

ROUTE 140 CORRIDOR PLAN

Shrewsbury Street

Boylston, Massachusetts

Prepared for:

Town of Boylston, Massachusetts
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Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
Key Findings	1
Key Recommendations.....	1
INTRODUCTION	3
Population and Household Characteristics.....	4
Industries and Employment.....	7
Economic Development Capacity & Resources.....	9
CORRIDOR PLANNING AREA.....	11
Physical Features and Environmental Constraints	11
Land Use Pattern	13
Zoning	16
Water and Wastewater	19
Demographics and Employment Patterns.....	21
Map 3.1: Study Area.....	25
Map 3.2: Surficial Geology	27
Map 3.3: Water Resources	29
Map 3.4: Existing Zoning	31
REGIONAL ECONOMY	33
Employment Base	33
Industrial Market	35
Office Market	39
Retail Market.....	41
VISION PLAN	45
Comprehensive Plan 2000.....	45
Public Participation	45
Environmental Constraints.....	50
Route 140 Vision Plan.....	54
Map 5.1: Stakeholder Priority Areas	57
Map 5.2: Composite Map.....	59
Map 5.3: Development Concept Areas	61
ZONING ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	63
Existing Regulations	63
Zoning Issues & Recommendations	68
DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES	75
New Development Potential	75
Development Potential: Existing Regulations	75
Development Potential: Proposed Regulations	77
Economic and Municipal Impacts	78
Map 7.1: Priority Development Parcels	81
IMPLEMENTATION	83
Zoning	83
Infrastructure & Public Services	84
Local Capacity	84
APPENDIX.....	87
Appendix A: Stakeholder Interviews	87
Appendix B: Proposed Table of Use Regulations.....	89
Appendix C: Route 140 Corridor Development Guidelines.....	97

Executive Summary

The Town of Boylston has commissioned a corridor plan for the portion of Route 140 known as Shrewsbury Street. The attractiveness of Route 140 for new business development will be influenced by a host of factors: population demographics, the corridor planning area's physical, infrastructure, and economic characteristics and land use regulations, market demand, and competing opportunities in the region. Many communities share Boylston's desire for more jobs and a stronger tax base.

Key Findings

- ◆ The corridor planning area includes 354± acres of vacant land: twenty-five acres of readily developable land, 158 acres with some development potential, another twenty-five acres assessed as undevelopable land, and 146 acres under Chapter 61-61A agreements.
- ◆ Regionally, Boylston functions as a “bedroom community” that exports labor and consumer spending power to other cities and towns. In most cases, the sources of labor for Boylston employers are communities that have both larger populations and a more maturely developed employment base. As a result, workers generated by these communities are more likely to make consumer expenditures in their own towns or the established retail and service centers located along commuter routes. This is evident in retail leakage statistics, which show that Boylston “loses” about 77 percent of its residents’ consumer expenditures to non-local stores.
- ◆ Boylston has 167 employer establishments with a combined total of 1,658 employees. Compared with the region, Boylston has much larger percentages of employment in the recreation, construction, and wholesale trade industries and

much smaller percentages in finance, health care, and food services.

- ◆ Boylston companies employ fewer people per business (on average) than companies in the same industrial class elsewhere in Worcester County. The ratio of jobs to the local labor force in Boylston is only 0.71, i.e., 0.71 jobs for every one resident in the labor force.
- ◆ Most of Boylston's neighbors have in-house or consulting planners and economic development staff: Shrewsbury, Westborough, Northborough, Berlin, Bolton, Clinton, Lancaster, and Holden. Boylston does not provide comparable assistance to its town boards.
- ◆ The most significant development constraints in the corridor planning area include:
 - ◆ Lack of sewer service
 - ◆ Existing zoning
 - ◆ Boylston's low-density development pattern and small daytime population
 - ◆ Wetlands
 - ◆ Steep slopes

Key Recommendations

Land Use

1. Establish a Neighborhood Business District in the vicinity of the Route 140-Route 70 intersection.
2. Change the Industrial District to the Flexible Business Development District.

ROUTE 140 CORRIDOR PLAN

3. Establish a Shrewsbury Street Business District on the south side of Route 140.
4. Establish a Mixed-Use Industrial District on the north side of Route 140.
5. Adjust the use regulations and dimensional controls for all districts along Route 140.
6. Bring off-street parking requirements in line with industry standards, and create flexibility for the Planning Board to reduce or waive parking requirements.
7. Eliminate the Limited Industrial District.
8. Update Zoning Bylaw definitions and procedures for site plan review.

Infrastructure and Utilities

1. Verify the capacity of the existing water supply and distribution system to support additional development on Route 140 and determine improvements that may be required, if any, together with the estimated cost of such improvements.
2. Hire an engineering firm to conduct a feasibility study of wastewater disposal options for Route 140: extending sewer service from Worcester, constructing and operating a municipal package treatment plant, and constructing and operating a shared treatment facility with the Town of Shrewsbury.
3. Explore opportunities with the Towns of West Boylston and Shrewsbury for providing shared fire and emergency medical services in the corridor study area.

Local Capacity

1. Establish an accurate, accessible, and easy-to-maintain database of all parcels on Route 140, including assessor's data, known environmental and other constraints, ownership and land use history, and broker contacts (if known).
2. Establish a Route 140 Corridor Advisory Committee that includes property owners and business owners to act as a sounding board for implementation and to advance new ideas concerning the corridor's development.
3. Maintain the Applicant Advisory Committee (AAC) as an information and technical assistance resource to business property owners and developers.
4. Retain an economic development consultant to assist the Town on an as-needed basis with application review, developer negotiations and development agreements, pricing and negotiating Tax Increment Financing (TIF) agreements, and provide training and technical support to the Business Development Committee and others.
5. Create a permitting guidebook to provide clear and detailed information on all aspects of the permitting process..
6. Participate in Wachusett Valley Chamber of Commerce (COC) meetings and events to ensure awareness of regional economic and development trends and build alliances with neighboring towns.

Introduction

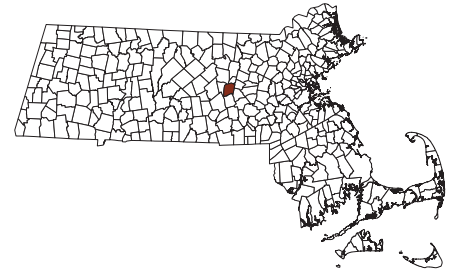
Boylston is a small, sparsely populated town in Central Massachusetts, located seven miles northeast of Worcester and bounded by the towns of Shrewsbury, Northborough, Berlin, Clinton, Sterling, and West Boylston. Despite its proximity to Worcester and the interstate highway system, Boylston remains largely undeveloped and forested, with low-density residential development etched along old, winding roadways. It is more like the small towns to the west and north than the maturing suburbs that form a ring around Worcester and define the Worcester metro office and industrial markets.

According to the *Boylston Comprehensive Plan*, about one-third of the town (or 4,000 acres) is owned by the Commonwealth and managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), Division of Water Supply Protection, because Boylston hosts a large portion of the Wachusett Reservoir.¹ More than two-thirds of the town is subject to the Watershed Protection Act (WsPA), which regulates land disturbance and land use around the primary water supplies serving Greater Boston – the Quabbin Reservoir, the Wachusett Reservoir, and the Ware River – and their tributaries.²

The state's control over so much land in Boylston, coupled with WsPA restrictions, contributes to the

limited amount of development that exists here. However, Boylston is also a small town by choice. About eighty percent of the town is

governed by fairly large-lot residential zoning requirements. In addition, Boylston has no public sewer service and only limited public water service, so it lacks the infrastructure to encourage a more diverse development pattern even where permitted by zoning. Much of Boylston's own planning suggests that residents would like to keep their town small, yet there is considerable interest in promoting more business activity along Route 140. Notably, Boylston's desire to attract business growth is articulated in the goals and recommendations of the *Comprehensive Plan* and reinforced in the *Boylston Community Development Plan* (2004). In furtherance of its economic goals, the Town has commissioned a corridor plan for the portion of Route 140 known as Shrewsbury Street.



¹ Kenneth M. Kreutziger, *Boylston Comprehensive Plan* (2000), 4. Note: MassGIS reports that DCR owns 2,755 acres in Boylston and holds conservation restrictions on another 130 acres, for a total of 2,885 acres of DCR-protected land. Source: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS), Protected and Recreational Open Space Geodatabase, updated September 2009, <http://www.mass.gov/mgis/>.

² DCR, Watershed Protection Act, <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/waterSupply/watershed/wsapa.htm>; MassGIS, NRCS HUC Basins, updated November 2005; and Community Opportunities Group, Inc.



The Route 140 Corridor, looking east.

ROUTE 140 CORRIDOR PLAN

A corridor study typically examines current and future transportation needs along a specific roadway. Although corridor studies tend to focus on transportation improvements, many of these studies also include a land use plan in order to facilitate a comprehensive look at transportation and land use alternatives. Such is the case in Boylston, which has a considerable amount of vacant land off Route 140. The future development of that land, as well as the potential for redevelopment of existing space, could have a significant impact on traffic operations and traffic control on Route 140, Main Street, and the surrounding local roads. For Boylston's study, Fay, Spofford & Thorndike, Inc. was retained to address the transportation component and Community Opportunities Group, Inc., the land use component, both working in conjunction with Special Town Counsel Blatman, Bobrowski & Mead, LLC. This report centers on the land use component. The consulting team's charge is to evaluate development opportunities in an area generally known as the Route 140 corridor planning area, identify steps the town can take to pursue economic growth, and recommend strategies to achieve Boylston's economic development goals.

Compared with several of its neighbors, Boylston has a relatively limited roadway network with no east-west routes extending across the town, and this is largely because of the Wachusett Reservoir. The shape of Boylston's landscape is different, too, and this is directly attributable to the convergence of three watershed divides in the southern part of town. Like many of the small towns just north of Worcester, Boylston is quite pretty. Its roads wind, twist, and traverse the hills, and Boylston has a considerable amount of forested land. Etched along the roadsides and between the trees are Boylston's homes. The town has very few businesses, and for the most part the businesses it has are inconspicuous. This picture of a quiet, residential community with limited development and pockets of small-scale commerce reflects the aims of Boylston's past planning and present zoning.

The attractiveness of Route 140 for new business development will be influenced by a host of factors: population demographics, the corridor planning ar-



The Route 140 Corridor, looking west.

ea's physical, infrastructure, and economic characteristics and land use regulations, market demand, and competing opportunities in the region. It is one thing to want economic growth and quite another to be prepared for it. Moreover, many communities share Boylston's desire for more jobs and a stronger tax base. This section of our report examines Boylston's economic development assets and potential liabilities and provides a baseline inventory of a corridor planning area. It also situates the corridor planning area in a regional economic context, which is important because Shrewsbury Street in Boylston does not exist in a vacuum. Although growth and change in nearby communities is not always a good barometer of the possibilities that may be available to a given town, Boylston's strategy for luring businesses to Route 140 should be informed by an understanding of regional trends.

Population and Household Characteristics

According to the Bureau of the Census and other sources, Boylston's population is growing at a moderate pace. Since 2000, the population has reportedly increased by just over 6 percent, to 4,264 people, which places Boylston's growth rate behind that of neighboring Berlin, West Boylston, and Sterling, and somewhat ahead of Shrewsbury and Northborough (Table 2.1).³ Evidence that Boylston's population is

³ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Population Estimates: Incorporated Places and Minor Civil Divisions 2000 to 2008, <http://www.census.gov>.

Table 2.1
Population Growth in Boylston and Surrounding Towns, 2000-2008 (Estimates)

Town	Census Population Estimate July 1, 2000-2008					
	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	% Change
Berlin	2,395	2,559	2,655	2,694	2,853	19.1%
BOYLSTON	4,022	4,095	4,147	4,217	4,264	6.0%
Clinton	13,478	13,687	13,779	14,035	13,965	3.6%
Northborough	14,049	14,192	14,204	14,549	14,646	4.2%
Shrewsbury	31,804	32,637	32,890	32,955	33,435	5.1%
Sterling	7,296	7,544	7,679	7,775	7,865	7.8%
West Boylston	7,502	7,718	7,739	8,007	8,277	10.3%

Source: Bureau of the Census, "Population Estimates: Incorporated Places and Minor Civil Divisions 2000 to 2008."

Note: Figures for 2000 represent July 1 estimates, not the official census count taken on April 1.

aging, consistent with national trends, can be seen in age cohort changes that have occurred over the past twenty years. In 2000, 75.7 percent of Boylston's population was age 18 years and over, down from 77.4 percent in 1990. Today, available demographic estimates place the 18-and-over population in Boylston at 77.8 percent of the total,⁴ signaling the progression of "Baby Boomers" toward retirement and their children – the so-called "Echo Boomers" – from adolescence to adulthood. Although people often focus on total population growth as the measure of change in their communities, the age make-up of the population is also very important. Shifts in the distribution of persons within age cohorts affects household formation rates, labor force participation rates, disposable income and spending power, and many other factors that tend to induce or constrain economic growth.

Like most communities, Boylston has experienced a more rapid rate of household growth than population growth. The number of households in Boylston increased approximately 8.9 percent – to 1,725 – between 2000 and 2009.⁵ Most of the town's households are families (72.4 percent), which makes sense given that so much of Boylston's housing stock is

composed of single-family dwellings. Still, Boylston is not immune to the effects of declining household sizes and changing lifestyles: childless couples, non-traditional families, one-person households, and households of unrelated people. Today, two kinds of households make up more than half of all households in Boylston: single people living alone, and two-person households, most being married couples without dependent children. Meanwhile, the town's average household size has dropped from 2.64 in 1990 to 2.55 in 2000 to 2.52 in 2009.⁶ This pattern will most likely hold as Boylston continues to grow. For example, population and household projections prepared by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) indicate that by 2030, Boylston's average household size will have declined to about 2.44 persons.⁷

On many measures of community well-being, Boylston fares quite well. The town has a high rate of homeownership (84 percent of all households), a very low crime rate, and good schools. For the most part, the incidence of public health problems in Boylston

gov/popest/estimates.html.

⁴ University of Massachusetts Donohue Institute, State Data Center, "Change in Population Over/Under 18, 1990 to 2000," <http://www.massbenchmarks.org/statedata/data.htm>, and Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

⁵ Claritas, Inc., Demographic Snapshot Report 2009.

⁶ Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Summary File 1, Table H017A, "Persons per Occupied Housing Unit," and Census 2000, Summary File 1, Table P17, "Average Household Size," <http://factfinder.census.gov>; and Claritas, Inc., Demographic Snapshot.

⁷ Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), "Population Projections: 2000-2030" and "Household Projections: 2000-2030," <http://www.cmrpc.org/>, and Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

Table 2.2
Comparative Economic Position of Households, Families, and Employed Persons (2000)

Town	Census 2000 Median			
	Household Income	Family Income	Income for Men with Full-Time Employment	Income for Women with Full-Time Employment
Berlin	65,667	76,419	51,178	34,438
BOYLSTON	67,703	77,604	56,574	44,315
Clinton	44,740	53,308	37,535	30,788
Northborough	79,781	90,480	66,926	42,620
Shrewsbury	64,237	77,674	58,328	38,365
Sterling	67,188	76,943	52,335	33,672
West Boylston	53,777	69,100	50,855	34,091

Source: Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Summary File 3, Tables P53, P77, P85, and PCT45.

falls far below the state average.⁸ Its population is generally well educated, too, and this plays an important part in the employment characteristics of its labor force and the economic position of its households. Nearly half of the Boylston's adult population has earned at minimum an associate's degree, and more than 15 percent has completed graduate school. For overall educational attainment, Boylston is comfortably ahead of Worcester County and somewhat ahead of the state as a whole.⁹ It is not surprising to find that a substantial portion of Boylston's civilian labor force consists of people with management, professional, and other "white collar" jobs, or that the town's unemployment rate is lower than that of the state as a whole.¹⁰ While current wage and salary statistics are unavailable for Boylston residents, it is worth noting that compared with surrounding towns in 2000, Boylston ranked very high for median earnings by the over-16 population and median income of women with full-time employment.¹¹

⁸ Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Public Health, "Health Status Indicators Report for Boylston," Massachusetts Community Health Information Profile ("MassCHIP"), 2009.

⁹ Census 2000, Summary File 3, Table P37, "Sex by Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Over."

¹⁰ Claritas, Inc., Demographic Snapshot Report 2009, and Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), "Labor Force and Unemployment Rates," <http://lmi2.detma.org/Lmi/LMIDataProg.asp>.

¹¹ Census 2000, Summary File 3, Table P85, "Median Earnings in 1999 (Dollars) by Sex for the Population 16 Years and Over with Earnings," and Table PCT45, "Medi-

Due to the relative competitiveness of its labor force, Boylston exceeds Worcester County and the state for household and family incomes. In 2000, Boylston's median household income was second highest in the immediate area, as shown in Table 2.2, and its median family income, while technically in the middle of the adjacent towns, barely fell below that of Shrewsbury. Boylston's income and earnings statistics matter because they indicate the presence of a skilled labor force, a relatively high labor force participation rate, general economic stability, and a low poverty rate. In fact, Boylston and Northborough had the region's lowest poverty rates in 2000: 2.8 percent of the total population.¹² The current (2009) estimated poverty rate for families in Boylston is 2.6 percent.¹³

For some measures of community well-being, however, Boylston rates fairly low. The town lacks cultural diversity, for it has an almost exclusively white, non-Hispanic population and its very small number of minority residents are mainly Asians. Boylston's

an Income in 1999 (Dollars) by Sex by Work Experience in 1999 for the Population 15 Years and Over with Income." In federal census terms, "earnings" represents income from employment (wages, salary, or net income from self-employment) whereas "income" is the total amount a person or household receives from all sources – employment, investments, net income from real estate, retirement, unemployment, and so forth.

¹² Census 2000, Summary File 3, Table P89, "Poverty Status in 1999 by Age by Household Type."

¹³ Claritas, Inc., Demographic Snapshot Report 2009.

population is overwhelmingly composed of people whose ancestries include Irish, English, French and French Canadian, Swedish, and Italian, and there is a very limited presence of other ancestral or language groups. Another factor that makes Boylston a fairly homogenous town is that incoming residents tend to migrate from elsewhere in Worcester County or Eastern Massachusetts more than from other parts of the country. This is not the case in Shrewsbury and Northborough, which attract people from a much wider area.¹⁴

A third factor is that Boylston's housing is quite expensive, and since detached single-family homes account for virtually all new housing built in Boylston, there are not many housing choices. The town has some older multi-family dwellings and condominiums, but with rare exception, Boylston's new homes are detached single-family homes and they sell at the upper end of the regional market.¹⁵ These characteristics of the town are important, too, because limitations on diversity often go hand-in-hand with conditions that create a challenging environment for business. Since Boylston's employment base is much smaller than its employed labor force, the town loses many of its residents (and their daily spending) to other communities.

Industries and Employment

Boylston is located along the eastern edge of the economic statistical region that surrounds the City of Worcester, known as the Worcester-MA Metropolitan New England City and Town Area (NECTA). The region includes most of Worcester County south of Route 2, which divides the Worcester metro area from that of the county's northern cities: Leominster, Fitchburg, and Gardner (Fig. 2.1). The boundaries that separate economic regions may seem somewhat



Fig. 2.1. Economic statistical regions.

arbitrary, but they are drawn in recognition of the waterways and transportation routes that reinforce economic links between cities and nearby towns. Often, regions develop an economic identity based on a particular industry or cluster of industries. The Worcester metro area has become a center of the educational, life sciences, and health care and social assistance industries, all having experienced net job growth since 2005 in spite of the national recession. The same industries are expected to generate a majority of the Worcester metro area's new jobs over the next ten years.¹⁶ Most of the existing jobs in these industries are located within the City of Worcester and Westborough, and to a lesser extent, traditional manufacturing towns such as Auburn and Southbridge.¹⁷

¹⁴ Census 2000, Summary File 3, Table P24, "Residence in 1995 for the Population 5 Years and Over – State and County Level."

¹⁵ The Warren Group, "Town Stats" and user-defined real property sales report via Real Estate Records Search, November 18, 2009.

¹⁶ Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), *Regional LMI Profile: Central Massachusetts Workforce Area* (May 2009), 24.

¹⁷ EOLWD, "Largest Employers by Area: Worcester MA-CT Metropolitan NECTA," Economic Data, <http://lmi2.detma.org>, 24.

Table 2.3
Location Quotients: Boylston Employment Base (2008)

Industrial Class	Average Monthly Employment ^{†(a)}		
	Worcester NECTA	Boylston	Location Quotient
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	316		
Mining	137		
Construction	9,954	112	1.587
Manufacturing	26,729	129	0.681
Durable Goods Manufacturing	17,846	116	0.917
Non-Durable Goods Manufacturing	8,883		
Utilities	1,173		
Wholesale Trade	10,635	159	2.109
Retail Trade	26,217	175	0.942
Transportation and Warehousing	8,231	32	
Information	4,306		
Finance and Insurance	11,173	10	0.126
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,864	16	1.211
Professional and Technical Services	10,767	84	1.100
Management of Companies and Enterprises	3,913		
Administrative and Waste Services	11,943		
Educational Services	26,417	175	0.934
Health Care and Social Assistance	40,507	25	0.087
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	4,048	242	8.433
Accommodation and Food Services	16,970	54	0.449
Other Services	<u>8,989</u>	<u>48</u>	0.753
Total Employment	233,877	1,658	

Source: EOLWD, "ES-202 Series," Annual Data 2008, and Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

Note: (a) Numbers may not total due to rounding and the exclusion of very small employment counts for selected industries. Boylston may have employment in one or more industries for which no jobs are reported above, but the number of jobs is so small that information about them is classified as confidential.

Economic statistics reported by the state show that Boylston has just 167 employer establishments with a combined total employment of 1,658 people. The employment base in Boylston is quite different from that of the region, as suggested by the *location quotients* in Table 2.3. A location quotient compares an industry's employment in one geographic area to that of a larger geographic area, such as an economic statistical region, a county, or a labor market area. It shows that Boylston has much larger percentages of employment in the recreation, construction, and wholesale trade industries (quotient >1.25), and much smaller percentages in finance, health care, and food services (quotient <0.75). In addition, Boylston companies employ fewer people per business (on average) than companies in the same industrial class elsewhere in Worcester County. The difference

is noteworthy: an average of 9.9 employees per business in Boylston and 16.5 per business in Worcester County as a whole.¹⁸ While the wages paid by Boylston employers often exceed the wages paid by employers elsewhere in the county, the employment base is so small that it cannot begin to meet the employment needs of the town's own residents. The ratio of jobs to the local labor force is only 0.71, i.e., 0.71 jobs for every one resident in the labor force. Some sources place the local employment estimate even lower, the result being a larger gap between jobs and residents.¹⁹

¹⁸ EOLWD, "Employment and Wages (ES-202)," Economic Data.

¹⁹ *Regional LMI Profile: Central Massachusetts Workforce Area*, 36.

Although Boylston has qualities that would make it appealing to companies in an expansion mode – that is, businesses looking for space to grow – it has not only a small total population but also a small *daytime* population, and a strikingly small percentage of its labor force works locally. In fact, Boylston has the smallest percentage of locally employed residents of any town in the immediate area: fewer than 10 percent, compared with the Worcester County average of 30 percent.²⁰ Boylston's business establishments employ more workers from Worcester than Boylston, and meanwhile half of the town's employed residents commute to jobs in Worcester or one of the larger suburbs to the south and east. Together, businesses in Worcester, Westborough, Marlborough, Shrewsbury, and Northborough employ half of Boylston's labor force.²¹

The small size and narrow composition of Boylston's employment base make the town quite different from communities with active, successful economic development programs and communities with similar amounts of land zoned for commercial and industrial development. Regionally, Boylston functions as a "bedroom community" that exports labor and consumer spending power to other cities and towns. The 1,900 residents commuting to non-local jobs every day amount to nearly twice the number of incoming workers (980) who travel from other communities to a job in Boylston.²² In most cases, the sources of labor for Boylston employers are communities that have both larger populations and a more maturely developed employment base. As a result, workers generated by these communities are more likely to make consumer expenditures in their own towns or the established retail and service centers located along commuter routes. The near-absence

of a meaningful retail base in Boylston is evident in retail leakage statistics, which show that Boylston "loses" about 77 percent of its residents' consumer expenditures to non-local stores.²³

Economic Development Capacity & Resources

In Boylston, planning, development review, and permitting functions are handled by the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals. Although most of Boylston's neighbors invest in planning capacity through in-house personnel or consultant services – Shrewsbury, Westborough, Northborough, Berlin, Bolton, Clinton, Lancaster, and Holden – Boylston does not provide comparable assistance to its town boards. However, there is an Applicant Advisory Committee composed of staff and board representatives, which is available to meet informally with and offer technical assistance to applicants. Recently the town also established a volunteer Boylston Business Marketing Committee (BBMC) to promote economic growth and assist with recruiting new businesses. The BBMC receives staff support from the Town Administrator, who is a professional planner by education and experience.

In 2009, Boylston joined a regional economic development consortium, the Northern Worcester County Economic Target Area (ETA). By taking this step, Boylston became eligible to participate in various economic development incentive programs offered by the state, notably Tax Increment Financing (TIF). The town's first experience with a TIF agreement involved a 425,000 sq. ft. industrial project proposed by Rand Whitney Group at 160 Shrewsbury Street (in the corridor planning area). Rand Whitney hoped to create forty new jobs and consolidate another operation with its new facility in Boylston, effectively employing some 180 people at the Boylston site.²⁴

²⁰ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Summary File 3, Table P29, "Place of Work for Works 16 Years and Over – Minor Civil Division Level," <http://factfinder.census.gov>.

²¹ Census 2000, "MCD/County to MCD/County Worker Flow Files," Special Tabulation Series, Census 2000 Gateway, <http://www.census.gov/mp/www/spectab/specialtab.html>.

²² Census 2000, "MCD/County to MCD/County Worker Flow Files."

²³ Claritas, Inc., "RMP Opportunity Gap, Retail Stores."

²⁴ Community Opportunities Group, Inc., for Town of Boylston, "Application for Designation of Economic Opportunity Area" (May 2008), 8.

ROUTE 140 CORRIDOR PLAN

Due to the recession, however, Rand Whitney's project never went forward.

Boylston is served by a regional branch of the Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD), a state agency charged with promoting business growth in the Commonwealth and providing business development assistance to companies. The regional MOBD office is based at Devens. MOBD is the umbrella of the Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP), which includes ETAs and is administered by the Economic Assistance Coordinating Council (EACC). Employment search and job training resources are available from the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), which maintains a branch office in Worcester.

Corridor Planning Area

The Route 140 corridor planning area discussed in this report includes Shrewsbury Street, West Boylston Street for approximately one-half mile west of the Route 140/Route 70 intersection, and Main Street (Route 70) for approximately one-half mile south of the same intersection (Map 3.1).¹ In most cases, the corridor planning area boundaries coincide with parcel boundaries as depicted on the Boylston's current assessor's maps. Since so much of the land in Boylston remains undeveloped, the corridor planning area includes some large parcels with frontage on Route 140 and a considerable amount of back land. As a result, the planning area's boundaries extend anywhere from 200 feet to as much as 2,700 feet from the centerline of Route 140. Together, all of the affected parcels contain a combined total of some 640 acres.²

Physical Features and Environmental Constraints

The Route 140 corridor planning area is located in the highlands that extend from Bolton to Shrewsbury and form the divide between the Blackstone, Nashua, and Concord River watersheds. Bisected by the Sewall Brook, the corridor planning area consists of an erratic, rolling landscape interspersed with forested wetlands and marshes. The land bordering Route 140 tends to be fairly level, but some steeply sloped areas exist south of the highway. The physical characteristics of the corridor planning area reveal its geologic history and help to define its present-day opportunities and constraints.

¹ For purposes of the draft report, all maps have been placed in a separate section at the end of the document.

² The 640-acre estimate is based on GIS acres, which is not the same as the sum of parcel acres recorded in the assessor's records.

GEOLOGY, SOILS, AND TOPOGRAPHY

Like many of the surrounding towns, Boylston has large areas covered with thin *glacial till*, including the eastern half of the planning area from the Shrewsbury town line to East Temple Street (Map 3.2). The layer of till formed more than 10,000 years ago, when the receding glacier scoured the New England landscape and ground the underlying rock into variously sized rocks, stones, and boulders. What remains are fairly compact formations with dense and stony soil types that may serve as a good base for buildings, but not necessarily for site development. Since till-based soils tend to transmit water slowly, they are often unsuitable for septic systems and water supplies.³ In some portions of the corridor planning area east of the Sewall Brook, the glacial till is so thin that rock outcrops and shallow bedrock have been exposed, particularly near I-290 and south of Route 140. The extent to which the soils constitute a significant development constraint depends on the developer's program, financial capacity, and expectations.

As the ice sheet melted on its journey northward, it left behind *glacial outwash deposits* of sand and stone in lower-lying areas. Unlike till, meltwater deposits tend to be consistently sized, and the corresponding soil types are better for farming and groundwater storage. Most of the glacial outwash deposits in the corridor planning area are coarse, resembling gravel and rockier soils. The western part of the corridor planning area (from East Temple Street to the intersection with Route 70) contains these coarse deposits. This area is part of a larger swath that runs from the southern edge of the Wachusett Reservoir along a corridor of topographic lowlands and open water through Shrewsbury and into Grafton. The major

³ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Soil Data Mart, User-defined query, accessed August 31, 2009.

ROUTE 140 CORRIDOR PLAN

soil type in this part of the corridor planning area is a well-drained sandy loam commonly found in Worcester County. In addition, *swamp deposits* exist in several parts of the corridor planning area. They formed when the glaciers receded and left behind a mix of silts, clays, sands, and gravel. As might be expected, the swamp deposits occur in low-lying areas and usually coincide with wetlands. The soils tend to be dense, poorly drained, and wet.



The Route 140 Corridor planning area contains moderate to steep slopes.

Most corridor planning area parcels with frontage along Route 140 are minimally to moderately sloped. Areas with significant slopes exist primarily on the Dipilato property, one the largest parcels within the corridor planning area, and a few neighboring parcels. The extent to which these steeper slopes limit or discourage development will depend on a developer's program and expected returns, and the characteristics of competing sites elsewhere in the Worcester non-metro area.

