

LONG RANGE PLAN FOR
WAYLAND TOWN CENTER
WAYLAND, MASSACHUSETTS
January, 2002

PREPARED BY ALLEN BENJAMIN, AIP

BASE MAP FROM WAYLAND
GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

INTRODUCTION

PLANNING FOR WAYLAND CENTER

The first plan affecting the long-range development of the Center (and the rest of town) was the Wayland Zoning Bylaw, adopted over a half-century ago. The zoning map (part of the Bylaw), divided the land into use districts (business, residence, etc.), and a text set forth the specific permitted or permissible types of uses in each district. (For example, drug stores, restaurants, offices, etc. in business zones; one-family houses, schools, farms etc. in residence zones. Other parts of the text regulated density and spacing by specifying minimum lot sizes, minimum frontage, and minimum yards.

The Zoning By-laws have been amended many times during the more than half-century they have been in effect: District boundaries have been changed; new types of districts have been set up (including a number of sub-types of business district.) Site plan approval has been made mandatory in many cases, and resource protection areas been adopted as overlay zones, superimposed on use districts. Since the Enabling Act and the courts have generally required that all property having the same characteristics be placed in the same zone or combination of zones., at any given time a city or town's zoning tends to reflect the status quo. Thus, in both Cochrane and Wayland Centers, the zoning requirements in effect encourage businesses that are in buildings detached from one another, with front, side, and rear yards like the detached (free standing) houses from which they were converted to business over time.

At the present writing, the Planning Board and others are studying ways of encouraging a more compact form of development in Wayland business areas so as to bring about a more pedestrian-oriented type of Center. This goal is here strongly endorsed. We already have one example in each village: the village shopping center in Wayland (on the south side of Rte. 20) and the business complex in Cochrane (on the southeast corner of the Rtes. 27 and 30 intersection). Both have the desirable characteristics of there being numerous businesses within walking distance of each other, shared off-street parking spaces, and as few as possible driveway openings onto main highways (instead of one opening per establishment, typical of the linear business strips elsewhere in town.

PROJECT-BY-PROJECT PLANNING

In the last half century, a number of special projects have been built or encouraged in both town Centers. Since this present report is directed primarily at Wayland Center, only those in that Center will be addressed here. (By "special projects" is meant changes and constructions which were planned per se rather than as implementations of any overall, pre-existing, comprehensive plan) They generally have had a major effect on the entire Center and beyond, and in most cases their relationships to the whole Center were considered via inter board communications and at hearings and meetings (even though no long-range Center plan existed, other than the use plan of zoning.)

One of these projects was the siting and construction of the "new high school," now the Town Building. The originally vacant site was provided with a smaller version of the present building, with driveways and parking, with fields for recreation and sports, and

with a forecourt for the building which was landscaped with a large pond (reduced in size today by silting and vegetative growth) As early photos show, the land around the pond was almost completely open, and one could clearly see the entire building from numerous spots on Rte. 20 and Cochituate Road. A plan in the Town Surveyor's files suggested that the pond not extend fully to Cochituate Rd but that there be left several hundred feet of confined stream between it and that Road. (and even further, that this stream contain a small weir and waterfall !)

Another major project from the past, fully implemented, involved the razing of the old Town Hall (on the east side of Cochituate Rd) and the moving of the Heard house onto the Town Hall site. This became the headquarters and museum of the Wayland Historical Society. It was particularly notable because it involved cooperation between the town and a quasi-public organization. One other cooperative measure affecting the Center was the acquisition of the abandoned railroad station, the renovation of the building, and its subsequent use by a non-profit organization, "The Depot", as an outlet for local arts and crafts.

One of the most far-reaching projects was the action of the town several decades ago to acquire the land and buildings of the McManus auto dealership and garage, which had dominated the business street frontage with its clearly non-pedestrian shopping type of building and its large billboard type of roof sign.. The structures were razed, and the land is now public open space. (at the intersection of Pelham Island Road and Rte. 20).. This action by the town was notable as an instance where the town spent substantial amounts of money for a project that would enhance the business area and Town Center without being primarily to accomodate a needed town use..

