



Town of Tyngsborough, Massachusetts TOWN CENTER MASTER PLAN

Tyngsborough Economic Development Committee
September 2008



TOWN OF TYNGSBOROUGH
Economic Development Committee
25 Bryants Lane
Tyngsborough, MA 01879
Tel: 978 649-2300 Ext. 100 Fax: 978 649-2320



**CONCORD SQUARE
PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT, INC.**



132 Irving Avenue
Providence, RI 02906
t: 401.654.4949
f: 617.275.8673

Acknowledgements

Tyngsborough Economic Development Committee:

Selectman Richard Lemoine, Chair; Walter Eriksen; Bob Nista; Tracy Connor; Beverly Woods (Northern Middlesex Council of Governments); Jeanne Kidder, Town Assessor

The Economic Development Committee would like to thank the following individuals and offices for devoting their time and energy to the creation of this Town Center Master Plan:

Board of Selectmen:

Kevin V. O'Connor; Richard B. Lemoine; Karyn M. Puleo; Jacqueline M. Schnackertz; Jay S. Booth; and Ashley L. O'Neill

Rosemary Cashman, Town Administrator

Planning Board:

Caryn DeCarteret, Chair; John Forti; Steven Nocco; Darryl Wickens; Steve O'Neill; and Joyce Harrington

Historical Commission:

Warren Allgrove, Chair; Marie Lambert; George Dupras; Rob Kydd; Herb Morton; Rodney Wood; and Therese Gay

and

The many Tyngsborough residents, landowners and merchants whose advice and feedback during the Town Center Master Plan process has helped shape this document.

Prepared by and under contract with:

- Concord Square Planning & Development, Inc.

Ted Carman, President

Angus Jennings, AICP, Principal Planner

www.concordsqdev.com

- Morris Beacon Design

Jon Ford, PE, President

www.morrisbeacon.com



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I. Executive Summary

This Tyngsborough Town Center Master Plan has been prepared by Concord Square Planning & Development, Inc., and Morris Beacon Design under the leadership of Tyngsborough's Economic Development Committee (EDC). It follows on several prior planning initiatives that designated the Town Center as a key priority for the future. The goal of the Master Plan is to offer a long term vision that can translate into an economically vibrant and dynamic Town Center.

This Master Plan was prepared from January through August 2008, and reflects many meetings, working sessions with and calls and letters received from Tyngsborough residents, merchants, and property owners.

The Town Center Master plan sets forth recommendations to realize its vision by evaluating and offering recommendations in the following areas:

1. Re-use of Town-Owned Properties
2. Open Space and Pedestrian Improvements
3. Opportunity Sites for New Development
4. Infrastructure Improvements

A detailed description of each of these recommendations is included in the chapters that follow, including a review of current conditions and a discussion of the steps necessary to implement each proposal. A summary matrix is also provided, including designation of each recommendation as a short, medium or long-term priority.

The Plan identifies and recommends potential reuse options for four Town-owned buildings within the Town Center Study Area. These properties are the Winslow School, the Littlefield Library, the Old Town Hall and the recently acquired Shur-Fine Market. At the time of the study all stood vacant, and only the Library is fit for and has current use.

The evaluation carried out by Concord Square indicates that the four properties are served by existing septic systems in various states of operational capacity. It appears that the proposed new uses for these buildings can be served by the existing systems as they may be expanded or improved. Consequently, the Town should be in a position to move forward in the near term with plans to effect the renovation and reuse of all of these buildings, without having to wait for a public sewer system to be installed.

In some cases, depending on decisions made by the Town, the Town may continue ownership and complete the renovations with public funds. In other cases the buildings may be renovated by private parties pursuant to Requests for Proposals that are accompanied by well thought-out design standards.

This Town Center Master Plan sets forth a strategy to create a Town Center for Tyngsborough that reestablishes many of its historical functions while respecting and working within the constraints of the automobile and its requirements relative to land use and design. Collectively, the recommendations aim to stimulate the growth of an economically viable, distinct and coherent Town Center, one that will visually capture the attention of those who pass by.



Tyngsborough, like many Massachusetts communities, is faced with severe budget constraints, and no change in this situation is expected in the near future. Therefore, in conceptualizing this plan, every effort has been made to propose concepts and directions that will create economic value. Economic value will attract private investment capital, and private funds can help pay for the costs. The planning goal has been to minimize the amount of public investment required, and to maximize the amounts that can be obtained from the private sector.

That having been said, a key public investment that must be made in order to realize the full potential of Tyngsborough's Town Center is the provision of public sewer capacity. Although it appears feasible to carry out the renovation and reuse of the four Town-owned properties using existing or expanded septic systems, it may not be possible to develop the Opportunity Sites for new construction that have been identified without public sewer. Thus, an immediate objective should be to plan for and find the resources that will bring public sewer service to the Town Center. This work is being led by the Sewer Commission in coordination with the Economic Development Committee, and is well underway.

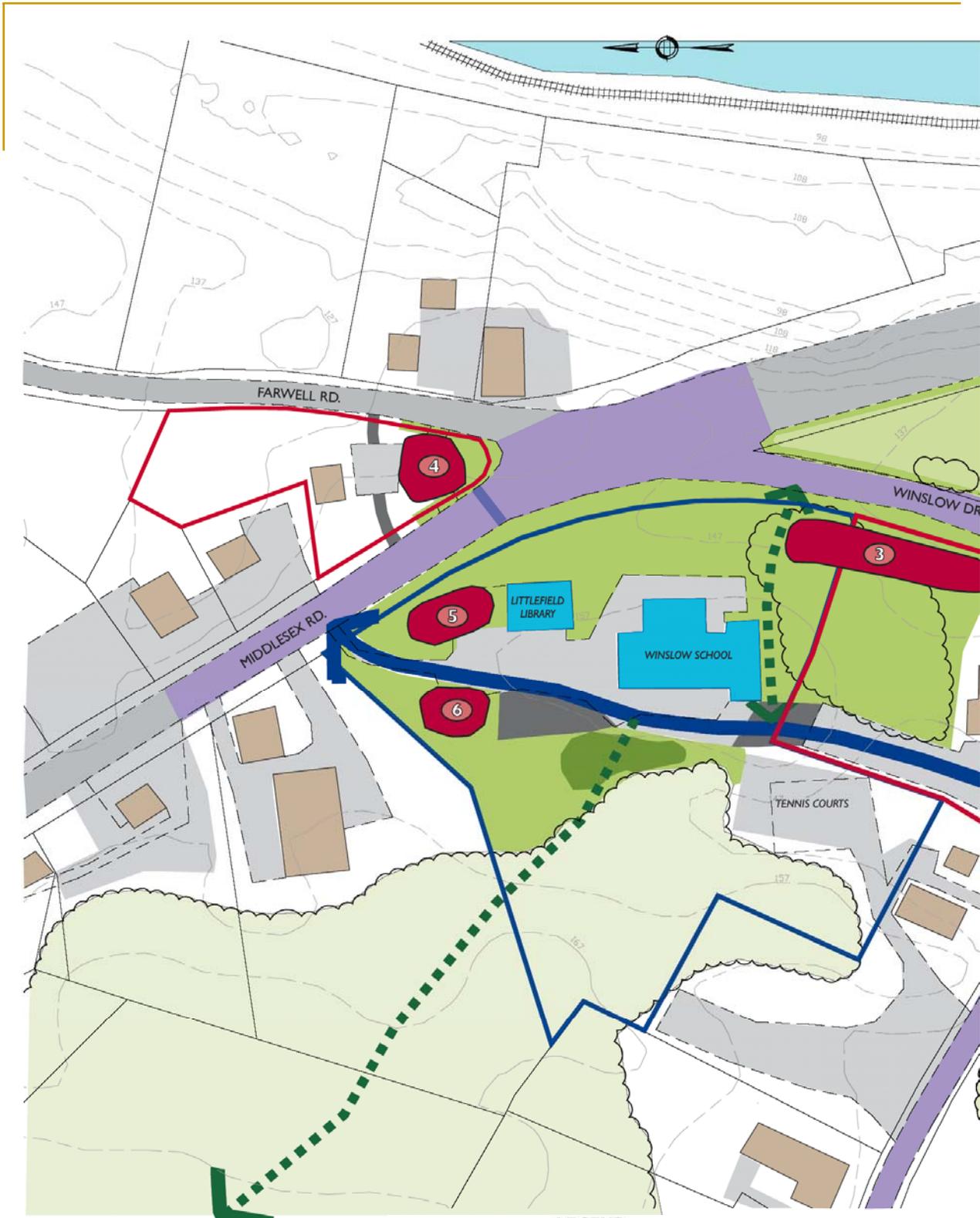
The extensive amount of Town-owned property in the Center of Tyngsboro makes the realization of much of the vision that is offered a realistic goal, and not simply a planning exercise. Development of these properties can be managed through the process of issuing Requests for Proposals ("RFPs") for the purchase and redevelopment of one or more specific parcels. It may be

strategically advisable to issue an RFP for more than one, or even all of the properties at one time. This would allow a potential developer to create a plan for the entire area that could be more ambitious and larger because the various elements would be mutually reinforcing. Such a plan is more likely to be successful than a series of RFPs for individual properties, because the larger plan can have an internal coherence with the various elements coordinated with each other, both in use and in design. The overall quality and specific details of what is to be built for these properties, as well as for other properties, can be carefully controlled through RFP evaluation criteria, zoning, and design standards that are part of the RFP process and through the zoning.



Aerial view of Tyngsborough Town Center, with the Merrimack River in the foreground.

Executive Summary



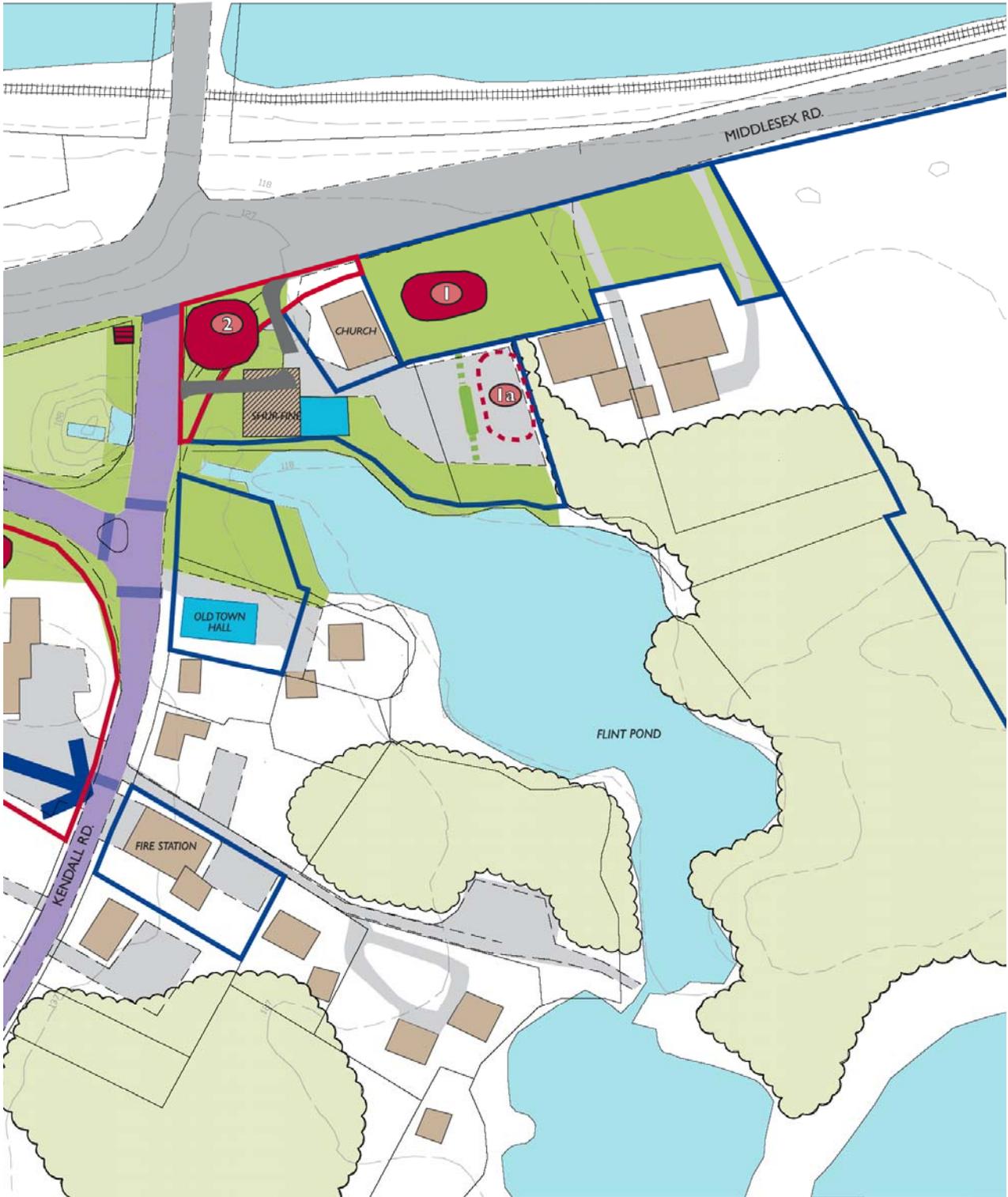
LEGEND

- TOWN OWNED PARCEL
- PRIVATELY OWNED OPPORTUNITY SITE
- ADAPTIVE REUSE
- OPPORTUNITY SITE
- PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLE CONNECTION
- VEHICULAR CONNECTION
- INFRASTRUCTURE/STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS
- ENHANCED OPEN SPACE

CONCORD SQUARE
PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT, INC.

MORRIS BEACON
design
132 Irving Avenue
Providence, RI 0290
t: 401.654.4949
f: 617.275.8673





Tyngsborough Town Center Study
Overview

II. History, Master Plan Elements and Planning Process

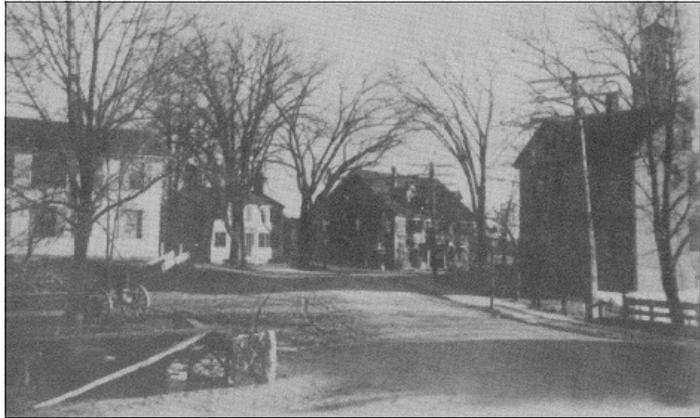
History. The Tyngsborough Town Center as it has Evolved:

The Town of Tyngsborough was established on February 23, 1809 when the municipality broke away from the much larger Dunstable Township. For many years Tyngsborough was referred to as the “Gateway to the White Mountains” because of its location at the New Hampshire border and its quiet and rural setting with many lakes. It was a popular vacation resort area. It also had a number of modest industrial operations - granite quarries and several box factories.

The Town Center is located on the Merrimack River. It was originally the location for the ferry across the river - extending back into the 18th century. The first bridge in the region across the river was built in 1874 at the edge of the Town Center, and the former ferry landing is visible today. The arched bridge was built in 1932. The North-South railroad lines were built on the western shore of the river - between the river and the Town Center - with rail service commencing in 1841.

Upstream on the Merrimack is Nashua, New Hampshire and downstream is Lowell, Massachusetts. Drawing on the water power from the river, both became heavily industrialized cities in the nineteenth century. Lowell, of course, was the first industrialized city in the country, with the mills being built there starting in the years just before 1820.

Thus Tyngsborough Center was in the past and continues today to be a busy four-way connection between Nashua and Lowell (the north - south axis), and between the populations and businesses on each side of the Merrimack (the east-west axis). There was and is and will be a lot of traffic on its major automobile and truck routes.

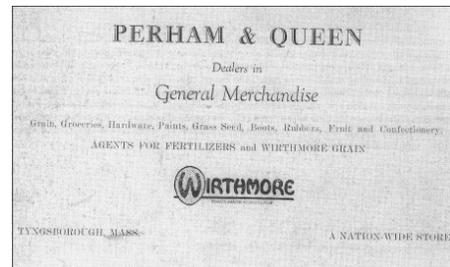
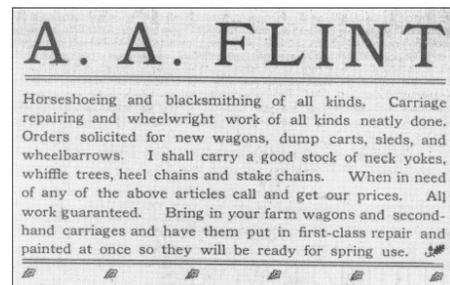


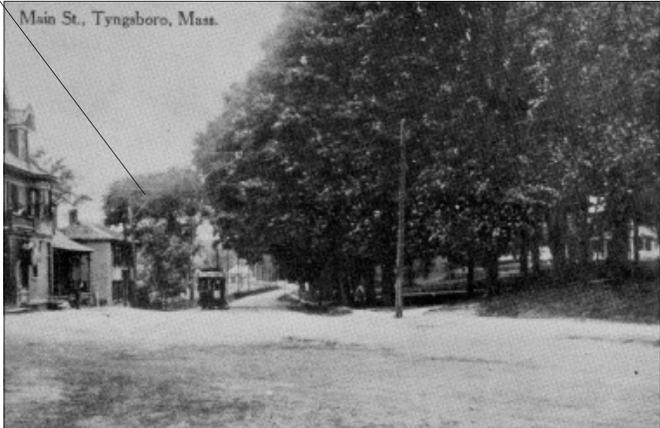
One hundred years ago the Town Center reflected this activity and was home to many typical New England town center activities. There was a general store, other stores and shops, a post office, many private homes, three churches, a town green and many jobs. The breadth of merchandise and services offered is illustrated in the advertisements of the times. In 1913 A.A. Flint (who built boxes at the box factory) also offered:

Horseshoeing and blacksmithing of all kinds. Carriage repairing and wheelwright work of all kinds... new wagons, dump carts, sleds and wheelbarrows... neck yokes, whiffle trees, heel chains and stake chains.

A 1933 ad from Perham and Queen, the general store, which was similar to advertisements it placed for over 40 years, said:

Dealers in General Merchandise. Grain, Groceries, Hardware, Paints, Grass Seed, Boots, Rubbers, Fruit and Confectionery. Agents for Fertilizers and Wirthmore grain.





