

## VIII. Conceptual Land Use Goals

Four main players - **government, developers, businesses and residents** - determine the physical arrangements of land uses in communities in an interesting and sometimes complex set of interactions. Each depends upon or responds to the desires and actions of others. Residents, businesses and government demand new buildings in which to live or conduct their activities. Workers consider commuting times as a factor when selecting a new place to live. Businesses locate where they can attract needed workers for their needs and consumers for their products. Developers profit when they meet these demands. Government affects both the supply of developable land through their land use, infrastructure and economic development policies and plans.

The price of land can serve as a sorting mechanism for the type and location of development. Residents, business and developers are willing to pay for land, but only up to the amount they will receive in future benefits. At the same time, developers, business and residents may all benefit from certain locations more than others and will outbid all others for these sites. For example, retail business that needs high levels of visibility and/or accessibility, at the intersection of major streets and highways or on heavily traveled roadways, will outbid other businesses that may not require this.

The following major themes involve the four main players described above, and represent the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified by participants of the study.



**1) Enable new development, redevelopment and adaptive reuse through a cohesive plan for heterogeneous lots and land uses.**

- a) Accommodate existing uses in large part.
- b) Transform the aging, auto-oriented uses into a series of integrated, livelier, development nodes.
- c) Encourage investment in commercial properties as potential solutions to challenges.
- d) Encourage neighborhood-oriented businesses.
- e) Develop and implement design guidelines for the West Gateway.

**2) Create a built environment, streetscape and street design that will include a concentration of interrelated uses to provide a wide ranges of activities.**

- a) Create a mix of uses, with taller, mixed-use buildings along Route 9, transitioning to less dense, more residential uses as development approaches the existing residential neighborhoods.
- b) Acknowledge the market for multi-generational living; provide high quality housing for a full range of incomes and ages.
- c) Provide the associated community and neighborhood services, open space, and public spaces important to making a great neighborhood.
- d) Any development must result in an improvement to the quality of life in Wellesley.

**3) Respect and enhance the existing environment.**

- a) Integrate development with surrounding conservation land and Morse’s Pond
- b) Encourage integration of green building practices
- c) Protect/maintain conservation land from infringement
- d) Look for opportunities to integrate new and innovative ways to handle stormwater detention and provide water quality benefits.
- e) Improve connectivity - link to the trail system
- f) Encourage good connections to nearby neighborhoods.

**4) Ensure a positive economic impact.**

- a) Any development, whether commercial, conservation or residential, must be “revenue positive”.
- b) Provide new economic growth in Wellesley
  - Additional tax revenues
  - New jobs
  - More retail opportunities and services
- c) Ensure that the costs of development minimize:
  - any increase in traffic congestion
  - Conflicts between new and old residents
  - Government’s cost of providing additional community services.



**5) Create a framework for zoning changes and design standards that will guide future private development**

- a) Careful review of the zoning bylaws indicates that zoning bylaw amendments and changes to existing rules and regulations would be required to allow the redevelopment.
- b) Craft zoning regulations with the understanding that market demand holds more sway than any other factor, including zoning, over the types of development proposed and constructed.
- c) Establish special parking requirements that encourage the consolidation and sharing of parking lots, the creation of interconnected parking lots between existing commercial development, and reduce the wide and numerous curb cuts;
- d) Consider Amending the Zoning Bylaw to include tools that will facilitate redevelopment and infill development through flexible dimensional and use standards, and by Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) within the overlay district.
  - Establish a Wellesley West Gateway Overlay District that combines a variety of housing types with commercial and civic functions in a cohesive and compatible context.
  - Utilize zero minimum lot requirements, maximum rather than minimum setbacks, and building separation requirements to enhance pedestrian access to buildings and between sites and promote site features and layouts conducive to walking and bicycling.
  - Use Form-Based Codes (FBCs) to replace or supplement standard text-based zoning, subdivision and other local regulations to achieve the desired outcomes.
  - Develop design standards to guide development of buildings and landscapes that are contextually compatible with the characteristics of the towns and promote the preservation of resources, i.e. xeriscape, green buildings (LEED).
  - Add best practice provisions for energy and environmental design for structures and orientation.