WATER RESOURCES

The corridor planning area traverses the topographic divide between two major watersheds - the Blackstone and Nashua River Watersheds - and skirts the western boundary of the Assabet (Concord) River Watershed (Map 3.3). Most of the corridor planning area is located within the northernmost sub-basin of the Blackstone River Watershed and drains to the Sewall Brook, which in turn feeds Sewall Pond and eventually, the Quinsigamond River. The Wachusett Reservoir is formed by impoundment of the Nashua River's headwaters in the northwest corner of the corridor planning area.

Wetlands exist throughout the planning area. A relatively large, conspicuous wetland area can be seen in the southeast and southwest corners of the Route 140 and 70 intersection, including Spruce Pond, a deep marsh community interspersed with bogs. However, wetlands extend within and along low-lying areas in most parts of the planning area and in some cases, they present significant site constraints. They are particularly prevalent east of Sewall Street (North and South), coinciding with the extensive glacial till and the rich swamp deposits found in this part of the planning area. Most of the wetlands are deciduous swamps associated with the Sewall Brook and numerous intermittent streams.

In addition to wetlands, part of the corridor planning area coincides with one of Boylston's major aquifers. The aquifer area is roughly the same as the large sand and gravel deposit described above, for these soil types are particularly good for groundwater storage. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has mapped the aquifers in each of the Commonwealth's major drainage basins and classified them as high-, medium-, and low-yield deposits. The yield definitions vary by drainage basin. In Boylston, the high-yield aquifers have capacity to support pumping of more than 300 gallons per minute (gpm) and medium-yield aquifers, 100-300 gpm. Four of the Town's five public wells are located within this aquifer and within the vicinity of Route 140 and 70. To protect its drinking water, Boylston has established a Wellhead Protection (WP) Overlay District, which covers most of the Zone I and Zone II Public Water Supply Protection Areas regulated by the Department of Environmental Protection. The Interim Wellhead Protection Area (IWPA) for the private well near the Other Place Pub lies within the Zone II and is subject to WP District requirements.⁴ The WP District restricts the type and intensity of uses allowed by the underlying zoning district to protect both the quality and quantity of drinking water supplies.⁵

⁴ Kreutziger, *Boylston Comprehensive Plan*. An IWPA is an area that contributes water to a well but has not been approved by the DEP as a Zone II.

⁵ Town of Boylston, Massachusetts, "Zoning By-laws," as approved by Annual Town Meeting, May 4, 2009, http://www.boylston-ma.gov/Pages/BoylstonMA_Clerk/

Although beyond the boundaries of the corridor planning area, the Wachusett Reservoir and the regulations that protect it deserve mention in this analysis. The Reservoir is both a remarkable water resource and a source of development constraints for the Town of Boylston. Within this area, development is either restricted to certain activities or prohibited outright, depending on the distance to surface waters, tributaries, and other water resources. These regulations do not affect the development potential of the Route 140 corridor. Rather they are the impetus for development within it. Because so much of the Town of Boylston's land is affected by the Wachusett Reservoir and its attendant regulations, pressure to maximize development along Route 140 and expand the town's tax base is that much greater.

WILDLIFE HABITAT

Two of the most important indicators of sensitive habitat are the National Heritage Endangered Species Program's (NHESP) Priority Habitats for Rare Species and Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife designations. These designations are used for regulatory purposes. A Priority Habitat designation is the filing trigger for determining whether a project must be reviewed by NHESP for compliance with the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA). Projects taking place in Estimated Habitats are subject to review under MESA and may be subject to review under the Wetlands Protection Act.⁶ According to the most recently published NHESP areas (October 2008), there are no Priority Habitats or Estimated Habitats in the Route 140 corridor planning area.⁷ However, there are two certified vernal pools. Vernal pools are shallow, often isolated ponds that sustain periods of dryness and function as critical habitat for a number of species. They are fragile re-

sources that require special protection. Vernal pools are certified according to guidelines established and administered by NHESP.⁸ The designation may afford vernal pools with protection under the Wetlands Protection Act, Title 5 of the Massachusetts Environmental Code, the state's Water Quality Certification regulations, and the Massachusetts Forest Cutting Practices Act.⁹ While the specific restrictions on development vary between vernal pools, the presence of a certified vernal pool would likely pose additional development constraints for property owners.

Land Use Pattern

Land use refers to the amount and intensity of a community's residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional development, along with roads, open land, and water. Patterns of development vary by the land and water resources that support them, the eras in which growth occurred, and the evolution of a community's transportation infrastructure. The ages of buildings in various parts of a town usually correlate with changes in land use patterns. Similarly, the placement of buildings in relation to the street and to each other tends to be inseparable from their age and whether they were constructed before or after the adoption of zoning.

EXISTING LAND USES

Existing development along Route 140 includes a mix of commercial, industrial, and residential uses. There are also some large government-owned and vacant parcels within or partially within the corridor planning area. In general, the existing land use pattern is characterized by some nodes of activity interspersed with large amounts of open land. In fact, privately owned vacant land constitutes just over half of all land in the corridor planning area. By contrast, commercial uses occupy slightly less than 10 percent and industrial uses, 6 percent, with housing – mainly single-family homes – located on about

index.

⁶ Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Fish and Game, Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Habitat, "Priority Habitat and Estimated Habitat for Rare Species," at http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/regulatory_review/priority_habitat/priority_habitat_home.htm.

⁷ MassGIS, NHESP Priority Habitats of Rare Species Database, NHESP Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife Database, <http://www.mass.gov/mgis/laylist.htm> (accessed September 9, 2009).

⁸ Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game, Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species, "Vernal Pool Certification," http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/vernal_pools/vernal_pool_cert.htm.

⁹ Ibid.

Table 3.1
Land Use Summary (2009)

Class of Use	No, Parcels	Acres	Aggregate Assessed Value		
			Land Value	Building Value	Total Value
Single-Family	24	42.93	\$3,953,750	\$3,133,550	\$7,087,300
Two-Family	2	3.18	\$362,700	\$288,600	\$651,300
Multi-Family	2	0.81	\$294,000	\$194,000	\$488,000
Retail	3	6.72	\$489,300	\$917,600	\$1,406,900
Office	1	2.42	\$237,300	\$644,900	\$882,200
Other Commercial	7	51.26	\$3,582,900	\$6,063,100	\$9,646,000
Industrial	6	41.36	\$5,257,500	\$7,269,800	\$12,527,300
Forestry	1	146.02	\$15,100	\$0	\$15,100
Vacant Land	<u>20</u>	<u>207.78</u>	\$5,161,300	\$19,700	\$5,181,000
Subtotal	66	502.48	\$19,353,850	\$18,531,250	\$37,885,100
Public Land	9	137.11			
Total	75	639.59			

Sources: FY 2009 Assessor's parcel database supplied by Town Administrator Nancy Colbert Puff, and GIS parcel analysis by Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

Notes: (a) Acres are expressed as GIS acres. Due to inaccuracies in the underlying GIS parcel map, the GIS acres reported for each parcel should be interpreted as an estimate.

7 percent. The corridor planning area currently has no charitable, non-profit institutional, or religious uses. Since the established uses are low-density and broadly distributed, and set back unevenly from the road, the corridor does not have a well-formed identity. Table 3.1 provides a snapshot of the corridor planning area's land by class of use.

The location and arrangement of the uses reported in Table 3.1 play a significant role in defining the roadway's character and development opportunities. From the Shrewsbury town line north to the point where School Street runs parallel to Route 140 (ap-

proximately 2,200 feet), the Route 140 land use pattern consists of small lots and a variety of land uses, including some vacant land. Most of the non-residential uses exist along the west side of Route 140, including two gasoline service stations, a restaurant, and small retail establishments. The assessor's parcel database also identifies a number of vacant parcels,¹⁰ some of which are forested and at least one of which is used for the temporary storage of vehicles and equipment. On the opposite side of Route 140 is a mix of vacant land and residential uses on small lots. Directly north and just outside the corridor planning area is a residential neighborhood that extends along School and Cross Streets.

As the road bends northwest, crossing the Sewall Brook, there are several large industrial parcels with industrial office, manufacturing, and warehouse space. These parcels about the Rand Whitney site, named for the company that intended to develop it. Significant backland parcels extend southward, including the largest privately owned tract in the corridor planning area, the 146-acre Dipilato property. Additionally, there is a forty-seven acre parcel



One of the few areas along Route 140 with a mix of service, retail, and restaurant establishments.

¹⁰ Nancy Colbert Puff, Town Administrator, "FY09-GISParcels.xls," to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., July 8, 2009.

formerly used as a gravel quarry. Residential uses exist along the east side of Route 140 in this part of the corridor planning area, especially around East Temple and School Streets and Mary Ann Drive, along with some vacant parcels. From East Temple Street and Sewall Street to the intersection of Route 140 and Route 70, the existing land uses consist of a commercial warehouse, a cluster of retail and other small business services, including the new commercial plaza at 81 Shrewsbury Street and an older cluster of shops, small business, and other services, including a post office branch.

The intersection of Route 140 and 70 abuts some large, constrained parcels. The two parcels on the southeast corner of the intersection are currently classified as vacant. One parcel is severely constrained by wetlands, including Spruce Pond, and south of Spruce Pond there are two public drinking water supplies (the Morningside wells) on a town-owned parcel that fronts on Main Street. The land east of Spruce Pond and the water supplies is slated for a fairly large residential subdivision developed by Compass Pointe Builders. On the west side of Route 70, there are two large parcels that lie partially within the corridor planning area. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) owns a large tract of watershed land that lies upgradient of the Wachusett Reservoir and extends



The newly constructed Greenleaf Plaza at 81 Shrewsbury Street includes a bank, pizza shop, and gym.

well beyond the corridor planning area. A portion of the town-owned Hillside site occupies the southwest corner of the intersection and currently hosts recreation fields. Directly south of the recreation fields, along Route 70, is one of Boylston's two Chapter 43D Priority Development Sites.

PARCELIZATION AND OWNERSHIP

The parcels along Route 140 tend to be small, with over half having a total area of less than five acres. Many of these small lots are located along or near the northern side of Route 140 and they abut or are part of residential neighborhoods. However, several parcels over ten acres in size contribute substantially to the corridor planning area as a whole, and three parcels with more than fifty acres, which account for well over half of all land in the corridor planning area, as shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2
Range of Parcel Sizes

Parcel Area	Number of Parcels in Size Range	Total Acres
50 or More Acres	3	289.88
25 to 49.90 Acres	3	118.77
10 to 24.9 Acres	6	86.31
5 to 9.9 Acres	6	42.10
3 to 4.9 Acres	14	55.26
1 to 2.9 Acres	17	34.01
Under 1 Acre	<u>26</u>	<u>13.25</u>
Total	75	639.59

Sources: FY 2009 Assessor's parcel database supplied by Town Administrator Nancy Colbert Puff, and GIS parcel analysis by Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

Notes:

(a) Two parcels included in Table 3.2 are much larger than the portion that falls within the corridor planning area: DCR's watershed land northwest of the Route 140/Route 70 intersection, and the town-owned Hillside property.

VACANT LAND

According to data from the Town and a GIS analysis of the seventy-five parcels in the corridor planning area, there are twenty-one parcels of privately owned vacant land, though at least one is being developed (Compass Pointe Estates LLC). Table 3.3 shows that the parcels range in size from less than one-third of an acre to approximately 146 acres, and discounting the smallest and largest parcels, the average is just over ten acres. Of the 354± acres reported as vacant in the assessor's land records, approximately twenty-five acres are considered developable, 158 acres have some development potential, another twenty-five acres are assessed as undevelopable land, and

ROUTE 140 CORRIDOR PLAN

Table 3.3
Privately Owned Vacant Land (2009)

Parcel #	Street	Owner	Assessment Class	Land Value ^(a)	Acres ^(b)
Residential					
16-47	Temple St.	Ellsmere Associates, LLC	Developable	\$251,600	6.66
9-18	School St.	Brown, Bradford E.	Developable	\$59,500	3.49
17-39	Shrewsbury St.	Green Heron Co.	Potentially Developable	\$299,000	14.76
11-8	Main St.	Compass Pointe Estates LLC ^(c)	Potentially Developable	\$965,000	76.94
12-25-2	Shrewsbury St.	DMG Realty Trust	Potentially Developable	\$915,200	47.26
16-16	Main St.	Defeudis, Gene J.	Potentially Developable	\$214,600	3.46
17-40	Shrewsbury St.	Phillips, Steven E.	Potentially Developable	\$214,000	4.24
16-51	Carol Ave.	Ellsmere Associates, LLC	Potentially Developable	\$47,800	1.98
9-14	Shrewsbury St.	Fuller, Robert	Potentially Developable	\$94,300	2.92
13-31	Shrewsbury St.	Dipilato, Vincent M.	Undevelopable	\$12,700	0.32
9-13	Shrewsbury St.	Deegan, Evelyn H.	Undevelopable	\$29,300	0.49
Commercial					
12-17-B	Shrewsbury St.	John F. McNabb Jr.	Developable	\$415,200	2.44
9-1	Sewall St.	Secured Financial Corp	Undevelopable	\$8,500	0.92
Industrial					
13-33	Shrewsbury St.	Borgatti, Robert A.	Developable	\$370,200	1.70
9-7	Shrewsbury St.	D & P Realty	Developable	\$512,500	6.01
12-15	Shrewsbury St.	New Boylston Trust	Developable	\$411,900	3.91
9-2	Shrewsbury St.	Secured Financial	Developable	\$83,900	0.30
9-4	Shrewsbury St.	Secured Financial	Potentially Developable	\$146,600	6.53
12-18-D	Shrewsbury St.	Boylston Realty Associates, Inc	Undevelopable	\$93,700	18.58
8-2	Shrewsbury St.	Secured Financial	Undevelopable	\$15,800	4.87
12-13	Shrewsbury St.	Dipilato, John M	Chapter 61	\$15,100	<u>146.02</u>
				Total	353.81

Sources: FY 2009 Assessor's parcel database supplied by Town Administrator Nancy Colbert Puff, and GIS parcel analysis by Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

Notes:

(a) The relatively low value of the Chapter 61 land reflects the property's use (forestry) value, not its fair market value.

(b) Acres are expressed as GIS acres. Due to inaccuracies in the underlying GIS parcel map, the GIS acres reported for each parcel should be interpreted as an estimate.

(c) Compass Pointe Estates LLC, though still classified as vacant land, is being developed as a residential subdivision.

146 acres are under a Chapter 61 agreement and assessed for their forestry value.

Zoning

Zoning is an essential component of any area plan. Through zoning bylaws and a zoning map, a town exerts considerable influence over its physical evolution and the character and quality of its built envi-

ronment. Zoning regulates how land may be used, where buildings may be placed and how large they may be, and the maximum amount of development that will be allowed on a given site. Though not the only determinant of a site's development potential, zoning is the only source of authority for regulating *land use*. The mechanism for differentiating areas by land use and density is the zoning district.

ZONING DISTRICTS IN THE PLANNING AREA

Shrewsbury Street is quite striking for the number of zoning districts it includes. Six zoning districts and three overlay districts converge within the corridor planning area, as shown in Map 3.4. The following briefly summarizes the districts, their purposes, and the estimated amount of land contained within each district.¹¹

- ◆ The **Rural Residential (RR) District** provides for low-density development of single-family and two-family homes. It covers nearly 83 percent of the town's total area and 23 percent of the corridor planning area, or approximately 145 acres of land east and north of Route 140. However, about 46 percent of the land in the RR District is owned by DCR and restricted for watershed protection. The portion that is privately owned and either developed or potentially developable vacant land extends between Sewall Street North and School Street, with a smaller pocket located near the Shrewsbury town line. In this district, Boylston requires a minimum lot area of 40,000 sq. ft. and a minimum lot frontage of 200 feet.
- ◆ The **Residential (R) District** includes 129± acres south of Route 140, generally between Main Street and Sewall Road South, or 20 percent of the corridor planning area. There is also a small pocket of R District land opposite Mary Ann Drive. In these areas, the town allows single-family or two-family homes on 30,000 sq. ft. lots with at least 150 feet of lot frontage. Boylston provides for this somewhat higher density of residential development in areas with access to public drinking water.
- ◆ The **Commercial (C) District** includes a strip of some twenty acres on Route 140 between Main Street and East Temple Street, or roughly 3 percent of the corridor planning area. According to the Zoning Bylaw, the C District's purpose is to provide for retail and personal services in areas with good access and adequate land for off-street parking. A second, smaller strip of C District land extends along a short segment of Main Street just north of the corridor planning area. Boylston provides for a wide range of uses in the C District, including both commercial uses and single-family and two-family homes. A noteworthy feature of Boylston's zoning is its highly prescriptive dimensional regulations, for in most districts, the Town imposes a different minimum lot area and frontage requirements for each class of permitted use. In the C District, for example, the minimum lot required for retail stores, single-family dwellings, personal services, and offices is 30,000 sq. ft., but the minimum lot area for a gasoline station or a restaurant is 40,000 sq. ft. and for wholesale or warehouse uses, two acres. The minimum frontage requirement ranges from 200 feet for 40,000 sq. ft. lots to 300 feet for uses requiring at least two acres. This district also provides for Flexible Business Development (see below).
- ◆ The **Industrial (I) District** exists in a single location in Boylston: west of Route 140 from the Shrewsbury town line north to Sewall Street. It includes all or portions of twenty-three parcels and approximately 41 percent of the corridor planning area, and most of the planning area's privately owned vacant land. The I District has changed quite a bit since Boylston first established industrial zoning forty years ago, from a small node off Main Street in the northern part of town to nearly 300 acres of land set aside for light industry and commercial uses in the southern part of town. Virtually any use other than a gasoline station or motor vehicle repair shop requires at least three acres of land and lot frontage of at least 300 feet. Flexible Business Development is available by special permit.
- ◆ The **Limited Industrial (LI) District** consists of twenty-three acres along Route 140, including two contiguous parcels west of Sewall Street South and a portion of one parcel (i.e., a split lot) north of the highway, roughly 850 feet east of Sewall Street North. Although the LI District's

¹¹ Chapter 6: Zoning Review & Recommendations, provides a detailed assessment of Boylston's present zoning requirements.

purpose is to “allow for a broad range of low density industrial uses while also limiting the potential negative impact of these uses upon abutting residential properties,” Boylston provides for an unusually limited number of uses by right, including agriculture, religious uses, and non-profit schools: in other words, only uses that are exempt under the state Zoning Act, M.G.L. c. 40A, § 3. Some additional uses are allowed subject to a special permit, including single-family and two-family homes, commercial greenhouses, municipal uses, and three classes of commercial use: offices, warehouse or self-storage facility, and building trade supplies. Further, a Flexible Business Development can be approved by special permit.

- ◆ The **Industrial Park (IP) District** is a very large zone that extends from the Route 140/Route 70 intersection west to the West Boylston town line and south to Morningside. The entire district consists of some 542 acres, including 55± acres located within the corridor planning area. Boylston has designated the IP District for office, research and development, and industrial uses, and it is the only district in which conference facilities are permitted within the town – provided they relate in some way to the primary purposes of the district. The dimensional requirements that apply in the IP District are not explicitly identified in the Zoning Bylaw.
- ◆ The **Residential-Office (RO) Overlay District** was established in 2004 to allow for the conversion of existing homes to professional and business offices or mixed uses with a dwelling and office space. It applies to residential parcels fronting on Route 140 east and north of the highway for about one mile north of the Shrewsbury line. While professional office conversions are permitted by right, the town provides for a special permit to build new offices, art studios, craft shops, performing arts instruction, and veterinary clinics. The district’s intent is clearly small-scale activity because converted and new buildings must have the appearance of a single-

family home. The underlying district is Rural Residential.

- ◆ The purpose of the **Wellhead Protection (WP) District** is to regulate land use and development within the recharge areas of the Morningside and Boylston Water District wells.¹² It includes most, but not all, of the public water supply recharge areas identified by DEP in the vicinity of Route 140.¹³ The corridor planning area includes two gravel pack wells southwest of the Route 140/Route 70 intersection and two to the northwest, all within the Blackstone River watershed. Under Boylston’s WP District regulations, a variety of conservation, agricultural, passive recreation, and water works uses are allowed as of right, along with residential and other uses permitted in the underlying district – subject to some additional requirements. Uses normally allowed but covering more than a specified percentage of the lot may still be approved by special permit if they provide adequate means of stormwater infiltration in order to recharge the aquifer.
- ◆ The **Flood Plain (FP) Overlay District** is a fairly standard zoning district that exists in nearly all communities. It is required in order for property owners to be eligible for federal flood insurance. While the flood plain bylaw does not prevent development, it imposes additional requirements on applicants for building permits and other approvals and it prohibits floodway encroachments that would cause flood levels to increase during a 100-year storm event. In the corridor planning area, mapped flood plains exist along the Sewall Brook.

¹² The corridor planning area also includes one transient non-community water supply serving the commercial property at 53 Shrewsbury Street.

¹³ The town’s Wellhead Protection Overlay District appears to cover only the DEP Zone II for Boylston’s own water supplies. However, the Zone II in south Boylston is larger, extending into Shrewsbury – possibly associated with that town’s public wells.

OTHER PROVISIONS

In the C, LI, and I Districts, the Planning Board has authority to grant a **Flexible Business Development (FBD)** special permit. FBD allows a wider variety of uses than are permitted in any single district, and its purpose is to encourage growth along Route 140 in planned developments that meet site and architectural design requirements and offer shared access and shared parking for contiguous properties. As a development incentive and to encourage creative design, FBD provides for waivers of normal dimensional requirements. The only dimensional standard that FBD projects must meet is a maximum impervious coverage ratio of 50 percent, which is quite limiting. In addition, at least 25 percent of the site must be set aside as open space, though some of the open space may be used for site development purposes such as a septic system and stormwater management.

Boylston requires affordable housing in developments of eight or more dwelling units. Under Section 16 of the Zoning Bylaw, **Inclusionary Zoning**, developers of covered projects have to restrict at least 10 percent of the units in their projects as affordable to households with incomes at or below 80 percent of the median income for Worcester County. In the corridor planning area, this provision would apply in the RR, R, C, or LI Districts to any single-family or two-family home development of sufficient size to trigger the inclusionary housing requirement. While Boylston's zoning requires affordable units, it does not give the Planning Board authority to approve additional density as a means of offsetting the developer's loss of income from the sale of lower-priced housing. The only "development bonus" is reduced lot frontage for projects that offer at least 15 percent affordable units.

Water and Wastewater

PUBLIC WATER

Most properties in the Route 140 corridor planning area have access to public water. In Boylston, public drinking water is supplied by the Boylston Water District, a semi-public entity separate from town government. The District operates groundwa-

ter supplies off Main Street, located northwest and southeast of the Route 140/Route 70 intersection. Through the District's water distribution system, water is available throughout the corridor planning area except for the southernmost leg of Route 140. There are also two storage tanks in this part of town, including a 500,000 gallon tank on the Hillside property and a 300,000 gallon tank south of the corridor planning area in the Morningdale neighborhood.

The District's capacity to absorb more commercial and industrial growth is unclear. Additional data is required from the town in order to estimate the amount of nonresidential floor area that could be supported in the corridor planning area. According to DEP, the Boylston Water District falls well within the Commonwealth's water conservation standards under the Water Management Act: residential water consumption per capita not exceeding 65 gallons per day, and "unaccounted for" water not exceeding 10 percent of the total amount of water entering the community's distribution system.¹⁴ However, these conservation standards do not measure how much additional water the District can withdraw from its wells and still be in compliance with its existing water supply registrations or permits.

WASTEWATER ASSESSMENT

Boylston does not have sewer service. However, the concept of providing sewer service on Route 140 – mainly to aid nonresidential development – has been discussed in one form or another for more than thirty years. Discussions with Weston & Sampson Engineers, Inc., Robert Kimball of the Department of Environmental Protection, Thomas Walsh, Director of Upper Blackstone Wastewater Treatment Plant, and

¹⁴ Massachusetts Water Resources Commission, "Policy for Developing Water Needs Forecasts for Public Water Suppliers and Communities and Methodology for Implementation," November 2007, rev. May 2009, 14-15, Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. November 2004, and Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (now EOEEA). *Massachusetts Water Policy*. See also, "Reported and Adjusted Performance Standards: Residential Gallons per Capita Day (RGPCD) & Unaccounted for Water (UAW)," 2006-2008 Public Water Supply Annual Statistical Reports [Summaries], <http://www.mass.gov/dep/water/resources/>.

ROUTE 140 CORRIDOR PLAN

Paul Caron, the Plant Manager, have helped create a clearer picture of the costs and potential roadblocks associated with such a large infrastructure project. To establish sewer service in the corridor planning area, Boylston would need to construct its own wastewater treatment facility or join a neighboring district. The Upper Blackstone Water Pollution Abatement District (UBWPAD) and the Westborough Wastewater Treatment Plant are the nearest regional wastewater treatment facilities. Construction of a new wastewater facility within Boylston would be extremely difficult from both a cost and permitting standpoint. Due to the topographical conditions of the town, only a groundwater discharge system would be allowed by DEP standards because there are no rivers with adequate flow in the area. A system such as this raises concerns about public water supply contamination.

The UBWPAD is a public entity formed in 1968. The current wastewater treatment facility was constructed in Worcester in 1976 with the goal of creating a regional solution to wastewater issues. Members of the UBWPAD include the Cherry Valley Sewer District, the towns of Holden, Millbury, Rutland, and West Boylston, and the City of Worcester. The District also serves portions of non-member communities, including Oxford, Paxton, Shrewsbury, Sutton, and the county jail in West Boylston. In addition, the UBWPAD plant handles additional septage and sludge from non-member communities, including wastewater treatment facilities that do not meet current discharge pollution guidelines. Approximately 90 percent of the UBWPAD facility's daily intake flows from Worcester. The plant is in the midst of a \$200 million, multi-phased upgrade to reach current EPA standards for effluent quality. The District's charter included Boylston as a potential member and would allow the town to join.

The Westborough Wastewater Treatment Plant is managed by a private company and serves Westborough (approximately 37 percent of plant intake), Shrewsbury (57 percent), and Hopkinton (5 percent). The Westborough plant needs between \$38 million to \$64 million in upgrades to meet current

EPA standards for effluent discharge.¹⁵ To continue plant operations, the sludge is transported to the Upper Blackstone plant for processing while treated wastewater flows into the Assabet River watershed. The plant is currently at or over capacity.

Should Boylston pursue sewerage for the Route 140 corridor, the most likely option would be to join the UBWPAD.¹⁶ Even after new environmental restrictions and advanced processing techniques have reduced plant capacity from approximately 56 million gallons per day (mgd) to 45 mgd, the average flow is only between roughly 25 and 35 mgd, leaving ample capacity for new members to be added. Communities must pay an initial buy-in fee to the district (Holden recently lost a legal challenge in an attempt to avoid paying buy-in fees). Buy-in fees are determined by a population-based calculation. Once connected to the district, all sewer flow is metered and billed to the individual members. Boylston would need to reach an agreement with either West Boylston or Worcester to connect to the sewer system as well. It appears that West Boylston does not have the flow capacity to accept effluent from Boylston. However, Worcester should be able to handle the additional flow through its sewer system without triggering an interbasin transfer review by the EPA.

Ratepayers would likely absorb the cost of the district buy-in and agreement with Worcester to act as a pass-through to the treatment facility. The District's value must be assessed to establish the buy-in price for the town after a formal request to join is made. The town would then pay a share price to the District based upon the proportion of the community size to the total district population. Due to the plant upgrades that are already underway, it is difficult to estimate the value of the district. A rough estimate places the value between \$200 and \$250 million with a population of 250,000. Therefore, should Boylston buy in to the district, the estimated cost would range from \$3.44 million to \$4.3 million, payable over four years. A portion of the town may join, but must first

¹⁵ State Revolving Fund Data (2009) and Massachusetts Water Resources Commission (July 9, 2009)

¹⁶ Robert Kimball, MA DEP Central Region Sanitary Sewer contact.

establish a sewage district with the state. Only full communities have voting rights, however.¹⁷

Worcester is in the preliminary stages of a sewer pump station expansion project on the eastern edge of the city. Flows from Boylston would likely be routed through this facility. It would presumably be in the best interest of both municipalities to open a dialogue about the possible sewer connection as soon as possible while the pump station expansion project is still in the conceptual phase. At this time, it is difficult to ascertain the exact fees Worcester may charge Boylston for a conveyance fee and a connection fee without a projected flow model identifying any potential systemic constraints. However, a one-time connection fee of \$15/gal and a conveyance fee of \$2/ccf (100 cubic feet) are general approximations for what Boylston would likely be charged.¹⁸ Based on the 20-year projections used for the original Morningdale development proposal of 200,000 gpd and 100,000 ccf, Boylston could face buy-in costs from Worcester of \$3 million and annual conveyance fees of \$200,000. These are order-of-magnitude estimates provided to the consulting team purely on an informal, advisory basis.

Another major obstacle with adding sewer service to the Route 140 corridor lies in construction. In the late 1980s, initial cost estimates were prepared by Weston and Sampson, Inc. for a project that was to be centered upon a 450,000 sq. ft. commercial complex for Digital Equipment Corp (DEC). Based on engineering requirements and construction costs from thirty years ago, the project was given a price tag of approximately \$5.5 million. Today, with more restrictive engineering guidelines and construction cost inflation, the project (as originally proposed) would most likely cost between \$6.47 million and \$11.5 million dollars. The revised cost estimate is based on the cost per linear foot of similar construction projects bid recently in the region.¹⁹ The

numerous variables associated with such a project, particularly the revised scope without the DEC development and the bidding climate when the new project is designed, account for the broad estimated cost range. In summary, if Boylston joined the UBW-PAD, buy-in/connection fees and construction costs would likely be in the range of \$13.5 million to \$18.5 million. All of these estimates would have to be confirmed or revised through new engineering studies commissioned by the Town.

Demographics and Employment Patterns

Business development within the corridor planning area is and will continue to be influenced by characteristics of the population living around it. Although the planning area itself is a very low-density area with a small residential population, its relationship with larger suburbs and Worcester suggests access to a labor supply and markets that could enhance its future development potential.²⁰

ONE-MILE RADIUS

Within a one-mile radius around the corridor planning area (measured from the center), there are currently ninety-five employers with 924 people on payroll, and 84 percent of the employer establishments are private for-profit businesses. Service industries – from professional services to schools and health care – account for about one-fourth of the existing establishments. Table 3.4 provides a snapshot of the existing industries and employment.