Photos: Images of America; Tyngsborough by Herbert Morton

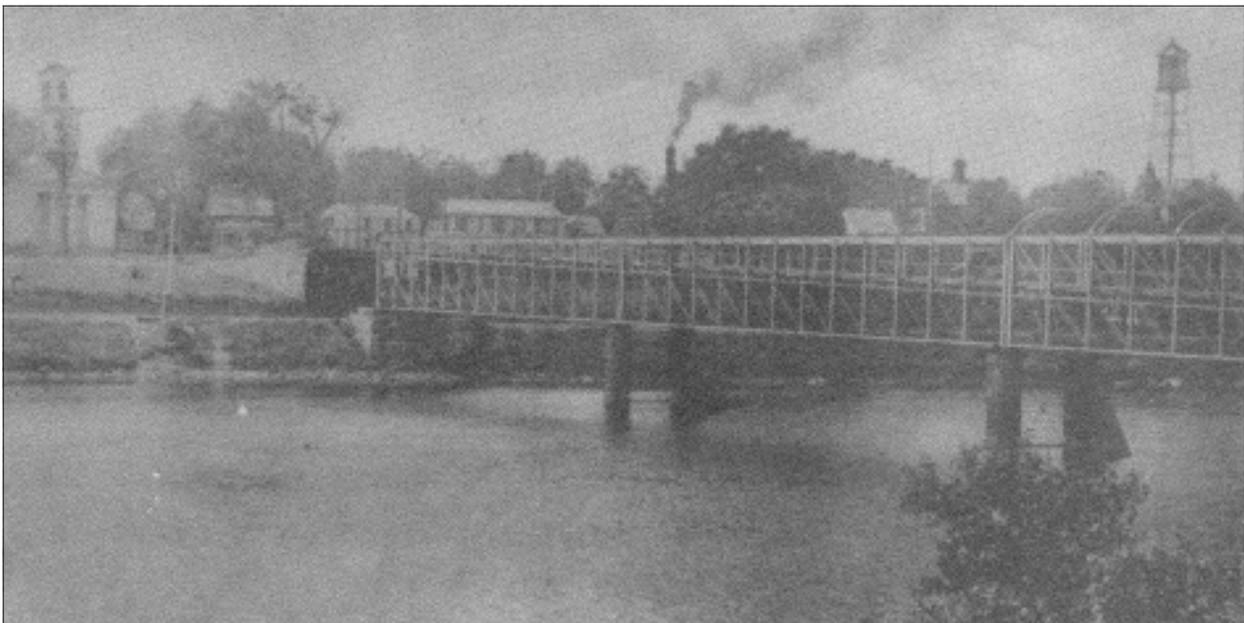
History, Master Plan Elements and Planning Process

Albert A. Flint's large box manufacturing company was located directly in the center of Town, across Kendall Road from the Old Town Hall and Flint Pond, at the location of the current open space, the waterfall and the outflow from Flint Pond. It was a major industrial operation. There was a water tower, mostly for fire protection, on the land by the Winslow School and the Littlefield Library. As the automobile arrived on the scene in the early years of the 20th century, several filling stations were built in the Town Center. In addition to this vibrant commercial activity, until the late 1960s the Tyngsborough Town Center and the surrounding countryside was a desirable vacation destination for city dwellers.



The historical images of the Town Center on the previous page illustrate the development pattern that emerged from all this activity. The map dates from the 19th century. The map and other pictures show that the Town Center was developed with many buildings sited close together. Different uses — from residential to worship to box manufacturing, from wagon building to the selling of grass seed and gasoline — all co-existed. The buildings and the roads connecting them were next to each other. The building on the corner by the Bridge was expanded over the years and included not only the Post Office, but apartments on the upper floors.

The picture just below highlights the view from the eastern bank of the river. It shows the bridge (the first bridge), and the line of buildings on the west bank. There is a strong sense of the way the buildings nestled close to each other: homes, stores, a large industrial chimney, the water tower, and the church steeples. There is a coherent presence. The visual image conveys that this is the place where the roads, the railroad and the bridge converge. The place where activity takes place, the place where the community comes together, the place where business was done. It announced to everyone — local residents, visitors, and those passing through — that they had arrived in Tyngsborough. The building patterns were a visual key.



With the passage of time much of this changed. Regrettably, much has been lost. The historical Tyngsborough Town Center became a victim of the imperatives of the automobile culture. Because the location represented the four-way intersection between Lowell and Nashua and between the east and the west bank of the Merrimack River, the demands of the automobile took precedence over the charm of the village. In 1932 a new and much larger bridge replaced the original bridge. Middlesex Road was widened and straightened. Where buildings were in the way, they were taken by eminent domain and demolished. This was done with skill and efficiency, so the roads now work reasonably well, even with routinely high traffic volumes. Over the years additional improvements have been made, all with the goal of having automobile traffic move efficiently. When the Pheasant Lane Mall was built in Nashua, only two miles north on Middlesex Road, the amount of traffic using the road system increased substantially.

Many in Tyngsborough have felt for years that it would be desirable to recreate a modern version of the historical town center. A number of planning studies have called for creating such a vision. The Historical Commission has called attention to the high quality of many of the existing buildings – a substantial number of which date from the nineteenth century and earlier – and have emphasized that it is important that any new Town Center be consistent with and honor the original development patterns. This Master Plan fully supports this sentiment. In fact, capturing and extending the unique quality of the historical buildings in Tyngsborough's Town Center is the way to maximize the long term economic success of new buildings that may be built.



Master Plan Elements:

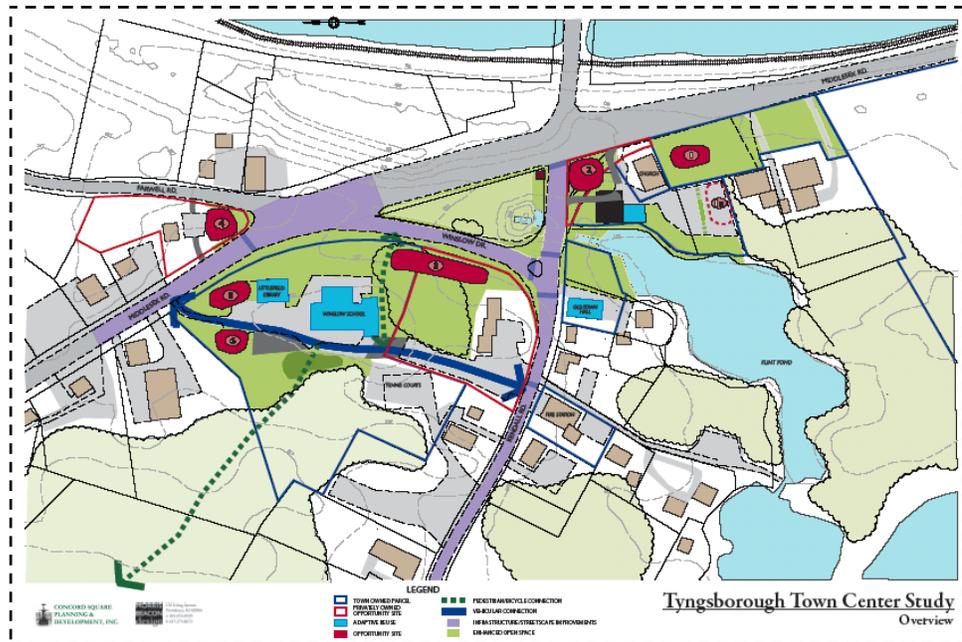
Visual Keys. The size, design and special arrangements of new buildings that may be constructed, working in conjunction with the existing historical buildings should announce the presence of the Town Center for those approaching from all directions.

Mixed Use. New, historical and existing buildings should be used for retail, restaurant, office and residential – all activities to stimulate interest, variety, and create the critical mass of activity necessary for commercial uses to be economically viable.

Open Space and Town Green. New England towns often have town greens at their center – signaling that the center of town has been reached and that public activities take place in this location. Town greens also serve as open space. Because of high levels of nearby automobile traffic, a town green may not function well as a town park.

Town Park. A Town Park should be quiet, pleasant for picnics, contemplation, and relaxation, fun for children, close to the water, and with pedestrian connections to other parts of the Town Center.

Parking and Circulation Plan. Needed to support all the town center activities, and to enhance and work in conjunction with efficiently moving traffic through the Town Center.



This proposed Master Plan for Tyngsborough has been developed in response to these five key elements. It is based on comments and suggestions received from community leaders, stakeholders and citizens. The following paragraphs and illustrations describe how the recommendations contained in this planning document relate to each of these Conceptual Elements.

Visual Keys:

Buildings: Of the buildings identified in pictures and located by arrows on the 19th century map on page 9, only two remain – the historic church and the original Town Hall. Everything else is gone or unrecognizably changed. As a result, when approaching the current town center, there is no sense of place, no sense that important, interesting, entertaining activity is happening. This Master Plan has identified six potential sites for development of new buildings that

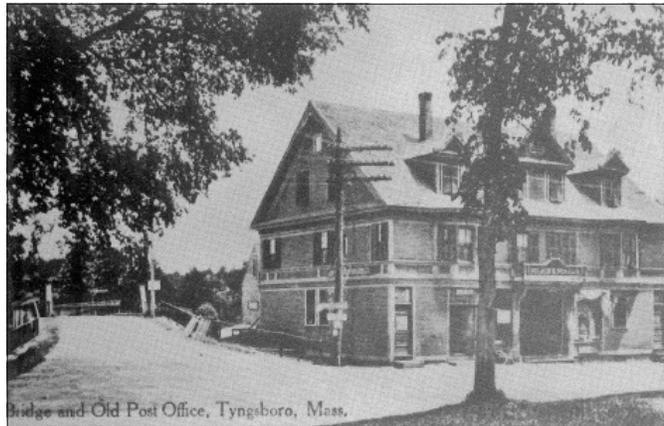


would restore the sense of visual density that used to exist. These buildings would announce the existence of a substantial center of activity. They would restore to Tyngsborough the essence of the image from the historical photograph from the east side of the River that shows the old bridge and the line of buildings, close to each other. In order to accomplish this goal, design standards should be included in any zoning changes and Requests for Proposals that set forth the extent to which new buildings should be similar to and use the same proportions, shapes and visual qualities as the historical buildings that were torn down many years ago.

The proposed locations where new buildings may be appropriate, with numbers indexed to the map on Pages 6-7, are:

1. Just to the south of the church, on Middlesex Road.
2. Just to the north of the Church, on the corner of Kendall and Middlesex Road. This building should be matched by a new sculptural structure on the opposite corner (next to the waterfall at the park). The Sculpture and the new building would frame the entrance to the new Tyngsborough Town Center, providing a gateway to the Town Center.

The former building on the corner of Middlesex Road and the access to the bridge (it contained the post office, a store, and office and residential uses) could be an excellent visual model for this location. The building has a gable roof, dormers, lots of detail around the windows and doors, decorative bands between the floors, and even bay windows.



3. On the privately owned land facing Winslow Drive, between the Farwell House and the Winslow School. If possible, this development site should be encouraged to extend onto the public land between the Winslow School and Winslow Drive.
4. On the private land at the intersection of Middlesex Road and Farwell Road. Ideally this building would be a "flatiron" building of two or preferably three stories in height, built out close to the intersection of the two roads. It would relate visually to the proposed new building across Middlesex Road next to the Littlefield Library.
5. On the public land just north of the Littlefield Library, facing Middlesex Road.
6. On the public land just behind the Littlefield Library and the Winslow School. This opportunity for development is available if the market calls for more commercial space. This building / development is not crucial in adding to the visual signals announcing the new Tyngsborough Town Center.

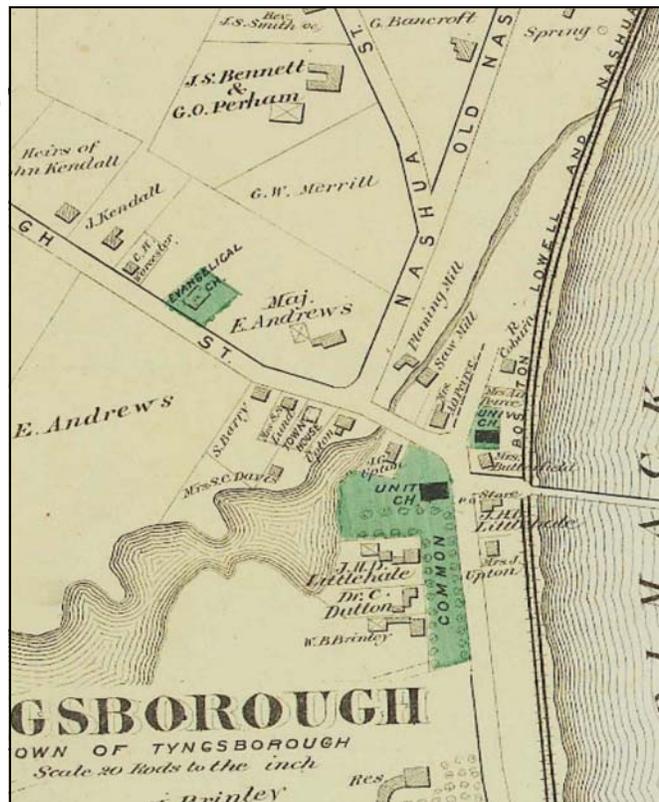
History, Master Plan Elements and Planning Process

Open Space / Town Greens:

A town green will visually suggest and strongly reinforce the idea of a town center. There are two locations along Middlesex Road that can and should serve as both open space and town greens. The first is the area just south of the Church and in front of the two privately owned homes. As shown on the image below, this was the historical town green for Tyngsborough – and continues to be owned by the Town. The second location is the site of the old Flint Box Factory. It is now open space, green, and has a quite handsome waterfall on the Kendall Road side, where the overflow from the pond drops down.

Both of these Town Greens are located adjacent to Middlesex Road. They both are subject to the noise, distraction, accelerations and exhaust emissions of thousands of cars and trucks that pass by hourly (based on MassHighway data, more than 20,000 per day). Most people would not feel that either of these Town Greens would be a pleasant place to relax, or sit in the sun while having lunch or play with children. This does not detract from their importance as open space, nor from their importance to visually signal that this is the Town Center of Tyngsborough. But the town should look elsewhere for the park-like setting that will encourage sitting in the sun and passive recreation.

Improvements to these areas should emphasize visual cues that will announce “Town Green.” A well maintained fence of granite posts and 1” rods around both sites, more landscaping, well kept lawns and some walking paths would enhance the visual buffer between the green space and the highway, and would contribute to the sense that these are historic and important public places.



Mixed Use:

The map and the advertisements discussed earlier make clear how much diverse activity was historically found in the Tyngsborough Town Center. The history of modern shopping center development demonstrates that bringing diverse retail and restaurant businesses together results in more sales for everyone. And the recent resurgence of many downtowns and town centers shows that when retail, restaurants, office and residential uses are combined, the resulting environment can be mutually self reinforcing. Thus a key objective for a new Tyngsborough Town Center is to stimulate a variety of different uses. This would restore the historical function of the Town Center. New buildings, restored and renovated old buildings, and successful



business enterprises will increase property values and add to the tax base and revenues for the Town. The Town Center will become a pleasant and interesting place, stimulating overall economic viability.

It is not necessary that each building have a “mixed use.” Nor is there any formula that should direct the ultimate uses of the buildings. The market can and should be the ultimate arbitrator in making these determinations. Those buildings and uses that can get financed will get built. Those that can’t be financed won’t get built.

It is proposed that an environment be created where different uses are encouraged for the various buildings that exist or are to be built. Zoning can allow retail, office and residential. Design standards associated with the zoning can control the form and appearance of the buildings. The market can then determine what can work in specific situations and at specific times.

The recommendations that follow for the four town owned buildings reflect this mixed use concept. The buildings should be redeveloped in ways that can assure their long-term economic viability. In one case that could mean public use (such as at the Old Town Hall), in another case it could be housing (the Winslow School); it might be a restaurant in the historical portion of the Shur-Fine building, and office use in the Littlefield Library.

Town Park:

Flint Pond and the land between the Pond and the Old Town Hall offers the Town an opportunity to create a park that will be beautiful, quiet, and removed from the highway. It is next to a tranquil body of water. The Park should be conceived as extending around the pond, from the Old Town Hall, across the bridge, and then along the shore of the pond next to the current Shur-Fine buildings and its parking lots. Most of the Shur-Fine buildings are proposed to be demolished; the one remaining should have a walkway between the building and the water to allow a path extending along the water’s edge. Improvements should include walking paths, picnic tables, benches and other simple park furniture. It is easy to imagine parents and their children enjoying such a park.

Public ownership of all this property makes the realization of the Public Park concept feasible and realistic. Improved pedestrian connections across Kendall Road are also important.



Photo montage of Tyngsborough Town Center in winter, at the intersection of Winslow Street and Kendall Road.

History, Master Plan Elements and Planning Process

A second potential location for a Town Park can be found behind the Winslow School and the Littlefield Library, on the open grassy area to the west of the parking pavement. Working with the hill at the edge of the grass, it would be possible to build an amphitheater around a newly constructed bandstand. This would allow for outdoor performances in a location well protected from the noise of Middlesex Road.

Parking and Circulation Plan:

In a sense the most important conceptual element has been left for last to discuss. Few of the proposed changes to the Tyngsborough Town Center will work if the automobile is not accommodated. And this does not mean accommodated in a grudging sense, but accommodated so that vehicular traffic moves smoothly and efficiently, and parking is easy to find and sufficient in quantity. The relationships must work, and work well, on the one hand between circulation, parking, and pedestrian travel, and on the other hand for the new shops, restaurants, offices and housing. All of this must take into account the interests of existing residents and businesses in the Town Center.

There is a high volume of traffic on Middlesex Road, Kendall Road and the Bridge to the east side of the Merrimack. Retail and restaurant uses can be successful in such an environment when it is obvious and easy for people to see the retail and how to get to the parking. This is an important reason why it is important to establish visual cues for the Town Center (discussed above) that are immediately obvious to those in their cars. However, both way-finding signage and architectural details must also be clear and appealing for those who park their cars and spend time in the Town Center on foot.

The geography and land ownership in Tyngsborough is highly fortuitous with regard to developing new circulation and parking to support the proposed new mixed-use buildings – the line of buildings to be seen from the bridge that will signify the new Town Center.

First: Town ownership of the Shur-Fine property as well as the historical town green to the south of the church means that the Town can control and manage the development of this entire area. The proposed new buildings will face Middlesex Road – but they will also face Flint Pond and parking. Town property can provide for appropriate access from Kendall Road to the parking for these new buildings and their retail, office, restaurant (and maybe residential) uses. The parking can be organized to leave room for a new park to extend on the Town-owned land around Flint Pond. An integrated environment can be created that will make retail/restaurant/office uses work – and provide direct access to a lovely public park.

Second: An opportunity may exist to provide new automobile circulation between Middlesex Road and Kendall Road. It could also provide more parking behind the Littlefield Library and the Winslow School. The circulation and the parking would support the retail / office / housing mixed-use recommended for the opportunity sites extending along and just above Winslow Drive and Middlesex Road, and for the Library and School.