THE ROUTE 20 BYPASS

Without doubt, the project that would have made the most impact on the Center, and on the town's street system as well, was the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' plan to construct a "Route 20 Bypass" south of the Center. This would have begun at "Dead Man's Curve" (at the present location of Temple Shir Tikva), crossed over Cochituate Road near the South Cemetery , crossed over Pelham Island Road, and rejoined Rte. 20 just beyond Russell's. The project was carried through to field borings and detailed designs in the early 1950s, and not a single organization or town board is on (available) records as having opposed it. (The environmental movement was just being born then). When this writer first joined the Planning Board, that was the talk of the town. Suddenly it was abandoned by the state and the rumor was that one property owner with great political influence did not want his land traversed by a bypass

Obviously, if the project had been carried out (as was the case with the Weston Bypass), the congestion in Wayland's Center today would be substantially less than it now is. Since we did not, and probably could not today, bypass through traffic the alternate should at least be considered: namely, accept the through traffic where it is and bypass the local traffic. That concept is the thrust of a major portion of this report.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING FOR THE CENTER

The first truly comprehensive plan for Wayland Center was begun about a decade ago, when the town voted to establish a Town Center Committee, and directed the Selectmen to appoint its members in accord with the specified criteria of the vote. The committee in turn voted to employ a consultant (the same firm as had been engaged earlier by the Planning Board for other studies) and that Board agreed to make some of its own funds available. The initial outcome was a detailed plan to, in effect, relocate the town center to open land north of the RR right-of-way on former Raytheon property. Provision was made in the plan for new streets, business and residential areas, public buildings, low-cost housing, and a large oval-shaped new Town Common. The town meeting failed to appropriate the money needed to acquire that site. Several years later the town did approve a larger amount of money for less acreage and approved the use of eminent domain to take the property if purchase failed. To date, (January 2002), the 38 acres are still privately owned.

The Committee's consultant continued to detail plans for an overall "Town Center Master Plan" covering not just the Raytheon land but also business and civic uses south of the RR on both sides of Rte 20 and along Cochituate Road, including the large complex of uses and open spaces east and south of the Town Building. A summary report was made available to the Planning Board in late Fall (2001), of which this writer was able to obtain a copy. This writer is in general agreement with some sections of that report but is in major disagreement with several of its key elements.

LONG-RANGE PLAN FOR WAYLAND TOWN CENTER

This present document contains specific recommendations for driveways, (some) key off-street and curb parking areas, a new service road around the main business district, a designated Center loop passing by numerous town buildings, historic buildings and sites, and natural features, and a "new" Town Common. The foregoing recommendations are shown on six Figures and explained briefly in this text. Additional elements are also shown. Figure 7 brings them together in a generalized master plan entitled Proposed Road and Land Use Patterns. More information and data are available in the writer's files and on rough study sketch-plans. Time (and energy) limitations have precluded his publication of them.