The total population in this area is 1,344, or roughly fourteen resident persons per business establishment, and the total number of households is 550. A majority of the households are families, with a median household income of \$80,275 and a median ef-

¹⁷ Thomas Walsh, Director, Upper Blackstone Wastewater Treatment Plant.

¹⁸ Matt Labovites, Assistant Commissioner for Operations, Worcester Public Works Department.

¹⁹ Weston & Sampson Engineers, Inc. Revised estimate of September 2009 based upon: "Table 5, Morningdale

Service Area Estimated Construction Costs for Sewers and Pump Stations." Weston & Sampson Engineers, Inc. April 10, 1989.

²⁰ Unless noted otherwise, all data in this section are from Claritas, Inc., Demographic Snapshot, Business Workplace and Employment, and Households Trends Reports for user-defined one-mile, three-mile, and five-mile radii around the center of the corridor planning area.

Table 3.4
Industries, Employer Establishments, and Employment: One-Mile Radius

Industry Description	Total	Total Employees	Average Employees per Establishment
Total, All Industries	95	924	10
Private Sector	79	705	9
Government and Non-Profit Organizations	16	219	14
Construction Trades	13	135	10
Manufacturing	5	52	10
Transportation, Communications, Public Utilities	7	22	3
Wholesale Trade	9	208	23
Retail	17	96	6
Finance (Banks, Insurance Agencies, Etc.)	9	47	5
Services	24	279	12
Public Administration	11	85	8

Source: Claritas, Inc.

fective buying income of \$60,557. The homeownership rate is very high, with more than 80 percent of all households owning the home they occupy. The median population age is 42.91, with just 21 percent of the population composed of children under 18 years. Sixty-eight percent of the population 16 years and over is in the labor force. The low-density residential development pattern found in this area coupled with the fact that most of Boylston's businesses are located here helps to explain the relatively high jobs-to-labor-force ratio of 1.22. As noted in Chapter 2 of this report, however, the ratio for the town as a whole is much lower.

THREE-MILE RADIUS

Not surprisingly, the employment base within three miles of the corridor planning area is much larger and more diverse. Notably, public and non-profit employment and service industries make up a significantly greater share of total employment, and the residential population increases to 32 persons per business. The three-mile employment base provides approximately 0.94 jobs for every one person in the labor force.

The three-mile radius includes most of Boylston along with the northeast corner of Worcester and roughly half of Shrewsbury. Overall, the 10,523 households in this area are younger, for the median population age is 38.11. In addition, families make

Table 3.5
Industries, Employer Establishments, and Employment: Three-Mile Radius

Industry Description	Total	Total Employees	Average Employees per Establishment
Total, All Industries	881	12,465	14
Private Sector	756	8,213	11
Government and Non-Profit Organizations	125	4,252	34
Agriculture	17	69	4
Mining	3	42	14
Construction	79	433	6
Manufacturing	44	1,468	33
Transportation, Communications, Public Utilities	26	488	19
Wholesale Trade	50	644	13
Retail	176	1,967	11
Finance	82	526	6
Services	369	4,352	12
Public Administration	36	2,496	69

Source: Claritas, Inc.

Table 3.6
Industries, Employer Establishments, and Employment: Five-Mile Radius

Industry Description	Total	Total Employees	Average Employees per Establishment
Total, All Industries	3,782	69,683	18
Private Sector	3,341	57,414	17
Government and Non-Profit Organizations	441	12,269	28
Agriculture	68	295	4
Mining	5	52	10
Construction	289	1,921	7
Manufacturing	187	8,608	46
Transportation, Communications, Public Utilities	108	1,671	16
Wholesale Trade	174	1,990	11
Retail	763	11,036	15
Finance	378	9,940	26
Services	1,712	30,141	18
Public Administration	99	4,049	41

Source: Claritas, Inc.

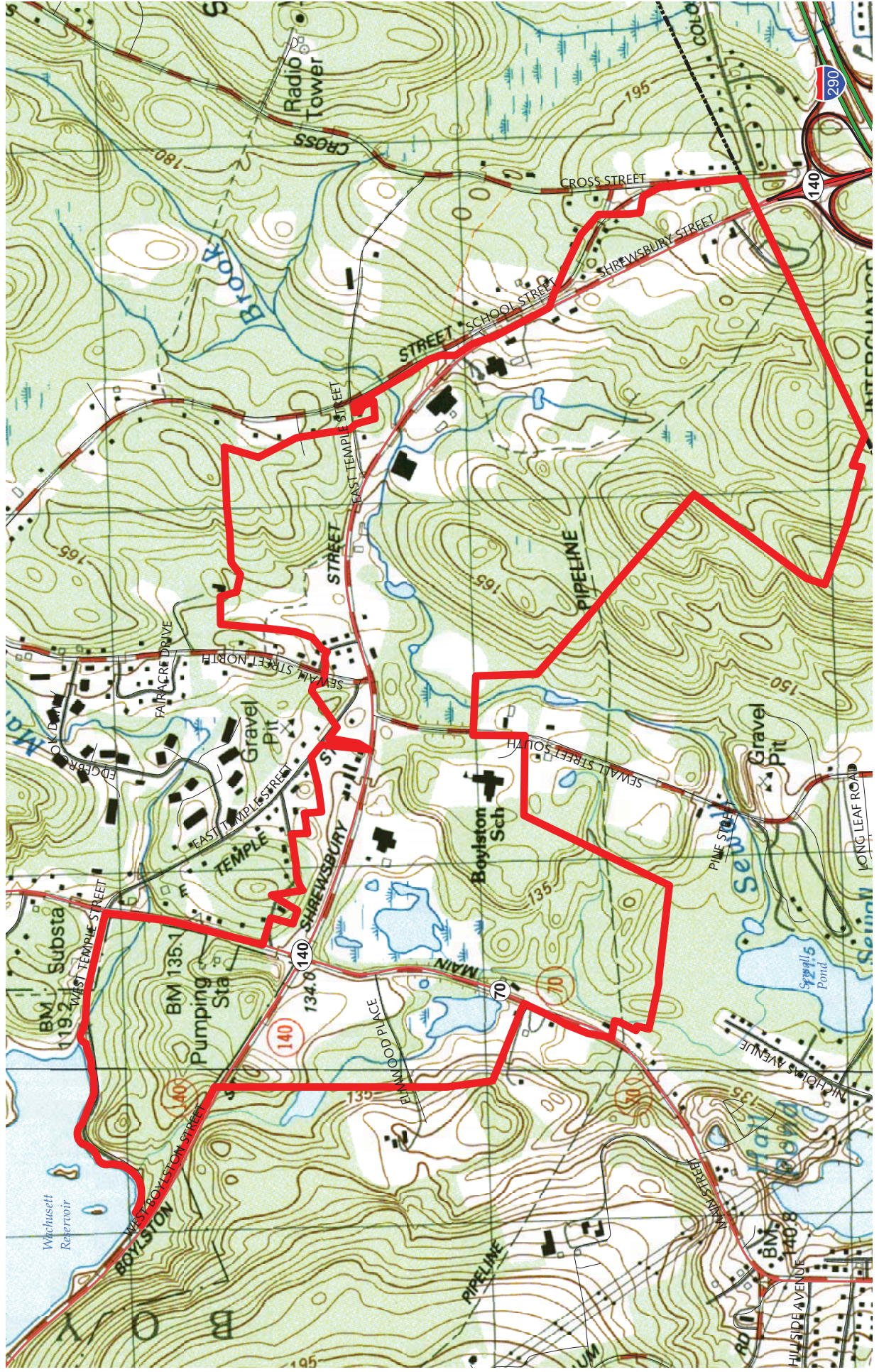
up a larger percentage of all households – 71.3 percent – so the average household size is somewhat larger, at 2.57 persons, and children under 18 make up 25 percent of the total population. The median effective buying income per household is not as high (\$49,293), but aggregate buying power is at least fifteen times that of households living within a mile of the corridor planning area. The labor force participation rate is also lower – 60.8% -- and the occupations held by those with jobs reflect somewhat different skills sets. For example, while 50 percent of the employed labor force in the one-mile area holds management or professional jobs, the same occupational classes account for 46 percent of all employed people in the three-mile area. More noteworthy, however, is that 31 percent of the labor force living within one mile of the corridor planning area and 38 percent of the labor force in the three-mile area has a sales or services occupation. Although the jobs-to-labor-force ratio in the three-mile area is not ideal, there is a closer fit between the composition of the

employment base – that is, the industries that provide jobs – and the types of jobs held by a majority of the residents.

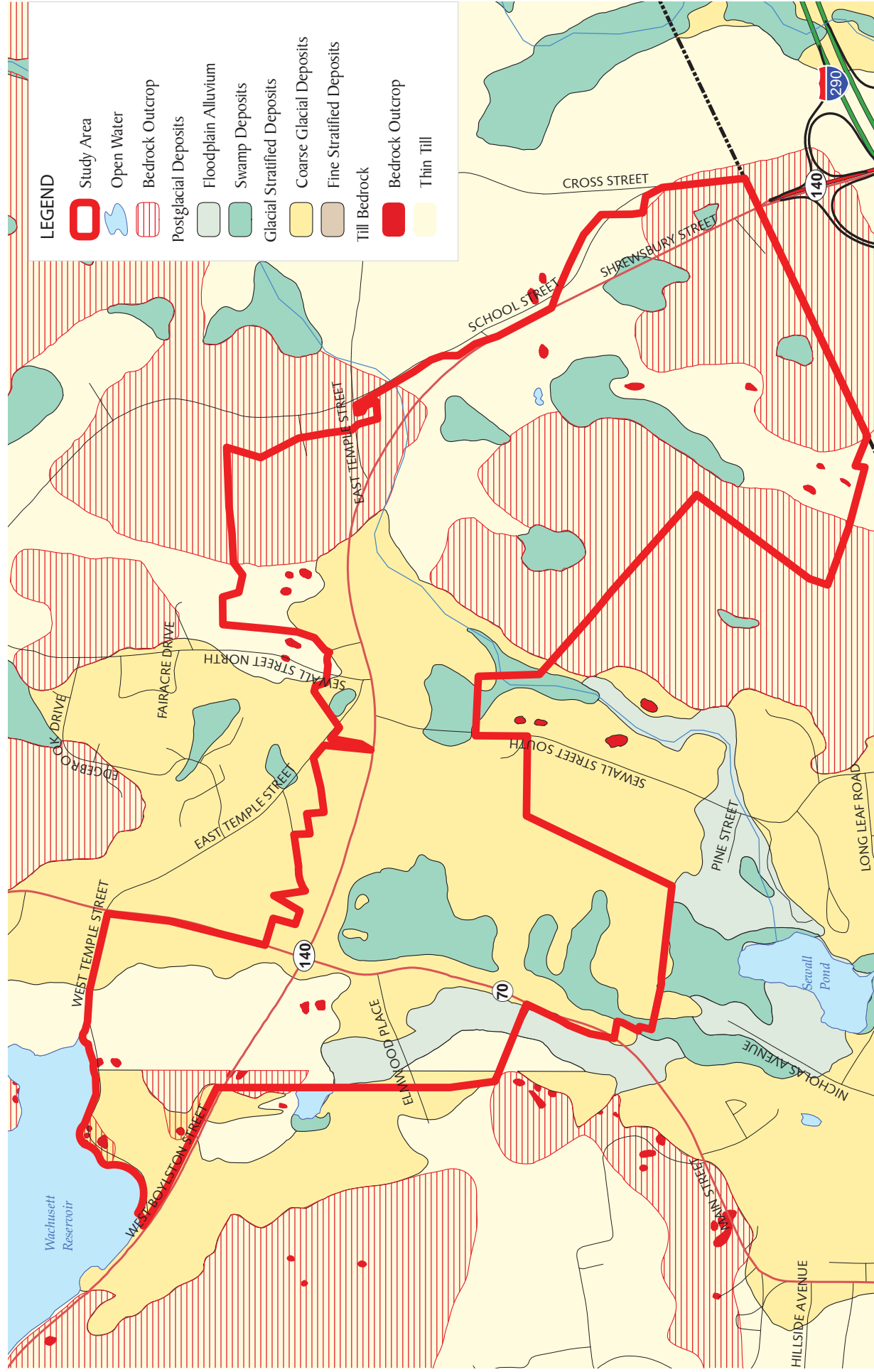
FILE-MILE RADIUS

The employment base within five miles of the corridor planning area provides jobs for nearly 70,000 people, or an average of 1.43 jobs per person in the labor force. The total population represents approximately 26 persons per business, or 96,493. This area includes all of Boylston, most of Shrewsbury and West Boylston, roughly one-third of Worcester, and portions of Berlin, Northborough, and Clinton.

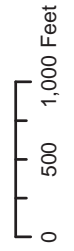
The five-mile radius area is home to 38,211 households with a median effective buying income per household of \$48,175. These households are also fairly young, for the median population age is 39.20. There is a relatively large percentage of non-family households in the five-mile area (34.3 percent), particularly one-person households, so naturally the average household is smaller, at 2.45 persons.



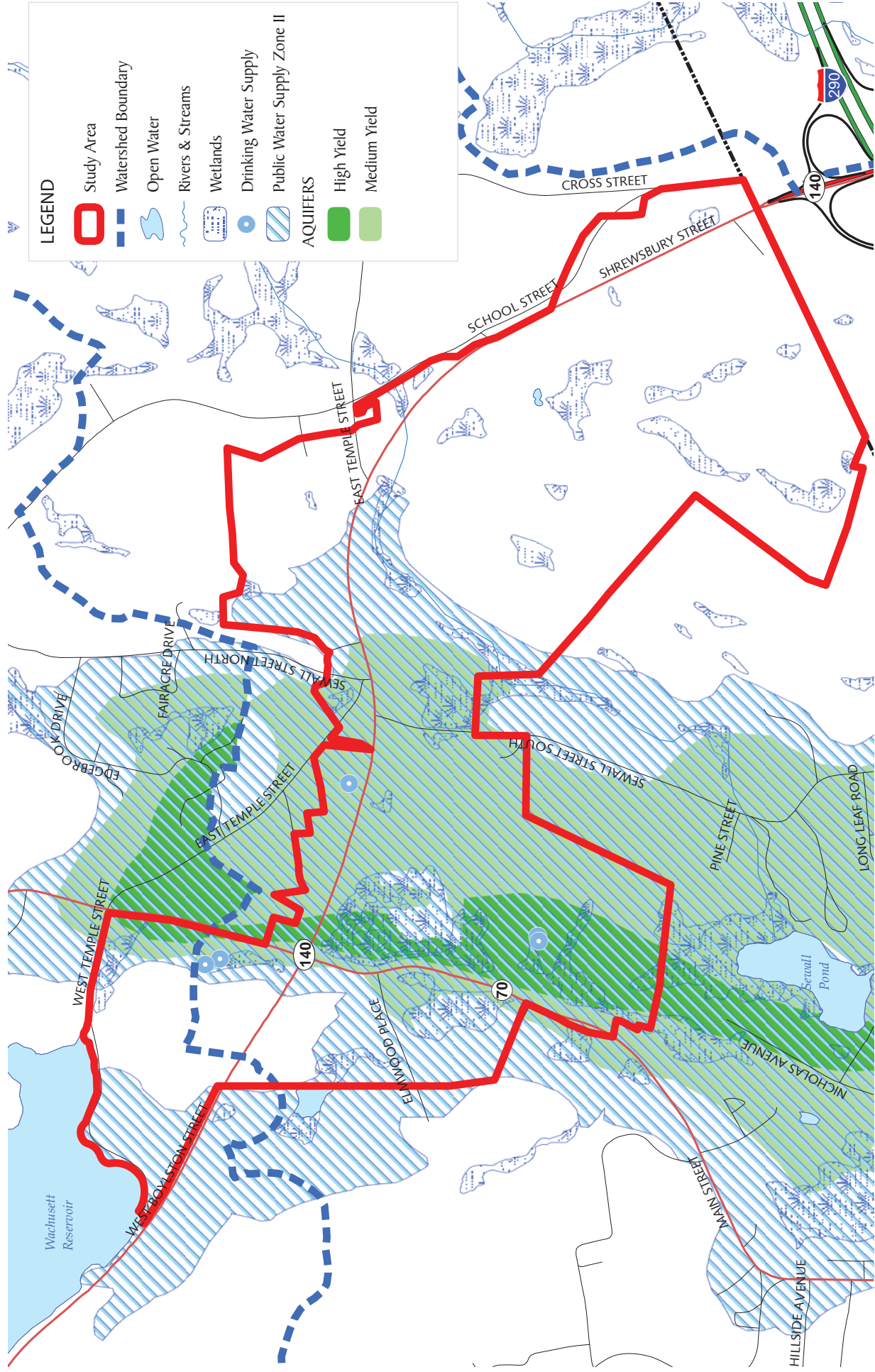
Map 3.1
Corridor Planning Area

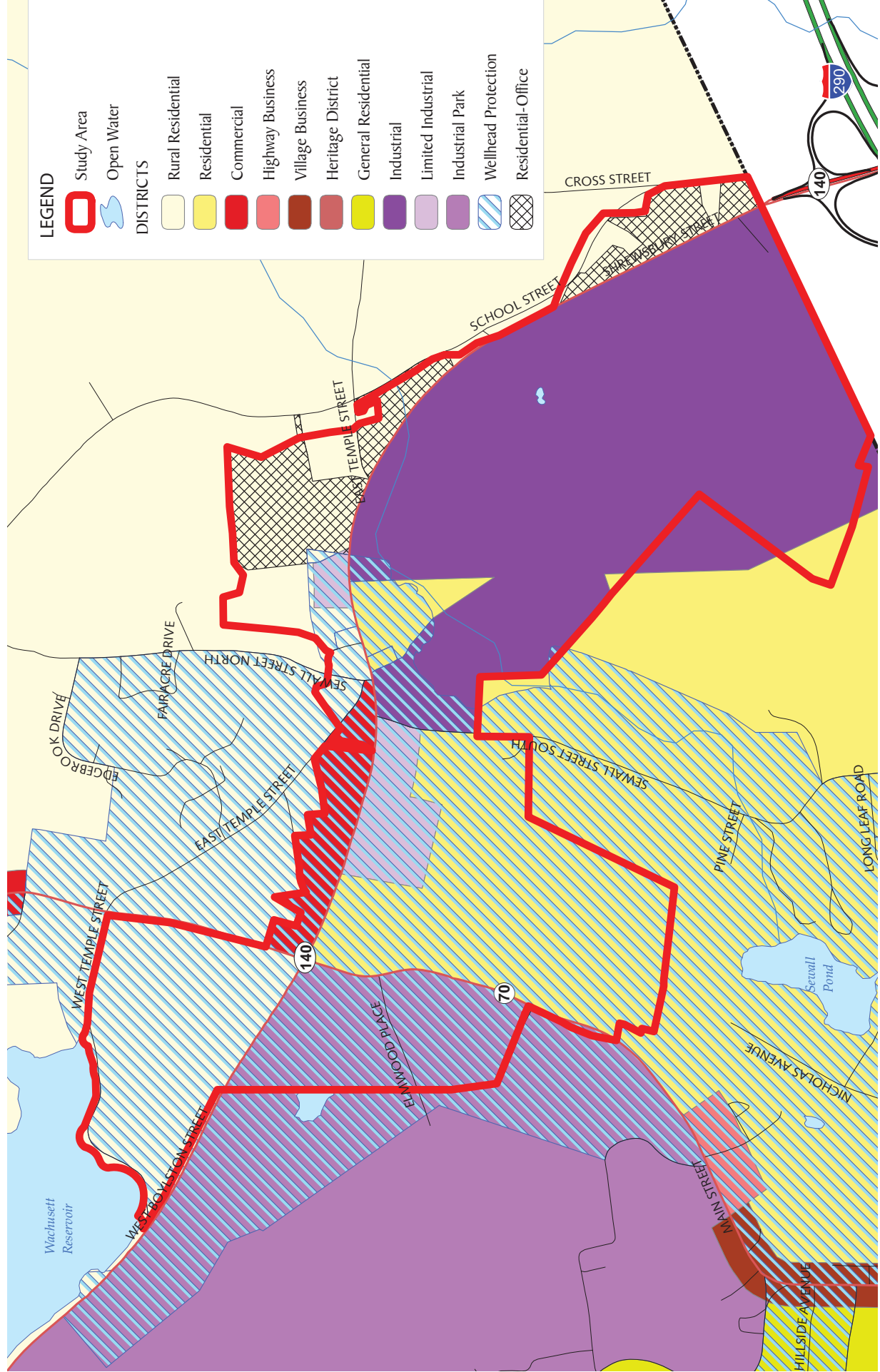


Map 3.2
Surficial Geology



Town of Boylston
ROUTE 140 CORRIDOR PLAN





Map 3.4
Existing Zoning



Regional Economy

Boylston's economy is a very small sub-set of the Worcester regional economy, which in turn is influenced by conditions throughout the larger Boston metropolitan area. Since Boylston lies so close to the City of Worcester, its economic development opportunities are influenced in part by Worcester metro conditions. However, Boylston is also a small, low-density town, located within a cluster of Central Massachusetts communities between Route 9, I-190, I-495, and Route 2: towns partially oriented toward Eastern Massachusetts and partially toward Worcester, mostly small by choice, and competing with each other, Worcester, and Devens for businesses. Together, these small towns make up a portion of the non-metro economy of Worcester County. In its entirety, the Worcester non-metro office, retail, and industrial submarket includes most of Worcester County south of Route 2, other than a five-mile radius around the City of Worcester, and it defines the westernmost edge of the Boston regional real estate market (Fig. 4.1). It differs significantly from both Boston proper and the suburbs east of I-495, as evidenced by differences in home prices, the make-up of the labor force and the employment base, and the inventory of commercial and industrial property.

There are also significant differences within the Worcester market area as a whole, i.e., between the metro area – the five-mile radius around Worcester – and the non-metro submarket that includes Boylston. Production and distribution facilities are more pronounced around Worcester than within the city itself, and the suburban patterns of nonresidential development are conspicuously different. Encouraging commercial and industrial growth on Route 140 in Boylston needs to be considered in the context of activity in Worcester, the suburban markets west of Boston, and to some extent, the Boston region as a whole. By virtue of its location, demographics, and position within the regional economy, Boylston has both competitive advantages and disadvantages that

will affect development on Route 140 and the Town needs to make an objective, realistic assessment of its opportunities.

Employment Base

The federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) tracks and reports employment and wages by industry for the nation, states, counties, metropolitan areas and sub-areas, and cities and towns. According to the most recent data for the Worcester New England City and Town Area (NECTA), which includes Boylston, the regional employment base includes about 234,000 jobs and 14,200 establishments. From 2004 to 2008, the total number of establishments increased 0.2 percent and the total number of jobs, 1.3 percent.¹ Although Worcester's region has experienced some job growth in spite of the recession, the simple addition of jobs in the economy does not tell a complete story of the economic health and well-being of an area. In fact, four jobs were lost from the region's employment base for every net gain of one job. The industries most affected by job loss include the construction trades, manufacturing, utilities, retail trade, and administration and waste services, while the greatest employment gains occurred in health services and wholesale trade.² Table 4.1 provides a summary of regional employment change since 2004.

¹ Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOWLD), Employment and Wages (ES-202), Worcester MA-CT NECTA, 2004-2008, Annual.

² As defined by BLS, establishments in the administration and waste services sector provide routine day-to-day operational support services to other organizations in a variety of industries and, in some cases, to households. Activities performed include: office administration, hiring and placing of personnel, document preparation and similar clerical services, solicitation, collection, security and surveillance services, cleaning, and waste disposal services. Source: BLS, Industries at a Glance, <http://www.bls.gov/iag/>.

Table 4.1**Worcester NECTA: Job Creation and Job Destruction by Industry, 2004-2008**

Industry	CY 2004-2008			
	2008 Employment	Job Creation	Job Destruction	Net Change
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	316	66	(19)	47
Mining	137	0	(76)	(76)
Construction	9,954	357	(1,235)	(878)
Manufacturing	26,729	519	(1,555)	(1,036)
Durable Goods Manufacturing	17,846	626	(863)	(237)
Non-Durable Goods Manufacturing	8,883	0	(798)	(798)
Utilities	1,173	41	(548)	(507)
Wholesale Trade	10,635	1,246	(64)	1,182
Retail Trade	26,217	465	(1,375)	(910)
Transportation and Warehousing	8,231	860	0	860
Information	4,306	271	(303)	(32)
Finance and Insurance	11,173	380	(741)	(361)
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,864	0	(218)	(218)
Professional and Technical Services	10,767	981	(1,064)	(83)
Management of Companies and Enterprises	3,913	263	(551)	(288)
Administrative and Waste Services	11,943	508	(1,828)	(1,320)
Educational Services	26,417	577	(233)	344
Health Care and Social Assistance	40,507	5,155	0	5,155
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	4,048	344	(234)	110
Accommodation and Food Services	16,970	472	(518)	(46)
Other Services	8,989	374	(121)	253
Public Administration	9,591	899	0	899
Total	233,877	14,404	(12,344)	3,093

Sources: EOLWD, "ES-202 Series," Annual Data 2008, and Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

Some of the employment losses in Table 4.1 were tied to the closure of business establishments, but this was not always the case. In turn, some industries lost establishments but experienced net job growth, resulting in an overall increase in average number of employees per establishment. For example, the number of wholesale trade employers decreased by 24 firms between 2004 and 2008, but the wholesale trade industry generated a net increase of 1,182 jobs with a relatively small incidence of job destruction. Accordingly, the average number of employees per wholesale trade establishment increased from 10.6 to 12.2. By contrast, the region's strong suit – health care and social assistance – gained 5,155 jobs with no reported decreases in any year between 2004 and 2008, but the number of establishments declined by 17 employers. This may be due to consolidations rather than outright closure of some establishments. Considering all industries, the average number of

jobs per establishment increased from 5.0 to 6.1 between 2004 and 2008, with the greatest changes occurring in utilities, which experienced a net gain of four establishments but a significant decline in employment, from 40 jobs per establishment to 25.5. Employment trends alone do not always correlate well with market demand for industrial, office, or retail space, but regional employment gains and losses do provide the "pulse" of an industry's well-being. As indicators of potential economic opportunity, employment trends – both total employment change the record of business formations and closures – shed light on the types and sizes of buildings that may be sought in a given market area. For communities that hope to garner a share of regional demand, the issue is whether they have the right mix of suitably zoned land or buildings, utilities, location, and demographics to compete with other communities in the same submarket area.

Industrial Market

The Worcester industrial market includes 37 million sq. ft. of leasable floor space, or approximately eight percent of the total industrial space inventory in the Boston region (Table 4.2).³ Over the past year, flex space and warehouse rents have declined somewhat, vacancies have decreased, and new construction has fallen considerably. Today, there is only one industrial building under construction in the Worcester market – a 16,000 sq. ft. facility on Commerce Road in Shrewsbury – and no new inventory has been delivered since the first half of 2008. These trends are largely consistent with conditions throughout the Boston region, but they are more pronounced in and around Worcester.

There is a considerable amount of warehouse space in the Worcester market, far more than “flex space,” or buildings designed to accommodate several types of tenants – offices, research and development, light manufacturing, and warehouse facilities – with at

least half of the space devoted to office or research and development uses. Flex space commands higher rents per sq. ft. and represents a higher-value real estate investment. It accounts for 14 percent of the Worcester market’s total industrial inventory and nearly 27 percent of the industrial inventory for the entire Boston region. At the submarket level, flex space represents 16 percent of all leasable industrial floor area in the Worcester metro market and 13 percent in the Worcester non-metro market.

Absorption and Vacancies. Industrial vacancies in the Worcester area have declined from 17 percent to 14.8 percent since January 2007, and there is not much difference in vacancy rates between the metro (15 percent) and non-metro (14.6 percent) submarkets. The Worcester market’s experience is fairly consistent with that of the larger Boston region, where vacancies have been declining slightly over the past two years. Ten years ago, however, both flex and warehouse market vacancy rates were half of today’s rate. Flex market vacancies peaked at 18.2 percent in

Table 4.2
Existing Conditions: Boston Region and Worcester Office Market and Worcester Submarkets, Mid-Year 2009

Market Area	Existing Inventory		Vacancy		Year-to-Date (Mid-Year 2009)		
	# Buildings	Total Leasable Floor Area	Leasable Floor Area	Percent	Net Absorption	Deliveries	Under Construction
Boston							
Flex	2,521	124,385,126	17,700,518	14.2%	-672,506	71,500	272,400
Warehouse	7,281	342,502,836	37,413,968	10.9%	-907,523	388,236	615,475
Total	9,802	466,887,962	55,114,486	11.8%	-1,580,029	459,736	887,875
Worcester							
Flex	128	5,202,798	1,249,831	24.0%	-69,765	0	0
Warehouse	626	31,807,440	4,222,032	13.3%	204,328	0	16,000
Total	754	37,010,238	5,471,863	14.8%	134,563	0	16,000
Metro							
Flex	68	2,634,017	631,631	24.0%	-55,431	0	0
Warehouse	299	13,845,690	1,836,307	13.3%	96,349	0	16,000
Total	367	16,479,707	2,467,938	15.0%	40,918	0	16,000
Non-Metro							
Flex	60	2,568,781	618,200	24.1%	-14,334	0	0
Warehouse	327	17,961,750	2,385,725	13.3%	107,979	0	0
Total	387	20,530,531	3,003,925	14.6%	93,645	0	0

Source: CoStar Industrial Report: Boston Industrial Market, Mid-Year 2009.

³ Unless otherwise noted, all market data presented in this chapter are based on CoStar Market Reports for the Boston Industrial, Office, and Retail Markets.