The Littlefield Library and the School are situated on a fairly substantial piece of Town-owned property, which includes tennis courts to the south. The property between the School and the tennis courts and Kendall Road is privately owned, and includes the historical Farwell property. The Farwell home was built in 1725, and is attached to a historical (that is, old) barn by a connecting el. The barn contains an antique store, the el is a bakery, the first floor of the house is a spa, and the upper floors of the house are residential. (It could hardly be more mixed-use). There are two fairly large parking areas.

The property owner has expressed interest in exploring a public-private partnership with the Town that would result in zoning that would allow additional development on the private property, along with the construction of an automobile circulation connector between the Town-owned property and Kendall Road. Such a connection would not only provide for automobile and pedestrian circulation, but could also provide the parking needed to support new buildings along the portion of the properties that front on Winslow Drive and Middlesex Road (specifically for opportunity Sites 3, 5 and 6).

The construction of such a road would restore original circulation patterns. It is understood that such a connection between Middlesex Road and Kendall Road existed until the mid-20th century.

The recommendations for narrowing Winslow Road, eliminating the traffic island, and providing some parking on the western side of the road would also support this overall development opportunity.

To summarize:

A comparison of prior conditions in the Town Center to those that exist today illustrates that many of its historical development patterns, patterns that often characterize New England villages, have been lost. The construction of the new bridge in 1932 and the on-going realignments of the Middlesex Turnpike (Rte. 3A) have caused the demolition of important historical buildings. These losses have diminished the sense of a village center where people live and where they gather to work, shop and visit. Today, when one drives through the intersection of Kendall Road and Middlesex Road there is little indication that this area once was the heart of Tyngsborough.

The goal of this Town Center Master Plan is to develop a strategy to re-create a Town Center for Tyngsborough that reestablishes many of its historical functions while respecting and working within the constraints of the automobile and its requirements. Collectively, the recommendations aim to recreate an economically viable, distinct and coherent Town Center, one that will visually capture the attention of those who pass by.

It is a fact that there are limited public funds available now, and the future is expected to have similar constraints on public investment. Therefore, in conceptualizing this plan, every effort has been made to create economic value. This is value that can be realized through the plan itself, through use of public land, through recommended zoning changes, and through design standards. As the private sector recognizes this economic value it is expected that it will be possible to negotiate a number of public-private partnerships to carry out the needed development. Much of the recommended development work itself can therefore be reasonably expected to be paid for by private parties.

History, Master Plan Elements and Planning Process

Planning Process:

The 2004 Tyngsborough Master Plan identified the need to strengthen the Town's commercial Town Center while preserving and enhancing its historical features. To further these goals, Town Meeting voters allocated Community Preservation Act funds toward this initiative in 2007. This funding was used by the Economic Development Committee to fund this study to develop a plan for the revitalization of the Town Center.

The Economic Development Committee has worked in recent years to address many of the Town's infrastructure issues and to recommend purchase of properties integral to the development of a cohesive Town Center. It has worked to draft zoning, design guidelines and various economic development tools to help realize an overall vision for Tyngsborough's historical Town Center.

The Town's ownership of key parcels of land, including historically significant buildings, has allowed the Town to be an active participant in the development of a plan for a more vibrant and active Town Center and was a key component of the Economic Development Committee's goals for the Master Plan. At the time of this study, all four Town-owned buildings in the primary study area were vacant and three were in need of significant repairs before they could become functional spaces. Development of recommendations for these Town-owned properties was an important objective to be realized in the Town Center Master Plan.

The Town of Tyngsborough retained Concord Square Planning & Development, Inc. and Morris Beacon Design in January 2008 to study the current conditions and to develop a conceptual master plan for the Town Center. Over the course of the following eight months, the two firms conducted an infrastructure analysis and analyzed reuse options for the Town-owned properties. The Town Center Master Plan also builds upon the work of previous plans and initiatives that collectively set out a vision for the Town with a focus on the Town Center. Plans and initiatives referenced in this work include: the Town Master Plan (2004), the Economic Development Plan (2006), the Open Space and Recreation Plan (2002) and the Town's adoption of the Community Preservation Act in 2001.

Throughout the process of developing the Town Center Master Plan there were multiple walking tours of the study area. Meetings and conversations were held with local property owners, merchants and municipal officials including the Town Administrator, Building Inspector, Town Assessor, Conservation Agent, the Chair and members of the Historical Commission, members of the Community Preservation Committee, the Economic Development Committee and the Board of Selectmen.

Three public meetings were conducted to gather ideas from Tyngsborough residents, merchants and landowners. The recommendations in this plan were the subject of extensive discussions, including ideas for potential building reuse, open space, infrastructure and new development opportunities. Outreach for the public meetings included a mailing to all landowners in the study area and to parties who showed an interest in the project by contacting the consultants or the Town. Public interest in this work was reflected in the strong attendance at each of the public workshops.

In addition, the Economic Development Committee met with the consultant team regularly during the course of the work, discussing and refining the ideas on an ongoing basis. This Master Plan and its recommendations resulted from the efforts of many citizens and public officials within this extensive public process. **On September 29, 2008 the Economic Development Committee met and unanimously (5-0) approved the Town Center Master Plan.** The Committee will review the Master Plan annually and will update and revise the document as appropriate.



III. Re-use of Town Owned Properties



The Master Plan vision includes the restoration and reuse of several Town-owned buildings and properties. The following section highlights a number of opportunities to channel the investment of private capital in the Town Center to supplement public efforts to recapture the area's historical function and vitality.

Re-use of Town Owned Properties

Winslow School

The Winslow School is a two-story, 17,569 s.f. building with a clapboard exterior and a refurbished roof. There are substantial associated school grounds and playing fields, including tennis courts.

The analysis of potential reuse options for the Winslow School explored commercial, retail and residential options. Commercial and retail use of the building is difficult because of the building configuration. The classroom and hallway layout make it impractical to divide the building into individual offices or stores. It might be possible to redevelop the building for the use of a single, large business. However this may be difficult given the cost of renovations and other potentially more attractive alternatives that would be available to the business user.

Housing is recommended as the most feasible reuse option for the Winslow School. Development of housing in the building could result in 8 two-level units with interior staircases, each with approximately 1,500 s.f. of living space. Ideally the zoning would allow live-work in the spaces. This would make it possible for a person or a couple to both live there and have a functioning home office or studio from which they could earn a living. The two level layout would be conducive to separating the living area from the working area. From a financing point of view, it is likely that it would be possible to receive both Federal and State Historic Tax Credits for the redevelopment work if the property is owned by a private party, and if it is rented (and not sold) to the residents for a period of 5 years. The tax credits can equal as much as 40% times the cost of renovation (which includes financing, architect, engineering and other costs in addition to the construction costs).

Views from the front of the building out to the Merrimack River are excellent. Construction of single level units on each of the two floors is likely to be unfeasible because the window sills on the lower level are too high above floor level. Utilizing the current classroom and hallway layout, the



design of the building would be reasonably efficient (approximately 69% useable space). The two hallways in the building could provide egress routes for the units from each level.

This type of housing use would not be expected to add many, if any, children to the school system. Typically

*Winslow School
Recommended
Use: Housing*

*Birds-eye view of Winslow
School and Littlefield Library.*



such housing generates between 0.1 and 0.2 school aged children who go to public schools per housing unit (that is, 10 children to 20 children per 100 units). Thus the probable number of children for eight 1,500 s.f. live-work housing units would be between zero and one. One of the reasons that this type of housing generates a small number of children is because the rents or sale prices need to be high enough to support the renovation costs, and for that amount of rent or purchase price, other accommodations more suitable for children are available.

It is understood that the existing septic system for the Winslow School is shared with the Littlefield Library, and that the system has largely failed. Consequently, re-use of the building would require a substantial rebuilding of the septic system, or, longer term, connection to a new Town Center sewer line.

This reuse of the Winslow School as housing would be most feasible as a public/private partnership. The RFP for this project should highlight the Town's guidelines for the preservation of the property's historical qualities and the project's role and contributions to the broader Town Center improvement plan. The center chimney could be replaced with a cupola comparable to the original building design. It is likely to be possible to move forward with this development by improving or rebuilding the on-site septic system prior to the availability of public sewer. Planning for parking, access, and the septic system should take into consideration the long term potential of having a connection to Kendall Road.



*Top: Winslow School prior to 1915 addition.
Bottom: Winslow School today.*



Photograph of the interior of the school illustrating the type of space, including large windows, available on the upper floor.

Re-use of Town Owned Properties: Winslow School

It would also be possible to redevelop the Winslow School into offices / headquarters for the Police and / or the Fire Department, as some have suggested. Given the difficulty of acquiring new land for the expansion of municipal offices, this possibility should be explored within an overall evaluation of other publicly owned parcels in Tyngsborough. However, municipal use, as opposed to private residential use, would forgo an increase in the municipal property tax base. It would also tend to work against the potential for developing a vibrant commercial office / retail / residential center in this location.



The lower floor of the Winslow School would not support independent units, but could work as the first level within two-level units.

Recommended Steps:

- A. Determination of optimum use (private housing or municipal offices / facilities).
- B. Evaluation of existing septic system and soil conditions with regard to the expansion / upgrade of current septic system.
- C. Proceed to implement the desired use:
 1. If municipal, obtain funds, do design, construction, etc.
 2. If housing:
 - i. Change the zoning to allow housing. Include Design Standards in the zoning.
 - ii. Subdivide the parcel to allow for its sale to a private party.
 - iii. Complete a 21(e) environmental analysis.
 - iv. Issue an RFP for redevelopment, using on-site septic system, subject to the zoning and design standards, and allowing for long term adjustments to parking and automobile circulation systems, as well as for potential adjacent commercial development.

Impacts/ Benefits:

- A. Restoration of an important historical building in Tyngsborough.
- B. If municipal use, will provide additional facilities without the cost of land acquisition.
- C. If housing (or other commercial use), will result in the receipt of the purchase price for the property, plus put the property on the tax rolls, plus, potentially, receipt of funds that could be used for off-site improvements, such as the proposed amphitheater and bandstand, and / or for making the circulation connection to Kendall Road.



Littlefield Library

The building is in good condition with a modern heating system. The building has been used by the Historical Commission for its regular meetings since the library moved to its new quarters in the same building as the current Town Hall. The building is reasonably well maintained. As noted in the discussion about the Winslow School, the shared septic system is currently marginal at best, and is likely to require an upgrade in order for significant use of the building to be possible.



Littlefield Library Recommended Use: Office

Meeting space, housing, retail, and office were considered as potential reuse options for this property:

- **Public meeting space:** Using the building for this purpose would not generate revenue for the Town and will require continued public maintenance of the building. However, if a decision is made to not use the Old Town Hall for a meeting hall and public facility, then continuing to use the Littlefield Library for this purpose—just as it is currently being used by the Historical Commission — could make good sense. This is particularly the case since there is or can be sufficient, nearby and safe parking.
- **Housing:** There is potential for either a single family home, or two 650 s.f. housing units within the building. To create two units would require the subdivision of the building and the creation of a new means of egress for the second unit. The basement is not available for bedroom space due to the lack of windows. It would be difficult to create a sense of privacy because of the traffic and parking requirements for the rest of the site. Use of the building as a single family residence would be possible and would not require significant or elaborate renovation work. However, the home would be relatively small since only the first floor is habitable. This use would be inconsistent with new commercial activity recommended for the immediately surrounding area. Use as housing is not recommended.
- **Retail:** A retail use for the building is not ideal because of the building's size and configuration. If such a use were to become desirable because of an overall retail plan that needed more leasable area, then retail use could enhance the commercial character of the Town Center and could aid with the goals of the Town Center Master Plan. The basement of the property is not handicapped accessible and therefore could only be used as storage and ancillary space for the retail business.

Recommended - Office: The use of the building as an office is recommended as likely being the best option, particularly because of the condition and character of the building. The building has a strong visual identity created by its architectural characteristics and its height above the street. It could be used by small businesses such as lawyers, architects, insurance agents or accountants. Current conditions including the woodwork finishes in the interior, and its handicapped accessibility would allow the building to be transformed into office space with little difficulty. Although the basement does not have many windows, it could be used for both a conference room and storage so the entire building could be utilized more efficiently than with other proposed uses. Converting this building to privately owned office space would also contribute to the goals for the Town Center, enhancing its presence as a commercial center, and put the building back on the tax rolls.

Re-use of Town Owned Properties: Littlefield Library

Recommended Steps:

- A. Determination of optimum use.
- B. Evaluation of the current septic system to determine feasibility and cost of upgrade.
- C. Proceed to implement the desired use:
 1. If municipal meeting space, obtain funds, complete design of needed improvements (if any), parking, etc. Then carry out construction, etc.
 2. If Private Office Use:
 - i. Subdivide the parcel to allow for its sale to a private party.
 - ii. Complete a 21(e) environmental analysis.
 - iii. Issue an RFP for redevelopment, using an on-site septic system, subject to design standards for renovation, and allowing for long term adjustments to parking and automobile circulation systems, and for potential adjacent commercial development.

Impacts/ Benefits:

- A. In the short run, continues to serve as a handicapped accessible meeting location for the Historical Commission, and others, with adequate and convenient parking.
- B. In the longer term, can be a location for groups to meet in the event that the Old Town Hall is not renovated for meeting use. This would not require major expenditures by the Town.
- C. If private office use: will result in the receipt of the purchase price for the property, plus put the property on the tax rolls, plus, potentially, allow for the receipt of funds that can be used for other off-site improvements, such as the potential amphitheater and bandstand, and / or for making the circulation connection to Kendall Road.



Littlefield Library looks as it did decades ago and is in good condition, making it a good candidate for reuse as office space for a small professional business.



Old Town Hall

The Old Town Hall was built circa 1834 and contains 6,776 s.f. on two levels plus a mezzanine. It is an iconic building in the Town Center. It has views of Flint Pond, the recommended expanded park space and the Shur-Fine building. The building is no longer in use and is in need of structural repairs. In 1999, the Historical Commission completed a thorough assessment of the building which identified a number of structural issues that must be addressed. In 2000, the roof and the clapboard exterior of the building were repaired in an effort to stabilize the building and protect it from further deterioration.



Old Town Hall

The 1999 study determined that the load bearing capacity of the building is insufficient for office use. Without significant upgrades to the structural system, it likewise cannot support large groups of people or office use, such as would be needed if it were to become a community facility. The cost to upgrade the load bearing capacity was estimated to be fifty to seventy thousand dollars. Residential use of the building is possible without the load bearing upgrades to the structure.

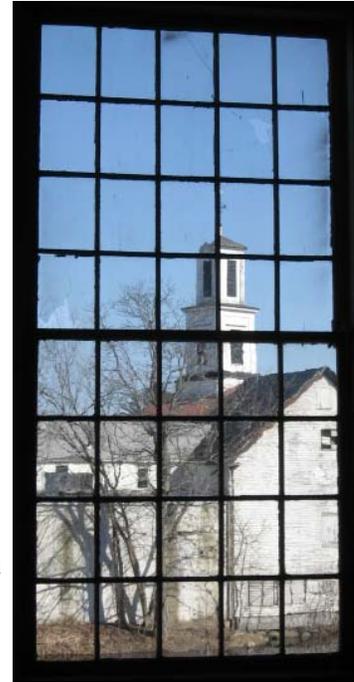
According to the Board of Health, the septic system was installed in 1998, is considered to be operable, and has a capacity of 488 gallons per day. This is sufficient for 6,500 s.f. of office space, 162 person capacity for an Auditorium or Theater, 32 person capacity for a function hall, or an 81 capacity of a church. Housing requires a capacity of 110 gallons per day per bedroom. The septic capacity of the property is a key element in determining the optimum use of the property until such time as a public sewer system is available in the Town Center.

Three potential options have been identified for the renovation and reuse of the Old Town Hall. In all three options it is assumed that the additions at the rear of the building are removed.

The first has been developed by the Historical Commission, which has invested a great deal of time and effort into developing a plan to preserve the building and maintain it as a public space. The 1999 study reflects this effort. The Historical Commission recommends that the building be renovated and upgraded for use as a public meeting space. In this case the building would be owned, renovated, operated and maintained by the Town. A key issue that would need to be addressed if this option is pursued is the location for the parking that would be needed to support the use. It may be possible to add spaces across Kendall Road on Winslow Drive. It may also be possible to use the parking areas at the Shur-Fine property on the other side of the pond. In addition, it would be possible to pave over all or a portion of the current green space beside the building next to Flint Pond. However, this is not recommended because this land would be much better used as a park. Selecting this option will also require that the Town find the funds to pay for the needed renovations, as well as to pay for ongoing operations and maintenance. In addition, the property would not be on the tax rolls. It has been estimated that the cost to rehabilitate the building for community hall use would be approximately three million dollars.

Old Town Hall

The second option is to allow this building to be converted into privately owned housing. **Housing is the re-use option that is recommended by the Economic Development Committee.** The analysis conducted by Concord Square suggests that it would be conceptually feasible to subdivide the building into three relatively large housing units, each approximately 2,255 square feet in size. Each unit would contain two bedrooms, have three levels, and be 22 feet wide. Each would have a private entrance at grade. By opening the roof area under the rafters, the original trusses could be exposed and skylights added to enhance the open space within the units. The addition of more windows on the north (front), east and south sides of the building would increase the light within each unit as well as open up views to Flint Pond. Such a use, if selected and if feasible, would result in restoring the property at little or no cost to the Town. The housing would be on the tax rolls and would generate property tax revenues each year. In addition, using the building for housing would require less parking than for any other use - a total of six spaces, three of which could conceivably be across Kendall Road. It is believed that the required changes in the physical structure to make the units economically feasible could be done in a historically sensitive and appropriate way. If this approach is selected, it is strongly recommended that the Town develop design standards within the RFP evaluation criteria that would govern its renovation and ensure that the property would be perpetually maintained in a manner consistent with its historical quality.



*View from Old Town Hall
across Flint Pond.*

The current septic system does not have sufficient capacity for three housing units with two bedroom each. Capacity would need to be increased to 660 gallons per day. Consequently an evaluation should be made about whether there is the potential to increasing capacity to this extent. It is possible that this could be done by extending the leaching field under the driveway.

The third potential use would be as offices. This is similar to the most immediate prior use, which was as Town offices. An advantage of this use is that the septic system currently has the capacity to handle 6,500 s.f. of office use, thereby not posing a challenge for the redevelopment of the building. The building would, however, offer challenges with regard to the high ceilings, the difficulty and cost of heating the space properly, the cost of structural reinforcements, the location of parking (approximately 20 spaces needed) and the probable need to install an elevator to provide handicapped accessibility. It may be helpful to such redevelopment to allow the installation of additional windows, entryways and skylights in the building, subject, of course, to design standards.

These photos show the interior of the Old Town Hall, illustrating the space available and as well as the renovation challenges. The photo on the left shows the basement level.



It should be anticipated that the value of the building to a developer of housing or office use and the resulting offering price for the building is likely to be at the low end of a scale of reasonableness. The building needs a great deal of work, including substantial reconfiguration, and the costs would be high. Consequently the major benefit to the Town is likely to be having the building begin to pay annual property taxes, as well as no longer require annual expenditures by the Town for maintenance and utilities. In any event, the correct sales price supported by the marketplace can be determined by the RFP process – that is, by what private parties are willing to pay.