## Opportunities

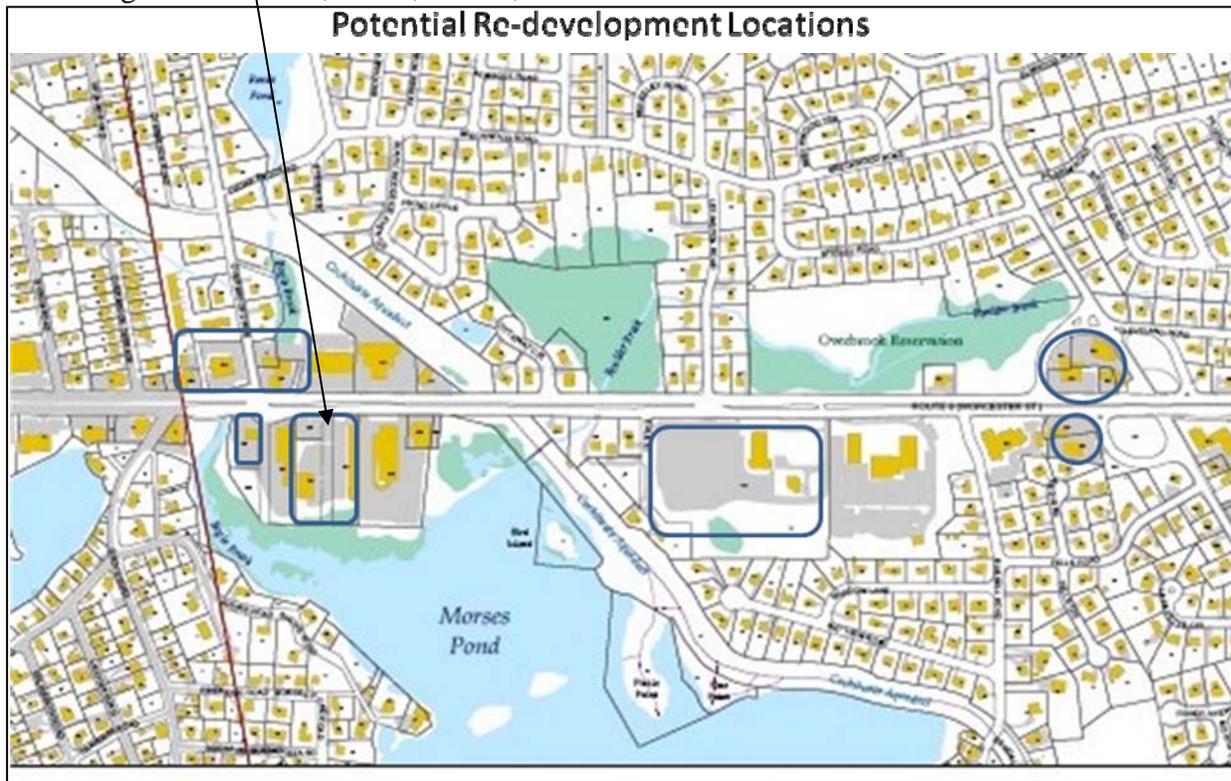
The following map shows six areas outlined in blue where there is obvious potential for redevelopment. The largest parcels are located on the east-bound side of Route 9. The area adjacent to the Natick town line is ripe for redevelopment due in large part to three abandoned buildings in close proximity to the town boundary. For this



reason, this portion of the Wellesley West Gateway is likely to be the first area that is redeveloped.



The property at 978 Worcester Street, the former Wellesley Travel Inn, is going through the development permitting process at this time. The project proponent has submitted a plan for a mixed-use development consisting of small retail, office, a bank, and residential condominiums.



The adjacent property to the east is vacant, and the property owner has made inquiries with the Planning Department about the potential for redevelopment of the property.





Three and one-half years ago, parishioners of St. James the Great Parish began a vigil to attempt to keep their Route 9 church open. During the past few years, the parishioners have filed appeals with the United States Supreme Court and the Vatican equivalent, the Apostolic Signatura.

Eleven months ago, the parishioners learned that the Supreme Judicial Court refused to interfere with the Archdiocese of Boston's decision to close the parish. The parish is still awaiting word from the Vatican on their decision regarding the parish.





Redevelopment of one or both of these properties would serve as a catalyst for the other redevelopment areas shown on the map above,



and other areas within the study area.

The area on the westbound side of Route 9 near the Natick town line may be ripe for redevelopment through parcel assembly, expansion of a non-conforming land use or building, or change of land uses. Although it is a fairly small area, any one of these changes could have a big impact, and could serve as a catalyst for other changes. Even this small area has a dominant automotive character, which is a concern as it drains into the brook which leads to Morses Pond.

A principal goal guiding the redevelopment of the study area should be to sustain and encourage a vital business center that provides needed goods, services, jobs and increased tax revenues in a manner that is compatible with Wellesley's historic development pattern, and establishes pedestrian accessibility and circulation throughout the study area.



Careful consideration of buffers between this business area and the adjacent neighborhoods, and improved pedestrian circulation should be a primary consideration in any redevelopment.

Pedestrian access and circulation are favored to limit vehicular congestion and air pollution. Adjacent



residential neighborhoods should be connected via safe pedestrian ways but should be separated with landscape buffers. It is widely recognized that the mere



provision of sidewalks and crosswalks will not encourage pedestrian use of a commercial area unless the layout and design of the sites and buildings are also conducive to pedestrian use.

A leading design principle therefore is to provide convenient and efficient pedestrian access within the study area and to surrounding neighborhoods and facilities, to provide a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment with walkways, pedestrian conveniences and amenities, and to encourage buildings with a pedestrian oriented scale and design.



These same precepts should apply to the redevelopment areas identified in area adjacent to the Weston Road interchange and shown in the photos on this page.



To accomplish the redevelopment that would, over time, result in a showcase gateway, the town should strongly consider adoption and utilization of the zoning tools discussed in the following paragraphs.