buildingbetter/>

Builder's Guide to Low Impact Development:

http://www.toolbase.org/PDF/DesignGuides/Builder_LID.pdf

4. Chapter 43D

Chapter 43D provides a transparent and efficient process for municipal permitting. It guarantees local permitting decisions on priority development sites within 180 days, and increases visibility of your community and target development site(s). The town should consider utilization of Chapter 43D as a tool to develop specific area plans for the Wellesley Travel Inn site and the St. James the Great church parcel.

Chapter 43D is a site-specific opt-in program in which the municipality identifies the Priority Development Site(s). The site eligibility requirements are:

- zoned for commercial, industrial or mixed-use development;
- eligible for the development or redevelopment of at least 50,000 square feet of gross floor area, and
- Must have permission of property owners and town meeting.

What are the benefits of opting-in? Chapter 43D grants up to \$150,000 for such things as professional staffing assistance, local government reorganization, and consulting services. It provides priority consideration for PWED, CDAG, brownfields remediation assistance, MORE infrastructure funds, and other financing through quasi-public organizations. It provides an aggressive online marketing of the site and promotion of your pro-business regulatory climate.

6. Educate property owners and public about maintenance

- Reduce the use of pesticides and fertilizers.
- Use drought-resistant, native, non-invasive plants.
- Maintain rain gardens, stormwater planters, grass swales and bioretention areas.



Chapter 43D Overview

- ❖ Site-specific opt-in program
- ❖ Municipality identifies Priority Development Site(s)
- ❖ Site eligibility requirements:
 - zoned for commercial, industrial or mixed-use development
 - eligible for the development or redevelopment of at least 50,000 square feet of gross floor area
- ❖ Must have permission of property owners and local governing body

MetroWest
Growth Management Committee

Additional information about Chapter 43D can be found at <http://www.mass.gov/Eoed/docs/43DFactSheet.pdf>

5. Mixed Use Development

Adoption of a Mixed Use Development bylaw provision would be beneficial for the Wellesley Travel Inn parcel. Mixed Use Development generally refers to a deliberate mix of housing, civic uses, and commercial uses, including retail, restaurants, and offices. Mixed use development is not a new idea. Housing above stores was common

Mixed-use is Smart Growth

What is so “smart” about Mixed-Use Projects?

- Civic identification
- Walkability and connectivity
- Public and civic spaces
- Variety of uses
- Diverse housing types
- Improved quality of urban design
- Increased density
- Environmental sensitivity
- Access to Public Transportation (where possible)



in village centers before the advent of zoning. Traditional zoning was developed during a time when factories and many commercial uses were noisy, smelly, and/or hazardous to the public. To protect public health and residential property values, early zoning focused on separating different uses, and buffering them from each other to minimize nuisances. Today, most commercial development is environmentally benign, and there are often advantages to locating different uses in close proximity.

There are a number of Mixed-Use Overlay bylaw models that can be used as a starting point. The mixed use bylaw for the Wellesley West Gateway should allow some housing, including multi-family, retail, restaurants, offices, and civic uses. Other uses may include housing for the elderly, personal services shops, child care facilities, recreation, and municipal uses. Several communities have found it useful to cap the percentage of housing in a mixed use development bylaw. Depending on how much housing is desired by a community, the cap on housing ranges from 10% to 40%. You can and should exclude those land uses that are not conducive to your vision of the Wellesley West Gateway of the future.

As a tool, Mixed Use:

- Spurs revitalization;
- Encourages high quality design by providing both greater flexibility and more control;
- Promotes a village-style mix of retail, restaurants, offices, civic uses, and multi-family housing;
- Provides more housing opportunities and choices;
- May increase affordable housing opportunities;
- Enhances an area's unique identity and development potential (e.g., village centers, locations near bike paths, or "gateway" areas that announce a community's strengths);
- Promotes pedestrian & bicycle travel;
- Reduces auto dependency, roadway congestion, and air pollution by co-locating multiple destinations;
- Promotes a sense of community;
- Encourages economic investment, and
- Promotes efficient use of land and infrastructure.

Mixed use development is seen as a key "smart growth" tool to reduce auto dependence and preserve and enhance green space and natural resources. However, Massachusetts has so little experience with new mixed-use development that it is difficult to forecast the household population and school enrollment impacts of this type of housing.

It would address the following Opportunities for Change identified at the public forums held on December 14, 2006 and June 7, 2007:

- Add Community/Neighborhood scale businesses and amenities – focus on community services;
- Diverse Housing – starter/smaller homes, empty nesters/seniors;
- Increase tax base – encourage expansion;
- Creating neighborhood retail – walkable;
- Encourage investment in commercial properties as potential solutions to challenges, and
- Integrated development with surrounding park land.

6. Develop a Traditional Neighborhood Development Bylaw Provision

Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) is a zoning tool that is compatible with the eastern edge of the Wellesley West Gateway, specifically for the St. James the Great church property. Although similar to Mixed Use Development, Traditional Neighborhood Development is usually more residential in nature, and includes a strong public presence such as an arts and cultural center envisioned by a Wellesley resident as a potential re-use of the church building now known as the St. James the Great Church.

TND seeks to remedy the most pressing problems associated with recent suburban expansion - low-density, auto-oriented development, single-use developments lacking in context and distinction as a unique community. TND is usually utilized for infill in an existing



developed area or as a district scale project. It is characterized by developments that provide a variety of uses, diverse housing types, and often a transit option within a compact neighborhood scale anchored by a central public space area.