Retail use in the Old Town Hall is not considered a realistic alternative. There is no convenient parking, and there is little potential for people on foot to walk in. Customers would not be able to easily reach the building. It would require additional structural reinforcement to the building. The space is not laid out well for retail – that is, it would be hard to efficiently utilize the volume of space in the main hall. Using both the basement and first floor levels would require the installation of an elevator. Limitation of the septic system and the lack of convenient parking also make restaurant use unlikely.

Recommended Steps:

- A. Determination of optimum use – Meeting Hall or sale for private development as housing or offices.
- B. For housing, an evaluation of soil for expansion and upgrade of current septic system. Determine whether an upgrade is feasible; if not, must wait for the installation of a public sewer system.
- C. Proceed to implement the desired use:
 1. If municipal meeting space, obtain funds, complete design of improvements needed, determine location of parking, etc. Then carry out construction, etc.
 2. If Housing or Office Use:
 - i. If housing, change the zoning to allow housing subject to design standards.
 - ii. Complete a 21(e) environmental survey – or an update if one has already been completed.
 - iii. Issue an RFP for redevelopment, subject to the zoning and design standards. Designate locations for needed parking.

Impacts/Benefits:

- A. Regardless of use, either choice will result in the renovation and long-term stability of an important historical building in the Town Center.
- B. If the Meeting House use is chosen, it would provide an additional location for groups to meet and for public events to be held in Tyngsborough.
- C. If housing or office use is chosen: would result in the receipt of the purchase price for the property, plus put the property on the tax rolls. Housing use requires the least amount of parking. Office use can be supported by the existing septic system.

Re-use of Town Owned Properties: Shur-Fine Market

Shur-Fine Market

The Shur-Fine Market is a wood framed building with a brick veneer exterior. The entire building is 13,526 s.f and contains 3 stories, one of which is a basement. There is an apartment in a portion of the 2nd floor. The barn attached to the main market building is 1,312 s.f. per floor and is three stories including a basement. A portion of the barn has clapboard siding. Phase I and II environmental assessments have been completed for the property. Because Community Preservation Commission (CPC) funds were used to purchase the Shur-Fine Market, the future use of the property is limited to uses that are “consistent with the purpose of the acquisition.”

Partial demolition of the building is recommended (to the left and right of the barn) with a cost estimate for demolition of \$60-65k. However, this estimate, which was obtained by the Community Preservation Committee prior to public acquisition of the site, should be updated to ensure accuracy. The buildings are functionally obsolete, and demolition would open up the site and provide needed access, parking and green space for this portion of the Town Center.

Retention, renovation and the long term preservation of the historical barn is recommended. The barn structure has two substantial assets; it is close to plenty of parking, and it overlooks – in fact is right on Flint Pond. It has two floors plus a basement. The basement level is at ground level on the Flint Pond side. As mentioned elsewhere, it is important to have a pedestrian path along the edge of the water to allow public access to the park-like areas surrounding Flint Pond. The ideal use for the first floor and perhaps a portion of the basement would be a restaurant, potentially with an



These photographs show the existing building; the barn portion (left photo) should be preserved for its historical value and the newer portion (upper right photo) should be demolished to improve aesthetics as well as the functionality of the site.

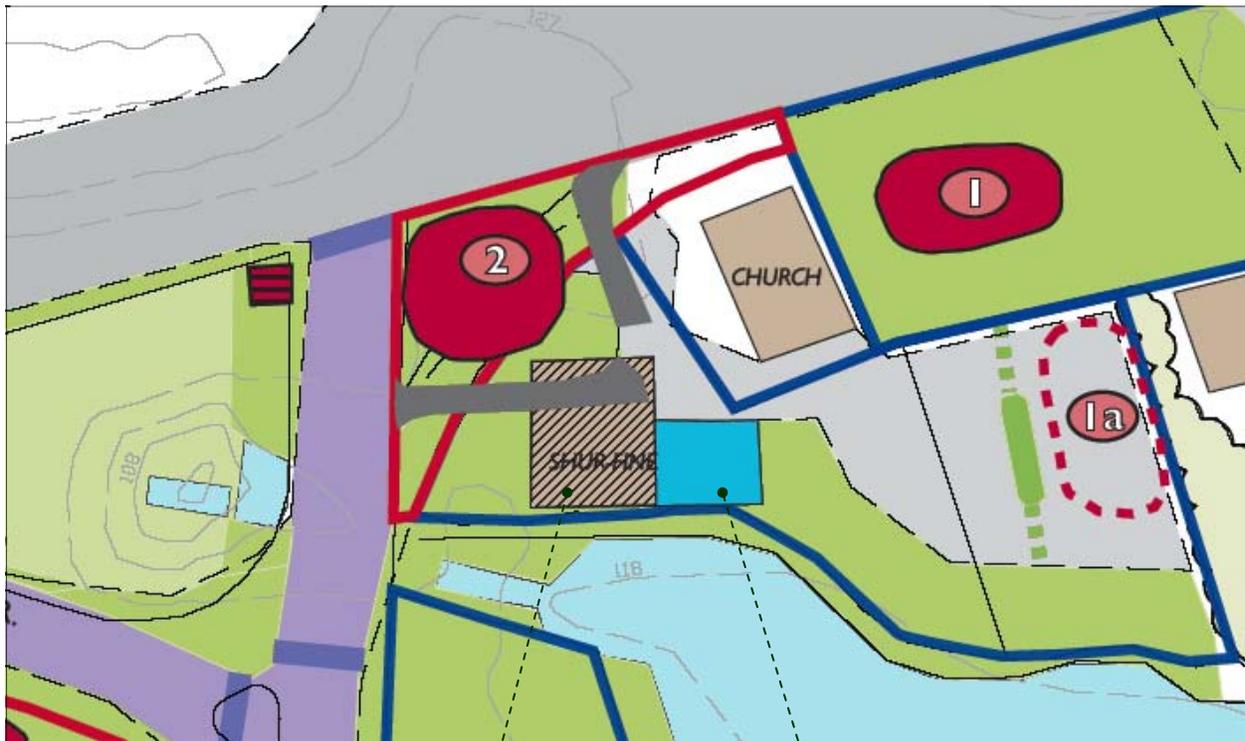


outside deck overlooking the pond. To fully utilize the space, the upper floors in the building could be office (preferred because it would contribute to the commercial atmosphere that is suggested for this area) or housing.

It would not be feasible to reconstruct the barn in its current location under today's regulations because of required environmental setbacks from Flint Pond. The exterior of the building should be restored in a historically appropriate way, probably with clapboard siding. The space within the building may be expanded by utilizing the space under the roof.

The Shur-Fine store installed a new septic system in 2002, with a design capacity of 636 gallons per day. It is understood that this system continues to function per design.

It may be possible to utilize the existing septic system that was used for the grocery store and the apartment for the new uses in a reduced footprint of just the barn building. The capacity of the current system is adequate for office use, or for apartments with up to a total of five bedrooms. Further, since the Town owns the land just south of the church, it may be possible to expand the capacity of the existing system sufficiently to accommodate a restaurant. New leaching fields must be at least 100 feet away from the pond. If this were to be completed, the Town could put the Shur-Fine property out for bid through an RFP process, rather than wait until public sewer arrived for significant, visible improvements to be realized at the site. In addition, it may be possible to get the demolition of the other buildings paid for by the purchaser of the remaining building.



Shur-Fine Market Recommended for partial demolition; recommended demolition of this portion of building

Preserve and reuse the barn portion of the building for a restaurant or retail business

Shur-Fine Market

Recommended Steps:

- A. Evaluate the potential for redevelopment of the barn building with regard to septic capacity, proposed new uses, and the public walk-way next to Flint Pond.
- B. Develop a conceptual overall site plan for all the property between Flint Pond and Middlesex Road. This should take into account the open space objectives that led to the allocation of Community Preservation Act funding for the property, as noted below.
- C. Issue an RFP for the redevelopment of the barn building, including design standards, and including coordination, compatibility and consistency with other proposed improvements to the area.
- D. Obtain funding for the public park, public parking and access on this side of Flint Pond. This public work may also include partial demolition of the Shur-Fine building.
- E. Carry out the public improvements.
- F. Undertake discussions with Massachusetts Highway Department with regard to the realignment of the corner (as further detailed in Section VI of this Master Plan).

Impacts/ Benefits:

- A. Coupled with a successful RFP process, modest public expenditures for the partial demolition of the Shur-Fine building and for the construction of public parking and public park areas on the west side of Flint Pond could result in the transformation of the entire area in a relatively short period of time.
- B. Longer term, re-alignment of the corner between Kendall Road and Middlesex Road, plus construction on the two suggested opportunity sites on this site, plus the construction of the structure / sculpture on the opposite corner would create the activity and sense of place that is the hallmark of a vibrant Town Center.



The Shur-Fine site should be considered as a whole. It offers the opportunity for building renovation, new development, parking, and enhancement of a network of walking paths and public open space.



IV. Open Space & Pedestrian Improvements



The Master Plan vision includes the creation of quality open spaces connected to one another by a network of pedestrian accessible paths. The following section highlights a number of opportunities to create a unique network of small open spaces within the Town Center and ways to emphasize the connectivity between them.

Open Space & Pedestrian Improvements

Flint Pond Green Space and Walking Path

The Town currently owns the grassy area surrounding the north-western edge of Flint Pond and next to the Old Town Hall. This green space is an existing park amenity in the Town Center and can play a key role in creating a sense of “place” and maximizing the network of open spaces within the Center. If this open space is developed into a more formal green space, it can be used as part of a pedestrian walking path on the Town-owned sections of land surrounding Flint Pond. With its tranquil view of the water, this section of the Town’s open space network may be developed as an ideal place to sit and enjoy the views, have a picnic, and play with children. This green space is across the street from the green space between Winslow Drive, Kendall Road and Middlesex Road and will help foster a connection between the two areas across Kendall Road.

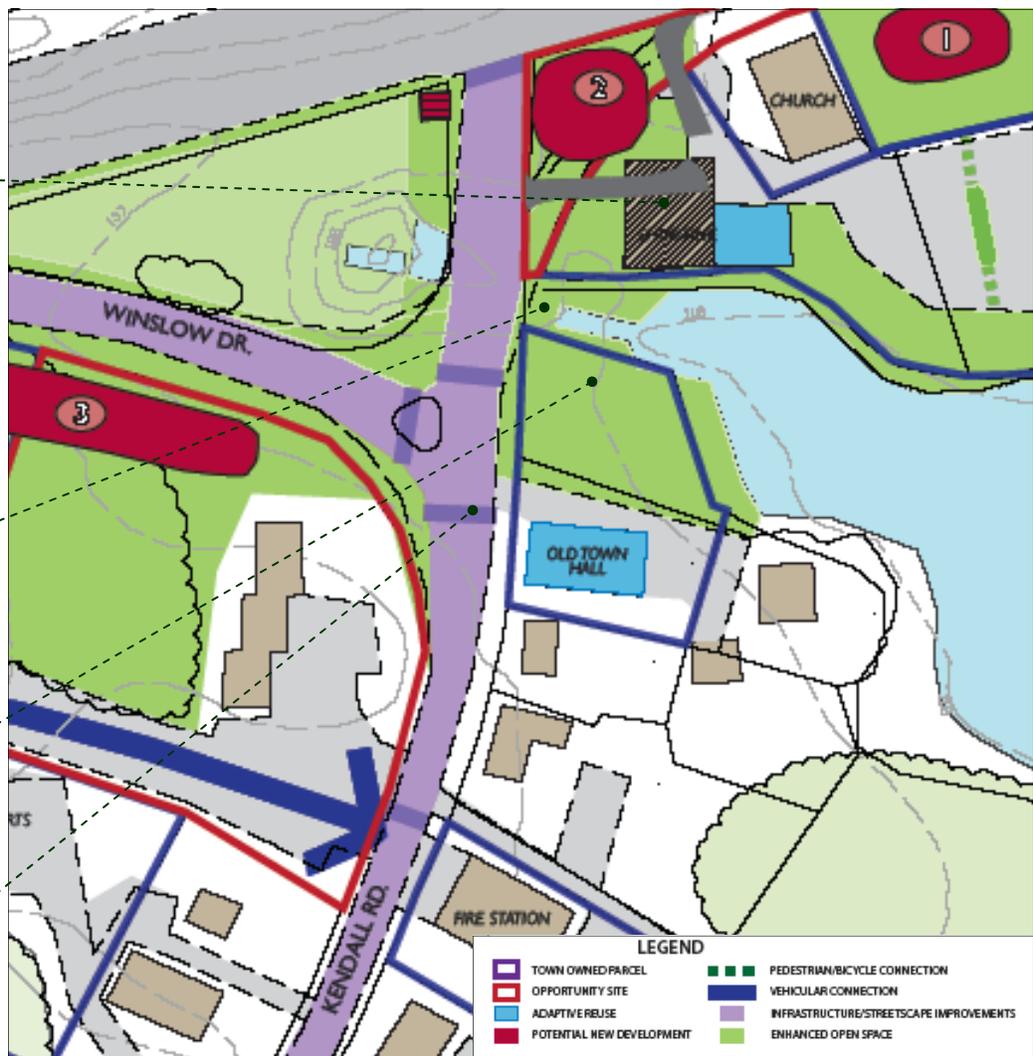


Partial demolition of Shur-Fine adds to open space and improves views. New walkway to continue connection around pond. (subject to permitting)

Create walking path along Town owned portion of Flint Pond

Enhance green space at Flint Pond

Emphasize connections to Kendall Rd. and Winslow Drive



Recommended Steps:

- Advance concept for enhanced, formalized green space near Old Town Hall.
- Walking paths and access must comply with ADA and AAB standards.
- Include neighboring property owners in discussions of planned improvements for green space and walking path.



Photograph of the Flint Pond area.

Impacts/ Benefits:

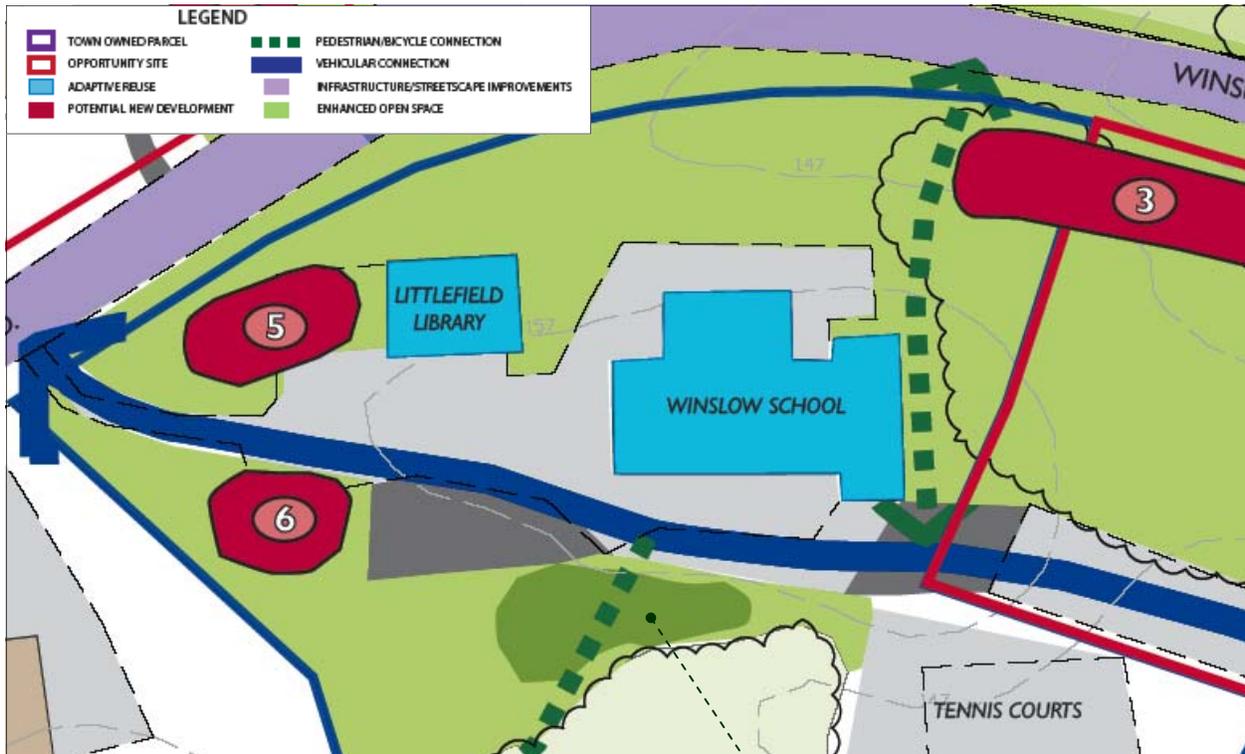
- Would enable visitors to this green space to park on Winslow Road or on the Shur-Fine lot and easily cross from one public area to the next.
- Development of a public space on the south side of the Town Center would encourage pedestrian traffic through both north and south sections of the center which are typically divided by Kendall Road.
- Green space may serve as an impetus for traffic calming measures on Kendall Road to ensure public safety when crossing between the two areas.



Open Space & Pedestrian Improvements

Winslow School Public Space

There is currently a section of under-utilized green space behind the Winslow School and the Littlefield Library. The lot includes open land that could be converted into an outdoor public gathering space. With the addition of a connection road from Middlesex Road to Kendall Road and the development of the Town-owned properties as housing or office space, this area may be visited by many more Town residents and visitors. This space behind the two Town-owned buildings could be utilized by the Town as a public meeting space and could offer a quiet green space set back from busy Middlesex Road. It might have an amphitheater built into the small hill to the southwest, and a bandstand to serve as the center for specific activities. In addition, if a pedestrian connection between the current Town Hall and the Winslow School is pursued, this area may be available to visitors walking from the library or Town Hall.