The specific recommendations of this plan are summarized below:--

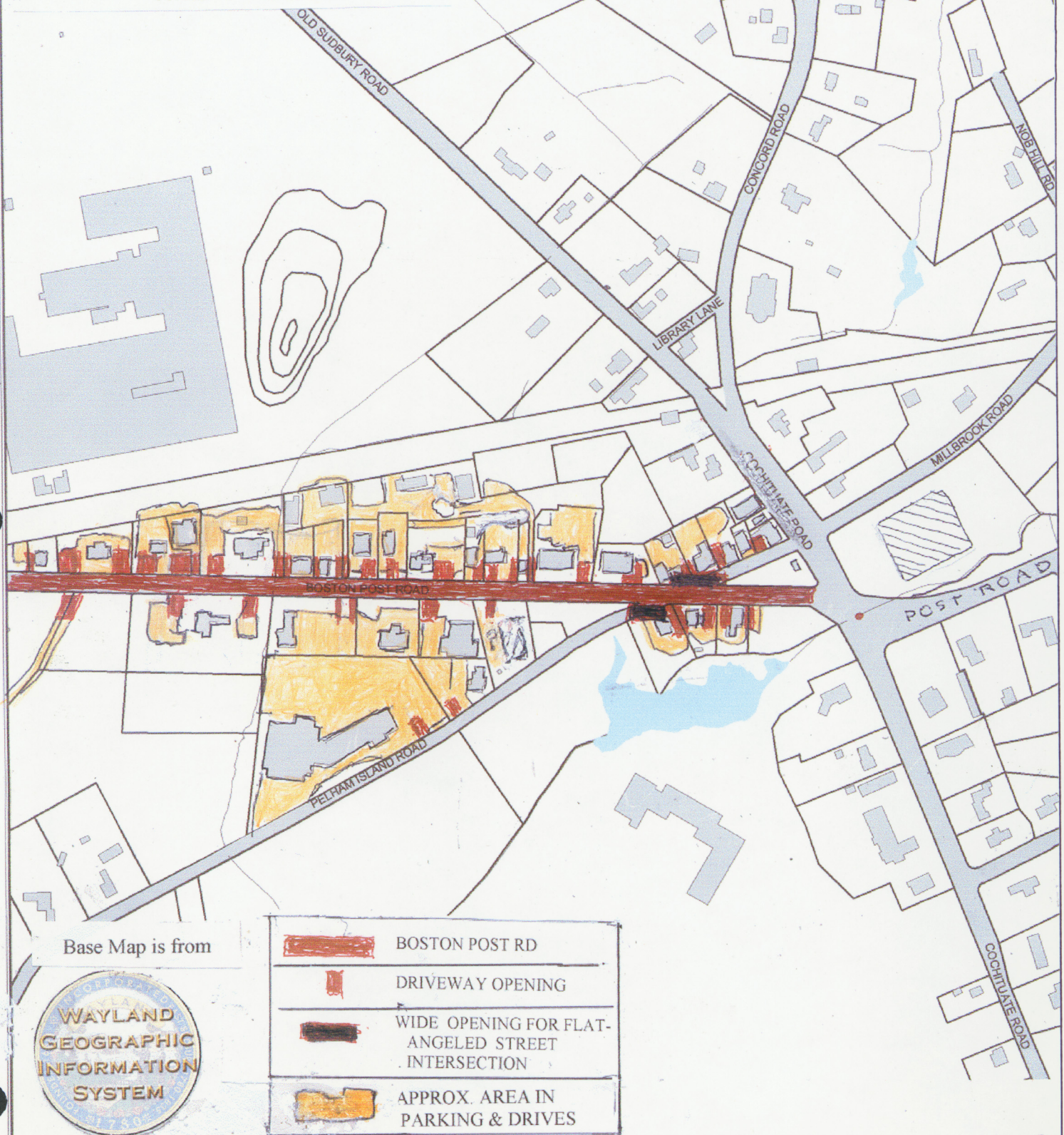
Vehicular Circulation

Reduce the large number of driveway openings on the Boston Post Road (Rte. 20) between Cochituate Rd and Russell's. Each opening (shown on Figure 1) is an interruption to any continuous system of sidewalks, and is a potential accident and delay point. This plan proposes that they be reduced in both number and usage by: combining driveways for every two or three lots (as shown on Figures 2 and 3), and eliminating all but the one that can best give rear access to them. (The installation of the rear service roads, discussed below, would allow many more than two properties to share one driveway,

LONG RANGE PLAN FOR
WAYLAND TOWN CENTER

DIAGRAM OF EXISTING
DRIVE AND STREET OPENINGS
ALONG THE BOSTON POST ROAD

SCALE 1" = 350 feet



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and the land saved through fewer driveways could be used for more rear parking or building expansion.).

● Eliminate or reduce the present need for local business traffic in the Center to travel along congested Rte. 20 in the study area in order to access most establishments. This plan would help to achieve that goal by providing a service road on each side of Rte. 20 (behind the developed street frontage).. These two service roads would be connected with all rear parking areas, present or future. To change sides of Rte.20, two main crossings of that route are proposed, one at each end. Together with the east-west service roads, an oval loop is created. And because of the relatively long distance between those two crossings, a third one is recommended at mid-point. Several connectors to allow drivers to reach the loop from all sides not presently so accessed. Right now there are as many crossings of Rte 20 as there are opposing driveways more or less opposite each other. By upgrading three (the three Rte.20 crossings), hopefully the cross traffic will be channeled into them and more and more individual driveways can be discontinued.