Table 4.3
Boston Region: Industrial Market Conditions Mid-Year 2009

Market Area	Existing Inventory			Year-to-Date			
	# Buildings	Total Leasable Floor Area	Vacant	Absorption	Deliveries	Under Construction	Quoted Rates
Boston/Suffolk County	613	26,776,111	15.0%	-355,240	0	0	\$10.92
Cambridge	156	4,527,182	9.0%	-32,859	0	0	\$19.00
Northern Suburbs	419	14,732,295	9.4%	-276,140	0	0	\$8.61
Route 128 North	1,144	50,905,369	9.2%	-672,204	7,200	6,000	\$8.17
Route 128 South	1,186	53,460,290	10.5%	35,546	10,500	11,515	\$6.37
Route 128 West	428	14,883,410	11.5%	-203,285	0	200,000	\$15.72
Route 3 North	553	26,422,951	14.6%	-273,855	0	0	\$7.65
Route 495 North East	665	38,257,052	11.1%	-835,127	0	45,546	\$5.53
Route 495 South	1,616	87,135,810	12.0%	648,884	79,500	435,014	\$5.40
Route 495/Mass Pike West	611	32,637,335	9.3%	-139,084	39,600	173,800	\$7.53
Route 495/Rt 2 West	628	31,680,601	14.5%	277,413	232,000	0	\$6.55
S. New Hampshire	1,029	48,459,318	11.7%	111,359	90,936	0	\$6.82
Worcester	754	37,010,238	14.8%	134,563	0	16,000	\$4.72
Total	9,802	466,887,962	11.8%	-1,580,029	459,736	887,875	\$6.82

Source: CoStar Industrial Report: Boston Industrial Market, Mid-Year 2009.

2004, following a year with net negative absorption of well over two million sq. ft., and have been declining at a rate of less than 1 percent per year. Table 4.3 compares existing conditions and vacancies in Boston region's thirteen market areas.

Both the Boston region overall and the Worcester area in particular have a large inventory of vacant flex space (17 million sq. ft.). Around Worcester, the percentage of vacant flex space is much larger (24 percent) than that of vacant warehouse space (13.3 percent), and while higher flex space vacancies also exist throughout the Boston region, the difference is more dramatic in the Worcester area. Today, the Worcester market has by far the largest percentage of vacant flex space and the third largest percentage of vacant warehouse space of all market areas in the Boston region. For Worcester, the first two quarters of 2009 experienced a cumulative net positive absorption of just 135,000 sq. ft. of industrial floor, and all of it consisted of warehouse and distribution space. This modest absorption rate followed a net positive absorption of 933,000 sq. ft. in 2008, a net negative absorption of nearly -300,000 sq. ft. in 2007, modest positive absorption of 38,000 sq. ft. in 2006, and a net negative of -430,000 sq. ft. in 2005.

New Construction and Completions. There is very little new construction underway in the Boston region as a whole and in the Worcester industrial market in particular. Including both flex and warehouse space, the largest industrial projects are under construction in the Lexington/Arlington submarket, with one 200,000 sq. ft. facility; along I-95 south of Boston, with seven buildings and a combined floor area of 435,000 sq. ft.; and in the Southborough/Westborough area, two buildings with a combined floor area of 174,000 sq. ft. To the extent that any new projects are under construction in the Boston area's other submarkets, the buildings tend to be small – much smaller than the industrial buildings constructed within the same market areas only a few years ago.

Since January 2007, seven buildings with a combined total of just under 266,950 sq. ft. of leasable floor area have been added to the Worcester industrial market's inventory. The projects have varied in size, but most of the newer industrial buildings are small, offering less than 15,000 sq. ft. of leasable floor area. The most recent completions include two buildings delivered in the Worcester non-metro submarket, with a total of 221,750 sq. ft.: at 26 Millbury Street in Auburn. 210,000 sq. ft., and at Boulder Park

Table 4.4
Worcester Industrial Market Trends: 2006-2009

Period	Existing Inventory		Vacancy		Leasable Floor Area			
	# Buildings	Total Leasable Floor Area	Leasable Floor Area	Percent	Net Absorption	Completed	Under Construction	Quoted Rates
2009 2q	754	37,010,238	5,471,863	14.8%	376,250	0	16,000	\$4.72
2009 1q	754	37,010,238	5,848,113	15.8%	-241,687	0	16,000	\$4.89
2008 4q	754	37,010,238	5,606,426	15.1%	97,467	0	0	\$4.89
2008 3q	754	37,010,238	5,703,893	15.4%	94,173	0	0	\$5.01
2008 2q	754	37,010,238	5,798,066	15.7%	114,065	11,750	0	\$5.09
2008 1q	753	36,998,488	5,900,381	15.9%	627,577	210,000	11,750	\$5.06
2007 4q	752	36,788,488	6,317,958	17.2%	-52,588	33,600	221,750	\$5.09
2007 3q	749	36,754,888	6,231,770	17.0%	64,036	0	243,600	\$5.12
2007 2q	749	36,754,888	6,295,806	17.1%	-351,811	11,600	243,600	\$5.07
2007 1q	747	36,743,288	5,932,395	16.1%	-8,636	0	233,600	\$5.01
2006 4q	747	36,743,288	5,923,759	16.1%	-572,332	18,800	216,000	\$5.33
2006 3q	746	36,726,614	5,334,753	14.5%	357,609	629,500	234,800	\$5.26
2006 2q	744	36,247,114	5,212,862	14.4%	221,569	0	648,300	\$5.18
2006 1q	744	36,247,114	5,434,431	15.0%	208,575	9,600	629,500	\$5.26

Source: CoStar Industrial Report: Boston Industrial Market, Mid-Year 2009.

in Oxford, 11,750 sq. ft. In 2007, the inventory grew at a much smaller rate: five buildings with a total of 45,000 sq. ft. of floor space.

Rents. Asking rents for flex space in the Worcester non-metro submarket today are slightly higher than in the metro submarket. For the second quarter of 2009, the metro submarket's average asking rent for flex space was \$7.50 per sq. ft., which is roughly 73 percent of the average asking rent for flex space throughout the Boston region. For warehouse space in the metro submarket, the average asking rent was \$4.70 per sq. ft., or 83 percent of the Boston regional average. By contrast, the non-metro submarket's average asking rents ranged from \$7.55 per sq. ft. for flex space to \$4.31 per sq. ft. for warehouse space. Including both submarkets and all types of industrial space, today's asking rents represent an overall pattern of decline in the past three years, during which the Worcester industrial market's asking rents for all types of industrial space peaked at \$5.33 per sq. ft. (fourth quarter of 2006).

Building Characteristics. Industrial buildings in and around Worcester are similar to buildings found closer to Boston. For the Worcester market area overall,

the average industrial building's leasable floor area is approximately 49,000 sq. ft., with flex buildings of about 40,000 sq. ft. and warehouse and distribution facilities of 51,000 sq. ft. Industrial buildings inside the Worcester metro submarket tend to be smaller than in the non-metro areas outside the city. For the Boston region as a whole, the average leasable floor area in flex space and warehouse buildings is very similar: approximately 48,000 sq. ft. The average building sizes tend to be larger in market areas that have experienced most of the region's new industrial development. Of the fourteen industrial projects completed in the Boston region this year, only three involved buildings with more than 50,000 sq. ft. of floor area.

Leased Space and Lease Expirations. Approximately one-fourth of the Boston region's flex space and warehouse tenants occupy 10,000 to 24,999 sq. ft. of floor area, and the average suburban lease is under 20,000 sq. ft. Flex space tenants are more likely to lease smaller amounts of floor area, for nearly 60 percent occupy under 10,000 sq. ft. and 22 percent occupy under 2,499 sq. ft. By contrast, 44 percent of warehouse tenants lease under 10,000 sq. ft., and 32 percent lease more than 25,000 sq. ft. All of the in-

dustrial space added to the Boston region's inventory this year is designed for multi-tenant occupancy, though about 2 percent of the floor area currently under construction consists of build-to-suit projects for single-user tenants. Region-wide, a considerable amount of occupied industrial floor area is subject to lease agreements that expire in the next three years. Between 2010 and 2012, leases will expire for 38 percent of the region's existing flex tenants and 41 percent of the existing warehouse tenants.

Industrial Employment. Compared with the nation as a whole, the Boston region has experienced much slower employment growth in the industries that create most of the demand for industrial space: manufacturing, transportation, utilities, and wholesale trade. While the number of industrial jobs in the region increased in the past five years, the overall growth rate was just 2.5 percent. Since 2005, there

has been a moderate decrease in the number of transportation and manufacturing jobs and a moderate increase in utilities employment throughout the Boston region. However, employment in all of these industries is in a general state of decline throughout the Commonwealth, including the Worcester area. The closure of some facilities at Devens, in communities along the northwestern arc of I-495, and in the City of Boston will simply exacerbate the challenges of trying to fill existing vacancies and near-term available industrial space.

In the Worcester area, manufacturing employment decreased 3.7 percent between 2004 and 2008 and utilities employment declined by more than 30 percent. While the wholesale trade and transportation industries gained jobs, it is important to note that the number of wholesale trade establishments decreased and transportation and warehousing gained

Table 4.5
Existing Conditions: Boston Region and Worcester Office Market and Worcester Submarkets, Mid-Year 2009

Market Area	Existing Inventory		Vacancy		Year-to-Date (Mid-Year 2009)		
	# Buildings	Total Leasable Floor Area	Leasable Floor Area	Percent	Net Absorption	Deliveries	Under Construction
Boston Region							
Class A	840	144,888,889	16,488,434	11.4%	-1,548,552	462,301	2,378,528
Class B	3,655	138,308,738	16,829,581	12.2%	-720,579	353,236	312,361
Class C	5,856	68,487,937	4,385,905	6.4%	-83,136	0	0
Total	10,351	351,685,564	37,703,920	10.7%	-2,352,267	815,537	2,690,889
Worcester							
Class A	24	1,990,547	251,454	12.6%	6,752	0	0
Class B	222	6,567,147	631,726	9.6%	54,588	0	0
Class C	281	3,066,938	238,374	7.8%	10,084	0	0
Total	527	11,624,632	1,121,554	9.6%	71,424	0	0
Metro							
Class A	17	1,571,067	173,884	11.1%	1,652	0	0
Class B	130	4,534,677	527,844	11.6%	61,070	0	0
Class C	148	2,113,307	193,011	9.1%	3,454	0	0
Total	295	8,219,051	894,739	10.9%	66,176	0	0
Non-Metro							
Class A	7	419,480	77,570	18.5%	5,100	0	0
Class B	92	2,032,470	103,882	5.1%	-6,482	0	0
Class C	133	953,631	45,363	4.8%	6,630	0	0
Total	232	3,405,581	226,815	6.7%	5,248	0	0

Source: CoStar Office Report: Boston Office Market, Mid-Year 2009.

Table 4.6
Boston Region: Office Market Conditions Mid-Year 2009

Market Area	Existing Inventory		Year-to-Date				
	# Buildings	Total Leasable Floor Area	Vacant	Absorption	Deliveries	Under Construction	Quoted Rates
Boston/Suffolk County	1,387	104,055,094	8.10%	-1,124,958	97,000	1,325,000	\$34.86
Cambridge	378	23,397,264	9.70%	-397,868	0	277,671	\$38.56
Close-In Suburbs North	313	7,446,508	9.20%	-163,470	120,000	0	\$21.06
Route 128 North	998	31,786,215	15.60%	-255,048	140,000	172,000	\$22.92
Route 128 South	1,129	28,799,125	11.40%	-119,408	0	125,213	\$20.75
Route 128 West	934	36,913,553	10.20%	-604,774	108,500	409,851	\$27.07
Route 3 North	405	16,996,384	11.50%	173,155	0	5,400	\$19.04
Route 495 North East	489	11,934,141	14.30%	-48,646	18,772	32,000	\$19.25
Route 495 South	1,234	17,540,661	13.20%	-44,811	137,885	197,610	\$17.63
Route 495/Mass Pike West	655	24,045,883	11.10%	-158,393	102,226	92,292	\$19.10
Route 495/Route 2 West	426	12,594,202	13.80%	53,632	78,000	0	\$16.81
Southern New Hampshire	1,476	24,551,902	11.70%	266,898	13,154	53,852	\$17.89
Worcester	527	11,624,632	9.60%	71,424	0	0	\$17.60
Totals	10,351	351,685,564	10.70%	-2,352,267	815,537	2,690,889	\$23.22

Source: CoStar Office Report: Boston Office Market, Mid-Year 2009.

only four establishments. Market demand for industrial floor space is driven by employer establishments, not employment gains per se.

Office Market

The Worcester market area's inventory of office space currently includes nearly 11.7 million sq. ft. of leasable floor area in 527 buildings. Measured on the basis of leasable floor area, office space in the Worcester market represents 3.3 percent of the total office inventory in the Boston region. Well over half of the Worcester market's inventory consists of Class B office space, which is not the case for the Boston region overall, where Class A office space accounts for 41 percent of the total inventory and Class B space, 39 percent. Table 4.5 provides a mid-year and year-to-date snapshot of the office market in the Boston region, the Worcester market area, and Worcester's two submarkets.

Absorption and Vacancies. The vacancy rate in the Worcester office market has decreased to 9.6 percent from 10.5 percent a year ago, unlike the Boston region as a whole, where vacancies increased some-

what in the same period. The non-metro submarket has a much smaller percentage of vacant office space (6.7 percent) than the metro submarket (10.9 percent). Vacancies in the Worcester metro submarket stems from a relatively large inventory of vacant Class B office space, which has been a challenge for the city for quite some time. However, most of the recent net positive absorption in the Worcester office market occurred in the metro submarket and in Class B office buildings. A modest drop in vacancies and a cumulative net absorption of approximately 143,000 sq. ft. have occurred since January 2008, but this net positive absorption came at the heels of a net negative of more than -106,000 sq. ft. during the last quarter of 2007.

Elsewhere in the Boston region, suburban office vacancies range from a low of 6 percent in the Framingham/Natick area to a high of 22 percent in the Wilmington/Reading area. For Class A office space, the region's highest suburban vacancy rates exist along Route 128 North and in Southeastern Massachusetts (I-495 South), both reporting negative absorption this year. The Worcester market area has a comparatively low Class A vacancy rate, 12.6 percent, but its Class A office inventory is small and has not increased

ROUTE 140 CORRIDOR PLAN

this year. For Class B space, the Worcester market is fairly strong, at 9.6 percent, ranking roughly in the middle of the region's thirteen market areas. As for Class C office space, Worcester has the fourth highest vacancy rate in the region.

New Construction and Completions. Among projects under construction, there are noteworthy differences between the Boston market as a whole and its suburban markets and submarkets. Considering year-to-date construction activity and all classes of office space, new multi-tenant office buildings constructed in Boston, Cambridge, and along Route 128 North have ranged from a low of 120,000 sq. ft. to a high of nearly 278,000 sq. ft. However, new buildings constructed along and west of I-495 are smaller, ranging from 23,000 sq. ft. to 88,000 sq. ft. This reflects differences in the class of office space and tenant demand. The vast majority of new buildings constructed in and around Boston and Cambridge qualify as Class A offices, but new offices in outlying suburban locations and the Worcester area include a mix of building types, sizes, and prices. Regionally, single-user facilities comprise 13 percent of all floor area completed this year and none of the floor area

currently under construction. Most of the new office space is designed for multi-tenant occupancy.

Considering the Boston region as a whole, the highest rates of growth in office space have occurred in communities along Route 128 from Burlington to Gloucester, Boston, Cambridge, the west suburbs, and the I-495/South area, which generally includes the southern end of Norfolk County, Southeastern Massachusetts (Attleboro/Taunton to New Bedford) and Plymouth. The Worcester market has not fared as well. Since 2006, the Worcester market's office inventory (all classes) has increased by 15 buildings with a combined total of 244,000 sq. ft. of leasable floor area, very little of it composed of Class A office space. Only one office project was completed in 2008: 54,100 sq. ft. of Class C space at 630 Plantation Street, Worcester. There have been no construction starts in 2009.

Rents. Over the past fifteen months, quoted asking rents have fallen in Worcester's non-metro market. The average asking rents for Class B space in the metro and non-metro submarkets are very similar: \$16.84 per sq. ft. in the non-metro submarket and

Table 4.7
Worcester Office Market Trends: 2006-2009

Period	Existing Inventory		Vacancy		Leasable Floor Area			
	# Buildings	Total Leasable Floor Area	Leasable Floor Area	Percent	Net Absorption		Under Construction	Quoted Rates
2009 2q	527	11,624,632	1,121,554	9.6%	43,053	0	0	\$17.60
2009 1q	527	11,624,632	1,164,607	10.0%	28,371	0	0	\$17.66
2008 4q	527	11,624,632	1,192,978	10.3%	-821	0	0	\$22.86
2008 3q	527	11,624,632	1,192,157	10.3%	22,660	0	0	\$17.99
2008 2q	527	11,624,632	1,214,817	10.5%	22,810	54,100	0	\$18.27
2008 1q	526	11,570,532	1,183,527	10.2%	26,495	0	54,100	\$18.61
2007 4q	526	11,570,532	1,210,022	10.5%	-106,051	924	54,100	\$18.80
2007 3q	525	11,569,608	1,103,047	9.5%	99,396	13,600	55,024	\$18.51
2007 2q	523	11,556,008	1,188,843	10.3%	45,845	62,000	14,524	\$18.43
2007 1q	521	11,494,008	1,172,688	10.2%	-36,954	18,050	76,524	\$18.24
2006 4q	519	11,475,958	1,117,684	9.7%	-23,005	33,000	93,650	\$17.92
2006 3q	517	11,442,958	1,061,679	9.3%	44,840	0	101,050	\$18.13
2006 2q	517	11,442,958	1,106,519	9.7%	82,085	0	101,050	\$17.95
2006 1q	517	11,442,958	1,188,604	10.4%	53,179	62,230	33,000	\$17.43

Source: CoStar Office Report: Boston Office Market, Mid-Year 2009.

\$16.96 per sq. ft. in the Worcester metro submarket. However, the average Class A asking rent has decreased from just over \$20.00 to \$18.31 per sq. ft. in the non-metro submarket and is currently \$20.83 per sq. ft. in the metro submarket. For comparison, the average Class A asking rent in the Boston region is \$29.22 per sq. ft. and in the Boston central business district, \$45.78. Considering both Worcester submarkets and all classes of office space, asking rents have changed in the past two years, from \$18.80 per sq. ft. in the last quarter of 2007 to \$17.60 per sq. ft. in the second quarter of 2009. This pattern is different from that of nearly all other suburban market areas around Boston, where asking rents have trended upward slightly since 2007. Decline in the Worcester office market's asking rents have run parallel to a decline in construction starts and completions.

Building Characteristics. The office product in Worcester's market is significantly different from that of the urban commercial centers in Boston, Cambridge, or along Route 128. Both in the Worcester market area overall and within each submarket, Class A office buildings tend to be smaller, with an inventory-wide average of less than 90,000 sq. ft. per building compared with 173,000 sq. ft. per building throughout the Boston region. Class B office buildings also are smaller, though the difference is not as dramatic. On average, Class B office buildings in the Worcester market and the Boston region range from 30,000 sq. ft. to 38,000 sq. ft., with the smallest buildings found in the non-metro submarket (about 23,000 sq. ft.).

Leased Space and Lease Expirations. The Boston region's office tenants are generally small operations occupying less than 5,000 sq. ft., with an average of about 330 sq. ft. per employee. However, floor area per employee figures vary significantly depending on the type of business. For example, accounting firms lease an average of 242 sq. ft. per employee while law firms lease nearly 370 sq. ft. per employee. One-fourth of the Boston regional market's occupied space is leased to tenants in the finance, insurance, and real estate industries, while manufacturing and business services firms hold leases on another 33 percent. The most obvious concentrations of large tenants, i.e., tenants occupying more than 75,000 sq.

ft., exist within Boston, Cambridge, and the suburban markets north and just west of Boston. The same locations boast a majority of the region's large leases and they are being sought by several tenants needing 200,000+ sq. ft. of office and research and development space. The Worcester market's last major office lease occurred in 2008, when the Flagship Bank renewed its lease for 44,000 sq. ft. at 120 Front Street in Worcester (City Square).

By the end of 2010, existing leases will expire for 15.2 percent of the Boston region's office tenants and a combined total of about 2.3 million sq. ft. of office space will be available for lease (including new deliveries).

Office-Related Employment. Three industries generate a majority of office-related employment: information, financial services, and professional and business services. While the number of office-related jobs increased in and around Boston over the past five years, the annual rate of office employment growth did not keep pace with national trends and, since 2007, the growth rate has declined – though not as sharply as the decline in the same period for the country as a whole. The major sources of office-related job creation in the Greater Boston area are the professional and business services, education, and health services industries. In the Worcester market, the information industry lost a net 32 jobs between 2004 and 2008. However, the financial, professional and real estate rental and leasing industries experienced a net loss of 600 jobs, or between 2 and 10 percent of each industry's 2004 employment in the Worcester market area as a whole. Approximately half of these jobs were based in the city. Office-related jobs make up a comparatively small part of Boylston's employment base (7 percent) even under strong economic conditions.

Retail Market

The Worcester retail market consists of 17.8 million sq. ft. of leasable floor area in 980 buildings. Measured on the basis of leasable floor area, retail space

ROUTE 140 CORRIDOR PLAN

in the Worcester market represents 6.8 percent of the total retail inventory in the Boston region. Nearly half of the Worcester market's retail inventory is composed of general retail space, a catch-all term used in the industry to describe single-tenant buildings that do not fit into any other retail category. Eleven percent of the market's retail space includes mall retail, and about 34 percent, shopping centers. The remaining floor area is in "power centers," or shopping centers dominated by large anchor stores, including discount department stores. Overall, the distribution of retail floor area by category in the Worcester market area is very similar to that of the

Boston region. Table 4.8 reports third-quarter and year-to-date retail building statistics for the Boston region, the Worcester market area, and Worcester's two submarkets.

Absorption and Vacancies. The vacancy rate in the Worcester retail market, 6.8 percent, is higher than that of the Boston region, with a larger percentage of vacancies in the metro submarket (7.8 percent) than the non-metro submarket (6.0 percent). The Worcester metro submarket has a relatively large amount of vacant space in shopping centers, but in general, vacancy rates for all types of retail space are higher in

Table 4.8
Existing Conditions: Boston Region and Worcester Retail Market and Worcester Submarkets, Mid-Year 2009

Market Area	Existing Inventory		Vacancy		Year-to-Date (Mid-Year 2009)		
	# Buildings	Total Leasable Floor Area	Leasable Floor Area	Percent	Net Absorption	Deliveries	Under Construction
Boston							
General Retail	13,551	137,956,869	6,588,679	4.8%	145,319	482,724	146,529
Mall Retail	38	26,907,816	729,064	2.7%	-244,053	0	0
Power Center	37	13,136,139	1,082,054	8.2%	-305,050	0	675,000
Shopping Center	1,481	82,813,123	6,897,156	8.3%	-406,535	168,115	476,025
Specialty Center	15	2,036,261	146,598	7.2%	19,085	0	0
Total	15,666	262,850,208	15,443,551	5.9%	-791,234	650,839	1,297,554
Worcester							
General Retail	843	8,874,277	493,646	5.6%	-6,496	12,900	14,270
Mall Retail	4	1,893,236	161,840	8.5%	-24,477	0	0
Power Center	3	948,807	34,916	3.7%	-29,000	0	0
Shopping Center	96	6,080,942	519,086	8.5%	6,697	12,000	0
Specialty Center	0	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0
Total	980	17,797,262	1,209,488	6.8%	-53,276	24,900	14,270
Metro							
General Retail	378	4,051,661	284,940	7.0%	-19,838	0	14,270
Mall Retail	3	1,103,236	83,400	7.6%	3,080	0	0
Power Center	2	623,807	1,439	0.2%	0	0	0
Shopping Center	36	2,273,616	256,218	11.3%	-340	0	0
Specialty Center	0	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0
Total	437	8,052,320	625,997	7.8%	-17,098	0	14,270
Non-Metro							
General Retail	465	4,822,616	208,706	4.3%	13,342	12,900	0
Mall Retail	1	790,000	78,440	9.9%	-27,557	0	0
Power Center	1	325,000	33,477	10.3%	-29,000	0	0
Shopping Center	60	3,807,326	262,868	6.9%	7,037	12,000	0
Specialty Center	0	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0
Total	543	9,744,942	583,491	6.0%	-36,178	24,900	0

Source: CoStar Retail Report: Boston Retail Market, Mid-Year 2009.

the metro submarket than the Boston region except for power centers. Over the past four years, there has been a nearly consistent net negative absorption of retail space in the Worcester market as a whole (including both submarkets), and a concurrent rise in vacancy rates. However, some classes of retail have fared better than others. At the submarket level, the non-metro market has positively absorbed both general retail and shopping center space in 2009, and a small amount of retail mall space has been absorbed in the metro area. In both cases, however, these gains were more than offset by negative absorption in other classes of retail. Table 4.9 reports comparison data for all of the Boston region's retail market areas.

In other markets around Boston, retail vacancies range from a low of 1 percent in Cambridge (Kendall Square) to a high of 8.2 percent in the Wilmington/Reading area, but the vacancy rates for specific retail classes vary even more. For mall space, for example, the region's highest suburban vacancy rates exist in the Worcester non-metro market area (9.9 percent) and Waltham/Watertown (7.1 percent), yet several markets with major regional retail malls report 0 to 1 percent vacancy rates, such as Peabody, Newton/

Brookline, the Route 24 area, and southern New Hampshire. Power center vacancies range from 0 percent in the Danvers/Peabody area to a staggering 55 percent in the Southborough-Westborough submarket. Shopping centers are struggling in most submarkets throughout the Boston region, with vacancies over 10 percent in Burlington, Chelsea/Revere, Lexington/Arlington, the I-95 South corridor, Saugus/Lynn, the southernmost sections of Boston near Dedham and Milton, and the Worcester metro submarket.

New Construction and Completions. A total of 1.3 million sq. ft. of new retail floor area is under construction in the Boston region. The Worcester market includes only 14,270 sq. ft., however. More than 70 percent of the new retail space is being built in the Route 128 South market, notably along Route 3 on the South Shore and Route 1 South, which has a 675,000 sq. ft. lifestyle center with entertainment and office space under construction (Legacy Place, Dedham). The vast majority of new-construction retail buildings region-wide are fairly small general retail facilities with 13,000 to 15,000 sq. ft. – buildings designed to house chain retail stores such as CVS or Walgreens. Although some variety clearly exists in

Table 4.9
Boston Region: Retail Market Conditions Mid-Year 2009

Market Area	Existing Inventory			Year-to-Date (Mid-Year 2009)			
	# Buildings	Total Leasable Floor Area	Vacant	Net Absorption	Deliveries	Under Construction	Quoted Rates
Boston/Suffolk County	1,149	17,983,633	4.9%	-96,528	0	27,465	\$23.22
Cambridge	199	4,721,441	3.8%	13,661	0	30,000	\$33.61
Close-In Suburbs North	538	10,016,163	5.1%	9,316	135,000	0	\$18.40
Route 128 North	1345	28,238,516	5.1%	-343,936	16,030	210,000	\$19.35
Route 128 South	1,683	28,604,897	4.7%	67,114	185,885	926,080	\$16.15
Route 128 West	694	9,901,542	5.2%	-4,973	5,954	5,920	\$28.30
Route 3 North	513	8,453,943	6.6%	3,026	0	0	\$15.34
Route 495 North East	1589	15,687,008	2.8%	4,077	15,000	0	\$13.27
Route 495 South	3,048	51,944,181	6.8%	-345,560	77,194	77,819	\$13.41
Route 495/Mass Pike West	585	16,043,766	7.2%	-17,988	0	0	\$18.24
Route 495/Route 2 West	517	9,863,176	5.9%	-1,753	2,170	0	\$16.04
Southern New Hampshire	2,826	43,594,680	7.0%	-24,414	188,706	6,000	\$14.46
Worcester	980	17,797,262	6.8%	-53,276	24,900	14,270	\$14.19
Totals	15,666	262,850,208	5.9%	-791,234	650,839	1,297,554	\$16.31

Source: CoStar Retail Report: Boston Retail Market, Mid-Year 2009.

Table 4.10
Worcester Retail Market Trends: 2006-2009

Period	Existing Inventory		Vacancy		Leasable Floor Area			
	# Buildings	Total Leasable Floor Area	Floor Area	Percent	Net Absorption	Completed	Under Construction	Quoted Rates
2009 2q	980	17,797,262	1,209,488	6.8%	-49,341	0	14,270	\$14.19
2009 1q	980	17,797,262	1,160,147	6.5%	-3,935	24,900	14,270	\$14.29
2008 4q	978	17,772,362	1,131,312	6.4%	-10,208	0	29,250	\$13.66
2008 3q	978	17,772,362	1,121,104	6.3%	-81,827	5,320	29,250	\$13.01
2008 2q	977	17,767,042	1,033,957	5.8%	-35,872	7,995	5,320	\$13.62
2008 1q	976	17,759,047	990,090	5.6%	124,116	9,400	13,315	\$13.40
2007 4q	974	17,749,647	1,104,806	6.2%	50,010	13,354	17,395	\$14.05
2007 3q	973	17,736,293	1,141,462	6.4%	12,721	25,215	22,754	\$13.71
2007 2q	971	17,711,078	1,128,968	6.4%	-76,721	5,000	47,969	\$12.59
2007 1q	970	17,706,078	1,047,247	5.9%	-81,452	0	30,215	\$12.18
2006 4q	970	17,706,078	965,795	5.5%	123,752	4,800	0	\$12.74
2006 3q	969	17,701,278	1,084,747	6.1%	-24,935	0	4,800	\$12.83
2006 2q	969	17,701,278	1,059,812	6.0%	-125,655	25,409	4,800	\$13.19
2006 1q	967	17,675,869	908,748	5.1%	35,781	114,229	30,209	\$14.43

Source: CoStar Retail Report: Boston Retail Market, Mid-Year 2009.

the regional retail market, the general picture for retail is fairly weak. The retail inventory is essentially flat, vacancies are up, and new construction and completions are down.

Rents. While retail rents have decreased throughout the Boston area, the Worcester market has seen some improvement. Quoted rents in the Worcester market area have increased from \$13.40 at the outset of 2008 to \$14.19 this year. Currently the average non-metro rent for retail space is \$12.71 per sq. ft., and the average metro rent, \$16.33 per sq. ft. The highest rents involve mall market space, with non-metro area mall rents at \$16.98 per sq. ft. and metro market rents, \$33 per sq. ft.