Enhance the public space behind Winslow School into a friendly, inviting park possibly including an amphitheatre or bandstand



Recommended Steps:

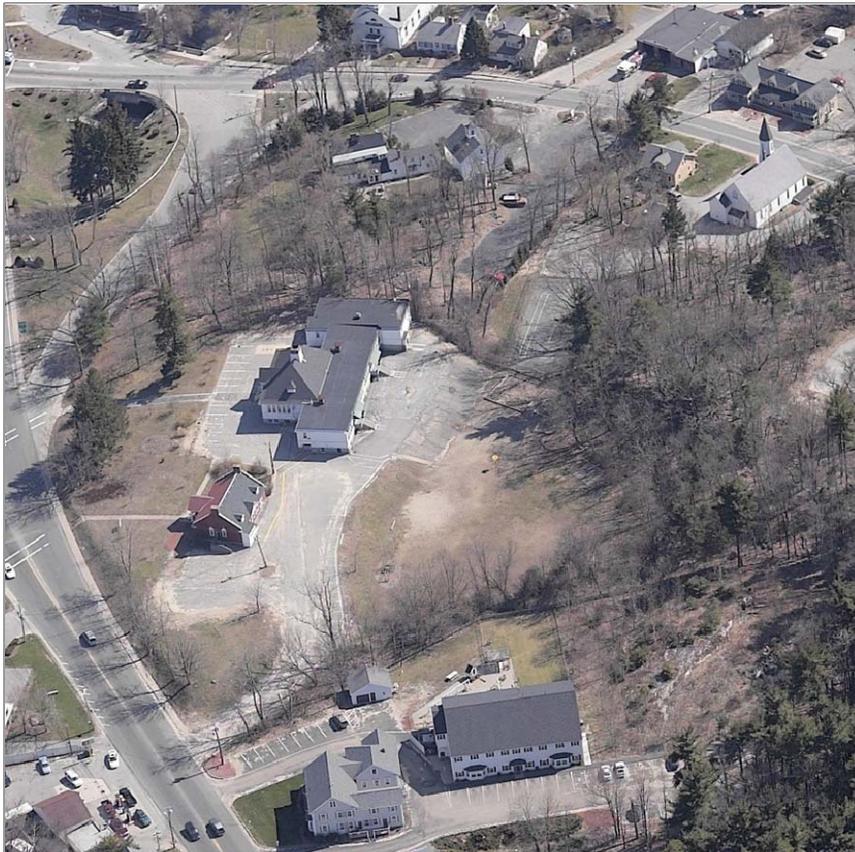
- Advance concept plan for public gathering space, taking into account site design issues such as topography and parking, and including programming of potential public uses.
- Would require parking along newly developed road or as part of the redevelopment of the Town-owned buildings.
- Coordinate with the development plans and parking plans for the Winslow School and Littlefield Library.



An attractive gazebo in the Town of Andover.

Impacts/ Benefits:

- Could encourage use of pedestrian walkway from Town Hall to Town Center.
- Would increase usable green space in Town Center and provide public gathering space set back from Middlesex Road and insulated from traffic noise.



Birds-eye views of the green space behind the Winslow School.



Public parks in other Massachusetts communities.

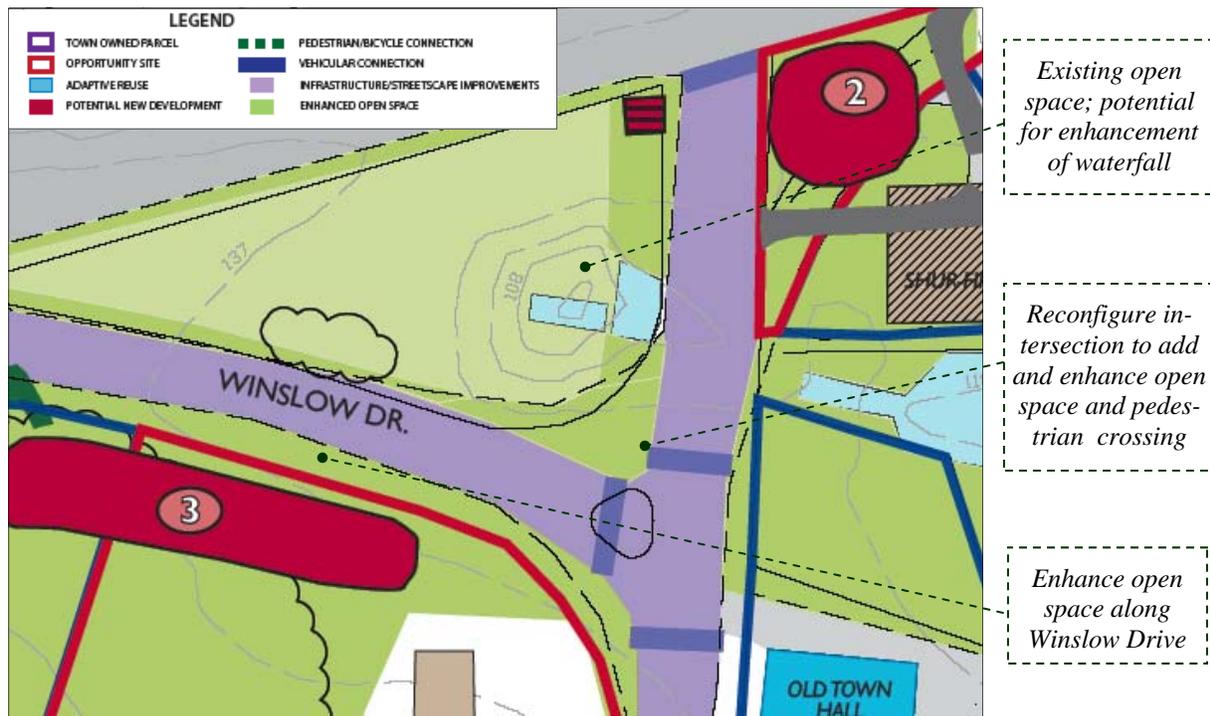
Open Space & Pedestrian Improvements

Winslow Drive Green Space Extension and Improvements

The Winslow Drive green space is currently the primary large portion of public open space in the Town Center. However, it is surrounded on all sides by roads, and Middlesex Road experiences high traffic volumes. The resulting traffic noise and exhaust fumes do not make the area conducive to being a restful environment for visitors. The waterfall from the outflow of Flint Pond is in this space, and could be more attractively presented for the public. This space, however, should become an important visual key as a Town Green for Tyngsborough Town Center.

Several opportunities exist that would transform this underutilized space into a visual focal point.

- Installing a granite post and rail fence around the entire space would define this as a public open space and would add visual interest (see the example on the next page).
- By eliminating the fork at the end of Winslow Drive and creating a T-intersection, the visual appearance of this green space would be extended across Kendall Road to the open space next to the Old Town Hall.
- Improving the waterfall area by adding an overlook with historic design elements and fencing would enhance what is currently a unique feature missed by most people.
- Installing an “iconic” sculpture at the corner of the site by the Middlesex Road/Kendall Road intersection would create a visual frame to the whole area, both from the bridge across the Merrimack River and from Kendall Road. This would serve as a gateway to the Town Center, and unique Tyngsborough historic or cultural elements should be integrated into the design.
- One alternative discussed within the planning process included creation of a Veterans’ Memorial Park within the Winslow Drive green space.



Recommended Steps:

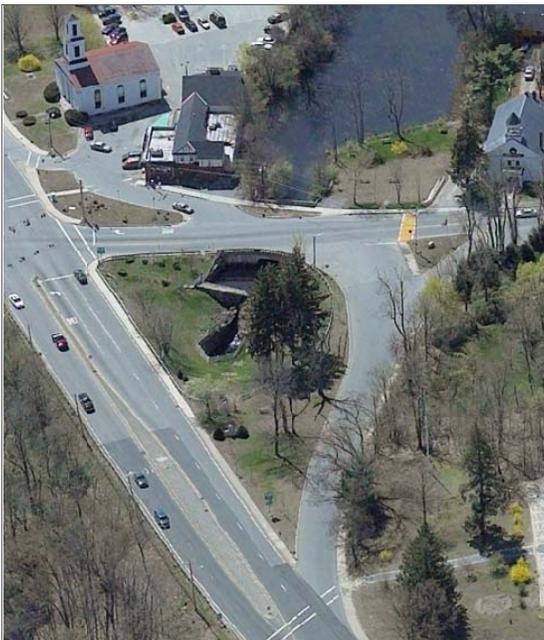
- Review process for extending green space and eliminating portion of Winslow Drive.
- Work with Mass Highway to review impact on traffic from fork to T-intersection.
- Work closely with MassHighway regarding the green space extension and alterations to the roadway.
- Issue RFP for architectural concepts for waterfall overlook, iconic “gateway” sculpture, and granite post and rail fence.



Existing sidewalk along Winslow Drive.

Impacts/ Benefits:

- Increased prominence of existing public space. A detailed plan for such improvements was initiated by the Town some years ago, and is noted on the next page.
- Would encourage visitors and encourage pedestrian activity in Town Center.
- Would enable Winslow Road to serve multiple purposes, not just for vehicular circulation.



Birds-eye views of the existing green space along Winslow Drive.



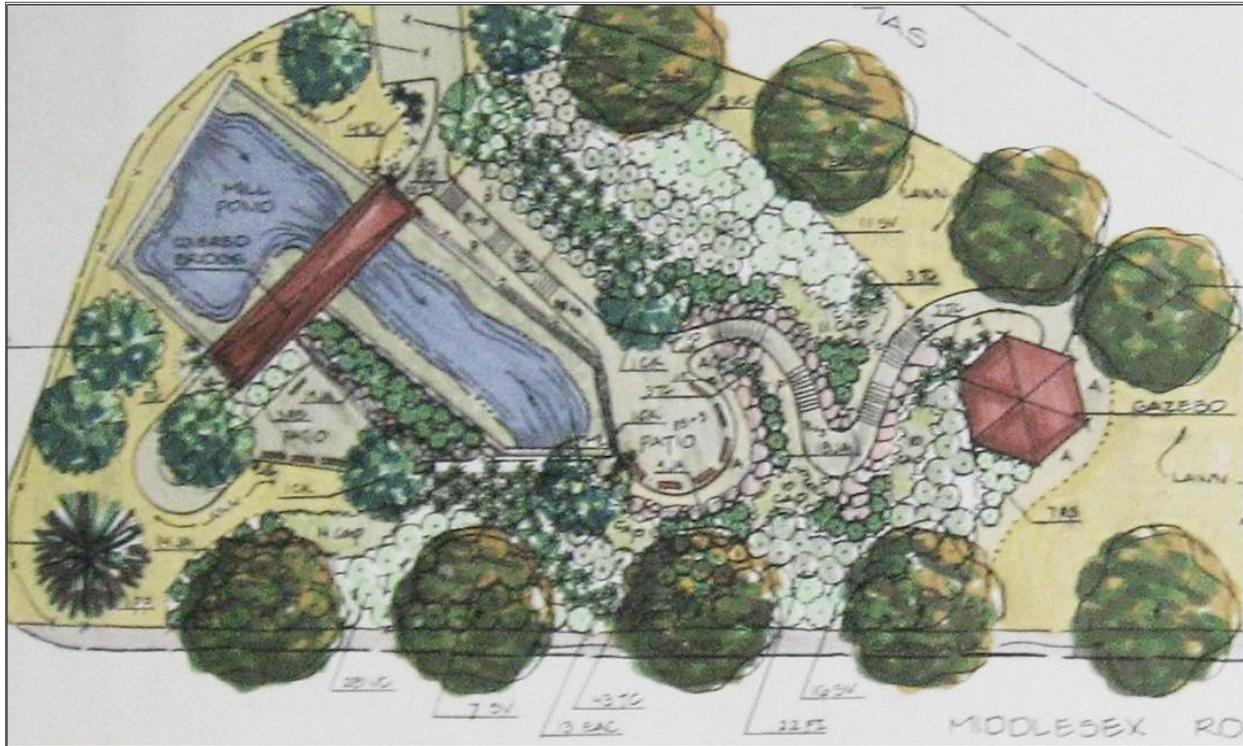
Existing open space and waterfall.



Examples of potential improvements. Note example of post & rail fence.



Open Space & Pedestrian Improvements



This plan completed on behalf of the Town in 1995 displays a landscaping plan for a the Winslow Drive Open Space. The rendering calls for a gazebo, patios, and a covered bridge all intended to provide greater public access to the waterfall.



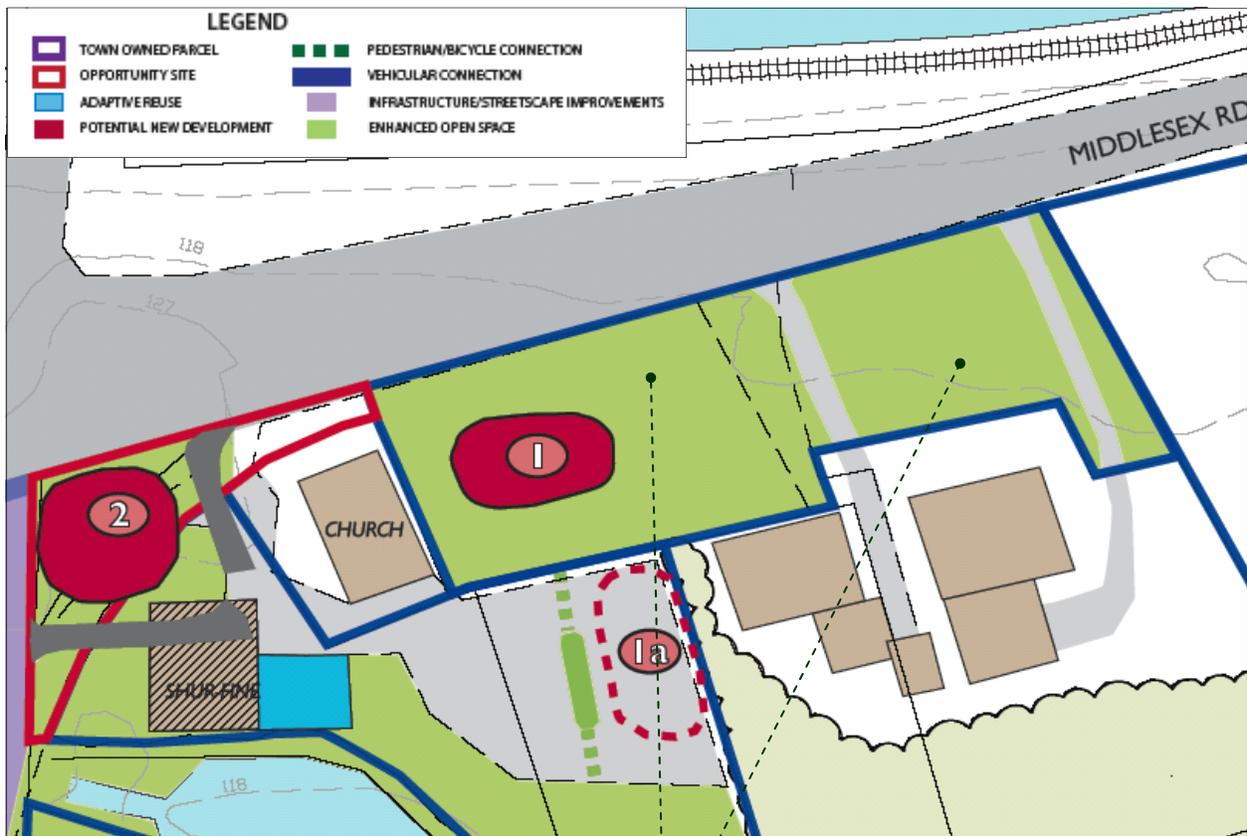
Former Town Common

This public land abuts land and housing owned by the Tyngsborough Housing Authority. A gravel driveway leads to abutting homes. The land was formerly in use as a Town Common, as illustrated by the map on the next page. Plans for restoring a public green space to this location should include close collaboration with neighbors and abutting homes. If the former Town Common is developed as a public space, the Town and abutting property owners may want to discuss formal easements to the properties along the gravel driveway.



Seating areas in the location of the former Town Common would benefit from redesign and improved maintenance to better define the space and provide a buffer from road noise.

To distinguish this land as a public space, a post and rail fence, in the same style as the fencing recommended for the Winslow Drive green space and throughout the entire open space network should be installed to provide a consistent and distinguishable feature that highlights the public spaces in the Town Center.



Enhance open space and pedestrian connections

Open Space & Pedestrian Improvements



The Historical Town Center Map above, obtained from the Tyngsborough Public Library, displays a Town Common at what is now the intersection of Middlesex Road and Kendall Road.



Former Town Common

Recommended Steps:

- Work with abutting homes and property owners to develop plan for the former Town Common.
- Address potential easements with abutting properties.
- Coordinate design to reflect consistency with other public open spaces in the Town Center.

Impacts/ Benefits:

- Restoration of Town Common in its former location.
- A green space on the former Town Common would become part of the open space network throughout the Town Center.
- Green space with appropriate fencing and landscaping and other improvements would provide a visual key to the Town Center.
- Would provide an enhanced pathway for residents of the Housing Authority property and others accessing the Town Center from the south.

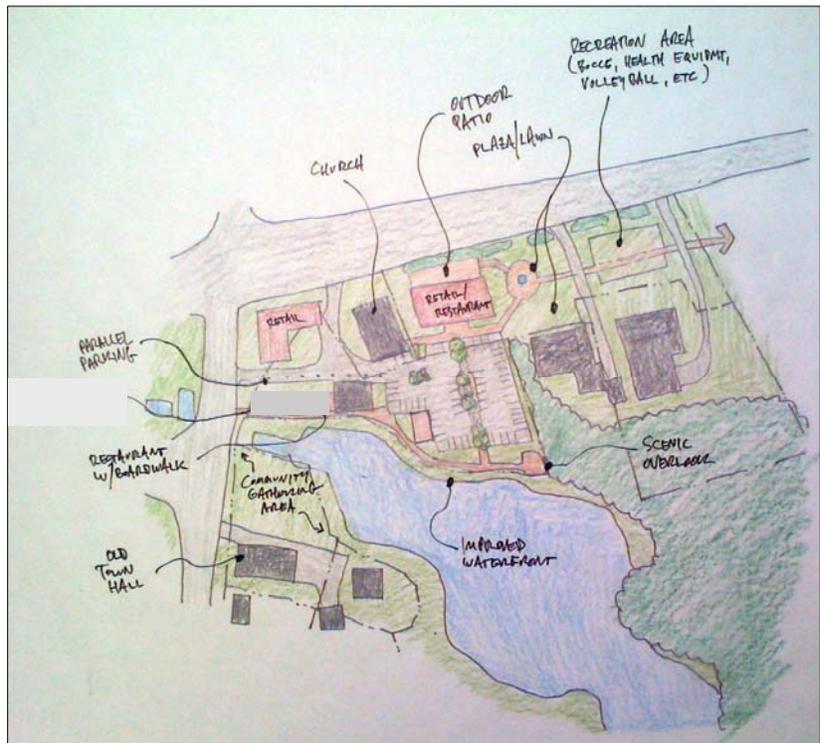


Neighbors to this public space should be included in discussions of possible changes.



Looking north from former Town Common site.

Looking south from former Town Common site.