● Completely redesign the northern end of Pelham Island Road (between Cochituate Road and the driveway into the Town Building) in order to: (a) eliminate the present flat-angle crossing (25 degrees) of Rte. 20 with its excessively wide openings and its difficult vision to a driver's left, and replace it with two near 90 degree crossings, as shown on Figure 4; (b) connect the portion of Pelham Island Road north of Rte. 20 with a near corner of the business loop so that local traffic can access that loop without first entering Rte. 20; (c) make the north part of Pelham Island Road one-way westerly (as already suggested by others).

● Provide a partly new all-purpose road from Pelham Island Road south of Rte. 20 to Cochituate Road. As shown on Figure 2, it would incorporate the existing driveway into the Town Building and extend beyond the latter, on a new location, to Cochituate Road at a point about 170 feet south of Winthrop Road.. This would provide additional access to the soccer and ballfields, would interconnect existing parking areas in the vicinity, and above all, would replace the present Cochituate Road driveway into the Town Building (whose intersection with Cochituate Road is so close to Rte. 20 that left turns out cannot be allowed.). It need not be abandoned, however, but could instead be a road and parking area for the herein proposed Town Common (Figure 2) Its intersection with Cochituate Road not only is at a much safer distance from Rte. 20 but offers good sight distance up and down Cochituate Road if it is placed as far south of the big red oak tree there as is possible. Figure 3 shows an alternate route for this new road, running along the rear of the church parking lot. However, this alternative, though shorter, would form a moving traffic barrier between the parking area and the playfields.

● Consider also that this new road (Figure 2 version) between Pelham Island Road and Cochituate Road could be regarded as a scenic parkway. The views that it would open up across the sports fields on one side and across the river meadows to the golf course and distant hills on the other would be among the best in town, and certainly in the Center. This road would contribute to the general "opening up" of the Center visually.

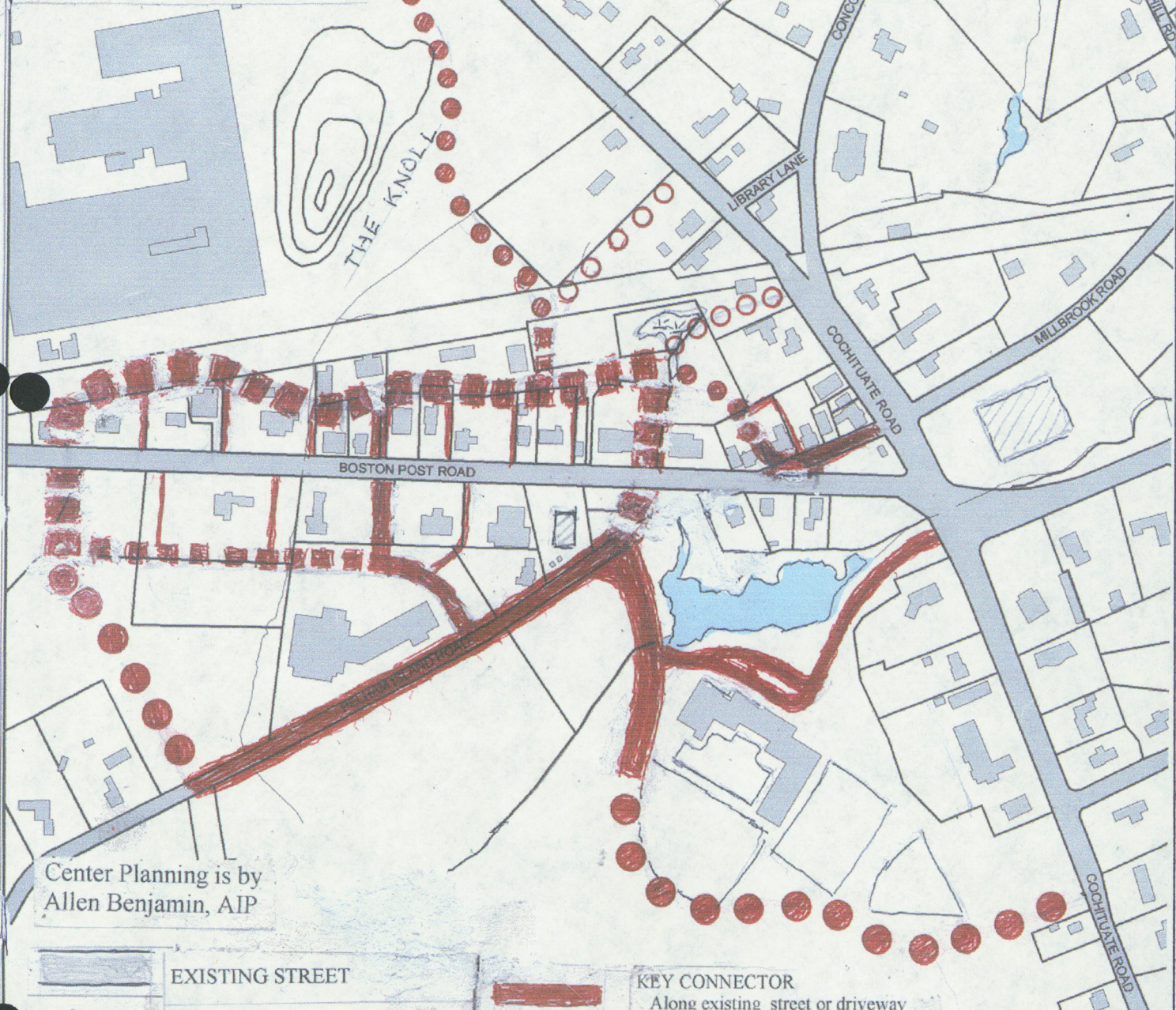
● Facilitate a road connecting Concord Road with Old Sudbury Road as shown on Figure 2, running along the south side of the Sudbury Valley Trustees' (SVTs') mostly