Building Characteristics. Retail buildings in Worcester's market are generally similar to those found in urban commercial areas. Both in the Worcester mar-

ket area overall and within each submarket, general retail buildings are on par with the region, with an inventory-wide average of 10,500 sq. ft. per building. A noticeable difference can be seen in retail mall facilities, though, because the Worcester market's average is 474,000 while regionally, mall buildings generally range from 400,000 sq. ft. to more than 1 million sq. ft. The shopping centers around Worcester fall within regional norms, with an average of 63,000 sq. ft. By contrast, the average is much smaller in Boston's west suburbs (39,000 sq. ft.) and noticeably larger in Cambridge (90,000 sq. ft.) and the suburbs just north of Boston (83,000 sq. ft.).

Retail Employment. Retail employment has decreased throughout the Boston area, including within the Worcester market area as a whole, which has lost 128 retail business establishments and more than 900 retail jobs since 2004.

Vision Plan

The Vision Plan for Route 140 is a composite of community input, existing conditions, constraints, and opportunities identified by the consulting team. Together, they create a framework for future development. At the heart of the Vision Plan is the input received through the public participation process, which included a series of stakeholder interviews and a community meeting. However, other elements will play a role in shaping the future of Route 140 as well, including environmental features, ownership constraints, market conditions, and vacant land. These “layers” combine to form an overall vision for the corridor to serve as a guide for the remainder of this planning process.

Comprehensive Plan 2000

The development potential of Route 140 has been a planning issue in Boylston for at least a decade. The *Boylston Comprehensive Plan* (2000) includes an assessment of the Route 140 corridor as part of the Economic Development Element, which integrates an existing conditions analysis and public input to create a land use concept plan for the corridor (Attachment 1). The strengths and weaknesses of Route 140 identified in the Corridor Assessment resonate with those presented in this Vision Plan. The area offers both regional and local access via the I-290 interchange, and the intersection with Route 70 and has several large parcels with minimal environmental constraints. Additionally, the *Comprehensive Plan* identified the potential for retail development as other commercial uses expand along the corridor, and also noted the potential for a mix of attached and detached senior housing. For weaknesses, the Plan identified the lack of sewer as the primary limitation of the corridor.¹

¹ Town of Boylston, “Economic Development,” in *Boylston Comprehensive Plan*, (March, 2000), 10.

The Corridor Assessment process included a public participation session for residents to express their opinions about development options and priorities for properties along Route 140. These ideas were integrated into the land use concept plan. The concept plan designates the area south of Route 140 as an industrial sector, with setbacks and restricted access from a point across from North Sewall Street. There is also a small industrial area north of Route 140 around the current site of Phillips Precision. The area that currently hosts Route 140’s collection of small businesses, including the post office, liquor store, and the Other Place Pub, would be reserved for business uses. Finally, the plan identifies two areas for village retail uses: the northeast and southwest corners of the Route 70 and Route 140 intersection, the latter of which is part of the approximately 250-acre town-owned Hillside property.²

Public Participation

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

A critical part of the public outreach and participation process for the Route 140 Corridor Plan involved interviewing key stakeholders with knowledge of and interest in the future of the roadway and surrounding area. We interviewed seventeen participants in August-September 2009, including public officials, staff, and business owners or affiliates in establishments on Route 140. Nancy Colbert Puff, Town Administrator, and members of the Boylston Business Development Committee identified the list of stakeholders and made the interview arrangements. The interview format, though fairly informal, was guided by a series of discussion questions. The primary purpose of the interviews was to confirm public opinion and community values about the Route 140 corridor’s development possibilities. Since some of the stakeholders have expertise in market and eco-

² Ibid, 11-13.

ROUTE 140 CORRIDOR PLAN

nomic trends, the interviews also provided opportunities to gather qualitative information about the development climate on and within the vicinity of the Route 140 corridor. These and other information sources will be incorporated into forthcoming elements of the Route 140 Corridor Study and Plan.³

Summary of Key Findings. The stakeholder interviews covered the broad themes of issues and assets for the Route 140 corridor and Boylston as a whole, a vision for development for Route 140 (what types of uses should go along corridor in the future), and a discussion of the steps needed to realize that vision. The stakeholders' responses to questions around these themes are summarized below.

Assets

- ◆ Good highway access via I-290.
- ◆ Proximity to an urban area (Worcester) while still affording residents with a “rural” lifestyle.
- ◆ Proximity to educational institutions such as Mt. Wachusett Community College and the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Worcester.
- ◆ Central Massachusetts's large, educated workforce.
- ◆ Boylston's high quality of life: natural resources and scenic beauty, pleasing aesthetics, a good public school system, good public services, and good housing options.
- ◆ Boylston's local airport (currently non-functioning).
- ◆ Possible untapped local market for goods and services due to the small number of businesses in Boylston.
- ◆ Lack of water service beyond 270 Shrewsbury Street (Dunkin Donuts).
- ◆ Lack of marketing effort and expertise for Route 140 properties and for business in Boylston in general.
- ◆ Lack of development guidance and planning/economic development capacity, and an overall lack of support from Town Hall for development.
- ◆ Zoning does not allow for retail in many places along the Route 140 corridor.
- ◆ Lack of initiative from local landowners in pursuing feasible development opportunities.
- ◆ Unwillingness of landowners to engage in co-operative deal-making, which will be required to develop some of the larger, backland parcels along Route 140.
- ◆ There is still a general, “resident-versus-business” sentiment in Boylston.
- ◆ A lack of networking opportunities makes development and expansion of existing businesses difficult.
- ◆ Poor visual quality and aesthetics along the Route 140 corridor will make it difficult to attract certain types of development, such as higher-end office.

Future Vision: What kind of development should there be along Route 140?

Issues

- ◆ Lack of sewerage along the Route 140 corridor.
- ◆ Medical offices.

³ See Appendix A for a list of the interviewees and the interview questions.

- ◆ Corporate headquarters might be possible due to the two golf courses in town, one which is along Route 140.
- ◆ No matter what type of development goes along the corridor, the aesthetics must be improved and be acceptable to residents.

Next Steps

- Boylston needs to plan more effectively for development and market Route 140 as a good area for business and development.
- Develop a clear vision and implementation plan for Route 140 which makes clear how Boylston will differentiate itself from surrounding towns.
- There may be a need for a full- or part-time planner or an economic/business development officer to increase the planning and development capacity at Town Hall.
- Continue to seek knowledgeable and friendly people to serve on Town boards and commissions.
- Continue to support the work of and develop the roles of the Business Marketing and Applicant Advisory committees.
- Landowners should be involved in the development planning process and potential policy and regulatory changes that could affect development.

Identification of Priority Parcels. Stakeholders were also asked to identify what they consider important development parcels within the Route 140 corridor planning area. They identified five sites or areas, listed below, which correspond to the numbered areas shown in Map 5.1.

1. The area from approximately East Temple Street to Route 70 on the northern side of Route 140. The area currently accommodates a post office branch, a liquor store, and some other small business, and the



This vacant lot on the corner of South Sewall Street and Route 140 was identified by stakeholders as a prime development parcel.

new shopping plaza at 81 Shrewsbury Street. Participants consider this section of the roadway as a potential location for more retail uses with a possible residential component, i.e., a mixed-use area. Also, this area includes the parcel on the northeast corner of the Route 140 and Route 70 intersection, which was identified as a good location for convenience retail.

2. The parcel owned by the Dipilato family close to the Shrewsbury town line. At roughly 145 acres, this property was correctly identified as one of the only parcels along Route 140 that can accommodate a major development.

3. The parcel owned by Mr. Nisi Dionis at the corner of South Sewall Street and Route 140.

4. The Town-owned land on the southwest corner of the Route 140 and Route 70 intersection known as the Hillside property.⁴ One person mentioned the revenue-generating opportunity from this parcel if the town were to sell some or all of it. By contrast, two other participants – while recognizing the opportunities for this parcel – said that it is more important to generate development on privately-owned parcels first before considering developing the Hillside property.

5. One participant mentioned the Rand Whitney site as a huge asset because it is already permitted and some site work has been initiated.

⁴ Only part of this parcel is within the corridor planning area boundaries.

Public Meeting

On September 23, 2009, the Town sponsored a public meeting on the Route 140 Plan at Town Hall. The purpose of the meeting was both to describe the project to town residents and business owners and gather input on issues and opportunities along the corridor, and ask people to share their vision for Route 140. The target audience was the general public of Boylston, with a particular emphasis on residents, property owners, and business owners within the Route 140 corridor planning area. Toward this end, the Town publicized the event in the following ways:

- ◆ A direct invitation from the Town to property and business owners within the corridor planning areas.
- ◆ A listing on the town's local cable TV channel.
- ◆ A meeting notice distributed to corridor-area property owners.
- ◆ Personal visits to Route 140 property owners from a member of the Business Marketing Committee.
- ◆ Phone calls from the Business Marketing Committee to people and groups with a potential interest in the project.
- ◆ Email invitations to Town boards and committees.
- ◆ An announcement at the Wachusett Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee meeting.
- ◆ In addition, *The Banner*, a local newspaper serving Boylston and West Boylston, published a story about the public meeting.⁵

Thirty-one people attended the meeting and engaged in an energetic discussion about the Route

140 corridor. The consultants gave a presentation to describe the purpose of the Route 140 plan, initial key findings, and next steps. After a brief question-and-answer period, meeting attendees participated in a small-group activity to gather specific information and ideas about the Route 140 corridor. Each group received an orthophoto map of the corridor planning area and discussed three aspects of Route 140, marking their ideas on the map:

- ◆ Route 140 assets: what do you already like about the area around Route 140?
- ◆ Route 140 issues: what problems exist along the Route 140 Corridor?
- ◆ Route 140 opportunities: what do you want to see along Route 140 in the future?

The groups worked enthusiastically for about thirty minutes on this task. Afterward, the participants reconvened and a spokesperson from each group presented their major ideas to the large group. While each group's ideas were presented, a member of the consulting team took flip-chart notes on additional ideas or issues that were mentioned but not marked on the map. Following the group presentations, the consultants reviewed next steps for the corridor plan and the meeting was adjourned.

The group visions for future development have been recreated in a series of map illustrations that show where commercial development should be located, what type of development it should be, and other issues or thoughts on the Route 140 corridor. Map 5.2, the Composite Map, combines the individual group maps to illustrate where groups agreed on areas for commercial development, areas where only one group suggested an area for future commercial development, and areas where groups disagreed on the nature of future development. Together, the individual group maps create a public vision for the Route 140 corridor.

The Composite Map shows that the public meeting participants generally agreed about development in three locations. They identified the area south of

⁵ Nancy Colbert Puff (Town Administrator, Town of Boylston, MA), email message to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., October 8, 2009.

Route 140 and closest to the intersection with I-290 as a location for some type of major development. Groups offered various specific suggestions as for what type of use should go here, as shown on the individual group maps. Some groups were specific, offering ideas such as hotel, restaurant, and an assisted living facility, and one group simply said “big business.” However, the groups seemed to agree that it should be a significant development. Also, with the exception of Group 5, none of the groups suggested this area for industrial or light industrial uses. Instead, their suggestions were along the lines of hotel, retail, or R&D. This suggests that people believe the value of the land is high enough and the visibility and access great enough to attract and sustain these types of uses.

Several groups also felt that there should be commercial development in the area south of Route 140 across from East Temple Street. One group thought this area would be suitable for restaurants, another light industrial, and another group did not specify the type of commercial development. This area includes the parcel owned by the Rand Whitney Group, which received a Tax Incrementing Financing (TIF) agreement for the site in 2008 and obtained site plan approval for a box and packaging manufacturing facility in 2007. However, the Rand Whitney Group was forced to reconsider the project due to the downturn in the national economy. It is not clear whether the company will continue to pursue development of this site.⁶

The third area of agreement is located east of the intersection Route 70 along the north side of Route 140. All but one group identified this area as appropriate for commercial development, specifically office and retail development. Two groups identified the northeastern corner of the Route 140 and Route 70 intersection as appropriate specifically for retail development. Two groups also agreed that this area would be appropriate for office uses. No group

suggested this area for industrial or light industrial uses.

There were four areas where only one group suggested a potential land use, shown in blue on the composite map, including:

- ◆ The area between Sewall Street North and East Temple Street, identified for R&D use. One of these parcels, though not shown on the map, is currently occupied by Phillips Precision, a light-run production machine company that developed its current site in 2008-2009.⁷ In addition to an existing residence, there is one or partially vacant parcel in this area.
- ◆ The area west of South Sewall Street, identified for retail use. This is a highly visible corner that is part of a forty-seven acre vacant parcel.
- ◆ The area between East Temple Street and Route 70, currently occupied by the post office, a liquor store, and several other small businesses. The group did not specify the type of commercial development they thought would be appropriate for this area. Regardless of the specific use, this would be a *redevelopment* area as it is currently occupied by active businesses.



Participants at the September 23 public meeting said they would like to see R&D development in the area between Sewall Street North and East Temple street, near the current Phillips Precision company.

⁶ Mark Bertonassi (Building Commissioner, Town of Boylston, MA), email message to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., October 14, 2009. Nancy Colbert Puff (Town Administrator, Town of Boylston, MA), email messages to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., October 16 and 19, 2009.

⁷ Catherine Phillips, (Phillips Precision), personal communication to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., October 19, 2009.

ROUTE 140 CORRIDOR PLAN

- ◆ The southern most part of the corridor planning area along Route 70, which was identified for retail. However, after the public meeting we learned this area is slated for a forty-eight-unit housing development.

Finally, the mapping exercise showed two areas where groups disagreed about the nature of development, shown in yellow on the composite map. In the area near School and Cross Streets, one group advocated for commercial development while another believed there should be no change to this area due to its proximity to a residential neighborhood. The other area of disagreement was southwestern corner of Routes 140 and 70. This area is part of a 250-acre town-owned parcel known as Hillside, which Boylston acquired in 1997.

In addition to mapping specific development ideas, most groups also offered general ideas about Route 140 issues, assets, and opportunities during the report-back session.

Issues

- ◆ High traffic speeds along Route 140.
- ◆ Lack of infrastructure, especially sewer and water.
- ◆ Zoning consistency/inconsistency.
- ◆ Height restrictions as a potential development constraint.
- ◆ The Town has a reputation of being anti-business.

Assets

- ◆ Proximity to I-290 and Worcester.
- ◆ Lots of traffic.
- ◆ Trees.

Opportunities

- ◆ Provide sidewalks between uses and between existing residences and new development and

natural resources such as the Wachusett Reservoir.

- ◆ Do not make Route 140 a 24-hour area.
- ◆ Do not allow adult entertainment uses in the area, if possible.
- ◆ Could allow or promote low-impact uses such as industrial, warehouse, and assisted living.
- ◆ Potential to sell Hillside fields and sell land to offset infrastructure costs.
- ◆ Provide bike paths in corridor.

Environmental Constraints

GEOLOGY & SOILS

The Route 140 corridor has distinctive physical characteristics. As noted in Chapter 3, the underlying land forms and soil patterns essentially divide the corridor planning area into two parts. The eastern half is characterized by significant areas of outcroppings and shallow bedrock, which support soils that are excessively well-drained and capable of holding steep slopes. Generally, these types of soils provide a good base for development. The western half of the corridor planning area, from about East Temple Street to the intersection of Route 70 and Route 140, has predominantly well-drained sandy loams whose groundwater storage and recharge properties make this one of the town's two primary aquifers.

Each of these "halves" of the Route 140 corridor has its own set of development constraints. The eastern half, though a good base for development, may present issues for on-site wastewater disposal systems. In the absence of sewer service, these soil conditions will likely limit development on many sites in this part of the corridor planning area. The western half, because it includes moderate- and higher-yield aquifers, largely falls within the town's Wellhead Protection (WP) District and under the purview of DEP's Zone II regulations. The WP District restricts certain activities and places additional constraints on most types of development, as described below. Thus, the

corridor's varying soil conditions create unique constraints on development in some areas, and these areas need to be considered within the overall vision plan.

SLOPES

Within the corridor planning area, the terrain is steeply sloped south of Route 140, mostly in the eastern half of the site. These areas largely coincide with areas of bedrock outcroppings. The presence of steep slopes means there will be additional site work and, most likely, additional expense for projects in these areas, but the extent to which these slopes will actually constrain or prevent development depends on the type of project and the availability of sufficient upland area. For one-story commercial or industrial buildings with a large footprint, the slopes will be problematic, but for a multi-story building with a smaller overall footprint, the same slope would not be as great a constraint. The greatest factor in determining the constraint of slopes is the developer's investment expectation for a given project. If site construction costs are too high relative to a project's total development cost and future income potential, the up-front investment will not be worthwhile, and prospective developers will look elsewhere for land that is easier (less costly) to develop.

WETLANDS

Wetland constraints are a function of federal and state laws, regulations, and policies. For purposes of this plan, wetland constraints include mapped wetlands (using GIS data layers) and their respective buffer zones: one hundred feet for wetland resource areas regulated under the Wetlands Protection Act and two hundred feet for riverfront areas around perennial streams under the Rivers Protection Act. While these laws do not impose an absolute ban on activity within the buffer zones, they do require prior review and approval by the local Conservation Commission. For example, the Rivers Protection Act requires that applicants seeking to build in the two hundred-foot buffer prove that there are no practicable alternatives to their projects and that the project will have no significant adverse impacts on the riverfront ecology. In addition, some existing

uses—including single-family homes and accessory uses—are exempt.⁸

Within the corridor planning area, there are four wetland areas that are likely to impose constraints on development:

- ◆ The parcel along Main Street that is south of Hillside and is also a Chapter 43D Priority Development Site (PDS).
- ◆ The parcel occupying the southeastern corner of the Route 70/140 intersection, the southern portion of which is being developed for the 48-unit Compass Pointe development.
- ◆ The parcel west of the intersection of South Sewall Street and Route 140.
- ◆ The Dipilato property.

GROUNDWATER SUPPLIES

Boylston's Wellhead Protection (WP) District is a zoning overlay district that largely aligns with the boundaries of DEP's Zone II wellhead protection area. A Zone II is a water supply recharge area, which means that water flows directly toward the well. The boundaries of a Zone II are determined by modeling highly stressed conditions, i.e., 180 days of continuous pumping at an approved yield, without recharge from precipitation.⁹ Since the WP District is intended to protect the groundwater supply in an especially critical area of town, it prohibits some uses that would otherwise be allowed. Most of these uses relate to the storage or treatment of hazardous or harmful materials or substances.

Perhaps the most significant development constraint in the WP District is that a special permit is required

⁸ Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, "Water, Wastewater, and Wetlands: Massachusetts Rivers Protection Act", <http://www.mass.gov/dep/water/laws/rpa01.htm>.

⁹ Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, "Water, Wastewater, and Wetlands: Water Supply Area Definitions," <http://www.mass.gov/dep/water/drinking/wspaglos.htm>.

ROUTE 140 CORRIDOR PLAN

for any development which renders impervious the greater of 15 percent or 2,500 square of a lot. Granting of the special permit is contingent upon the applicant providing a system for groundwater recharge. Like the wetlands and rivers buffers, this measure does not prohibit construction, but may constrain a project and place additional costs upon an applicant.

OWNERSHIP CONSTRAINTS

The corridor planning area contains some parcels that are unavailable for development due to ownership. The northwestern part of the corridor planning area includes some of the watershed land around Wachusett Reservoir, owned by the state's Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). This land cannot be developed because it is subject to a perpetual watershed protection restriction. The Boylston Elementary School, located off of South Sewall Street in the southern part of the corridor planning area, will remain unchanged for many years because the land is already in use for a public facility. Two town-owned parcels in the corridor planning area accommodate public water supplies: one off Main Street and the second, near the southern edge of the Wachusett Reservoir and DCR's land in the northwestern part of the corridor planning area. This study assumes that all such parcels will remain unavailable for development.

Hillside is a roughly 250-acre property at the corner of Route 70 and Route 140, part of which lies within the corridor planning area. According to the *Boylston Comprehensive Plan*, the Town acquired the property by eminent domain from the Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC) in 1997, paying \$2.1 million.¹⁰ Currently, Boylston uses the property for municipal activities such as Town Hall and Town Offices and the Boylston Police Department, which are located on the site at the 221 Main Street entrance. There is also a football field and recreation area at the corner of Route 70 and Route 140.

The Hillside property triggered some disagreement at the September 23, 2009 public meeting. Some res-



A town recreation area and football field is part of the 250-acre Hillside property.

idents said they want the area to remain the same while others said the Town should sell the land for development. Though technically it may be possible for Boylston to dispose of the Hillside parcel for private use, doing so is unlikely to help the development of Route 140 as a whole. Boylston already has vacant, viable, privately-owned properties along Route 140 that are appropriate for development. From an economic development standpoint, we think the town should avoid placing publicly-owned land in competition with private property. In addition, we understand that there may be some restrictions on the sale of this land due to financing arrangement made at the time of purchase. As a result, we recommend that Boylston retain ownership of the Hillside parcel and continue using it for municipal purposes. Hillside is therefore classified as a property that is not available for development as part of the Route 140 Corridor plan.

INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRAINTS

It is premature to determine whether public water will act as a development constraint on Route 140. The water system's capacity to support nonresidential growth depends in part on the currently permitted capacity of the Boylston Water District's wells, net of existing consumption and additional public water demands that are already in the pipeline, such as the Compass Pointe housing development. In addition, capacity for growth will be influenced by hydraulic factors such as available fire flows and plumbing pressure requirements at ground level and the highest floor of buildings. A critical component for determining the adequacy of water supply will also

¹⁰ Town of Boylston, MA, *Boylston Comprehensive Plan*, March 2000.

be the land uses that develop along the corridor over time. Relatively low water users such as light industry and office space will place fewer demands on the water system than uses such as restaurants, hair salons, medical offices, nursing homes, and some types of manufacturing. The same quantity of available water will support greater or lesser amounts of additional floor space depending on the land use.

The most compelling infrastructure constraint on Route 140 is the lack of public sewer service. Even more than zoning, sewer service affects the total amount of development that a site can support. Having to accommodate an on-site septic system means that enough land must be reserved for wastewater disposal, and a very large project could trigger requirements for a groundwater discharge permit from DEP. At issue for Boylston is how the town would finance the cost to buy into the Upper Blackstone Water Pollution Abatement District (UBWPAD) and build the sewer infrastructure. Although providing sewers on Route 140 would have a significant impact on the corridor's appeal for new commercial investment, the total project cost could be prohibitive for such a small town. Boylston also would have to consider assessing betterments on properties that will directly benefit from the installation of sewer service, and it is not clear that property owners along the corridor would be willing to absorb the cost – not without significant zoning relief to “unlock” the value of their land.

Boylston could consider strategies such as District Improvement Financing (DIF) for a sewer extension project. However, there would have to be a substantial guarantee of near-term development taxed at full and fair cash market value *or* a development agreement to secure the same amount of revenue in exchange for Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Further, Boylston could explore a partnership with Shrewsbury to construct a small treatment facility that would serve some properties in both towns, but this would require paying for a feasibility study and it may also involve other trade-offs, e.g., an agreement to sell water to Shrewsbury.

Left unsewered, Route 140 will continue to evolve, albeit gradually, as a low-density corridor with some

offices, light industrial uses, and a modest amount of retail space. Although there is not much development on Route 140, the corridor planning area has a semi-rural quality that is fairly consistent with the town's past planning and existing land use policies. Boylston has to decide how much development it wants to promote in the corridor planning area because no matter what financing mechanism is used to pay for the utility improvements, ultimately the cost to sewer Route 140 will be borne by betterments and rate payers.

MARKET AND REGULATORY CONSTRAINTS

The market constraints that affect the corridor planning area are largely driven by the absence of construction-ready land for industrial and office projects and the moderate amount of traffic for retail projects. Except for industrial zones in fairly affluent towns with direct highway access, recent industrial growth in the Worcester non-metro area has consisted of warehouse and distribution facilities more than flex space, and the office buildings that have been constructed are more likely to qualify as Class B or C than Class A space. The non-metro area has approximately 620,000 sq. ft. of vacant flex space and 2.8 million sq. ft. of vacant warehouse space, or a 14.6 percent vacancy rate, which does not bode well for near-term new industrial development. Moreover, while Route 140 in Boylston offers the advantage of direct access to I-290, it does not have sewer service to offer to prospective businesses or amenities to offer their employees. In addition, there are unanswered questions about the water district's capacity to serve large-volume users.

The regional office market, with a 6.7 percent vacancy rate, has room for modest growth. The issue for Boylston and other small towns north of Worcester is competitiveness. Depending on the size of an office facility and the types of tenants, the lack of sewer service on Route 140 may not be a significant constraint. Boylston would most likely attract locally oriented office space. In general, the area seems most conducive to small, owner-occupied office facilities suited for professional and business services. There is also some market potential for general or convenience-oriented retail.

Market demand (or lack thereof) is important, but it should not act as a deciding factor in the town's decisions about Route 140. While Boylston needs to be realistic about its options and Shrewsbury Street's market position in the region, the town should focus on promoting sound land use and economic goals and regulate the land accordingly. The convergence of six use districts within the corridor planning area – including provisions for single-family home development – does not convey a clear message about the town's land use priorities and may actually impede desired development. Opportunities to provide for more housing diversity, higher intensity of use for both residential and nonresidential development, and logical clustering of compatible uses could change the corridor's market position. More importantly, these measures could create enough value to make shared wastewater facilities or a district package treatment plant feasible even if connecting to a regional wastewater treatment facility remains infeasible. Shrewsbury Street is not a "Main Street" environment, but it could evolve as a more attractive, visually interesting, and vibrant area if the town is willing to unlock the value of the land.

VACANT LAND

Notwithstanding the corridor planning area's numerous development constraints, there is a large amount of privately owned vacant land both along and just off of Route 140. As reported in Chapter 3, the corridor planning area has approximately 180 acres of vacant land, including twenty-five developable acres and another 158 acres with some degree of development potential.

Route 140 Vision Plan

The overall vision plan of the Route 140 corridor is a fusion of the elements presented thus far: the public vision that emerged from stakeholder interviews and the public meeting; natural, infrastructure, ownership, and market constraints; and vacant land. To illustrate relationships between these different (and potentially conflicting) elements, the consulting team created a set of potential land uses for the corridor planning area's most viable parcels and sub-areas, which were determined by overlaying the

constraints described above in the previous sections. The Development Concept Areas that emerged from this process are illustrated in Map 5.3 and correspond to the lettered descriptions that follow.

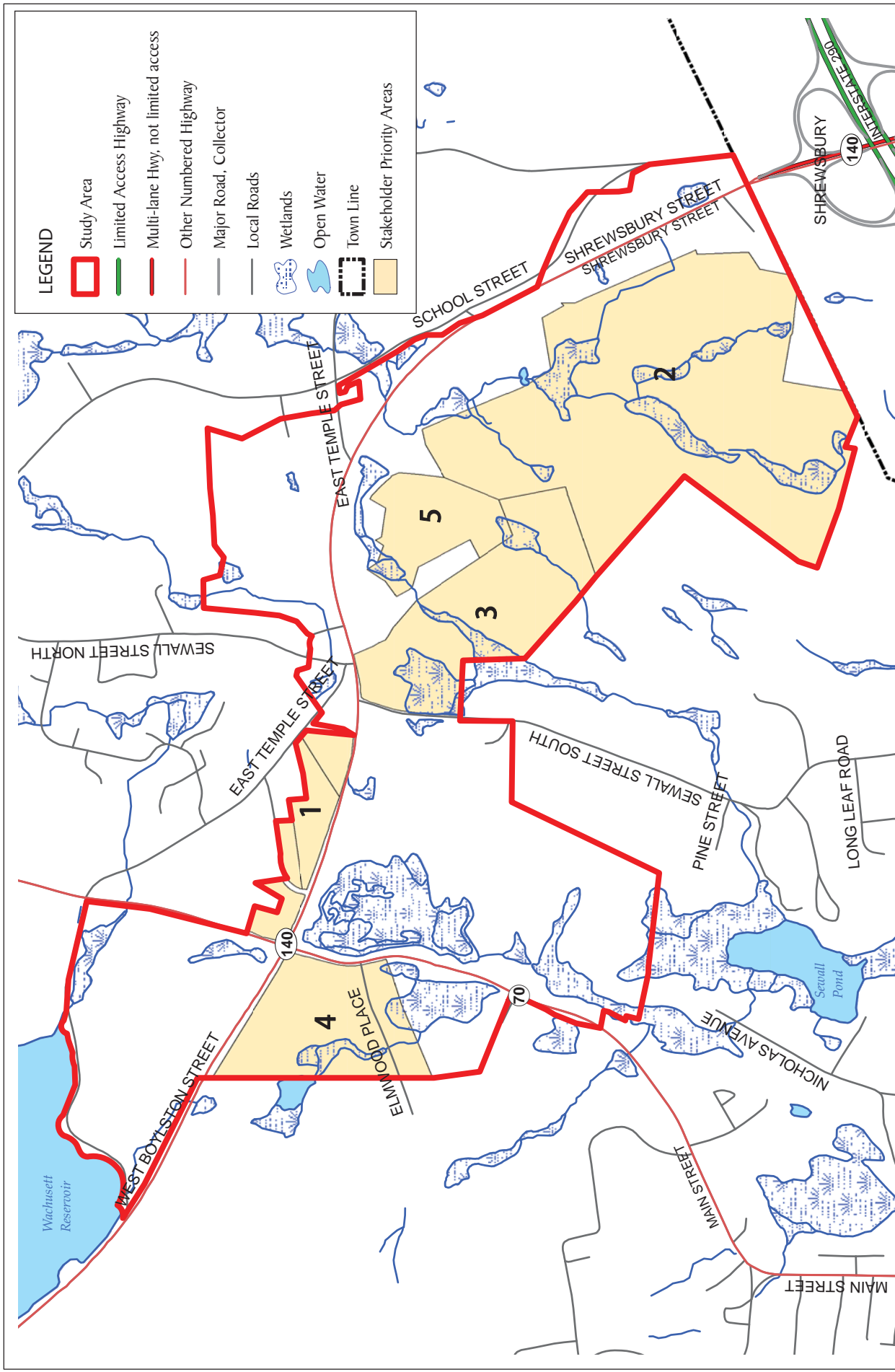
- ◆ **Area A.** This area is the western half of one of the largest parcels within the Route 140 corridor planning area, owned by the Dipilato family. It was identified in both the stakeholder consultation process and September 23, 2009 public meeting as a good site for major development. The entire parcel is approximately 145 acres and bisected by a stream and wetlands diverging from the Sewall Brook, which effectively creates two usable pieces of land. Although as a whole the Route 140 corridor will not likely support a large amount of retail, Area A's proximity to the Route 140/I-290 intersection makes it viable for retail as well as light industrial uses. Access from Route 140 could be provided by the smaller parcel owned by the Dipilato family, shown as part of Area A. Wetlands within Area A, as well as the 15-25 percent slopes that cover most of the site, may cause additional development constraints and/or expense.
- ◆ **Area B** is the eastern half of the Dipilato property. This parcel is farther away from the roadway and would be most suitable for light industrial use. Accessing this site will be difficult: unlike Area A, the developer of Area B would need to obtain access from another landowner along Route 140. Also, the developer would likely need a wetlands permit to cross either of the streams to the north and east of the development area. There are 15-25 percent slopes in the southern portion of this site.
- ◆ **Area C** is section of Route 140 that would be appropriate for possible *redevelopment* that includes both retail/restaurant uses and some light industrial uses. This area was identified in the September 23, 2009 public meeting as a place that could provide shopping and dining opportunities for employees of Route 140 businesses. Currently, the area is mostly occupied by commercial and industrial uses. Over time and

with proper zoning, some of these uses could be redeveloped into retail and restaurant, creating an area that is primarily light industrial, but offers opportunities for workers and residents to meet daily needs without have to travel long distances.