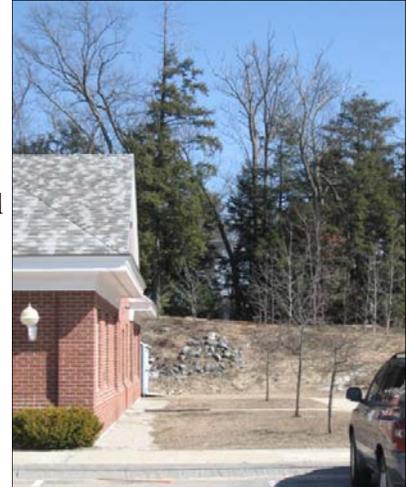


Open Space & Pedestrian Improvements

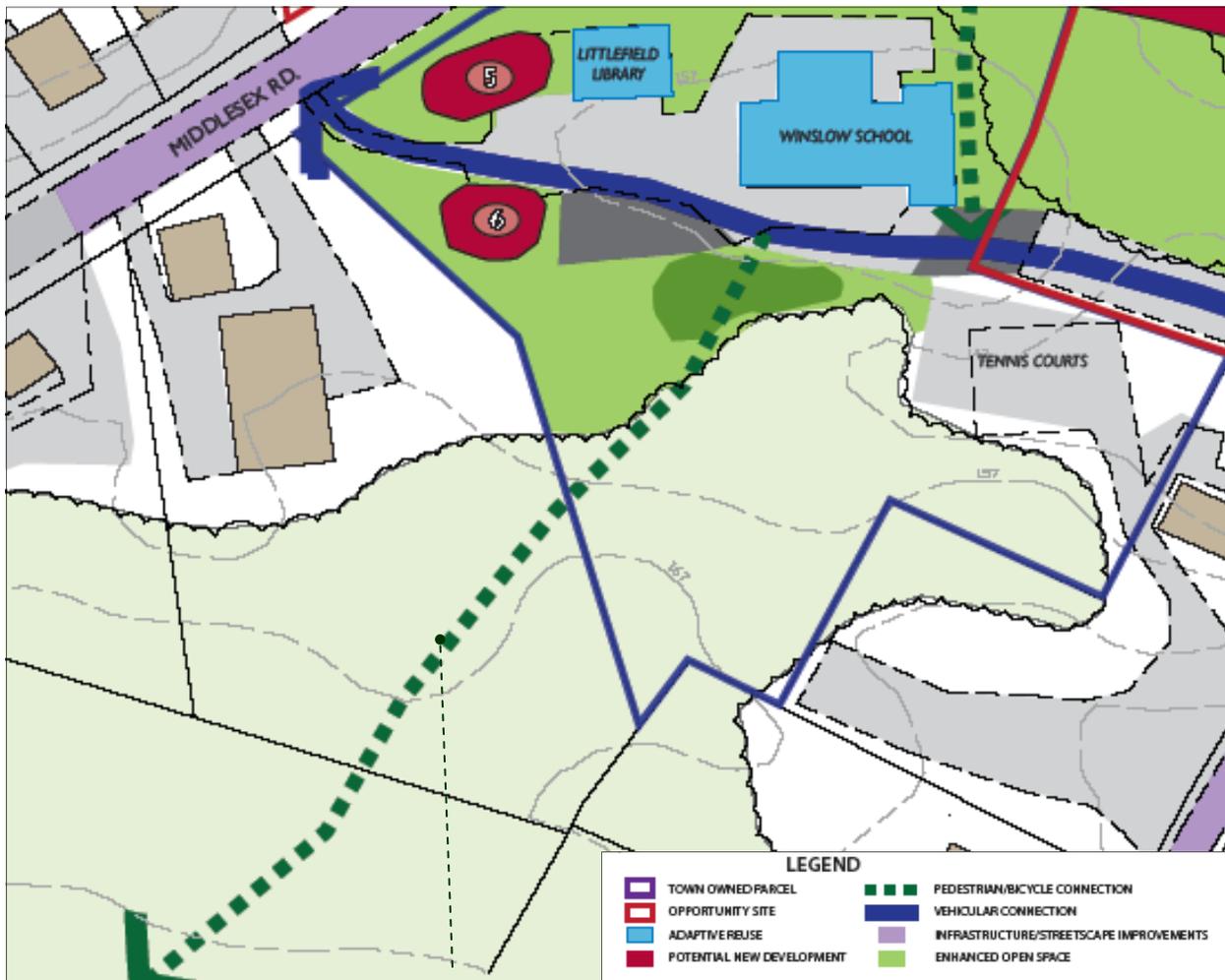
New Town Hall / Library Pedestrian Connection

It may be possible to create a pedestrian walkway connecting the current Town Hall and the Littlefield Library area through the woods. If a public meeting space is developed behind the Littlefield Library, the creation of a pathway between these two areas would link two significant public spaces in Town and encourage people to walk between the two locations. It would also tie into a larger network of public space including Conservation Commission land located immediately north of the Town Hall.

There is currently an informal path created along this route. However the current path crosses private property. If pursued, the Town would need to work closely with neighboring property owners. The creation of a walking path between Town Hall and the Littlefield Library would require easements on two privately owned properties.



Significant re-grading would be necessary to access a new pedestrian path from Town Hall to the Town Center.



Potential pedestrian connection between the new Town Hall and Littlefield Library



Town Hall/Library Connection

Recommended Steps:

- Evaluate rights-of-way and the need for any easements for walkway.
- Discussions with two property owners regarding potential easements to allow walking path.
- Path must meet ADA and AAB standards. May be a challenge due to topography and ledge along route. Adequate path would be costly.

Impacts/ Benefits:

- Residents would be able to park once and walk to the Town's public buildings and spaces, including Conservation Commission land to the north.
- Additional parking spaces in New Town Hall parking lot could be utilized during peak hours and for large events in potential public meeting space behind Littlefield Library.



Photographs of the area the trail would pass through.

V. Opportunity Sites for New Development



The Master Plan vision includes the creation of development opportunities in the Town Center to ensure that the Town realizes economic benefits from the district's revitalization. The following section highlights a number of opportunities for new capital investment in the Town Center within an overall design framework to ensure an attractive, cohesive destination.



Opportunity Sites: Introduction

Historically the buildings in Tyngsborough's Town Center were clustered around the intersection of Middlesex Road and Kendall Road. The area of the waterfall and stream was commercial and industrial – first a planing mill and a saw mill and then later the Flint Box Factory. Seen from the east, there was a line of buildings – and an obvious density of development. The historical maps and photographs shown earlier in this Master Plan make this quite evident. The density not only signals activity and attractions, it also leads to a variety of commercial offerings which, because of their interest and usefulness, make a trip worthwhile. In modern times, when most travel is by automobile, density and variety make it efficient and fun to stop, park, look at shops, eat in a restaurant, get a cup of coffee, or just pick up the newspaper at a general store.

The Tyngsborough Town Center continues its historical function of serving as the intersection of east-west and north-south traffic. Middlesex Road has over 20,000 vehicle trips per day. Many people drive past the Town Center. Consequently, an expanded and revived commercial Town Center will be working from a strong location, with a large amount of traffic arriving from four directions. Capturing only a small percentage of these potential visitors, shoppers and restaurant customers will be sufficient to support a significant amount of new commercial space. On the other hand, shopping destinations abound just up the road in Nashua, New Hampshire. New commercial space would need to differentiate itself in quality from existing uses, and is expected to be primarily retail, restaurant, and office use. The upper floors of some of these buildings could be housing.

The six Opportunity Sites that have been identified are locations where new commercial buildings could be located. These sites will only work – that is, their development will only be financially feasible – if most of the other recommended public improvements are made. These include the improvements to the two Town Green areas, the Town Park, the reconfiguration of the roadways and traffic patterns, and most importantly, the availability of public sewer. Adequate parking, easily reached, is imperative.

There are two primary objectives to be sought in the process of developing a vibrant, workable Town Center for Tyngsborough. The **first** is to have a row of two and three story buildings that are relatively close together and which can be seen from a distance, visually announcing that:

This is the Town Center!

Second, and equally important, is to have a variety of activities going on in these buildings. Shops, offices, restaurants, housing, plus the Town Park, and the Town Green, that will all bring people to the Town Center and make it possible for the new businesses to thrive. Thinking small does not make the enterprise more practical or easier to do, but just the opposite, because the resulting one or two buildings would not have a sufficient pull to attract customers.

These principles should be kept in mind as the six Opportunity Sites are discussed on the pages that follow.

Opportunity Sites for New Development

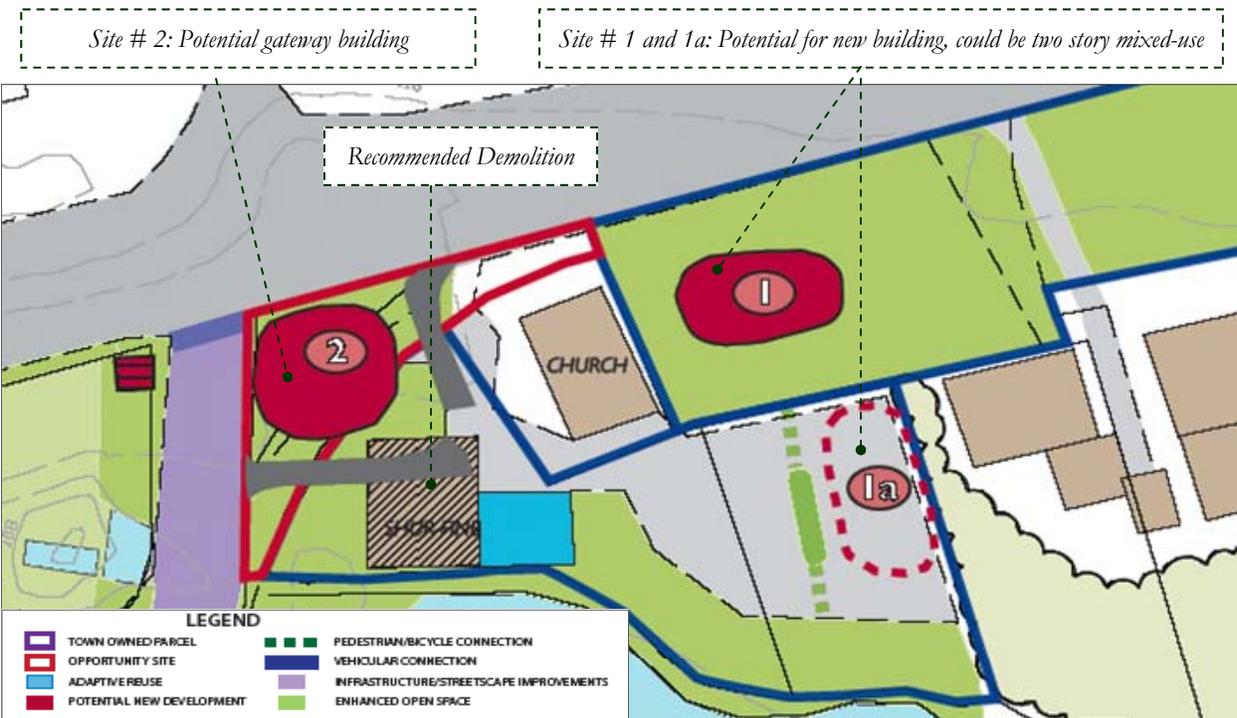
Opportunity Site #1

This site is located at the southern edge of the Town Center, on Middlesex Road where many people drive by daily. A new building could be constructed on this site that would enhance the visual appearance of the area, using architectural details that would be compatible with the neighborhood's history. Given the potential for parking behind this site, a building here could be used for retail with residential on the upper stories. The size, scale, and siting of a new building in this location should be designed to enhance rather than compete with the adjacent church.

This site has the opportunity to benefit from views to the Merrimack River as well as Flint Pond, particularly from the upper stories. Designing a building with an upper story porch on the back would add both visual interest to the exterior of the building and a valuable amenity to residential units.

Development of this site would probably mean the existing trees would have to be removed, but there appears to be space for a septic system. New landscaping would need to be designed and planted to enhance new building and to provide inviting public spaces, drawing people from the front of the site and building down to the back to the redeveloped old barn portion of the Shur-Fine building and Flint Pond. As part of the planning for new development on this site, clear way-finding signage for the entire area is recommended to direct people from Middlesex Road around to the parking area to the rear of the site. Access to the site would be from Kendall Road.

An alternative to the development on Middlesex Road, described above, is the potential for development set further back on the property on the existing parking lot. This proposal, highlighted by the dotted red circle, would allow the former Town Common green space to extend along Middlesex Road. If this proposal advances, the elimination of parking spaces and the location of replacement spaces will need to be addressed.



#1 & #2—Land by Korean Church and Shur-Fine Market

Opportunity Site #2

Discussions with MassHighway personnel suggest that the portion of the existing MassHighway right-of-way at the corner of Middlesex Road and Kendall Road could be turned over to the Town if it is found to be unnecessary for existing or future traffic operations. This finding would not happen overnight, and would involve a substantial process between the Town and MassHighway, but is feasible and could be realized over time.

If this were to occur, the opportunity would exist to create a visual gateway into the Tyngsborough Town Center. The current configuration of roadways in this area is confusing to drivers. This corner would be better utilized as the site of a cornerstone building that signals the entrance to the Town Center to drivers approaching the area from Middlesex Road, the bridge, or Kendall Road.

A new building in this location could be two or three stories, but should include significant architectural detail at ground level to maintain a “people friendly” scale. This building should reflect - but not mimic - the historical quality of the Town Center while providing new mixed-use space to enhance the vibrancy of the area. A well landscaped area with an attractive signature building would capture the attention of people passing on Middlesex Road and would be emblematic of the Town Center’s renewed energy. As suggested earlier in this Master Plan (page 13), the building located across Middlesex Road a century ago offers a potential design model for this location.

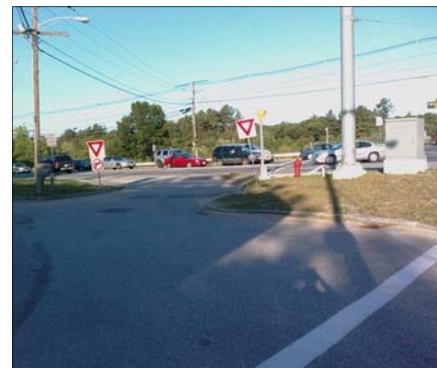
As with the previous opportunity site, appropriate and clear signage would be necessary to direct patrons to the parking lot with access from Kendall Road. With the demolition of the newer portion of the Shur-Fine Market, the circulation pattern for all of the buildings in this area could be better defined with a new driveway and landscaping, leaving room for this building and landscaping. A more significant challenge could be on-site sewage disposal, although there are likely to be opportunities for shared systems and alternative systems that could appropriately handle the sewage disposal needs of the building.

Suggested use for this building is retail, including shops, an ice cream parlor or coffee shop, or a full service restaurant, and possibly service businesses such as salons, tailors, lawyers, insurance agents, and the like. A building housing several small businesses or a single restaurant is envisioned. Potential uses will vary based on the market support, parking and the sewage disposal situation.



Site # 1 and 1a

Site # 2



MassHighway right-of-way area at the corner of Middlesex Road and Kendall Road.

Opportunity Sites for New Development

Opportunity Site #3

Opportunity Site # 3 is on privately owned land, next to the Winslow School. What is envisioned is a two or three story building or buildings built along Winslow Drive, but located up above the granite retaining wall (which would be retained), looking out towards the Merrimack River. It is possible that the building could be three stories on the side facing the east (the River), and two stories on the uphill side. Uses for the building would include retail, restaurant, office, and possibly housing on the upper floors.



Existing conditions at Site # 3.

The access and roadway recommendations include a suggestion that parallel parking be included on the west side of Winslow Drive. This parking would be available to serve the proposed new building(s). Attractive granite steps could be built up through the existing granite wall, and a sidewalk constructed in front of the building, encouraging pedestrian access.

This site is likely to be feasible only if the connection between Middlesex Road and Kendall Road is made behind the Winslow School. That connection may make it possible to build parking to serve the proposed commercial buildings along Winslow Drive. It might be possible to provide a septic leaching field as part of the road reconfiguration that could service the new building(s).

To make the site work it may also be necessary to have a loop roadway that runs in front of the Winslow School around behind the new buildings facing Winslow Drive, and then looping back to connect to the parking and access road to Kendall Road and Middlesex Road. Such a roadway could be helpful in providing handicapped access. It may also be desirable to have a portion of these new buildings located in front of the Winslow School. Clearly a close public / private partnership would be necessary in order to manage and organize the complexity of such an endeavor. Despite the complexity, the rewards, both to the Town and to the private parties could be substantial.



Site # 3

Site # 4



#3 and #4—Winslow Drive and Farwell and Middlesex Road

Opportunity Site #4

Opportunity Site # 4 is located at the intersection of Farwell Road and Middlesex Road. This site currently is the location of a branch of the Washington Savings Bank. The land and building are privately owned, and the Bank is a tenant in the building. The building is relatively small, particularly compared to the size of the lot, and located to the rear of the lot, with parking in the front.



Existing conditions at Site # 4.

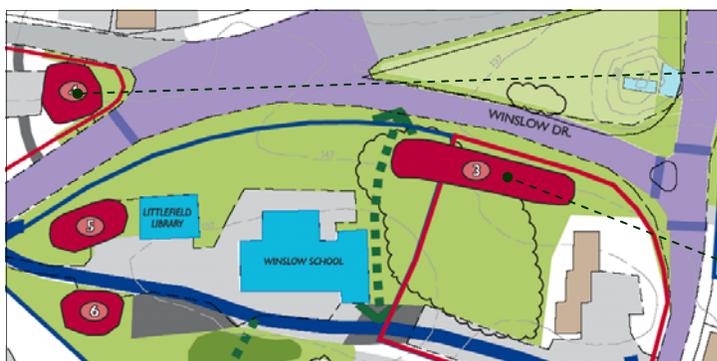
With regard to the objective of creating a strong visual sense of a new Town Center for Tyngsborough, this is a key parcel. It is particularly important for those drivers coming through Tyngsborough from the south, because it is located just as Middlesex Road curves to the left (west) past the corner, and because it basically sets the northern limit of the Town Center study area.

A prominent building on this site would “anchor” the northern end of the Tyngsborough Town Center. To be prominent it should be forward on the lot, at least two, and preferably three stories in height, constructed primarily of brick, and be a “flatiron” type building, with building frontage on both Middlesex Road and Farwell Road and a somewhat triangular footprint. The building might have a longer dimension on Middlesex Road than on Farwell Road. Use of brick as the primary building material would also relate to the brick construction of the Littlefield Library, directly across the street.

To the extent necessary it is suggested that the zoning be changed to encourage the construction of such a substantially larger building with reduced setback requirements (to allow a flatiron type configuration). Design standards accompanying the modified zoning could suggest and encourage the design elements described above.

The relatively large lot size suggests that both sufficient parking and a satisfactory septic system could be accommodated for a significantly larger building than the current bank. Ideally the Bank might lease all (or at least a portion of) the first floor of the new building, with other office space above.

While brick is suggested as the preferred building material, a white (or a limited range of colors) clapboard consistent with other Town Center buildings, both those existing and those to be built, would also be appropriate.



Potential “flatiron” building to anchor the Town Center, and incorporating brick to complement the Littlefield Library.

Potential for new row of single story shops and offices with a wide sidewalk behind the existing trees, creating a pedestrian friendly environment.