Both Mixed Use Development and Traditional Neighborhood Development:

- Spur revitalization;
- Encourage high quality design by providing both greater flexibility and more control;
- Promote a village-style mix of retail, restaurants, offices, civic uses, and multi-family housing;
- Provide more housing opportunities and choices and may increase affordable housing opportunities;
- Enhance an area's unique identity and development potential (e.g., village centers, locations near bike paths, or "gateway" areas that announce a community's strengths);
- Promote pedestrian & bicycle travel;
- Reduce auto dependency, roadway congestion, and air pollution by co-locating multiple destinations;
- Promote a sense of community;
- Encourage economic investment, and
- Promote efficient use of land and infrastructure.

The higher standard of living we enjoy today hasn't necessarily resulted in a higher quality of life. By implementing TND, the Wellesley West Gateway Study Area can fulfill this potential.

As you can see from the Churchill Homes illustration, the mixed use development that is part of TND usually differs significantly from standard mixed use development. In contrast, TND is cost-effective. The TND model makes the most of existing public infrastructure before expanding it, and households with fewer cars can invest more resources in home purchases.

TND is time-saving. Mixed use development reduces the need for vehicle trips, increasing time available for recreation and civic participation. TND promotes health, safety and well-being. More walkable communities decrease the rate of obesity by encouraging frequent exercise, and building relationships with neighbors leads to an increased sense of security. For each of these reasons, TND is a superior option to development as usual.

Churchill Homes, Holyoke MA

With the help of the TND principles listed below, the patterns of growth can be smarter, and our future generations will be healthier and healthier. The eight principles of Traditional Neighborhood Development are:

- 1: Town Center and Edges
- 2: Connectivity
- 3: Walkability
- 4: Mixed Uses
- 5: Mixed Housing
- 6: Compatible Architecture
- 7: Community-Oriented Design
- 8: Vibrant Neighborhood Districts.



No one person or group invented sprawl. Few residents would consciously choose a faceless urban strip over an accessible main street in a intimate village center. But prevailing development have become accepted, and many people don't know that alternatives exist. Through the use of the TND principles stated above, the Wellesley West Gateway Study Area can become a prime example of development and redevelopment that includes a return to the vibrant walkable communities of 50 years ago.

Links:

- Mashpee Commons
 - www.mashpeecommons.com
- Churchill Homes
 - www.dietzarch.com/projects_churchill.html
- Harbor Point
 - www.gcassoc.com

- Congress for the New Urbanism
 - www.cnu.org/
- Other TND projects
 - www.tndtownpaper.com/neighborhoods.htm

7. Opportunities for Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation and Links to and Between Existing Uses in the Area and to Other Destinations

The bike path using the aqueduct is part of the Regional Bike Plan, and will also improve access to the commuter rail stations along Route 16. It is recommended that the bike path be a multi-use trail system that can adequately accommodate pedestrians, hikers and bicycles. The purchase of the portion of the aqueduct north of route 9 was recommended by many of the participants at the public forums. The vision is to provide a boardwalk around the edge of Morses Pond along the rear portion of the Wellesley Travel Inn parcel that would be an integral component of a multi-use trail extending from Wellesley Square to the Cochituate State Park and the new Natick Collection regional shopping center. The bike path is eligible for an Enhancement Grant through MAPC.

The other design change consistent with the new Guidebook would be to move the guardrails on Route 9 adjacent to the roadway to protect pedestrians, rather than their present location behind the sidewalks, protecting the trees. Where there is room in the Right of Way trees should be planted between the sidewalk and the roadway. At present, the crosswalk and pedestrian buttons at Overbrook seem ok, but they need to be maintained.

When the church property is redeveloped a pedestrian crossing of Route 9 should be part of any design.

8. Opportunities to Promote Transportation Demand Management and Public Transportation And/Or Links to Public Transportation

Any large new development along Route 9 should be designed with room for a bus pullover and a shelter, but Wellesley by itself cannot support transit along Route 9. The newly formed MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) could be beneficial to Wellesley, and it is recommended that the Town vote to join the MWRTA at its earliest convenience. There are now 8 members of the MWRTA (Ashland, Framingham, Holliston, Hopkinton, Natick, Wayland, Weston and Sherborn) that will formulate plans for improvements to and enhancement of public transportation in MetroWest. Wellesley should be at the table as these plans are formulated. In addition, the MWRTA can assist Wellesley with a public transportation needs analysis.

9. Chapter 40R, 40S

Although Chapter 40R, 40S is a tool that could be implemented to offset the cost of development, the density needed to qualify for approval under Chapter 40R is likely more than appropriate for Wellesley. If the town wanted to pursue this type of option and the state approved the proposed zoning – an overlay district with variable densities of up to 20 multi-family units per acre by right –

Wellesley would qualify for a one-time, non-recurring “zoning incentive payment” and a one-time payment per building permit of \$3,000 for each unit built in the Chapter 40R district over and above what could be developed under existing zoning. Chapter 40S authorizes supplemental Chapter 70 aids to offset a community’s educational costs for children living in a Chapter 40R district.

10. Access Management Regulation

An initial recommendation is that the Town considers adopting an **Access Management Regulation** to minimize the number of driveways, consolidate existing driveways, encourage shared driveways, control the geometric design of driveways, and to locate driveways as far away from roadway intersections as possible on those roads that are under the Town’s control. As you can see from MAPC’s crash analysis reported in the table below, an access management bylaw may alleviate some of the vehicle/vehicle conflicts that result in crashes.