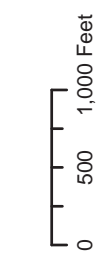
- ◆ **Area D** includes one of the larger parcels within the planning area. Like Areas A and B, this site is constrained by wetlands, and its largest usable area is a considerable distance from the roadway. Light industrial would be an appropriate use here. The area will mostly likely require a permit for a wetlands crossing, and there are moderately steep slopes adjacent to the wetlands.
- ◆ **Area E** is currently a mix of vacant land and single-family homes and is adjacent to a more residential area near Route 140. The area does not include the parcel occupied by Phillips Precision, although the company's presence indicates that light industrial uses may suitable for this part of the corridor in the future. In addition to continued light industrial use, multi-family de-

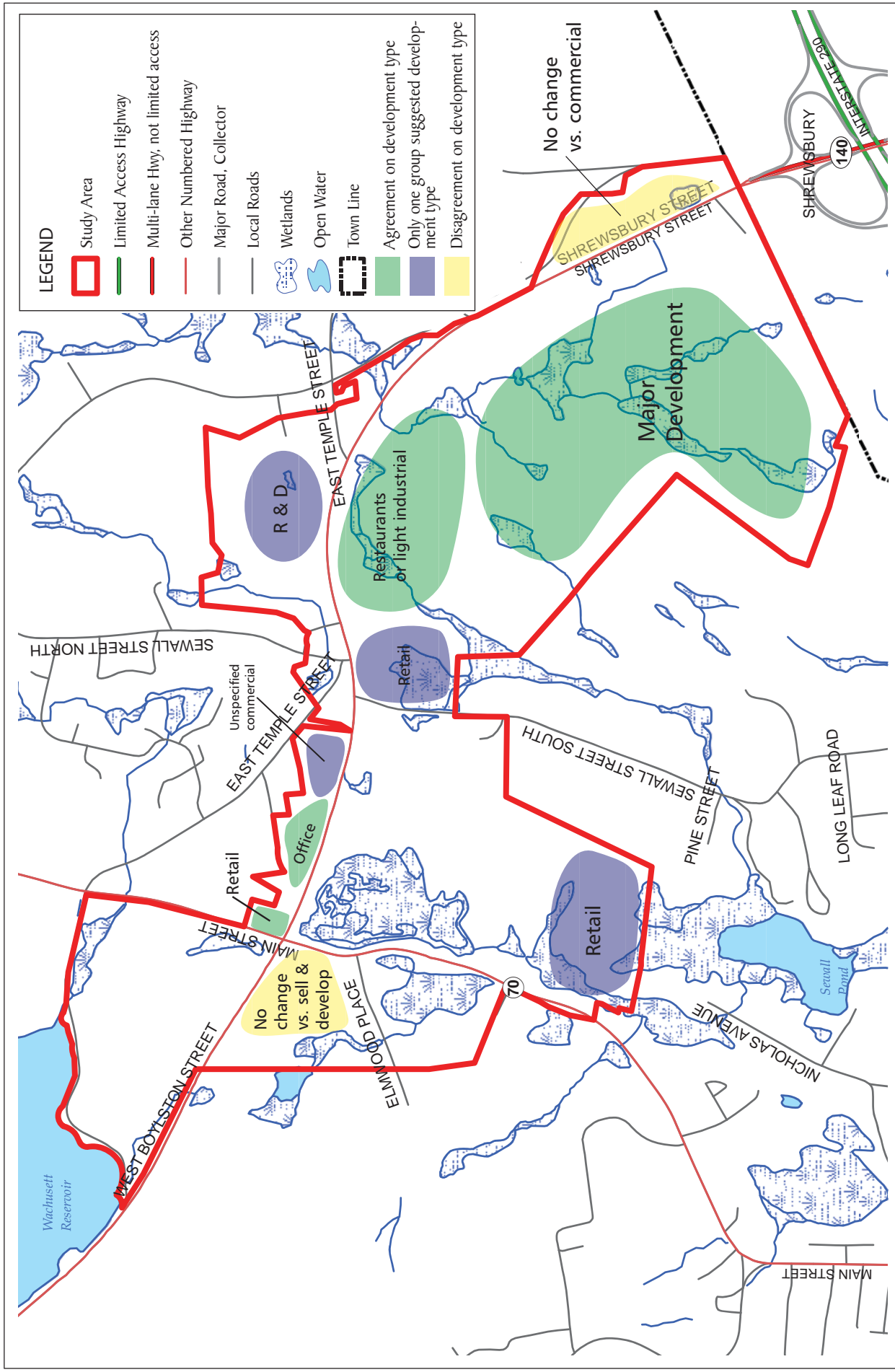
velopment would also be suitable here because it is a suitable transitional use between the commercial and industrial uses directly along Route 140, and the residential neighborhoods to the north. Moreover, providing additional housing choices along Route 140 would provide opportunities for local employees to live closer to where they work.

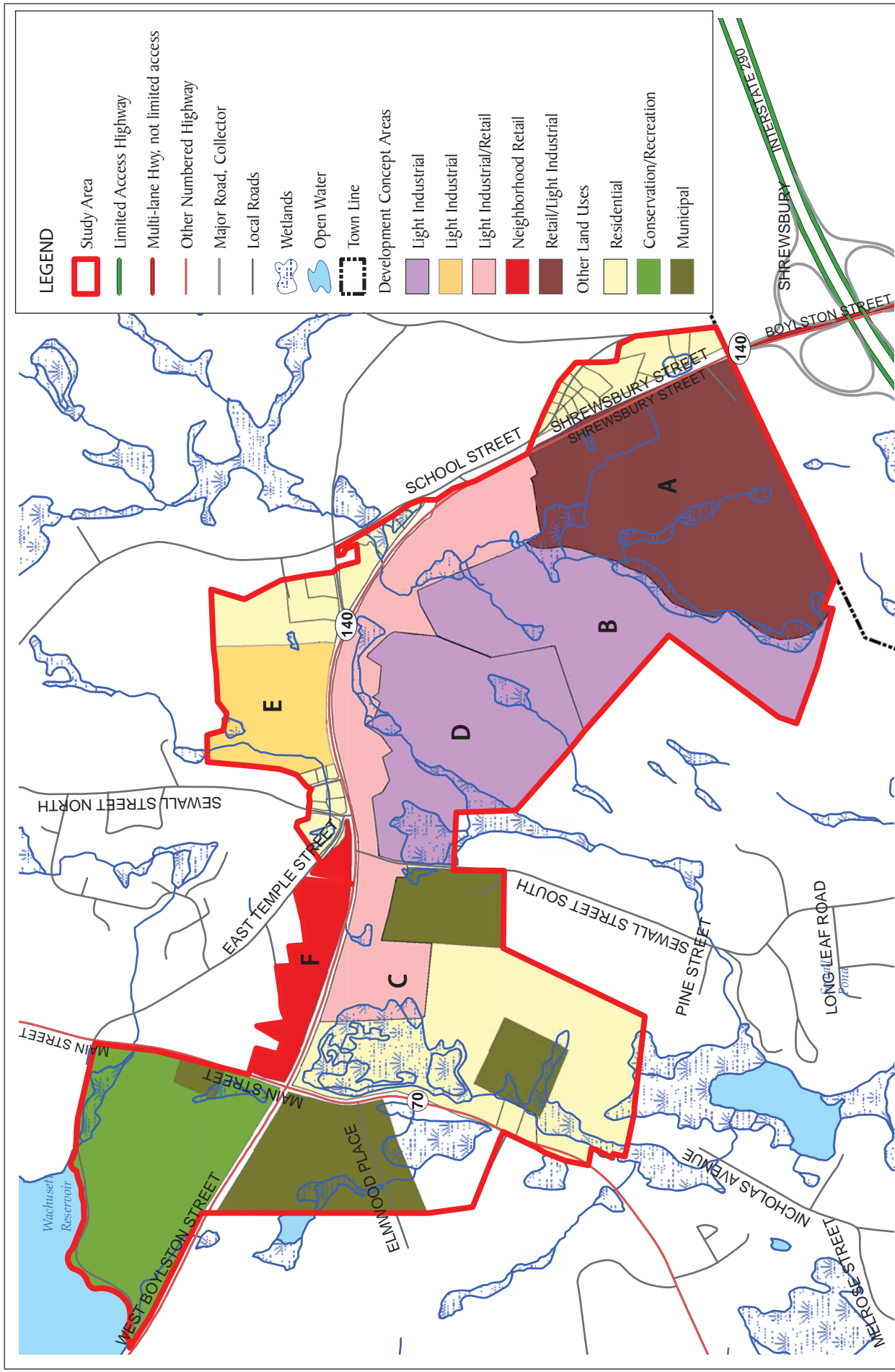
- **Area F** has was identified by the both *Boylston Comprehensive Plan* the public participation process for this plan as a good site for retail and/or office development. Currently, this area hosts some of Route 140's only retail establishments and also the town's local post office. With few other retail and service opportunities in Boylston, this area functions as a distinct activity node for the town. Expanding these opportunities to Area F would build upon existing use patterns and provide additional services to town residents. Area F includes three parcels owned by the same landowner, and offers a rare opportunity to plan for the entire area, rather than parcel by parcel. Additionally, the area has few environmental constraints, although it is within the town's Wellhead Protection District.



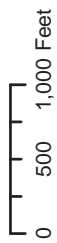
Map 5.1
Stakeholder Priority Areas







Map 5.3
Development Concept Areas



Town of Boylston
ROUTE 140 CORRIDOR PLAN

Zoning Analysis and Recommendations

Boylston's present zoning is not conducive to the town's tax base or employment base aspirations for Route 140. This section of the Corridor Plan provides a detailed look at Boylston's zoning requirements for land in the planning area and identifies several issues that will need to be addressed in order to bring the Zoning Bylaw in line with the Vision Plan.

Existing Regulations

RURAL RESIDENTIAL (RR)

The Rural Residential (RR) district is located exclusively on the north side of Route 140. The purpose of the district is to protect the Wachusett Reservoir, preserve the rural character of the town, to promote agricultural and related uses, and to provide for low-density, single-family residential uses. Most of town north of Route 140 is in the RR district, which provides for the following uses:

- ◆ Agricultural uses over and under five acres, commercial greenhouse/nursery, preparation and marketing of agricultural products, and accessory agricultural uses.
- ◆ Single- and two-family dwellings and accessory uses.
- ◆ Lawfully recognized professional offices existing prior to the adoption of bylaw by ZBA special permit, and use of portion of a single-family home for home office as-of-right.
- ◆ Public or private utility building or structure by ZBA special permit.
- ◆ Religious or educational uses.
- ◆ Hospital or sanitarium by ZBA special permit.

- ◆ Municipal uses and municipal recreation uses.
- ◆ Conference, clubhouse, or country club building by ZBA special permit.
- ◆ Golf course, private tennis club, or other public or private outdoor recreation activity.

The corridor planning area includes two areas in the RR district. The first is just west of the I-290 intersection in Shrewsbury, extending to East Temple Street. It consists of a collection of small parcels that have access off School Street, which runs parallel to Route 140 in this portion of the corridor planning area. Due to this area's residential character, its small, shallow, and often irregularly shaped lots, and its orientation to School Street, the Vision Plan does not propose additional development for this area, recommending instead that it remain primarily a residential neighborhood oriented to School Street.

The other RR-zoned area is located roughly between East Temple Street and Mary Ann Drive. This area is primarily composed of a few, larger parcels. One of these is the Phillips Precision company, two are listed as vacant, developable land, and there is one large, single-family residential parcel. The Vision Plan describes this part of the Route 140 corridor as a mixed-use transitional area, capable of supporting commercial, light industrial, and multi-family uses, but that must also accommodate and integrate well with the adjacent residential uses. To implement the Vision Plan, the RR zoning in this area should be replaced with one that accommodates light industrial multi-family uses as discussed in the Vision Plan, with provisions to limit any negative externalities on the surrounding properties.

ROUTE 140 CORRIDOR PLAN

The area between Mary Ann Drive and North Sewall Street is a residential neighborhood and it should remain in the RR district.

RESIDENTIAL (R)

The Residential (R) district is located south of Route 140 and east of Route 70. It encompasses some of Boylston's older neighborhoods. In terms of use regulations, the R district is almost identical to the RR district. It differs primarily in dimensional regulations, which provide for smaller minimum lot sizes and frontages. Within the corridor planning area, the RR district directly abuts Route 140 at the intersection with Route 70, and along a short stretch of roadway opposite Mary Ann Drive. The large parcel in the southeast quadrant of the Route 140/70 intersection is slated for a single-family residential subdivision and also contains a large amount of wetlands. It also adjoins the larger R district to the south. For these reasons, the R zoning designation in this area should remain as is.

There is a small area in the R district across the roadway from Mary Ann Drive. The Vision Plan proposes commercial and light industrial uses in this area, with opportunities for small retail and restaurant uses. It appears to be a remnant of a once-larger R district that has been preserved to keep the single-family property in conformance with current zoning. However, a single parcel of R-district land surrounded by nonresidential uses does not make good planning sense and it contributes to the potential for operational and visual conflicts on Shrewsbury Street.

COMMERCIAL (C)

Boylston's Commercial (C) district exists in two locations. The portion that lies within the corridor planning area extends from the intersection with Route 140 and Route 70 to the north side of the roadway to East Temple Street/North Sewall Street. The district includes two developed parcels, one containing the post office, liquor store, pub, and several other small businesses, and the other containing Greenleaf Plaza. The remaining parcels are undeveloped, including the parcel at the corner of Route 70 and Route 140. The C district allows a fairly broad range of uses including:

- ◆ Agricultural uses over five acres, commercial greenhouse/nursery, preparation and marketing of agricultural products, and accessory agricultural uses;
- ◆ All residential uses allowed in RR and R districts;
- ◆ Retail establishments for the sale of general merchandise;
- ◆ Consumer service establishment;
- ◆ Use by the resident owner of one to two rooms of a single-family dwelling existing prior to the adopting of the bylaw for retail sale of crafts, art-related supplies, books, stationary, gifts, or clothing;
- ◆ Lawfully recognized professional that was existing prior to the adoption of the bylaw by ZBA special permit;
- ◆ Professional bank, office, or other financial institution;
- ◆ Wholesale/warehouse or self-storage facility;
- ◆ Office facility;
- ◆ Shopping center with more than one retail or service establishment by Planning Board special permit;
- ◆ Gasoline station, motor vehicle repair shop, heating oil sales and service;
- ◆ Package store by Planning Board special permit;
- ◆ Eat-in restaurant by Planning Board special permit;
- ◆ Building trade supply;

- ◆ Flexible Business Development (by special permit);
- ◆ Yards and building of a contractor or building tradesman by Planning Board special permit;
- ◆ Public or private utility building or structure by Planning Board special permit;
- ◆ Religious or public educational use; and
- ◆ Municipal uses.

The C district's purpose is to provide retail and personal service requirements to town residents. However, as shown in the list above, the district provides not only for retail and services but also a range of other commercial uses such as office, wholesale or warehouse facilities, utilities, and Flexible Business Development. The Vision Plan proposes neighborhood retail for this area, meaning smaller, convenience-oriented retail and services that allow residents to meet daily needs. Although there may be some benefit to providing a more expansive list of allowed uses for a commercial district, the town should consider refining the currently allowed list of uses to ensure that it only includes those appropriate for neighborhood-scale retail goods and services.

The boundaries of the current C district align with the Neighborhood Retail area proposed in the Vision Plan. Therefore, the geometry of the C district does not have to be changed in the corridor planning area. The second C district that exists north of the corridor planning area on Route 70 is not affected by the recommendations of the Vision Plan.

INDUSTRIAL (I)

Boylston's Industrial (I) district is located almost entirely within the southeastern portion of the Route 140 corridor planning area. It includes both smaller parcels adjacent to the roadway and some of the larger properties as well. The I district is one of three industrial districts in Boylston. However, there are actually few industrial uses allowed in the I or any of the other industrial districts. Of the four industrial uses listed in the Schedule of Use Regulations, one

is unique to the Industrial and Office Park district and one is a very specific use (recreational vehicle sales and rentals). In fact, there is only one "core" industrial use: light manufacturing or light assembly facility. The other allowed use is for contractor/tradesman yards or buildings. In addition to these uses, the I district also provides for the following.

- ◆ Agricultural uses over five acres and accessory agricultural uses;
- ◆ Wholesale/warehouse or self-storage facility by Planning Board special permit;
- ◆ Building trade supply;
- ◆ Flexible Business Development;
- ◆ Public and private utility building by ZBA special permit;
- ◆ Wireless communications facility by Planning Board special permit;
- ◆ Religious or public education use;
- ◆ Municipal uses; and
- ◆ Conference, club house, or country club.

Within the current industrially zoned parts of the corridor planning area, the Vision Plan proposes three types of development, all of which involve some light industrial uses. For the area closest to the Shrewsbury town line, the Vision Plan proposes light industrial development and/or some retail uses: in other words, a mix of uses much like that already contemplated in Boylston's Flexible Business Development bylaw. The deeper backland parts of the current I district would be light industrial. The area along the south side of Route 140 to South Sewall Street would be light industrial, too, with provisions for retail and personal service establishments. In addition, the Vision Plan proposes that the area currently zoned as RR north of Route 140 be changed to accommodate light industrial or multi-family uses. The current list of industrial uses will need to be de-

ROUTE 140 CORRIDOR PLAN

veloped and refined to respond to the different characters of each of these sub-areas.

LIMITED INDUSTRIAL (LI)

The Limited Industrial (LI) district is located opposite the C district on south side of Route 140 and as a small “island” within the RR district on the north side of Route 140. The purpose of the LI district is to provide for low-density industrial uses while limiting their effects on adjacent residential properties. It was established at Boylston’s March 2008 Special Town Meeting and replaced the former Watershed Protection District.

The LI district allows commercial uses (wholesale/warehouse and self-storage facilities, offices, building trade supply, and Flexible Business Development) by special permit only and allows no industrial uses. Agricultural uses (with the exception of commercial greenhouses) are allowed by special permit, as are single- and two-family residential uses. Religious or public education uses, private/non-profit education uses are allowed by right, and municipal uses are allowed by special permit.

Over time, the rationale for the LI district has been weakened by other zoning changes. First, although the stated purpose of the district is to provide for uses that have a limited impact of residential development, the LI district actually abuts a very small amount of residential land, considerably less than the I district. Additionally, another reason for the LI district may have been to protect groundwater resources which have long been an issue in this area of Boylston. However, since its establishment in 2000, the Wellhead Protection District has provided use and dimensional limits on development for the entire aquifer recharge area.

The Vision Plan proposes light industrial or multi-family uses for the area between School and East Temple Streets on the north side of Route 140. In the LI district facing the commercial zone near the intersection with Route 70, the parcels are used for a sand and gravel operation and a storage/warehouse facility. Given their current use and location, they simply extend the commercial and light industrial development that occupies most of the south side

of Route 140. These parcels could be placed in the I district, but Boylston needs to consider whether, in the long run, promoting mining and warehouse uses adjacent to Route 140 is in the best interests of the corridor as a whole. A flexible district that encourages predominantly commercial uses but does not prohibit light industrial uses should replace the LI district in this location, and the LI district should be deleted from Boylston’s Zoning Bylaw.

INDUSTRIAL PARK (IP)

Boylston’s Industrial Park (IP) district occupies the southwestern portion of the corridor planning area, encompassing the Hillside property and the town’s remaining 43D Priority Development Site (PDS). The purpose of the district is primarily to provide facilities for executive offices, research and development, light manufacturing, and product component assembly, and secondarily to provide facilities for training for people engaged in management, sales, or manufacturing industries.

Unlike the I and LI districts, the IP district provides for more balance between commercial and industrial uses without having to obtain a Flexible Business Development special permit. For commercial uses, it allows wholesale/warehouse, self-storage, and office facilities, and for industrial uses it allows light manufacturing and supportive uses for an industrial park, such as sleeping and eating accommodations and meeting/conference facilities. Interestingly, the IP district is the only industrial district where wholesale/warehouse facilities and office facilities are allowed by-right; these are special permit uses in the I and LI districts. Other allowed uses in the IP district include:

- ◆ Agricultural uses on five acres or less and accessory agricultural uses;
- ◆ Single- and two-family dwellings by ZBA special permit;
- ◆ Public or utility building or structure by ZBA special permit;

- ◆ Wireless communication facility by Planning Board special permit;
- ◆ Religious or public educational use;
- ◆ Municipal use; and
- ◆ Golf course, public or private tennis club or other public or private outdoor recreation activity.

The Vision Plan does not contemplate pursuing development in the southwestern portion of the corridor planning area, so no zoning changes are recommended for the IP district. However, it is important to note that the Zoning Bylaw contains no dimensional requirements for the IP district. It appears that the requirements were inadvertently dropped from the Zoning Bylaw at some point and they need to be restored.

WELLHEAD PROTECTION DISTRICT (WPD)

The purpose of the Wellhead Protection District is to protect the town's drinking water supply through land use controls in groundwater recharge areas. Like many other wellhead protection bylaws and ordinances, it includes the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Zones I and II, and portions of Zone III. Zone I includes a 400-foot radius around a public water supply well and is the most restrictive DEP area. In this area, only the construction, maintenance, repair, or enlargement of drinking water supply facilities is permitted. Zone II permits the following uses in addition to those allowed in the underlying district, provided they are not listed as prohibited or special permit uses.

- ◆ Outdoor recreation activities;
- ◆ Foot, bicycle, and/or horse paths, and bridges;
- ◆ Normal operation and maintenance of water control, supply, and conservation devices;
- ◆ Maintenance and repair of existing, lawful non-conforming structures, buildings, or uses;

- ◆ Enlargement of existing structures and maintenance;
- ◆ Residential development;
- ◆ Farming, gardening, nursery, and similar uses;
- ◆ Construction, maintenance, repair of drinking waters supply-related facilities; and
- ◆ Land uses permitted in underlying district and not specifically prohibited.

The following uses are prohibited within the WPD:

- ◆ Landfills and open dumps;
- ◆ Storage of liquid petroleum products;
- ◆ Landfilling and storage of sludge or septage;
- ◆ Storage of sodium chloride or other chemicals used to treat snow and ice;
- ◆ Storage of animal manure of a certain amount;
- ◆ Some earth removal activities;
- ◆ Hazardous waste treatment and storage facilities;
- ◆ Auto junkyards;
- ◆ Treatment works for non-sanitary wastewater;
- ◆ Storage of liquid hazardous materials;
- ◆ Stockpiling snow and ice containing sodium chloride; and
- ◆ Storage of commercial fertilizers and soil conditions unless in a special storage container to prevent runoff.

These uses are allowed by special permit within the WPD:

- ♦ Alteration of existing uses that do not conform to the WPD regulations; and
- ♦ Land uses that render impervious more than fifteen percent or 2,500 square feet (whichever greater) of any lot. (This regulation does not apply to single-family lots with decks, patios, tennis courts, or other impervious areas that naturally drain to pervious areas on the same lot. Special permits are contingent upon provision of a system for groundwater recharge that does not degrade groundwater quality.)

The WPD is an important land use regulation that needs to remain in place. It may impose additional requirements on developers because projects over a certain size must provide a groundwater recharge system in order to obtain a special permit. However, the additional requirements are unlikely to impede quality development in the corridor planning area. Other existing zoning requirements having nothing to do with the WPD are more problematic.

RESIDENTIAL-OFFICE (RO) OVERLAY DISTRICT

The Residential-Office (RO) District applies to several RR areas along the Route 140 corridor. It was established in 2004 to allow small-scale professional offices as a transitional use for residential districts that are located near busy roadways and are “adversely affected and poorly suited” for residential use. The overlay’s main provision is to allow residential dwellings in existence as of July 1, 2004 to be converted to professional offices. Structures may also be used as residences and offices concurrently, and up to one thousand square feet of additional space may be added to structures with professional offices. The overlay also permits a number of uses through new construction by special permit including professional offices, artist studios, craft shops, performing arts instruction, and veterinary clinics.

For the most part, the current configuration of the RO district aligns with the Vision Plan, which calls for preserving the RR zoning in the area closest to the I-290 intersection and the area around Mary Ann Drive. However, the Vision Plan recommends establishing light industrial or multi-family development

for some of the larger RR-zoned parcels on the north side of Route 140. In this area, the RO district would no longer be appropriate.

Zoning Issues & Recommendations

Boylston’s existing zoning regulations raise questions about the town’s desire for commercial and industrial development on Route 140. Although this may seem odd in light of the plan that Boylston has commissioned, the Zoning Bylaw suggests that residents have mixed feelings about nonresidential development. Indeed, the town’s zoning regulations, viewed in their entirety, make it difficult to develop commercial and industrial land, yet the sought-for benefits one typically finds in “high barrier” regulations are conspicuously absent in Boylston. At a recent community meeting for the corridor planning process, a local official said that the consulting team’s observations simply reinforce what Boylston has already known for quite some time. In fact, several of the recommendations made in this report echo proposals contained in Boylston’s 2000 *Comprehensive Plan*, yet for reasons that remain unclear, many of those proposals have not been implemented.

ZONING MAP AMENDMENTS

This plan recommends several amendments to the Zoning Map. In response to many of the ideas expressed at the community meeting, it makes sense to rezone portions of Route 140 in order to reduce the chaotic arrangement of districts and work toward a more coherent land use pattern. The issue has less to do with the total number of districts that converge along the corridor than the uses allowed within those districts and the built form contemplated by the Town’s dimensional requirements. While the changes outlined below will not bring about growth or higher-value development on their own, they would at least present a unified picture of Route 140 both the existing property owners and potential investors.

- ♦ **RR District.** The large parcels between East Temple/School Street and Mary Ann Drive should be replaced with zoning that accommodates a limited mix of industrial uses and office uses, with

multi-family housing allowed by special permit. For purposes of this memo, we refer to this new zoning as the Mixed-Use Industrial District.

- ◆ **R District.** The triangular-shaped area across from Mary Ann Drive would make a good location for commercial uses and it should be rezoned to the Commercial (C) District. This area may be a remnant of a once-larger R district that has been preserved to keep the single-family property in conformance with zoning, but the current zoning designation – given the uses permitted on surrounding land – is inappropriate.
- ◆ **LI District.** Eliminate the LI District and where it currently exists on the south side of Route 140, replace it with the Shrewsbury Street Business District (see below). On the north side, the LI District would become part of the proposed Mixed-Use Industrial (MUI) District.
- ◆ **Neighborhood Business (NB) District.** Change the present Commercial (C) District (only in the corridor planning area) to Neighborhood Business (NB) District, with no change in C district boundaries.
- ◆ **Shrewsbury Street Business (SSB) District.** Establish a new district, the Shrewsbury Street Business District, to permit commercial uses at a somewhat larger scale than neighborhood-oriented businesses as well as light industrial uses (in some cases by special permit). The boundaries of the SSB should be substantially in accord with the area shown as Area C on the Vision Plan (legend: Light Industrial with Retail/Restaurant).
- ◆ **Flexible Business Development (FBD) District.** Change the present Industrial (I) District to Flexible Business Development District.

USE REGULATIONS

Through its use, dimensional, and off-street parking regulations, Boylston has locked (limited) the development potential of land along Route 140. The regulations are so intertwined that modifying some

while leaving others “as is” will yield few if any benefits for the Town and its property owners. While this report separates the regulations for discussion purposes, it also illustrates how a given amendment will have limited value unless it is attended by corresponding amendments in other sections of the Zoning Bylaw. Appendix B presents a recommended overhaul of Boylston’s existing Section 4.02, Use Regulations. The rationale for the proposed changes is outlined below.

- ◆ **NB (C) District.** Boylston should refine the use regulations for the NB District (currently the C District) in order to encourage locally oriented, neighborhood-scale retail goods and services and set the bar higher for businesses serving a predominantly non-local clientele. In general, the use regulations should be simplified and clarified, and uses that are incompatible with neighborhood commercial development should be prohibited.
- ◆ **FBD (I) District.** For the area closest to the Shrewsbury town line, the Vision Plan proposes sub-areas for light industrial development and commercial uses. The deeper backland parts of the current I district are designated for light industry. The area along the south side of Route 140 to South Sewall Street is also designated for light industrial uses but with provisions for retail and personal service establishments as well. Since Boylston already provides for a mix of industrial and commercial uses through Section 15, Flexible Business Development, it makes sense to recast the I District as a Flexible Business Development District and allow mixed uses as of right, subject to floor area caps and design standards, with larger projects controlled by a special permit process similar to that which exists today. However, the Town should consider allowing “gasoline station” near the town line, first to accommodate highway traffic in a convenient location and second, because this area is not within a Wellhead Protection District.
- ◆ **MUI District.** The area contemplated for the MUI District is currently divided between the LI and

RR districts. Since Boylston's residential zoning is so restrictive, it is virtually impossible to develop workforce housing, especially in areas where the Town wants to promote economic growth. Given the inseparable relationship between housing and economic development and the benefits of concentrating housing near places of work, it makes sense to provide *some* land for multi-family housing. Although residents did not identify any type of housing as a preferred option during the vision planning process in September, multi-family development should be incorporated in the plan. It is recommended as part of the rezoning for parcels between East Temple/School Street and Mary Ann Drive.