#5 and #6—Land by Littlefield Library on Middlesex Road

Opportunity Site #5 and #6

Opportunity Sites # 5 and # 6 are located just to the north of the Littlefield Library. It appears possible to allow the construction of one or two new buildings in this area. They should be designed to be compatible in scale and design with the Library. This is a prominent location, and would be seen easily from Middlesex Road, both from the north and the south. There appears to be enough room for adequate parking.



Opportunity Site # 5 is visually prominent from the road.

The location and layouts of these buildings should be determined in conjunction with the overall plan for this area, including the design and programming of public open space recommended in Section IV of this Master Plan. It is anticipated that public support for site redevelopment would likely be contingent on also realizing the potential for a public space on the current playing field, a possible bandstand or amphitheater. The site may also accommodate a through connection to Kendall Road.

The desirability and feasibility of having new buildings placed at this location will be a function of the decisions made about the Library and the School, whether the connection is made to Kendall Road, the results of market analysis, and development decisions about the Opportunity Site next to Winslow Drive. Decisions about the appropriate use of the buildings (whether retail, restaurant, or office) will also depend on resolution of the above issues. Housing is not considered a likely option.



Potential design precedents for Opportunity Sites



Preparation of design guidelines or design standards is recommended for implementation of this Master Plan, and should precede the disposition of public land for redevelopment. Several of the buildings above, many of which are located in the Merrimack Valley region, illustrate positive design elements in newer construction. Clockwise from upper left: new mixed-use in Cohasset; residential townhouses with parking underneath in Brookline; mixed-use in Canton; mixed-use in Amesbury; new development in Wilmington; mixed-use in Amesbury.

Zoning and Design Guidelines

Zoning and Design Guidelines. Background:

The Tyngsborough Economic Development Committee, working with the Northern Middlesex Regional Council of Governments, has prepared a draft Town Center Overlay Zoning District that would change the allowable uses and dimensional standards applicable in the Town Center, and incorporate design guidelines that would be applicable to new development. The Economic Development Committee anticipates continued refinement to this draft on an ongoing basis to generate an eventual zoning proposal for consideration by Town Meeting voters.

Recommended Steps:

- Zoning should accommodate development on small lots (~5,000 s.f.) with limited frontage.
- Multiple uses should be allowed within a single building as a matter of right.
- Zoning should be revised to allow reduced parking requirements for renovated housing units in the Town Center. The amount of parking is often dictated by market conditions. Therefore it is recommended that parking requirements be set lower than elsewhere in the community. Provision should also be made to allow reduced parking where shared parking is available.
- Multiple structures should be allowed on a single lot provided adequate access is provided, including provision for emergency vehicles.
- A requirement for deed-restricted affordable housing may hinder the economic feasibility of investment, particularly the small-scale renovation and redevelopment envisioned here. The Town should weigh the benefits of affordable housing against the challenge it creates to actually stimulating new investment. In addition, if the Town requires affordable housing in a development on land owned by the Town, the requirement will likely result in a lower purchase price for the property than would otherwise be the case. An incentive-based approach such as a density bonus may be more appropriate than a requirement in this location.
- Design guidelines or design standards should be a required element of plan review. However, design review should take place within a clear and streamlined permitting process, ideally allowing as-of-right development, to ensure that it does not become a disincentive to private investment.

Impacts/Benefits:

- If sewer connections become available, 40R “Smart Growth Zoning” should be considered as a potential zoning strategy, including design standards. However, it should be noted that this approach would require mixed-income housing with 20% affordable units. This may be beneficial in some regards, and a percentage of such units could be subject to local preference upon demonstration of need, but the required affordability would create a challenge to economic viability.
- Several of the opportunity sites identified in this Master Plan would only be feasible for development if revised zoning was adopted by Town Meeting. Therefore, zoning amendments would be necessary in order to fully implement these recommendations.



Historic Preservation Background:

Within the public meetings that were held during the preparation of this Master Plan, some members of the public recommended that the Town consider potential designation of the Town Center area, or additional buildings within the study area, for historical preservation restrictions pursuant to state or federal laws.

Detailed exploration of these policy options was beyond the scope of this study. However, this plan recommends additional research regarding the benefits of additional historic preservation policies including potential designation as a National Historic District. This section is intended to provide background information regarding these and other public policy options available to support historic preservation activities. It is intended as a resource for further research.

There are two different kinds of historic districts in Massachusetts, with widely different levels of protection: National Register Historic Districts, and Local Historic Districts.

National Register

National Register listing places no restrictions or conditions on changes made to a property, unless there is federal or state involvement in the project, and in no way limits the owner's use of the property (*Source: Massachusetts Historical Commission. "Establishing Local Historic Districts." Boston, March 2007*). National Register listing, therefore, provides very little protection to listed properties. It does, however, offer some benefits:

- A formal recognition of the property's historical significance;
- Eligibility for national historic tax credits for owners of income-producing property (including rental housing units);
- Limited protection from state or federally funded, licensed, or assisted projects.

Listing a property on the National Register can be a fairly lengthy process, sometimes taking up to two years. Nominations for National Register listings are typically initiated by the property owner or by the local Historical Commission, and require no formal approval by Town Meeting although the Board of Selectmen would be involved in the designation process. After the community has documented the property, the site is reviewed for eligibility by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) or the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). MHC will visit the site or district, study its historical importance, and provide a written assessment.

If the MHC determines the property to be an eligible location, the community begins the process of completing a National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. Upon receipt of a nomination, MHC will review the Nomination Form for completeness, approve the form, and send it to the National Park Service for consideration and official designation.

Local Historic Districts

Local Historic Districts are established locally, requiring a two-thirds majority Town Meeting vote. They offer a greater level of protection to properties included in the District, and are generally

National, State and Local Historic Preservation Resources

more successful at preventing inappropriate exterior renovations. This is accomplished through the creation of a locally appointed Historic District Commission, responsible for the review of proposed changes to exterior architectural features visible from a public way. The Historic District Commission would hold a public hearing to determine whether proposed changes are appropriate. If the renovations are approved, the property owner would be issued a certificate to authorize the work to proceed (*Source: Massachusetts Historical Commission. "There's a Difference!"*).

Many proposed changes in Local Historic Districts are exempt from review. The scope of review and clarification of exempt activities would be detailed in a specific local bylaw as adopted by vote of Town Meeting. Exemptions often include items such as: air conditioning units, storm doors, storm windows, paint color, and temporary structures. In a Local Historic District there is no review of interior features.

State Register of Historic Places

Properties within Local Historic Districts and National Register Districts are automatically included in the State Register of Historic Places. Properties with preservation restrictions are also included in the State Register Listing in the State Register:

- Provides limited protection from adverse effects by state-involved projects.
- When available, provides owners of municipal or private non-profit properties opportunity to apply for 50% matching state grants through the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund.

Massachusetts State Income Tax Credit

Beginning in January 2005 Massachusetts began offering a state income tax credit of up to 20% for eligible, income-producing historic properties. Massachusetts has placed a \$10 million annual cap on the program. The state program is scheduled to end in December of 2009. Owners of income-producing properties listed on the National Register may also be eligible for federal tax credits to offset the cost of substantial rehabilitation. It is not clear how many properties in the Tyngsborough Town Center area, if any, may be eligible for this tax credit. However, the Economic Development Committee and the Historical Commission may consider maintaining information regarding this program in the event that a landowner approaches Town Hall with an idea for commercial use of existing properties in the historical resources inventory.

Neighborhood Conservation District

The MHC publication *Preservation through Bylaws and Ordinances* describes a Neighborhood Conservation District in use in the City of Cambridge, but nowhere else in Massachusetts. The MHC indicates that a similar approach may make sense in developed neighborhoods with a substantial concentration of historical buildings. The Massachusetts Historical Commission is increasingly advocating for this approach as an alternative to zoning or a state or local historic district designation.

For more information on historic preservation programs, contact either the Tyngsborough Historical Commission or the Massachusetts Historical Commission, 220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, MA 02125 (617) 727-8470, <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcidx.htm>



VI. Infrastructure Improvements



The Master Plan vision identifies potential investments in the public infrastructure that would enhance the viability of the overall master plan. The following section recommends a series of investments in the Town Center that would enhance the area both functionally and aesthetically. It will require the participation and support of many stakeholders, including the Town, state agencies, landowners and private developers.

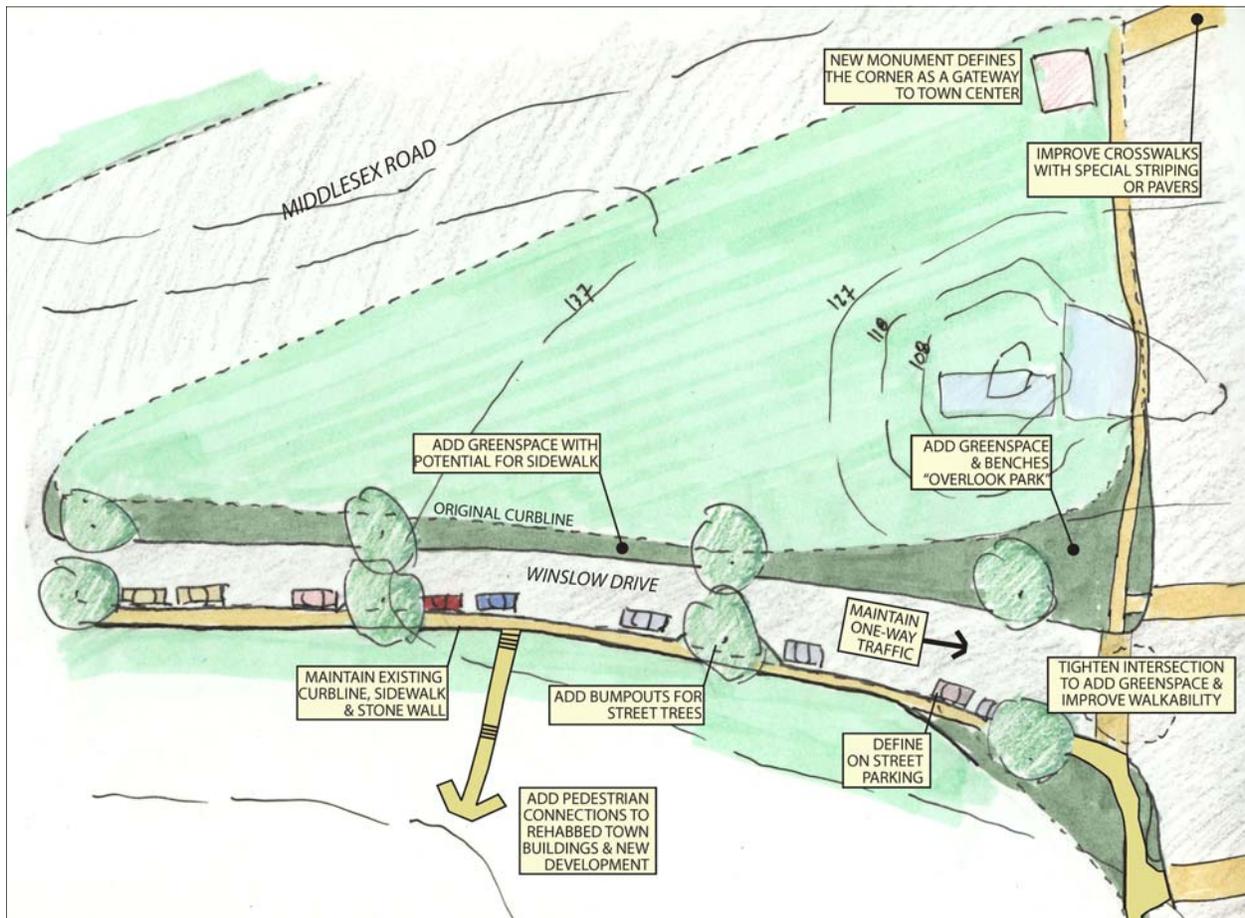
Infrastructure Improvements

Winslow Drive

Winslow Drive is a southbound one-way street leading from Middlesex Road to Kendall Road. The paved portion of the street is wide and runs between the Winslow School/Littlefield Library and the green space that abuts Middlesex Road. The existing triangular green space to the east of Winslow Drive is underutilized due in part to lack of parking, difficult access across the heavily-traveled Kendall Road, the amount of traffic on Middlesex Road.



Recommendations for Winslow Drive seek to make the roadway more attractive and pedestrian friendly while adding on-street parking and improving accessibility to the green space. The roadway is included within the MassHighway right-of-way. Therefore, any geometric changes to the road, including alternate materials, sidewalks and on-street parking, would require approval from MassHighway, and may involve transfer of the right-of-way to the Town. Conversations with the District Office suggest that MassHighway would be willing to work with the Town to achieve community objectives. However, it should be understood that any such changes will require a significant investment in engineering and related analysis.



Recommended Steps:

- Redesign Winslow Drive as a pedestrian friendly gateway to Kendall Road and the Town Center. Maintain one-way southbound traffic on Winslow Drive. Use alternate paving materials such as cobblestone to slow traffic and encourage pedestrian use.
- Restore on-street parking on Winslow Drive, preferably parallel in order to maximize the number of spaces.
- Create extended green space onto part of Winslow Drive to narrow vehicular cross-section, extend existing open space and create public seating areas to overlook waterfall.
- Better define perimeter with granite post & rail to announce that this is public open space, this is the Town Green. The fencing should be similar to that on the open space to the south of the Church. Such a fence would also encourage walking by enhancing buffer to the street.
- Extension of the triangular green space is recommended, with additional seating, as well as the installation of granite post and rail fencing to better define the edge of the open space.



The waterfall is attractive, but access today is poor. Through redesign, the wide paved area on Winslow Drive creates an opportunity for enhanced pedestrian use and additional on-street parking.

Impacts/Benefits:

- Continued allowance for one-way traffic would retain vehicular circulation patterns through the Town Center, with design enhancements to encourage pedestrian activity.
- Parking along Winslow drive would provide visitors to the Town Center a central location to park their cars. It would also provide parking for any development on Opportunity Site #3, just up the hill.
- Safer and more defined sidewalks and crosswalks would encourage use of the area by showing visitors where to go and clarifying locations for pedestrian right-of-way.



Trees, plantings and paths would encourage pedestrians to enjoy the park and waterfall.



Infrastructure Improvements

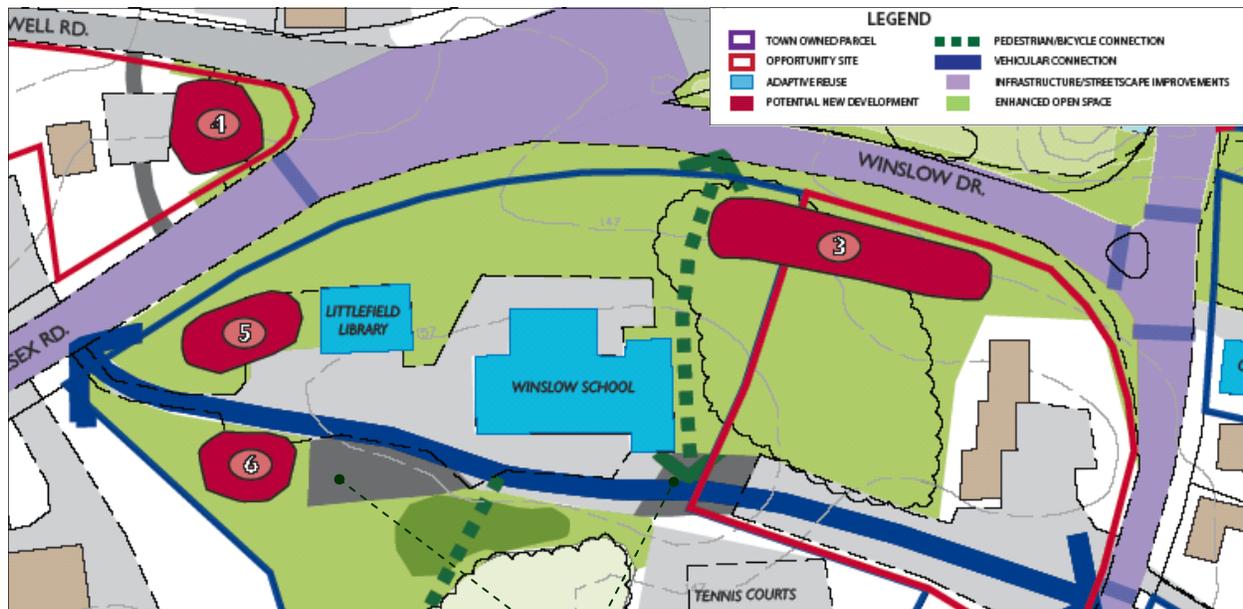
Parking Amount and Accessibility

A healthy Town Center will require the creation of a coordinated network of parking to adequately serve both existing and new uses. Parking must be easily accessible yet, due to design and aesthetic considerations, it should not be highly visible. One way to achieve both objectives is to create a coordinated, attractive way-finding signage plan to allow visitors to easily locate parking.



The Town Center has parking spaces at present but their layout, accessibility and location will not be adequate to accommodate the restoration of existing buildings and potential new development recommended in this Master Plan. As part of the permitting process for new development, a parking analysis of the entire study area should take place. Accommodation should be made for the shared use of parking by uses that generate different peak-hour demands in order to minimize the need for impervious surface while providing adequate parking. Consideration should also be given to the use of pervious pavers and other low-impact development (LID) strategies such as drainage swales and bioretention basins, particularly in proximity to Flint Pond.

There are opportunities to increase the parking supply in public locations that can serve existing and new users. On-street parking could be added to Winslow Drive, and on the site of the Winslow School and Littlefield Library. Existing on-street parking on Kendall Road could be formalized with striping. Combined with a coordinated way-finding signage program, it is likely that adequate supply could be available to accommodate significant renovation and redevelopment.



Add Parking



Increase Parking Amount and Accessibility

Recommended Steps:

- The cost of adding new parking capacity on the Winslow School and Littlefield Library site should be shifted to the private sector by including this as a condition of land disposition through an RFP process. Prior to issuance of an RFP, the Town should perform additional analysis of the site to estimate the development capacity of the site, and define design objectives for its landscaping, lighting and construction. Greater detail included in the RFP will yield benefits by clarifying public expectations for use of the site, and attracting developers with the capacity to meet those expectations.
- Additional parking on the Winslow School and Littlefield Library site would need to be coordinated with a new street connection from Middlesex Road to Kendall Road. Both public improvements could be incorporated into the RFP process.
- As important as the amount of parking is its character and design. Wherever possible, parking should be broken into smaller lots, including landscaping and innovative stormwater treatments. The availability of on-street parking can also provide a traffic calming benefit.

Impacts/Benefits:

- Given the large mall, strip mall and big box retail to the north of the Town Center on Route 3A, the availability of parking will never be a competitive advantage for merchants. However, if parking is perceived as inadequate or inaccessible, it would be a significant disadvantage. The concept plans included here should be fully articulated and realized in order to attract new merchants to choose a Town Center location for their business.
- Accessible and available parking will also provide a benefit to people visiting the shops and public spaces in the Town Center.