LONG RANGE PLAN FOR WAYLAND TOWN CENTER

DIAGRAM OF PROPOSED VEHICULAR CIRCULATION

SCALE: 1" = 350 feet

NOTE: The symbols here used
should not be construed as representing
width of road. Those used for service
roads in particular are exaggerated for
differentiation and emphasis.



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	EXISTING STREET		KEY CONNECTOR Along existing street or driveway	 	POTENTIAL SHARED DRIVEWAY
	PROPOSED SERVICE RD. Along existing street or driveway		In new location as shown		
	In new location as shown		In the generalized route indicated		
	In the generalized route indicated		As an alternative to the Sudbury Rd. connector south to the service loop		

LONG RANGE PLAN FOR WAYLAND TOWN CENTER

VEHICULAR CIRCULATION ALTERNATIVES

SCALE 1" = 350 feet

NOTE: The symbols here used should not be construed as representing width of road. Those used for service roads in particular are exaggerated for differentiation and emphasis.



LONG RANGE PLAN FOR
WAYLAND TOWN CENTER

ILLUSTRATIVE LAYOUT OF STREETS,
DRIVES, SIDEWALKS, & PARKING
IN THE PELHAM ISLAND ROAD AREA

NORTH OF THE BOSTON POST ROAD

SCALE: 1" = 50 feet

TO PROPOSED NEW N-S
SERVICE ROAD CROSSING
THE BOSTON POST ROAD

RESIDENTIAL

PARKING

COCHITUATE RD.

PKG.

PELHAM ISLAND RD

VILLAGE GREEN

BOSTON

POST

ROAD

(WEST)

PARKING

PKG.

TOWN COMMON

TO POND
"LOOP WALK"



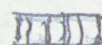
EXISTING BUILDING



OPEN SPACE OR LAWN



SIDEWALK



CROSS WALK

4

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wet land.. (There is the semblance of a ridge along that side for about 2/3 of the distance, to minimize fill). Compensatory measures may need to be taken elsewhere on the parcel, or it may well be totally disapproved. for road use) The importance of this new connection can not be overemphasized., for two reasons:-- (1) Lacking such a direct connection, through and local traffic are using Bow Road, never designed as a connector street, to the detriment of the neighborhood and (2) Its construction will bring even more north-south traffic now using Concord Road to shift on to Sudbury Road (which is what many drivers are trying to do) as it is easier and safer to enter the vee intersiction at the Depot if one is in the outside lane. Since a traffic light is not going to be installed at that intersection, regrettably, drivers will continue to prefer hitting the intersection from the north via Sudbury Road rather than from Concord Road