- ◆ **SSB District.** The SSB District's purpose is to encourage more types of commercial uses along the south side of Route 140 while still providing opportunities for industrial development, depending on the market. In terms of scale, intensity of use, and business types, the SSB District would function as a transition area between the FBD District and the NB District.
- ◆ **IP District.** The Vision Plan does not call for pursuing development in the southwestern portion of the study, so we have not recommended many changes in the IP District. However, it is important to note that while the Zoning Bylaw refers to "industrial park" in the table of uses, the term itself is not defined and the scope of what is permitted within an industrial park is unclear. Moreover, as noted before, the Zoning Bylaw omits dimensional and density or intensity of use regulations for the IP District. The only references to IP dimensional requirements are in Section 9.03.02, Main Building, but the paragraph does not tie back to any requirements in Section 9.02, Schedule of Dimensional Requirements.
- ◆ **WPD.** No changes recommended.
- ◆ **RO District.** For the most part, the current configuration of the RO district aligns with the Vision Plan. Although the ROD could be a easily

be converted to a new use district instead of an overlay, there does not appear to be a persuasive reason to change it at this time.

DIMENSIONAL REGULATIONS

Boylston has an unusual scheme for controlling the amount of development in each zoning district. Section 9.02, Schedule of Dimensional Requirements, differentiates lot dimensional regulations both by district and class of use. The irony of Boylston's dimensional regulations is that for the districts of primary concern for the Corridor Plan – the Commercial and Industrial Districts – the minimum lot area for nonresidential uses is larger than that which applies to residential uses (where permitted). However, this condition is far more pronounced in the Industrial District, where the minimum lot area for a gasoline station is 40,000 sq. ft. and for light manufacturing, *three acres*. (Note: according to Section 4.02.03, "gasoline station" is neither permitted nor allowed by special permit in the Industrial District.)

The frontage requirements are extraordinary, too. For example, a gasoline station needs 200 feet of frontage, but an industrial use needs 300 feet. Minimum lot width is measured at the rear of the building on a lot, not at points found in a majority of zoning bylaws: the building line or the minimum front setback (in the I District, 50 feet). Thus, in order for an industrial lot to comply with Boylston's zoning, it must include three acres with 300 feet of frontage and maintain a 300-ft. width for a substantial distance into the lot. Section 9.02 virtually prescribes sprawl along the full length of Route 140.

The Town should adopt following changes to its dimensional regulations:

NB District

Standard	Requirement	Notes
Minimum lot area	30,000 sq. ft.	All except as listed below
	60,000 sq. ft.	Shopping center
Minimum lot frontage	125 feet	May be reduced by SP from the Planning Board for shared/lateral access to abutting business lots
Minimum front setback	25 feet	
Minimum side setback	20 feet	
Minimum rear setback	20 feet	Except 50 feet abutting a residential lot or district boundary
Minimum lot width	125 feet	Measured at the building line; may be reduced by SP for reduced-frontage lots per above
Minimum lot depth	150 feet	
Maximum lot coverage	30 percent	
Minimum open space	25 percent	
Maximum building height	3 stories and 40 feet	See Section 9.03.05

SSB District

Standard	Requirement	Notes
Minimum lot area	40,000 sq. ft.	All except as listed below
	80,000 sq. ft.	Shopping center
Minimum lot frontage	125 feet	May be reduced by SP from the Planning Board for shared/lateral access to abutting business lots
Minimum front setback	25 feet	
Minimum side setback	25 feet	
Minimum rear setback	25 feet	Except 50 feet abutting a residential lot or district boundary
Minimum lot width	125 feet	Measured at the building line; may be reduced by SP for reduced-frontage lots per above
Minimum lot depth	150 feet	
Maximum lot coverage	40 percent	
Minimum open space	25 percent	
Maximum building height	3 stories and 45 feet 4 stories and 56 feet by SP	See Section 9.03.05

MUI District

Standard	Requirement	Notes
Minimum lot area	40,000 sq. ft.	All except as listed below
Minimum land area/unit	4,000 sq. ft.	Multi-family dwellings
Minimum lot frontage	150 feet	
Minimum front setback	50 feet	
Minimum side setback	50 feet	
Minimum rear setback	50 feet	
Minimum lot width	150 feet	Measured at the building line
Minimum lot depth	200 feet	
Maximum lot coverage	35 percent	
Minimum open space	25 percent	
Maximum building height	3 stories and 45 feet	See Section 9.03.05

FBD (I) District

Standard	Requirement	Notes
Minimum lot area	40,000 sq. ft.	All uses
Minimum lot frontage	150 feet	May be reduced by SP from the Planning Board for shared/lateral access to abutting business lots
Minimum front setback	40 feet	
Minimum side setback	40 feet	
Minimum rear setback	50 feet	
Minimum lot width	150 feet	Measured at the building line; may be reduced by SP for reduced-frontage lots per above
Minimum lot depth	200 feet	
Maximum lot coverage	40 percent	Increase from 30 percent
Minimum open space	20 percent	Decrease from 25 percent
Maximum building height	3 stories and 45 feet 4 stories and 56 feet by SP	See Section 9.03.05

RELATED REQUIREMENTS

Main Buildings. Section 9.03.02 states: "...A lot may have two or more main buildings provided that, *within an Industrial Park District if allowed by Special Permit*, each main building on a lot must satisfy the minimum requirements of area lot sizes, frontage, depth, and minimum width; and *except within an Industrial Park District if allowed by Special Permit*, on any lot each main building must have all the minimum requirements of area, frontage, depth, and width which are required for a single lot on which a single main building is constructed; otherwise additional main buildings cannot be constructed on a lot." This is very confusing indeed.

Since the current version of the ZBL does not provide specific dimensional requirements for the IP District, it is not clear how the Town would apply Section 9.03.02 to development in the IP District. Moreover, when read along with the first italicized clause, the second ("*and except within an Industrial Park District if allowed by Special Permit*") implies that the words following it apply to main buildings outside of the IP District. If this is the Town's intent, applying such a restriction to "main buildings" in a commercial district can frustrate retail and office development. Multiple buildings on a lot should be allowed in a business district as long as (a) the buildings do not exceed the maximum lot coverage requirement and at least 25 percent of the lot is reserved as open space,

per Section 9.03.03, and (b) the retail establishments are small and neighborhood-oriented or at least required to meet certain landscaping and lighting standards if developed at a larger scale.

Minimum Open Space Requirement. Boylston requires that at least 25 percent of any lot be reserved as open space. The public benefits and the aesthetic impact of open space on commercial and industrial lots would be enhanced if Section 9.03.03 also required, in the C and I Districts (and the proposed MUI District), at least one-half of the open space to be located in front of the main building(s) or in the side yard, visible from the street.

Shopping Center. This term is not defined in the ZBL, but the Table of Uses indicates that a shopping center is any project with more than one retail use. This needs to be changed to a standard such as: a retail development with one or more buildings and a combined total of more than 25,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area designed, intended, or occupied by four or more retail establishments (or retail tenants). Doing so would allow smaller retail projects (up to three stores and less than 25,000 sq. ft.) to proceed as of right, subject to site plan review, and leave larger projects to a special permit process.

Neighborhood Retail. While the Zoning Bylaw limits as-of-right retail uses to one establishment per lot, it places no requirements on the size of individual re-

tail establishments. But for the C District's shape and depth constraints, a retail use of just about any size could be constructed on Route 140. The Town should consider floor area caps on retail uses in all districts where retail is permitted, but the focus of this plan is the Neighborhood Business District. It make sense to allow retail up to 15,000 sq. ft. per establishment and require a special permit for larger stores – perhaps up to the 75,000 sq. ft. maximum that currently applies in a Flexible Business Development. (In districts such as Village Business or Heritage, the as-of-right floor area cap should be much smaller.) With a 15,000 sq. ft. maximum as of right, a small retail development on Route 140 could theoretically include a modest-size chain retailer and two smaller stores without triggering a special permit requirement for a shopping center. To achieve neighborhood scale and provide a viable mix of goods and services in a community as small as Boylston, a retail project needs to be able to accommodate both “chain” or regional establishments as well as local shops, yet house them in a relatively small space.

Buffer. Section 4.01.01 is needlessly restrictive and it has the potential to place even more constraints on lots in the C District, which is not very deep. It is common for commercial or industrial zoning to require a minimum rear setback of 50 feet for lots abutting a residential use or a residential district boundary; Boylston requires a 50-ft. no-build area, which seems to prohibit construction of any kind, including parking. Further requiring a vegetated buffer, fencing, and/or an 8-ft. berm if a residence is located within 100 feet of a commercial or industrial use is fairly onerous – especially since dwellings are subject to a minimum rear yard setback of only 20 feet. Retaining the 50-ft. no-build area makes sense because the Town is accustomed to it, but the additional requirements should be eliminated.

Shared/Lateral Access and Shared Parking. The Zoning Bylaw should provide incentives to encourage shared access to abutting nonresidential lots on Route 140. Frontage and parking reductions and a modest increase in maximum lot coverage could help to manage access to lots along the corridor and help to concentrate activity as well.

Off-Street Parking. Boylston requires an excessive amount of off-street parking for retail uses. For retail under 5,000 sq. ft. the Town requires a parking area that is at least equal to the total floor area, but for retail exceeding 10,001 sq. ft., the required parking area is a minimum of *four times* the total floor area. In the interests of simplicity and clarity, it would be better to specify parking by a number of spaces per sq. ft. of floor area and reduce the amount of parking required for very large stores. In suburban communities, a minimum of one space per 300 sq. ft. is fairly common. Adding a *maximum* of one space per 250 sq. ft. would be very appropriate.

Despite some of the advantages of tailoring off-street parking requirements to the number of employees in a facility – as Boylston currently does for some land uses – this approach can be difficult to enforce. Boylston should consider simplifying and updating its parking requirements for office, industrial, and other uses, such as:

- ◆ Professional or business office: minimum of one space per 300 sq. ft. of gross floor area, reduced to one space per 400 sq. ft. for offices above the ground floor.
- ◆ Medical office: one space per 250 sq. ft. of gross floor area.
- ◆ Warehouse or distribution facility: one space per 1,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area and a maximum of one space per 500 sq. ft.
- ◆ General industrial use: minimum of two spaces and a maximum of three spaces per 1,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area (for associated office space, the parking should be calculated as for professional or business office, but the Planning Board should have flexibility to reduce the total parking requirement on a case-by-case basis, depending on the actual mix of uses and the space allocated to each).
- ◆ Research and development: minimum of three parking spaces and a maximum of four spaces per 1,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area.

ROUTE 140 CORRIDOR PLAN

- ◆ Child care center: one space per six children of design capacity.
- ◆ Multi-family dwelling or upper-story dwelling in a commercial building: one space per one-bedroom unit and two spaces per unit for units with two or more bedrooms.

In addition, Section 10.02, Off-Street Parking, should be amended by:

- ◆ Setting the minimum parking stall dimensions at 9' by 18.5' and
- ◆ Establishing parking lot design and landscaping requirements, including green design standards.

Development Opportunities

New Development Potential

Three sites in the corridor planning area were selected for a detailed review and assessment of their development potential (Map 7.1, Priority Development Parcels). The purpose of these site assessments, or case studies, is to illustrate possibilities that may be facilitated by the Vision Plan:

- ◆ **Parcels 0-1-2** are located on the north side of Route 140 at the Route 140-Route 70 intersection. Together, they have approximately twelve acres. The parcels were chosen for analysis because their location and current uses (including the local post office branch, a liquor store, a pub, and other small commercial establishments) make the site as a whole well-suited for neighborhood-oriented retail and services, which residents identified as much-needed in Boylston. The site has been evaluated for its potential to support neighborhood retail with second-story office or residential uses, assuming a combination of redevelopment and new development.
- ◆ **Parcel 3** occupies the southeastern corner of the South Sewall Street and Route 140 intersection, and extends south for the entire depth of the corridor planning area. This parcel was chosen for further analysis because it is vacant and residents have identified it as a major development opportunity along Route 140. The parcel contains approximately forty-seven acres and will be assessed for its potential to support light industrial development, per the Vision Plan.
- ◆ **Parcel 4** is located southwest of Route 140. It consists of the 145-acre parcel owned by the DiPilato family. The site was chosen because it is the largest vacant property along the corridor and was identified during both the Stakeholder

Consultations and the September 23, 2009 Public Meeting as a major development opportunity. Additionally, the site's proximity to the I-290 interchange makes it one of the few parcels along the corridor that could support some non-local commercial development. The Vision Plan identifies this area for a mix of light industrial and commercial uses.

Development Potential: Existing Regulations

The development potential for the three case study sites was calculated using the following method and assumptions:

1. Both Parcels 3 and 4 have notable slopes and wetlands that will constrain development. To account for slopes, areas with slopes greater than 15 percent were subtracted from the total area of these sites. Similarly, to account for wetlands, the streams and wetlands buffers (the 100-foot buffer for all wetlands and 200-foot buffer for perennial streams) were subtracted as well. Parcels 0-1-2 do not have slope or wetland constraints, so no land was subtracted.
2. To calculate the development potential, an effective floor-area ratio of 0.30 (FAR) for each site was established. This metric derives from the Zoning Bylaw's requirement that buildings may not cover more than thirty percent of a lot in any zoning district. Although theoretically buildings can exceed one story, Boylston's thirty-five foot height limit does not work for multi-story industrial and commercial buildings. Instead, it is a residential height standard. Accordingly, the FAR is the same as the lot coverage ratio: 0.30, or 30 percent. The FAR applied to the total area of each site yields the gross floor development potential.

ROUTE 140 CORRIDOR PLAN

3. To determine the effect of existing off-parking regulations on development potential, the parking requirement for the gross floor development potential for each site was calculated using the following assumptions:

- (a) Retail and other service establishments (Parcels 0-1-2): Four times the GFA of developments with more than 10,001 square feet.
- (b) Industrial development (Parcels 3 and 4): 1.5 spaces per 1,000 square feet gross floor area (GFA).

4. To calculate the total square feet required for parking to serve industrial development, a multiplier of 375 square feet per parking space was applied. This metric accounts for the parking stall, parking aisle, and additional circulation space.

5. The parking requirement in square feet was added to the gross floor development potential to arrive at total site coverage for each site. For Parcels 0-1-2, the total land coverage with maximum buildout plus parking exceeded the amount of developable land. Therefore, the gross floor development poten-

tial was adjusted to reflect the maximum amount of development plus required parking the site could accommodate under current regulations.

6. The estimated development potential for each site in Table 7.1 reflects the maximum gross floor area in square feet that realistically could be built under current zoning. The total maximum gross floor area for the three sites combined is 1,200,129 square feet.

The Town's Flexible Business Development (FBD) provision, which may be administered in the Industrial, Commercial, and Industrial Park districts by special permit, could provide relief from the base district's dimensional and parking regulations. However, FBD requirements are determined at the discretion of the Planning Board and they are not clear to any applicant or reader of the Zoning Bylaw. Since FBD is not a by-right provision, it was not considered in estimating the development potential of the three sites.

Table 7.1
Development Potential of Case Study Parcels under Existing Zoning

Area Calculations in Square Feet						
Site	Assumed Use	(A) Total Area	(B) Wetlands Buffer	(C) Slopes (>15%)	(D) Developable Land [A-B-C]	(E) Gross Floor Area [D*0.30]
Parcels 0-1-2	Shopping Center	527,076	0	0	527,076	158,123
Parcel 3	Light Industrial/Industrial	2,051,676	624,708	367,523	1,059,445	317,834
Parcel 4	Light Industrial/Industrial	6,351,161	680,475	3,081,085	2,589,601	776,880
		(F)	(G)	(H)	(I)	(J)
	Assumed Use	Area for Off-Street Parking	Total Impervious Coverage [E+F]	Net Developable Land [(D-G)]	Adjusted Total Impervious Coverage	Estimated Development Potential
Parcels 0-1-2	Shopping Center	632,491	790,614	-263,538	527,075	105,415
Parcel 3	Light Industrial/Industrial	178,781	496,615		496,615	317,834
Parcel 4	Light Industrial/Industrial	436,995	1,213,875		1,213,875	776,880

Source: Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

Notes:

For an explanation of the adjusted impervious coverage calculation (Column I) for Parcels 0-1-2, see comment #5 above.

Development Potential: Proposed Regulations

1. Steps taken to account for environmental constraints were the same as those used under the Existing Development Potential analysis (above).
2. The gross floor development potential was estimated with an effective FAR of 0.40 for industrial and commercial uses on Parcels 3 and 4, i.e., the FAR assumes a one-story building at the maximum coverage ratio for the proposed zoning districts. Although the proposed zoning provides for taller buildings, Boylston is unlikely to see more height for industrial and some types of commercial buildings until properties undergo *redevelopment*. For neighborhood retail with second-story office or residential uses on Parcels 0-1-2, gross floor area was estimated with an effective FAR of 0.80. This reflects the proposed maximum lot coverage of 40 percent times two stories. For Parcel 4, it was assumed that 35 percent of

the site would host commercial uses and 65 percent, light industrial uses.

3. The parking requirement was determined by the same method used to estimate Existing Development Potential, but with the following set of proposed off-street parking regulations:

(a) Neighborhood retail with second-story office or residential (Parcels 0-1-2): one space per 350 square feet GFA. This should be viewed as a *maximum parking scenario*. It is important to note that if the second-story space were used for dwelling units, off-street parking would be calculated on a per-unit basis, not a per sq. ft. basis, and the total parking requirement would be reduced.

(b) Commercial (Parcel 4): one space per 350 square feet GFA.

(c) Industrial (Parcels 3 and 4): 1.5 spaces per 1,000 square feet GFA.

Table 7.2
Development Potential of Case Study Parcels under Proposed Zoning

Area Calculations in Square Feet						
		(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
Site	Assumed Use	Total Area	Wetlands Buffer	Slopes (>15%)	Developable Land [A-B-C]	Gross Floor Area ^b
Parcels 0-1-2	Neighborhood Retail/Residential	527,076	0	0	527,076	421,661
Parcel 3	Light Industrial/Industrial	2,051,676	624,708	367,523	1,059,445	423,778
Parcel 4	Light Industrial/Industrial	6,351,161	680,476	3,081,085	2,589,601	1,035,840
	35% Commercial					362,544
	65% Light Industrial					673,296
		(F)	(G)	(H)	(I)	(J)
	Assumed Use	Area for Off-Street Parking ^c	Total Impervious Coverage [E+F]	Net Developable Land [(D-G)]	Adjusted Total Impervious Coverage	Estimated Development Potential
Parcels 0-1-2	Neighborhood Retail/Residential	451,779	662,610	335,412	527,076	335,412
Parcel 3	Light Industrial/Industrial	238,375	662,153	n/a	662,153	423,778
Parcel 4	Light Industrial/Industrial	767,169	1,803,010	n/a	1,803,010	1,035,840
	35% Commercial	388,440				
	65% Light Industrial	378,729				

Source: Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

Notes:

(a) Numbers may not total due to rounding.

(b) Floor area ratio assumptions differ by class of use: 0.80 for neighborhood retail/residential, and 0.40 for commercial and industrial uses.

(c) For Parcels 0-1-2, parking and total coverage adjusted to reflect the allocation of Gross Floor Area to two stories.

4. The total square feet required for off-street parking was estimated with a multiplier of 375 square feet per parking space. This accounts for parking stalls, parking aisle, and additional circulation space.

5. To determine the total land coverage, the parking requirement in square feet was added to the gross floor development potential in the same manner as in the Existing Development Potential analysis, with the exception of Parcels 0-1-2. Here, it was necessary to divide the gross floor development potential by two and add this to the parking requirement in order to simulate two-story development on the site. For Parcels 0-1-2, as in the Existing Development Potential analysis, the total land coverage with maximum buildout plus parking exceeded the amount of developable land because the parking was calculated for office uses. Accordingly, the gross floor development potential was adjusted to accommodate building floor area plus parking. This adjustment would not be necessary if the upper-story floor area was used for dwelling units.

6. The estimated development potential for each site reflects the maximum gross floor area in square feet that could realistically be built under the proposed zoning regulations. The total gross floor area of the three sites combined is 1,795,030 square feet:

a 49.6 percent increase over development potential under existing zoning.

Economic and Municipal Impacts

EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES

Under the proposed zoning changes for the Route 140 planning area, Boylston could experience significant job growth as properties develop or redevelop over time. Given the estimated development potential for the study area's priority parcels, Table 7.3 shows that total direct employment could range between 1,500 to 3,000 jobs (rounded), expressed in full-time equivalent (FTE), depending on the actual use of the additional floor space. The lower-range employment estimate in Table 7.3 is nearly the same as the size of the entire employment base in Boylston today. However, it is important to note that some (perhaps many) of the jobs reported in Table 7.3 already exist, first because the priority parcels include some existing tenants and second, new development usually results in some net job growth and some job reallocation within the economy.

There would be indirect employment outcomes, or jobs created or supported indirectly, elsewhere in Boylston or within the immediate region due to con-

Table 7.3
Gross Economic Output: Direct Employment and Wages

			Direct Employment ^a		Direct Wages ^b	
	Assumed Use	Floor Area	Low	High	Low	High
Parcels 0-1-2	Neighborhood Retail & Offices	335,412				
	50% Retail, Restaurant, Services	167,706	258	419	\$5,366,592	\$8,720,712
	50% Offices	167,706	373	671	\$18,634,000	\$33,541,200
Parcel 3	Light Industrial/Industrial	423,778	283	424	\$13,560,896	\$20,341,344
Parcel 4	Light Industrial/Industrial	1,035,840				
	35% Commercial	362,544	558	906	\$27,888,000	\$45,318,000
	65% Light Industrial	673,296	449	673	\$21,545,472	\$32,318,208
Total	With Offices on Parcels 0-1-2	1,795,030	1,920	3,094	\$86,994,960	\$140,239,464
	Without Offices on Parcels 0-1-2		1,547	2,423	\$68,360,960	\$106,698,264

Source: Community Opportunities Group, Inc., and Urban Land Institute.

Notes:

(a) Low and high employment estimates are based on average number of jobs per sq. ft. for each class of land use. For retail/restaurant uses, the multipliers are (low) 1 job/650 sq. ft. and (high) 1 job/400 sq. ft.; for offices and other commercial, (low) 1 job/450 sq. ft. and (high) 1 job/250 sq. ft.; and for industrial, (low) 1 job/1,500 sq. ft. and (high) 1 job/1,000 sq. ft.

(b) Estimates represent an average wage for each class of employment, multiplied by low-high jobs. Retail/restaurant wage multiplier = \$300/week; office/commercial wage multiplier = \$50,000/year; industrial wage multiplier = \$48,000/year.

Table 7.4
Economic Impact: Indirect Employment and Wages

		Average ^a		Indirect Multipliers ^b		Indirect Impacts	
	Assumed Use	Employment	Wages	Jobs	Wages	Jobs	Wages
Parcels 0-1-2	Retail, Restaurant, Services	339	\$5,282,739	0.2019	0.4925	68	\$2,601,485
	Offices	522	\$26,087,600	0.7129	0.6933	372	\$18,086,533
Parcel 3	Light Industrial	353	\$16,951,120	0.5911	0.9212	209	\$15,615,372
Parcel 4	Commercial	732	\$36,603,000	0.8129	0.7233	595	\$26,474,950
	Light Industrial	<u>561</u>	<u>\$26,931,840</u>	0.5911	0.9212	<u>332</u>	<u>\$24,809,611</u>
Total		2,507	\$111,856,299			1,576	\$88,455,112

Source: Community Opportunities Group, Inc., and U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, RIMS II Regional Input-Output Multipliers, 2010.

Notes:

(a) Average employment and wages is the average of the low-high values in Table 7.3.

(b) The multipliers vary by class of employment because direct wages vary; the higher the wage group, the greater the indirect impact.

sumer expenditures by employees and services purchased by businesses. If the priority parcels were developed at even the moderate amount of floor area shown in Table 7.2, the direct and indirect economic output would include approximately 4,000 jobs and more than \$202 million in wages. These results will be *long-term* gains, however.

must also recognize that businesses use municipal services and there will be an ongoing cost to providing those services. (Insufficient municipal services – mainly public safety services – can sometimes be a deterrent to economic growth.) The difference between the total revenue generated by development and the cost of services used by development is known as net fiscal impact.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Town's primary objective for promoting more development on Route 140 is the anticipated increase in tax revenue. While Boylston would clearly benefit from the expansion of its tax base, the Town

Table 7.5 provides a net fiscal impact estimate of developing the priority parcels substantially in accordance with the gross floor area projections in Table 7.2. The total net revenue is \$1.5 million per year, in current dollars. The ratio of the total cost of mu-

Table 7.5
Net Fiscal Impact of Developing Priority Parcels under Proposed Zoning

		A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	Assumed Use	Gross Floor Area	Cost Multiplier (Sq. Ft.) ^a	Cost of Services [B*A]	Assessed Value Multiplier	Assessed Value [D*B]	Tax Revenue ^b	Net Fiscal Impact [F-C]
Parcels 0-1-2	Retail, Restaurant, Services	167,706	\$0.95	\$159,300	\$125	\$20,963,300	\$268,700	\$109,400
	Offices	167,706	\$0.40	\$67,100	\$100	\$16,770,600	\$215,000	\$147,900
Parcel 3	Light Industrial/Industrial	423,778	\$0.30	\$127,100	\$90	\$38,140,000	\$489,000	\$361,900
Parcel 4	Commercial	362,544	\$0.40	\$145,000	\$100	\$36,254,400	\$464,800	\$319,800
	Light Industrial	<u>673,296</u>	<u>\$0.30</u>	<u>\$202,000</u>	<u>\$90</u>	<u>\$60,596,600</u>	<u>\$776,800</u>	<u>\$574,800</u>
		1,795,030		\$700,500		\$172,724,900	\$2,214,300	\$1,513,800

Source: Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

Notes:

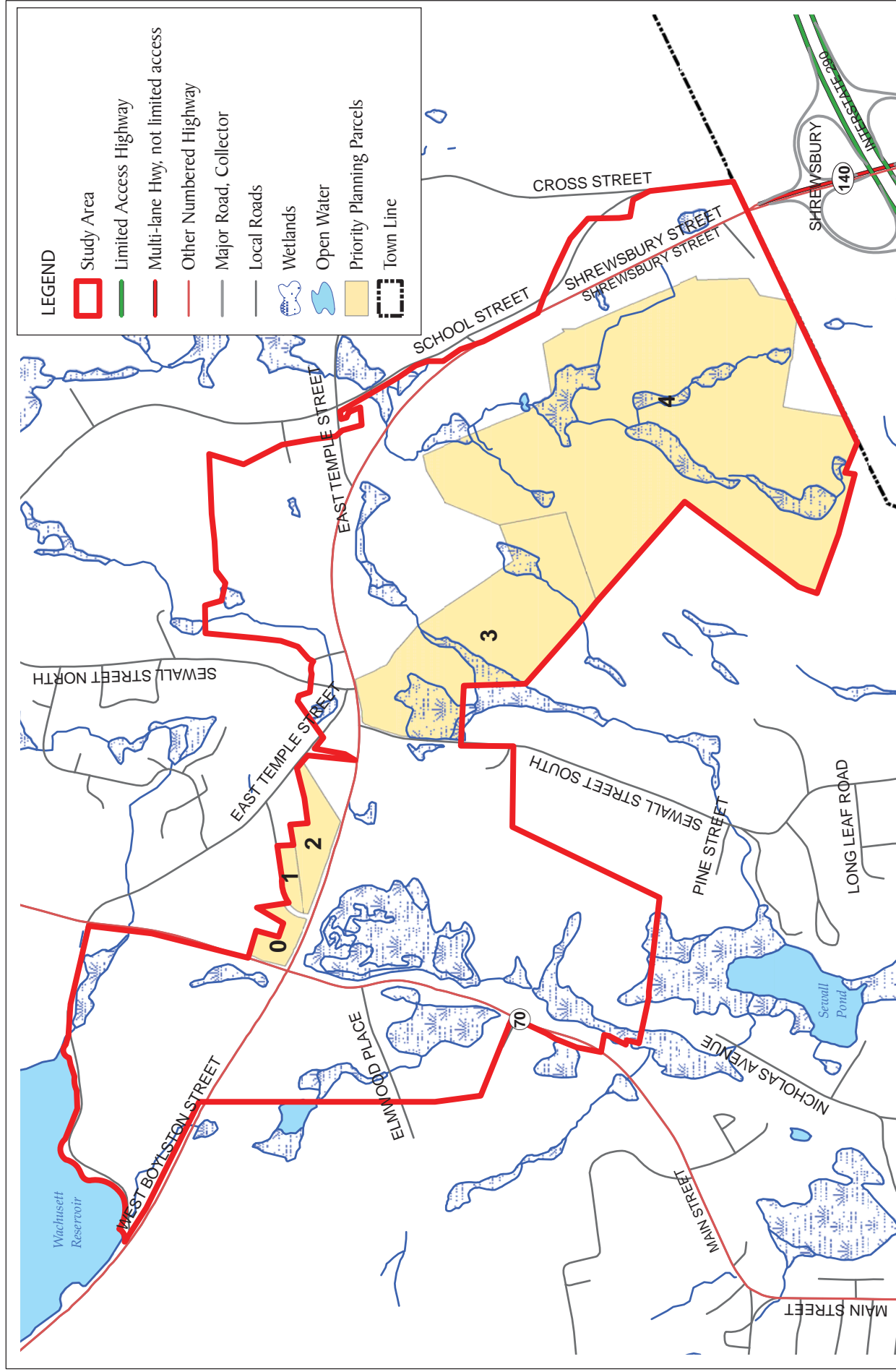
(a) Cost estimates are based on regional averages in small towns similar to Boylston in total population and development maturity.