A fair amount of land exists to the west of the Littlefield Library and Winslow School. A portion of this land could accommodate additional parking within an overall plan for renovation and redevelopment.

Infrastructure Improvements

New Vehicular Connection from Middlesex Road to Kendall Road

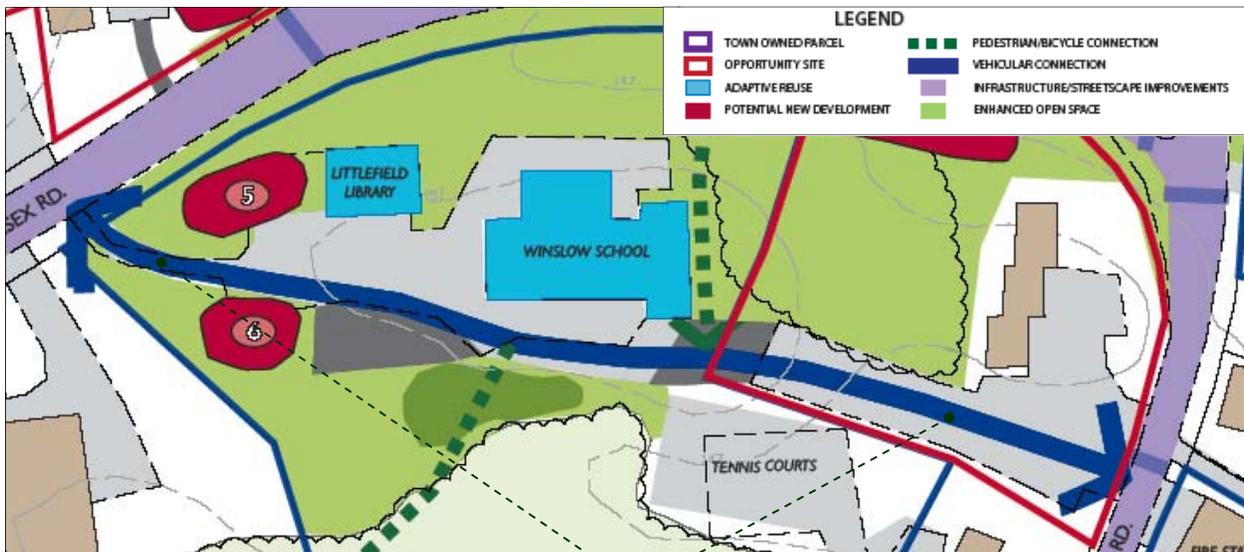
Access and visibility from Middlesex Road will be critical for the viability of any new commercial venture. A “critical mass” of investment will be necessary if new commercial development is to be feasible on the western portion of the site - further away from Middlesex Road. Residential development, however, could be successful with limited visibility from the road.

A new connector road from Middlesex Road to Kendall Road behind the Littlefield Library and the Winslow School should be considered in an effort to realize the substantial redevelopment potential identified here. The goal is to attract private capital and channel it partially toward investment in public improvements. A new connector road is not recommended as a public expenditure. Public officials have raised concerns regarding the potential for traffic, speeding and noise that this connection may generate. Certainly, before this recommendation is pursued, engineering including a detailed traffic study is recommended to determine the connector road’s potential impacts.

The cross-section for a new connector road should include high-quality sidewalks with street trees and pedestrian amenities such as village-style lighting fixtures, benches, trash receptacles etc.

In order to advance this concept further, the Town should work closely with the Evangelical Congregational Church located at 23 Kendall Road to ensure that any changes produce no detriment - ideally they would generate a benefit - to the Church on Kendall Road. Prior discussions have taken place between the Town and the Church regarding the potential for a land swap for a portion of each property to improve the parking availability to the Church. Discussions with the landowner of the corner property suggest that access may be feasible through that site provided such changes enhance the commercial viability of the corner property.

Such a new vehicular connection from Middlesex Road to Kendall Road could allow improved access to the existing buildings, create a welcoming entrance to the proposed public open space and walkway to the current Town Hall and provide access to the proposed new development sites.



*Create road behind
Littlefield Library and Winslow School*



Recommended Steps:

- Carry out additional conceptual design work.
- Meetings with adjacent landowners to determine overall feasibility.
- Include vehicular connection, with design and construction standards, as part of overall RFP for redevelopment.

Impacts/ Benefits:

- New vehicular connection would provide access to potential new development on the Winslow School and Littlefield Library site, and on Opportunity Site #3, adjacent to Winslow Drive.



Streetscape design will be critical to ensure a low traffic, pedestrian oriented environment.



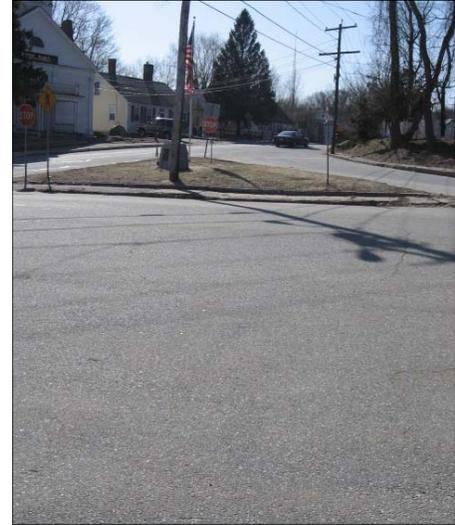
A new connector road would require substantial engineering to accommodate grade changes, the presence of ledge, and the need to create a traveled way including sidewalks that comply with width and grading requirements of ADA and AAB.

Infrastructure Improvements

Kendall Road Streetscape

Streetscape improvements along Kendall Road are recommended to help improve the connectivity within the Town Center. Improvements may include traffic calming strategies, formalization of a parking plan for the road, and pedestrian improvements such as improved sidewalks, village scale lighting, additional or improved crosswalks and trees.

Particular attention should be paid to improvements that would connect the new development and green spaces on either side of Kendall Road. Additional analysis should take place to advance specific streetscape improvement concepts for Kendall Road.



Existing conditions present wide crossings that can be a challenge for pedestrians.

New crosswalk across Kendall Road at the Middlesex Road intersection.

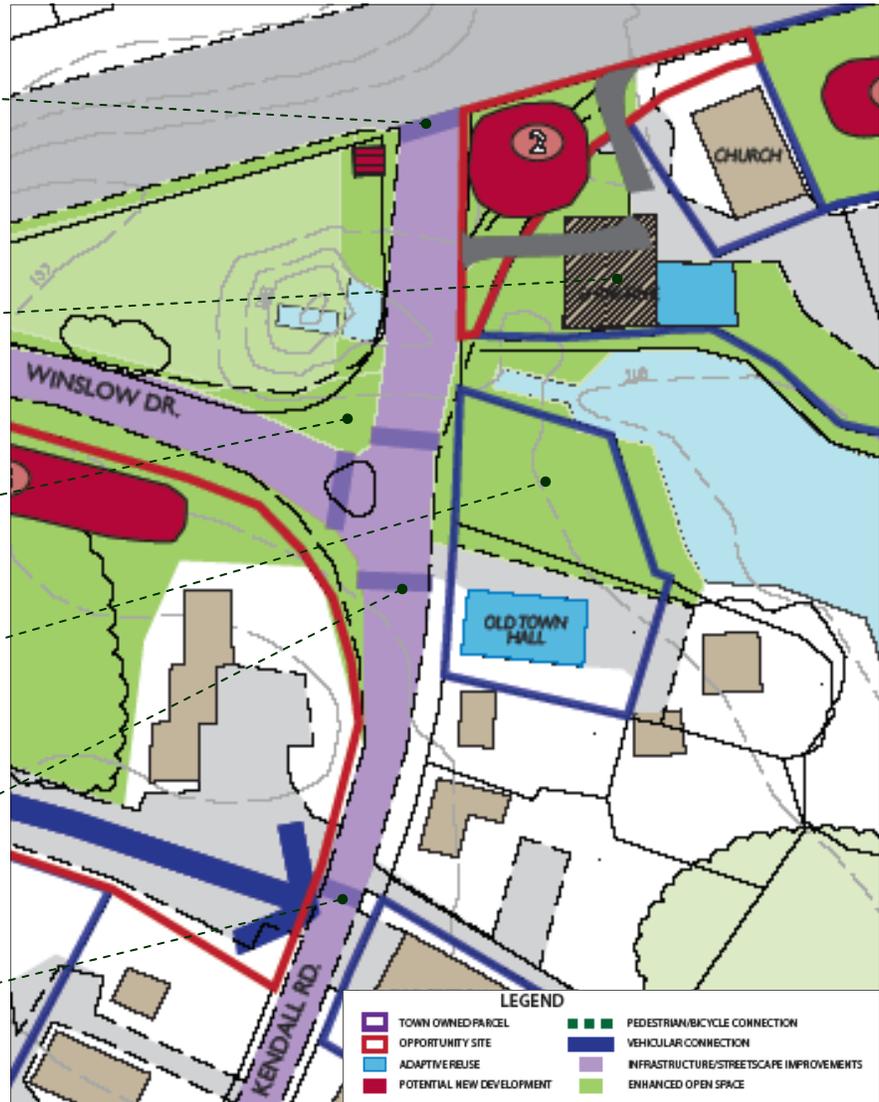
Demolition of part of Shur-Fine building will open up views to Flint Pond. Restoration of remaining portion of building to productive use.

Green space along Winslow Drive.

Flint Pond green space

New crosswalks to connect green spaces on either side of Kendall Road.

New crosswalk across Kendall Road at the new connector road.



Recommended Steps:

- Evaluate potential locations for pedestrian crosswalks connecting Winslow Drive green space with Flint Pond green space.
- Implement traffic calming strategies to limit congestion and speed along Kendall Road. Options include addition of landscaping and lighting that is oriented to pedestrians rather than cars, improved striping and visibility for crosswalks, additional sidewalks and potential reduced width of vehicular lanes, signage, and on-street parking.
- Install village scale “dark skies” lighting in place of cobra head street lights.
- Formalize (add striping to define spaces) or eliminate on-street parking along Kendall Road. If eliminated and parking spaces are lost, replacement parking should be determined. The decision-making process should include Kendall Road residents and businesses who would be affected by possible parking or roadway changes on Kendall Road. MassHighway would also be involved in such discussions.

Impacts/ Benefits:

- Reducing the speed of cars along Kendall Road while improving the streetscape to promote a safe pedestrian environment would improve the quality of life for existing and new residents and businesses in the Town Center.
- An improved pedestrian environment and clear connections between key sites would encourage visitors to park their cars and walk through the Town Center to enjoy the shops and public open spaces.



These images illustrate current conditions on Kendall Road and what the street could look like if some of the pavement was replaced with lighting, grass, landscaping, and a sidewalk.

VII. Conclusions

The Town of Tyngsborough's ownership of four properties within the Town Center provides a unique opportunity to guide the future development and use of the Town Center. Following the direction of the Economic Development Committee, a key goal of this planning process was to analyze each property and suggest ways to preserve, restore and renovate each of the buildings. The restoration and reuse of these properties would help restore vibrancy and activity to the Town Center and would play a critical role in the implementation of the Master Plan for the Town Center. Each property was examined to identify feasible options to place the buildings back in service.

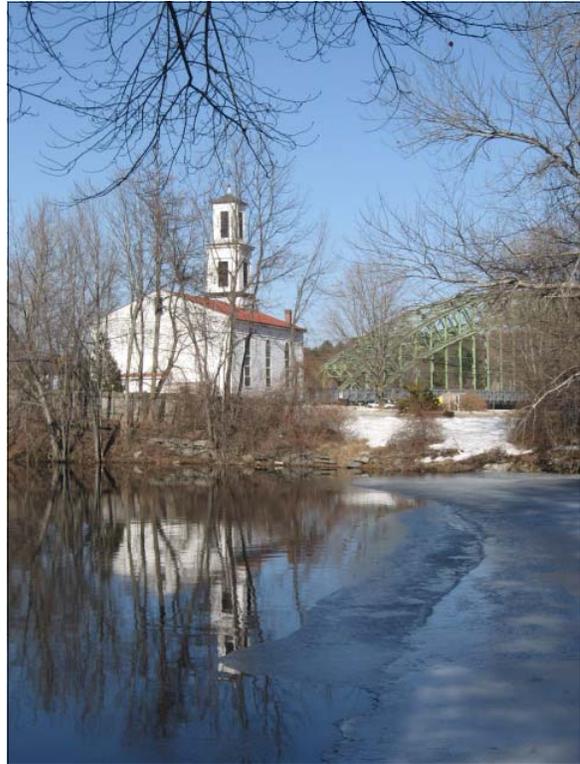
However, this Master Plan recommends more than just the renovation of the four Town-owned buildings. To further the goal of restoring a New England style Town Center in Tyngsborough, the Master Plan identifies potential sites for new development intended to recreate the density and line of buildings that will distinguish the Town Center and bring back its historical look and feel. New buildings with similar forms and aesthetics to the Town's historical buildings would help create a distinctive entrance to the Town Center along the Middlesex Turnpike, from the bridge, and from Kendall Road.

There is a need to improve and link the Town Center's public open spaces and to invest in infrastructure upgrades to help build the network of public spaces throughout the Town Center. There are a number of existing green spaces that could be connected to create a more formalized set of public spaces within the Town Center. Making the Town Center more pedestrian friendly with traffic calming measures and sidewalk improvements would also have a significant impact. A visual design theme such as the proposed granite post and rail fence carried out within all of the open space would help unify and draw attention to these resources. This network and improved pedestrian connectivity in the Town Center would enhance the "sense of place" within the Town Center.

The current records at the Board of Health suggest that it would be feasible to move forward with renovation plans for the Winslow School, the Littlefield Library, the Old Town Hall, and the historic barn at the Shur-Fine site using the existing septic systems, as they may be able to be expanded or improved. However, it is not at all clear at this time the extent to which construction on the Opportunity Sites could proceed using on-site septic systems. Additional study will be necessary to illuminate what may be possible. It appears that in order for the optimum build-out in accordance with this Master Plan to take place that public sewer will need to be brought to the site.

As a result, the Town should continue to place a high priority on exploring the technical and financial problems that will have to be solved in order to build the necessary sewer extensions.

In order to ensure that the benefits of past and future investments in public open space are realized, the Town should implement a coordinated maintenance plan. Over time, if enough private investment results in the Town Center, it may be feasible to supplement public maintenance with private funds through creation of a neighborhood association or a Business Improvement District.





However, such policies have had limited success in many Massachusetts communities, and this is not recommended as a short-term strategy.

- Steps that can and should be taken in the short-term include:
 - Engineering evaluations of the current condition of the septic systems for the four town owned buildings, with recommendations and cost estimates for the improvements needed in order to carry out the proposed redevelopment of each of the buildings.
 - Retain an architect to prepare renderings of the recommended renovation and redevelopment locations to better articulate a public vision for the Town Center. This would both refine the conceptual ideas included here, and would become an important resource for the public processes that will be necessary to implement this plan over time.
 - Re-stripping existing and new crosswalks would yield an immediate benefit to the function and perception of the Town Center. This could set the stage for capital improvements such as new and repaired sidewalks and curb cuts, which will take more time.
 - During the course of this work, we spoke with MassHighway on multiple occasions to talk through various concepts as they relate to MassHighway rights-of-way and jurisdiction. We recommend that the Town initiate a meeting with the MassHighway District personnel to review elements of this Master Plan in detail. MassHighway will be a necessary partner for the implementation of many of the infrastructure recommendations, as well as development of the opportunity site east of the Shur-Fine building. The Town will achieve benefits by maintaining an open line of communication. This could lead to resources for further planning, engineering and construction of public improvements over time.
 - Prior to the RFP process, a market study may be useful to determine supportable uses.

The Town Center in Tyngsborough that existed a century ago, before the major bridge and highway work was done, had character and activity. It provided an identity and a place to gather for the community. Much of this was lost in the process of accommodating the automobile and modern transportation requirements.

Happily, the work that has gone into this Master Plan, based on extensive conversations and meetings with people in the community, as well as careful consideration of the historical building patterns, has led to the conclusion that much can be done to restore a viable Tyngsborough Town Center. It should be possible to not only recreate a comparable sense of place and activity, add as many as four currently vacant or underutilized buildings to the tax rolls, but also provide an attractive public park, new and enhanced public space, and a significant amount of new commercial activity. There is a great deal of opportunity for the community.

VIII. Recommendations Matrix

This matrix is a summary of recommendations in the Town Center Master Plan, and should be reviewed in conjunction with the Plan. The designation of leading parties for each task is illustrative, not exhaustive. It is anticipated that any policy actions in this Plan will be considered within an inclusive public process.

Tyngsborough Town Center Master Plan Recommendations Matrix		Page # in Master Plan	Timeframe (Short-Range=1-3 years; Mid-Range=4-6 years; Long-Range=7-10 years)	Notes	Responsible Parties									
Category / Task					Econ. Dev. Committee	Town Administrator	Board of Selectmen	Historical Commission	Conservation Comm.	Board of Health	Planning Board	Property Owners	Mass Highway	Respondent to RFP
III. Re-use of Town Owned Properties														
Winslow School	Short-Range	20			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Littlefield Library	Short-Range	23	Batch properties in single RFP; option to respond to one or more	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Old Town Hall	Mid-Range	25		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Shur-Fine Market & Site	Short (Demo), Mid (Barn)	28		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
IV. Open Space & Pedestrian Improvements														
Filant Pond Green Space and Walking Path	Short (Town Prop.) Long (Private easements)	32			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Winslow School Public Space	Short-Range	34			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Winslow Drive Green Space Extension and Improvements	Short- to Mid-Range	36	Begin process w/MHwy short-term.	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Former Town Common	Short-Range (Fencing)	39	Improvements by respondents to RFP process.	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
New Town Hall / Library Pedestrian Connection	Long-Range	42		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
V. Opportunity Sites for New Development														
#1 - Land by Korean Church on Middlesex Road	Mid- to Long-Range	46			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
#2 - Land at corner of Middlesex Road and Kendall Road	Mid- to Long-Range	47	Town-owned sites may be included in RFP for re-use of	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
#3 - Land along Winslow Drive	Mid- to Long-Range	48	Town buildings.	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
#4 - Corner of Farwell Road and Middlesex Road	Mid- to Long-Range	49	Private sites will vary based on zoning,	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
#5 - Land near Littlefield Library on Middlesex Road	Short- to Mid-Range	50	infrastructure and market conditions.	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
#6 - Land across connector road from site 4	Short- to Mid-Range	50		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Zoning and Design Guidelines	Short-Range	52		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Historic Preservation Opportunities and Tax Credits	Short-Range	53		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
VI. Infrastructure Improvements														
Winslow Drive	Short- to Mid-Range	56			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Parking Amount and Accessibility	Mid-Range	58	Infra. Improvements concurrent with RFP	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
New Vehicular Connection from Middlesex Rd to Kendall Rd	Mid- to Long-Range (?)	60		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Kendall Road Streetscape	Short-Range	62		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		