● Construct a road through the former Raytheon land connecting Sudbury Road opposite the proposed Concord Road- Sudbury Road connector to the proposed business loop (and thence to the Town Building and points south.) Together with the other connector, this will give total access to all parts of the business district without use of Rte. 20 If the town succeeds in acquiring the 38 acre portion of the former Raytheon land (still pending) the recommended connecting road could be intergrated into any site plan. If the town does not acquire the land, the private owner might be persuaded to build the connector into his street system, In either case, there remains the problem of crossing the MBTA right-of-way. As noted elsewhere, for the next decade or so the MBTA may permit only "temporary" road crossings and unpaved ones at that.. However, policies might change and Wayland should be prepared with a plan that allows for the possibility of a permanant and paved crossing. Meantime, plans on Figures 2 and 3 provide connections to the service loop without an absolute necessity of crossing the right-of-way.

Parking in the Town Center

● Rather than build several large public parking lots on the north side of Route 20, connect the planned service roads there with all existing (and future) parking areas. (At present the vast majority of these areas are unpaved and not clearly bounded, which makes it an opportune time to layout and construct the service roads.. Such interconnection of parking areas increases total number of spaces available to individual establishments provided, of course, the different owners are willing to share total spaces). Additionally, this plan would maintain long-standing town policies of requiring property owners to provide their own off-street parking (while continuing to provide public curb parking where appropriate)..

● The parking spaces in front of some businesses (on their own land) now allow or require autos to back out into lanes. of moving traffic and should be redesigned to have only one opening to each group of spaces. (As it is now, their opening on the highway is the full width of the row of spaces and forms a major interruption to sidewalks). If some

of these back-out spaces cannot be satisfactorily redesigned, they should be abandoned, and compensated for by adding more spaces in the rear.

Consider, in connection with the Pelham Island Road redesign discussed previously (and shown on Figure 4) the addition of 45 degree angled parking spaces within the road's 33 foot right-of-way.. If the Road Commissioners think the residual width is too narrow to carry one lane of one-way traffic, either parallel parking could be substituted or the right-of-way widened by a few feet. At first, this recommendation may seem contrary to getting rid of back-out parking, but it should be remembered that Pelham Island Road is being down-graded to a one-way connector. Also, this is the most critical section of the entire study area in regard to the ratio of parking space to floor area. (It's very deficient).

Consider, in connection with the Wayland Public Library and its program for possible expansion, the addition of more parking spaces by the following means:- (a) Enlarge limits of the presently paved area by paving behind and beside the old freight house, and seek approval for clearing and grading additional areas for parking within the present ownership; -(b) With MBTA permission, extend the parking lot southerly to the Historical Society property. This would not only add more total spaces but permit a sharing of spaces by the Library and the Historical Society. As noted elsewhere, the MBTA's present policy seems to be to allow only "temporary" uses, with unpaved (graveled) surfaces. It is here believed that a graveled "annex" to the paved lot would be worth constructing.

Town Common and Related Open Spaces

Rather than establish a Town Common on the former Raytheon land (connected by road to the business and civic areas south of the MBTA's right-of-way), instead establish a Common on town-owned land between the Town Building and the Rte. 20 intersection with Rtes. 27/126 (that is, in front of the Town Building) Before the pond was put in along with the original construction of that building, this was mostly low land with a brook running through it, lightly vegetated, and visually open. A common here, again mostly open, would do much to restore the general character of the Center. It need not be all "useable". (See below.) This location is the heart of the Town Center, around which several public buildings are grouped. Additionally, a Common here would adjoin other public open spaces (Figure 5) which are already used for recreation and outdoor assembly, and adjoin support facilities such as parking, toilets, and shelter from sudden storms (in the Town Building). All of those facilities would have to be built anew to support a Common on the Raytheon land.

Visually "open up" the Town Common site here proposed by further removal of selected vegetation, so that there will be a nearly clear view of the Town Building from the new Public Safety Building, and vice versa. (Figure 5) This view would be a wider one if the easternmost building of the three on the south side of Rte. 20 was acquired and removed. If all three were removed, a clear view across the pond of the Town Building would open as would a wide view of the overall Common itself. Acquisition and removal of the three buildings is highly desirable.