(b) Tax revenue assumes Boylston's FY 2009 tax rate of \$12.40.

ROUTE 140 CORRIDOR PLAN

municipal services to total tax revenue is very favorable to the Town: 0.46, which means that for every one dollar in tax revenue generated by development, the Town will spend, on average, 46 cents to provide municipal services. Most of the service costs will involve increases in public safety capacity, mainly fire and emergency medical services. The estimate is an approximation of what *could* happen in Boylston over a period of several years, given the following assumptions and caveats:

- ◆ Retail, restaurant, and service uses include a range of retail: specialty, regional chain, and small or neighborhood-scale supermarket. Since the assessed value of these types of retail varies significantly, the actual value (and revenue yield) of improvements on Route 140 could be higher or lower than the average of \$125 per sq. ft. shown in Table 7.5.
- ◆ The assessed value of office space assumes new Class B space. If the corridor had sewer service and more intensive development were possible, the grade of office space and assessed value per foot would be higher.
- ◆ Infrastructure improvements required as a direct result of new development would be paid for by the development, but not necessarily all off-site improvements.



Implementation

Zoning

To implement the Route 140 Corridor Plan's land use recommendations, Boylston needs to make the following changes to its Zoning Bylaw and Zoning Map.¹ Lead responsibility: Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Business Marketing Committee.

1. Establish the Neighborhood Business District.
 - (a) Amend the Zoning Map by changing the Commercial (C) District to Neighborhood Business (NB) District.
 - (b) Amend the Table of Uses by adding the NB District and establishing use regulations in accordance with the proposed Table of Uses.
 - (c) Amend Section 9.02 by adding the NB District and establishing dimensional regulations as shown in the proposed Dimensional Regulations (Chapter 7).
 - (d) Establish a definition of "Shopping Center" such as: a retail development with one or more buildings and a combined total of more than 25,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area designed, intended, or occupied by four or more retail establishments (or retail tenants).
2. Establish the Flexible Business Development District.
 - (a) Amend the Zoning Map by changing the Industrial District southwest of Route 140 to a new district, Flexible Business Development District (no change in boundaries).
 - (b) Amend the Table of Uses by replacing I with FBD, and establishing use regulations in accordance with the proposed Table of Uses.
 - (c) Amend Section 9.02 by replacing I with FBD and establishing dimensional regulations as presented in the proposed Dimensional Regulations (Chapter 7).
 - (d) Delete existing Section 15, Flexible Business Development, but retain Sections 15.07-15.12 (with appropriate modifications) in a new Section 5A, Design Standards for Commercial and Industrial Development (Appendix X).
3. Establish the Shrewsbury Street Business District.
 - (a) Amend the Zoning Map to establish the SSB District south of Route 140, substantially as shown in the Vision Plan.
 - (b) Amend the Table of Uses by adding the SBB District and establishing use regulations in accordance with the proposed Table of Uses.
 - (c) Amend Section 9.02 by adding the SBB District and establishing dimensional regulations as presented in the proposed Dimensional Regulations (Chapter 7).
4. Establish the Mixed-Use Industrial District.
 - (a) Amend the Zoning Map by deleting the LI district north of Route 140 and replacing it with the Mixed-Use Industrial (MUI) District, substantially as shown in the Vision Plan.
 - (b) Amend the Table of Uses by deleting LI in its entirety, adding MUI, and establishing use regulations in accordance with the proposed Table of Uses.

¹ See Appendix B for a proposed new Table of Uses.

- (c) Amend Section 9.02 by adding MUI and establishing dimensional regulations as presented in the proposed Dimensional Regulations (Chapter 7).
 5. Amend Section 10.02, Off-Street Parking, by replacing the existing parking requirements in par. a.1-6 with the standards proposed in Chapter 7 of this report and adding a provision for shared/lateral access and shared parking.
 6. Delete the existing Section 5, Limited Industrial District.
 7. Revise and clarify Section 9.03.02, Main Buildings, to clarify that multiple buildings on a single lot are permitted as of right in the NB and FBD Districts, subject to open space requirements and design standards.
 8. Amend Section 9.02 by restoring the dimensional requirements for the IP District.
 9. Review and update Section 1.04, Definitions.
 10. Amend Section 4.01.01 by deleting the vegetated buffer requirement within 100 feet of a residence, but continue to require a 50-ft. no-build buffer on nonresidential lots adjacent to a residence or a residential zoning boundary
 11. Update and strengthen Section 10.03, Site Plan Approval.
 12. Add a new Section 10.04, Nonresidential Development Standards²
 13. Hire a planning consultant to conduct a comprehensive review, update, and revision of the Zoning Bylaw.
1. Verify the capacity of the existing water supply and distribution system to support additional development on Route 140 and determine improvements that may be required, if any, together with the estimated cost of such improvements.
 2. Hire an engineering firm to conduct a feasibility study of (at least) three wastewater disposal options for Route 140: extending sewer service from Worcester, constructing and operating a municipal package treatment plant, and constructing and operating a shared treatment facility with the Town of Shrewsbury. Before issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for engineering services, the Town should meet informally with two or three qualified firms in order to explore options for a scope of services and develop a budget estimate for the work. (The Town also should consult with Town Counsel to determine whether a professional services contract with an engineering firm is still subject to the Uniform Procurement Act, M.G.L. c. 30B, due to amendments enacted by the legislature in August 2009.)
 3. Explore opportunities with the Towns of West Boylston and Shrewsbury for providing shared fire and emergency medical services in the corridor study area. It may be financially advantageous for Boylston to increase public safety capacity through interlocal agreements instead of hiring its own staff.

Infrastructure & Public Services

To increase the feasibility of attracting commercial and industrial development to Route 140, Boylston needs to conduct additional technical studies and planning beyond the scope of this Corridor Plan. Lead responsibility: Board of Selectmen.

² See Appendix C for proposed Nonresidential Development Standards.

Local Capacity

Boylston's local government has committed volunteers and competent staff, but under current conditions, the Town does not have the capacity to compete for economic growth. It needs more information and better information than it has today, professional assistance, knowledgeable leadership, and a comprehensive understanding of economic development. Expanding the tax base was the catalyst for the Route 140 Corridor Plan, but Boylston is not the only Massachusetts town that wants a broader tax base. Boylston needs to undertake a candid assessment of its strengths and weaknesses and make it-

self more attractive to business development. Lead responsibility: as identified for each major activity.

1. Establish an accurate, accessible, and easy-to-maintain database of all parcels on Route 140, including assessor's data, known environmental and other constraints, ownership and land use history, and broker contacts (if known). Lead responsibility: Business Development Committee, with support from the Town Administrator.
 - (a) Maintain a site map and site photos of all properties.
 - (b) Create a user-friendly database that is available to everyone involved with Route 140 marketing and promotion efforts.
 - (c) Correct and update the Town's Geographic Information System (GIS) assessor's parcel map so that it can be used effectively as a planning and analytical tool.
2. Establish a Route 140 Corridor Advisory Committee that includes property owners and business owners to act as a sounding board for implementation and to advance new ideas concerning the corridor's development. Lead responsibility: Business Development Committee.
 - (a) Establish a regular meeting schedule for the Route 140 property and business owners group.
 - (b) Maintain communication through email lists and newsletters.
 - (c) Include at least one representative of the Town's professional staff at all organization meetings.
3. Maintain the Applicant Advisory Committee (AAC) as an information and technical assistance resource to business property owners and developers. Lead responsibility: Town Administrator.
4. Retain an economic development consultant to assist the Town on an as-needed basis with application review, developer negotiations and development agreements, pricing and negotiating Tax Increment Financing (TIF) agreements, and

provide training and technical support to the Business Development Committee and others.

- (a) Interview officials from other communities with established, ongoing relationships with planning and economic development consultants to learn more about how these arrangements have worked, the advantages and disadvantages of working with consultants, how compensation has been structured, and what the towns have spent from their own resources (as opposed to developer funds) on consulting services. Suggested communities: Berlin, Hopkinton, Norwood.
 - (b) Appropriate funds for a retainer and professional service hours to engage an economic development consultant.
 - (c) Develop and issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a three-year contract (subject to annual appropriation).
 - (d) Choose a consultant.
5. Create a permitting guidebook to provide clear and detailed information on all aspects of the permitting process. Lead responsibility: Town Administrator.
 - (a) Review samples of permitting guides developed for or by other small towns in Massachusetts.
 - (b) Seek input from property owners, developers, and engineering and legal professionals familiar with Boylston's land use regulations and procedures.
 - (c) Procure for consulting services to write, design, and produce a Boylston permitting guide.
6. Participate in Wachusett Valley Chamber of Commerce (COC) meetings and events to ensure awareness of regional economic and development trends and build alliances with neighboring towns. Lead responsibility: Business Development Committee.

Appendix

Appendix A: Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder Interview List

Stakeholder	Affiliation	Date	Location
Roger Deal	Boylston Board of Selectmen	8/12/09	Town Hall
Maegan McCafferty	Wachusett Chamber of Commerce	8/12/09	Wachusett COC, Clinton
Rick Baker	Boylston Planning Board	8/12/09	Town Hall
Jim Stanton	Boylston Board of Selectmen	8/12/09	Town Hall
Bob Fuller	Fuller Motorhome Rentals, Inc.	8/13/09	Old Town Hall
Ken Sydow	Boylston Board of Selectmen	8/13/09	Town Hall
Claire O'Neill	Regional Office Director, Massachusetts Office of Business Development	8/13/09	Town Hall
Nisi Dionis	Property owner on Route 140	8/13/09	Old Town Hall
Vin DiPilato	Property owner and business owner, Route 140	8/13/09	Old Town Hall
Eric Brose	Finance Committee member	9/01/90	Old Town Hall
Ron Ernenwein	Business owner: Route 140 Wholesale Auto Sales	9/01/09	Old Town Hall
Jeff Walsh	Boylston Conservation Commission, Chair	9/01/09	Old Town Hall
Brendan Gallagher	Clinton Savings Bank, Branch Manager	9/01/09	Old Town Hall
Dave Frem	Cyprian Keys Golf Club, General Manager	9/01/09	Old Town Hall
Ed Defeudis	Property owner on Route 140	9/4/09	Phone
Chuck Marble	Suggested by Dave Frem; businessman and Boylston resident	9/10/09	Phone

Questions primarily for non-local interviewees:

- 1) What kinds of businesses are looking for (a) vacant land or (b) existing space in the non-metro Worcester area? Are there apparent trends in the region, based on recent development, projects in the pipeline, and inquiries?
- 2) What kinds of businesses are leaving the region? (Or, what kinds of businesses is the region finding it difficult to retain?)
- 3) What advantages does Boylston offer to the regional market for office, industrial, and commercial space? What would draw businesses to Boylston as opposed to a neighboring community?
- 4) What factors might discourage businesses from coming to Boylston as opposed to another community nearby?
- 5) Based on what you know about Boylston's existing businesses, are there any business retention steps that Boylston should be thinking about while also exploring opportunities to attract new businesses?

ROUTE 140 CORRIDOR PLAN

- 6) What could Boylston do to improve its competitive position in the region?

Questions primarily for local officials and staff:

- 1) What kind of development you think residents would like to see along Route 140?
- 2) Is the town's interest in developing Route 140 primarily a desire to increase local employment or to generate more property tax revenue? Both?
- 3) What kind of employment base does the town want? Is the town interested in particular industries or industry clusters, or simply a broad range of new job opportunities?
- 4) What has the town done to encourage the types of development that residents would like to see?
- 5) What do the think are the major impediments to encouraging development along Route 140?
- 6) What opportunities do you see for the town to overcome some of these impediments?
- 7) Are there particular sites or parcels along Route 140 that the town is particularly interested in promoting for economic growth?

Appendix B: Proposed Table of Use Regulations

See following pages.

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Use	RR	R	GR	VB	HB	NB	SBB	C	H	IP	FBD	MUI	Notes
4.02.01 AGRICULTURE													
Agriculture, horticulture, or floriculture under 5 acres	Y	Y	Y						Y				
Agriculture, horticulture or floriculture over 5 acres	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Commercial greenhouse, nursery	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y			SP#	
Farm stand for the sale of agricultural products, the majority of which is grown or raised on-site	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	For agriculture on 5+ acres; otherwise SP*.
Accessory agricultural uses such as silos, machinery sheds, greenhouses, and animal shelters	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	For agriculture on 5+ acres; otherwise SP*.
4.02.02 RESIDENTIAL													
Single-family detached dwelling	Y	Y	Y	Y				Y	Y				
Two-family dwelling	Y	Y	Y	Y				Y	Y				
Dwelling unit(s) above the ground floor of a building occupied primarily by commercial uses						SP#	SP#						(1) Ground floor shall be limited to retail, restaurant and/or office uses.
Accessory residential use which is customarily incidental to such use	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	Y			Y	

Use	RR	R	GR	VB	HB	NB	SBB	C	H	IP	FBD	MUI	Notes
Use of a portion of a single-family residential building for a home occupation, as defined in Section 1.04(22)	Y	Y	SP*										(1) There is no open display of materials visible from the street, (2) there is adequate off-street parking and (3) the use is not detrimental by way of noise or other nuisance to the neighborhood.
4.02.03 COMMERCIAL													
Retail establishment located on a separate lot and used for the sale of merchandise to the general public				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	SP*		SP#		In the NB District, a retail use with less than 15,000 gross square feet of floor area shall be allowed as of right. A retail use with more than 15,000 gross square feet of floor area but less than 75,000 gross square feet of floor area shall only be allowed by special permit from the Planning Board.
Personal service establishment				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	SP*				
Business service, such as a photocopy center, temporary personnel service, computer sales and service, or similar establishment						Y	Y	Y			SP#	Y	
Use by the resident owner of not more than two rooms of a single-family dwelling existing prior to the adoption of this By-law for retail sale of specialty goods such as crafts, art and related supplies, books, stationary, and similar paper products, gifts, or clothing				SP*	SP*	Y	Y	Y	SP*				Except in the NB and SBB Districts, the exterior appearance of the building shall not change from that of a single family dwelling and adequate off-street parking shall be provided

Use	RR	R	GR	VB	HB	NB	SBB	C	H	IP	FBD	MUI	Notes
Office of a resident doctor, lawyer, dentist, architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other recognized lawful profession in a single or two-family residential building which, except in a Village Business District, was existing prior to the adoption [of this By-law]	SP*	SP*	SP*	SP#	Y	Y	Y	Y	SP*				Except in the NB and SBB Districts, the building shall retain its residential appearance and adequate off-street parking shall be provided.
Professional or business office, bank, or other financial institution				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		
Medical office				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	
Medical laboratory, medical clinic, day surgery center or similar outpatient care facility							Y				Y		
Wholesale or warehouse use-					SP#		SP#	Y		Y	SP#		
Funeral home			SP#	Y	Y			Y	SP#				
Shopping center				SP#	SP#	SP#	SP#	SP#			SP#		
Commercial recreation; indoor, such as a tennis or racquetball club, health club or fitness center							SP#			Y	Y	Y	
Gasoline station, motor vehicle repair shop and heating oil sales and service				SP#	Y		SP#	Y			SP#		In the FBD District, if within 2,500 feet of an interchange of a designated interstate highway.
Package store					SP#		SP#	SP#	SP#				
Restaurant, with food service limited to the interior of a building				SP#	SP#	Y	Y	SP#	SP#		SP#		Food may also be served in an outdoor seating area, such as a patio, as an accessory use.
Take-out food service, such as a deli, sandwich shop, pizza shop, or an ice cream shop, or similar establishment					SP#	Y	Y	Y			SP#	SP#	Establishment shall not exceed 1,200 square feet or have a seating capacity of more than 30 persons, and shall not offer drive-through service.
Building trade supply					Y		SP#	Y			Y		

Use	RR	R	GR	VB	HB	NB	SBB	C	H	IP	FBD	MUI	Notes
Automobile dealership for the sale, leasing, and servicing of new and used automobiles, provided such use was in existence at the time of adoption of this By-law provision.				Y									
Automobile dealership for the sale, leasing and servicing of new and used automobiles					SP#		SP#						
4.02.04 INDUSTRIAL													
Research and development, including renewable or alternative energy research and development							Y			Y	Y	Y	Design, development and testing of electrical, magnetic, mechanical or optical components in advance of manufacturing renewable or alternative energy products.
Corporate headquarters or similar industrial-office use										Y	Y		
Light manufacturing, or light assembly							SP#			Y	Y	Y	
Renewable or alternative energy manufacturing facility for processing, fabrication, assembly, and packaging							SP#			Y	Y	Y	
Corporate conference center, which may include short-term eating and sleeping accommodations										SP#	SP#		
Hotel or motel										SP#	SP#		Except that an apartment hotel is prohibited.
Yards and building of a contractor or building tradesman					SP*			SP*			Y		All open storage of materials and vehicles shall be screened from public view and aesthetically pleasing as it relates to surrounding architecture.

Use	RR	R	GR	VB	HB	NB	SBB	C	H	IP	FBD	MUI	Notes
The sale and rental of recreational vehicles limited to motor homes, campers, camping trailers, and related accessories							SP#				Y		
4.02.05 TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATION, UTILITY													
Public utility building or structure	SP*	SP*	SP*	SP*	Y	SP*	SP*	SP#	SP*	SP*	SP*		
Building or structure of a private utility company	SP*	SP*	SP*	SP*	Y	SP*	SP*	SP#	SP*	SP*	SP*		
Wireless Communication Facility	SP#				SP#					SP#	SP#		
4.02.06 PUBLIC, SEMI-PUBLIC, INSTITUTIONAL													
Any religious or public educational use.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Private, non-profit educational use	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	
Child Care Center	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Hospital or sanitarium	SP*	SP*	SP*								SP*		
Any municipal use	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Any municipal recreation use	Y	Y	Y										
Conference or clubhouse or country club building	SP*									Y	Y		
Golf course, public or private tennis club or other public or private outdoor recreation activity	SP*	SP*	SP*							Y			
4.02.07 OTHER (UNCLASSIFIED)													
A garage for not more than four (4) automobiles as an accessory use	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	

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Appendix C: Route 140 Corridor Development Guidelines

10.04. ROUTE 140 DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

10.05. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this section are to:

- A. Encourage commercial, industrial, and mixed-use developments on Route 140 that provide local employment and enhance the tax base;
- B. Enhance the appearance, function, and safety of Route 140;
- C. Create successful, attractive business areas that serve as gathering places for Boylston residents and meet local needs for goods and services; and
- D. Facilitate a compatible mix of commercial and industrial uses while also protecting surrounding neighborhoods from land use conflicts.

10.05.01. APPLICABILITY

This section shall apply to all commercial, industrial, and mixed-use development in the Flexible Business Development District, the Shrewsbury Street Business District, the Mixed-Use Industrial District, and the Neighborhood Business District.

10.05.02. LANDSCAPING

- A. Location of open space. At least fifty percent (50%) of the minimum required open space in Section 9.02 shall be located within the front yard or side yards, or a combination thereof, provided that open space in the side yard shall be located forward of the rear building line of the principal building on the lot. All such open space shall consist of landscaped areas in accordance with

this section. Up to twenty-five percent (25%) of the minimum required open space may include man-made features such as stormwater management facilities, non-commercial recreational structures and uses, septic systems, and similar features.

- B. Front yard treatment. The front yard facing Route 140 shall provide a continuous landscaped edge to the property in question, except for points of entry and exit. Minimum front yard landscaping shall include not less than one canopy tree per twenty-five (25) linear feet of frontage, located not more than ten (10) feet from the right of way, and shrubs or bushes at a minimum ratio of 12 per tree. Wherever possible, canopy and ornamental trees, shrubs, planters, and groundcover at the edge of Route 140 shall be arranged in groupings that reduce the optical width of the road and shall not be regimented or evenly spaced. However, no landscaping treatments shall be permitted to obstruct clear sight distance.
- C. Landscaped buffer. A landscaped buffer area at least ten (10) feet in width shall abut all side and rear property lines, except that a landscaped buffer along the side property line shall not be required on abutting lots under a shared parking agreement approved by the Planning Board. On lots abutting an existing residential use or a residential district, the landscaped buffer shall be at least twenty (20) feet in width. For vegetated swales located within the buffer area, the Planning Board may approve alternative buffer dimensions and buffer design standards than those specified herein.
- D. Environmental standards. Landscaping shall be composed primarily of non-invasive, drought-resistant plantings that include trees, flowers, shrubs, succulents and ornamental grasses. High-water use turf shall not exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of all open space on the site. Outdoor watering may be achieved by drip irrigation or low-

ROUTE 140 CORRIDOR PLAN

energy spray irrigation, or a comparable water-conserving irrigation system, but sprinkler systems are prohibited unless the applicant can demonstrate to the Planning Board's satisfaction that the proposed system meets acceptable water conservation standards. All outdoor irrigation systems shall be served by a private water supply.

E. Minimum specifications. Plantings shall comply with the following minimum requirements and shall, wherever possible, consist of existing vegetation:

1. Shade trees shall be a minimum of three (3) inches in caliper six inches above grade and reach an ultimate height of at least thirty (30) feet.
2. Ornamental trees shall be a minimum of eight (8) feet at the time of planting, measured from the top of the root ball to the top of the tree.
3. Shrubs shall be at least eighteen (18) inches in height at the time of building occupancy and reach an ultimate height of at least three (3) feet.

F. The property owner shall ensure the health and survival of all plantings required under this section. If any plant material dies, the property owner shall replace it within 180 days.

10.05.03. LIGHTING AND UTILITIES

- A. Lighting. All artificial lighting used to illuminate a parking or storage area, maneuvering space, or access road shall be arranged and shielded so as to prevent direct glare from the light source into any public street or private way or onto adjacent property.
- B. Cutoffs Required. Each outdoor luminaire shall be a full cutoff luminaire, and the use

of decorative luminaires with full cutoff optics is desired. (A full cutoff luminaire is an outdoor light fixture shielded in such a manner that all light emitted by the fixture, either directly from the lamp or indirectly from the fixture is projected below the horizontal plane.)

C. All exterior lights and illuminated signs shall be designed and installed in such a manner as to prevent objectionable light at (and glare across) the property lines. Externally lit signs, display, building and aesthetic lighting must be lit from the top and shine downward. The lighting must be shielded to prevent direct glare and/or light trespass.

D. Underground Wiring: All electric, telephone, television and other communication lines, both main and service connections, shall be provided by underground wiring.

10.05.04. ACCESS AND OFF-STREET PARKING

A. Roads and Drainage. The principal roadway(s) serving the site and drainage systems shall be designed to comply with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Stormwater Management Handbook.

B. Access Management. Access to lots on Route 140 shall be designed to minimize construction of new curb cuts. Shared access may be provided through one or more of the following methods, subject to approval by the Planning Board and, as applicable, by the Massachusetts Highway Department: (a) a cul-de-sac or loop road or common driveway shared by adjacent lots or premises, (b) joint and cross access between the lot and adjacent uses, (c) an existing side or rear street, (d) a cul-de-sac or loop road shared by adjacent lots or premises.

- C. Location of Off-Street Parking. Location. No more than twenty percent (20%) of the total parking spaces may be located in the front of the principal building on a lot to accommodate short-term parking needs of the proposed uses. In granting a special permit, the Planning Board may impose design, surface treatment, landscaping, lighting, and other requirements to mitigate the visual impact of parking areas on views from the road, and may regulate the location of the remaining parking to achieve the purposes of this section. On lots with two or more buildings, parking may be located in front of a building that is located in the rear of another building as viewed from the street.
- D. Parking lot design. Any new parking area with five (5) or more parking spaces or an existing parking area that is expanded or improved to increase the number of spaces by five (5) or more shall conform to the requirements below.
 1. No parking shall be permitted within the landscaped buffer required under Section 10.04.02.
 2. Parking lots shall be provided with interior landscaping covering not less than five percent (5%) of the total area of the parking lot.
 3. The interior landscaping shall include two shade trees or three ornamental trees for every ten (10) spaces. For a mix of shade and ornamental trees, there shall be an average of 2.5 trees for every ten (10) parking spaces.
 4. Trees shall be at least three (3) inches in trunk diameter at the time of planting, and shall be located in planting beds at least six feet (6') in width or diameter. To the extent possible, tree plantings shall be located in continuous islands six feet (6') or more in width.
5. Where the planting of trees is impractical, the Planning Board may authorize alternative landscaping instead of trees.
 6. To preserve landscaped open space from damage by parking cars and snow removal operations, bumper overhang areas shall be provided with permeable ground cover that will not be damaged by bumpers or vehicle drippings, and all landscaped open space shall be provided with suitable curbing.
 7. The Planning Board may modify the above requirements for any interior landscaped areas or islands that serve as vegetated swales or bioretention cells. The number, dimensions, and design specifications for bioretention cells shall be determined by the Planning Board.
- E. Shared parking. The Planning Board may grant a special permit for a shared parking serving two or more adjacent lots, subject to the following requirements.
 1. A reciprocal agreement in the form of a recorded perpetual easement shall be required in order to guarantee long-term joint use of the shared parking, and the agreement shall be acceptable to the Planning Board.
 2. Uses sharing the parking facility shall be located not more than five hundred (500) feet from the closest parking space.
 3. The Planning Board shall base its decision on the following criteria:

ROUTE 140 CORRIDOR PLAN

- a. The hours of operation of the uses involved;
 - b. The number of spaces required for each individual use under this section;
 - c. The degree to which vehicles using a particular number of spaces are unlikely to require the use of those spaces at the same time of day or same day of the week; and
 - d. The degree to which the applicant's proposal promotes and accommodates other means of transportation to access the site, such as pedestrian or bicycle facilities.
4. No change in any conditions associated with a shared parking arrangement, such as but not limited to any change in the use of such property(ies) to a greater category of parking demand, shall be permitted unless the Planning Board approves an amendment to the special permit.
- F. **Loading and Service Areas.** Loading areas and other service facilities (trash dumpsters, storage areas, utility boxes, etc.) shall be placed to the rear of buildings in visually unobtrusive locations. Screening and landscaping shall prevent direct views of such areas from adjacent properties or from public ways. Screening and buffering shall be achieved through walls, fences and landscaping; shall be a minimum of five (5) feet tall; and shall be visually opaque. Chain link, plastic, or concrete materials are prohibited.
- G. **Pedestrian Safety**
1. Sidewalks and pedestrian paths shall connect the parking lots to the principal uses they will serve. Walkways and crosswalks shall be clearly recognizable through the use of raised, textured, or color treatments in order to aid pedestrians in crossing traffic within the lot, and may be bordered with fencing or shrubbery to clearly separate pedestrians from automobile traffic. Facilities and access routes for deliveries, service and maintenance shall be separated, where practical, from public access routes and parking areas.
 2. Car stops shall be provided to prevent parked cars from damaging trees and shrubs or disrupting pedestrian walkways.
- H. **Bicycle Accommodation.** Bicycle parking facilities shall be provided for any new building, addition or enlargement of an existing building, or for any change in the occupancy of any building that results in the need for additional vehicular parking facilities, according to the following schedule.
1. Minimum of one (1) bicycle parking space for every fifteen (15) required vehicle parking spaces, for up to forty-five (45) vehicle spaces; and one (1) bicycle parking space for every twenty-five (25) required vehicle parking spaces thereafter.
 2. In all cases where bicycle parking is required, a minimum of two (2) and a maximum of twenty-five (25) bicycle parking spaces shall be provided.
 3. The Planning Board may approve a reduction of one (1) vehicle parking space for every five (5) bicycle parking spaces provided.

10.05.05. SIGNS

- A. The sign requirements contained elsewhere in this Zoning By-Law shall determine the number, size, and location of signs for buildings and uses within a development.
- B. For projects requiring Site Plan Review under Section 10.03, the applicant shall submit a comprehensive signage plan for all uses, individual buildings or complex of buildings and uses as part of its review. The signage plan shall include conceptual drawings and supporting information describing the proposed signage for all major buildings and uses, including entrance signs, directional signs, etc.

10.05.06. DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

The following guidelines shall be incorporated in the design of any new building or substantial reconstruction of an existing building for retail, restaurant, or service uses, including any combination thereof, in any district subject to this Section 10.05.

- A. General. Buildings and landscape treatments, not parking, should serve as the focal points for development along Route 140. They should contribute to a sense of continuity and coherence from Route 140 and distant vantage points.
- B. Orientation. The front façade of the principal building on a lot with frontage on Route 140 shall be oriented toward Route 140. For developments of two or more buildings or for development on interior lots, buildings shall face the access road that serves them. Buildings may also be oriented around a courtyard or respond in design to a prominent feature, such as a corner location, subject to approval by the Planning Board.
- C. Size, mass, and exterior features. Buildings shall be varied in building massing, height, and roof form, and long expanses of wall at

a single height shall be avoided.

- 1. Whenever possible, floor height shall be varied to follow the natural grade if there is significant variation.
- 2. Provide interest and variety at the pedestrian scale so that the highest level of detail occurs near pedestrian areas, streets, building entries, and around the ground floor.
- 3. Windows should be recessed and include visually prominent sills, shutters, or similar forms of framing. Windowless buildings with standardized façade treatments are prohibited. No building shall have more than sixty (60) linear feet of unbroken wall area.
- 4. Whenever possible, buildings shall include vertical articulation such as columns, piers, and windows.

D. Building materials including shingles, wood clapboards, brick and stone should be used for the exterior skin of building. These materials shall be considered for all buildings or portions of buildings facing public or private streets.

E. Architecture based upon generic franchise design is prohibited. Rather, where franchise buildings of national chains are proposed architects should rely upon traditional New England building forms and incorporate such elements into building design.

F. Large-scale development shall be broken up into groupings of small-scale buildings that are scaled down into groupings of smaller attached or detached structures.

G. Architectural focal points. In any development with 10,000 square feet or more of retail use, the principal building on a lot shall have clearly defined, highly

ROUTE 140 CORRIDOR PLAN

visible customer entrances featuring at least two of the following:

1. Canopies or porticos
2. Overhangs
3. Recesses/projections
4. Raised corniced parapets over the door
5. Peaked roof forms
6. Arches
7. Outdoor patios
8. Display windows
9. Planters or wing walls that incorporate landscaped areas and/or places for sitting