LONG RANGE PLAN FOR WAYLAND TOWN CENTER

TOWN COMMON AND RELATED OPEN SPACES

SCALE: 1" = 125 feet



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- PROPOSED "TOWN COMMON"
- DESIRABLE ADDITION TO SAME

ADJACENT SPACES FOR
OUTDOOR ASSEMBLY AND
OUTDOOR SPORTS

PROXIMATE PUBLIC PARKING

POTENTIAL LONG, WIDE
VIEW BETWEEN AND OF
MAJOR PUBLIC BUILDING

OTHER EXISTING OR POTENTIAL
VIEWS OF POND AND RIVER
MEADOWS

● Design the "new" Town Common as an informal naturalized area, featuring a stream flowing into and out of a pond.. The shore of the pond could be solidified sufficiently to allow a ring trail, and a number of interior spaces could be raised by deposit of dredged materials for sunning, lunching, bird watching, and assembly of small groups. (The nearby Town Building's courtyard could be used for larger outdoor groups and the soccer field for still larger ones. (as was the recent case with the September 11 memorial service). The design itself for this Common should be made with substantial input from the Conservation Commission, the Park and Recreation Department, local beautification and garden groups, and others. Since the area is substantially wetland, some changes might not be allowed by authorities; others may require compensatory measures off-site.

Center Loop or "Ring Road".

● Compare the proposed "Center Loop" of this study (Figure 6) with the "Ring Road" proposed by the Town Center Master Plan, first as to concept. The later is intended to provide for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic connections between public buildings and nearby public open spaces. Its most northerly point is at the Library parking lot and its most southerly part is at the front easterly corner of the Town Building. The straight east side of the Ring runs parallel to Cochituate Road, between it and the fronts of the buildings there.. (It was originally planned to go behind the buildings). The west side would use part of a relocated Pelham Island Road and then cross Rte. 20 and come out at the depot., while the south side would use Town Hall driveways. On the other hand, the here proposed Center Loop would not require special construction of a Ring but rather the mere designation of a Loop using those roads in the vicinity which exist or have already been planned for special vehicular circulation purposes. This designation method inherently means there would be no need to add more intersections, especially near other intersections.. Under this concept, the size of the loop can vary from small to large, provided that, as is the case, there are appropriate other roads that can be included in the Loop without special construction.

Road and Land Use Patterns

● Coordinate the land uses in the Center area with the street system finally decided upon as Year 2002 Center Plan. Figure 7 attempts to illustrate a match between the street system most strongly recommended with various use categories, taking allowance, of course for the existing pattern of use in the Center. As will be noted, two categories of business are indicated, although the Zoning By-law may establish more. These are: (1) Store, shop or office (generally pedestrian oriented, and (2) Commercial, automotive or utility use (seldom pedestrian oriented) Since the former benefit from proximity to other pedestrian-serving establishments, it is generally desirable to keep the more auto-oriented uses out of established compact shopping areas. While this plan does not purport to consider at this time signs, street furniture, building facades, or landscaping., once the general format of the street system and land use determinations are settled, detailed drawings of enhancing items can be begun. Figure 7 shows one trial of matching, based on the street system considered in this study as being most favorable.. The Zoning By-

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WAYLAND TOWN CENTER

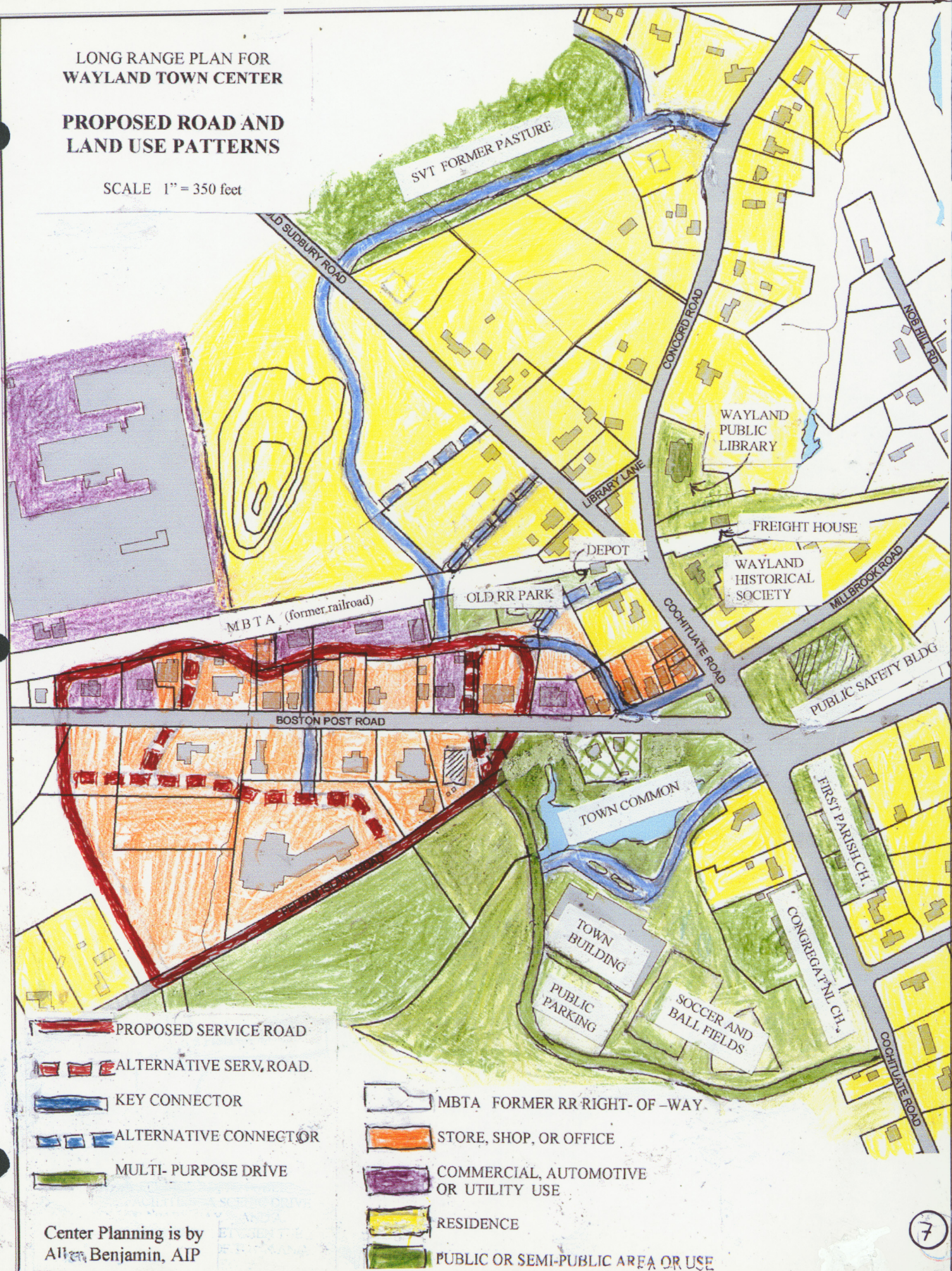
ALTERNATIVE CENTER LOOPS -
(DRIVES CONNECTING CIVIC, HISTORIC,
AND NATURAL FEATURES)



LONG RANGE PLAN FOR WAYLAND TOWN CENTER

PROPOSED ROAD AND LAND USE PATTERNS

SCALE 1" = 350 feet



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law will later need to be amended to match the selected land use pattern.. Within the business loop, there would be at least two categories of business: (a) Store, shop, or office (all potentially pedestrian oriented) and (b) Commercial, automotive, or utility use (seldom pedestrian oriented) Because the former benefit from having other stores etc. nearby, it is often desirable to keep auto-oriented uses out of a walking center.

This Long Range Plan for Wayland Town Center was made by Allen Benjamin and presented to the Town for such action as is deemed appropriate. It is his hope that it will be the take-off point for completely reexamining current Master Plans before the town goes ahead on their further detailing. The author is a 61 year resident of Wayland and he has served on the Planning Board, Zoning Board, Board of Assessors, and most recently, on the Town Center Committee. He is an urban and environmental planner by profession, which he has practiced for over 50 yers. He received a BS in Civil Engineering from WPI, an MS from Cornell in City and Regional Planning, and did post-graduate work at Harvard in the problems of Massachusetts suburban towns facing growth